

Women and Environmental Protests:  
The Cerattepe Incident and the Role of Women  
in Protests

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## Abstract

“Women and Environmental Protests: The Cerattepe Incident and the Role of Women in Protests”

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Professor Duygu Köksal, Thesis Advisor

This thesis examines the experiences of local women of Cerattepe, a district of Artvin, who participate in antimining resistance in the region. As a means of exploring the relationship between women and nature, this thesis intervenes in the debates about women’s closeness to nature, and the explanations that the controversial theory of ecofeminism brings to this relation are discussed. The research explains how women’s roles within society were affected by the environmental protests in Cerattepe and whether agency issues within this group were influenced by their active participation in the protests. I demonstrate that environmental activism plays a central role in the development of female protestors’ self-efficacy as agents in the movement. The antimining resistance in Cerattepe and women’s roles in the incident is analyzed based on field research, consisting of thirteen semi-structured interviews and participant observation. Although the thesis finds little evidence that women’s participation in the resistance totally transformed patriarchal relations in their respective communities, their increasing self-confidence and self-efficacy turned them into agents or subjects of the incident as well as into executors of decisions within the movement. This level of agency - or “partial agency” - of local women from Cerattepe contributes to theorization of them as the “actresses” of the movement. In this regard, the contribution of this thesis is its use of the Cerattepe movement as a case to analyze the influence of environmental activism on women’s agency.

62,500 words

## Özet

“Kadınlar ve Çevresel Protestolar: Cerattepe Olayı ve Protestolarda Kadınların Rolü”

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Profesör Duygu Köksal, Tez Danışmanı

Bu tez, Cerattepe’de; Artvin ilinin bir ilçesi; maden karşıtı eylemlere katılan yerel kadınların deneyimlerini incelemektedir. Kadın-doğa ilişkisini araştırabilmek amacı ile bu tez kadının doğa ile olan yakınlığını ele alan tartışmalara katılmakta ve ihtilafli bir teori olan ekofeminizmin bu ilişkiye getirdiği açıklamaları tartışmaktadır. Bu araştırma, kadınların toplum içindeki rollerinin Cerattepe’de gerçekleşen çevresel eylemlerden nasıl etkilendiğini ve kadınların; eğer varsa; faillik durumlarının harekete aktif katılımlarından etkilenip etkilenmediğini açıklamaktadır. Çevresel aktivizmin, hareketin faileri olan eylemci kadınların öz yeterliliklerinin gelişimini üzerinde merkezi bir rol oynadığını göstermekteyim. Cerattepe’deki maden karşıtı direniş ve kadınların bu direnişteki rolü 13 röportaj ve katılımcı gözlemden oluşan bir saha araştırması ile analiz edilmektedir. Bu tez, kadınların Cerattepe eylemlerine katılmalarının bölge halkları içerisindeki patriyarkal ilişkileri tamamen dönüştürdüğüne dair az kanıt bulsa da; kadınların artan özgüveni ve öz yeterliliklerinin onları bu hareketin faileri yada özneleri haline getirdiği ve onları hareket içerisinde kararları alanlar haline dönüştürmüş olduklarını göstermektedir. Cerattepe’deki yerel kadınların elde ettikleri bu faillik seviyesi yada “kısmi faillik”, onları hareketin “aktrisleri” olarak kabul eden teorileştirmemi desteklemektedir. Bu bağlamda, Cerattepe hareketinin çevresel aktivizmin kadınların faillikleri üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmek için bir vaka olarak kullanılması, bu tezin literatüre katkısı olarak kabul edilebilir.

62.500 kelime

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NOTE: The in-house editor of the Atatürk Institute has made recommendations with regard to the format, grammar, spelling, usage, syntax, and style of this dissertation.

To my mother and  
my late father,  
whose laughter is still in our ears...

## Introduction

In this thesis, it will be dealt with the question of how women raise their voice when faced with an ecological problem and how their active participation in environmental protests makes them more visible or more *public*, especially in their local communities where their struggle took place. Although I will consider at wide range of environmental protests from around the world, my research focuses on the area of Cerattepe, a district of Artvin, and on the local women of this region who participate and organize protests against gold mining. To ascertain the perceptions of women during and after the protests, face-to-face meetings and in-depth interviews with local women were conducted in the region.

In Turkey, environmental movements are mostly examined on the grounds of their organizational methods or how they can be placed in a global context. How women themselves were affected by these movements or how they influenced these protests become secondary issues of this research. To better understand how women responded to the exploitation of nature and on what grounds they do so is my main focus of this thesis. I explain how women's roles in society were affected by the environmental protests in Cerattepe and whether agency issues of these women were influenced by their active participation in protests.

I choose the Cerattepe incident as a case study because as a continuation of such environmental resistance, the Cerattepe protests gained the interest of

the public and especially local women of the region undertook the role of public spokespeople. This situation can be seen in reports by newspapers and news portals. Most of the news articles on this issue were publicized with photos of local women's resistance or with the statements they made to the newspapers. Indeed, local women of the region were the face of the protests. Determining how the media represented these images is subject for another study however; I believe it is important to acknowledge these kinds of situations when dealing with women's activism in the Cerattepe resistance.

In this thesis, I will first deal with views on the relationship between women and nature and explore why women have for centuries been compared to nature. Then, from a perspective informed by the literature on environmental movements, this study underscores the importance of women's participation in ecological resistance. To explore the case of Cerattepe in a broader picture, other environmental movements from the world in which women explicitly raised their voices will be taken into consideration. I will be examining the incident of Cerattepe; specifically the local women who became an active part of the protests; as a heterogeneous movement in which the dynamics of a social movement and an ecological resistance coincide. In addition, due to the high level of participation of women in the demonstrations, it is possible to see this case as a women's movement to a degree. In this thesis I will be dealing with the question of how these local women's daily habits, relations, and patriarchal relations in the local community were influenced by the Cerattepe incident and to what extent these local women affected the course of events.

## § 1.1 Theoretical Framework

In this study, I explain women's roles in environmental movements. To this end, I will first be dealing with the relationship between women and nature and the gendered metaphors that are used to describe nature.

Women have long been associated with nature, and nature is personified as a mother. Representing the earth as a mother is common, and as a metaphor, Mother Earth and Mother Nature have long been used to describe the world around us. The earth has been feminized throughout history based on the matters of life cycles such as fertility and reproduction. In addition to the

imagery of Mother Nature, such concepts as virgin land, fertility of the soil and conquest of nature have been utilized.<sup>1</sup> Most of these metaphors indicate an ideological link between the domination of nature and the domination of women. Women have long been seen as closer to nature on the grounds of these representations, and they are often restricted to the roles within the domestic sphere.<sup>2</sup> These associations of women with nature can be read as a consequence of a patriarchal worldview that restricts women to the private realm. The imagery of Mother Nature, which creates a loving and caring vision of the environment, also underscores the same patriarchal worldview.

Relatively little information is available about gender differences in environmental activism, but some studies examining local environmental concerns reach the conclusion that women are more concerned about potential environmental risks than men and are more likely to participate in environmental movements.<sup>3</sup> However, to what extent these women are effective in these movements or how they change the course of events are major, open questions with respect to women's environmental activism.

“As McAdam (1992) and Mohai (1992) have noted, there are conflicting pressures that affect women's activism. In particular, the constraining pressures rooted in the double day for women, as a result of the gendered division of labor; mute women's activism.”<sup>4</sup> According to this view, women cannot fully participate in environmental movements because of gender differences in socialization as well as gendered division of labor. As Tindall explains in his article “Activism and Conservation Behavior in an Environmental Move-

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- 1 Michael Mayerfeld Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, (California: Pine Forge Press, 1998,) 163.
  - 2 *Ibid.*, 163.
  - 3 Paul Mohai, “Men, Women and The Environment: An Examination of the Gender Gap in Environmental Concern and Activism,” in *Women Working in the Environment*, ed. Carolyn E. Sachs (New York: Routledge, 2013), 216.
  - 4 D.B. Tindall, Scott Davies, and Celine Mauboules, “Activism and Conservation Behavior in an Environmental Movement: The Contradictory Effects of Gender,” *Society and Natural Resources*, 16 (2003):926.

ment”; women’s concerns are not translated to higher levels of activism because of their limited resources and domestic responsibilities<sup>5</sup>. According to this understanding of environmental sociology, women often cannot channel their environmental concerns into activism. Apart from their motherhood role, the gendered division of labor also shapes women’s participation. Personal constraints like marriage, children or and holding a full-time job may cancel out the positive effects of women’s environmental concerns.<sup>6</sup>

Unlike environmental sociologists; ecofeminists do not emphasize the limited opportunities of women. They ask broader questions about women’s participation in environmental movements. As a “new term for an ancient wisdom”, ecofeminists show the direct relation among patriarchal violence against women, other people, and nature.<sup>7</sup> Francoise D’Eaubonne first used the term ecofeminism in *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* in 1974, and it became popular in protests and activities related to environmental destruction, nuclear annihilation, the and threats against nature in mid-1970s and the 1980s. Ecofeminism as an academic and activist movement sees connections between exploitation and domination of nature and the subordination and oppression of women. From this point of view, women’s protests against exploitation of nature turned into protests against patriarchal order in time. Therefore, women knowingly or unknowingly criticize the oppression and subordination of women when they raise their voices for environmental causes. The ecofeminist perspective connects the liberation of women with the liberation of nature from patriarchal domination and opposes the patriarchal mentality that seeks to dominate nature as well as women. In order to possess power over life; men exploit both women and nature, and ecofeminism connects patriarchal violence against women and the devastation of the earth.<sup>8</sup> Women fight against this domination in various events. Most of the time they want to protect the environment against the exploitative activities of the male-dominated capitalist system- unaware that this fight is also a fight against the same patriarchal system that subjugates them.

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5 Ibid.,928.

6 Ibid., 915.

7 Maria Mies, and Vandana Shiva, *Ecofeminism*, (London: Zed Books, 1993), 14.

8 Ibid., 15.

This thesis will be dealing specifically with the Cerattepe incident, but in order to examine women's roles in environmental movements; I consider other environmentalist struggles in the world where women were active participants. There are numerous examples of these kinds of resistance, and I believe these examples are significant for this thesis as they indicate how women's participation in these movements made them more visible and more public. In other words, I explore women's social and political evolution during these environmental protests to more comprehensively explain the recent environmental resistance of Cerattepe women.

Without doubt, the famous Chipko movement was as a leading movement in women's environmental activism. "We are the runners and messengers; the real leaders are the women."<sup>9</sup> These words belong to a local man; Sunderlal Bahuguna, who was an Indian activist in the Chipko Movement. At a time when there were few any environmental movements in the world, the Chipko Movement was one of the first examples of major, non-violent environmental resistance. The environmental consciousness in the region that gave way to the Chipko Movement can be traced back to eighteenth century. "Three hundred years ago more than 300 members of the Bishnoi community in Rajasthan, led by a woman called Amrita Devi, sacrificed their lives to save their sacred khejri trees by clinging to them. With that event begins the recorded history of Chipko."<sup>10</sup>

Women embracing the living trees as their protectors spread the methodology and philosophy of Chipko to other regions, and beginning in the early 1970s the philosophy of Chipko became popular worldwide. The movement is usually interpreted as a women's movement due to the activism of women within the movement. Against the commercial exploitation of forests by the non-local logging contractors, these Indian women sought to preserve natural forests as life-support systems and saw their exploitation as the main reason for their own ongoing economic deprivation. The ecologic instability of the Himalayas forced these local women to take action, and by 1972 women began

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9 Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, (London: Zed Books, 1989), 64.

10 *Ibid.*,67.

to perform widespread, organized protests. The movement spread quickly to other regions through the decentralized leadership of local women.<sup>11</sup> For these local women, food production and obviously the survival of their families began with the forest, and that is why they strongly resisted the exploitation of their natural habitat. From one village to next and from one region to another; local women continued to mobilize, and women like Hima Devi gave speeches at demonstrations to raise awareness among local women. A large number of women also tied “sacred threads to trees as a token of their vow of protection.”<sup>12</sup>

“This forest is our mother. When there is a crisis of food, we come here to collect grass and dry fruits to feed our children. We dig out herbs and collect mushrooms from this forest. You cannot touch these trees.”<sup>13</sup> Given women’s unending resistance to the contactors and their strong struggle to protect the forests, the Chipko movement can be seen both an ecological and a women’s movement. Their decisive approach was evident when Bachni Devi of Adwani led resistance to her own husband who had obtained a contract to fell trees in local forests.<sup>14</sup> The attitudes of these women created new directions for the movement and transformed the resistance from ecological protest to both an ecological and a feminist movement. Local women learned how to raise their voice against ecological destruction and they saw that they could be successful. The movement’s philosophy created a kind of politics for these local women and paved the way for more determined resistance to male-led environmental degradation.

As a turning point in the environmental politics in Turkey, the Bergama movement was one of the largest and most effective environmental protests in Turkey to date. Numerous earlier protests occurred, especially between 1995-1998, where peasant activists staged high-profile demonstrations.<sup>15</sup> In this

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11 Ibid.,73.

12 Ibid.,75.

13 Ibid.,74.

14 Ibid.,76.

15 Baran Alp Uncu, “Within Borders, Beyond Borders: The Bergama Movement at the Junction of Local, National and Transnational Practices” (PhD diss, The London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Sociology, 2012),26

movement, coffeehouses were significant for local men who gathered there and shared opinions about mines. But the present of women in such public spaces was rare if not impossible. However, given women's active participation in the protests; the mobilization of the Bergama movement changed circumstances to a great extent. In meetings in their houses and in conversations during their work in the fields; women socialized. Gradually, they began to participate in meetings at coffeehouses and became publicly visible. In the protests they were seen shoulder-to-shoulder with men.<sup>16</sup> Apart from their efforts to mobilize locals; female villagers took up the task of prolonging the resistance; in order to mobilize male villagers they went on a sexual strike for about six months.<sup>17</sup> Unless their men became fully involved with the resistance, women decided to refrain from sexual activity. Apart from their participation in protests, some of these local women became widely-known public figures in time. Women like Sabahat Gökçeoğlu led female villagers and appeared in the mass media as a spokesperson of the Bergama movement.<sup>18</sup> Reinart, in "Biz Toprağı Bilirik!" argues that due to their newly gained self-reliance; women's position in their households changed. When they joined out-of-town protests, they left household duties to their husbands. Thus, they stopped wearing *kıvraks*; the traditional cloth with which women cover their whole bodies; and joined meetings at the coffeehouses without them.<sup>19</sup>

There are a wide range of ecological movements in the world that were led and organized by women. Apart from activism in the field, women were leaders of some of the most important modern environmental movements. In a world where men hold the most important leadership positions, the prominence of women in these environmental movements should be emphasized. Women -like the former Green Party leader Petra Kelly and writer Vandana

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16 Ibid.,125.

17 Ibid.,126.

18 Ibid.

19 Üstün Bilgen Reinart, *Biz Toğrağı Bilirik: Bergama Köylüleri Anlatıyor*, (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003), 63.

Shiva- play important roles as global advocates of environmentalism.<sup>20</sup> However, local women's leadership in resistance should also be highlighted. In his book of "An Invitation to Environmental Sociology", Michael Mayerfeld Bell exemplifies women's participation in environmental movements. In India, for example; forty-year-old Medha Patkar led a ten-year-old struggle against Narmada River dam project.<sup>21</sup> She led the nonviolent Save the Narmada movement. After several internments, hunger strikes, and arrests, the Indian Supreme Court suspended work on the dam.<sup>22</sup> In New York; under the leadership of Lois Gibbs and other local women; there was a determined resistance to the Hooker Chemical Cooperation, which dumped 21,000 tons of chemicals in the neighborhood in which Lois and other locals had lived. Their resistance was also successful, and the federal government bought their houses and relocated the locals.<sup>23</sup> Later, Gibbs started to take calls from other local activists with similar problems and decided to participate in environmental organizations to help others.

## § 1.2 The Case of Cerattepe

The Black Sea region is known for its rich flora and old growth forests that provide food and shelter to a wealth of wildlife species. Artvin, one of the provinces in this mountainous ecoregion; is considered the third ecologically richest province of the country after Istanbul and Antalya with its 1900 plant species; 200 of which are endemic and 300 of which are rare species.<sup>24</sup> Artvin is rich in terms of ecological diversity, and many of plant species and habitats that are in need of protection according to international conventions can be

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20 Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 166.

21 Ibid.,166.

22 Ibid.,167.

23 Ibid., 166.

24 "Artvin Uzlaşmanın Simgesi Olsun," TEMA (The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats), published February 25, 2016 [http://tema.org.tr/web\\_14966-2\\_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary\\_id=1562&target=categori&type=2&detail=single](http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary_id=1562&target=categori&type=2&detail=single).

found there. The World Wide Fund labels Artvin a Caucasus Hotspot for Nature and it has been declared one of thirty-four Territorial Biodiversity Hotspots under threat.<sup>25</sup> Due to its underground resources and the possibility of producing large amounts of energy from its rivers, the region is seen as an economic resource by the state. Up until today, locals and the state have come into conflict many times due to disagreements about the future of the region.

The Black Sea highway project built along the coastline was opened in 2007 and first attracted got the nationwide attention. Then hydroelectric power plants (HEPPs) for power generation elicited a huge reaction from both locals and environmentalists. Limited farmlands have been seized for dam projects and thousands of trees, plants, and animals have been destroyed. In addition, the dams caused the destruction of local ecosystems making the region vulnerable to constant erosion and frequent landslides.<sup>26</sup> The 26 hundred-kilometer Green Road Project recently received a reaction from environmentalists. The project connects forty plateaus within the borders eight provinces of the region-from Samsun to Artvin- and is planned to be completed in 2018.<sup>27</sup> The public is convinced that the project will destroy not only the natural habitat and unique ecosystem of the region but will also harm the culture and lifestyle of local residents. Sit-in protests were staged to prevent construction vehicles from working, and people from other cities supported the protests.

“Who is the state? We are the state!”<sup>28</sup> These words belong to Rabia Özcan; known as Mother Rabia by protestors, who was one of the leading figures of

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- 25 “Ormana ve Çevreye Akademik Bakış,” Yeşil Artvin Derneği, May 7, 2016, <http://yesilartvin-derneği.org/ormana-ve-cevreye-akademik-bakis/>.
- 26 Pınar Tremblay, “Is Turkey Driving Down Road to Environmental Disaster?,” *Al-Monitor*, September 3, 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/contents/articles/originals/2015/09/turkey-reckless-destruction-of-black-sea-forests.html>.
- 27 Erdinç Çelikkan, “Government Plan Reveals Controversial Green Road Project conducted for Arab Tourists,” *Hürriyet Daily News*, July 15, 2015 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/government-plan-reveals-controversial-green-road-project-conducted-for-arab-tourists-85477>.
- 28 “Havva Ana’nın İsyanı: Kimdir Devlet? Devlet Bizim Sayemizde Devlettir,” *Birgün*, July 11, 2015, <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/havva-ananin-isyani-kimdir-devlet-devlet-bizim-sayemizde-devlettir-84583.html>.

the demonstrations against the Green Road Project. She stood with sticks in front of the bulldozer along with many other women protestors. Apart from Özcan, many women in their sixties and seventies came with homemade banners reading, “Will our animals hitchhike?.” while criticizing the project on the grounds that their animals will be unable to get to the highlands if roads and tourism centers are built in there.<sup>29</sup> Locals acknowledged that the project would end their traditional lifestyle and ruin their clean water and the unique flora of the region. These protests were temporally successful and local residents did not allow bulldozers to pass. Machine operators stopped and their equipment was removed from the area. These incidents occurred in July 2015, and leading female figures in the protests paved the way for more women-led resistance in the region.

The gold reserve of Artvin is not a new issue; indeed, locals define it as a “twenty-five-year headache”.<sup>30</sup> Gold mining could have started in the early 1990s; however, due to region’s mountainous features both the government and mining companies hesitated, fearing the possibility of landslides. Local academics and environmentalists warned locals, and the Green Artvin Association was established in 1995 to fight against gold mining in the region. In 2009, the State Council made clear that conditions in the region were not suitable for mining activities. However, in 2010 a new mining law allowed gold mining in Cerattepe, and as of 2012, a mining license was put out to tender. The environmental impact assessment (EIA, çevresel etki değerlendirmesi) report was approved by the ministry. It was later annulled by the courts, but the mining company revised the project and as of 2015 received approval from the Ministry of the Environment and Urbanisation. Therefore, the legal struggle against gold mining which had lasted almost twenty years reached a peak, and locals finally tried to stop mining through their own efforts.

People began to keep watch at Cerattepe on 21 June 2015, and the protest lasted 245 days. They fought back the working machines and did not allow

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29 Pınar Tremblay, “Is Turkey Driving Down Road to Environmental Disaster?,” *Al-Monitor*, September 3, 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/contents/articles/originals/2015/09/turkey-reckless-destruction-of-black-sea-forests.html>.

30 “Artvinli’nin 25 Yıllık Baş Ağrısı,” *Yeşil Artvin Derneği*, October 19, 2016, <http://yesilartvin-dernegi.org/artvinlinin-25-yillik-bas-agrisi/>,

them to begin operations. On 8 of July, 761 people and 60 lawyers appealed to the court to stopping the mining efforts. While the court has demanded a new expert report on the region, the company wanted to start mining operations, which triggered the protests. On 16 February 2016, clashes between police and the people of the region began, and security forces began to use tear gas against the protestors. On 18 February, a group of 5000 people protested against the intervention by security forces. The Artvin governor's office banned new arrivals to the city center, and tear gas and water cannons were fired on protestors on February 21.

Nur Neşe Karahan; the chair of the Green Artvin Association; explained why the local people were resisting and read a press release before almost 5,000 people gathered in front of the governor's office on 18 February. She mentioned that for almost 250 days the local people guarded the region against "bandits" trying to extract rent from the region and that locals were guarding their region on peaceful grounds.<sup>31</sup> On 21 February 2016, police fired tear gas and water cannons on a group of around 2,000 people, mostly women, attempting to resist the company's activities in the region. Women had begun their march shouting, "Run away ,Cengiz! Women, come!"<sup>32</sup> (They were targeting the Cengiz Holding) Security forces did not allow the women to reach the vicinity of Cerattepe. A number of women were wounded and admitted to the hospital. With respect to the excessive use of tear-gas; a 61-years-old local woman said;

"We are not giving up! We are going to save Cerattepe! I have asthma, and even so, I came here to save Cerattepe. They called us marginal. I

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31 "Artvin Cerattepe'de Dün Gece de Maden Karşısı Eylem Vardı," *Hürriyet*, February 19, 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/artvin-cerattepede-dun-gece-de-maden-karsiti-eylem-vardi-40057365>.

32 "Artvin'de Yurttaşların Cerattepe Direnişi Sürüyor," *Birgün*, February 21, 2016, <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/artvin-de-yurttaslarin-cerattepe-direnisi-suruyor-104374.html>.

don't know what marginal is. Cerattepe is ours and it will stay like this.”<sup>33</sup>

The slogan “Cerattepe does not belong to Cengiz, it belongs to Havvas” could be heard throughout the region that night. Social conflict continued in the region and on 19 September 2016, the lawyers for all 751 plaintiffs including members of the Green Artvin Association demanded the judges’ recusal in the country’s biggest environmental lawsuit claiming that they lacked impartiality.

### § 1.3 Methodology

My research is a case study of the Cerattepe incident. I believe a case study is an appropriate research strategy for this thesis it provides a comprehensive, detailed understanding of the antimining resistance in Cerattepe, which is ongoing. In this way, the initial motivation of locals; specifically women; can be seen in a more detailed way. As the resistance in the region is ongoing, the case study helps explain how these local people; especially women; were initially mobilized and to what extent women’s lives were changed by the Cerattepe protests.

In this study, I used qualitative research methods of data collection. The fieldwork consisted of in-depth interviews with participants in the protests as well as of participant observation. These qualitative methods explain the relations, beliefs, and moral values of the participants within their social context. Through interviews, it is possible to analyze participant’s initial motivations, expectations, and own interpretations of the protests. Thus, these interviews provide a comprehensive understanding of their mobilization as well as locals’ detailed narratives of the historical process of gold mining in the region. With locals’ own narration and analyses it is possible to interpret and conceptualize this information in the process of data analysis. Local women’s discourses about their own participation, how they position themselves within the movement, and their understanding of environmental issues is seen more clearly

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33 “Cerattepe için Direnenlere Polis Saldırısı,” Cumhuriyet, February 21, 2016, [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/cevre/484909/Cerattepe\\_icin\\_direnenlere\\_polis\\_saldirisi.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/cevre/484909/Cerattepe_icin_direnenlere_polis_saldirisi.html).

through these interviews. In addition to interviews, participant observation provided candid conversations about the protests and about day-to-day gender relations in society.

#### § 1.4 Organization of the Chapters

In the second chapter, I will be dealing with the conceptualization of women's relation to nature and how theoretical frameworks like ecofeminism tackle this issue. Women's roles in environmental movements in the world will be briefly discussed based on the literatures of ecofeminism as well as environmental sociology. In accordance with this, the environmentalism of women will be analyzed as an emancipatory and promising discourse. The issue of local women's agency in the Cerattepe movement will also be discussed in this chapter. Through an analysis of the relationship between women's agency and social movements; I will show how local environmental resistance can change the daily habits and relations of the female protestors and energize women's movements.

The third chapter will provide a brief timeline of environmental movements in which women participated at high rates both in Turkey and around the world. This chapter will summarize the organizational and social background of these environmental movements and determine women's position in them. Why and under what conditions women decided to participate in these movements and how they were affected by them will be thoroughly discussed. The next chapter will present a historical and social background of the Cerattepe incident, its public demonstrations, and some symbolic events. Also, social incentives will be discussed in this chapter.

The last chapter will be the core of this thesis and relying on local women's own statements, the extent of their agency, empowerment, and autonomy will be discussed; especially in relation to their participation in the Cerattepe demonstrations. Thus, the perception of women's role in the society will also be discussed. Local women's initial motivations, their methods of resistance, and their own perceptions about their relation to nature will be analyzed in this chapter with the help of the interviews and participant observation.

## Women and Environmental Politics

### § 2.1 Women, Nature and Ecofeminism

Nature is a feminist issue and this can be considered the informal slogan of ecofeminism.<sup>1</sup> But does it really mean? How can nature be accepted as a feminist issue? How can we define the feminism in it? Is it something that comes from a sexist-patriarchal language or does it address the domination that both women and nature experience? To answer these questions, we should look at the relationship between women and nature. How ecofeminism handles and makes sense of this connection will also be discussed in this chapter.

The pioneers in North America “broke virgin land” and cleared “virgin forest”. Farmers have long spoken of the fertility of the soil and surveyors and military commanders assess the “lay of the land”. Mariners sail on the “bosom of the deep”. The environment in general is “Mother Nature”. We speak of abuse of the environment as “raping the land” and we speak of civilization as the “conquest of the nature”<sup>2</sup>

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1 Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000) , 238.

2 Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 123.

“Mother Nature” is raped, mastered, conquered, mined; her secrets are “penetrated” and her “womb” is to be put into service of the “man of science”. Virgin timber is felled, cut down; fertile soil is tilled, and land that lies “fallow” is “barren” useless.<sup>3</sup>

As seen in probably these examples, one can say that the sex of the environment is considered as female. Moreover, nature has a place in the patriarchal hierarchy and can be protected like a *mother* or raped like a *virgin*. Against the abuse of the environment, environmentalists around the world use the slogan “love your mother” referring to the earth as our mother.<sup>4</sup> As Michael Mayerfeld Bell explains in “An Invitation to Environmental Sociology” this image of Mother Nature is used by environmentalists who believe that they are positively valuing women, not in a negative way.<sup>5</sup> Charles Sitter, the senior vice-president of Exxon Corporation which was known as Standard Oil Company of New Jersey up until 1972, used this image to minimize the significance of the Exxon Valdez oil spill in Alaska saying, “Mother Nature cleans up and does quite a cleaning job.”<sup>6</sup> The understanding that “mom will pick up after us” continues within environmentalism as humankind- or “boys”- continues to mess up a bit.

However, feminine –‘closeness to nature’- is hardly a compliment. Val Plumwood argues that the relation between women and nature has been used to of justify women’s inferior position in society. According to her, women’s closeness to nature became a tool for their oppression, and she insists that this situation also can be seen in many sources:

“Women represent the interests of the family and sexual life; the work of civilization has become more and more men’s business” (Freud: 1989:80) “Woman is a violent and uncontrolled animal.” (Cato 1989: 193) , “A woman is an animal and an animal not of the highest order.”

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3 Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1997), 12.

4 Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 165.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

(Burke 1989:187), “Women are certainly capable of learning, but they are not made for the higher forms of science such as philosophy and certain types of creative activity; these require a universal ingredient.” (Hegel 1989: 62)<sup>7</sup>

How can we make sense of such perceptions that openly equate nature with femininity and consider both as inferior? This chapter will deal with this question and within a sea of definitions; ecofeminism will be explained. It is an exaggeration to connect ecofeminism with all women-led environmental movements in the world and to see ecofeminism as the main motivation behind their resistance. However, especially since 1980s, women’s resistance to environmental degradations has been placed in a different context and sometimes this resistance is called a ‘Third Women’s Movement’ by researchers. Ecofeminist analyses create a theory for analyzing the resistance based on the grounds of the exploitation of nature and the subordination of women by patriarchal domination.

Ynestra King and Anna Gyorgy as well as other women from anti-nuclear and environmental movements organized the conference Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the Eighties.<sup>8</sup> This conference was an influential event in the history of environmentalism in the United States and eighty workshops were organized on a wide range of topics like art, health, and racism.<sup>9</sup> However, ecofeminism did not develop as an academic discourse until the late 1980s. In these years, women in anti-militarist movements in the United States began to describe themselves as ecofeminists.<sup>10</sup> Thus, they came to connect political issues with their activism, and the peace movement itself was influenced by ecofeminism in these years.<sup>11</sup> The Ecofeminist Perspectives: Culture, Nature, Theory conference in 1987 at the University of Southern California

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7 Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, (London: Routledge,1993), 19.

8 “What is Ecofeminism?,” Women and Life On Earth, <http://www.wloe.org/what-is-ecofeminism.76.o.html>, (D.A.:10.07.2017)

9 Noel Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Nature: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*, (New York, Routledge, 1997), 26.

10 Ibid.,27.

11 Ibid.

indicated that ecofeminism had become an independent term separate from anti-nuclear struggles; it thus intertwined environmentalism with feminism as well as racism, animal liberation, and anti-colonialism.<sup>12</sup> In 1991, the World Women's Conference for a Healthy Planet was organized by Women's Environmental Development Organization (WEDO). Despite the fact that this conference was not labeled an ecofeminist gathering, it opened women's topics up to discussion and discussed women's issues within the context of environmentalism. It can be said that the 1980s and early 1990s gave birth to ecofeminism as an independent theory, and it gained a distinct place in environmental discussions from this time forward.

### 2.1.1 *Definitions of Ecofeminism*

Ecofeminism is a feminist approach that uses gender analysis as a starting point when exploring women-other human and others-nature interconnections.<sup>13</sup> It is also a way of thinking that explores links between the domination of women and the domination of nature. It argues that the domination of the environment originates together with social domination of all types like that of gender, race, ethnicity, and class.<sup>14</sup> Noël Sturgeon says; "... my characterization of ecofeminism as a social movement ... is meant as an intervention into the arena of social movement theory as well as feminist theory."<sup>15</sup> She sees ecofeminism in terms of the creation of new forms of collective identity and places ecofeminism as a new form of identity politics.<sup>16</sup> Her characterization of ecofeminism as a social movement is related to her understanding of social movements which,

including that of the deployment of symbolic resources, shifts in identity construction and the production of both popular and scholarly

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12 Ibid.

13 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, 2.

14 Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 164.

15 Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Nature: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*, 4.

16 Ibid.

knowledge – as well as direct action, civil disobedience strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, lobbying and other more traditionally recognized forms of political action.<sup>17</sup>

Mies and Shiva approach the issue as a form of domination rather than identity politics, and according to them, the ecofeminist perspective connects the liberation of women with the liberation of nature from patriarchal order. They also pose the masculinist mentality that aims to dominate nature as well as women. To dominate, men exploit both, and ecofeminism sees a connection between patriarchal violence against women and the devastation of the environment.<sup>18</sup>

Ynestra King extends the scope of feminism in Western philosophy and concludes that “ecofeminism’s challenge of social domination extends beyond sex to social domination of all kinds, because the domination of sex, race and class and the domination of nature are mutually reinforcing.”<sup>19</sup> King tries to create a rapprochement between cultural and socialist feminism within the scope of ecofeminism:

In ecofeminism, nature is the central category of analysis. An analysis of the interrelated dominations of nature- psyche and sexuality, human oppression, and nonhuman nature – and the historic position of women in relation to those forms of domination is the starting point of ecofeminist theory. ... Together they make possible a new ecological relationship between nature and culture, in which mind and nature, heart and reason, join forces to transform the internal and external systems of domination that threaten the existence of life on Earth.<sup>20</sup>

There are multiple definitions of ecofeminism, and yet, as with feminism itself, it is hard to acquire one single description of it. It is even difficult to reach a

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17 Ibid.

18 M. Mies., V. Shiva, *Ecofeminism*, 15.

19 Andy Smith, “Ecofeminism Through an Anticolonial Framework”, in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, ed. Karen J. Warren , (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1997), 21.

20 Ynestra King, ”Healing the Wounds: Feminism , Ecology and Nature/Culture Dualism,” in *Gender/Body/Knowledge: Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, ed. Alison M. Jaggar & Susan Bordo, (Rutgers University Press,1989), pg: 106-121

conclusion about why it is called ecofeminism in the first place. Sturgeon rejects the name ecofeminism and asks; “Why not just call the feminist analysis of the interaction between sexism and environmental problems ‘feminism’?”

I believe that ecofeminism as a term indicates a double political intervention; of environmentalism into feminism and feminism into environmentalism, that is as politically important as the designations “socialist feminism” and “black feminism” were previously.<sup>21</sup>

Ecofeminism is intertwined with race, class, ethnicity, and capitalism; it is not just an issue of gender inequality. The domination of nature and women goes hand in hand with racism; especially in non-Western countries; and it is a matter of debate whether it is possible to apply ecofeminism to women in these non-Western parts of the world. Ecofeminism is seen as an extension of Western feminist philosophy and women of color concur that ecofeminism neither adequately considers their experiences nor addresses the differences between white women and women of color.<sup>22</sup>

From an anti-capitalist perspective, Maria Mies agrees that women’s labor and bodies are colonized by both capitalism and patriarchy, and this is valid for nature, as well.<sup>23</sup> According to her, socioeconomic interconnections between the exploitation of women, their bodies, their labor, and nature state that the reason for this domination is the agricultural development strategy of the West.<sup>24</sup> Likewise, Shiva argues that this development is really a *maldevelopment*, and it based on false assumptions about both women and nature:

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21 Noel Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Nature: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*, (New York: Routledge, 1997), 168.

22 Dorceta E. Taylor, “Women of Color, Environmental Justice, and Ecofeminism”, in *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, ed. Karen J. Warren, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 62.

23 Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000), 26.

24 *Ibid.*, 25.

A stable and clean river is not a productive resource in this view; it needs to be developed with dams in order to become so. Women sharing the river as a commons to satisfy the water needs of their families and society are not involved in productive labour: when substituted by the engineering men, water management and water use become productive activities. Natural forests remain unproductive till they are developed into monoculture plantations of commercial species.<sup>25</sup>

There are multiple forms or typologies of ecofeminism. Each has its own focus though they share the desire to create a nonessentializing ecofeminist theory and produce a version of ecofeminism that can include women's issues from all over the world. Yet it is hard to line up these typologies; few acquired international acceptance in environmental discussions.

There are several key issues upon which ecofeminist theorists do not agree, including: the symbolic association of women with nature; the classification of women and nature as biological rather than socially constructed entities, and finally de-emphasis of women's daily life experiences and the challenges that they face every day.<sup>26</sup> The different approaches of ecofeminists in this respect reflect the political and social perspectives of each of these theories and distinguish them from each other.

One of these typologies is socialist ecofeminism which intertwines the aspect of socialism with green politics and feminism. The capitalist system itself is seen as the main cause of both environmental degradation as well as of women's inferior position in the society. Socialist -or materialist- ecofeminism puts socioeconomic conditions at the center when analyzing the domination of women and nature. According to this understanding, raw materials, land, and energy resources- the means of production in general- indicate a

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25 *Ibid.*,26.

26 *Ibid.*,39.

capitalist patriarchal system, and this overwhelmingly male-dominated system of production exploits both women and nature.<sup>27</sup> Shiva's term *maldevelopment* is also closely related to materialist ecofeminism. Shiva says that the agricultural development strategies of the West caused the mutual exploitation of women and nature in non-Western parts of the world. The gendered division of labor implies that men are responsible for cash-based economic activities while women are to be employed in non-monetary activities like household duties.<sup>28</sup> According to Shiva, this situation creates the "feminization of poverty".<sup>29</sup> Maria Mies agrees and argues that the combination of capitalism and patriarchy dominates- or in other words colonizes- the women's bodies with their labor as well as nature.<sup>30</sup>

Socialist ecofeminism or eco-socialism mainly criticizes capitalism and capitalist patriarchy for the domination of women and degradation of nature, but at the same time this new model of ecofeminism is also values class and gender.<sup>31</sup> According to Plumwood, socialist ecofeminism advocates a model of oppression that intertwines class, race, and gender and does not see patriarchy as the only reason for environmental degradation.<sup>32</sup> For Carolyn Merchant, socialist ecofeminism also offers a critical analysis of the domination of women and exploitation of nature. Socialist ecofeminism is the "superior one" according to her, because it "views both nature and human nature as socially constructed".<sup>33</sup> Socialist ecofeminism, according to Merchant "offer[s] a stand-

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27 Karen J. Warren, "Feminist Environmental Philosophy", in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Summer 2015 Edition), 11.

28 Ibid.,12.

29 Ibid.

30 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*, 2.

31 Richard T. Twine, "Ecofeminisms in Process", February 1998, <http://richardtwine.com/ecofem/ecofem2001.pdf>, 3.

32 Ibid.

33 Carolyn Merchant, "Ecofeminism and Feminist Theory", in *Reweaving the World: the Emergence of Ecofeminism*, ed. Irene Diamond and Gloria Orenstein, (San Francisco: New Society Publishers,1990), 103.

point from which to analyze social and ecological transformations and to suggest social actions that will lead to the sustainability of life and a just society.”<sup>34</sup> Merchant sees socialist ecofeminism as the main actor for “suggesting” political actions, yet she acknowledges that “socialist ecofeminism is not yet a movement but rather a feminist transformation of socialist ecology.”<sup>35</sup>

Mary Mellor, on the other hand, uses the historical materialist approach to criticize capitalist patriarchy for the exploitation of both women and nature.<sup>36</sup> She also argues that men and women have different relationships to the environment and are affected differently by the natural world. For that reason, her viewpoint, which is based on “the fact that the boundaries of women’s lives are not defined by capitalist patriarchal economic relations” she calls “materialist ecofeminism.”<sup>37</sup> Accordingly, patriarchy refers to material and economic domination; not just cultural domination.<sup>38</sup>

Socialist or materialist ecofeminism can be seen as a significant typology of ecofeminism getting its ideological stance and its emphasis on the oppressor and the oppressed. The other significant typology is cultural ecofeminism. It can be considered part of radical ecofeminism and values the *qualities* of women like care, nurture, emotions, and the woman’s body. These are culturally linked with women and are celebrated by cultural ecofeminism.<sup>39</sup> Cultural ecofeminists tend to naturalize the women-nature connection and accept that women have a privileged knowledge of nature.<sup>40</sup> Plumwood makes the distinction between cultural and social ecofeminism and sees Spretnak as a cultural ecofeminist. According to Spretnak:

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34 Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Nature: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*, 181.

35 Ibid.

36 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, 26.

37 Ibid., 27.

38 Ibid.

39 Elizabeth Carlassare, “Socialist and Cultural Ecofeminism: Allies in Resistance”, *Ethics and Environment* 5 no:1, (2000), [https://www.jstor.org/stable/27766057?seq=7#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/27766057?seq=7#page_scan_tab_contents), 94.

40 Richard T. Twine, “Ecofeminisms in Process”, <http://richardtwine.com/ecofem/ecofem2001.pdf>, February 1998, 2.

... That there are similarities and very real differences between sexes is not news. What is new is our refusal to accept patriarchal perceptions and interpretations of those differences. To achieve a sane society that reflects , spiritually and culturally, holistic truths, we must encourage awareness or mindfulness of such truths. Admittedly, women seem to have an elemental advantage, but men may consider that old feminist adage: Biology is not destiny. All minds contain all possibilities.<sup>41</sup>

Cultural ecofeminism rewrites women's history to recover women-based cultures and spiritualities. Based on that, the history of goddess-worshipping civilizations is emphasized and "women-centered and earth-based spiritualities [are] accepted as alternatives to god-the-father based religions."<sup>42</sup> Cultural ecofeminists sees the world as a living organism and value biological and cultural diversity.<sup>43</sup> Through new linguistic and discursive styles as well as through the recreation of goddess myths and spiritualities; cultural ecofeminists resist patriarchal language and culture and encourage the empowerment of women. They seek the ecological, egalitarian transformation of culture, and according to these cultural ecofeminists; social change can be achieved through changes in language, culture, and consciousness,

Socialist and cultural ecofeminism have different understandings of social change. While socialist ecofeminists emphasize the importance of changes to political and economic structures, cultural ecofeminists focus on language, culture, spirituality, and consciousness.<sup>44</sup>The emphasis on human consciousness, spirituality, and cultural products like poetry instead of historical-materialist sources and institutions makes cultural ecofeminism essentialist –and also political- in the eyes of socialist ecofeminists. Elizabeth Carlassare explains the dichotomy between two typologies as follows:

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41 Ibid.

42 Carlassare, "Socialist and Cultural Ecofeminism: Allies in Resistance", 94.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid.,96.

In relying on more spiritual, psychological and intuitive explorations of the oppression of women, instead of on materialist analyses of intuitions, some social ecofeminists believe that the work of cultural ecofeminists does not spell out a path for political or social action, only a path for personal transformation.<sup>45</sup>

Although they have different interpretations of social change and the ecological transformation of society, materialist analyses of socialist ecofeminism do not necessarily urge direct action, just as the spirituality of cultural ecofeminism does not imply that it proposes non-violent action on behalf of ecofeminism. As Starhawk describes; "... we need to engage in active, non-violent resistance to the destruction being mounted all around us. Feminist spirituality, earth-based spirituality, is not just an intellectual exercise, it is a practice."<sup>46</sup> Cultural ecofeminists' symbolic resistance, their pagan, goddess, spirituality-based rituals have become a significant part of ecofeminist actions. For that reason, despite their differing analyses and methods of resistance, nearly all types of ecofeminism constitute the philosophy of ecofeminism. As Donna Haraway says, ecofeminism "must not be stereotyped as an essentialist dogma, frozen at one caricatured historical moment."<sup>47</sup> It is actually a social movement in process, as Quinby writes.<sup>48</sup> Stephanie Lahar also deals with the question of political activism in ecofeminism.

Ecofeminism's political goals include the deconstruction of oppressive social economic and political systems and the reconstruction of more viable social and political forms. No version of ecofeminist theory dictates exactly what people should do in the face of situations they encounter in personal and public life, nor is it a single political platform.

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45 Ibid.,228.

46 Ibid.,96.

47 Richard T. Twine, "Ecofeminisms in Process" Richard T. Twine, "Ecofeminisms in Process" ; <http://richardtwine.com/ecofem/ecofem2001.pdf>, February 1998, 5.

48 Ibid.

The relation of ecofeminist theory to political activism is ideally informative and generative and not one of either prescribing or owning particular actions.<sup>49</sup>

### 2.1.1.2 *Controversy over Ecofeminism*

There are some controversial issues about ecofeminism, and they generally concern essentialism. Although the main aim of ecofeminism is to create alternatives to a patriarchal system that oppresses women and nature; ecofeminism is criticized for supporting male-biased views that celebrate women's association with nature. This celebration of the women-nature relation actually reproduces *patriarchy* according to criticism. Critics of essentialist versions of ecofeminism focus on the so-called innate, essential links between women and nature and demonstrate that such assumptions actually strengthen patriarchal stereotypes based on women's natural, innate biological and psychological characteristics.<sup>50</sup>

The women-nature connection has always been controversial in environmental philosophy. Some versions of ecofeminism support the argument that "the goodness of women that will save us".<sup>51</sup> According to Val Plumwood, this affirmation of the feminine qualities of women replaces the "angel in the house" version of women with the "angel in the ecosystem" version.<sup>52</sup> The emphasis on feminine qualities like empathy, nurture and the reproductive capacity of women provides a basis for claims of essentialism. Much of the debate about this issue concerns claims by some writers on ecofeminism that women's association with nature as well as the feminine qualities of women should be celebrated.<sup>53</sup> Critics also argue that this turn of mind perpetuates "the negative stereotypes of women as irrational, as controlled by their bodies and as best suited for the domestic realm."<sup>54</sup> These kinds of arguments are

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49 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, 36.

50 *Ibid.*,222.

51 Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, (London: Routledge,1993),7.

52 *Ibid.*,9.

53 Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 170.

54 *Ibid.*

supported by the idea that women should embrace these qualities. The discussion centers around one main question: Should the biological differences of women be celebrated?

The dichotomy between men and women based on biological differences serves a kind of essentialism. With the celebration of these differences, women's roles as housewives and mothers are underscored and their traditional labor roles are automatically downplayed, and their inferior roles in society are reemphasized. Critics both inside and outside ecofeminism emphasize that this attitude highlights men's superiority while normalizing women's secondary, inferior position in society. Within the ecofeminist movement itself; most criticism comes from socialist ecofeminists who prioritize economic, social, and political institutions like capitalism and patriarchy. For them, the transformation of material conditions is seen as the solution for all kinds of oppression; including those of women and nature.

In debate between "deep ecology" and "ecofeminism" during the 1980s and 1990s is also relevant. Deep ecologists, want to accept humanity just one of the life forms in the world among many.<sup>55</sup> Thus, according to deep ecologists like Warwick Fox, feminism has nothing to do with environmental ethics; hierarchies within human society are irrelevant to environmental degradation. Nature, on the other hand, is meaningful only when it serves the needs of humanity.<sup>56</sup> Deep ecology criticized by ecofeminists because of its individualistic perception in which humans are superior. Ecofeminists relate this anthropocentrism to male-centered thinking (androcentrism), and the critics of deep ecology concentrate on its denial of the role of human hierarchies in the degradation of nature.

### 2.1.3 *The "Death of Nature"*<sup>57</sup>

Carolyn Merchant's "Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution", written in 1980, is a foundational text of ecofeminism. Merchant

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55 Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 15.

56 Ibid.

57 Carolyn Merchant, "Scientific Revolution and the Death of Nature", in *ISIS* :97, No: 3, The University of Chicago Press, (2006).

argues that “seventeenth-century science could be implicated in the ecological crisis, the domination of nature, and the devaluation of women in the production of scientific knowledge.”<sup>58</sup> In this book, the central claim of ecofeminism that both women and nature have suffered from the domination of the logic of science and capitalism is emphasized once again, and she seeks to move the movement beyond essentialist debates.

According to Merchant, the interwoven domination of women and nature exists because of the rise of modern science and its economies. She concludes that the forms of the oppression of women and the environment - so-called modern exploitations- are affected by the aggressive, competitive characteristics of the market economy. Merchant interprets this relation with the term of “death of nature.”<sup>59</sup> Ideologically, textually, empirically, and historically, this modern exploitation of women and nature share the same historical process of development. The scientific revolution in Europe, and the events and changes that followed created the basis for the oppression of women and of nature. However, she rejects essentialist critics of ecofeminism. According to her, “... women and nature have an age-old association -an affiliation that has persisted throughout culture, language and history.”<sup>60</sup> However, this enduring relation does not mean women should be the caretakers or nurturers of others. She explains this relation as follows:

It is not the purpose of this analysis to reinstate nature as the mother of humankind nor to advocate that women reassume the role of nurturer dictated by that historical identity. Both need to be liberated from the anthropomorphic and stereotypic labels that degrade the serious underlying issues. The weather forecaster who tells us what Mother Nature has in store for us this weekend and legal systems that treat a woman’s sexuality as her husband’s property are equally guilty of perpetuating a system repressive to both women and nature.<sup>61</sup>

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58 Ibid.,513.

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.,xix.

61 Ibid.,xxi.

After all, according to many ecofeminists, differences among women should take priority over essentialist debates. Noël Sturgeon indicates that certain feminist conceptions of women are as important as the patriarchal domination of them.<sup>62</sup> The white, middle class, heterosexual version of ecofeminism creates a certain image of a woman. This essentialism by women has led some women to perceive certain experiences as the common experience of all women. As Carlassare points out in her article of “Essentialism in Ecofeminist Discourse,” in celebrating the commonalities of women and asserting a unified essentialized gender category ‘woman,’ the diversity of women’s lives and histories across the boundaries of race, class, nationality, age and sexuality is ignored.”<sup>63</sup> Thus like many feminists of color, many ecofeminists within the movement express their thoughts about the differences between groups of women, not just between women and men. Therefore, for many ecofeminists, it was clear that “various notions of femininity [are] differentially articulated by race, class, sexual and national differences and [are] structured by specific historical contexts.”<sup>64</sup>

Women experience patriarchal oppression differently, and how women are affected by environmental destruction depends on the type of woman in question. This argument so sublimated the essentialist debate and in time focuses attention on the differences among women. Sexuality, race, ethnicity and class became indicators of how women’s experiences differ from each other. Women of color, lesbians, and non-Western women were able to express their real experiences of environmental degradation in a more understandable context. This situation changed the game for non-Western, third-world women. Thus this differentiation itself meant that leadership roles were held by white, middle-class, Western, heterosexual women need these other women the “victims” of all kinds of oppression and domination. As secular, liberated women from the West, these leaders took responsibility for helping others; however, as can be seen on a number of occasions, the reality is different for non-Western women. This will become clearer in the discussion of the Chipko and

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62 Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Nature: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*, 12.

63 Elizabeth Carlassare, “Essentialism in Ecofeminist Discourse”, in *Ecology*, ed. Carolyn Merchant, (New York, Humanities Press, 1994),229.

64 Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Nature: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*, 13.

Green Belt movements and how they affected women's roles in environmental protests all over the world.

#### 2.1.1.4 *Ecofeminism: The Third Wave of Feminism?*

Women's high involvement in environmental movements and their outstanding roles in environmental organizations raise the question of whether the ecofeminist movement is a third wave of feminism. This argument in favor suggests that ecofeminism is a step on the path of the women's liberation movement the first wave of which was in the nineteenth century and the second wave of which was in the 1960s.<sup>65</sup> However, as with essentialist debates and the tension over the exclusion of non-Western women from the movement, this issue has also created opposition both inside and outside of ecofeminism. There are some conflicts about its vision and its activism on the field along with the debate of whether it is a "new" wave of feminism. This debate is based on the question of whether ecofeminism as a Western academic product can really respond to non-Western women's environmental problems. In other words; academic theory creates women's activism or a wave of feminism by enabling women from all over the world to act against environmental degradation?

Before examining the place of ecofeminism in the third wave feminism, it would be better to determine how third-wave feminism is interpreted by academics. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine this issue in depth; however, to broadly explain ecofeminism's place in the third wave, the question of how and under what conditions feminism in the 1990s differed from previous waves should be investigated.

Naomi Zack's explain that "the foundation of second wave feminism collapsed during the 1980s and feminists did not unite to rebuild it."<sup>66</sup> Although there are opposing views on this issue, the 1990s are accepted as the years when third-wave feminism began. In contrast with previous waves, third-wave feminists alleged to have a more inclusive approach to women and

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65 Ibid.,23.

66 Naomi Zack, *A Third Wave Theory of Women's Commonality*, (Lanham: Rowman& Littlefield Publishers , 2005), 1.

openly challenged racist, ethnic, and class-based discrimination. Thus, it had a more individualistic, and apolitical approach compared to previous waves. The aim of the first wave was to challenge the exclusion of women from political, economic, and social life in the nineteenth century, and its purpose to obtain political citizenship for women was achieved. The first wave's connection to feminist ideals was weak, but the second wave in the 1960s had a clear, self-defined feminist setting.<sup>67</sup> They were concerned with issues like reproduction, mothering, domestic labor, and sexuality - matters that most concern women. However, a road map for or even an accurate definition of the third wave is difficult to identify. In her article of "Contest for the Meaning of Third Wave Feminism," Ednie Kaeh Garrison argues that few agree on its meaning. According to her,

it has become a name for young women who identify as feminists, it is a name assigned to those who have no clear sense of what feminist ideology, feminist praxis, feminist movement or feminist identity have meant across time and space.<sup>68</sup>

Although there is no common definition in this respect, Rebecca Walker's article "Becoming the Third Wave" is accepted as a pioneering document in the development of the third wave.<sup>69</sup> Rebecca Walker and Shannon Liss became early third wave leaders and together started the Third Wave Direct Action Corporation.<sup>70</sup> According to them, the third wave differs from the previous waves because it connects women's issues to issues of race, sexuality, and class. As of 2017, the organization is celebrating its twentieth anniversary.

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67 Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, "Introduction" in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration* ed. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford. (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 21.

68 Ednie Kaeh Garrison, "Contest For the Meaning of Third Wave Feminism", in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration*, ed. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 185.

69 Youth Vision and Activism for Gender Justice, < <http://thirdwavefund.org/history--past-initiatives.html>>, (D.A : 24.04.2017)

70 Ibid.

There even though it is not new, there is debate about how the third wave is bringing change to feminism. According to Claire Snyder, the third wave of feminism has brought new directions to the feminist movement.

While third-wave feminists do not have an entirely different set of issues or solutions to long-standing dilemmas, the movement does constitute, I would argue, more than simply a rebellion against second-wave mothers. What really differentiates the third wave from the second is the tactical approach it offers to some of the impasses that developed within feminist theory in the 1980s.<sup>71</sup>

Third-wave feminists see themselves as providing new solutions to fundamental problems that the previous waves could not solve. They emphasize the differences among women's races, ethnicities, nationalities, cultural backgrounds, and religions. Thus, they challenge the image of a universal female identity and the superiority of the experiences of middle class, white women. As Claire Snyder's planes in "What Is Third-Wave Feminism: A New Directions Essay," the wave embraces the multivocality over synthesis and action over theory.<sup>72</sup> In spite of the increasing awareness created through media about these issues, the question of who owns the third wave has become an issue. The term "third wave" was itself used for the first time in "The Third Wave: Feminist Perspectives on Racism" by M. Jacqui Alexander, Lisa Albrecht, and Mab Segrest in the late 1980s.<sup>73</sup> Their aim was to conceptualize third-wave feminism around challenges brought up by women-of-color feminists, and they particularly opposed the racial bias of the second wave.<sup>74</sup> This claim by third wavers is mentioned numerous times.

in her discussion of the possibilities of a 'third-wave black feminism', Springer proposes that the wave model has 'drowned out' the history

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71 R. Claire Snyder, "What Is Third-Wave Feminism? A New Directions Essay," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* :34, no. 1 (Autumn 2008), 175.

72 Ibid.

73 Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, "Introduction" in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration* ed. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, (Basingstoke : Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 23.

74 Ibid.

of black feminism in its disregard for the influence of race-based movements on gender activism.

After all, third-wave feminists claimed to have opened up a more individual, anti racist, and inclusive space for *all* women's problems. How was ecofeminism put in this wave in the first place? Under what conditions can ecofeminism be claimed to have the potential to be a wave- especially a third wave- of feminism?

Ynestra King, who is known as a founder of ecofeminism in the United States, stated in an interview with Noel Sturgeon that ecofeminism can be considered the third wave of the women's movement. In her book "Ecofeminist Natures", Sturgeon explains King's primary motivation of establishing an ecofeminist organizational network.

She felt it was important to continue to do political work based on the interconnections identified by activists in these actions between patriarchy, militarism, social justice and ecology -the position that, beginning in the early 1980s, began to be called "ecofeminism." ... Having taught in the Institute for Social Ecology's summer program for several years, King thought that what was needed was an ecofeminist educational institution that could provide resources for ecofeminist action, engage in networking and support research on relevant issues.<sup>75</sup>

However, giving ecofeminism an organizational basis was not a response to criticisms about its effectiveness in the field. Noel Sturgeon herself admits that critics hit the right notes regarding ecofeminism as a third wave, but she emphasizes the difference between its potentiality and actuality.<sup>76</sup> On the other hand, Val Plumwood provides a different analysis of the subject arguing that critical ecological feminism is a continuation of cultural, social, and radical feminism that rejects failed approaches that do not recognize dualistic definitions of women, and nature. The importance of connecting nature to further feminist "waves," should be celebrated according to her.<sup>77</sup> She describes a more

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75 Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Nature: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*, 81.

76 *Ibid.*,23.

77 Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*, 39.

promising version of ecofeminism according to which it is necessary to reject the dualism of nature and culture as well as the equating of women with nature. As a political movement it should represent the willingness of women.

to move to a further stage in their relations with nature beyond that of powerless inclusion in nature, beyond that of reaction against their old exclusion from culture, and towards an active, deliberate and reflective positioning of themselves with nature against a destructive and dualising form of culture.<sup>78</sup>

As Niamh Moore states in “Ecofeminism as Third Wave Feminism? Essentialism, Activism and the Academy,” it is not possible to reach agreement about whether ecofeminism is a new wave of feminism. She alleges that there are different attitudes about ecofeminism’s place within the feminist movement overall and that they emerge from inside the ecofeminist movement as well as from outside. However, she claims that the distinctions among them are rooted in how they deal with the subject. For instance, Moore states that while Plumwood emphasizes ecofeminism’s conceptual contributions to feminism; King and Sturgeon focus on it as an activist movement.<sup>79</sup> Therefore, Plumwood accepts that ecofeminism is a continuation of the second wave, but King and Sturgeon see it as a separate third wave that transcends the first and second.

However, some fundamental critics of ecofeminism have affected the relation of ecofeminism to the third wave. The problem of “the unified women image” in ecofeminism, in particular, is seen as a major obstacle to the possibility of its being a third wave. Among third-wave feminists, emphasis on white, middle class women’s experiences is seen as a basic indicator of discrimination given the so-called essentialism within ecofeminism.<sup>80</sup> Despite exposure to a high level of criticism, ecofeminism continues to be one of the

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78 Ibid.,13.

79 Niamh Moore, “Ecofeminism as Third Wave Feminism? Essentialism, Activism and the Academy”, in *Third Wave Feminism: A Critical Exploration* ed. Stacy Gillis, Gillian Howie and Rebecca Munford, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 231.

80 Charis Thompson, “Back to Nature? Resurrecting Ecofeminism after Poststructuralist and Third-Wave Feminisms”, in *ISIS*: 97, No: 3, The University of Chicago Press, (2006), 507.

influential feminist movements in the world. What are the reasons for this? How has it become one of the movements that mobilize women globally and locally? Under what conditions did environmentalism become a separate field of struggle rather than a subheading of the feminist movement? In the last part of this chapter, I will give a brief explanation of the importance of relation of women's movements to the environment, and leaving the criticisms aside; I will express my argument about whether ecofeminism is influential for women's movements.

#### 2.1.5 “*Nature is a Feminist Issue*”<sup>81</sup>

In “Ecofeminist Philosophy,” Karen Warren explains why special attention is given to the domination of women among all the systems of domination.<sup>82</sup> As she clarifies with examples, there are few basic reasons for this particular interest. First, among all human groups harmed by environmental degradation; most of the time women suffer disproportionately more than the men in any given society.<sup>83</sup> Traditional gender roles like household management and farming cause women to face with the harms of environmental degradation more than men. Lastly, besides the existent literature, ideologies related to the environment make women's inferior position more visible. According to Warren, for these reasons “ecofeminists often (but not exclusively) focus on ‘women’”.<sup>84</sup>

How can we explain women's special relation to the environment and see under what conditions they suffer more than men in society? At this point, Warren's analysis is useful. She categorizes women's relation to the environment and elucidates their status in all environmental exploitation. Her classification is as follows: Women and Trees, Forests, and Forestry; Women, Water, and Drought; Women, Food, and Farming; and Women, People of Color,

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81 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*, 238.

82 Ibid.,2.

83 Ibid

84 Ibid.

Children, and Health.<sup>85</sup> Due to this categorization, it is possible to get a glimpse of why women suffer in these situations more than men.

In the first section, Warren explains why trees and forests are so important to women, especially to those who live in rural areas. According to her, there are several reasons for women are disproportionately affected by logging. One is that women use trees in many different ways—from food and fuel to economic activities.<sup>86</sup> Thus, as logging increases, women must walk much longer distances to meet their fuel and fodder needs. Lastly, women who often have no opportunity to obtain an education news their source of income when trees become scarce.<sup>87</sup> For all these reasons, tree shortages have a more destructive effect on women than men. Their disadvantaged position in this situation has made them active in the subject of forestry. For example, professionally-trained foresters argue, “it is better to have a large-scale production using a small number of species than small-scale, community-based forestry using a wide variety of species.”<sup>88</sup> However, this is not the case. Small-scale production responds to the needs of the community, and the multiple uses of varied species of trees help women maintain their livelihoods in the geographies in which they live. The importance of forestry for women is clearly seen in the Chipko Movement which is one of the most memorable feminist environmental movements to date.

Women and water is a hot issue of debate for ecofeminists since water scarcity is a special concern for both women and children. Just as with the scarcity of forests, women must walk further to get clean water when water is scarce. Since women and children do most of the collection and carrying of water, they automatically suffer most from water scarcity. Studies in Africa and Asia indicate how women are affected by this situation.

The proportion of rural women affected by water scarcity is estimated at 55 percent in Africa, 32 percent in Asia and 45 percent in Latin

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85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.,4.

87 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*,4.

88 Ibid.,6.

America. Even where water is abundant overall in countries, there still are significant parts of many countries where at least seasonal water scarcity burdens women with added time for water collection.<sup>89</sup>

Under this heading, Warren also refers to the impact of droughts and floods on women. “Are droughts and floods issues of gender and age?” she asks.<sup>90</sup> According to her, the answer is yes; especially considering the fact that the majority of the poor population is made up of women. According to Seagar, 80 to 90 percent of poor families in the world are headed by women.<sup>91</sup> Women are paid less than men despite the fact that in most regions of the world they spend more time working than men when their unpaid housework is taken into account.<sup>92</sup> They have fewer resources and opportunities than men and a lesser share of the world’s wealth. They possess only 1 percent of the world’s property.<sup>93</sup> Given these circumstances, it is clear that women – particularly poor women- are more seriously harmed by natural disasters than men. These interconnected factors make water; like forests; a matter of gender in most situations.

Another subject of ecofeminism, according to Warren, is food and farming. Considering that between one-third and one-half of agricultural laborers in the non-Western world are women, it is understandable why women are more closely identified with this issue than men.<sup>94</sup> Women are much more involved in agricultural production when the work is done by hand. Their limited access to machines makes them more vulnerable to natural conditions, and the so-called feminization of labor makes the situation worse. “The number of women for each 100 men working in agriculture is seventy-one in Africa, fifty-four in Western Europe and forty-seven in Asia and Pacific and

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89 Ibid.,7.

90 Ibid.,8.

91 Joni Seagar, *The State of the Earth Atlas: Atlas of Environmental Concern*, (London: Unwin Hyman Limited, 1990),21.

92 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*,8.

93 Seagar, *The State of the Earth Atlas: Atlas of Environmental Concern*, 120.

94 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*,9.

eighty-four in Eastern Europe.”<sup>95</sup> However, these numbers not reflect the reality of women’s work in agriculture. As with all other kinds of human domination like ethnic, racial, or ageist ones, women rarely become decision makers in agricultural production processes and development projects. Despite the fact that as workers or partners on farms they do much of the work; women are rarely included in decision-making processes, and this situation interests ecofeminists in farming.

According to Warren, these few issues explain why women deserve special attention in environment-related issues. Among all systems of human domination, women are affected by environmental destruction much more than men. For these reasons, ecofeminists take gender as an analytical category when discussing the effects of environmental exploitation. Warren sees the relationship between women and nature not as an indication of their passivity; rather, they are “associated with creativity and in the maintenance of life.”<sup>96</sup> Maria Mies also calls this a truly productive relationship to nature. She adds that “women not only collected and consumed what grew in nature but they made things grow.”<sup>97</sup> Ecofeminist sociologist Ariel Salleh expresses the relation as follows: “The unconscious connection between women and nature needs to be made conscious” if anyone wants to live in a “humane, ecological future.”<sup>98</sup>

“ I was once advised, by a prominent feminist theorist who wanted to support my work, to remove the word “ecofeminism” from the title of one of my papers about the movement, because she said she would never choose to read an article about ecofeminism. ... I have been challenged by a commentator during a conference presentation to call my position “feminist” rather than “ecofeminist”<sup>99</sup>

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95 Ibid.,10.

96 Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, (London: Zed Books, 1988), 47.

97 Ibid.,43.

98 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, 25.

99 Noel Sturgeon, *Ecofeminist Nature: Race, Gender, Feminist Theory and Political Action*, (New York, Routledge, 1997), 6.

As Noel Sturgeon relates in her personal memoirs, ecofeminism was not a well-accepted movement in its early years. The critiques of it can our legitimate when questions like “does ecofeminism tell the story that the goodness of women will save us at the end?” are asked in discussions of the women-nature relation. It seems that there is a thin line between essentialism and the activism of the ecofeminist movement. The women-nature association seems to create women with nature and emphasize the reproductive characteristics of both; however, examples of women leading environmental struggle; show that it actually gives them a voice. At the end, not all these struggles can be labeled ecofeminist activism, but women are somehow much more sensitive to environmental exploitation and much more ready to take action against it.

I argue that ecofeminism is not itself the third wave of the feminist movement but should certainly be seen as a significant part of it. Especially the post-1990s, women began to raise their voices against environmental destruction and became actively opposed to it around the world. Not all women were included in the movement early on- especially not women from the non-Western world as well as women of color- however, ecofeminists our overcoming this issue in recent years. Especially movements of the non-Western world; like the Chipko and Green Belt movements acquired attention worldwide and forced western ecofeminists to acknowledge other women’s problems.

The circling of trees can be understood as representing the broad circle of concerns that women understand. Trees mean water for Chipko women. Trees mean safety from flooding. Forests, not simply plant monoculture, mean food, fodder, building materials and medicines.

Hugging trees is much a defense of culture and future generations as it is a defense of nature.<sup>100</sup>

This quote is representative of what nature means to women. Apart from nature as a resource and equipment for their economic survival, nature is simply a *continuation* for women- the continuation of their culture and history through their attachment to the land, trees, and rivers. Women feel more secure about the future with their environment secured. Obviously, a healthy

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100 Warren, *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*, 86.

environment is needed for all humanity as well as for other life forms, but it is hard to ignore women's sensibility and visibility in environmental movements and examples of ecological activism. Knowingly or unknowingly, ecofeminist activism challenges gender roles in the society and gives women an opportunity to express their problems as women that are being ignored. From this point of view, the women-nature relation must be analyzed more analytically, and ecofeminist movements cannot be dismissed based on their supposedly essentialist arguments.

Although there is some controversy about the term, ecofeminism has made a significant contribution to the literature on women's participation in environmental movements. Obviously, most men as well as women resist the degradation of nature, but in order to contribute to feminist research, emphasis on women's experiences of environmental resistance is a major contribution. Getting closer to women's experiences, understanding how they organize around environmental problems, and analyzing to what extent their participation in resistance and protest affects their gendered roles in society allow the role of women in society to be seen more comprehensively. Therefore, despite debates about the essentialism of ecofeminism, it provides an important contribution to a better analysis of women's roles in environmental movements.

## § 2.2 Women's Agency and Environmentalism

*"The notion of agency has historically been rooted in the construction of the individual in Enlightenment thought, within which agency can be understood as synonymous with what Ahearn describes as 'socially unfettered' free will."<sup>101</sup>*

Agency can be defined as an ability or capacity to act in its most basic form. Having an agency can be described as a kind of power that gives people the

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101 Kalpana Wilson, "Reclaiming Agency, Reasserting Resistance", Institute of Development Studies Bulletin :39 no:6 (2008), 83.

ability to make free choices. Challenging the status-quo and paving the way for fundamental shifts in perceptions are significant indicators of women's agency. Simply, when women begin to consider themselves entitled to make choices, their agencies become operative. Therefore, the concept of agency is an ability to "formulate strategic choices and to control resources and decisions that affect important life outcomes."<sup>102</sup> However, both the conceptualization of agency and its measurement are problematic in many ways. Mounira M. Charrad states that "insofar as individuals are able to act, they exert some form of agency."<sup>103</sup>

As long as the actions of and interventions by a person have a specific outcome or effect, they can be included in the definition of agency. As an "ability to overcome barriers, to question or confront situations of oppression and deprivation," agency is indeed difficult to measure.<sup>104</sup> "To have an influence and be heard in society" are central concepts to the definition of the concept but it varies according to the institutions and contexts in which we evaluate agency itself.<sup>105</sup> Given that it is context-specific, it will be meaningful to analyze agency according to its assorted implementations in various socio-political contexts. Due to context-specific and multidimensional character of agency, it can be perceived as ambiguous. The agency of a person or group can be measured with respect to different domains of their capability in various spheres of life, but a multidimensional measurement of agency is needed given that "ability to exercise agency in one sphere does not necessarily spill over into having agency in other spheres."<sup>106</sup>

"Either we limit the structural constraints of gender so well that we deny women any agency or we portray women's agency so glowingly that the power

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102 Nripendra Kishore Mishra And Tulika Tripathi, "Conceptualising Women's Agency, Autonomy and Empowerment" , *Economic and Political Weekly*: 46, No. 11, (2011),59.

103 Mounira M. Charrad, "Women's Agency Across Cultures: Conceptualizing Strengths and Boundaries", *Women's Studies International Forum*: 33, (2008), 517.

104 Lucia Hanmer & Jeni Klugman "Exploring Women's Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries: Where do we stand?", *Feminist Economics*: 22 No:1, (2016), 237.

105 Ibid

106 Ibid.,239.

of subordination evaporates.”<sup>107</sup> Nancy Fraser identifies one of the problems with the conceptualization of agency and implies that agency can be depicted as restrictive and empowering at the same time. In the article of “Women’s Agency across Cultures: Conceptualization Strengths and Boundaries”; Charrad also notes that agency can be alternately progressive, conservative, and regressive.<sup>108</sup> This approach overlaps with another argument about women’s agency. Joanna Baker exemplifies how newly founded freedom or agency of women affected the lives of women in North Queensland, Australia.

Feminists are confronted with a changed socio-political climate where the subordination of girls and women is allowed to occur more covertly within a framework of ostensible commitment to equality, the valorization of choice and through seductive incitements to individual responsibility.<sup>109</sup>

Therefore, women’s agency does not always involve positive social change. Women’s agency can oppose patriarchal relations and gender-based structures but may not develop a strategy to challenge and change them: “Beyond the subversion and redefinition of gender roles, women’s agency may contribute to the continuity and repetition of gender roles.”<sup>110</sup> Even if they intend to challenge gender biases and norms in society, women’s agency can reproduce these rules and norms in different ways. In an investigation of women’s agency with respect to international mobility, the authors claim that despite their independent status as migrant and working women; women’s recruitment into care services and domestic labor in receiving countries reproduce these

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- 107 Nancy Fraser, “Introduction”, in *Revaluing French Feminism: Critical Essays on Difference, Agency and Culture*, ed. Nancy Fraser & Sandra L. Bartky (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992),17.
- 108 Mounira M. Charrad, “Women’s Agency Across Cultures: Conceptualizing Strengths and Boundaries”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*:33, (2010), 519.
- 109 Joanna Baker, “The Ideology of Choice: Overstating Progress and Hiding Injustice in the lives of Young Women : Findings From a Study in North Queensland , Australia”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*:31 no:1 (2008),53.
- 110 Ana M. González Ramos, Esther Torrado Martín-Palomino, “Addressing women's agency on international mobility”, *Women’s Studies International Forum*:49 (2015), 2.

women's secondary, oppressed position by creating a set of restrictive forces that differ from those in their home country.<sup>111</sup> Thus, the patriarchal oppression of women continues to be effective- just in a different context.

The lack of tractable measures and adequate data on women's agency makes it difficult to accurately definite it. Agency is difficult to measure as we "typically only observe the outcomes of what people do, not what they were free to choose to do."<sup>112</sup> Women's agency is especially difficult to measure given its structure which is hidden from public view under a male-dominated system with traditional gender roles in the community. Therefore, in order to more comprehensively analyze women's agency, we must consider some domains on both the micro and macro levels. Charrad summarizes it as follows: "Women's agency or subordination cannot be imagined outside established gender hierarchies and institutional and structural contexts."<sup>113</sup> The agency of women is connected to existing rules and norms, and from time to time women's agency can both be "limited and empowered by them."<sup>114</sup>

In the case of the international migration of women, they are empowered and became more independent by leaving their so-called repressive communities. However, by securing low-ranking, gender-defined jobs in the countries to which they migrate, these women are exposed to the same situation but just a different scheme. They have to deal with a different set of problems related to the conditions of labor market, the permanent status of their visas, and creating a balance between family and work life. The research into the experiences of thirty-four highly-skilled migrant women explores the importance of structural forces on women's agency and concludes that women's decisions about mobility are more related to the well-being of their families

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111 Ibid.

112 Lucia Hanmer & Jeni Klugman "Exploring Women's Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries: Where do we stand?", *Feminist Economics*: 22 no:1 (2016),238.

113 Charrad, "Women's Agency Across Cultures: Conceptualizing Strenghts and Boundaries", 519.

114 Ibid.,520.

than their personal motivations, and in most cases, women's specified reproductive roles are reproduced in their new countries. Indeed maternity guides women's decisions about mobility.<sup>115</sup>

Therefore, women's agency is not as autonomous as it looks, and their relative independence and agency may reinforce or reproduce roles for women in patriarchal systems. On what grounds we can associate women's agency with empowerment if the agency does not guarantee autonomous status for women? The concepts of autonomy, agency, and empowerment seem to have been substituting each other in the sense that all imply that women not only be able to make free choices but be entitled to make them. Although "they are very positively related to each other as an empowered woman can exercise a higher degree of autonomy and agency"; these terms can substantially diverge.<sup>116</sup> While empowerment directly affects the autonomy of women; these concepts that cannot be used interchangeably.

Empowerment can be described as "the enchantment of assets and capabilities of diverse individuals and groups to engage, influence and hold accountable the institutions, which affect them."<sup>117</sup> Naila Kerber mentions the fuzziness of the concept of empowerment: "As an NGO activist cited in Batliwala puts it: 'I like the term empowerment because no one has defined it clearly yet; so it gives us a breathing space to work it out in action terms before we have to pin ourselves down to what it means.'<sup>118</sup> As an unclear concept, women's empowerment is thought to transform patriarchal structures by giving women the ability to make strategic life choices vis-à-vis their own lives and enable them to take control over resources.<sup>119</sup> Sen, on the other hand, defines the empowerment of women as "altering relations of power ... which constrain women's options and autonomy and adversely affect health and

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115 Ana M. González Ramos, Esther Torrado Martín-Palomino, "Addressing women's agency on international mobility", *Women's Studies International Forum*, 49, (2015), 9.

116 Nripendra Kishore Mishra And Tulika Tripathi, "Conceptualising Women's Agency, Autonomy and Empowerment" , *Economic and Political Weekly*: 46, No. 11, (2011),63.

117 Ibid.,59.

118 Naila Kabeer, "Resources, Agency and Achievements: Reflections on the Measurement of Women's Empowerment", *Development and Change*: 30, (1999),436.

119 Mishra and Tripathi, "Conceptualising Women's Agency, Autonomy and Empowerment" ,59.

well-being.”<sup>120</sup> However, any improvement in the empowerment of women is insignificant unless accompanied by their agency.<sup>121</sup> In other words, women must be the real agents in these processes to be able to mention the empowerment of women. Therefore, while agency can be called the “essence of the empowerment”; the autonomy of women is “one step ahead of empowerment.”<sup>122</sup>

All three terms indicate a structure in which women gain control over their lives and become decision makers while coping with the family, society, community, or market. However, autonomy implies a greater level of independence, while empowerment is a process that can change over time and encompasses a progression that depicts women as the executors of changes not just its *recipients*.<sup>123</sup> As indicated in “Conceptualizing Women’s Agency, Autonomy and Empowerment,” there is substantial ambiguity about these concepts: “The indicators of empowerment or empowerment in itself are the positive correlates of women’s autonomy and not the proxy of autonomy.”<sup>124</sup>

To be clear about the role of agency in the empowerment of women, it should be underscored that agency has multidimensional, context-specific, and country-specific features and should be analyzed accordingly. The mechanisms of pressure on women vary according to country and take various forms. Thus, “women, located in diverse geographies and cultures, develop different forms of agency in response to or against existing rules and norms.”<sup>125</sup> Despite the fact that the agency can be exercised differently and the fact that its consequences are not as obvious as expected; there are key dimensions or domains of women’s agency that acknowledge some central notions and patterns around the subject.

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120 Ibid.

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid.

123 Ibid.

124 Ibid.,60.

125 Charrad, “Women’s Agency Across Cultures: Conceptualizing Strengths and Boundaries”, 520.

Hanmer and Klugman define some of these domains in their co-written article “Exploring Women’s Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries” those are useful for measuring women’s agency. These include the “social norms and attitudes; sexual and reproductive health and rights, freedom from gender-based violence; freedom of movement and control over household resources.”<sup>126</sup> The Demographic and Health Survey data of fifty-eight developing countries were used by the authors to draw empirical conclusions about women’s agency, and they realized that physical, financial, and human assets and women’s access to them are essential to the conceptualization of agency.<sup>127</sup> Therefore, getting an education, making choices surrounding marriage and childbearing, making decisions within the household, participating in the labor market, being able to go outside the home, frequently listening to the radio or watching television, owning land, participating in public life or collective action or politics, having a role in civil society associations, and voting are important indicators of women’s agency.<sup>128</sup>

Defining key dimensions of women’s agency with regard to its multidimensionality and context-specificity provides perspective on the patterns of the agency of women and how it leads to their empowerment. However, the role of agency in the empowerment of women should not be taken for granted. Mahmood suggests that “agency not [be considered] as a synonym for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action, that historically specific relations of subordination enable and create.”<sup>129</sup> Women deal with difficulties on both the micro and macro levels to gain a measure of autonomy from family commitments, patriarchal relations, and the constraints of the labor market. They develop distinctive strategies to make a demand in all these fields. They have to negotiate “with a group of actors ranging from husbands to human rights groups, from the judiciary to representatives of the

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126 Hanmer & Klugman “Exploring Women’s Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries: Where do we stand?”, 245.

127 Ibid.,240.

128 Ibid.,238-240.

129 Mahmood, Saba, “Feminist theory,embodiment, and the docile agent: some reflections on the Egyptian Islamic revival”, *Cultural Anthropology*: 6(2) (2001),203.

state.<sup>130</sup> The diverse institutions like family, state, religion, judiciary, and labor market along with the influence of class, race, and ethnicity affect women's decision-making mechanisms when they try to create, reshape, and use their agency.<sup>131</sup> Therefore, consciously or unconsciously, women take all these institutions and actors into consideration when they question, challenge, and change the norms, rules, and institutions that oppress them.

the assets of a woman's tertiary qualifications in Qatar may not be equivalent, in agency terms, to acquiring the same qualifications in Australia, and so it is essential to understand the processes through which assets translate into agency.<sup>132</sup>

Ownership and control over land and housing had strong impacts in Bangladesh and Ghana but not in Egypt; membership of an association had a more positive impact in Bangladesh than in Ghana.<sup>133</sup>

Physical, economic, and human assets and women's access to them should be analyzed according to the context and country-specific features of women's agency. Agency is differently exercised- or not exercised at all- in differing socio-political contexts, and its impact on empowerment varies. Finding a job outside the home, actively participating in public life and politics, making decisions about the family and household wealth- all obviously help women find their voices and gain self-confidence as they began to feel more respected with their newly gained agency. However, as can be seen in the existing literature, women living in similar conditions and having similar opportunities may not obtain the same level of agency.

As can be concluded from these different explanations, it is not possible to provide accurate definitions of the concepts agency, autonomy, and empowerment. However, in order to understand these definitions, the importances of social and cultural influence on both the micro and macro levels must be taken

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130 Charrad, "Women's Agency Across Cultures: Conceptualizing Strengths and Boundaries", 519

131 Ibid.

132 Lucia Hanmer & Jeni Klugman, "Exploring Women's Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries: Where do we stand?," *Feminist Economics*, 22:1 (2016), 240

133 Ibid.,242.

into consideration. For these concepts, theoretical explanations do not quite match the reality of women. As stated in Charrad's article of "Women's Agency across Cultures"; structural forces as well as transformations within them have conflicting effects on women's agency and empowerment as different social and cultural settings shape women's lives in significantly different ways.

Cultural and socio-political transformations accompanying globalization create new standards for women's rights, helping women to voice their demands sometimes beyond local boundaries. ... At the same time, women face long-standing and new obstacles in terms of access to economic, social, political, reproductive and sexual rights.<sup>134</sup>

When the relatively accepted dimensions for the measurement of women's agency and empowerment are taken into account, it can be concluded that the rate of the deprivation of agency is high in low-income countries.<sup>135</sup> This means that a large proportion of women in low-income countries lack agency in the domains of sexual and reproductive rights, social and political participation in community life, freedom of movement, and freedom from gender-based violence. However, even given similar societal structures, it is possible to encounter significant nuances. For example; while formal employment and paid work outside the home is considered one of the most powerful indicators of the empowerment of women in developing countries; "women working outside the home in Bangladesh and Egypt were also more likely to feel stressed than women working within the home, and women working outside the home in Bangladesh and Ghana were more likely to face spousal abuse."<sup>136</sup> Even in the scope of similar social and political contexts there are local differences as socio-economic and cultural conditions significantly affect the aforementioned indicators of agency.

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134 Mounira M. Charrad, "Women's Agency Across Cultures: Conceptualizing Strengths and Boundaries", *Women's Studies International Forum*: 33, (2010), 518

135 Lucia Hanmer & Jeni Klugman, "Exploring Women's Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries: Where do we stand?," *Feminist Economics*, 22:1 (2016), 248

136 *Ibid.*, 242.

In the article “Conceptualizing Women’s Agency, Autonomy and Empowerment,” the authors define some indicators of autonomy and empowerment for Indian women.<sup>137</sup> Taking the heterogonous profile of India into account, the authors argue that it is useful to conduct regional-based research on these subjects. In six identified regions, they concluded that “women from the east have the lowest and those from the west have the highest freedom of movement.”<sup>138</sup> Despite the fact that northeastern states are the “worst performing states for women in terms of education and health outcomes, access to job and resources,” they are actually far superior in the fields of autonomy and freedom of movement.<sup>139</sup> On the other hand, women in southeastern states “ranked at the top” in terms of access to these resources; but they did not have control over strategic-life choices. Gender-based violence was also high in regions where local women seem to justify it.<sup>140</sup>

As can be concluded from this, the multifaceted, controversial, and complex concepts of agency, empowerment, and autonomy should be analyzed with recognition of the importance of context. Cross-country analyses and even region-based research projects are helpful in defining multidimensional indices for a more reliable measurement of women’s agency and empowerment. Both cultural and social restraints on women should be analyzed as there are various forms of oppression and structures of constraint that affect women. Country- and context-specific research demonstrates that the identified indicators of women’s agency and empowerment are not straightforward, and even insignificant local customs or practices may adversely affect the agency of women. Therefore, the significance of established gender hierarchies and structural contexts should be underscored given that the indicators of women’s agency and empowerment can vary between and within countries under the influence of race, gender, ethnicity, social class, and caste.

It is not possible to provide a clear-cut definition of women’s agency, empowerment, and autonomy as it is not even certain whether they demolish

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137 Nripendra Kishore Mishra And Tulika Tripathi, “Conceptualising Women's Agency, Autonomy and Empowerment” , *Economic and Political Weekly*: 46, No. 11 (2011),60

138 Ibid.,62.

139 Ibid.,63.

140 Ibid.

patriarchal structures or reproduce them unconsciously. Some women feel autonomous and empowered, but others may question their subjective feelings on the grounds that these beliefs and values are shaped by a particular atmosphere; they may perceive themselves as autonomous from their husbands and from patriarchal structures as they are unable to imagine any other possibility.

However, what I have supported in this thesis is that social movements open up potential spaces for the empowerment of women as these movements unveil the roles of self-identification, autonomy, empowerment, and agency. As I mentioned before, a main goal of this thesis is to uncover the role of women's agency in the Cerattepe protests. In other words, I want to see how women's role within society was affected by the environmental protests of Cerattepe and how agency issues within this group are influenced by their active participation in protests. To analyze the real role of women in these protests and obtain a clear picture of the agency aspect of these local women; it will be beneficial to look at the relationship between social movements and women's agency.

### 2.2.1 *Women's Agency and Social Movements*

As phenomena of modern and industrialized era; social movements can be described as "...an organized set of constituents pursuing a common political agenda of change through collective action" or "conscious, organized and collective actions to bring about or resist social change."<sup>141</sup> It can also be seen as "the product of people trying to come to terms with circumstances they view as unacceptable by employing ostensibly non-political means to achieve political ends."<sup>142</sup> Therefore, social movements are pivotal for envisioning, promot-

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141 Jessica Horn, "BRIDGE: Gender and Social Movements: Overview Report" *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin*, (2013),9 and Rose Erin Holyoak, "Young Women's Gendered Subjectivity and Agency in Social Movement Activism" (PhD Diss., University Of Leicester, Department of Sociology, 2015), 30

142 Meyer, D.S. "Social Movements: Creating Communities of Change" in Tétreault, M.A. and Teske, R.L. (eds) *Conscious Acts and the Politics of Social Change.*, (2000), Cubria,SC: University of South Carolina Press,36.

ing, making, and maintaining significant changes in society. Social movements also can be defined as spaces of dissidence in which dissatisfied people come together to create an alternative form of politics that removes unjust and unequal political, social, and economic relations. By creating new forms of collective identity, social movements can also lead to alternative strategies for the transformation of patriarchal structures.

“When it comes to making an impact or transforming gender power relations; social movements matter.”<sup>143</sup> Even though social movements are not inherently progressive with respect to gender relations; they are significant forces to challenge longstanding inequalities and exclusions in society and can grow into “producers of knowledge” in time.<sup>144</sup> They create visions of more egalitarian and gender-just political, social, and economic relations in the context of effectively addressing a broad spectrum of social justice goals including the environmental protection, peace movements, disarmament, and human rights.

Therefore; even if the word feminism is not used by activists in a social movement, it can still serve the purposes of a women’s movement. But, if a social movement does not identify itself with the term feminism; how is it possible to refer to that social movement as a women’s movement? The establishment and implementation of social movements differs and there are various ways in which social movements can accommodate the aim of transforming patriarchal power relations.

Social movements are not static; they emerge, change, transform, and grow in response to shifts in internal and external factors. Therefore, there is no recipe for labeling a movement as a gender neutral social movement. In some social movements, feminist discourses are raised after women in the movement are faced with unfair expectations such as taking caressive, secretarial and back office roles within the movement- in other words, when they notice their exclusion from the movement. In other movements, leaders indicate that they do not have the resources or time to deal with feminist issues or that there are more urgent issues. Such responses have urged women to take

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143 Jessica Horn, “BRIDGE: Gender and Social Movements: Overview Report”, *Institute of Development Studies Bulletin*, (2013),9

144 Ibid.,10.

more responsibility in decision-making mechanisms in a movement. Such situations are effective beginning to incorporate feminist issues onto the agenda of a social movement.

“the sexist oppression is the essence of feminist politics, and it is this politics that energises women’s movements, whether or not the word ‘feminist’ is used.”<sup>145</sup> By addressing gender inequality in the social, cultural, and economic spheres of society, activist women in various social movements challenge the systematic exclusion of women by patriarchal gender relations. Knowingly or unknowingly, the consciousness of sexism has risen in social movements, and movements with no gender-specific agenda are opening up new political spaces for women that support women’s challenge to patriarchal structures.

By transforming women’s perceptions of themselves and their role in society; social spaces are redefined along with the gender-power relations in the society. This occurs through the emergence of not only feminist movements but also environmental and peace movements, human rights struggles, and labor rights movements as well as protests against ethnic, racial, and caste discrimination. A recent study shows how women’s participation in a social movement in Thailand resulted “in women acquiring political knowledge and learning about political engagement, while being increasingly accepted as competent political actors.”<sup>146</sup> Despite the fact that this was a movement with political goals, it is important that women gained self-confidence and began to be seen as political *actresses* through a social movement.

The Yellow Shirt activists in Thailand expressed loyalty to the king. The Red Shirt movement, on the other hand, referred to people who opposed the military coup that toppled the Thai government formed by Thaksin Shinawatra. It was protested by the Yellow Shirt movement.<sup>147</sup> The authors of the article “Expansion of Women’s Political Participation Through Social

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145 P. Antrobus, *The Global Women’s Movement: Origins, Issues and Strategies*, ( London: Zed Books,2004), 16.

146 Duanghathai Buranajaroenkij, Philippe Doneys, Kyoko Kusakabe and Donna L Doane; “Expansion of Women’s Political Participation Through Social Movements : The Case of the Red and Yellow Shirts in Thailand”; *Journal of Asian and African Studies*:53 (1) (2018),34.

147 *Ibid.*,35.

Movements” claimed that these “color-coded political protests” enhanced women’s confidence and provided them agency.<sup>148</sup> They increased the visibility of women in demonstrations and political and social debates at both the local and national levels.<sup>149</sup> These political protests acted as a “political socialization processes” and by extension, women’s political participation in the public sphere became more inclusive, and new forms of political participation for Thai women emerged.<sup>150</sup>

The authors claim that beforehand, women in Thailand were seen as apolitical. Religious doctrines and cultural and social norms created a gap between the public and private sphere, and women were restricted to the latter. However, as interviews conducted by the authors in 2013 and 2014 indicate; “women made up the majority of those who came to demonstrations; and in some cases up to 60%.”<sup>151</sup> How do we make sense of the female majority in these movements? More importantly; what were the consequences of this situation for women of the country?

As women began to create their own space in which to speak out, their awareness of their own capability rose along with their political consciousness. One female interviewee spoke about their increasing awareness: “In each election, it is different for us now; women get together to discuss about policies offered by each political party.”<sup>152</sup> Another claimed:

I am full of self-confidence. I believe that I am doing good and right things. I am not afraid of anyone. I can express my opinions freely with my husband. Together we have been in the movement’s fight for a long time. Politics is now a part of our daily conversation. Once, he gave me

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148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid.,38.

152 Ibid.,40.

advice and attempted to dictate what I should do with my group's activities. I told him I wanted to do it my own way; he listened and sat back.<sup>153</sup>

Women's presence in the political sphere transformed patriarchal power relations at the micro level; the husband of this interviewee indicated he was impressed by his wife's confidence and internal change during the protests.<sup>154</sup> Another man from the demonstrations stated, "women were more active than men and they have actively volunteered to participate in demonstrations."<sup>155</sup> As women individually changed their discourses to a more feminist one, they also started to form women's groups within the movement. One of the co-founders of such a group stated "... having a group also, I think, helps improve women's confidence in themselves and in women in general. We need to help each other."<sup>156</sup> Therefore, by forming a women's group, by creating links between movement politics and electoral politics, and by supporting female candidates in formal political areas, women began to become "dynamic political actors."<sup>157</sup> They challenged the patriarchal power relations in politics by speaking out about their own matters as women. Even if they were not alluding to a definitive feminist agenda; the social movement gave them the ability to act as a group, and this created a whole new space for them to be active in real terms.

If we take this color-coded movement in Thailand as an example of how women achieve greater political presence through a socio-political movement, the relation between social movements and women's agency can be analyzed thoroughly. There are many cases in the world that can be considered gender-transforming social movements. Wangari Waathai's Green Belt movement in Kenya, which started in 1977, worked as a pressure group to push through new legislative regulations about environmental protection. Through its educational programs and seminars, rural women received training on the issues of environmental and economic improvement. They began to question the actual

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153 Ibid.,41.

154 Ibid.

155 Ibid.,40.

156 Ibid.,43.

157 Ibid.,46.

causes of their poverty and subordination. In the end, an environmental movement paved the way both for democratic achievements and the improvement of gender relations within society by giving women a more critical, and analytical frame of mind. Lisa Gibbs' environmental struggle against chemical waste in New York in 1978 turned local women into the defenders of their environment. Through formal and informal organizations, they gained confidence and became part of the political environmental movement, not only as participants but also as decisionmakers.

In the end, social movements only actually matter for gender relations when they knowingly or unknowingly bring women into politics, enable them to acquire more political knowledge, empower them, and raise their political consciousness through participation in demonstrations and political debates. By that way, women can be *real actresses* in all kinds of struggles in various contexts. The political socialization process can transform women's beliefs, values, and perceptions about themselves as women as well as about politics by providing them opportunities to create their agencies and alternative routes to transform any movement into a women's movement, even if these movements do not have the intent to serve feminist ends.

### 2.2.2 *The Environmentalism of Women*

Joan-Martinez Alier and Ramachandra Guha invented the term of "environmentalism of poor" and indicated that the environmental conflicts and resistance include the social justice claims of the people. Therefore, by resisting the state or private companies, activists' real motivations concern their livelihood, health, and culture- they rarely see themselves as environmentalists. Formed in contradistinction to Peter Dauvergne's "environmentalism of rich," the environmentalism of the poor relates poverty to environmentalism and indicates that "because the poor rely directly on the land and its natural

resources, they have an intrinsic motivation to be careful managers of the environment.”<sup>158</sup> Martínez-Alier argues that economic growth is actually a reason for increased environmental degradation, not a solution to it, as the Brundtland Report claims.<sup>159</sup> This supports the idea that environmental reports, international environmental agreements, and the increase in the production of eco-friendly technologies are establishing an *illusion*.<sup>160</sup> This term highlights that the real environmental motivation for resistance is “a material interest in the environment as a source and a requirement for livelihood; not so much a concern with the rights of other species and of future generations of humans as a concern for today’s poor humans.”<sup>161</sup>

The environmental fighters in this respect do not typically describe themselves as environmentalists. The notion of the environmentalism of the poor emphasizes the idea that impoverished communities have a more direct link to the environment. For their livelihood and sustenance, they must resist the unfair use of environmental resources and services by the rich and powerful.<sup>162</sup> Martínez-Alier also puts forward the notion of the environmentalist of poor as an umbrella term “for social concerns and for forms of social action based on a view of the environment as a source.”<sup>163</sup> For that reason, activists may not

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158 Iain Davey, ‘Environmentalism of the Poor and Sustainable Development: An Appraisal’, *Joaag*, 4.no:1 (2009), 2.

159 The published report of “Our Common Future” by the World Commission on Environment and Development (also known as the Brundtland Report); indicates that the environmental damage increases with poverty and growth in economical means (in both production and GNP) and the economic growth is the key issue for the solution of the environmental problems and for ‘our common future’, the increase in national income in all countries of the world must be achieved.

160 Ibid.

161 Joan Martínez-Alier, *The Environmentalism of the Poor: A Study of Ecological Conflicts and Valuation*, (Cheltenham, Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc., 2002), 11.

162 Iain Davey, “Environmentalism of the Poor and Sustainable Development: An Appraisal,” *Joaag*, 4.no:1 (2009): 2.

163 Joan Martínez-Alier, “The Environmentalism of the Poor”, *The Political Economy of Sustainable Development: Environmental Conflict, Participation and Movements Conference*, 30 August 2002, Johannesburg, 40.

adopt the name ‘environmentalist,’ but they risk their lives to protect the environment and their livelihood and save their resources.

From a similar point of view; Murat Arsel, Bengi Akbulut, and Fikret Adaman introduce the term “environmentalism of malcontent” in their cowritten article “Environmentalism of the Malcontent.”

The ‘environmentalism of the malcontent’ concept refers to the type of environmentally themed activism whose motivations are primarily- though of course not exclusively- animated by a political economic posture that is not informed by direct or immediate personal livelihood concerns.<sup>164</sup>

According to the authors, long-lasting economic and political dissatisfaction can transform any environmental movement into a political formation. Describing environmental activism against coal power in Gerze, a district of Sinop, Turkey, the authors recognize that the political context of Turkey after 1980s shaped the motivations of the activists. They also indicate that “the conflict around the coal power plant has provided an opportunity for those with a history of left politics, violently repressed after 1980, to get even with the state and articulate a critique of neoliberal developmentalism.”<sup>165</sup> Activists organized a mobilization for environmental purposes, but at the same time they developed a critique of the state-society relationship through their local environmental resistance: “Environmental concern is the glue that binds these groups together, building a coalition that seeks not only to prevent local environmental degradation but also to transform the state system and its relationship with society.”<sup>166</sup> It is the fact that the environmental resistance can have more loaded political and social baggage than expected, and it can be interpreted as a kind of umbrella movement from time to time.

From both the terms environmentalism of poor and environmentalism of malcontent, it is possible to interpret environmental movements as umbrella

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164 Murat Arsel, Bengi Akbulut, and Fikret Adaman, “Environmentalism of the Malcontent: Anatomy of an Anti-Coal Power Plant Struggle in Turkey,” *The Journal of Peasant Studies* 42, no. April (2015), 17.

165 Ibid.,5.

166 Ibid.,6.

movements that can challenge, change, and transform the current social, political, and cultural context even as environmental concerns were the driving forces for the activists. While Martiner-Aliez emphasizes the role of poverty in environmental resistance- with the recognition that there is a relation between the concerns of impoverished communities for their livelihood and their instinctive motivation to resist environmental, Arsel, Akbulut, and Adaman highlight the importance of the political context of Turkey since 1980s and its effects on the people. They regard this situation as one of the real motivations for locals' resistance to coal power in Gerze. I choose to use the term "environmentalism of women" bearing in mind that there may be various understandings of such a term. However, environmental resistance contains many different issues and concerns that can grow into something larger and different in time. Given this feature of umbrella movements, I believe gender is another behind-the-scenes issue in many environmental movements; including that in Cerattepe. From there on it is possible to talk about the environmentalism of women as a term. As I have shown throughout this thesis, women's relation to nature and their role in environmental resistance should be analyzed specifically with respect to the question of how women themselves are affected by environmental protests and to what extent they affect the course of events in this resistance. Therefore, I will provide examples of women-led environmental resistance from around the world in the next subsection, recognizing that women's involvement in this resistance usually changed the direction of the resistance and pushed the issue of gender under the umbrella. I claim this was also the case for Cerattepe.

### 2.2.3 *Does Environmental Resistance Provide Women With Agency?*

As I claimed in the previous section, women have different reasons for participating in environmental resistance than men. Health concerns, attachment to symbolic values, and economic issues force women to take action against ecological destruction, but apart from these reasons; women's closeness to nature gives them some kind of a protective role over nature. It is risky to link women's courage to resist the exploitation of nature to their so-called *close* relationship; however, what I mean by *closeness* does not imply some spiritual relation. In many parts of the world women have and inseparable relation to

nature in their daily lives, and it is a fact that their lives are closely connected to nature. Therefore, denying this special relationship works an explanation of the real driving force behind environmental movements that women are in a leading position. I am not calling women *goddesses of earth*. However, much of the time women must listen to the voice of nature and protect it; often as a necessity for survival.

The examples environmental movements known worldwide in which women were pioneers give a glimpse of the conditions that made them take action and explain how they managed to get what they wanted from the struggle. In this section, I will be analyzing the environmental movements of women of varying social statuses and lifestyles in order to assess the subject in a wider context. From the well-known Chipko movement of Indian women to the conservational environmental resistance of American women it will be possible to see whether there is an environmentalism of women in the first place.

Embrace our trees.  
 Save them from being felled.  
 The property of our bills;  
 Save it from being looted!<sup>167</sup>

This popular poem composed by Raturi for the Chipko movement is the earliest documentary source of the movement. This poem is the prayer of a woman trying to protect the trees by embracing them. The struggle can be read simply as a conflict of two different points of view. One sees the forests and trees as life-support systems which, for their communities' survival, must be protected. The opposing view seems to embrace the idea that "money grows on trees;" trees and forests commercially valued and considered "green gold."<sup>168</sup> The existence of these opposing views led to the emergence of envi-

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167 Vandana Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, (London: Zed Books, 1989), 73

168 *Ibid.*, 77.

ronmental resistance in India in which women put their lives at stake to preserve the natural environment of the region. It was simply called the Chipko movement.

“Soil, water and oxygen.” The women of the region used this slogan to talk about the ecological significance of forests.<sup>169</sup> As indigenous forestry experts; women acknowledged that forests were always central to their Indian culture; known as the culture of forest for most of the time.<sup>170</sup> In the evolution of Indian civilization and the survival of rural household economies, soil, water, and oxygen became key factors for the preservation of the life of the people as well as the naturalness of the region.

The main threat to the people of India was deforestation, but also- as a result of the developmental strategies of developed countries – there was a process of the replacement of multispecies forests with monoculture plantations going on in the region.<sup>171</sup> In other words, the commercial felling of trees and the planting nature compatible trees were increasing the ecological instability of the Himalayas. “*Trees as a living source, maintaining the life of the soil and water and of local people, were replaced by trees whose dead wood went straight to a pulp factory hundreds of miles away.*”<sup>172</sup> This so-called scientific reforestation ignored the actual needs of people in the region and imposed a Western-style of developmentalism on the geography.

Since the Chipko Movement is based upon the perception of forests in their ecological context, it exposes the social and ecological costs of short-term growth-orientated forests management. This is clearly seen in the slogan of the Chipko movement, which claims that the main products of the forests are not timber ore resin, but “soil, water and oxygen.”<sup>173</sup>

The efforts of the women in the region to protect the environment have a long historical background. It went three centuries back to when Amrita Devi from

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169 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*, 3.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid.

172 Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, 79.

173 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*, 3.

Rajasthan led more than 300 members of her community to save their sacred *khejri* trees. Clinging to them, they sacrificed their lives, and three hundred years later, in 1972, another powerful women's movement acted to preserve the same environment. Locals see the disappearance of *banj* trees as the main reason for current floods and droughts; moreover planting a single commercially-valued species of tree is accepted as the cause of the ecological insatiability of the Garhwal Himalayas along with the increasing economic deprivation of local women. In 1972, widespread, organized protests against the exploitation of forests began. Under the decentered leadership of women, the resistance quickly spread to whole region. In March 1973 local people declared that "*they would embrace the trees and not allow them to be cut.*"<sup>174</sup> They forced the contractor to withdraw and then locals began to take action to ban commercial exploitation of the forests. Locals and especially women acknowledged that the ecological balance of Northern India should not be sacrificed for short-term economic utility and that local people would face floods and other natural disasters if they did not oppose the contractors right away.

In 1975, local women of the region under the leadership of women like 50-year-old Hima Devi started treks in many regions to mobilize the public to save the trees. During these protests to which all activist women of the region were summoned; the methodology of hugging trees began.<sup>175</sup> They tied sacred threads to the trees as a vow to protect them, and women like Bachni Devi of Adwani continued their struggle even in defiance of their own husbands.<sup>176</sup>

*"This forest is our mother. When there is a crisis of food, we come here to collect grass and dry fruits to feed our children. We dig out herbs and collect mushrooms from this forest. You cannot touch these trees.*"<sup>177</sup> Given the women's unending resistance to the contractors and their strong struggle to protect the forests, the Chipko movement was arguably both an ecological and a women's movement. These attitudes of the women created new directions for the movement and transformed the resistance from an ecological protest into an ecological and feminist movement. Local women learned to raise their voices

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174 Shiva, Vandana, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, 73.

175 Ibid.,75.

176 Ibid.,76.

177 Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, 74.

against ecological destruction, and they saw that they could be successful if they tried. The movement's philosophy created a kind of politics for these local women and paved the way for more determined resistance to male-led environmental degradation. The ecological insight and political as well as moral strength of local women carried the message of Chipko from one village to another, and large groups of women gathered together to openly challenge the commercial forestry system. In the end, they were the ones with the real scientific knowledge of the region and they knew the value of forestry based on multiple species to maintain the natural continuity of the region.

This environmental movement demonstrates what I mean by the closeness between women and nature which I explained in the previous subsection. Western commercial forestry experts guessed that eucalyptus was a good investment because it grows straight and its wood is suitable for making pulp. However, eucalyptuses draw a high amount of water which destroyed the water cycle in the dry regions. Women's closeness to nature made them aware of this situation, and they resisted it from the beginning. It is a fact that South Indian women are more dependent than men on trees and other forestry products, and they are the primary sufferers of any scarcity.<sup>178</sup> In the book "Staying Alive," Shiva underscores the importance of the local women's knowledge, "... they see the productivity of the tree in terms of its non-woody biomass which functions critically in hydrological and nutrient cycles within the forests, and through green fertilizer and fodder in cropland"<sup>179</sup>

The forest as well as water have historically been necessary of survival for women in India, and in 1983 they resisted the expansion of eucalyptus in the region and challenged the domination of Western-style forestry management. This strategy aimed to reduce all species to one and in that way; it spread the idea that expanding eucalyptus would provide a good income for locals because its wood would satisfy the needs of the pulp industry. Against this so-called *wasteland development*, local women sought to satisfy the needs of all

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178 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, 4.

179 Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, 80.

living forms. “Forestry for food -food for the soil, for farm animals, for people - all women’s and peasants’ struggle revolve around this theme”<sup>180</sup>

The women of the Chipko movement are known as the founders of women’s ecological resistance. They continued a three-hundred-year-old tradition of hugging trees; and despite local men’s desire to develop economically through new forestry strategies; women sought to protect the environment and the naturalness of the region at any cost. As the primary users of forest commodities, local women of the region understood the multiple uses of trees, and through their hands-on involvement with natural resources, they predicted the devastating effects of deforestation. Because of the effective use of non-violent resistance strategies as well as the decentralized and autonomous characteristics of the movement, it became one of the most praiseworthy ecological movements in the history of environmental movements. It is believed that the between 1972 and 1979, approximately 150 villages participated in the movement, and a fifteen-year ban on the commercial felling of the trees issued by the Indian prime minister in 1980 was considered a great success for the movement.<sup>181</sup>

Another influential environmental movement where women were on the frontline was the Green Belt movement in Kenya. It was founded by Professor Wangari Maathai in 1977 to express the needs of rural Kenyan women who suffered from water shortages and deforestation. In order to give them a voice a non-governmental organization called the Green Belt Movement mobilized with the support of the National Council of Women of Kenya. According to the organization’s annual report of 2015, its mission is summarized as follows: “GBM’s (*Green Belt Movement*) mission is to strive for better environmental management, community empowerment and livelihood improvement using

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180 George J. James, *Ethical Perspectives on Environmental Issues in India*, (New Delhi: A.P.H. Publishing Corporation, 1999), 97.

181 Petruzzello, Melissa. “Chipko Movement.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., <<https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chipko-movement>> ( D.A: 14 May 2017.)

*tree-planting as an entry point.*<sup>182</sup> The same report indicates that the organization began as a grassroots tree planting program, but by then it had undertaken the role of being “*a vehicle empowering women and communities.*”<sup>183</sup> UNESCO also published a study in 2014 about the work of Wangari Maathai as a part of the “UNESCO Series on Women in African History” and tried summarized how the organization was established and how it spread throughout the region in a short time. The efforts of Maathai, who was the first African woman to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; and of the Green Belt Movement attracted attention from all over the world. The development of the movement over time contributes to the main purpose of this thesis to analyze the relationship that exists between women and nature and how this relationship makes women active agents in struggles against environmental exploitation.

Under the leadership of Maathai, the Green Belt Movement encouraged women to plant trees to fight deforestation and environmental degradation. As a result of the colonization of Kenya from 1895 to 1963; instability of the food supply along with environmental exploitation distanced the country from its traditional values and agricultural habits. A push to industrialize as well as a transition from subsistence farming to export agriculture had destructive effects on Kenya’s environment. In 1977 Wangari Maathai founded the non-governmental organization The Green Belt Movement and encouraged women throughout the region to plant trees.<sup>184</sup> Over the years, the organization succeeded in planting more than 50 million trees across the region. In addition to its environmental achievements, the organization has also undertaken the mission of empowering women by enabling them to assume active roles in both in the organization and execution of protests.

In 1989, Maathai learned that the government intended to build a tower block in the middle of Uhuru Park, an important city park in Nairobi. Over

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182 “The Green Belt Movement:Annual Report 2015”, <<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/sites/greenbeltmovement.org/files/GBM%202015%20Annual%20Report.pdf>>, pg: 4 (D.A : 5 May 2017)

183 Ibid.

184 “The Green Belt Movement:Annual Report 2015”, <<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/sites/greenbeltmovement.org/files/GBM%202015%20Annual%20Report.pdf>>, pg: 4 (D.A : 5 May 2017)

the years, Maathai and local women have continued to struggle to stop the project from progressing. She wrote many letters to the government and despite the risk of imprisonment; she continued to call people to the park to join the resistance. Women did not give up resisting even when Maathai had to move the headquarters of the organization to her own house because of pressure by the government. Finally, in 1992, the project was abandoned and the construction site was restored to parkland. In addition to this victory, Maathai and her counterparts went up against the government again in the late 1990s to prevent the government from selling parts of Karura Forest in northern Nairobi.<sup>185</sup> The members of the Green Belt Movement -mostly women- continued to visit the forests and plant trees, though during clashes with security forces Maathai and other members were seriously injured many times. With the support of student marches in Kenya, the government banned the inhabitation of public lands in 1999. The restoration of the Karura forests began in 2002.<sup>186</sup>

These events are just a few of the achievements of the organization. Wangari Maathai was awarded with Nobel Peace Prize in 2004. Her efforts for environmental protection and greater democratic space for the people of Kenya were recognized by the world; however, another aspect of the movement that is as important was her commitment to the empowerment of rural women. After the colonization of the region, women were highly affected by disempowerment and poverty:

Many Kenyan women were excluded from the evolving western-type cash-economy and were generally unable to own land. They were often financially dependent on their husbands, denied access to education,

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185 “The Ecology of Public Space: From Uhuru to Taksim”, The Green Belt Movement, <<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/node/456>>, 5 July 2013, (D.A.: 04.04.2017)

186 Ibid.

unable to own land and increasingly suffered from the effects of environmental degradation aggravated by forest clearings and the radical changes in the social system.<sup>187</sup>

The movement explored the link between their poverty and ecological problems, and over the years, it encouraged more women to resist environmental degradation and to plant trees in response to deforestation. Through educational programs and seminars, the movement encouraged women to think about the real causes of their poverty. Rural women were trained in environmental, economic and livelihood improvement in the region.<sup>188</sup> The organization made partnerships with other foundations to “unlocking women’s potential in natural resource management.”<sup>189</sup> The Green Belt Movement under the leadership of Maathai linked ecological problems with women’s problems, and the struggle against both strengthened the democratic development of Kenya in addition to improving gender equality throughout the region. Due to her efforts, women’s problems like constitutional protection, access to education, and land ownership began to be discussed among women from various regions and cultures. Indeed, Maathai’s struggle for environmental protection increased solidarity and awareness among women and transformed an ecological struggle into an environmental women’s movement in the course of time.

For the women of the Global South there is a strong correlation between poverty and environmental degradation. For that reason, besides these two known examples, rural women in South feel obliged to respond to all kinds of ecological destruction. Their environmental sensitivity is closely linked to the problem of survival, and movements like Chipko and organizations like Green Belt make women visible in protests, increasing their chances of becoming educated and becoming decisionmakers within the movements.

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187 “Wangari Maathai and the Green Belt Movement”, UNESCO Series on Women in African History, 2014, < <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002301/230122e.pdf>>, (D.A: 07.04.2017)

188 “The Green Belt Movement : Annual Report 2015”, <<http://www.greenbeltmovement.org/sites/greenbeltmovement.org/files/GBM%202015%20Annual%20Report.pdf>>, (D.A : 5 May 2017)

189 Ibid.

For developed countries of the Global North, environmental problems also concern women more than men. The following questions reveal the real relation between these women and environmental protests. What are the real reasons that make women in such countries sensitive to environmental issues even though their living conditions are different from those of rural women in India and Kenya? What forces them to take action and force authorities to stop exploitation? How do they evaluate their own resistance when comparing themselves with women of the South? Did these movements in developed countries bring about the empowerment of women? In other words, is it possible to associate environmental movements with the women's movement for the Global North? To answer these questions, I will analyze some environmental movements from in developed countries.

Although the Lisa Gibbs's struggle against Hooker Chemical Corporation did not create a worldwide impact like the Chipko protests and the Green Belt movement, local women's resistance to the dump of 21,000 tons of chemical waste in their neighborhood in New York in 1978 attracted attention.<sup>190</sup> Gibbs' main concern was her son's asthma attacks which increased after chemical wastes were spread all over the neighborhood. Gibbs and other local women of the region; through their homeowners committee; managed to get the attention of the federal government which in the end was forced to buy up 700 homes in the neighborhood.<sup>191</sup> As founder of the Love Canal Homeowners Committee and known as the Mother of the Superfund; Gibbs started to share information with other environmental organizations and was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 1990.<sup>192</sup> In 1981, Gibbs founded the Central for Health, Environment and Justice (CHEJ), and with the help of the organization she defends public land against the dangers of toxic waste.

Winona LaDuke's fight against the Sandpiper pipeline also received nationwide attention. She is a native American environmental activist and the

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190 Bell, *An Invitation to Environmental Sociology*, 166.

191 Ibid.,168.

192 "Gibbs, Lois Grassroots Environmental Activist And The "Mother Of Superfund" (1951-) Read More: <http://www.pollutionissues.com/Fo-Hi/Gibbs-Lois-Grassroots-Environmental-Activist-and-The-Mother-of-Superfund-1951>." Pollution Issues. N.p. (D.A. 10 May 2017)

executive director of the group Honor the Earth.<sup>193</sup> On the issues of climate change, sustainable energy, and environmental justice, she has become a well-known figure in the environmentalist movement in the United States. She explained in an interview why she and other activists struggled against the pipeline's construction:

It is time to end the fossil fuel infrastructure. I mean, these people on this reservation, they don't have adequate infrastructure for their houses. They don't have adequate energy infrastructure. They don't have adequate highway infrastructure. And yet they're looking at a \$3.9 billion pipeline that will not help them. It will only help oil companies. And so that's why we're here. You know, we're here to protect this land.<sup>194</sup>

Besides the possible environmental damage that the pipeline could cause; activists under the leadership of LaDuke also complained that people of the region were not consulted beforehand. She stated that the people of the region not need a new pipeline; what they needed is solar and wind power stations. "It's time to move on from fossil fuels," she says.<sup>195</sup> According to her, it is time to become energy interdependent and create renewable energy systems that would not only benefit some companies and some people but would help everyone to have control over the future of the world. Eventually, the construction of the pipeline was delayed and will not start up again until 2019.

Another activist is Debra White Plume. She is a longtime resister against the Dakota Access pipeline and experienced serious clashes with security forces during the protests. She encouraged people take a stand to protect the clean water of the region. However, she does not label herself as a protestor:

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193 "Native American Activist Winona LaDuke at Standing Rock: It's Time to Move On from Fossil Fuels." Democracy Now <[https://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/native\\_american\\_activist\\_winona\\_laduke\\_at](https://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/native_american_activist_winona_laduke_at)>N.p. (D.A. 21 May 2017.)

194 "Native American Activist Winona LaDuke at Standing Rock: It's Time to Move On from Fossil Fuels." Democracy Now <[https://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/native\\_american\\_activist\\_winona\\_laduke\\_at](https://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/native_american_activist_winona_laduke_at)>N.p. (D.A. 21 May 2017.)

195 Ibid.

first and foremost, I'm just a regular human being. I'm a mother and a grandmother, a great-grandmother. I'm Lakota. I'm a woman. And it's-water is the domain of the women in our nation. And so, it's our privilege and our obligation to protect water. So, you know, if somebody wants to label me, I guess it would be water protector.<sup>196</sup>

JoAnn Tall can be considered another *protector* of North Dakota's Black Hill region. She opposed proposed nuclear weapons testing in the region and she raised awareness among the Lakota people about the health hazards of uranium mining and nuclear weapons testing.<sup>197</sup> She established a resistance camp near to the land on which a company planned to test nuclear weapons, and she quickly won the support of the local people. The company; Honeywell; was forced to abandon its plans for the land. After that victory; she helped other local communities to deal with similar problems, and she prevented companies from establishing hazardous landfills on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations.<sup>198</sup> As a mother of eight with rheumatoid arthritis, she began to worry about possible health problems that future generations will confront. This motivation gave her the strength to fight big companies, and her victories affected environmental resistance in the country to proposed waste dumps.

In the book of "Places and Politics in an Age of Globalization," Roxann Prazniak published her interview with JoAnn Tall. This interview, reveals the conditions that forced Tall to take action against environmental degradation in the region. She said that she had been involved in the environmental problems of the Lakota since the 1973 events at Wounded Knee.<sup>199</sup>To fight tribal corruption on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; she joined the events in the Wounded Knee. She was the only woman at the events together with twenty-

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196 "Lakota Activist Debra White Plume from Pine Ridge: Why I Am a Water Protector at Standing Rock." Democracy Now! <[https://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/lakota\\_activist\\_debra\\_white\\_plume\\_from](https://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/lakota_activist_debra_white_plume_from)>N.p.(D.A.:22 May 2017.)

197 "JoAnn Tall." Goldman Environmental Foundation.< <http://www.goldmanprize.org/recipient/joann-tall/>> N.p.,(D.A. 15 May 2017.)

198 Ibid.

199 Roxann Prazniak and Arif Dirlik, Places and Politics in an Age of Globalization, (Lanham, Rowman&Littlefield Publishers, 2001),247.

four men. In this interview conducted in 1995, she indicates how that experience changed her activist personality:

I would say that in my whole career, all my twenty- two years of being a leader and organizer on all kinds of issues that was the one experience that strengthened me for all the other struggles. I lost my fear there. I no longer had any fear when I stood up before corporations, government bodies, congress, hearing all of sorts. I no longer had a fear of speaking out. It started there at Wounded Knee.<sup>200</sup>

From this date forward, she organized locals around environmental issues and was awarded the Goldman Environmental Prize in 1993 for her efforts to protect the environment in South Dakota. Despite her illness and difficulty walking, she never stopped fighting for the lands she believes are sacred to her community. She opposed tribal councils many times urging the rejection of proposals from the government and companies seeking to test nuclear weapons in the area or dispose of poisonous toxins there. Her strong faith in the nature-based Lakota religion was a motivation for her longstanding protest of environmental exploitation. In another interview she declared, “We are part of Mother Nature, we are her children.” She adds that the events at Wounded Knee gave her the belief that she can sacrifice her life for what she believes in: for the protection of the environment, and the continuity of her people’s way of life.<sup>201</sup> She is just one of the women in environmental movements who are not afraid to put their lives in danger for the protection of environment.

The gathering of forty-three women in 1987 for the Women in Toxics Organizing conference in Virginia was a turning point for environmental movements. Meetings like it redefined the role of women within them. The speeches in this conference were intended to be a transformative force for women participating in environmental struggles. They included “Though Women Against Toxics” and “We Can Do It.”<sup>202</sup> The keynote speaker at the conference;

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200 Prazniak and Dirlik, *Places and Politics in an Age of Globalization*, 255.

201 Goldmanprize. “JoAnn Tall: 1993 Goldman Prize Winner, USA.” YouTube, 31 July 2013. Web. 22 May 2017.

202 Robert Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*, (Washington D.C. , Island Press, 1993), 208.

Cora Tucker; was an important figure in women's environmental resistance. As an American-African civil right activist, she related that since the early 1980s she was involved in these kinds of resistance. In 1985 she brought local people together for the purpose of improving the quality of life all citizens, without regard to race, ethnicity, and gender discriminations, and she became the chairperson of Citizens for a Better America.<sup>203</sup> In 1986, she and 1,400 residents of Virginia expressed opposition to a proposed nuclear waste site, and their effective resistance forced the Department of Energy to abandon plans to locate a nuclear waste site in the region.<sup>204</sup> At the 1987 conference about toxics, Tucker told participants that the "*the involvement of women in the antitoxics movement was a function of who they were, related to their sense of family and community.*"<sup>205</sup> She also suggested that women's gendered roles give them an advantage in terms of environmental activism. The experiences of managing households and dealing with their children's school activities helped them to organized community-based antitoxics resistance.<sup>206</sup> In addition, Tucker believed that motherhood also makes women more conscious of the potential threat of environmental degradation. In the book of "Forcing the Spring", Robert Gottlieb underscores that claim.

mothers especially become assertive in their claims that they know when something is not right and that something has to be done about it. As caretakers and as nurturers, mothers bring to the movement a sense of immediacy and passion and inclusiveness related to the task at hand. 'Everything is a women's issue,' Cora Tucker declared at the conference, 'because every child that's born, some women [woman] had it'<sup>207</sup>

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203 Robert W. Collin, William Harris , Sr, "Race and Waste in Two Virginia Communities" in *Confronting Environmental Racism: Voices from the Grassroots*, ed. Robert D. Bullard, (Massachusetts, South End Press, 1993),99.

204 Ibid., 100.

205 Gottlieb, *Forcing the Spring: The Transformation of the American Environmental Movement*, 208.

206 Ibid.,209.

207 Ibid.,209.

To some extent, it is fair to say that women are more concerned about their children's health than men. However, as a counter argument, it can be said that for every child that's born, some man also had a part in it. Women's roles in patriarchal communities and historical and sociological contexts have also forced women to develop more effective decision-making processes for their's children future as well as for the sake of their communities. As far as patriarchal relations are concerned, the viewpoints of women along with men followed a path leading to the internalization of this situation over time. In anti-toxics movement, Tucker and other female participants identified themselves as home makers and they became involved in the environmental movement through this identity. In relation to questions of rootedness and survival, Gottlieb also claimed that "this movement of 'housewives'" caused a personal and public transformation and made gender issues an integral issue for environmental movements.<sup>208</sup> Through a "consciousness rising described in feminist literature," the relationship between husbands and wives was also affected by this situation. According to him; the participation of women in antitoxics movements opened the way for women to become involved in decision-making mechanisms at the community level, and this community development movement has increased the visibility of women in environmental resistance in a global context.

These are just a few of the events and environmental protests that women organized and at which they were at the forefront. Among many others, these events show how local women change their own lives and the lives of their communities through their local environmental struggles. Marked by class, gender, and racial divisions; nearly all these protests are linked to other kinds of inequality. Local environmental struggles; even if they do not reach the level of a global environmental movement; influence the history of environmentalism in the world. From this point of view, women's local ecological struggles have a transforming power for both environmentalism and the women's movement at the same time.

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208 Ibid.,211.

“Nature is a feminist issue.”<sup>209</sup> This informal slogan of ecofeminism explains understand the connection between women and nature. Throughout the centuries, this relationship has been questioned and, from time to time, it was glorified as representing the true nature of femininity. However, for the same reason, it was the reason for the inferior positions of both women and nature. Apart from myths about goddesses, women indeed always have a closer relationship to nature. However, as emphasized in the previous section, this closeness is not a spiritual relation between the two. Actually, women are forced to be closer to nature as a part of their gendered duties as housewives, mothers, nurturers, and caretakers. They become more dependent on environmental situations than men because they are the primary sufferers of ecological destruction. Given limited opportunities, women in rural areas in particular must more sensitive to nature than men, and as a result, they are the first to oppose any environmental exploitation.

In this section of the thesis, I analyze the contribution of ecofeminism in the environmentalism literature. While ecofeminism as a separate theory was born in the 1980s, a mutually agreeable definition of it has been hard to reach. As a politically-loaded term that inserts gender inequality into discussions of environmentalism, ecofeminism should not be seen as just an issue of gender inequality. Actually, it concerns all kinds of injustice from class to race to ethnicity. Although there are critics about the place of women in environmentalism, in order to contribute to feminist research, ecofeminism focuses on the experiences of women in environmental struggles.

To conclude, I value the importance of ecofeminism as a *movement in progress* as it has made a significant contribution to the literature of women’s movements. In the contexts of women’s agency, empowerment, and autonomy, the existing literature supports the idea that women’s participation in environmental struggles opens up spaces for the potential socialization and politicization of women. Just as other kinds of social movements, environmental movements create alternative routes and spaces for women to become not just recipients but executors of policy. Women’s role in environmental

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209 Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Is Matters*, (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000) , 238.

movements should thus be analyzed as a separate category, as women's involvement in these struggles as the power to challenge, change, and transform patriarchal relations in society even if the word feminism is not used. Therefore, I posit the term *environmentalism o women* and focus on their experiences in order to answer the question of how the issues of the agency and empowerment of women is affected by environmental movements.

## The Role of Women in the Struggle for Environmental Protection in Turkey

### § 3.1 History of Environmental Politics in Turkey

**E**nvironmental issues have not been on the agenda of the Turkish state for long. However, there was a growing awareness about environmental issues in the 1980s, and this led to the rise of environmental activism in Turkey. The historical timeline of the environmental movements in Turkey should be analyzed in the larger framework of modernization, bureaucratic, and economic policies of the Turkish state. This chapter gives a brief history of environmental movements in Turkey to analyze the similarities and differences between the Cerattepe protests and others and to situate environmental movements in Turkey today.

The history of environmental struggles in Turkey should be analyzed with respect to the political and economic policies of the Turkish state since these policies significantly influence the state's choices about environmentalism. Therefore, environmentalism in Turkey should be analyzed in terms of the dichotomy between environmental protection and the development policies of Turkish state. From early on, the process of democratization as well as the relationship between the state and civil society affected environmental politics. A complete analysis of the relationship between these processes and environ-

mentalism in Turkey exceeds the scope of this study; however, to comprehensively explain environmental politics in Turkey, I will address these issues when necessary.

### 3.1.1 *Pre-1980 Environmental Politics in Turkey*

The state-centric Turkish model of modernity dominated the early years of the Turkish state. To establish a national identity as well as a republican model of citizenship; a strong state model was adopted in this era.<sup>1</sup> This approach of state produced a type of modernity in which the polity and society are modernized under the leadership of an active, dominant agent of modernity: the state.<sup>2</sup> It can be said that Turkish modernity developed as a top-down process and has operated as a state-centric modernity.<sup>3</sup> This strong state approach went hand in hand with national development characterized by with its anti-liberalism and state-centricism and included a planned, import substituting industrialization as the “proper prescription for development.”<sup>4</sup> This state-centric model of Turkish modernity was consolidated in the early republican period.

The defining features of the state-centric model of Turkish modernization shaped the duty-based concept of citizenship.<sup>5</sup> Given these circumstances, the emergence of civil society in the early years of the republic was weak if not non-existent. The birth and rise of environmental politics in Turkey should be analyzed with these processes, as social movements and associational life were dependent on the choices of the state with respect to democratization.

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- 1 E. Fuat Keyman, “Modernity, Democracy and Civil Society”,in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005),41.
  - 2 Ç. Keyder, “Whither the Project of Modernity?” in *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, ed. S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba, (London : University of Washington Press,1997),40.
  - 3 Ibid.
  - 4 Ibid.
  - 5 E. Fuat Keyman, “Modernity, Democracy and Civil Society”,in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 42.

In the single party period (1923-45), environmental issues and problems were accepted as a matter of state and were seen as related to the preservation of natural beauty as well as to health and sanitation. In this period, a number of new laws concerning environmental issues were ratified, like Municipal Law and the Public Health Law; both enacted in 1930. In these legal codes, it was clear that the state was clearly the sole authority where issues about public health and the environment in general were concerned. In this period, 1924, Forest Academy Graduates Society was established.

Until the 1950s, state policies about environmental issues were related to the management and protection of forests by the state, the continuation of the fight against malaria in marshlands, and the completion of urban infrastructure in the context of meeting the “basic needs of national developmentalism.”<sup>6</sup> The single party regime approached environmental issues as an extension of developmentalism and economic progress as well as a matter of public health. A number of associations established in this period, like the Forestry Academy Graduates Society, the Mountaineering Club and the Tree Protection Association.<sup>7</sup> These were semi-official entities intended to protect natural and historical resources and scenery but were generally not concerned with environmental risks.

The single party period of the republic ended with the 1950 elections, and along with the relative liberalization of politics; the number of environmental associations increased. These associations were still concerned with environmental protection and city beautification and not concerned with potential risks that could cause environmental degradation. The increase in the number of these associations could be clearly observed in Istanbul and Ankara. In 1946, there was one association in Ankara dealing with the protection of the environment, but by 1960 there were forty one. The case was similar in Istanbul; the number of environmental associations increased from six in 1946 to

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6 Nesrin Algan, “Türkiye’de Devlet Politikaları Bağlamında Çevre ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihine Kısa Bir Bakış”, in *Türkiye’de Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu*, 7-8 Nisan 2000, (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 2000), 226.

7 Kemal Görmez , *Çevre Sorunları ve Türkiye*, (Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, 1997), 109.

one hundred sixty six in 1960.<sup>8</sup> However, the increase in the number of these associations was not positively correlated with concern for the environment in society. These environmental protection associations were limited in terms of their political efficacy and did not represent the opinion of the masses.<sup>9</sup>

In the 1960s; environmental issues started to be examined separately in the development plans of cities and in symposiums on air pollution.<sup>10</sup> The intense urbanization and industrialization of the 1950s caused a number of environmental problems related to the quality of the air, water, and soil.<sup>11</sup> Air pollution in Turkey became an environmental issue in this period. Especially large cities like Istanbul and Ankara; witnessed the worsening consequences of air pollution. To publicize the problem of severe air pollution in urban centers; the Air Pollution Association was established in 1969.<sup>12</sup> Apart from single-issue environmental associations, it was not until the 1970s that environmental sensitivity began to raise leading to a sensitivity that underscores environmental degradation. The first environment-related public protest took place in Samsun in 1975 when people from twenty one different villages organized a silent rally to protest poisonous gases coming from a copper plant.<sup>13</sup> They claimed that the gases damaged their agricultural production. Another protest was organized in 1978 by commercial fishermen against the pollution of waters along the Izmit shore.<sup>14</sup>

Increasing international environmental awareness in 1970s also affected Turkey's institutionalization in the context of environmental politics. The establishment of the Environmental Protection and Greenification Association

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8 Çiğdem Adem, "Non-state Actors and Environmentalism", in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 73.

9 Ibid.

10 Görmez , *Çevre Sorunları ve Türkiye*, 109.

11 Ibid.

12 Çiğdem Adem, "Non-state Actors and Environmentalism", in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel,74.

13 Görmez , *Çevre Sorunları ve Türkiye*, 110.

14 Çiğdem Adem, "Non-state Actors and Environmentalism," in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, 74.

in 1972 and the Society for the Protection of Nature in 1975 were massive developments in environmental politics.<sup>15</sup> The formation of the Environment Foundation of Turkey in 1978 followed, and although their political efficiency in this institutionalization period was limited; these associations formed the basis for the more active, political environmentalism of the 1980s.<sup>16</sup>

The period between 1950 and 1980 witnessed the formation of the basis of environmental activism in Turkey. After the establishment of the modern Republic of Turkey in 1923; the state's focus was rapid industrialization, national developmentalism, and reaching the contemporary level of civilization. In this context, environmental issues were a matter of state concern as a subdivision of public health. During these years when the country was internalizing democracy; an independent civil society formation was not expected. Therefore, environmental awareness did not become a social issue until air pollution in urban centers emerged as a massive social and political problem. Apart from that, the effect of international institutionalization on environmental protection as well as international agreements about the issue forced politicians of the Turkish republic to take a step further. For this reason, the institutionalization of environmental politics in Turkey started in the 1970s and was transformed into an influential policy during the 1980s.

### 3.1.2 *The 1980s and Beyond: Institutionalization of Environmentalism in Turkey*

The Turkish state's approach to modernization transformed in 1980s and the state-centric model of governance began to be questioned. A number of significant changes and transformations took place in these years making it necessary for a new economic policy and approach to governance to emerge. Due to changes in the world economy during the 1980s, along with an emphasis on the democratization of state-society relations, the Turkish state took measures to create new policies and legitimize existing ones.

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15 Ibid.

16 Akın Atauz, "Çevreci Sivil Toplum Hareketinin Yakın Tarihi", in *Türkiye'de Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu*, 7-8 Nisan 2000, (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 2000),200.

First, changes in the world economy had a significant effect on Turkey's economic policies. During the 1980s the ideology of national developmentalism was insufficient and the replacement of import-substitution industrialization with export-oriented industrialization was inevitable.<sup>17</sup> The neoliberal policies common in the world economy supported a free-market rationality, individualism, and a minimal state for the Republic of Turkey. These economic changes transformed the strong-state ideology and national developmentalism; creating a space for the neoliberal discourse of a free-market economic rationality and the democratization of state-society relations.<sup>18</sup>

All these transformations along with strengthening relations between the Turkish state and international organizations like the European Union transformed not only the economic policy of the state but also the state-centric model of associational life. The need for a more democratic, active life challenged the duty-based notion of citizenship, and civil society in Turkey was reconstituted as a necessity for democratization.

This transition to neoliberal policies with respect to both the free-market rationality and to individuality opened a new space for environmental politics in the 1980s. The environment was the subject of a government program for the first time in 1974 during the time of Bülent Ecevit's prime ministry.<sup>19</sup> The Turkish state had already begun the institutionalization of environmental concerns, and the Prime Ministry Undersecretariat for Environment was founded in 1978 which was evolved into the Ministry of Environment in 1991. The establishment of the undersecretariat in 1978 was the first attempt at the institutionalization of environmentalism in Turkey.

Article 56 of the 1982 Constitution titled, "Health Services and the Conservation of the Environment," states: "Everyone has the right to live in a healthy, balanced environment. It is the duty of the State and the citizens to

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17 E. Fuat Keyman, "Modernity, Democracy and Civil Society", in *Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, 43.

18 Ibid.

19 Refet Erim, "Çevre ile İlgili Hukuksal Düzenlemeler", in *Türkiye'de Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu*, 7-8 Nisan 2000, (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 2000), 186.

improve the natural environment and to prevent environmental pollution.”<sup>20</sup> The necessity of protecting environment was an issue in this constitution and many other articles support that statement. “Utilization of the Coasts” (Article43), “Protection of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Persons Engaged in These Activities” ( Article45) , “Right to Housing” (Article57), “Conservation of Historical, Cultural and Natural Wealth” ( Article63), “Exploration and Exploitation of Natural Resources” ( Article168), and “Protection and the Development of the Forests” (Article169) include direct environmental regulations.<sup>21</sup> In these articles, the conservation of the environment gained a constitutional importance.

Article 56 of the 1982 Constitution was the one of the most important, *pioneer* statements that regulates the protection of the environment. However, there were numerous disruptions and confusion in the implementation of the law. Between the years 1983 and 1990 the article was changed four times, and the belated enactment of environmental regulations prevented the law from achieving the desired effectiveness. Furthermore, there was disagreement about which institution was responsible for enforcement. While Article 12 gave the mandate to audit to the undersecretariat (now the Ministry of Environment); Article 16 indicates that the ability to suspend activities belonged to the Ministry of Health.<sup>22</sup>

The same situation was valid for the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) process in the United States. The preparation of an EIA became an issue in Turkey in 1983 along with Article 56. Environmental Impact Assessment reports were required in Turkey, but until 1993; the date on which the relevant regulation was issued; they were not implemented.<sup>23</sup> According to the 1993 regulation, companies could not operate in specified areas of activity until

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20 Constitution of The Republic of Turkey, [https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution\\_en.pdf](https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf), (D.A: 02.02.2017)

21 Kemal Görmez , *Çevre Sorunları ve Türkiye*, 143

22 Kemal Görmez , *Çevre Sorunları ve Türkiye*, 148 .

23 Ibid.

they obtained an Environmental Impact Assessment.<sup>24</sup> Although this regulation was intended to ensure the protection of the environment; exceptions and violations in practice continue today.

During the 1980s, international organizations and agreements on created an impetus for the development of environmentalism in Turkey. According to Article 90 of the 1982 Constitution, “International agreements duly put into effect have the force of law. No appeal to the Constitutional Court shall be made with regard to these agreements, on the grounds that they are unconstitutional.”<sup>25</sup> In the light of this, the state is obliged to uphold international agreements.

Among the various international agreements and conferences on environmental protection, the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment; held in Stockholm; had a significant effect on the environmentalist movement in Turkey. Its influence can be clear given changes to the state’s environmental policies during the 1970s and 1980s. The third and fourth five-year development plans (1972-1979, 1979-1983) approached urbanization with environmentalist sensitivity, and curtailing the excessive growth of cities was one aim.<sup>26</sup> These agreements that have articles on behalf of environmentalism regulate different issues from nuclear risks to the protection of world cultural heritage to precautions to be taken against the depletion of the ozone layer.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, in 1992 Turkey attended the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED); also known as the Rio de Janeiro Earth

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24 Ibid.

25 Constitution of The Republic of Turkey, [https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution\\_en.pdf](https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf), (D.A: 02.02.2017)

26 Nesrin Algan, “Türkiye’de Devlet Politikaları Bağlamında Çevre ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihine Kısa Bir Bakış”, in *Türkiye’de Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu*, 7-8 Nisan 2000, (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 2000), 227.

27 Refet Erim, “Çevre ile İlgili Hukuksal Düzenlemeler”, in *Türkiye’de Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu*, 7-8 Nisan 2000, (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 2000), 192.

Summit; and signed the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity.<sup>28</sup>

In addition to international agreements, the European Union accession process had a significant impact on the development of the national environmental policy of Turkey. Turkey's candidacy for membership started in 1963 and the process greatly influenced Turkey's economic and political structures through the years.<sup>29</sup> As a candidate country, Turkey adopted a national program to fulfill the terms of the Accession Partnership adopted in 2001 and revised in 2003.<sup>30</sup> The Accession Partnership specifies priority areas for Turkey's membership, and environmental protection is one. For example, a revision to the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) regulation is required to make it conform with the European Union EIA directive.<sup>31</sup>

In the 2000s, in order to align itself with EU environmental *acquis*, Turkey indicated that its environmental legislation is in accord with EU environmental policy. Turkey made great deal of progress in terms of the environmental *acquis* and strengthened the institutional capacity of the state establishing the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2003.<sup>32</sup> A National Environmental Action Plan was put into effect in 1999, and Turkey became a member of the European Environment Agency in 2003; joining the European Information and Observation Network.<sup>33</sup> All these processes forced Turkey's policymakers to make environmental policies more effective. From environmental awareness to coastal management to the protection of ecosystems; Turkey's environmental policy experienced a rapid transition process. Turkey's sustainable development strategy greatly progressed during the membership process. In

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- 28 Zeynep Arat, "1970'lerden Sonra Çevrede Kurumsal Yapının Gelişimi", in *Türkiye'de Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu*, 7-8 Nisan 2000, (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 2000),171.
- 29 Rana İzci, "The Impact of the European Union on Environmental Policy", in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005),89.
- 30 Ibid.,91.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 Ibid., 92.
- 33 Ibid.

formal as well as informal ways, the impetus for the institutionalization of environmental governance in Turkey came from the European Union's environmental *acquis*.<sup>34</sup>

The 1982 Constitution -and Article 56 more specifically- transformed the environmental policy of Turkey. It was regarded as one of the most effective, progressive laws of its period concerning environmental protection. However, due to the lack of institutional capacity of the state as well as constantly changing regulations about the environment; the law did not achieve the expected outcomes. Even so, the enforcement of such numerous articles about environmental conservation increased environmental awareness among the masses in Turkey to a large extent. The regulation of environmental matters was an issue just after the establishment of the republic, but the protection of the environment was considered as a state matter and a top-down process was applied to the issues of environmental protection up until the 1970s. Environmentalism in these early years was understood as the preservation of the natural beauty; especially in coastal areas; and as the prevention of pollution for the sake of public health. The 1982 Constitution transformed the issue into a duty for every citizen.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, the preservation of the environment has been accepted as an object for regulation, not just as a subdivision of public health. The impetus for strengthening Turkey's institutional capacity in environmental policy was mostly to conform to international standards as a member of certain international unions like the EU. Their high standards for environmental preservation changed the path of environmentalism in Turkey. It is debatable to what extent Turkey fulfills the requirements, but in the sense of environmental awareness, much changed, especially during the 1990s.

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34 Çiğdem Adem, "Non-state Actors and Environmentalism", in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, 83.

35 Çiğdem Adem, "Non-state Actors and Environmentalism", in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, 75.

### § 3.2 Significant Environmental Resistance in the History of Environmental Activism in Turkey

There has been a gradual increase in the number of environmental resistance movements in Turkey during the second half of the 1980s. Overlapping global and national improvements in environmental politics, the environmental awareness and consciousness of the public has risen. Resistance that attracted public attention in this period included: Güvenpark (1986), Zaferpark (1987), Gökaova (starting in 1986), Yatağan (starting in 1989), Aliağa (1989-1992), Fırtına Valley (1999), Bursa (1992), and resistance to the Green-Road Project and HEPPs as well as the famous Bergama Movement.<sup>36</sup>

Since the 1980s, environmental resistance in Turkey has common features. Nearly all avoid overpoliticization and are concerned with one issue at a time.<sup>37</sup> Alongside this issue-based activism, this resistance prioritized forming public opinion and the means of resisting that were chosen were to stage protests or block the activities of private companies.<sup>38</sup> Environmental activism in this period sought public support and, in this way, aimed to put pressure on public authorities. It should be noted that the environmental resistance in the early 1990s did not openly conflict with the state itself. These protests were not in the area of politics proper, and therefore they criticized the state's environmental policies by resisting against private companies trying to establish factories or extract minerals.

The transformation from forestry and beautification organizations into conservation organizations -later into specialized organizations- happened during the 1980s, while the change from issue-based local resistance to national environmental movements took place in the second half of the 1990s. The Bergama movement was a pioneering movement in the history of environmental activism in Turkey. The development of environmental activism in

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36 Çiğdem Adem, "Non-state Actors and Environmentalism", in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, 76.

37 Ibid., 83.

38 Akın Atauz, "Çevreci Sivil Toplum Hareketinin Yakın Tarihi", in *Türkiye'de Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu*, 7-8 Nisan 2000, (Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, İstanbul, 2000),203.

a country should be analyze in continuity in order to understand why and under what conditions it developed. The Cerattepe resistance should be accepted as a part of this development process. In order to find out how they were organized and what political and social outcomes came out of these movements -as well as how local women's daily habits and relations were affected by them -I will give a brief timeline of some of these protests.

### 3.2.1 *Protect Nature from the State: The Bergama Movement*

As a turning point for environmental politics in Turkey, the Bergama movement is remembered as the largest, most effective environmental protest in Turkey to date. The villagers of the region of Bergama began their struggle with a discourse of the right to live, the protection of one's habitat, and the right to a healthy environment.<sup>39</sup> Eurogold, a multinational corporation, came to Bergama in 1988 and was given a license for gold exploration and excavation by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.<sup>40</sup> Mining activities in Bergama began in Ovacık, and at first, there was no negative reaction from villagers who believed that the company's mining activities would benefit their country and provide new areas of employment to young people in the region. However, when they learned that the method by which the gold would be extracted was cyanide leaching, they started to become suspicious.<sup>41</sup>

Between 1990 and 1996 a developmental process of the movement occurred as local men and women of Bergama became aware of the risks of gold extraction with cyanide and began to organize a resistance to goldmining in the region. They began to mobilize as soon as they became aware of the risks

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39 Nurçin İleri, "The Story of a Transition: The Organization and The Reception of the Bergama Movement", (Master Diss., Boğaziçi University, The Ataturk Institute of Modern Turkish History, 2006), 3

40 Baran Alp Uncu, "Within Borders, Beyond Borders: The Bergama Movement at the Junction of Local, National and Transnational Practices" (PhD diss, The London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Sociology, 2012), 13

41 Nurçin İleri, "The Story of a Transition: The Organization and The Reception of the Bergama Movement", (Master Diss., Boğaziçi University, The Ataturk Institute of Modern Turkish History, 2006), 36

of cyanide, as did environmentalists, professors, lawyers, university students, and musicians. All kinds of people from different backgrounds began to support the resistance and organized panels and seminars to inform the public about the possible threat to the environment of Bergama. Furthermore, in order to voice their claims, they sent letters to members of parliament, the cabinet, and state bureaucrats.<sup>42</sup> Locals visited the prime minister in 1992 and submitted a petition to the governor of Izmir that requested that the company not be granted environmental permission for mining activities.<sup>43</sup>

Despite these efforts on the part of locals, the government granted permission to the company in 1994 with one caveat: the company would have to install a filtration system at the mining site.<sup>44</sup> Locals then realized that the government would not support them. In order to prevent the company's activities, locals started legal proceedings against the decision by state authorities. However, they did not receive the ruling for which they had hoped, and the Izmir Administrative Court rejected their demand for a stay of execution.<sup>45</sup> From this point, locals' direct actions took the form of demonstrations and protests as well as action to prevent the operation of the mine. They tried all possible means of resistance.

In 1995, locals of Bergama started to stage public protests both in the region as well as in metropolises like Istanbul and Ankara. The numerous of protests expressed the real feelings of locals about the mines and showed their loyalty to land around Bergama. The first massive villager response occurred just after Eurogold started constructing the mining site in 1996.<sup>46</sup> Villagers staged a sit-in and blocked the Izmir-Çanakkale road for six hours.<sup>47</sup>After a

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42 Şükrü Özen and Hayriye Özen, "Peasants Against MNCs and the State: The Role of the Bergama Struggle in the Institutional Construction of the Gold- Mining Field in Turkey", (Organization Articles, 2009), 557.

43 Ibid.

44 Ibid., 558.

45 Ibid.

46 Baran Alp Uncu, "Within Borders, Beyond Borders: The Bergama Movement at the Junction of Local, National and Transnational Practices" (PhD diss, The London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Sociology, 2012), 116

47 Ibid.

period in which consciousness about goldmining was formed, protests continued and spread to other villages of the region. Along with the support of environmentalists from around the country, the movement attracted further media attention. They voiced their claims to the public via these protests, and when a group of local activists chained themselves to the railings of the Bosphorus Bridge in August 1997, they managed to get the attention of the national media.<sup>48</sup> A group of farmers applied to the German Consulate in Izmir for environmental asylum claiming that they would not face the same threat to their lives in Germany.<sup>49</sup> Apart from such symbolic resistance as well as picnics, festivals, and tree-planting days, locals also dealt with a lawsuit that ended in their favor. In 1997, the court decided that the ministerial act violated the rights to life stipulated in the constitution.<sup>50</sup>

On December 23, 1996, an unusual protest occurred in the region. Several hundred villagers from Bergama staged a demonstration, marching half-naked in only their underwear.<sup>51</sup> To undress in public is difficult for Turkish villagers -it is against traditions. In the book “Biz Toprağı Bilirik”, an interview with Oktay Konyar, a local who can be considered a leader of the movement, reveals the background of this protest.

Now women see me naked, in my underwear, they talk among themselves: “He is naked!”...Then I said, “This is a struggle; you cannot interfere.” One of them -she is very smart- says, “What should we do? I said, “Talk to your men.” She turned to her husband and yelled at him, “Why are you not naked?!”... Then we walked around Bergama like a flood, not feeling ashamed anymore.<sup>52</sup>

A number of protests took place. Especially between 1995-1998, peasant activists staged numerous high-profile demonstrations that attracted national and

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48 Ibid., 146.

49 Aykut Çoban, “Community-Based Ecological Resistance: The Bergama Movement in Turkey”, in *Environmental Politics*, (2004), 451.

50 Ibid.,448.

51 Üstün Bilgen Reinart, *Biz Toprağı Bilirik: Bergama Köylüleri Anlatıyor*, (İstanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2003),142.

52 Ibid.,63.

international attention. These protests, the organizational methods, and the efforts to inform the public constituted a network. The villagers refused to participate in the census in 1997 on the grounds that the state was not performing its rightful duties for its citizens.

As a non-violent social movement, local activists as well as environmentalists and supporters of the movement managed to attract public attention and carried the movement to a national level. Apart from the collective methods of resistance -organized lobbying activities, sit-ins at the mining site, petitions, and festivals- their use of slogans strengthened the movement.<sup>53</sup> “These are our lands, we don’t want the cyanide-using company in our hands.”; “Turkey won’t be Africa”, and “Eurogold get out of our country!” were some. Furthermore, slogans like “Everywhere is Bergama and we are all from Bergama” indicate the global claims of this local movement. According to Çoban; the locals of Bergama broadened the movement’s scale to reach the goal of “no cyanide in the country and on Earth.”<sup>54</sup>

As the largest-scale, longest-running ecological resistance in Turkey, the Bergama Movement paved the way for other kinds of environmental resistance and created legal and ecological bases for resistance for further anti-goldmining movements. To save the environment as well as the community, the locals of Bergama moved on from a local conflict and turned it into a struggle on judicial level.<sup>55</sup> Like other instances of environmental resistance, local activists demanded the cessation of harmful activities and a return to the community’s former way of life.<sup>56</sup> They sought neither to make the mining process more environmentally friendly nor to reduce the risks of mining; they insisted on the cessation of mining activities completely. The movement attracted the attention of both the public and the media, but in 2002, the Justice and Development Party government reallocated the company to operate, the

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53 Aykut Çoban, “Community-Based Ecological Resistance: The Bergama Movement in Turkey”, 445.

54 Ibid.,453.

55 Şükrü Özen and Hayriye Özen, “Peasants Against MNCs and the State: The Role of the Bergama Struggle in the Institutional Construction of the Gold- Mining Field in Turkey”, 548.

56 Aykut Çoban, “Community-Based Ecological Resistance: The Bergama Movement in Turkey”, 454.

1997 decision of the The Council of State notwithstanding. Moreover, in 2004, the government enacted a new mining law that allows mining activities in the region.

The movement was considered successful in terms of organizational methods and determined ways of resistance. Its way of maintaining mobilization and the strategies and tactics used had a spillover effect for ensuing environmental resistance. It is possible to see this inheritance in the Cerattepe protests. The slogans that activists at Cerattepe used are similar to those used in Bergama. Especially given references to loyalty to the land and emphasis on *all living things above and below ground*, the Cerattepe resistance was arguably influenced by the Bergama Movement's methods of resistance. How the local women of Cerattepe and those of Bergama can be compared on the grounds of their participation in protests will be analyzed in the next chapter.

### 3.2.2 "Will Our Animals Hitchhike?": The Green Road Project<sup>57</sup>

The Black Sea region is known for rich flora and old growth forests that provide food and shelter to a wealth of wildlife species. Due to the region's underground resources and the possibility of producing abundant energy from its rivers, the Black Sea region's natural resources have been seen as an economic opportunity by successive governments. The highway built parallel to the coastline which opened in 2007 was the first object of nationwide criticism. Then construction of hydroelectric power plants (HEPPs) for power generation elicited a huge reaction from both locals and environmentalists who argued that the natural habitats of the wildlife and the region's biological diversity were threatened by these projects. Locals tried for many years to protect their unique ecosystem. Recently, the Green Road Project has further threatened the unique ecology of the region.

"Who is the state? We are the state!" These words belong to Rabia Özcan; known to protestors as *Mother Rabia*, who was one of the leading figures at demonstrations against the Green Road Project. She stood with a shepherd's

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57 Nilay Vardar, "Will Our Animals Hitchhike?", July 3, 2015, <https://bianet.org/english/people/165775-will-our-animals-hitchhike>.

staff in front of bulldozers along with many other female protestors. The protest to which she heavily contributed was successful, and local residents did not allow the bulldozers to pass. Machine operators were stopped and removed from the area. This incident occurred in July 2015 and her determined stance paved the way for more women-led resistance to the Green Road Project. Davutoğlu explained the purpose of the project saying that the region has great potential for tourism and that there was a growing interest from tourists from Arab countries.<sup>58</sup> The public, on the other hand, was convinced that the project will destroy not only the natural habitat and unique ecosystem of the region but will also harm the culture and lifestyle of local residents. Against this exploitation, sit-ins were staged to prevent the construction vehicles' from working and people from other cities supported them.

Locals as well as civil society organizations are still trying to stop the project through all legal means. One of the activists, Özlem Erol, who is also the leader of the Slow Food Fırtına Vadisi Convivium; says;

Turkey has signed the Berne Convention, and based on this agreement had promised to safeguard these mountain areas, preserving their flora and fauna. In fact at the time they were declared protected zones; *SIT alanı* in Turkish. But all it took was the modification of those laws, in defiance of the international agreements, to accommodate all kinds of construction, ruining pastures, highlands and mountains.<sup>59</sup>

### 3.2.3 *The Commodification of Water: HEPPs*

'The sources of HEPPs [rivers] are flowing away. We need to make use of these. If we don't convert this water into energy, we will have to answer to both Allah and the nation.'<sup>60</sup> This quotation is from Erdoğan's speech at the opening of a

58 Erdinç Çelik, "Government Plan Reveals Controversial Green Road Project conducted for Arab Tourists," *Hürriyet Daily News*, July 15, 2015, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/government-plan-reveals-controversial-green-road-project-conducted-for-arab-tourists-85477>.

59 "Stop the Green Road", July 30, 2015, (D.A: 03.07.2017), <https://www.slowfood.com/stop-the-green-road/>.

60 Kamil Kaygusuz, Murat Arsel, "Energy Politics and Policy", in *Environmentalism in Turkey : Between Democracy and Development?*, ed. Fikret Adaman and Murat Arsel, (Burlington: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2005), 159.

hydroelectric power plant in 2010. As one can see, water sources were seen as a commodity, and the necessity of evaluating these goods is often emphasized by the government. As part of the neoliberal policies of 1990s, aggressive construction of HEPPs occurred throughout the country. According to the 2010 report of the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works, there were 500 HEPPs in Turkey; 264 of which were operating and 236 of which were under construction.<sup>61</sup> By January 2014, 458 hydroelectric power plants were operational and the number increases every year.

Due to its mountainous geography as well as its fast-flowing streams, Turkey has potential for hydroelectric energy production. The issue of hydroelectricity in Turkey is beyond the scope of this thesis; however, especially after 2010, there has been growing resistance to the construction of hydroelectric power plants on its rivers. In the Black Sea region, platforms have been established against the hydroelectricity and the resistance of locals in the region explains these people's perspective on the environment around them. Therefore, it became clear during my interviews that the locals of Artvin do not approach mining and power plants as two separate subjects. They frequently emphasized that issue of hydroelectric power plants is part of their ongoing struggle.

Loç, Senoz, Güneysu, Hopa, Fındıklı, and Andon are just some of the places where locals have tried to stop HEPPs with non-violent resistance. Like environmental resistance to mining or nuclear power stations, protests against HEPPs started locally. Today this resistance is supported by worldwide environmental organizations like Greenpeace. Also, platforms like the Brotherhood of the Rivers and Northern Forests Defense helped locals organize and more effectively voice their claims to the public. Their members provided expert reports, explored all legal channels to withdrawal of projects of the power plants, and invited scientists to inform local people regarding the negative environmental impact of the power plants. The struggle is ongoing, especially in

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61 Fikret Adaman, Bengi Akbulut, Murat Arsel, "Türkiye'de Kalkınmacılığı Yeniden Okumak: HES'ler ve Dönüşen Devlet-Toplum-Doğa İlişkileri", in *Sudan Sebepler: Türkiye'de Neoliberal Su-Enerji Politikaları ve Direnişleri*, ed. by Cemil Aksu, Sinan Erensü, Erdem Evren, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016), 7.

the Black Sea region, but the commodification of water has become part of developmentalist policies of the state since the 1990s.

### § 3.3 Women's Participation in Environmental Movements in Turkey

Environmental policies of the government affect state-society relations, and in Turkey, these policies have been decisive in the formation of public opposition. Since the 1980s, the economic and political structures of the Turkish state have been transformed via foreign direct investment as well as increasing production for exports. Successive governments sought to quickly integrate into the global market.<sup>62</sup> The energy development projects of the state followed this neoliberalization and starting in 1990s, local environmental protests against goldmines, HEPPs, nuclear power plants, and the destruction of city parks began all over the country.

Environmental protests in Turkey usually started locally and then evolved into nationally-recognized movements. As I mentioned above, the participation of local people in these protests has been intense and their enduring struggles have initiated the transformation of societal dynamics. In this chapter, I look at women's experiences in some of the environmental struggles in Turkey to figure out if anything changed for them during or after the protests. Relying on women's own statements that they gave to newspapers as well as on the articles of social movement researchers, my intent is to see how women are perceived in these environmental struggles and how they interpret their own participation in the protests.

The Bergama Movement was the first of these environmental struggles where women's participation was high, and their experiences during the protests transformed their socially-constructed roles and challenged traditional gender relations within their communities. When men staged half-naked protests, women supported them without hesitation. Despite the fact that getting undressed in public is against their tradition, the memoirs of Oktay Konyar

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62 Murat Arsel, Bengi Akbulut, Fikret Adaman, "Environmentalism of the Malcontent: Anatomy of an Anti-Coal Power Plant Struggle in Turkey", 6.

make clear that the women were the ones who encouraged the men in the first place. Women not only supported the actions of men in society but became protest organizers in the course of time.

Sabahat Gökçeoğlu led the female villagers' subnetwork and appeared in the mass media as a spokesperson of the Bergama movement. Regarding the 1997 occupation of the mine she said in an interview with Reinart:

... How can I forget the occupation of mine? ... Some of the women are crying; "Is there an armed struggle there? Are we going to die?" ... I cheered up and said to myself, "My God! Look at the beauty of these people!" ... And in the morning the media came. Brother Oktay and Brother Sefa were not there yet. What should I do? I called to the women: "Dear friends, get up, get up! If any conflict will happen here; it will be bloody! Get up, get up!" This was the first women-led movement that you saw in the newspapers. I made them sing marches and shout slogans....Women who did not occupy the mine saw us and came close by. Some were waving their scarves; others were waving their jackets. They joined us with great joy!<sup>63</sup>

Coffeehouses, on the other hand, were significant for the local men of Bergama. They gathered there and shared their opinions about the mines, but women's presence in these public spaces was rare if not impossible. The lives of women are mostly limited to the private sphere. Their visibility in public spaces was restricted by tradition. However, as we can see by their active participation in the protests, the mobilization of the Bergama movement changed their circumstances to a great extent. In meetings at houses and in conversations during their work in the fields, they became socialized. Gradually, women began to participate in the meetings at coffeehouses and became publicly visible. In protests, they stood shoulder to shoulder with men.<sup>64</sup> Apart from their efforts to mobilize locals, female villagers took on the important

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63 stün Blgen Reinart, *Biz Töğrağı Blirik: Bergama Köylüleri Anlatıyor*, (İstanbul: Mētis Yayınları, 2003), 74

64 Baran Alp Uncu, "Within Borders, Beyond Borders: The Bergama Movement at the Junction of Local, National and Transnational Practices" (PhD diss, The London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Sociology, 2012),125

task of prolonging the resistance; in order to mobilize male villagers to a greater extent, they went on a sexual strike for about six months. Unless men were fully involved in the resistance, women decided to refrain from sexual activity. Again, from an interview with Oktay Konyar, we see that women gained much from this resistance and gradually became active participants. One of these local women, Müberra Özyaylalı; said,

Women did not go to demonstrations then. ... We didn't know anything like demonstrations before. I went to a meeting, which was held in a wedding saloon; for the first time in my life. ... Men were seated in the front seats and women sat behind them. None of the women talked. We didn't know Mr. Oktay then. He led the way and then women started to follow.<sup>65</sup>

Oktay Konyar relates that he encouraged women to hold the sexual strike to prevent the men from sitting in coffeehouses all day: *"I said; 'We are going to separate your beds. You will be honest, and you will check up on each other. You are going to punish those bastards!' They shouted; 'We will!'"*<sup>66</sup>

Women's visibility in public was increased and they actively participated in demonstrations. The Bergama Movement transcended conventional distinctions between male and female and between public and private.<sup>67</sup> Also, due to their newly gained self-reliance, women's positions in their households changed in a positive way. When they joined urban protests -most of these women had never been to the capital before- they left their household duties to their husbands. They stopped wearing *kıvraks*; a traditional cloth with

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65 Reinart, , *Biz Toğrağı Bilirik: Bergama Köylüleri Anlatıyor*, 63.

66 Ibid.,68.

67 Baran Alp Uncu, "Within Borders, Beyond Borders: The Bergama Movement at the Junction of Local, National and Transnational Practices" (PhD diss, The London School of Economics and Political Science, Department of Sociology, 2012),125

which women cover their whole bodies, they and joined meetings in coffee-houses without them.<sup>68</sup> The local women's alternative mechanisms of resistance; like refusing to participate in the census and not sending their children to school; accelerated the momentum of the movement and challenged women's position. Once excluded, passive agents in society, these women created new roles for themselves and became significant actors of the movement in time.

The Green Road resistance was one of the first movements in the region in which women declared their opinions with such clarity and led the protests most of the time. There were many women at the demonstrations and they resisted to the best of their ability. Women like Rabia Özcan – who shouted like “*We are the state! Citizens make up the state!*” -many women in their sixties and seventies came with critical homemade banners reading, “*Will our animals hitchhike?*”-questioning how their animals would get to the highlands if roads and tourism centers were built.<sup>69</sup> Locals acknowledged that the project would end their traditional lifestyle and ruin their clean water and unique flora. Protests continued in cities like Istanbul and people danced the horon to get the attention of the public; meanwhile, locals were clashing with gendarmes in the region. Local women made statements to the press and clearly declared their position against the Green Road Project. To explain the motivations for their struggle, I will give them a voice here:

Gönül Gülay and Süreyya Yücel were two of the local women who participated in the protests who threw themselves in front of bulldozers without hesitation. After that, they attracted the media's attention and became symbols of the resistance. Gülay said:

Our struggle will continue. ... These plateaus are ours. There is no place in nature to take shelter anymore. Everything is taken from us.

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68 Hayriye Özen “Bergama Mücadelesi: Doğuşu, Gelişimi ve Sonuçları”, Atılım Üniversitesi, (14), no:3 March 4, 2009, (D.A: 5.11.2017), [http://e-bulten.library.atilim.edu.tr/sayilar/2009-03/makale\\_04.html](http://e-bulten.library.atilim.edu.tr/sayilar/2009-03/makale_04.html).

69 Pınar Tremblay, “Is Turkey Driving Down Road to Environmental Disaster?,” September 3 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/tr/contents/articles/originals/2015/09/turkey-reckless-destruction-of-black-sea-forests.html#>, (D.A: 13.12.15)

...They have taken even the fields that turned into forests. They will destroy the nature by riddle all of these mountains. ... Our aim is to save these plateaus. We don't want this project."<sup>70</sup>

For another newspaper, Gülay related;

I am from Çamlıhemşin and I am a primary school graduate. Everything was good back then. I shepherded thirty cows in a house where twenty-five people lived. We were happy on those plateaus. We lived shoulder to shoulder. Not even the letter 'g' of the 'government' came to Çamlıhemşin back then. ... *Hemşin* women are superior to their men. In every house there is a matriarch and she is the spokesperson of the house. ... We are going to resist. I don't know how far.<sup>71</sup>

Süreyya Yücel expressed her feelings as follows: "*We don't want to sacrifice our plateaus to rent seeking.(...) We are against this project and we say stop! We are determined to stop this immediately.*"<sup>72</sup> Another resister; Zeliha Gülay; mentions her conversation with a parliamentarian. "*I asked why it called 'green' and he said green is 'felicity.' However, if you dig into the green, the soil comes to surface. We already know what felicity is, but you are digging into it right now. We are struggling, and we are going to resist to the end.*"<sup>73</sup>

Many women came to protests, expressed their concerns about their homelands, and criticized the government directly. Rabia Özcan said; "*They called us riffraff. How could they call these people riffraff? ... Who is the governor? You are sitting in your chair thanks to me. How can you say this to me? ...*

70 "Yeşil Yol Direnişinin Sembolü Kadınlar: Müadelemiz Sürecek", July 12, 2015, CNN Türk, <https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/yesil-yol-direnisinin-sembolu-kadinlar-mucadelemiz-surecek>.

71 Nilay Vardar, "Yeşil Yol'a Karşı Çıkan Kadınlar: Yeşili Kazarsan Altından Toprak Çıkar", November 13, 2015, <http://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/169200-yesil-yol-a-karsi-cikan-kadinlar-yesili-kazirsan-altindan-toprak-cikar>.

72 "Yeşil Yol Direnişinin Sembolü Kadınlar: Müadelemiz Sürecek", July 12, 2015, CNN Türk

73 Nilay Vardar, "Yeşil Yol'a Karşı Çıkan Kadınlar: Yeşili Kazarsan Altından Toprak Çıkar", November 13, 2015, <http://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/169200-yesil-yol-a-karsi-cikan-kadinlar-yesili-kazirsan-altindan-toprak-cikar>.

*We are the state. If we do not protect these plateaus, a lot of bad things will happen here.*<sup>74</sup> To the newspaper *Birgün* she also said; *“Let them hang me if they want, I am not turning back from my fight!”*<sup>75</sup>

The resistance to the hydroelectric power plants in the Black Sea region, on the other hand were exceptional examples of women’s resistance. Local women who experienced the resistance to power plants were from all age and professional groups. The hydroelectric facilities planned for almost entirety of the Black Sea region caused local women to counter this threat to their homeland, and they developed alternative resistance mechanisms in time. Women’s determinant resistance attracted the attention of researchers because most of these local women had been *good* citizens and had never participated in a protest in their lives. Therefore, these protests were a new experience for them. Given that these women participated in the demonstrations in the front row and even became protest organizers and spokespeople for the resistance in time, the value of their participation is clear.

Collective action and struggle affected women’s perception of the state, and in a sense; this resistance transformed state-society relations. The main argument of the article “Türkiye’de Kalkınmacılığı Yeniden Okumak: HES’ler ve Dönüşen Devlet-Toplum-Doğa İlişkileri” (Rereading of Developmentalism in Turkey: HEPPs and Transforming State-Society- Nature Relationships) is that in recent years the state itself is recently undergoing a transformation. From a paternal state that knows what is best for its citizens to a developmentalist, neoliberal state. According to the article, this transformation entails more interference in local people’s lives because this new neoliberal state urgently needs energy to fully integrate into the global market. The article implied that local people are not only opposed to the interference in their lifestyles and to environmental degradation, but they also resist the privatizations

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74 "Yeşil Yol Direnişinin Sembölü Kadınlar: Müadelemiz Sürecektir", July 12, 2015, CNN Türk, <https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/yesil-yol-direnisinin-sembolu-kadinlar-mucadelemiz-surecek>.

75 "Rabia Ana'dan Bakanlara: Umurumda Değiller, Mücadelemden Dönmem", *Birgün*, July 27, 2015, <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/rabia-ana-dan-bakanlara-umurumda-degiller-mucadelemden-donmem-85606.html>.

emerging because of neoliberal policies.<sup>76</sup> Private companies build the power plants, and the rights to the water are leased to them for up to ninety-eight years. These were the most influential reasons for the formation of social opposition to HEPPs.<sup>77</sup>

*“We already gave our water. ... We did not oppose the dams. They do not construct (dams) for somebody else to increase their profits or to trade the water. HEPPs are something else. They take our water and produce electricity and then sell it to somebody.”*<sup>78</sup> These words of a villager from Artvin draw a line between dams and HEPPs. It is clear from these words that locals are aware that the construction of private power plants in their region will not benefit them collectively.

In this context, how can we analyze women’s participation in this resistance to HEPPs? They were called ‘guardians of the rivers’ in the media, and their images were widely used by newspapers and news portals.<sup>79</sup> Their stated opposition to private companies indicates that for them this is not just environmental resistance. It is also an issue of survival; at least, they perceive the struggle in this context. Özlem Şendeniz and Şahinde Yavuz tried to give a glimpse of these guardians’ lives in their cowritten article “HES Direnişlerinde Kadınların Deneyimleri: Fındıklı Örneği.” In this article, they dealt with the question of how local women’s lives changed after the protests; if at all. Therefore, they tried to figure out how gender relations in society influenced women’s participation in these protests.

Like many other environmentalist movements, demonstrations against HEPPs are the first experiences of mass protest for most of these women. The

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76 Fikret Adaman, Bengi Akbulut, Murat Arsel, “Türkiye’de Kalkınmacılığı Yeniden Okumak: HES’ler ve Dönüşen Devlet-Toplum-Doğa İlişkileri”, in *Sudan Sebepler: Türkiye’de Neoliberal Su-Enerji Politikaları ve Direnişleri*, ed. by Cemil Aksu, Sinan Erensü, Erdem Evren, (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2016), 2.

77 Ibid.,9.

78 Ibid.,10.

79 “KİP Su ve Kadın Söyleşisi’nde Derelerin Bekçisi Kadınlar Deneyimlerini Paylaştı”, *EkolojiAgi*, January 10, 2011, D:A:04.05.2017 <https://ekolojiagi.wordpress.com/2011/01/10/kip-su-ve-kadin-soylesisinde-derelerin-bekcisi-kadınlar-deneyimlerini-paylasti/>.

formation of the Fındıklı Dereleri Koruma Platformu in 2007 provided a common ground for all protestors to gather for discussions and to organize more efficiently.<sup>80</sup> For students, retirees, and housewives, this platform became a tool for voicing their claims to the public.

According to the research, most women linked the protection of rivers to their right to live, and “if the river goes, we lose everything” became a common saying among local women. It is clear from that this is an issue of survival for them - even a life and death struggle. One of these women said that if the rivers dried up it would be as if their blood was driven out of their body. ‘How long do you walk around without blood? You can’t!’<sup>81</sup>

On May 17, 2010; villagers of the Arılı Valley in Fındıklı pitched tents on the edge of the river, and for six days they protected the river from the constructors. Local women also joined these watches, and those who could not join the night watches supported the struggle by bringing food.<sup>82</sup> One of the interviewees said that women came to the watches with their babies. One local woman who came with her husband confronted her husband when he said; “Let’s go, it’s very cold here.” In reply, she said; “It will be a shame if we go and everybody else dies here from the cold. This is our river!’ In the end, the husband submitted to his wife.<sup>83</sup>

Another woman from the same region; a 50-year-old housewife and primary school graduate; held a banner at a demonstration for the first time in her life. The image of her with her banner reading: ‘Our rivers are free and they will flow freely!’ was published in newspapers. This woman; who Şendeniz and Yavuz call Aynur in their article; said that she was not afraid. On the contrary, because of their determined stance at the demonstrations she was appreciated and she was proud of herself when the gendarmes forced them to leave.<sup>84</sup> A 26-year-old college graduate expressed her amazement when she

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80 Özlem Şendeniz, Şahinde Yavuz, “HES Direnişlerinde Kadınların Deneyimleri: Fındıklı Örneği”, *Fe Dergi* 5,no.1 (2013), 48.

81 *Ibid.*,49.

82 *Ibid.*,50.

83 *Ibid.*

84 *Ibid.*,51.

saw local women talking not only with their words but also with their hands and bodies. According to her, it seemed that these women had found an opportunity to express themselves probably for the first time in their lives.<sup>85</sup>

One of the interviewees said that because women are at the center of production in the fields; they were the ones to warn their husbands against the future threat of these power plants. She explained that her husband thought the water flowed and was wasted. She convinced him of the importance of the water from the rivers for the agricultural production in the region.<sup>86</sup> A 23-year-old teacher, Çiğdem, tells a similar story that her mother is the only person in the family who works the fields. She added that her father was never interested in field work even in his retirement.<sup>87</sup> She indicates that for that reason, women are the ones who determinedly resist the construction of power plants in the region. They know the environmental consequences much better than the men in society do.

Şendeniz and Yavuz concluded that the resistance to power plants gave women self-confidence, and given the statements of interviewees, their daily lives and gender relations were highly affected by these protests. One local woman relates that she learned to say *no* to her husband when he ordered her to prepare a bowl of soup at the home due to these protests. A mother-in-law complained that the protests had opened up women's political minds and that is why her daughter-in-law behaves badly toward her son. Ayşe also indicated 'a human should resist,' and she indicated that since the protests she listens to all the news about disadvantaged groups in society.<sup>88</sup> According to the interviewees; women of the region obtained the power to say *no* and oppose their husbands at home or any other men in the society; like tea exports; for their unjust behaviors.<sup>89</sup>

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85 Ibid.

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid.,52.

88 Ibid.,53.

89 Ibid.

The scope of the book *Dereler ve İsyandar* includes all of the resistance to HEPPs, and similar experiences can be seen in different resistance movements. For example, an old woman in Giresun-Çanakçı; Ayşe Kır; said that she went to all the demonstrations against HEPPs in the region:

We are going to continue to resist. I was there at the protests. For the first time in my life I joined a march like that. If it happens [again] in the future I will go again. The girls are there at the demonstrations and I prayed for everybody there.”<sup>90</sup>

In Tonya; Trabzon; the picture is similar. Images in the book show local women holding banners against the HEPPs and walking in front at the demonstrations.<sup>91</sup> A local woman; Ayşe Lermi; is threatened the builders of one power plant saying, “*If we go there as 100 women, and I say to them ‘come on!’ we are going to lynch them. You should believe we can do it. Our Tonya women are like that.*” She adds, “*We are not going to push our men into this struggle!*”<sup>92</sup> The author of the book; Mahmut Hamsici; also indicates how local women of the Fındıklı region formed a somewhat private security system among themselves. They informed each other, says Hamsili; whenever they saw a car with out-of-town license plates. In that way, they guarded the river and did not allow any stranger near it. Hamsili says he organized a meeting with villagers in the Valley of Çağlayan (again in Fındıklı) and listened to their stories of resistance. They told how they responded to builders by throwing eggs at them. Women said they would never give up on their water and would fight until giving their last drop of blood.<sup>93</sup> They also acknowledged their position in society: “Women of this region are like men.”, “In our house the woman is the minister of internal affairs.”, and “We can take care of this resistance. We are not going to drag men anywhere.”<sup>94</sup>

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90 Mahmut Hamsici, *Dereler ve İsyandar*, (Ankara: Nota Bene Yayınları, 2010), 63.

91 Ibid.,76.

92 Ibid.,81.

93 Ibid.,115.

94 Ibid.,116.

Women in the nearby region of Artvin were also angry with the builders of power plants as well as with the government that had given permission for the HEPPs. At a forum called Doğu Karadeniz Su Hakkı Forumu (The Black Sea Water Forum ), one woman said; “I hope that they cannot find water for their *Ghusl* when they die.”<sup>95</sup> Hamsici says women directly targeted the government in their speeches and indicated that they would “crack open builders’ heads” should they come.<sup>96</sup> In another district of Artvin; Şavşat; women held shepherd’s staff in their hands and protected the river from workers who had started on the project. One of these women; Emine Yılmaz said, “If we did not react in this way, they would take our water.” Another old woman from the village said, “If it is necessary we will lie down under the bulldozers, but we won’t give up on our water!”<sup>97</sup>

There are numerous other examples, but it is clear that water was a matter of life and death for these women. Even though they did not know how to resist or how to behave in such circumstances; they fought at the cost of their lives. They placed water at the center of village life because they knew that water gives them suitable conditions for agricultural production and ensures the continuity of their culture in the region. As one villager said in Hamsici’s book, the rivers are the reason that the region’s people spoke loudly.<sup>98</sup> Women use the water for both agricultural production and domestic use, and for that reason, they very well know the value of a *flowing* river. That is why they oppose the companies and as well as the government with their shepherd’s staff, banners, and eggs. As I noted in the beginning of this chapter, the establishment of power plants was especially common in the Black Sea region. Women of the region opposed to them from the very beginning and that resistance also changed their daily relations with each other as well as with men. Through their increasing self-confidence, they became political in the process of time.

Since the 1990s, there have been a number of instances of environmental resistance in the country, and despite the fact that the people who participated did not see themselves as opponents of the state, many environmental protests

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95 Ibid.,155.

96 Ibid.,156.

97 Ibid.,172.

98 Ibid.,56.

resulted in clashes between protestors and security forces, especially since the turn of the century. Women also found opportunities to voice their claims to the public via this resistance, and in some cases, like the Green Road Project and HEPPs, these women also harshly criticized the state which had tried to label them as *marginal* or *terrorists*. They came face to face with security forces, and in most such events, they questioned the legality of the state and the judiciary based on the argument that must protect the environment against them even though it should be the other way around. In this chapter, a few outstanding examples of environmental resistance in Turkey, show that women's involvement in this resistance changed something about their daily lives and habits. They learned to say 'no' while participating in the resistance to HEPPs. They used this newly gained power in their homes. And during protests against the Green Road project, they realized that citizens comprise the state not the other way around. Given that, it can be said that, environmental resistance in Turkey had a transformative power in women's lives, and this fact is especially true for movements since the 1990s.

# 4

## The Cerattepe Incident

### § 4.1 Historical and Social Background of the Region

*Today the sea's many names are really, in translation, in the same: Karadeniz in Turkish, Maure Neagra in Romanian, Chorne More in Ukranian, Chernoe More in Russian, shavi zghva in Gerorgian -all of which mean literally "black sea."*<sup>1</sup>

The eastern Black Sea region has been home to several civilizations throughout history. It is the crossroads of Eastern Anatolia to the south, the Black Sea to the north, the Caucasus to the northeast, and the Central Anatolian steppes to the southwest. With its abundance of water resources, fertile forests, and meadows, it welcomed many civilizations throughout history. The most important feature that distinguishes the region from others is its mountain ranges that start at the coastline and up reach nearly 3000 meters in some places.<sup>2</sup> The Rize Mountains and Çoruh-Kelkit Range constitute the mountainous borders of the region and cause its unique climatic conditions. Thus,

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1 Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History*; (New York; Oxford University Press, 2004), xii.

2 Osman Emir, "Eskiçağ'da Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi'nin Jeopolitik Önemi", *Journal of Black Sea Studies*, I:13, (2015), 10.

numerous rivers and waterways serve as natural roads and define areas of settlement. Due to the strategic locations of its harbors and the region's proximity to significant trade routes, it became one of the regions favored for settlement by important civilizations. The history of the region; which was settled in prehistoric times; can be traced back to the Gaşka people in the sixteenth century B.C.<sup>3</sup> Today this region comprises the Ordu, Giresun, Gümüşhane, Trabzon, Rize, and Artvin provinces of Turkey.

Precious metals such as silver and copper have been extracted in this region since prehistoric times.<sup>4</sup> Especially the valley of the Çoruh River; the largest water source in the region; is rich in terms of mineral resources. It is known that there are rich copper deposits in the entirety of the valley.<sup>5</sup> This richness in terms of mineral resources makes the region significant geopolitically. The shielded physical structure provided by geographical characteristics and the commercial gain from the harbors have made the region an attractive settlement place.

The Laz people came to the region in a migration wave from the Caucasus in the first century, and the areas where the Laz population was located in the region called "Pontus" began to be called "Lazistan" in time. After this date, many waves of migration and incursions influenced the cultural formation of the region. The residents of this region were first dominated by the Byzantines and then became subjects of the Greek Empire of Trebizond (Trabzon Rum Devleti) in 1204. Ottoman hegemony in the Eastern Black Sea region started with the conquest of Mehmed the Conqueror in 1461.<sup>6</sup> In the 300-year

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- 3 İbrahim Telliöđlu, "Dođu Karadeniz Bölgesinin Bugünkü Etnik Yapısına Tesir Eden Göçler", Karadeniz Araştırmaları, I:5,(2005), 1.
  - 4 Fatma Acun, "Tarih Boyunca Pontus", Milli Mücadele Döneminde Giresun Sempozyumu, 6-7 March , İstanbul, (1999), 20.
  - 5 Veli Ünsal, "Dođu Karadeniz'in Tarihi Coğrafyası", Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi, I:8 , (2006), 136.
  - 6 İbrahim Telliöđlu, "Dođu Karadeniz Bölgesinin Bugünkü Etnik Yapısına Tesir Eden Göçler", Karadeniz Araştırmaları, I:5, (2005), 3.

period before the opening of the Black Sea to the commercial activities of European states in the late eighteenth century; the Black Sea was generally referred to as a “Turkish Lake.”<sup>7</sup>

Even two hundred years after the conquest by the Ottoman Empire and the formation of Muslims as the majority throughout the region in the seventeenth century, different religions and languages could still be encountered in the region. Residents spoke various languages such as Turkish, Laz, Armenian, and Greek.<sup>8</sup> The topography and shielding effect of the Pontic Mountains was influential in the periods of both Turkification and Islamization. Often serving as a shield against invasions, environmental features such as mountains and rivers resulted in the formation of isolated coastal villages that were little affected by external factors. Therefore, the eastern Black Sea region became a region where there was the opportunity for different cultures to coexist. In his book *A Nation of Empire* Meeker analyzes this situation:

Even as the high mountains and dense vegetation defined an “island on the land,” a kind of refuge area set apart from the interior highlands, its temperate climate and fertile soils were powerful magnets that lured people into it. The two opposed qualities of the landscape, defensibility balanced against desirability, led to a pattern of ethnic fragmentation. For whenever outsiders did succeed in penetrating the coastal region, they tended to retain elements of their distinctiveness.<sup>9</sup>

The Lazi, Pontics and Hemşin lived together in this region but maintained their linguistic and cultural differences. In time, the specific features of these local communities mixed because of relocations and their cultural and social characteristics intermingled from time to time. The complex social and cultural structure of the region is the reason why people in this coastal region are simply referred as Laz. This term was eventually used to describe the entire

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7 Charles King, *The Black Sea: A History*; (New York; Oxford University Press, 2004), 111.

8 Michael E. Meeker ; *A Nation of Empire: the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*, (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2002), 90.

9 *Ibid.*,91.

Muslim majority in the coastal region despite ethnic and cultural differences.<sup>10</sup> The geographic characteristics of the region worked to preserve this cultural, ethnic, and linguistic context and at the same time helped these different cultures to converge. This relative homogenization of identities and relations along with the preservation of difference formed a unique social structure in the region.

Meeker analyzes that there were two contradictory aspects of the rural society of this coastal region:

Their homelands served as isolated refuges where archaic traits and dialects were preserved. And yet, their homelands while isolated refuges were also connected with the outside world. Topography and environment did not have a single, undivided consequence for social life in the coastal region.<sup>11</sup>

Given that it seems that the environmental characteristics of the Eastern Black Sea Region significantly influenced the economic power of its empires and caused the formation of a cultural context that was specific to the region. However, isolation increased the importance of subsistence agriculture in the region. When the population of the eastern coastal region rapidly increased after the conquest of the Ottoman Empire; the population suffered from impoverishment and local market-oriented agricultural production led to the continuation of extreme hardship for the people. Meeker indicates how the British consul William Palgrave described the situation of the villagers of Trabzon in the nineteenth century:

The inhabitants are hardly an exception, wretchedly poor. The plot of ground on which each man cultivates his maize, hemp and garden stuff, yields little more than enough for his own personal uses and those of his family; the maize-field and garden supply their stable food,

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10 Michael E. Meeker, *A Nation of Empire: the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*, (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2002),95.

11 *Ibid.*,97.

and the hemp their clothing; this last coarse and ragged beyond belief.<sup>12</sup>

Agricultural lands were narrow and divided into small patches, but agricultural production was still important for the local people. The main products were tobacco, hazelnuts, and beans, but climatic conditions prevented these agricultural products from being produced in commercially valuable quantities. Due to these conditions that prevented agricultural products from having commercial value, agriculture became a sector in which mostly women and children were employed.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, men sought jobs outside the region to support their families, and this affected gender relations in society, as I explain later in this chapter.

The extreme poverty of the region led to waves of emigration. Particularly in the first half of the twentieth century, men of the region evaluated their work opportunities and travelled to cities like Batumi to provide incomes for their families. They served as mercenaries for the power-holders in Asia, and employed in governmental institutions.<sup>14</sup> This situation transformed not only the economic situation of the local community but affected gender relations in society. In the absence of men, local women of the coastal valleys of Eastern Black Sea region closely associated themselves with subsistence tasks like farming and husbandry. While men felt with more official work like government and commercial enterprise outside of their hometowns, women with their wicker baskets were responsible for all gathering and harvesting activities. The differing relationship between women and men in the region became a cultural tradition over the years, which compelled women to take on more and more responsibility. It is hard to claim that present gender relations in the Eastern Black Sea region are a continuation of this historical context, but there is a correlation between them.

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12 Michael E. Meeker , *A Nation of Empire: the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*, (Berkeley; University of California Press, 2002),103.

13 Ahmet Karaçavuş, “XIX. Yüzyıl Sonu ve XX. Yüzyıl Başlarında Trabzon’da Tarım, Uluslar arası Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi, 1:9,(2015), 54.

14 Michael E. Meeker , *A Nation of Empire: the Ottoman Legacy of Turkish Modernity*, 103.

Women's labor in the gardens and stables was the precondition for men's participation in the horizon of elsewhere. It was the men who soldiered and preached and, in doing so, traveled to other towns, resided in dormitories, socialized in coffeehouses, set up shops and ateliers in markets, ran caravans into eastern Anatolia, and sailed transport ships along the coast.(...) And by the logic of such circumstances, women's work in the fields and stables became the confirmation that the men of the household were something more than peasants. Women were therefore obliged to work in the fields and stables whether or not the men were absent from the homestead.<sup>15</sup>

Women's undertaking of these types of businesses created a permanent gendered division of labor in the region. Women not only took care of their houses, stables, and fields but were also trained to use weapons in the absence of their husbands and fathers. Meeker analyzes in his book *A Nation of Empire* this "cultural tradition" was clear when he visited the region in the 1960s.<sup>16</sup> It is also possible to encounter the image of women with rifles in many memoirs and travel writings. Asım Zihnioğlu tells in his memoirs that it was hard to find men in the villages in 1940s; there were only women and children, and women were the guardians of their towns, the protectors of their children, and the owners of the houses in the absence of men.<sup>17</sup>

Ahmet Karaçavuş makes a relevant claim in his article "Agriculture in Trabzon at the Turn of the Twentieth Century". According to him, matriarchy develops more easily in societies where men are far from their homes for most of the year. He claims that in the Eastern Black Sea region, women had to take care of their fields and houses and had to protect themselves and their families when necessary. Karaçavuş says women were responsible for the management and protection of their households while men dealt with financial issues away from their homeland. According to him, it can be said that the "women were

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15 Ibid.,105.

16 Ibid.,106.

17 Asım Zihnioğlu, *Bir Yeşilin Peşinde*, (Ankara, TÜBİTAK, 1998), 20

the one who closely tied to their lands and their children were the helpers”<sup>18</sup> For these reasons, he says that the region turned into one of the regions in Turkey where matriarchy is most evident.<sup>19</sup> Though it is not possible to draw definitive conclusions about matriarchy in the Eastern Black Sea region, the existing literature and interviews with people of the region corroborate this argument.

In this thesis, I show that these features of the local community play a significant role in the life of locals even today. When interviewing local people about the Cerattepe protests, one main question concerned with how local women perceived their relations with men and how they interpreted gender relations in the region. Given the responses, this unique type of gender relations, which I call a cultural tradition, continues in the region. During my interviews, women often emphasized their independence, both socially and economically. They said that equality between women and men as always been the case in the city of Artvin. The roots of gender relations in the Eastern Black Sea region are important for examining the issue of women’s agency during the Cerattepe protests. As I show in the next sections, the immigration status of men as well as the societal position of women in their local communities helps explain the present sociological and gendered context of the region. This situation, began in the eighteenth century, was still existent in the 1960s. As can be inferred from memoirs and travel writings, it links women’s independent status in the past and gender relations in the local community today.

In addition to geographical and financial difficulties; wars also dramatically affected the lives of locals. The Ottoman-Russian War of 1877-1878 affected population movements and the strategies of the states. Studies have shown how Eastern Black Sea harbors affected the demography of the region. One such study “Orta Doğu ve Karadeniz Limanlarındaki Ticari Faaliyetlerin Kent Nüfusuna Etkisi (1838-1900)” indicates that harbors in Trabzon, Samsun, and Sinop were significant trade centers, and the Ottomans’ adoption of a free-market economy in the second half of the nineteenth century visibly increased

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18 Ahmet Karaçavuş, “XIX. Yüzyıl Sonu ve XX. Yüzyıl Başlarında Trabzon’da Tarım, Uluslar arası Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi, 1:9,(2015), 54.

19 Ibid.

commercial activity in the Black Sea region.<sup>20</sup> According to the author of this article; Nedim İpek; new employment opportunities in these ports made coastal villages attractive to locals, especially after the Crimean War (1853-1856), and large numbers of villagers in their vicinity found themselves among an internal migration towards the coastline of the Black Sea. However, according to İpek, the discrepancy between the number of migrants and the opportunities for employment along the coast later caused a second wave of immigration. Non-Muslim people had to leave the cities when they became unemployed after the wars, and they emigrated to the Caucasus and Crimea with the support of Russia. Meanwhile, unemployed Muslims returned to their villages or migrated to larger cities in the region of the Sea of Marmara.<sup>21</sup>

#### § 4.2 Mining and Natural Resources in Cerattepe

*Underground wealth is also our wealth, but more important than anything, the most precious mineral, is water.*<sup>22</sup>

The struggle against mining considered an issue of survival for the people of the Eastern Black Sea region. As they often expressed, the protests were vital to the future of their lands, the future of their children, and the future of their most important wealth: the water. As revealed in interviews, they clearly appreciate the importance of water, forests, and other natural resources, and they are aware that the sustainability of healthy living spaces depends on those resources. As I expressed in the previous subsections, the living conditions in this region are closely related to geographical factors and climatic conditions. As a consequence, opposition to mining has been intense from the beginning, especially among locals.

The Eastern Black Sea region also has a notable, rich diversity of plants, many endemic, and the whole region is considered worthy of protection by

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20 Nedim İpek, "Orta ve Doğu Karadeniz Limanlarındaki Ticari Faaliyetlerin Kent Nüfusu'na Etkisi (1838-1900), Uluslar arası Karadeniz İncelemeleri Dergisi, I: 1, (2006), 120.

21 Ibid.

22 Neşe Karahan, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016.

local and global environmental organizations. The city of Artvin in the region is the third-most environmentally rich in Turkey -after Antalya and Istanbul- with approximately 1900 plant species of which 200 are endemic.<sup>23</sup>

The largest natural, old-growth forest ecosystem in the vast geographical area spanning Europe and Central Asia is found in the Hatila and Çoruh Valleys, regions also greatly affected by the possible mining. The Hatila region; the right side of the Cerattepe; was declared a national park in 1994 and though locals claimed that the extent of the national park was purposely narrowed so that Cerattepe remained outside its boundaries so as not to cause problems for future mining activities.<sup>24</sup> According to these claims, the integrity of the valley was deteriorated and the mining area was deliberately left out of Hatila National Park.<sup>25</sup> The region contains about 1300 plant species, including endemic ones.<sup>26</sup> The region of Cerattepe reportedly has more than 120 endemic plant species and is home to hundreds of rare animal species. The World Wide Fund for Nature labels the whole region -including Cerattepe- a “Caucasus Hotspot for Nature,” and it has been declared a threatened “Territorial Biodiversity Hotspot.”<sup>27</sup> As one of the richest ecological provinces of the country, it is important to see what kind of unique ecological habitat the people of the region are concerned about.

The city of Artvin and its various habitats, elevation differences of 4000 meters, the influence of three different climates (Mediterranean,

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- 23 TEMA ( The Turkish Foundation of Combating Erosion Reforestration and the Protection of Natural Habits), <[http://tema.org.tr/web\\_14966-2\\_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary\\_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single](http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single)> “Artvin Uzlaşmanın Simgesi Olsun”, (D.A: 15.07.2017)
- 24 Yeşil Artin Derneği, “Our History of Struggle”, D.A: 08.06.2017, <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>.
- 25 TEMA ( The Turkish Foundation of Combating Erosion Reforestration and the Protection of Natural Habits );”Artvin Uzlaşmanın Simgesi Olsun”,[http://tema.org.tr/web\\_14966-2\\_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary\\_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single](http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single), (D.A: 15.07.2017)
- 26 Ö. Eminağaoğlu, H. Akyıldırım Beğen, “Artvin’de Önemli ve Hassas Alanlar”, in *Artvin’in Doğal Bitkileri*, ed. Özgür Eminağaoğlu, (İstanbul; Promat , 2015), 68.
- 27 Yeşil Artvin Derneği; “Ormana ve Çevreye Akademik Bakış”, May 7, 2016, D.A: 09.09.2017, <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/ormana-ve-cevreye-akademik-bakis/>.

terrestrial and oceanic), its rich water resources and its geological and geomorphological differences allow a large number of different plants to grow.<sup>28</sup>

As Özgür Eminağaoğlu states, the region is considered a Caucasus Hotspot for Nature and has been declared one of 200 regions in the world that needs protection.<sup>29</sup> The question is how mining activities in the region affect the natural vegetation. In other words, will these activities harm the unique habitat of the region?

Environmental associations indicate that the damage in terms of plant diversity would be irreversible. The Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats (TEMA) analyzed the situation in detail and asked: “What do we have to lose with mining in Artvin?”.<sup>30</sup> In a press bulletin dated 2016, the possible environmental damage as a result of mining; which had been expressed many times by non-governmental organizations and locals, was repeated once again.

First, as the antimining social movement has repeatedly stated, the mine license is for a zone equivalent to the size of 10,000 football fields fifteen times larger than the area of the city of Artvin proper. It extends right up to the Artvin city center.<sup>31</sup> The traditional Kafkasör Festival is held in this upper region of the city, and many local families use the area as a place of recreation; especially in the summer. The region is considered important to the continuity of the traditional cultural values of the local community. Bullfighting in Artvin, which is part of the Kafkasör Festivals, and has a history of more than two hundred years, was transformed into an international event in 1981.<sup>32</sup> With

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- 28 Ö. Eminağaoğlu, H. Akyıldırım Beğen, G. Aksu, “Artvin’in Flora ve Vejetasyon Yapısı”, in *Artvin’in Doğal Bitkileri*, ed. Özgür Eminağaoğlu, (İstanbul; Promat , 2015), 30.
- 29 TEMA ( The Turkish Foundation of Combating Erosion Reforestration and the Protection of Natural Habits), [http://tema.org.tr/web\\_14966-2\\_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary\\_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single](http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single), “Artvin Uzlaşmanın Simgesi Olsun”, (D.A: 15.07.2017)
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid.
- 32 “Göge Komşu Topraklar: Artvin”and “Kafkasör Boğa Güreşlerinin Kısa Tarihçesi”, D.A: 05.01.2018 <http://www.kafkasor.org/hakkinda/>.

its recreation and picnic areas, the region becomes an entertainment zone especially during the festival. Nature and culture are blended for both the people of the region and for those coming from other provinces and countries for this festival. While a ski resort at the upper end of the planned mining area is worthwhile in terms of its value to tourism; the Stone Pine Genetic Conservation Forest is located at the lower end and displays the significant floral diversity of the region.

Apart from its cultural and traditional importance, the source of the reservoir of drinking and utility water for Artvin is the Kafkasör region, an area included within the extents of the mine.<sup>33</sup> One of the lawyers of the Cerattepe case and a member of board of the Green Artvin Association; Bedrettin Kalın, says that the mining activities will contaminate the water reservoirs of the region, devastating agricultural production as well as animal husbandry.<sup>34</sup> According to antimining movement supporters, the poisoning of the water and the increased risk of landslides will imperil the living spaces of 25 thousand people.

The popular environmental movement in the city has attracted nationwide attention since 2015. In a short documentary about the protests filmed in August 2017; the tributaries of one river clearly had different colored water, and seemed to be contaminated by chemicals. In the same video, a resident claimed that eleven of his animals were poisoned because they had drunk water from these contaminated rivers. He also stated that the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture said that there was no proof that the animals have been poisoned by the water -the reason could have been their fodder. The owner of the animals said that the Provincial Directorate of Agriculture had no technical equipment to analyze the water or the fodder, but they insisted that the

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33 TEMA ( The Turkish Foundation of Combating Erosion Reforestration and the Protection of Natural Habits),[http://tema.org.tr/web\\_14966-2\\_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary\\_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single](http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitalfocus.aspx?primary_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single), “Artvin Uzlaşmanın Simgesi Olsun”, (D.A: 15.07.2017)

34 Zehra Çiğdem Özcan, “Bedrettin Kalın: Cerattepe Çevre Mücadelesinin Kalbidir.”, *hukukpolitik*, (D.A.:14.11.2017) <http://www.hukukpolitik.com.tr/2017/02/17/bedrettin-kalin-cerattepe-bir-gun-ozgurlugune-kavusacaktır/>.

poisoning of the animals could not be related to the water that seemed to have been contaminated by chemicals from the mining area.<sup>35</sup>

In the summer of 2017, the general manager of the mining company arranged a press tour of the mining site. He stated that 2000 of the 4,406-hectare area licensed for exploration would be excluded from exploration activities due to the fact that it is a residential area, has the potential for tourism, and there is a drinking water reservoir nearby.<sup>36</sup> The mining company claimed that there are no gold-mining projects in the region. According to the statement, it was a copper mine that absolutely would not destroy the natural habitat of the region:

There will be no other facility in Cerattepe except a mine for the extraction and transportation of copper. A cyanide pool will not be installed, as enrichment will not be conducted. After the mine is removed, the ore will be transported to Samsun and processed in our facilities there. It is not possible for a non-cyanide pool to harm Artvin.<sup>37</sup>

According to the company, the mining project would either harm the natural habitat of the region nor its water reservoirs and touristic potential. As a matter of fact, the project would contribute to the economy of the region and the country and increase the employment rate among people living in the region by reviving local industry. The amount of copper imported into Turkey would be significantly reduced, after the opening of the Cerattepe copper mining facilities.

A total of 20 thousand tons of pure copper will be obtained from this mine. Turkey consumes 450 thousand tons of copper annually. Its' production is 100 thousand tons. We import 4 billion dollars worth of copper every year. The economic value of copper will extracted from our

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35 Ibid.

36 Özer Akdemir, "Cerattepe Madencilerine Tek Tek Yanıt", *Evrensel.net*, D.A: 10.09.2017, <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/331027/cerattepe-madencilerine-tek-tek-yanit>.

37 "Cengiz Holding Sağduyu Gösterdi", *tgrthaber*, D.A: 30.09.2017 <http://www.tgrthaber.com.tr/ekonomi/cengiz-holding-sagduyu-gosterdi-195398>.

mine over fourteen years, will be 1.5 billion dollars. We will have a cut of at least \$1.5 billion in imports.<sup>38</sup>

According to the mining company, the local construction sector in Artvin would revive through the production of cement, diesel, and spare parts. The company's statement in August 2017 emphasized that the project was an underground, ecofriendly, modern, responsible mining project and that the planned life of the project was limited just to fourteen years.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, the company alleged that underground mining was planned for the region and that there would be only one above ground entrance to the tunnel. Copper would be brought to the entrance of the mine and removed from the area using cable car system. For this reason, according to the authorities of the mining company, it was unrealistic to assume that dust from its transportation would harm either the settlement of Artvin or its endemic plants because land transportation would not be carried out in the region.<sup>40</sup>

However, members of the Green Artvin Association stated that since the start of mining activities, locals had expressed concern about water pollution and that the company had made it clear that such a situation would never happen. Due to the fact that the company was choosing to exclude 2000 hectares at this stage in the project in order to reduce the possibility of the contamination of water resources, members of the association claimed that this either proved the validity of their suspicions or indicated that the mining company had not done sufficient research beforehand.<sup>41</sup> Members of the association also claimed that eighteen out of thirty three water wells, that supplied water to the municipality remained in the mine license area.

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38 Ibid.

39 "Cengiz Holding Sağduyu Gösterdi, Cerattepe'de 2 bin Hektardan Vazgeçildi.", Türkiye Gazetesi, August 28, 2017

40 "Cengiz Holding Sağduyu Gösterdi", tgrthaber, <http://www.tgrthaber.com.tr/ekonomi/cengiz-holding-sagduyu-gosterdi-195398>.

41 Yeşil Artvin Derneği, "Cengiz Holding'in Cerattepe Madenciligi ile İlgili Kamuoyunu Oyuna Getirme Açıklamasına Cevap", August 31, 2017, D.A: 09.10.2017 <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/cengiz-holdingin-cerattepe-madenciligi-ile-iligili-kamuoyunu-oyuna-getirme-aciklamasina-cevap/>.

Another counter argument by the Green Artvin Association to the declarations of the mining company concerned reforestation. The company stated that it would plant ten times more trees than the 3500 planned to be cut. However, the association pointed out that the number of trees planned to be cut in the region was actually 50,300 as can be seen on page 83 of the EIA report of the copper mine.<sup>42</sup> Another counter argument of Green Artvin Association was that the trees to be cut belonged to natural, old-growth forests and that at least 250-300 years would be to restore the same flora to the region if it was possible at all.<sup>43</sup>

Whether or not mining would be carried out only by means of underground mining is still among the controversial issues. The mining company claimed that surface mining would be done in the region and that extracted ore would be transported by cable car to facilities in Murgul; a district of Artvin; for processing. However, according to supporters of the antimining mobilization in the region, the amount of ore planned to be extracted is much higher than the carrying capacity of the cable car system, supporting the idea that land transportation was still in the cards.<sup>44</sup>

While the debate about mining continued around these main topics, it was obvious that the discussion would affect the future of the region. There are two opposing sides to the argument. On one hand are those claiming that new, modern projects will empower both the region and the country, and on the other are those who say that it is not possible for a city life in Artvin, which mixed with rural life and urban life, and a mining project to coexist in the same region. In time it will become clear whose claims are correct, but legal and social conflicts will continue in the meantime. The Green Artvin Association and the local people of the region who strongly oppose the mining characterized this ongoing conflict as a “struggle of existence”:

The right of 25 thousand people living in the city center to live in a healthy environment will be violated. Drinking water, serice water as

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42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 “ Madencilik Yapılabilir: Cerattepe,” [Youtube Video], 13:40, 24 September 2017, posted by 140journos, D.A: 10.11.2017 , from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSxGh7rAulo>.

well as agricultural waters will be poisoned; landslides will create crucial risks. Tourism and education -the sole future of Artvin- will be hindered by this activity, and the future of the province will thus be dimmed. Mining activity will force the people of Artvin to emigrate, social problems will increase, people living in peace will become hostile toward each other, and Artvin will suffer from it all.<sup>45</sup>

#### 4.2.1 *The Chronological Development of the Movement*

Field exploration in the region started in 1985, and the General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration (MTA) stated in 1986 that economically valuable resources were not to be found in the region.<sup>46</sup> However, in 1988 and 1989, mineral exploration and preliminary licenses to operate were issued to the Canadian mining company Cominco by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources.<sup>47</sup> The Municipality of Artvin and Cominco tried to persuade locals of the extraction of gold, but the people of Artvin became more and more concerned about the situation. Seminars and panels to inform the public about mining led the people to establish the Green Artvin Association in 1995 in order to obtain accurate information about mining activities and participate actively in the process.<sup>48</sup> From this date forward, the association became the center of opposition to gold mining in the region.

On the web site of the Green Artvin Association, the history of its establishment is described under the title “Our History of Struggle.”<sup>49</sup> Indeed, since its establishment it has been the headquarters of the struggle over Cerattepe. The association invited many academic and scientists to carry out investigations in the area, and in its early years, it held panels about the results of the

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45 Zehra Çiğdem Özcan, “Bedrettin Kalın: Cerattepe Çevre Mücadelesinin Kalbidir.”, hukukpolitik, (D.A.:14.11.2017) <http://www.hukukpolitik.com.tr/2017/02/17/bedrettin-kalin-cerattepe-bir-gun-ozgurlugune-kavusacaktır/>.

46 Yeşil Artin Derneği, “Our History of Struggle”, D.A: 08.06.2017, <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

investigations. The outcomes were unsurprising to the people of Artvin, as they claimed that they were confronted with the adverse effects of the exploration as early as 1994. The local people complained that their cows died due to water poisoned by chemicals from the mining sites and by drillings in the region.<sup>50</sup> Although these claims were not technically proven -the samples taken from the dead animals for laboratory examination were lost- local people argued that these mining in the region was the cause of sudden deaths of their animals based on their own environmental expertise. As I will explain in detail in the next chapters; the people of Artvin are facing a similar situation today and are claiming that a tributarie of a river coming from the mining site is highly contaminated and leading to livestock deaths.<sup>51</sup>

The establishment of the Green Artvin Association in July 1995 indicated the reaction of locals as they began organizing in opposition to the license for the Canadian mining company Cominco to operate. In 1996, the Governorship of Artvin's Local Environment Board published a report in the Official Gazette (issue 22553 dated February 13, 1996) about the possible negative outcomes of mining in the region.<sup>52</sup> In 1997, 10 thousand signatures were collected, and in 1998 a petition was sent to the Ministry of the Environment in Ankara with the support of almost all political parties and NGOs.<sup>53</sup> As a result of these developments, the mining project was suspended for time and a reexamination of mining was demanded. In 1998, a work of research titled "The City of Artvin Environmental Geology and Natural Resources" was published by the General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration focused on

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50 Ibid.

51 "Öteki Ses: Cerattepe Direnişi", [Youtube Video], 48:49, 2 March 2016, posted by: Jiyan Tv, (D.A: 10.11.2017), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOqwLfWpGu4>.

52 TEMA ( The Turkish Foundation of Combating Erosion Reforestration and the Protection of Natural Habits),[http://tema.org.tr/web\\_14966-2\\_1/entitilfocus.aspx?primary\\_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single](http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitilfocus.aspx?primary_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single), "Artvin Uzlaşmanın Simgesi Olsun", (D.A: 15.07.2017)

53 Yeşil Artin Derneği, "Our History of Struggle", D.A: 08.06.2017, <http://yesilartvinderneği.org/our-history-of-struggle/>.

the risks of landslides in the region.<sup>54</sup> In light of this, Cominco stepped away from the project in 2002 and handed its exploration license over to INMET Mining, another Canadian company.<sup>55</sup>

In 2005, the Artvin Bar Association filed the first lawsuit against the mining project with the support of the Green Artvin Association, and they were granted a stay of execution. The Artvin Faculty of Forestry published a report in 2006 supporting this decision. In the report, titled as “Faculty Opinion about the Impacts of Mining Planned to be Carried Out in the Artvin-Cerattepe Forest,” the possible impact of the planned project was evaluated. Faculty members concluded that air and soil quality, the socio-economic structure, and the forest ecosystem of the region would be seriously affected by this project. They came to the conclusion that “the project will neither benefit the regional economy nor the national economy and will lead to irreparable environmental problems in the region.”<sup>56</sup>

In 2008, the Rize Administrative Tribunal with through the mining license of IMMET, and the company released a statement stating that “occasionally we believed that we could exceed but we have come to understand that we cannot succeed without the support of the people and politicians.” At the end of the year they announced their withdrawal from the project.<sup>57</sup> The Council of State upheld the revocation of the license in 2009 based on the importance of the natural sources and the beauty of the region.

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- 54 TEMA ( The Turkish Foundation of Combating Erosion Reforestration and the Protection of Natural Habits),[http://tema.org.tr/web\\_14966-2\\_1/entitilfocus.aspx?primary\\_id=1562&target=categorial1&type=2&detail=single](http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitilfocus.aspx?primary_id=1562&target=categorial1&type=2&detail=single), “Artvin Uzlaşmanın Simgesi Olsun”, (D.A: 15.07.2017)
- 55 Yeşil Artin Derneği, “Our History of Struggle”, D.A: 08.06.2017, <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>.
- 56 Yeşil Artin Derneği, “Kafkas Üniversitesi Artvin Orman Fakültesi Cerattepe Raporu -2006”, May 19, 2016, D.A.: 20.11.2017 <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/kafkas-universitesi-artvin-orman-fakultesi-cerattepe-raporu-2006/>.
- 57 Yeşil Artin Derneği, “Our History of Struggle”, D.A: 08.06.2017, <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>.

The areas with the mining license are within the national park and touristic areas, the mining operation would not provide any substantial benefit to the country's economy, the unique natural beauties and the creatures would be harmed, Artvin is essentially on an area where the risk of landslide is high, there are active landslide areas, many scientific reports can be found asserting this risk, the mining activities in the area would also have adverse effects on the flora and fauna, the activity is within the scope of EIA directive as of the date the license was granted, the licensing was carried out in an illegal way, the EIA favorable report was not asked and therefore the operating license and all the licenses should be annulled.<sup>58</sup>

The cancellation of the mining license was finalized by that decision, and to the announcement of a new mining law in 2011; it was believed among locals that a mining project in the region was out of the question. However, the new mining law declared 1343 mining zones to be put out for tender, and Artvin's Cerattepe and Genya districts were included among them.<sup>59</sup> The mining site licenses in these regions was initially ordered to Özaltın A.Ş. and then handed over to Etibakır A.Ş. after a short time.<sup>60</sup> As of that, protests started to be staged and a legal struggle against mining in the region was initiated. Despite the fact that the Rize Administrative Tribunal granted a stay of execution for the revocation of a favorable EIA (Environmental Impact Assessment) report in 2014 and that court annulled the EIA report in 2015; the decision to accept a new, favorable EIA report was made in June 2015.<sup>61</sup> From that date forward, locals as well as environmentalists stood guard in the region in opposition to mining,

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58 Ibid.

59 "Turkey's Cerattepe Case: 32 -years- Long Struggle of Existence", 140Journos, D.A: 09.11.17, <https://140journos.com/turkeys-cerattepe-case-32-years-long-struggle-of-existence-4c32d8a0ce7b>.

60 Yeşil Artin Derneği, "Our History of Struggle", D.A: 08.06.2017, <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>.

61 TEMA ( The Turkish Foundation of Combating Erosion Reforestration and the Protection of Natural Habits), [http://tema.org.tr/web\\_14966-2\\_1/entitiefocus.aspx?primary\\_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single](http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitiefocus.aspx?primary_id=1562&target=categorialı&type=2&detail=single), "Artvin Uzlaşmanın Simgesi Olsun", (D.A: 15.07.2017)

and their 24-hour watch over the region would last 245 days. They tried to prevent any attempt by the mining company to operate in the region. On the legal side, Turkey's biggest environmental lawsuit to date was filed; 751 defendants and 61 attorneys wanted the favorable decision regarding the EIA on mining to be overturned. However, in 2017, the Turkish Council of State upheld the decision of the local court of Rize which allowed mining in the region on the basis of expert reports and opinions that transportation via a ropeway conveyor with lidded material buckets would diminish the environmental and social deterioration of the area to a great extent.<sup>62,63</sup> However, the legal and social struggle against mining in Cerattepe and the Genya region continued. One of the lawyers in the case; Bedrettin Kalın; said that they would bring the case before the European Court of Human Rights if necessary, but that domestic remedies had to be exhausted first. Application to the The Constitutional Court was also part of the legal plans.<sup>64</sup>

The intervention of security forces in the protests in Artvin started on February 16, 2016 when severe clashes between police and local people occurred that would receive widespread media attention from both national and international media organizations. Locals described the Cerattepe environmental movement as “a twenty-five year headache.” A brief chronological history indicates that the events had sociological, legal, and political dimensions and that as a close-knit community; the local people of Artvin were greatly influenced by the process. Especially following the new Mining Law of 2011, anti-mining mobilization among the people reached an important point in the region. In the next chapter I will analyze the initial motivations that motivated local people to take action and how environmental concerns and their attachment to the land affected this process, sociological and political motivations notwithstanding.

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62 “Cerattepe Davasında Danıştay’dan Kötü Haber”, *cnnturk.com*, D.A.: 08.07.2017, <https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/cerattepe-davasinda-danistaydan-kotu-haber>.

63 Muhammet Kaçar, Adem Güngör; “Cerattepe’ye Madeni Danıştay Onayladı”, *Hürriyet*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/cerattepeye-madeni-danistay-onadi-40512254>.

64 “Çevrecilerin Hukuk Arayışı: Cerattepe AYM’de”, *Cumhuriyet*, August 25, 2017, [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/cevre/811441/Cevrecilerin\\_hukuk\\_arayisi...\\_Cerattepe\\_AYM\\_de.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/cevre/811441/Cevrecilerin_hukuk_arayisi..._Cerattepe_AYM_de.html).

#### 4.2.2 *Local Protests*

There are different types of motivation for environmental activism, and it is unlikely that these motivations are analyzed separately. Health issues, survival, economic reasons, attachment to the land, connection to a particular lifestyle, and commitment to the symbolic values of a lifestyle can be cited as leading stimuli for environmental activism. All of them become intertwined from time to time. In this section, I will try to analyze what motivates the local people of Artvin to oppose mining in the first place and how they perceived their primary motivations. This section of the thesis will focus on the statements of local people in interviews given to various media organizations and in documentaries and amateur films. It will be possible to see how they express themselves on the topic. The variety of sources will be helpful for ascertaining at what point people decided to act in opposition to mining. In such a perspective, it will be helpful to analyze the sources of the motivations of local women of Artvin for their antimining mobilization.

Castell argues that there are five classifications of environmental movements, each having a different primary motivation. They are as follows: protection of nature, protection of one's own space, the counterculture of deep ecology, a "save the planet" theme, and green politics.<sup>65</sup> In the article of "Cerattepe: As an Explanandum of the Common Faith," Özgökçeler and Sevgi mention that among these five typologies the Cerattepe protests can be categorized under protection of one's own space.<sup>66</sup> According to the authors, the protection of one's own space conforms with the resistance carried out by the local community in Cerattepe which initially acts to 'defend their areas.'

In fact, this movement has similarities with the motto '*not in my backyard*' and the local community/public have put a real 'standing' against

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65 Castells, Manuel, *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, (İstanbul: İstabil Bilgi University, 2008), 223.

66 Serhat Özgökçeler and Hüseyin Sevgi, "Cerattepe as an Explanandum of the Common Faith", *The Journal of International Social Research*, I:45, (2016), 503.

the future environmental damages probable to be caused by the relevant mining activities in their livelihood, in Cerattepe as their space.<sup>67</sup> Cerattepe is a resistance where the local community /people has been acting (for more than 20 years) ‘to defend their areas’.<sup>68</sup>

I found that classification appropriate for this case as the protection of one’s own space is not only associated with a community’s physical living space but is also related to the preservation of one’s lifestyle -a combination of local, communal values, cultural characteristics, and a close relation to nature. Their statements suggest that locals strongly believe that they cannot find such intimate relationships in any other region of the country. Although people from different backgrounds from throughout the country and the world support the antimining resistance in Cerattepe, environmental concerns are intertwined with one’s related to the lifestyle of the local community. The protection of the environment is handled together with the preservation of local’s way of life in Artvin.

Özgökçeler and Sevgi argue that local people claim that “their spaces will be seriously and irreversibly affected” by mining activities and that this can be considered the primary motivation of Cerattepe protestors.<sup>69</sup> In one interview she gave, Karahan; the president of the Green Artvin Association; explained what the antimining struggle really meant to the people of the region: “This is our life struggle, our life...They will cut off our heads and say ‘live with the remainder of your body.’”<sup>70</sup> In a geography where nature and city life are tightly connected, any damage to the ecosystem will affect the life of every living creature there. Locals think it will be impossible to live in the region in the case of the deterioration of the environment.

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67 Ibid.,506.

68 Serhat Özgökçeler and Hüseyin Sevgi, “Cerattepe as an Explanandum of the Common Faith”, 507.

69 Ibid.,505.

70 Hazal Ocak, “Direnişin Kadınları”, Cumhuriyet, March 5, 2016, [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/sokak/492779/Direninin\\_kadinlari.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/sokak/492779/Direninin_kadinlari.html).

“Let me explain my real intention: protecting the nature of Artvin!”<sup>71</sup> As can be inferred from this statement by one local woman on the day when the people of Artvin and security forces clashed; protecting nature was considered the real motivation for these people. Another local woman who participated in the same protest expressed their main aim as “the preservation of environment.” She expressed that she did not understand why there were so many security forces in the city.<sup>72</sup> On their way to Cerattepe, a local tradesman told a film crew that they just wanted to protect nature and their living space. He emphasized that they had no quarrel with the state’s security forces.<sup>73</sup>

Health concerns also constitute a large part of local’s objection to mining. Although there is no definitive evidence in this regard, the people of Artvin believe there is a connection between high cancer rates in the region and mining activities in the area of Murgul; a district of Artvin. Known since the first century B.C. to have copper deposits, copper in Murgul started to be extracted in 1968 with the support of the private sector by Black Sea Copper Mining Facilities which had an equity of 300 million Turkish liras.<sup>74</sup> <sup>75</sup>The exploration license was transferred to Cengiz Holding in 2006.

The local people believe that mining in Murgul severely damaged nature and that the health of the local population was also adversely affected. Many people; including employees of the copper mine facilities in Murgul; claim that Murgul became unlivable –that mining activities actually poisoned the region.<sup>76</sup> The population of the province declined rapidly in recent years and

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- 71 “32. Gün TV: 23 Yıllık Bir Direniş: Cerattepe”, [Youtube Video]; 33:09, 9March 2016, posted by 32. Gün TV, D.A: 01.12.2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYqTvAnxGmo>.
- 72 “32. Gün TV: 23 Yıllık Bir Direniş: Cerattepe”, [Youtube Video]; 33:09, 9March 2016, posted by 32. Gün TV, D.A: 01.12.2017; <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YYqTvAnxGmo>>
- 73 Ibid.
- 74 Murat Turan, “Madenciliğimizin Tarihsel Gelişimi; maden.org.tr, D.A: 11.11.17 [http://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/b4e2b9376139fao\\_ek.pdf](http://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/b4e2b9376139fao_ek.pdf).
- 75 “Cumhuriyet Dönemi Madenciliğimiz”, maden.org.tr, D.A: 15.11 17 [http://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/8191d2a914c6dae\\_ek.pdf](http://www.maden.org.tr/resimler/ekler/8191d2a914c6dae_ek.pdf).
- 76 Serkan Ocak, “En Büyük Korku: Cerattepe Murgul Olmasın”, Radikal, February 28, 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/kelebek/hayat/en-buyuk-korku-cerattepe-murgul-olmasin-40061069>.

residents claimed that even bees had fled the region. It is now believed that no business other than mining can be done in Murgul.<sup>77</sup> Most people I interviewed also expressed that they do not want Cerattepe to become like Murgul. Their previous personal ‘environmental’ experience in Murgul was a crucial reason for their objection to mining at Cerattepe.

One main question during the interview was, “What was your initial reason for participating in the protests?” I was trying to determine whether their motivation was political, sociological, or environmental. Nearly all said that their primary motivation was related to environmental sensitivity. They simply wanted to preserve their lives and they desired to die in the same region in which they were born:

It is absolutely environmental, but it has a social aspect, too. Environmental degradation also causes social deterioration. For that reason, if the environment deteriorates here, this region will turned into an unlivable place. What we can do here economically is limited, and the population is small, so certain kind of a lifestyle developed in the region throughout the years.<sup>78</sup>

Our main aim is to protect nature, to prevent the deterioration of our peace, and to show that nature at ground level is more beautiful than underground wealth.<sup>79</sup>

I have never been under anyone’s influence. I felt the region I was living in was under threat and I just wanted to defend it.<sup>80</sup>

The real reasons are the air and water of the city we live in. We cannot find this kind of intimacy anywhere else. We just do not want any disturbance.<sup>81</sup>

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77 Damla Yur, “Bir Ölü Köy: Damar”, Cumhuriyet, July 11, 2015, [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/319865/Bir\\_olu\\_koy\\_\\_Damar.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/turkiye/319865/Bir_olu_koy__Damar.html).

78 Seda, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 6, 2016

79 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

80 Lale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

81 Nazlı, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

They will restrain the area we live in. We were born and raised here. We don't have a coast; we have very little cultivated land. We just have nature here and that's how we cheer ourselves up.<sup>82</sup>

In response to my aforementioned question about their initial motivation, these are just some answers I received. Another local woman emphasized that she joined the protests without consulting anyone and participated because she thought it was something that everyone should do to defend their living space.<sup>83</sup>

As these statements demonstrate, locals' primary motivation can be concluded to be the protection of their living space. However, the people of Artvin also considered themselves experts on their environment and knew that this living space did not just consist of the land and the community; it also included the animals, trees, mountains, and rivers of the region. As I mentioned above, with a population of one-hundred-sixty-six-thousand, Artvin can be considered a small city. Therefore, when considering the fact that the whole eastern Black Sea region including Artvin is extremely mountainous; it is not surprising that locals of the region want to take good care of their rivers, their mountains, and their natural old-growth forests, as they considered them to be substantial parts of their *living space*.

#### 4.2.3 *Building Mobilization*

The Green Artvin Association was founded in 1995 and is the center of the local community's antimining protests in the region. To be better informed about and involved in the mining process, the association acted as an agent for local people to acquire relevant information and express their opinions about the process. Karahan, who was formerly an owner of a pastry shop, is president of the association and expresses that initially seven artisans came together to found the association. She also states that the aim was not political

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82 Nezire. Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

83 Selime, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

in the beginning since all political parties at the time supported the foundation of the association.<sup>84</sup>

Although locals repeated many times that the protests were neither led by any one person nor any foundation; panels and press bulletins organized by the Green Artvin Association are taken under consideration by the community, and locals show respect for the discourses of the association. Participation in the association's meetings in the city center was high because locals wanted to express their opinions about mining and to be informed about recent court decisions and the mining company's operations in the field. In my personal experience in the region, these meetings became a platform where locals gained knowledge of recent developments and shared their views with each other.<sup>85</sup> At the same time, the intense interest of the media in these meetings is also crucial so that public interest in the movement is maintained.

Social media, on the other hand, has become an agent for the movement and throughout the protests. It has been used for both communication and organization of further protests in Artvin as well as in other cities. The social media accounts of the Green Artvin Association; the platforms "Karadeniz İsyandır (Black Sea is in Riot), Kuzey Ormanları Savunması (Northern Forests Defense), Arhavi Nature Protection Platform, and other environmental social media accounts of Black Sea towns served as tools of communication for the Cerattepe movement.

While conducting interviews for this thesis, I learned that women in the region also established a women's platform during the protests. One can assume from that local women thought they should be organized amongst themselves and spoke out about both the adverse effects of environmental degradation and their disadvantaged position resulting therefrom. One of the members of the Artvin's Women Platform; Yerlikaya, mentions that women's

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84 Nilay Vardar, "Cerattepe Direnişi O Kadar Zamanımı Alıyor ki Pastaneyi Kapattım", *Bianet*, August 16, 2017, <https://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/189119-cerattepe-direnisi-o-kadar-zanimi-aliyor-ki-pastaneyi-kapattim>.

85 "Artvin Cerattepe'de Dün Gece de Maden Karşısı Eylem Vardı", *Hürriyet*, February 19, 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/artvin-cerattepede-dun-gece-de-maden-karsiti-eylem-vardi-40057365>.

leadership in the protests was important and that putting women at the forefront of the demonstrations was a conscious decision.<sup>86</sup> Yerlikaya describes the political stance of women participating in the protests and shares her view of how women perceived their own status within the demonstrations:

The day of the protests, many women in the action were not political. Some were mothers, some were wives, and they gave a novel touch to the resistance. Many women in the streets realized that we, as women; had to be more visible in the streets. Until that day, only activist women were active in the protests, but we showed that contributing to the resistance was not only a matter of hanging posters or shouting slogans. Some made bread; some cooked meals. We showed that women could keep watch 24 hours a day in the forests. Many women who belonged to the Cerattepe resistance did not position themselves as activists.<sup>87</sup>

Yerlikaya also states that they organized the platform as women who did not want to gather around a political party but to contribute to the resistance. She also explained that the resistance of Mother Rabia against the Green Road Project encouraged them. Women who had never participated in any street demonstrations insisted that they should be at the forefront and through this; women became more active in the movement.<sup>88</sup> One of my interviewees also mentions this platform and said that women consciously wanted to be on the frontline at the demonstrations, and as platform; they organized events and released press statements.<sup>89</sup> In other words, women established Artvin Women's Platform to participate more actively in the antimining resistance, but at the same time they wanted to take over the leadership of the protests at some point. As I will explain in detail in the following sections, local women led the marches in the Atmaca neighborhood and the demonstrations in front

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86 Burcu Cansu, "Söz Sırası Cerattepelilerde: Cerattepe Yenilmez", *Birgün*, September 4, 2017, <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/soz-sirasi-cerattepelilerde-cerattepe-yenilmez-177733.html>.

87 Ibid.

88 Ibid.

89 Elif, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

of the city hospital. They have negotiated with security forces to reach Cerattepe and made statements to the press. Women also warned men to withdraw from the front lines of the march, and they declared their requests to security forces themselves.

Intimate social connections in the city also enabled locals to organize public demonstrations faster and more effectively. Especially the relationship among tradespeople in the city accelerated the flow of information about recent legal and sociological developments related to the mining process. During one of my interviews I witnessed an example of this communication. While interviewing an elderly female shopkeeper in the city center in September 2016, locals came to the shop to say that the lawyers of the Green Artvin Association had left the courthouse and had requested the judge's recusal in the case. As an observer, I conclude that such dialogues had become part of the daily lives of the people of Artvin. The owner of the shop received the news normally and said, "Of course, we will continue to resist!" She gave that answer while telling that she is sick from asthma and that given her advanced age; her children initially objected to her participation in the protests. But she said, "I am determined to keep resisting. I am ready to die for Artvin."<sup>90</sup>

In other cities of Turkey, especially big cities like Istanbul and Ankara; people voiced concerns about the issue via demonstrations and organized rallies in solidarity with the Artvin people.<sup>91</sup> Through the broadcasts of the mainstream media, the concerns of the local people of Artvin became known by the wider masses. Participants showed their reaction by dancing the *horon*; a well-known folk dance of the Eastern Black Sea region. Most held press conferences emphasizing that they utterly supported the efforts of the people at Cerattepe.<sup>92,93</sup>

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90 Pınar, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

91 "Cerattepe için Eş Zamanlı Eylem", Birgün, July 19, 2017, <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/cerattepe-icin-es-zamanli-eylem-170675.html>.

92 "Taksim'de Horonlu Cerattepe Protestosu", Milliyet, February 20, 2016, <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/taksim-de-horonlu-cerattepe-de-protestosu-istanbul-yerelhaber-1224610>.

93 Muhammet Bayram, "Ankara'da Cerattepe Protestosuna Polis Müdahalesi: 10 Gözaltı", Radikal, February 17, 2016, <http://www.radikal.com.tr/cevre/ankarada-cerattepe-protestosuna-polis-mudahalesi-10-gozalti-1512683>.

In conclusion, apart from associations and non-governmental organizations, social media and tight social relationships in the region were effective tools for antimining mobilization. For residents of the city, informal gatherings and meetings in homes, shops, and the town square, helped them get organized and adopt a common stance against the mining company's efforts. As I emphasized in the previous chapter, many participants stressed that they did not protest the mining at Cerattepe under the leadership of any person or association -nor in relation to any political party. The antimining mobilization in the region developed spontaneously and eventually evolved into something that can be called as an "environmental movement."

### § 4.3 Public Demonstrations and Symbolic Events

The 245-day watch by locals in the Cerattepe region in 2015 to prevent the activities of the mining company ensured that the resistance was widely heard throughout the country. With that watch, the public formed an opinion on what was happening in the region and how the local people were striving to protect their environment. After a while, a kind of community life emerged at Cerattepe. They built a cottage there, and stood guard in shifts. Tasks such as cooking, collecting wood, and maintaining a fire were evenly distributed between men and women. Given that 245 days is a long time to keep watch, locals stood guard in bad weather conditions in a mountainous region. Even at times of heavy snowfall, the mass protests continued with the support of political parties, trade unions, tradesmen, students, and civil society organizations from different cities.<sup>94</sup>

In July 2015, thousands of environmentalists who heard that the forestry department had come to the region to conduct field surveys and measurements on behalf of the mining company organized through social media and blocked the road. They set up barricades with trees that had previously been cut by forestry officials, and a famous "photo with a log" was taken on 2 July

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94 "Cerattepe'de Nöbet Sırası Kadınlarda", Haberler.com, 20 January 2016 and Turan Şentürk, "Cerattepe'de Nöbet Değişimi", Karadeniz Gazetesi, 19 December 2015

2015.<sup>95</sup> The protestors' photo with the "tree barricade" became an icon of the movement. This image was shared via social media and thousands of people came to region from nearby cities to support the locals.

This photograph became the symbol of antimining, and inspired by movie "300 Spartans," the group began to call themselves the "300 Cerattepeli." This reference to the film symbolized their determined, fearless attitude towards mining efforts in the region. However, an investigation was initiated and charges of "violation of work and work freedom and forestallment" were brought against a few of these "300 Cerattepeli" including Nur Neşe Karahan; the head of the Green Artvin Association.<sup>96</sup>

Protestors faced a similar situation in summer 2017. It was claimed that the wooden cottage built by locals in the region during the 245- day of watch harmed the natural habitat. Charged with "invasion of forest areas and utilization of forests," three people were investigated, including Karahan.<sup>97</sup> Eventually, the accusations were dropped because the cottage had actually been built on the road; not in the heart of forests. And no trees were cut during its construction. Moreover, expert report indicated that the cottage was demountable and that forestry land was not harmed during the 245-day watch period.

Therefore, antimining protestors in the region often expressed discomfort with how the state dealt with the issue. They said they had to "protect the forests against the foresters."<sup>98</sup> A few interviewees also mentioned this:

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- 95 Adem Güngör, "Ormancıların Kestiği Ağaçlarla Yola Barikat Kurdular", *Hürriyet*, July 2, 2015, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/ormancilarin-kestigi-agaclarla-yola-barikat-kurdular-29440710>.
- 96 Muhammet Kaçar, Ali Aksoyer, Adem Güngör, "Cerattepe'de Madene Karşı Nöbet Tutanlara Kütükle Yol Kesme Soruşturması", *Hürriyet*, August 7, 2015, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/cerattepede-madene-karsi-nobet-tutanlara-kutukle-yol-kesme-sorusturmasi-29750673>.
- 97 Hazal Ocak, "Orman Bölge Müdürlüğü Ormanı Katleden Cengiz Holding'e Değil Tahta Kulübeye Dava Açtı", *Cumhuriyet*, August 15, 2017, [http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/cevre/804068/Orman\\_Bolge\\_Mudurlugu\\_ormani\\_katleden\\_Cengiz\\_Holding\\_e\\_degil\\_tahta\\_kulubeye\\_dava\\_acti.html](http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/cevre/804068/Orman_Bolge_Mudurlugu_ormani_katleden_Cengiz_Holding_e_degil_tahta_kulubeye_dava_acti.html).
- 98 Adem Güngör, "Cerattepe'de 24 Saat Ağaç Nöbeti", *Evrensel*, November 17, 2014, <http://www.evrensel.net/haber/97722/cerattepede-24-saat-agac-nobeti>.

In past years, foresters protected the forest from citizens. We were afraid of them. If you cut green wood, they took your ax and imposed a fine on you right away. Now we have to protect the forest against them -against the state.<sup>99</sup>

We are the guardians of Artvin. We are trying to protect it... to protect our city.<sup>100</sup>

In many villages or centers there are prohibited areas such as a prohibited river, prohibited hill or forbidden mountain. These rules are also found in some village law books. Some are not written, but they are in a way 'constitutional'. Let's say there is a forbidden hill. No one leaves their chickens there nor cuts the brush. Everyone knows this area needs to be protected. Everyone has to comply with the rules. They are excluded from community if they do not.<sup>101</sup>

In the past, the state protected the forest from the citizens through the forest protection officers who punished [citizens] even if a tree was cut. Now the situation is exactly the opposite. The citizens are protecting the forests from the state. This is the case in Cerattepe.<sup>102</sup>

These discourses were adopted among the local community. After a while, they accepted the role of "protector of the environment," and this became a strong motivation for their antimining mobilization. Although this unusual guardianship awakened public interest in the movement, public demonstrations in the city center transformed the local environmental movement into a "hot topic" for the whole country. When the mining company tried to reach Cerattepe on February 16, 2016, a large number of security forces came to the city. On this day, security forces began closing roads to Cerattepe while local

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99 Nezire, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

100 Pınar, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

101 Nilay Vardar, "Cerattepe Direnişi O Kadar Zamanımı Alıyor ki Pastaneyi Kapattım", *Bianet*, 16 August 2017

102 Nurzen Amuran, "Eskiden Devlet Ormanı Vatandaştan Korurdu, Şimdi Vatandaş Devletten Koruyor", *odatv.com*, October 2, 2016, <https://odatv.com/eskiden-devlet-ormani-vatandastan-korurdu-simdi-vatandas-devletten-koruyor-0210161200.html>.

people started building barricades to prevent the mining company's construction machines from entering to the region. Shop owners closed their shops in the city center and hung notes on store fronts reading: "This workplace is closed whenever there is an intervention in Cerattepe!"<sup>103</sup>

The interference of security forces began on February 16 and severe clashes with protesters continued throughout the week. In the face of fierce opposition from the people, tear gas, water cannons, and rubber bullets were used liberally. During the period, some people were injured and some were taken into custody. Members of the press from various media organizations rushed to Artvin to report on the current situation. The protests and conflicts which news channels started to report as breaking news, attracted more and more of the public's attention as conflicts between locals and security forces turned into a matter of public security. Locals of the region, including the ones I interviewed, mostly emphasized the significance of two incidents, often referred to as the "Clash of Atmaca" and "Intervention in Front of the State Hospital."

On February 16, 2016, police used tear gas to disperse hundreds of protesters to open the way for the machines of the mining company. The intervention by security forces in protestors at Atmaca region near the Çamlık Quarter started early in the morning on the same day. The conflict continued until evening and the following day, as well. Six people were taken into custody during the conflicts.<sup>104</sup> Karahan, the head of the Green Artvin Association said; "I have never forgotten the 16 February, 2016, the day when the work machines entered the area." She added that it was the most difficult hour of her life as she tried to reduce tensions in the region.<sup>105</sup> As the mobility in the region has continued to increase every hour, Uğur Bayraktutan; the Republican People's Party deputy of Artvin province; recalled a 2001 speech to parliament by Veyysel Eroğlu who was the Minister of Food, Agriculture, and Livestock at the time:

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103 Yeşil Artin Derneği, "Our History of Struggle", D.A: 08.06.2017, <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>.

104 Yeşil Artin Derneği, "Our History of Struggle", <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>.

105 Nilay Vardar, "Cerattepe Direnişi O Kadar Zamanımı Alıyor ki Pastaneyi Kapattım", Bianet, August 16, 2017.

Faruk Çelik was then a member of parliament. He delivered a speech in parliament. He said it just like that: ‘The mining in the Cerattepe region of Artvin is murder; it is an attempt to destroy the city.’ This speech and the signature under it belong to Faruk Çelik. This is not a press statement. In those years Faruk Çelik said that the mining enterprise in Cerattepe would destroy the city. I have the original text of the conservation. I asked him about it in parliament. I said, ‘Do you stand behind your speech?’ ‘Yes, I do,’ he said.<sup>106</sup>

It was also alleged by protesters that the mining company’s arrival in the region was illegal. A lawyer and board member of the Green Artvin Association, Kalın, claimed that exploration in the region would be conducted in March due to bad weather conditions, adding, “An exploration will be conducted on March 14th. However, there is no legal basis to justify the presence of the mining company in Cerattepe district.”<sup>107</sup> It was also alleged that this situation constituted a crime on behalf of the directorate of forestry as well as the governor of the city. There was debate about the subject in the political area. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to handle all the political conversations about the subject, but it will be helpful to acknowledge that members of the Justice and Development Party -the ruling party of Turkey since 2002- often expressed that they believed there was a connection between the protests at Gezi Park and Cerattepe. President Erdoğan even labeled the Cerattepe protests a “junior Gezi.”<sup>108</sup>

During this critical week of encounters; security forces forbade outsiders from joining the demonstrations at the city center when Artvin authorities introduced a ban on new arrivals to the city center of Artvin on February 20th.

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106 Muhammet Kaçar, Adem Güngör, Hürriyet, “Artvin Cerattepe’ye Polis ve Jandarma Takviyesi Yapıldı: Göstericilere Müdahale Edildi”, February 17, 2016, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/artvin-cerattepeye-polis-ve-jandarma-takviyesi-yapildi-gostericilere-mudahale-edildi-40056053>.

107 “Avukat Kalın: Maden Şirketinin Cerattepe’de Bulunmasının Yasal Dayanağı yok”, Birgün, February 20, 2016, <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/avukat-kalin-maden-sirketinin-cerattepe-de-bulunmasinin-yasal-dayanagi-yok-104298.html>.

108 “Erdoğan’dan Cerattepe Çıkışı: ‘Bunlar Yavru Geziciler’”, BBC/Türkçe, February 27, 2016, [https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/02/160227\\_erdogan\\_cerattepe](https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler/2016/02/160227_erdogan_cerattepe).

With this prohibition, tensions in the region increased. On the seventh day of fierce clashes between the people and the police, approximately 2,000 people –the majority of them women- gathered at a parking lot in the city center upon the appeal of Green Artvin Association. The group, which marched in the accompaniment of applause and folk music; came to a junction in front of the Artvin State Hospital. Women led the march and shouted slogans like “Runaway Cengiz! Women are coming!” The front row consisted of elderly women who came face-to-face with security forces in front of the hospital and told them they wanted to reach Cerattepe. Karahan said that only women wanted to go to the Cerattepe region and that they could do this with police cars but their demands were refused. Women repeated that they just wanted to make sure that trees in the region were not cut. Karahan said; “Today, women are leading. We have a very innocent desire. We want to go to Cerattepe in the police’s own vehicles. We want to see the situation there with our own eyes.”<sup>109</sup> Female protestors frequently asked men to stay at the back of the march. As women at the front of the group began to approach the police barricades, they were countered with tear gas and rubber bullets, twenty-six people; mostly women; were injured during the clashes. One of these was an interviewee for this thesis whose arm was broken that day.<sup>110</sup>

Due to the geographical conditions of Eastern Black Sea region, people of the region have strong ties to the environment. Although there is an abundance of precious metals in the region such as silver and copper, the most valuable mineral for locals is the water. That is why people of Artvin described their antimining resistance as a struggle for existence and called the mining efforts in the region as “a twenty-five year headache.”<sup>111</sup> Their struggle against the mining company of Cominco started in 1989, and their resistance prevented mining up until 2017. With the announcement of a new mining law in

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109 “Artvin’de Yurttaşların Cerattepe Direnişi Sürüyor”, Birgün, February 21, 2016, <https://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/artvin-de-yurttaslarin-cerattepe-direnisi-suruyor-104374.html>.

110 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

111 Yeşil Artvin Derneği, “Artvinli’nin 25 Yıllık Baş Ağrısı”, October 19, 2016, D.A: 4 .04.2017, <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/artvinlinin-25-yillik-bas-agrisi/>.

2011, their struggle for existence injured a new phase. In opposition to the new EIA, which favors mining in the Cerattepe region, locals kept guard at the region for 245 days, and the struggle thus became popular nationwide.

Among Castell's classifications of the primary motivations of people involved in environmental movements, "the protection of his/her own space" is most suitable for the case of Cerattepe.<sup>112</sup> In order to defend their living space; locals resisted actively for a year and a half during which there were severe clashes with security forces. The Green Artvin Association was considered an informal head office by locals and new associations emerged in the process such as the Artvin Women's Platform through which women contribute the resistance without being guided by a political frame. In this chapter, I gave a brief historical timeline of the events at Cerattepe and analyzed how passive resistance lasting twenty-five years transformed into active resistance after 2015. The primary motivations of locals for resisting and their methods of mobilization were also analyzed in this chapter.

In order to obtain a clearer vision of the place of women in these demonstrations; I will discuss the "interference in front of the state hospital" in more detail in the next section. Through observations gleaned from interviews, this march affected women's activism in the movement and changed the perceptions of how local women positioned themselves in the antimining mobilization. It is logical to analyze this protest as well as the significance of their 245-day watch in the Cerattepe region through the own words of the protesting women. The next chapter of this thesis will give a glimpse of how local women perceive their own position in the movement. With the help of in-depth interviews, it is possible to make their voices -which have been hidden among press bulletins, the statements of politicians, and the speeches of heads of civil society organizations- heard. By these means, they can move beyond being an image used to attract public attention in the news and become real agents or "actresses" of an environmental movement.

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112 Serhat Özgökçeler and Hüseyin Sevgi, "Cerattepe as an Explanandum of the Common Faith", *The Journal of International Social Research*, I:45, (2016),503.

## The Role of Women in the Cerattepe Protests

### § 5.1 The Profile of Women Participating in the Cerattepe Protests

**D**uring the data collection phase of this thesis, participatory methods were used such as in-depth interviews and participant observation. Interviews were chosen as the main method because they helped to obtain narratives that reveal interviewees' personal experiences, values, beliefs, and attitudes as well as the historical and sociological background of the movement. Participatory methods and especially interviews are valuable as they better explain the strategies, tactics, and mobilization methods of participants. These methods also provide information about the internal dynamics of the movement.

The interviews for this thesis were conducted in autumn 2016. Semi-structured and open-ended questions were used, and the order of questions was changed for each interviewee. Interviews were conducted in person and lasted from half an hour to forty minutes. My questions covered a range of topics from gender relations in the local community, their relations to nature, their own perceptions of environmental policies, and their thoughts about women's active presence in social movements. Throughout the interviews I also wrote detailed field notes of my observations and describing the atmosphere in more detail.

I chose face-to-face interviews because they provided intimacy with individual interviewees and afforded significant visual data. Therefore; listening to their discussions about the protests, sitting with them in cafes, travelling with them to meet other participants, and eating in their houses and workplaces enriched my data collection process and reduced my feeling of being an outsider. Both branches of my family are from the city and I spent my childhood there, facts that were helpful in becoming familiar with the interviewees. For that reason, I used a snowball sample starting with women I already knew or with whom I had contact before beginning my research. One question that interviewees asked before the interviews was whether I am from the region. When they knew that I am, it seems that the answers I received from them were more candid. For such a delicate subject -both politically and socially- the importance of becoming familiar with interviewees cannot be denied. All of my interviewees gave consent for the recording of their interviews.

I originally intended to find at least fifteen participants, but I felt confident with the thirteen I eventually interviewed. Some of the interviews were conducted in a context that could be described as a group interview in these women's homes and workplaces. I did not include the opinions of everyone with whom I talked in the thesis, but I certainly benefited from those conversations along with my field notes. One day on which I conducted interviews coincided with the hearing of the Cerattepe case at the Rize Administrative Tribunal which made it easier to witness an atmosphere in which the opinions of locals were heatedly debated.

Table 1 details the age, marital status, and educational status of the interviewees and whether they supported a political party. The interviewees are given pseudonyms for their security. They are also categorized as working or not working without specifying their actual professions.

Table 5.1

Pseudonym	Age	Marital Status	Education	Employed	Political Views
Emine	25	Single	University	Yes	Yes
Hale	42	Married	Primary School	Yes	Yes
Lale	36	Single	High School	Yes	No
Nazlı	42	Married	High School	Yes	Yes
Neşe	60	Single	University	Yes	No
Nezire	56	Single	Primary School	No	No
Pelin	49	Married	High School	Yes	No
Pınar	72	Married	Primary School	Yes	Yes
Seda	51	Married	University	No	Yes
Selma	49	Married	High School	Yes	Yes
Elif	34	Single	University	No	No
Saliha	32	Married	University	Yes	Yes
Selime	37	Married	High School	Yes	Yes

The differences between activist women on the grounds of their perception of women's involvement and their discourse of the resistance should be analyzed by focus groups. While the research for this thesis consists of participant observation and thirteen face-to-face meetings, analyzes of how women's education or marital status and age affect their activism cannot be effectively addressed. However, it can be concluded that educational background and age may have distinctive effects on women's discourse about their motivation for protests and in particular about their perceptions of the political aspects of the movement. Although more detailed and more complex research is needed for adequate data on this subject; there were supportive examples of this effect from my interviews.

Emine, a twenty-five-year-old university graduate, handles the environmental resistance in Cerattepe with its political characteristics and says that as movement continued, women began to act with a level of consciousness of their femininity and as a member of the People's House, she talks about a kind of political enlightenment with the protests; yet she insists that the protection of the environment was her primary motivation and it still is. Nezire who is a fifty-six-year-old housewife, repeatedly claims that this whole movement is about their living space and states that after witnessing the decrease in the olive

production in the region after the construction of dams, protection of the environment is the primary reason of her stance against mining. Nevertheless she resists the environmental politics of the government; she prefers to stay in line with the theme of “protection of one’s own space”.<sup>1</sup> As Emine speaks of women’s participation in the movement as a social and political progress and even a kind of political enlightenment of these women; Nezire prefers to remain within the zone of safe femininity and labels this resistance as a must.

Seda; university graduate, fifty-one- year old participant; also does not prefer to talk about the political aspect of the movement but speaks about the political and social context of it. She claims that as a small-scale city with limited fertile lands, their economic capability is very limited in Artvin and that is why if their natural resources will be taken away from them, decreasing agricultural production will lead to economic deterioration and cause the social fractures and cultural degeneracy. Like Nezire, Seda also emphasizes that this resistance to mining is a must for the region and her perception of this movement often represents the characteristics of safe-femininity rather than a political movement.

However, as it stated before, interviews with thirteen people are not sufficient for such a classification and modeling, but further research is needed on this subject. From there on, it can be said that these limited examples should not be taken as given, and that focus groups are needed to analyze and interpret these classifications.

## § 5.2 How Can We Define Agency for the Local Women of Cerattepe?

Various types of social movement in the world enhance the confidence of women, help them raise their voices, and open the way for them to become more visible in politics as well as in other domains of life. Through a process of environmental politicization, this question can be asked: Can we consider these activist women as real “agents”?

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1 Serhat Özgökçeler and Hüseyin Sevgi, “Cerattepe as an Explanandum of the Common Faith”, *The Journal of International Social Research*, I:45, (2016), 503

As seen in the second chapter of this thesis; there is no one formula for defining the agency of women. It can still be argued that how demonstrations, protests or movements have an impact on women's agency. These social and political activities can create alternative routes for politicization and influence the transformation of gender relations in society, and through these processes, women's social and political roles can be redefined whether positively or negatively. If agency is an ability and capacity to act -a degree of power to make decisions, formulate choices, and produce a particular result or effect- I argue that the local women of Cerattepe acquired agency or more precisely a degree of agency through their participation in the protests at Cerattepe. This thesis mainly explores whether local women of Cerattepe acquired agency from the antimining protests in Cerattepe, and in this chapter, I explain to what extent their participation and actions constituted agency for them.

In the next subsection, I will analyze whether these protests changed women's perceptions about themselves in more detail. Therefore, I will give a glimpse of under what conditions it is became possible to mention about Artvin women's agency during and after the Cerattepe protests.

To say that local women acquired agency through these protests does not imply that these women were previously apolitical, oppressed, or guided by men in the society. However, the interviews suggested that the Cerattepe protests politicized and encouraged local women in a different way. As I said above; if the definition of agency is an acting and decision-making capability; then the concept of agency can be applied to these women, especially when the discourses, behaviors, and appearances of women during and after the protests are considered.

The significance of these protests is due to the fact that residents of Artvin never experienced such a process of protest beforehand. Even though anti-mining resistance has persisted for more than twenty-five years, the transition from passive resistance to a well-attended environmental movement changed the extent of the political and social outcomes of the protest. Women who had never participated in any demonstration before the ones at Cerattepe; including those who were critical of activist women; became leading figures in these demonstrations. This is a consequence of a process by which women are both influenced and affected. Beginning with the watches at the Cerattepe region,

the visibility of women in the protests, their self-confidence, and their environmental and political awareness increased simultaneously. As politics become part of their daily conversation they began to take on more responsibilities in the movement and became leading figures in the demonstrations. In the face of various actors from governmental institutions to civil society organizations to the media to men in their immediate community, their political and social maneuverability escalated.

To conclude, in the context of this thesis, I define the concept of women's agency as an increasing capacity to act, decide, and choose. While the long-term gender-related outcomes of the Cerattepe protests are a matter of debate; in the next subsection I will explore the thoughts and experiences of these local women about their participation in the movement from their own point of view in their own words. As a participant observer, I will also explore the general atmosphere of the local community in this section and I will discuss to what extent women's discourse about their self-confidence overlaps with practices in their daily lives.

#### 5.2.1 *What Have Women Changed and What Has Changed For Women During and After The Cerattepe Protests?*

In this chapter, I give voice to local protestor women of Cerattepe, and I will discuss the role of these women in the protests in the framework of a few basic questions. These questions are as follows: What changed for local women during the protests? To what extent did women influence the protests? And how did women perceive their own status within the movement.

While interviewing a tradeswoman another woman came to her shop. She had come from a distant village and wanted to do business with the shop owner. However, her offer was rejected. Due to the current economic as well as social situation of the city, the shopkeeper said she had to sell her shop which she had opened a few years before with the dream of a wealthy retirement. She also added that she wanted to be independent of her husband and was willing to risk everything to ensure that their children received the proper education. She said due to her job, many women from neighboring villages also made their own money. She was disappointed by the situation.

This interviewee; whom I choose to call Hale; also said that there were many trees in Artvin before the construction of the dams, and people were able to send their children to school or helped them get married on account of income gained from those trees. Hale told me in addition to the remaining agricultural production, the cultural and social values of the city would be completely destroyed by mine extraction in Cerattepe.

The olive trees were like a scholarship for the people. [in Sirya- a village of Artvin] Every year olives were harvested and sold, and oil was made from them. People could send their children to school in that way. There was not one poor villager in this region. These people even had enough money to lend to their neighbors.<sup>2</sup>

She continued with her impressions of how dam construction affected the entire region:

After [the construction of dams], our villages were flooded. People started living in the barracks in Sirya. These people suffered so much; they became homeless. They could not build a new living space for themselves. This place we call Sirya was the richest town in Artvin. Every fifteen days a car went there and the cooperative collected fruits and vegetables to sell them in other regions. However, they have no income right now.<sup>3</sup>

Her statements, clearly link the construction of dams with decreasing agricultural production in the city in recent years. As someone who was born and grew up in the city, she also claimed that the livability of Artvin would disappear with the mining in Cerattepe. Another interviewee; a 56-year-old housewife, also talked about the effects of dams:

There were people who opposed the dam construction. Some said that those people were stupid. Why? They said, if they were intelligent they would support the construction of dams and use the electricity which comes from these dams. Many people believed that. However, these

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2 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

3 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

dams always harmed us; they were never beneficial to us. With the dams, they cut off our legs, and now they are trying to cut off our heads. There were such nice villages here. Good, quality olives grew here. In my village, they even made and sold olive oil. Every kind of vegetable and fruit grew here. Now, no plants grow here. After the dust came from the construction of the dams, even apples do not grow here anymore. Why? Because, the dams were built and the climate changed. These dams changed our climate and now the mine mining is going to dig into our soil. There will be many landslides. We will lose our water resources.<sup>4</sup>

As we were talking in her home; we were interrupted by noise strong enough to shake the floor. I tried to figure out where the noise had come from; but they seemed accustomed to the situation. They said that dynamite was used on the opposing mountain for road construction. They did not know what the road was being made for, but from her home one could clearly see that many trees had been felled and the whole mountain looked like a construction site.

Dam building in the region affected locals' lives to a great extent. Although I did not ask about the issue, another interviewee also chose to mention it:

We are the victims of dams. They said the dams would be the biggest to be built in Turkey and would be very beneficial to Artvin. What happened? Our villages, our greenery -all of them are gone. When mining starts in Cerattepe, our water will go the way of our fresh air. This whole place will look like Murgul. Yet [the mining facility at] Murgul was under the control of government. However, [this one] will be under the control of a private company, and they will probably never be interested in our rivers or water. The whole life here will be paralyzed.<sup>5</sup>

Another made a self-criticism about the subject saying,

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4 Nezire, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

5 Nazlı, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

We are in this position right now because we did not oppose the dam building. We should have resisted more; we did not resist even a little. I do not know if we were not aware of the situation or we did not think it would be so harmful. However, it was. I wish we could have resisted them much more at the time.<sup>6</sup>

We suffered so much from the dams. Our climate changed and we are covered in dust. In many villages, fertile land was flooded. Because of the climate change, many fruits rotted on their branches. People lost their sources of income. There was one woman in the Cerattepe protests who lost her hometown due to the construction of dams, and she was shouting: ‘Where are we going now? Should we climb up into the sky?’<sup>7</sup>

Many of my interviewees as well as others whom I met agreed that dam building had adversely affected the entire region, and many regretted having allowed the construction in the past. The local community felt a twinge of guilt about it; therefore, they were willing to take any risk with regard to the mining issue. In my observation, locals associated the two subjects and their regret about the dams transformed their resistance to mining into a more passionate one. They claimed that agricultural production and nature were greatly damaged by the dams. The dams and locals’ reaction to them are meaningful as they explain why their continued resistance to mining is so important to them today and why they are willing to resist until the end. Some interviewees even said that they supported the Cerattepe protests as a kind of compensation for the dams.

We did nothing to prevent the dams, and today it seems that we have no right to complain about the collapse of agriculture and the contamination of our rivers caused by the dams. We regret this so much and we feel guilty every day. We are actually resisting mining in order not to experience a similar situation and guilt in the future.<sup>8</sup>

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6 Pelin, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

7 Elif, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

8 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

This kind of guilt is evidence of their responsibility for the future and legitimizes the women's participation in these kinds of protests for them. Women's restricted roles in the private sphere -as protectors and caretakers- led to a situation in which their resistance was more reasonable and justifiable in their own eyes. Did women's identities as mothers and caretakers actually make their protest and resistance more appropriate and acceptable for them? As stated in research on women's activities in the politics of water in Bolivia, this makes it possible for women to "project a traditional, domestic and therefore politically safe femininity, while at the same time opening up the space for seemingly non-traditional forms of behavior and activities."<sup>9</sup> This "safe femininity" is a major part of Cerattepe women's resistance to mining.

During in-depth interviews with local women, I witnessed this unusual method of justification. When talking about their activeness during the protests, they were eager to tell every detail. However, when telling how they resisted the mining company's working machines, most immediately said that this was a must for them, a must for their children; a must for the continuity of their community and culture at the same time. Labeling this resistance as a necessity made a huge difference to them. This situation turned them into *rightful resisters*. Nearly all interviewees said that their foremost motivation was related to that and they felt obliged to take on that protection mission. Thus, this necessity and this role were arguably the basis of their safe femininity and the justification of their resistance. They mentioned that for the continuity of their cultural and social heritage and for the well-being of the future generations, they were willing to undertake the task of "protection":

We have a history here. There is the beauty of our nature as well as the unity and solidarity of the people who live in Artvin. It is as if there is no life in other cities for us. I have embraced nature to raise my children; nature has become my mother and father. Then it became a grandparent to my children. Today I am resisting, making sure that it will continue to stay that way for future generations.<sup>10</sup>

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9 N. Laurie , "Gender Water Networks: Femininity and Masculinity in Water Politics in Bolivia." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(1), (2011), 179.

10 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

I was born and raised in Artvin and I want to die here; I do not want to move anywhere else. I also do not want mining in Artvin. Because of that, I *have to* be in these demonstrations. There is no alternative way for me. I have to be there and I went voluntarily with great pleasure. All of us did.<sup>11</sup>

They also associated the mission of protection with being a good, sensitive citizen, and in that way, they transformed environmental resistance into a patriotic one. As can be seen in documentaries and amateur videos from the days when protestors clashed with security forces, local women held Turkish flags and saying the national anthem and patriotic songs. Protection of their livelihood was linked with the protection of the country, its natural resources, and its beauty. This emphasis on patriotism was another source of justification for the protests and comprised an ingredient of their zone of safe-femininity.

We have an organized movement here and this gave power to civil society. Today we fight for the protection of our nature, but tomorrow we may also fight against internal and external threats to our country.<sup>12</sup>

This is a national fight in a sense. By protecting Cerattepe, we are actually protecting our country and our future. We cannot sacrifice our national resources for the benefit of one company, one person. We are behaving patriotically here, and everyone should do the same, I think. Cerattepe, our rivers, our forests constitute this country-our country-and we are just being patriotic in that sense.<sup>13</sup>

On my identity card, my village is written in place of my mother's name and "Cerattepe" is written as my father's name. It is like that my homeland is my real identity. If they rub out my roots here and delete my name, my family, from Artvin; they will destroy my culture, my

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11 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

12 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

13 Lale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

history, my manners and customs. How can I speak of a homeland then?<sup>14</sup>

Especially one interviewee; whom I call Selime; was keen about the patriotic aspect of this resistance. As a supporter of the Republican People's Party; she associated her political opposition with Cerattepe.

I do not support any of the environmental policies of the ruling party. Especially for the Black Sea Region, these projects will create disasters. In demonstrations we were not opposed to the police; we were actually opposed to Cengiz Holding and how [the owner's] voice is superior to [that of] a whole community. We are living here, and now I am worried for my child and for my country. We should protect our democratic values.<sup>15</sup>

The emphasis on patriotism can be clearly seen in their arguments about Cengiz Holding. Locals are opposed to the fact that mine exploration in Cerattepe will be carried out by a private company and not by the state. There was a significant level of anger about this, and nearly all interviewees talked about how they are not selling their nature and future for the enrichment of a single person, namely the owner of Cengiz Holding.

Aware that it is a hard question to answer, I asked my interviewees that what was the most disturbing issue in this whole process, and eight answered that they felt their livelihood and more importantly a natural treasure was being sacrificed for the unjust enrichment of one person. They repeated that the benefit to the state from the mining would be little -42 million lire precisely. And they repeated that the city was ready to collect that amount which would be earned by mining extraction in the region.<sup>16</sup>

The benefit to the state is less than 2 percent, and we cannot accept that. For the enrichment of a few people, this natural beauty cannot be

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14 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

15 Selime , Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

16 Researcher's Note, October 2016

destroyed. As a city, we can collect and give that amount of money to the state; we can do it so long as they leave our nature alone.<sup>17</sup>

As our attorney told the court, if the whole case is about 42 million lire, the people of Artvin will collect and give this money to the state and you will not touch our Artvin. It is not nearly beneficial to the state. The damage [caused by ]the mine will be much more than its benefit, and because of that especially, in the long run all of us will be sorry for the loss of our natural beauty if mining occurs here.<sup>18</sup>

The emphasis on the fact that the company not the state will profit corresponds to the sense of patriotism of the protestors. They stated that they would do anything for the well-being of their country but that this was not the case for Cerattepe. In that way, they justified their resistance and transformed it from a local one to a national and even a patriotic one. By taking care of the social, cultural, and natural heritage, interviewees believed that they were protecting the national interests of the country. Like one interviewee, Hale, said about her identity card; they considered their villages as their mothers and Cerattepe as their fathers. They justifiably created a national-protector identity for themselves and it thus became inevitable for these women to resist the mining.

The fact that the presidency of the Green Artvin Association was held by a woman also encouraged these women to join the movement from the beginning. One interviewee emphasized: “As women we are very brave in the sense of resisting; both physically and emotionally, and the fact that the head of the association is also a woman makes it easier for us to speak up.”<sup>19</sup> Karahan also speak about how she started working on this environmental struggle nearly thirty years ago:

Everyone talked to me like this: “Your husband just died, you have a lot of debt, and you have to manage a shop by yourself. You have a very complicated life; why do you deal with these things? I said; “What do I want for my children? To have a good education, to be good citizens, to be good individuals, and to make money to live. I want them to own

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17 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

18 Seda, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 6, 2016

19 Elif, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

a house and a car. However, if they do not have a world in which they can live, what will they do with them?" I have always questioned that. Therefore, for mothers and fathers maintaining a livable world should be important. Clean water, clean air, food and soil -these things should matter most.<sup>20</sup>

Since she witnessed local women's participation in the protests from the beginning, she stated how environmental protection is more meaningful for women:

It is a fight for survival, and women; as mothers; are more sensitive to this subject. Even if they are not mothers, they are still more concerned about the future, especially for the children. Moreover, they want to make the future better for all the children. Because they actually know what they are fighting for, they know it is vital to resist.<sup>21</sup>

The usage of women's images in written and visual media; especially for environmental movements; is intentional. Quickly giving the attention of a prodswath of the public is the driving force behind it. For that reason, it is unrealistic to classify any movement as a women's movement or as predominantly female based on the publishing of the printed and visual media. For that reason, I wanted to give voice to these local women of Artvin and to learn about their real experiences on the field. In addition to their visibility in the media; their "real visibility" on the streets, in meetings, and at demonstrations indicate their real involvement in the Cerattepe movement:

I wish you could have seen that unity and cooperation. [at Cerattepe during the watches]. Our table was open to everyone; we offered tea and food. Whenever we went there, we always did something as women. Sometimes we made a shelf; we fixed things, or carried sofas. The last time we held a watch there; there was snow. Nevertheless, we still went voluntarily. Many housewives came with me to the watches. We all feel more confident and active than ever there.<sup>22</sup>

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20 Neşe, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

21 Neşe, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

22 Nezire, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

It was like a whirlwind adventure for us. One day we were sitting in our homes and the next day we were face-to-face with cameras, and many television channels came to our workplaces to speak with us. We never thought that we would give speeches to press or keep watch on the mountain by ourselves. However, it seemed to right thing to do, and it felt natural. These were the things to do and we did them.<sup>23</sup>

The participation of women in protests who had never engaged in any kind of protest before was a driving force for my interviewees. The emphasis on women's involvement in the movement encouraged other women.

Women who had never attended any protest before became aware that our nature was being taken from our hands. They realized this is a very serious situation and that we could lose everything we have. Then women who did not even go out onto streets came to the protests. Old women came from various villages saying, 'We want to say something, too. We will protect our nature'. These women's self-confidence increased. They began to tell their children what they did. In conversation anywhere you will encounter women who say, 'We were there that day, too. We did something like that...'<sup>24</sup>

Women -those who have never engaged in any resistance before- felt the necessity of being there when mining was at question. They realized their individuality. When they became aware of their individuality, they gained self-confidence. There are so many women like this. Feeling the privilege of being there, so many women gained self-confidence throughout the process.<sup>25</sup>

As first-time protestors, two interviewees also told how this movement changed their inner capability as women:

We really felt we were very brave; we felt we were getting stronger. Journalists came here. As women, we talked very comfortably. We had

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23 Lale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

24 Seda, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 6, 2016

25 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

never done this kind of thing before. Women's self-confidence increased, for sure.<sup>26</sup>

We [local women] were getting stronger during the process. We were not aware that there were so many "revolutionary" women among us. We felt like lions. We really perceived ourselves as "go-getters." We realized that if we wanted to be, we could be three steps ahead of men – forget about being a step behind them. We realized that we were the women who were not afraid of anything. We were actually felt like daredevils in this sense.<sup>27</sup>

The phrase "revolutionary women" should be underscored. According to my observations, Hale used this term to indicate their braveness; nevertheless, this metaphor along with other statements about the increase in women's self-confidence during the protests can be read as how the movement itself was perceived by these local women. Doing this kind of identification signifies how women analyzed their involvement in the movement and to what extent they saw their resistance as emancipatory. It would be exaggerated to say that women considered the whole resistance to be gender-neutral but they highlight the emancipatory effect of the resistance in the name of being brave, self-confident, or "go-getters".

Locals guarded the region for 245 days, and throughout the interviews women talked about these watches and mentioned how they changed their self-confidence. The watches in the mountainous region of Cerattepe had a special place in these women's minds and hearts. They often told how they kept guard in the region alone and how they fearlessly took over the watch from men at night. They spoke about building a cottage there and taking the leading role in the construction as women.

All of these demonstrations changed our visibility; especially the watches. We have guarded the region at nights. All by ourselves- only as women.<sup>28</sup>

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26 Nazlı, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

27 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

28 Lale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

It was a great privilege for us to stand guard in the region. If you come to think about it, sometimes we watched the region for 24 hours. Keeping those watches made a major change in women. I think the watches were very effective and useful for us to think about how we can fight for our lives, and we realized that we could actually do something about it.<sup>29</sup>

I participated in all of the demonstrations and went to the watches in the region. My house is actually very close to the Cerattepe region. I opened my house up to everyone. I showed them where I kept my keys so that when I was on guard in the region, they could easily enter the home. We went to the region only as women. We protected the region until dawn for many days. I will go again if necessary.<sup>30</sup>

Pelin summarized how the days passed for them during this period: they went to watches, guarded the region for 24 hours or even longer, and checked whether the mining company was active in the region. All these became parts of their daily lives and for Pelin, giving out her house keys was never an issue of trust or a problem. 245 days is a long time to keep guard in a mountainous region, and the practices these people took on for the sake of the watches became part of their daily lives and changed their perceptions about societal relations -in other words, about the community.

We have a lodge at the region. From time to time we stayed there only as women. On one occasion, we went there as three women and stood guard alone under the heavy fall of snow. We had a generator but we did not have any protection against wild animals in the mountains. However, our consciousness and feeling that we had to protect allowed us to do anything. We were never afraid or worried.<sup>31</sup>

The emphasis on bravery and self-confidence changed the meaning of these watches for these local women. Before the clashes with security forces, these watches in the mountainous region only as women helped them to internalize

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29 Neşe, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

30 Pelin, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

31 Seda, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 6, 2016

the resistance. For most of these women, these watches were the first experiences in which they could be seen as resisters and citizens, not just as mothers and wives:

It was the first time for me, going to the region all by myself, and I guarded the region like a soldier. I felt responsible for Cerattepe there. As a soldier, as a citizen, I just wanted to do whatever I could to help others and nature, of course.<sup>32</sup>

In previous sections, I mentioned that the local women of the region formed a women's platform during the protests, and interviewees acknowledged its importance with respect to local women's activity and involvement in the process:

We started to organize demonstrations and the women's platform undertook the task of organization. We made press conferences every day... organized events. Some women fried *lokmas*, and others played drums. We did not doing things based on the man-woman division. After the demonstration in Atmaca, many women were wounded or fainted because of the teargas. But we said we women wanted to be on the front line anyway. [in front of the state hospital] Our other [women's ] demonstrations also had a tremendous effect. Therefore, we walked forward and said that as women we are going to pass the barricade. Actually, we could have done it if we wanted, but we did not want to make things violent. Women's self-confidence increased. They voiced their thoughts. They started to go out. Their visibility in this community also increased. Even today; if one says, "Let's gather again," women will come first. Our previous demonstrations as women have influenced that.<sup>33</sup>

As an active associate of the platform, the same interviewee also discussed how women's increasing visibility affected societal relations in the region:

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32 Lale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

33 Elif, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

We will continue our work as a platform. This was a phase. People who hesitate to say “woman” aloud have begun to accept the identity of a “woman.” This was huge progress for us. Little by little, we have constituted a movement. Now we are going to show everyone that women should be on the streets and they should not be ashamed.<sup>34</sup>

As a small-scale platform, it certainly did not serve the feminist agenda. But for local women, it emerged as a place where they could speak up and take the charge of future resistance. Because of that, they were eager to talk about it, and even though I was not privy to how often they met, they had a special communication system to inform each other when the mining company’s work machines went to Cerattepe. Thus, they also helped women to organize pots and pans protests at the city center.

From interviews and field notes, I can say that another important turning point for these women was the intervention in front of the state hospital. This demonstration was both organized and led by women, and all my interviewees chose to speak about that particular day when asked how they are interpreted the participation of local women in demonstrations:

In the vicinity of the hospital we were some 500 women in front, and [we thought] there was no distinction between women and men. Many women came to the front line voluntarily and they said that should the pepper gas come; it was no problem for them at all. I was taking pictures of the demonstration and that is why I could see things more clearly. Local women knew that they could be affected by the teargas, but they stood there anyway. They did not run away or get tired. On that day especially, though they were affected by teargas and wounded by plastic bullets; they stood there and resisted.<sup>35</sup>

I was at the forefront at the “hospital demonstration.” It was so nice to see that women were so determined to take a leading role, but we did not expect such a clash [with security forces]. I still feel ill when I see

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34 Elif, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

35 Emine, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

smoke somewhere; it is as if I still smell the gas. However, it was a privilege for me to be there that day.<sup>36</sup>

Another 72-year-old interviewee whose experiences I also mentioned in previous chapters said she has asthma and was seriously affected by the teargas at that day. Nevertheless, she added that she would go again and never be afraid though her children did not want her to participate in demonstrations because of her health problems.<sup>37</sup>

Another interviewee said that she thought she was about to die that day:

I tried to breath but I could not. I said to myself that death must be something like this. For the first time in my life, I was affected by tear-gas. People I never knew helped me. These kinds of things force us to be closer to each other. Because against injustice, we must be together and resist. And so we did. .<sup>38</sup>

I broke my arm that day. The participation of women was very high that day and we led the demonstration. Besides, that protest was a women's protest. We; as women only; were face-to-face with security forces.<sup>39</sup>

This particular day changed women's perception about activeness in the protests; especially when they came face-to-face with security forces. In of that way, the passive resistance at the watches turned into an active one for most of these women. Along with their increasing self-confidence, the importance of this protest should be underlined. Most of the women with whom I have talked experienced the effects of teargas and plastic bullets, and astonishment was their first and the most common feeling that day. However, for most of these local women these clashes also became an indicator of the significance of the Cerattpe resistance:

On that day, I recognize that we did something extraordinary there and it could have been a matter of life and death. I remember that I

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36 Pelin, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

37 Pinar, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

38 Seda, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 6, 2016

39 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

thought that it was also a matter of life and death for Cerattepe. We were the voices of the mountains, trees, and rivers, and it was vital for all of our survival. On that day when we were tried to reach an agreement with security forces to go to Cerattepe and look at the region, I realized that, this is a vital struggle for all of us.<sup>40</sup>

### 5.2.2 *How Do Women Perceive Their Own Status Within The Movement?*

Another important question about women's agency in the Cerattepe protests is related to women's own perceptions about their activeness. Some interviewees said that they had always been "politically conscious" and that is why they were the first to resist explorations for the mine:

I am a supporter of the People's House. (Halkevi) It is obviously good to go forward with some level of awareness in these kinds of situations. You can give people clearer information that way. This is also important in terms of 'femininity' with regard to leading other women and informing them about matters. Therefore, it is always good to act in an organized way. Especially when women who live far from the city center came to realize what was happening in Cerattepe, they began to search and talk about things. It was good for us because it is always easier to talk to people who are curious about what is happening around them. It can be said that we helped these women to look into things precisely; especially with a perception of femininity. Therefore, I believe it is possible to talk about politicization and political enlightenment [during the protests].<sup>41</sup>

Another interviewee mentioned that she has always had a political identity, and along with her political consciousness; this also made her active in the Cerattepe demonstrations:

I am already a political person and a questioner. I follow the news all the time. When I see something wrong, I cannot stay silent. I did my

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40 Lale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

41 Emine, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

research about mining and I already live in Artvin, so I see what is happening here. It was a spontaneous movement from the beginning. It was similar to a situation in which a person cannot tolerate a personal insult. Our reaction to mining was just like that.<sup>42</sup>

The emphasis on political consciousness was a common characteristic of the activist women with whom I talked. However, a few also stated that they acted responsibly in this situation because they somehow felt closer to the nature as women. They also perceived themselves as responsible for the protection of nature:

I liken nature to women. If you give one seed to nature, it will give you back a thousand seeds. If you give one seed to a woman, she will not only give you thousands, but she will give you the future. It is like a generational thing. The woman is the same as the soil. Both are mothers and you cannot give up on either. When you give up on one, you lose both.<sup>43</sup>

Women are more sensitive than men in every situation. This is also valid in relation to nature. Women are emotional creatures and they take care of nature with their feelings. As women, we neither want nature nor the people to get hurt.<sup>44</sup>

We care everything about nature. It is like protecting a friend. Here, we grew up together with nature and it has been a like mother, sister, and daughter to us. It fed us, took care of us, and became friends with us. We are not just participating in an environmental resistance here; it is like protecting our family for us.<sup>45</sup>

The closeness between women and nature, which is not seen as a compliment by ecofeminists, is a legitimate argument for some local women of Cerattepe. Thus, this closeness became a motivation for them to resist mining in the region. It is hard to label this relation as a purely spiritual one. Although they

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42 Elif, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

43 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

44 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

45 Lale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

think that they are closely –even spiritually- bonded to nature, it is also evident that due to economic, social, and geographical conditions, they are actually obligated to relate with nature. As I stated in previous chapters, women from around the world disproportionately suffer higher risks from environmental degradation than men. Thus, these women; knowingly or unknowingly; emphasize their relation to nature and differentiate themselves from men with respect to this subject.

As I explain in the first chapter of this thesis; I greatly value ecofeminism on the grounds that it opens up a space to analyze women’s experiences of environmental movements, and the theory highlights that “nature is a feminist issue.”<sup>46</sup> Due to obvious economic, social, and cultural reasons, women’s inferior position in society makes their relation to forestry, water, farming, and food more delicate than it is men. As Warren states, the relationship between women and nature is “associated with in creativity and in the maintenance of life”.<sup>47</sup> This productive, mutual relationship between women and nature is accepted by many ecofeminists, and this intimacy expands the zone of safe femininity for women as it creates a more legitimate discourse for their resistance. In the case of Cerattepe, it can be said that the mother-sister-daughter likening gave women extra strength to resist.

The chair of the Green Artvin Association; Karahan; also approached the relation between women and nature from a different perspective:

In this region, women are more active than men in terms of agriculture. In the coastal region, women are largely responsible for the harvesting of tea and hazelnuts, for example. Especially in the productive jobs, women have a huge role here. They live closely together with nature. For that reason, they are very aware of the consequences of [mining]. They also realize that clean water and clean air are the most important ingredients for their as well as their children’s future. They

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46 Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters*, 238.

47 Shiva, *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*, 47.

acknowledge that nature is what will ensure the continuity of generations in this geography.<sup>48</sup>

Karahan's argument correlates with the "nature is a feminist issue" view of the Warren. Karahan claims that women's dominance in agriculture gives them an awareness and conscious of environmental issues. Because of that, they were the first to resist against mining in the region. This can be seen in the examples of resistnace to HEPPs in the Black Sea region. In this resistance, women also claimed that they were the ones who knew the value of a flowing river, and they also realized that a flowing river was not a 'wasted resource' for the country, but the very thing that keeps nature and people alive in this geography.<sup>49</sup>

It is debatable whether the Cerattepe protests can be considered a women's movement, but the visibility of women in the streets increased with these protests. When I talked to local men, they said they actually enjoyed the fact that their wives go to the protests and take the front lines. They are proud that women in the community have that courage. In daily conversations, they proudly say, 'My wife was there, too'.<sup>50</sup> These protests had an impact on local women's behaviors and daily habits, and they affected the perception of women in the community. The way that both women and men perceive "the place of women in the society" changed. In the words of women, I will show how:

It has increased the activeness of women. Women from villages came to the city just to attend meetings at the city center. Some of these women joined committees to visit neighbors and tried to explain the effects of mining. Therefore, "keep one's nose clean" types of women also came and helped during this process, which is surprising and very encouraging for all of us.<sup>51</sup>

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48 Neşe, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

49 Şendeniz and Yavuz, "HES Direnişlerinde Kadınların Deneyimleri: Fındıklı Örneği", 51.

50 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

51 Leyla, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

Women, whom I can describe as apolitical spoke in news conferences, were front and center in demonstrations, and asked questions in city meetings to help the movement. We saw that. They had an explosion of self-confidence.<sup>52</sup>

We believe that women will be more active after this process. Being part of a social movement gave us courage, and we can achieve anything with that. Consider a woman who has participated in protests, for the first time in her life. Her point of view is about to change, and she will also not tell her children not to be involved in social events. This is the situation in Artvin right now.<sup>53</sup>

These statements about women's possible future activeness imply that for many women; as both participants and observers; acknowledged that these protests made a difference. This is evident when I asked whether these protests will make a difference for the local women of the region in the future. According to interviewees Emine, Leyla, and Neşe; newly-gained self-confidence and courage just that there is a high possibility of change, especially for first-time, local participants.

It is also evident that there is a "explosion of self-confidence" among these women; which my interviewee Emine mentioned. This situation enhanced their vision of the future activeness of local women of the region. For many women, this was their first involvement in a protest, and it changed their perception of their capability. And for other women who had experiences with environmental and political protests the participation of "keep one's nose clean" types of women expanded the scope and durability of the resistance. The increasing activity of local women in that sense became both a cause and a consequence of the expansion of the movement. Thus, this increase in women's activism was, as well noticed by local men also:

I entered a café to meet the women whom I contacted before. There are seven or eight men in this little café, and I told them why I had come here. Before I even told them that I wanted to only interview

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52 Emine, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

53 Neşe, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

women, they offered me the names of a few women with whom I could talk. Apparently, these men also acknowledged women's greater presence in the movement.<sup>54</sup>

More extensive research is needed concerning the long-term effects of the protests on close relationship between men and women in the local community, but the interviews I conducted and observations I made suggest that women are beginning to challenge male domination in society:

As women, we realized some things during the protests. The company is trying to fool people by saying that mining will not cause any harm. The people of Artvin are not silent or ignorant. Neither, are the women. I went to Cerattepe on the day of exploration. I talked with the site chief and he claimed the harm would be minimal. I said, "Who are you fooling? I know it will seriously harm nature." We went to all the panels and listened to the professors; we know everything. We are not puppets here; we are the ones consciously resisting the mining.<sup>55</sup>

We do not want men to be on the front lines everywhere. They should open the way for us. If we are the ones who gave birth, raised them and make men out of them, we can do many things -we can achieve better things. We do not want to be a step ahead of them; we want to walk together with our brothers, husbands, and sons, on the same road. If women did not look after their lands and their homes, the men would sell everything and destroy every establishment in the world.<sup>56</sup>

Hale's discussion about "being on the same road with husbands, brothers, and sons" can be considered a challenge gender inequality in society. With the help of the Cerattepe movement, she started to think that this was a possibility for them. It is natural to expect that the increasing visibility of women in the streets, which changed women's social lives, would have an impact on their intimate, familial relations. This was one of my predictions before I went to the region to conduct the interviews. I asked my interviewees whether their

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54 Researcher's Note, October 2016

55 Nezire, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

56 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

participation in the protests affected relations within their families. However, none answered this question affirmatively. Many thought that they were already the ones who made decisions in the home, and because of that, their newly gained political and social stances did not change their family life much. However, an event during an interview with Hale exemplifies how the declarations of women about gender equality are not necessarily accurate:

When I was interviewing a local woman (who also has a shop in the city); someone called her. It was her son who she told me during the interview is around sixteen or seventeen years old. He asked what she was doing and her answer was surprising: she told her son that she was busy with a customer. I did not ask her why she did not tell the truth. However, he later came to the shop and seemed a little angry. Again, he asked his mother what we were doing there, and this time she said that I was a researcher conducting a research on the life of university students in the city. As she has a shop in the city center, she mentioned that I was asking about how the opening of the university affected businesses. After he left, she said that her son was not pleased that his mother had been active in the movement and quickly returned to our real subject.<sup>57</sup>

This is but one example of the presence of gender-specific relations in some of these women's lives, and they figured out how to be an "activist" in the field and a "mother" at home despite their declarations of gender-equal lifestyles in their homes. Women's activities in the field, at the watches or in the platform, may not be as emancipatory as expected. It was a tremendous experience for most of these local women, but for some, like Hale, gender-equality in the streets and at home are two different things. By lying to her son about our meeting, she kept these two different areas separate.

Hale was one of the very active figures in the protests. During my preliminary research for the interviews, six or seven people told me to interview her because she had been involved every step of the movement. Thus, the situation in her shop compelled me to conclude that every case and every woman in the

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57 Researcher's Note, October 2016

case of the Cerattepe movement is different. As stated above, for the purposes of this thesis I chose to define the agency of women as an increasing capacity to act, decide, and choose, Hale's level of agency must be questioned on the grounds that she was not ready to transform her agency in protests into her relations with male family members. However, since there is no formula or recipe for women's agency, Hale's degree of agency should be questioned; not dismissed.

To mention the full agency of these local women, a comprehensive research about the dynamics of their relationships is necessary. As Charrad states, women have to negotiate "with a group of actors ranging from husbands to human rights groups, from the judiciary to representatives of the state."<sup>58</sup> Given the fact that this is a new challenge for the local women of Cerattepe, their agency will be tested many times by a large group of actors. That is why I prefer to refer to their "degree of agency" even though they have the capacity to act, decide, and choose within the scope of the Cerattepe movement.

It appears that local women's participation in the movement created a perception in public that closely relates "Mother Rabia," "the guardians of rivers," and the women of Cerattepe. Women's resistance to HEPPs and the Green Road Project in the Black Sea region -along with the Cerattepe incident- are considered parts of one major environmental struggle by the broader public. In other words, the women at Cerattepe are seen as counterparts of the "guardians of the rivers" who resisted to HEPPs in the Black Sea region. I asked my interviewees how they compared their struggle to other ongoing challenges these are the HEPPs and the Green Road Project in the Black Sea region:

We saw the resistance of Mother Rabia in Rize and the women with their baggy trousers in Bergama. All of these are the same actually. There is no limitation of age or border for femininity. There is no limit on women acknowledging their womanhood through resistance.<sup>59</sup>

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58 Mounira M. Charrad, "Women's Agency Across Cultures: Conceptualizing Strengths and Boundaries", *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol:33, (2010), 519.

59 Emine, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

We resisted against the construction of dams. However, nobody believed us. There was an approach like: “You are going against everything!” Now they say, “You are right,” but it does not matter anymore. The cycle of life runs along with the cycle of water here. Now, everybody in those villages realizes that. Along with the climate change, dams in the valleys affected the whole Black Sea region. The Black Sea Highway was highly resisted to by locals, and now we can see its devastating results. These results are due both to the mistakes of residents and to a lack of political control.<sup>60</sup>

Water equals life. Taking a person’s water resources means ending their life according to me. This is especially valid for this geography, and that is why women came face-to-face with the state officials in Rize and other cities -just to protect their lives.<sup>61</sup>

Women’s leading roles in environmental movements in this region have tended to increase in the last decade; especially given ever-mounting HEPPs and road projects. Women took strength from each other to resist environmental degradation:

Especially elderly women in the community were proud of Mother Rabiya’s riot against the Green Road Project. They think that the Green Road Project along with mining deteriorate the naturalness of the whole Black Sea region. In addition, they blame past and present state officials. During conversations, one woman said that women should lead the world, while other mentioned women’s increasing resistance in the region: “I don’t think that defeat will be an option if women go out and speak up!” They were proud of their stance against environmentally hazardous projects, and one of them referred to passive women resisters and said: “You cannot oppose mining from your home. You should go out on the streets; you should make yourself heard!”<sup>62</sup>

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60 Neşe, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

61 Selma, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

62 Researcher’s Note, October 2016

While not true for everybody, the lives of local women in Artvin changed to a degree after the Cerattepe incidents. Their political and social awareness was enhanced as well as their visibility in public. Their statements indicate that this situation has also influenced their daily habits. They acknowledge that their daily conversations tend to be more political. Giving speeches during the protests became part of daily life, and they are more likely to be active in future social activities related to mining or any other *injustice*. My reflections once I returned from the fields provide a glimpse of the atmosphere:

It seems that developments in the legal and political aspects of mining have become a natural part of their daily conversations. When I had breakfast with them, I could clearly see this. One actually had a house close to the planned mine area, and she talked about how repairs in her house were going. She then turned me and said that she would be the first to be affected by the mining, but yet she continued to paint her house and expand the balcony, and she actually saw this as an alternate form of resistance.<sup>63</sup>

Artvin can be considered a city, but in terms of social connections, it has the character of a small town. Everyone is familiar with each other, and on that particular day, many people came and asked the woman how the renovations were going. They offered help, and it seemed that all these local people believed that mining would not take place in Cerattepe. Thus, everyone had faith in this woman's determination and capability even though the mining company's machines were just outside her house at that moment.

“The participation of women in this struggle is very important. Without women, this struggle cannot be won, for sure.”<sup>64</sup> Lale mentioned how she believes in the power of women in this struggle, which is proof of how far women have come with respect to self-confidence. The Cerattepe protests opened up a new space for them to speak up and be visible in the streets. In other words, by transforming women's perceptions about themselves and their role in so-

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63 Researcher's Note, October 2016

64 Lale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

ciety, this movement redefined social spaces. The political socialization process was helpful with regard to transforming women’s beliefs, values, and perceptions about themselves as women. In the end, it is fair to say that the Cerattepe movement provided women with opportunities to create a ‘level of agency’ and thereby influence the course of events and improve the scope of the movement.

### § 5.3 The Transformative Power of Environmental Protests for the Agency of Local Women

“When it comes to making an impact or transforming gender power relations; social movements matter.”<sup>65</sup> By opening a space for women’s politics, social movements bring women into the political sphere, encourage them to become decision makers, and pave the way for rising sexism during and after the movement. In that way -even without a definitive feminist agenda- social movements can trigger a transformation of patriarchal relations in society. As I show in this thesis, environmental movements open up a great space for women’s politicization and empowerment. The aim of agency; which is to “have an influence and be heard” in society has been achieved by a number of environmental movements throughout the world.<sup>66</sup>

The term “environmentalism of malcontent” introduced by Arsel, Akbulut and Adaman in the article of “Environmentalism of the Malcontent: Anatomy of an Anti-Coal Power Plant Struggle in Turkey”; indicates that along with issues of survival and health, political and economic disaffection can also motivate people in an environmental resistance. According to them, such discontent can be based on the personal political experiences of protestors or can derive from their opposition to the power relations of global capitalism. Vari-

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65 Jessica Horn, “BRIDGE: Gender and Social Movements: Overview Report “Institute of Development Studies Bulletin, (2013), 9.

66 Lucia Hanmer & Jeni Klugman, “Exploring Women’s Agency and Empowerment in Developing Countries: Where do we stand?”, *Feminist Economics*, 22:1, (2016), 237.

ous types of dissatisfaction, concern, and hope bring people together, and concern for the environment in these cases undertakes the role of the glue that binds different groups of people together.<sup>67</sup>

As can be seen in various examples of environmental movements from around the world, these movements really do undertake the role of glue and they can turn into mass political and social movements in time, the outcomes of which can effectively transform gender relations in society. Environmental struggles have the potential to be politicized or feminized over time and can create mass political or social mobilizations. From the Chipko Movement to the Green Belt Movement to the Bergama movement to Debra White's resistance to the Dakota Access Pipeline -all these environmental struggles have different motivations but in the end carried political and social baggage that blurred the distinctions between an environmental movement, a social or political movement, and a women's movement. It can be said that the Chipko movement's stance against environmental degradation paved the way for Indian women's empowerment, and color-coded movements in Thailand enhanced Thai women's confidence and increased their visibility in public by providing them with alternate forms of political participation. From these examples, it can be seen that environmental movements emerge, change, grow, and transform in time, and depending on internal and external factors, the outcomes of environmental movements vary.

However, in the case of women's participation in environmental movements, the importance of a legitimate and conceiving discourse should be highlighted. For women who are frequently forced to be apolitical by cultural, religious, and social norms and doctrines, becoming active in any social movement is a challenge. However, if women with limited resources and restricted movement believe that being part of a struggle is legitimate, their involvement increases. As seen in various examples, along with concern for the environment, a feeling the responsibility for the survival of their families has constituted a motivational discourse for their participation.

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67 Arsel, Akbulut, and Adaman, "Environmentalism of the Malcontent: Anatomy of an Anti-Coal Power Plant Struggle in Turkey," .6.

As I explain before, women's agency, empowerment, and autonomy are not a monolithic category. There are several indicators of their realization, and it should not be forgotten that "empowerment of women may not always lead to autonomy."<sup>68</sup> The multidimensional, context-specific features of these terms suggest that the ability to exercise agency or be empowered in one sphere of life does not automatically spill over into other areas. For this reason, it is hard to pin down the agency of the women of Cerattepe just as it is nearly impossible to measure their political, social, or gendered empowerment and autonomy.

I already stated that I chose to define the term agency as an increasing capacity to act, decide, and choose. Given this scope, I acknowledge that due to the Cerattepe protests, women became aware of their influence in politics as well as in social movements and that they gained a degree of agency from that. Nevertheless, this degree of agency either leads to autonomy nor to empowerment for most of them, as many of these protestor women do not realized why they are the first and most passionate to resist in environmental struggles. Many said that they have a kind of a spiritual bond with nature: "I went to the protests as an opponent, as an environmentalist, and more importantly as a mother." Another strongly likened nature to women and explained women's involvement in resistance on this basis.<sup>69</sup> I also support the idea that there is a closeness between women and nature, but as seen in the existing literature, the real reason is not spiritual. It is because women along with children are the first to be affected by environmental degradation. To conclude, this realistic perception of women's relation to nature did not gain traction among many of the local women during Cerattepe protests.

Therefore, women accepted the role of protector of the environment and undertook responsibility for their families' survival. As stated by Laurie, accepting "motherly" and "protector" roles defined by gendered mechanisms, these women unconsciously created "a safe femininity" for themselves during

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68 Nripendra Kishore Mishra And Tulika Tripathi, "Conceptualising Women's Agency, Autonomy and Empowerment" , *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 46, No. 11, (2011), 58.

69 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

the protests.<sup>70</sup> They may acquire a greater ability to act, decide, and choose, and their daily life practices and behaviors may have been transformed during and after the protests. However, it is not possible to speak about a “complete” agency for these women, and the extent to which this incident empowered them is an open question. It is more meaningful to address local women’s agency within the scope of this safe femininity. The women of Artvin with whom I have talked frequently mentioned that their struggle is legal, rightful, and necessary:

Women came to realization that [the struggle against mining] is not illegal and is actually is their constitutional right. The more they are involved in the protests; the more they understand they are not doing anything wrong. Our struggle includes people from all political parties and civil society organizations. It does not belong to party A or party B. From the beginning, governments, opposition parties, and nearly all politicians have been involved in this struggle because it really is a “fight for survival.”<sup>71</sup>

My number one motivation was environmental, but I also believe environmental degradation leads to social degradation in time. They are related. Because of that, if the natural habitat is destroyed here; this city and even the whole region will become unlivable. This is a small city, and what we can do economically is very limited. With limited resources and a small population; a particular lifestyle is accepted in here, and this lifestyle is actually interwoven with nature. This situation [with the mind] will not only affect Artvin but will also have an effect on the country overall. The destruction of Cerattepe is equivalent to the destruction of Artvin. This is a unique area, and it will take hundreds of years to become the same again. That is why our struggle was

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70 N. Laurie ; “Gender Water Networks: Femininity and Masculinity in Water Politics in Bolivia.” *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, 35(1), (2011), 179.

71 Neşe, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

not at all political. We put politics to one side and just protected our right to live.<sup>72</sup>

I condemned people who approached the issue from a political standpoint. You can support any party, but you must support this issue just with concern for the environment. This place is your home; this fight should not be political.<sup>73</sup>

I gave water to a policeman on the day of the clashes. He asked if it was bottled water. I said no. You see, we are fighting just for this: this water is a natural resource from our mountains. There is no politics here. It is obvious what we are fighting for.<sup>74</sup>

Most of these local women draw a clear-cut line between political aims and the resistance in Cerattepe, and they consider the latter a truly environmental, vital struggle. On that basis, they created a legitimate and conceiving discourse for themselves. Indeed, most interviewees thought that they should resist mining for the sake of their families as well as for the sake of the Artvin people and even the world. This kind of discourse opened up a space for both their politicization and socialization and, at the same time, constituted a “safe feminine” space where they could be part of this environmental struggle as women. This kind of *protector* understanding is the real driving force behind their high level of participation in Cerattepe demonstrations. Seeing this environmental struggle as a *must* gives these women the encouragement to get out their so-called private spheres and play an active part in politics in a way that most have never experienced before:

Many women who do not go outside their homes came to the demonstrations for Cerattepe. In any other protest of any political party, you would not see these women. Nevertheless, for one and only one reason, everyone united. If there are any future protests for Cerattepe; these

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72 Seda, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

73 Selma , Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

74 Nazlı, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 3, 2016

women will come, I am sure. Moreover -I believe this is so important- women are going out in the streets.<sup>75</sup>

They are going to restrict our sphere of life. Why do we accept this? We are also against the expropriation. We do not want any money. My children and all of us here just want to live in this beautiful environment. It is not a political movement. We fought in the name of the nature.<sup>76</sup>

The concept of resisting in the name of the nature is evidence of how they highlighted the fact that this struggle is legal and necessary. Naming it in that way kept them in the safe feminine zone.

“Resisting for the sake of all” can obviously be the focus of motivation not just for women but for all humans. However, women’s gender-defined roles as mothers and caretakers; along with their mission to protect the family, the future, children, elders, nature, and animals- simply, the helpless- automatically makes many women part of environmental movements. While eight interviewees told that the Cerattepe protests were their first experience actively participating in any social movement; three of these further stated that before the Cerattepe incident, they harshly criticize women who protested on the streets. A possible threat to their life space and their community transformed the thoughts of these local, non-activist women about active resistance. In other words, the exploration of mining in Cerattepe region was an adequate, legitimate, and conceiving discourse for them. One of my interviewees, Hale, works in cooperation with other local women in accordance with her job and said:

I may be one Hale here; but there are hundreds of Hales behind me. I am the one who has made money for them through their production, along with their dreams and hopes for the future. I may not fulfill my dreams, but I want them to have that opportunity. That was my dream, but once there is mining, there will be no future for us here.

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75 Pelin , Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 8, 2016

76 Nezire, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

One interviewee also said that she was not actually concerned for her own future but that she held watch in mountains and resisted the mining company's machines because she was greatly worried for the future of the elders in the community:

If we have to, I can go another city with my children and have the chance to start again. However, my parents are in their sixties; as our aunts and uncles; and they cannot even think of settling in another place. It will be impossible for them. I thought of them before me.<sup>77</sup>

This is where the transformative power of environmental movements for gender relations exists. By accepting environmental concern as a legitimate driving force of resistance, women can more comfortably perform seemingly "non-traditional forms and behavior and activities." With regard to gendered and cultural constraints on women; having a justifiable and conceiving reason to participate in any kind of resistance supports their smooth transition from the private to the public sphere. Therefore, as I say above; any kind of socialization and politicization can become part of the feminist agenda over time. And women in these processes; consciously or not; can derive a degree of agency from their participation.

Forming women's groups during the protests, establishing of committees to inform women in the villages, giving speeches to the media about the movement, and even going to demonstrations for the first time in their lives enhanced the restricted zone of movement and activity of these local women seem through an environmental movement. The villager women in Bergama chose to stop to wearing their *kıvraks* -a type of a traditional clothing that only covered women's bodies- when they went to protests and meetings in coffee-houses. They left the household duties to their husbands to go to out-of-town demonstrations. They even performed a sexual-strike for six months to convince their husbands to join the movement more actively and they refused to send their children to school.<sup>78</sup> Their alternate resistance mechanisms added

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77 Saliha, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

78 Reinart, , *Biz Toğrağı Bilirik: Bergama Köylüleri Anlatıyor*, 63.

to their presence in demonstrations created new roles for them which are outside the traditional, gender-defined, restrictive “womanly sphere.”

Şendeniz and Yavuz give us a glimpse of how women in Fındıklı; a district in the Black Sea region; resisted the construction of HEPPs in their article “HES Direnişlerinde Kadınların Deneyimleri: Fındıklı Örneği.” One of their interviewees told them how her husband thought of the importance of a river, which is very different from her thinking. She had to convince her husband that a flowing river is not waste of water and is actually a necessity for the sustainability of their lives.<sup>79</sup> Other women resisting HEPPs -in Tonya- explained the determination of local women as follows: “*If we go there as 100 women, and I say to them ‘come on!’ we are going to lynch them. You should believe we could do it. Our Tonya women are like that.*” She adds, “*We are not going to push our men into this struggle!*”<sup>80</sup> As indicated in previous chapters, local women resisted the construction of HEPPs in every alternate way that they could find with their sticks, eggs, and banners; which most were holding up for the first time in their lives.

This chapter gives voice to local women of Cerattepe. With the help of observations and field notes, interviews gave me this chance to voice their ideas in their own words. I adhered to their rhetoric and tried to understand what this movement and process meant for them.

“We were not aware that there are so many ‘revolutionary’ women among us.”<sup>81</sup> This expression by Hale indicates to what extent local women valued their participation in the Cerattepe incident. They saw as themselves revolutionary, labeled themselves brave, and openly threatened the mining company with their newly gained self-confidence shouting “Runaway Cengiz! Women came!” during the intervention in front of the state hospital. In this chapter, I analyze women’s participation in the framework of some basic questions. I discuss what changed for local women during the protests and how women themselves perceive their participation in the protests. These protests also influenced their daily behaviour and habits and increased their political and so-

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79 Şendeniz and Yavuz, “HES Direnişlerinde Kadınların Deneyimleri: Fındıklı Örneği”, 51.

80 Ibid.,81.

81 Hale, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 5, 2016

cial awareness. During the watches and interventions, going up against security forces, guarding a region under heavy snow, and giving statements to newspapers and television channels became part of their daily lives.

The Cerattepe movement evolved from a local to a national one, and in the eyes of local women; it even became a patriotic movement in the end. While Lale accepted this struggle as a national fight, Selime expressed her concern for the future of the country based on the state's political choices with respect to Cerattepe movement. According to Hale, today they can be seen as environmental resisters, but they only want what is good for the future of the people, and these resisters may also fight against internal and external threats to the country, if necessary. Seeing their resistance as legal, rightful, and necessary paved the way for the increased participation of women in the movement. In that way, within the boundaries of their "safe femininity," more and more women began to participate in the movement in the process. They considered this antimining resistance to be an adequately conceiving and legitimate discourse, and in turn, they began to perform non-traditional forms of behavior like going to a mountainous region only as women or trying to reach the Cerattepe region despite the intervention of security forces. Especially for first-time participants, this was a rupture from the traditional, gender-based roles of these women.

"Should we climb up into the sky?"<sup>82</sup> My interviewee, Elif; mentioned a woman in the demonstrations who had lost her home because of the dams and was now facing the likelihood of having to leave her new home due to mining who had shouted this question. Among all the expressions of the women with whom I talked during my research, this was the most tragic. At the same time, it clearly shows why women were so determined to resist mining and on what grounds they labelled their struggle a *must*. To conclude, the concept of agency is defined as an increasing capacity to act and decide, and the local women of Cerattepe were able to act and decide during their resistance -based on justified reasons according to their own view. However, as

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82 Elif, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

I stated before, long-term gender-related outcomes of the Cerattepe movement must be analyzed separately in a more detailed research that takes the personal and familial relationships of these women into account.

## Conclusion

This thesis sets out to analyze the experiences of the local women of the Cerattepe region as a means to understand both how their presence as women changed the course of events and how their participation in the anti-mining demonstrations transformed the perception about agency issues of these women. Based on two master frames -environmentalism and protection of one's living space- local women's resistance in Cerattepe was analyzed in this thesis within the scope of the role of women in environmental movements.

The relation between women and nature constituted a major framework of this thesis as perceptions about this relationship affect both women and men. Ecofeminism and environmental sociology have been used as means to interpret the women-nature relationship. While the feminine closeness to nature is generally considered an insult to women, ecofeminists are analyzing and reshaping this closeness. Even though they are labeled as essentialists due to their analysis of this closeness; the main aim of ecofeminists is to disclose the interweaving of the domination of women and nature in patriarchal systems.

The ecofeminist perspective connects the liberation of women to the liberation of nature from patriarchal order. It also challenges all kinds of social domination based on sex, race, class, and ethnicity along with the domination of nature which have suffered from the combination of capitalism and patriarchy. In this thesis, I use ecofeminism as a theoretical framework in order to

better focus on women's experiences in environmental struggles. From the brief analyses of women-led environmental resistance movements known worldwide, women's inferior position in society was meaningfully related to their determined resistance to environmental degradation. From the existing literature, it can be seen that women are forced to be closer to nature as they are the primary sufferers of any kind of environmental exploitation. Along with well-known movements like Chipko and Green Belt, small-scale local environmental resistance by women from around the world have contributed to my understanding of women's place in these struggles. As indicated throughout the thesis, despite controversy about its essentialism, ecofeminism is important in the context of its contribution to the literature of feminism and the women's movement. A particular point of interest of this thesis is to hear the real voices of female protestors and emphasize women's experiences in environmental struggles. Ecofeminism provided the opportunity to place Cerattepe women's struggles into a wider conceptual and theoretical framework.

Add to the contributions of ecofeminist discussions to my research; one of the main claims of this thesis is that just like the environmentalism of the malcontent, the women's environmentalism or as a term "environmentalism of women", has its own dynamics and it should be accepted as a separate term. The closeness between women and nature, women's motivations for environmental resistance as well as women's roles and participation in the environmental protests are different from men, and women's involvement in environmental movements has changed the course of events and seems to have unforeseeable consequences for both the environmental movements and for women. While environmental concerns are seen as the main driving forces for activists, the environmental protests may contain many different issues that can foster different things over time and they can challenge, change and transform current political, social and economic contexts. In the case of women's protests in Cerattepe, this term should be emphasized once again on the grounds that their activism is different from men's, in terms of both motivation and methods of resistance. As I have shown in this thesis that women's involvement in Cerattepe movement has changed the perception about women and gave them a level of agency. To conclude, a local environmental

resistance that bearing the characteristics of an *umbrella movement* has gender as a behind the scenes issue. In time, women's issues and participation in the movement tended to increase while the Cerattepe incident was much more accepted within the scope of environmentalism of women.

The reason that I have shown the examples of environmental struggles at the local and global levels in which women are led and organized, and analyze the ecofeminist discussions in this thesis, is to give a better understanding of why environmentalism of women should be taken into consideration as a separate term. Nevertheless, in addition to the consequences of each environmental struggle, the methods of resistance and motivations are different from each other, and it is important to acknowledge that women's environmentalism has different dynamics and that the evolution of women's resistance along with the outcomes of it must be analyzed separately. Like others, the Cerattepe incident; in which women become the faces of the movement in time; carried the dynamics of environmentalism of women as local women participated in the protests with their gender-defined roles and in the course of events, their presence in social, political and economic contexts began to be challenged and changed.

Since the 1990s, the number of environmental struggles in Turkey has increased both in number and with respect to their sphere of influence. Obviously, the Bergama movement was one of the most memorable environmental movements and stayed on the public agenda for a decade. The organizational methods and tactics used in the Bergama movement were used in other local environmental struggles in Turkey against gold mining, hydroelectric and nuclear power plants, and the construction of dams. In the 1990s and 2000s, activism in Turkey against environmental exploitation was intense. The Cerattepe protests should be analyzed within this trend of increasing environmental activism in Turkey. People of different age and occupation groups quickly became aware of the events due to the intense interests of media, and they supported the locals of Cerattepe.

My main aim in this thesis was to examine whether the women of the Cerattepe resistance gained agency from their participation in the protests. Among a sea of definitions, I applied the concept of agency consisting of an increasing capacity of women to act, decide, and choose. I examine the agency

issues of these women in this context. As a means of transforming or challenging gender power relations in society, the existing literature indicates that all types of social movements matter. Even if the word of feminism is not employed; social movements challenge and change existing gender relations in society by bringing women into politics, enabling them to acquire more political knowledge, and empowering them. They also can be seen as effective, alternative political routes for women. The change or transformation of gender power relations may not be explicitly, but changes in daily habits and behaviors are indicators of transforming gender relations in the society. I claim in this thesis that this is the case for Cerattepe women. Within the framework of social movements, the environmental struggle at Cerattepe matters for local women because it transformed both women's perceptions about themselves and the way the community perceives women's role in society. Social spaces were redefined by this movement and the increasing self-confidence of women made their agency an issue for further discussion.

That the agency of the local women of the Cerattepe region became a question of debate after the environmental resistance does not imply that these women were apolitical or insensitive to political and social issues beforehand. However, their involvement in the Cerattepe resistance was pivotal for the vision and maintenance of the politicization and socialization of these local women. Through their participation in discussions and demonstrations along with their activities in women's platforms, they became agents of this environmental struggle.

As an in-depth, participatory study of local women's activism in Cerattepe, this thesis answers the question of how women decided to become involved in this environmental struggle and what motivated those most. The impressions I drew from the interviews indicate that a "safe feminine" zone along with a legitimate, conceiving discourse helped increase the participation of women. By claiming that the Cerattepe resistance is legal, rightful, necessary, and even a *must* for them; local women of the region transformed it from a local to a national and even patriotic resistance. Locals also drew attention to human rights and claimed that their rights to water, land, food, and a healthy environment were being violated by the mining efforts. As Karahan stated, they knew that "the cycle of life runs along with the cycle of water

here.”<sup>1</sup> They prioritized human life and the protection of nature over the profits of a handful of companies. The fact that the mining operations were run by a private company and not by the state made their resistance to the mining more legitimate, and I claim that this method of justification had a huge impact on women’s increasing participation in the movement.

The difference between investments in environmental projects has been performed by the state or a private company is also emphasized by the participants of environmental movements in Turkey. The protestors underline this difference in various events and through that differentiation they seem to have empowered and legalized their position as opponents. As in the case of Cerattepe, women emphasize the fact that they are loyal to their country and oppose the mining in Cerattepe on environmental as well as patriotic reasons. As they acknowledge the protection of natural and cultural resources of Artvin within the framework of national interest of their country, their environmental activism corresponds to the sense of patriotism. For that reason, the idea that the company not the state will profit from the mining in Cerattepe confirm the patriotic stance of Cerattepe protestors. Increasingly, the division between the state and private companies has become an impetus for the protestors and has carried their environmental opposition from local to national and even to a patriotic level. The women protestors also seemed to use this method as a mean of justification for their antimining activities and by that way they strengthened their protestor identity by staying in the zone of safe femininity.

The Cerattepe environmental resistance -or the “twenty-five-year headache” of the locals- turned into active resistance in 2015 with the enforcement of a new EIA that favored mining in the Cerattepe region. From this date forward, women began to resist in the name of nature, for the sake of their families, and even for the sake of the country. They performed non-traditional activities like guarding the region alone under heavy snow and being involved in clashes with security forces in which teargas and plastic bullets were used extensively. Accepting the Cerattepe movement as an adequately legitimate discourse should be seen as a significant incentive for the female protestors.

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1 Neşe, Recorded interview by the author in Artvin, October 4, 2016

During the process they even were regarding it as a national fight with a sense of patriotism.

In the end, one question remains: Was the Cerattepe movement successful? Actually, the focus of this thesis concerns the development and mobilization of the movement along with a special emphasis on women's role within it. An analysis of the outcomes would require a different research that should analyze all social and political variables separately. An extensive research that examines the spillover effects of the movement on the cultural and social domains of the Cerattepe community would be an appropriate topic for such further research. Therefore, it would be misleading to conclude that a movement has changed public opinion or has influenced the behavior of the state without thoroughly investigating the outcomes.

In 2017, the mining site at Cerattepe opened and started to operate. In the beginning of the 2018, supporters of the antimining resistance from all over the country began to collect signatures opposing mining operations in the region. The 100-year-old Hacı Ali Keklik; a local of Artvin; also became an active member of this process and collected signatures door-to-door in Artvin. Known as the veteran of Cerattepe, Keklik became a face of the movement with a photo of him holding a plastic bullet case in his hand. He said that he owes his long life to Artvin's nature. The 100-year-old environmentalist; who was hit by a plastic bullet and was affected by the tear-gas during the clashes; stated that he will continue to be a part of this struggle to protect the forests, the water, and the country.<sup>2</sup> A group of members of the Environmental Platform of Artvin presented the petition to the Turkish Parliamentary Speaker's Office in January 15, 2018. During this one-month period, 40,000 signatures were collected not just from Artvin but also from Istanbul, Ankara, Bursa, Zonguldak, Kocaeli, Çanakkale, Izmir and other cities. In the joint press releases in these cities, it has been stated once again that this is a matter of survival:

Hundreds of new mine licenses recently granted in the region, around Cerattepe seem to be making Artvin unlivable. Mining operations,

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2 Adem Güngör, "100 Yaşındaki Çevreci Madene Karşı", *Hürriyet*, January 10, 2018, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/artvinde-100-yasindaki-cevreci-madene-karsi-i-40705462>.

quarries, HEPPs, and Green Road projects threaten the right of the people of Artvin to live in a healthy environment. We believe it is a necessity given our love of nature and country to fight against projects that have in proven by scientists to threaten the nature as a whole; especially endemic species; that intend to people's culture and living spaces, [and] that open of irreversible wounds in the ecological system which are based on the profitability for companies rather than the national economy.<sup>3</sup>

On 21 February 2018, on the second anniversary of the severe clashes between locals and security forces, a crowd of about 500 people gathered in the city center. The head of the Green Artvin Association, Karahan, made a press conference, emphasizing the importance of active resistance and saying that they would never forget the clashes, which came after 245 days keeping watch over the region. They would tell their children about these memorable days. She added that they made history through the resistance of February 2016 as a continuation of their twenty five-year movement, which was also a model of civil society for the world.<sup>4</sup>

In March 2018, a panel was organized in Artvin called "The Life Concerns of the People of Artvin: Cerattepe." Biologists, scientists, and journalists as well as members of political parties and civil society organizations talked about the possible damage from gold mining in the Cerattepe region.<sup>5</sup> The supporters of this antimining resistance have been continued to work to keep public interest in Cerattepe alive. With the signatures they collected, they hoped to show the state that they had not given up on the resistance.

The locals constructed two little cottages in Cerattepe to protect the region from the operations of the mining company in 2015, and in April 2018, locals

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3 Doğan News Agency, "Cerattepe'den Ankara'ya 40 bin İmza", *Hürriyet*, January 15, 2018, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/cerattepeden-ankaraya-40-bin-imza-40711066>.

4 Adem Güngör, "Artvin'de Cerattepe Olayları İkinci Yılında Protesto Edildi.", *Hürriyet*, February 21, 2018, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/artvinde-cerattepe-olaylari-2nci-yilinda-pro-40749564>.

5 Adem Güngör, "Artvin'de Cerattepe Paneli Düzenlendi", *Hürriyet*, March 24, 2018, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/artvinde-cerattepe-paneli-duzenlendi-40783075>.

demolished them in accordance with the court's final ruling that they be (are) removed because they were illegal. The locals who helped construct the cottages did not want to leave their demolition to the Directorate of Forestry and did it themselves. Bedrettin Kalin, the lawyer in the case who was also a member of the Green Artvin Association stated that they did not construct these cottages for fun:

The mining company made an illegal attempt to reach to the Cerattepe region, and for that reason, people had to come out here to protect their nature, their forests, and they started guarding the region. We started guarding the Cerattepe area to prevent any damage to the Cerattepe region and to the forests as well as to the ecosystem of the region, thinking that the Artvin people should not come face-to-face with the disaster of mining. A very patriotic civil resistance occurred there; people guarded there with great devotion.<sup>6</sup> The demolition of the cottages should not be accepted as a defeat according to Karahan who stated that they were kept on the right side of the law and that this was not compliance for them. She added that these cottages were the symbolic places of their resistance and that for the sake of Artvin and the world, they would continue to protect this world heritage and resist mining to the end.<sup>7</sup>

Given recent developments, it can be argued that the Cerattepe movement was not successful and even failed in terms of reaching its main, stated goal to prevent mining extraction in the Cerattepe region. However, an analysis of the movement in terms of its impact and effects on social and cultural domains provide a better understanding of its level of success for partial success. A particular point of interest derived from this thesis is that the political, social, and environmental awareness of locals increased with the movement, especially after the watches and clashes in 2016. Women of the region specifically gained

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6 Adem Güngör, "Cerattepe'de Çevreciler Orman İşgali Sayılan Nöbet Kulübelerini Kaldırdı", *Hürriyet*, April 14, 2018, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cerattepede-cevreciler-orman-ısgali-sayilan-40805028>.

7 Ibid.

a level of agency from their participation in the movement and became decision makers in the process. Given their explosion of self-confidence, one of the main conclusions of this thesis is that the perception of women changed both in the eyes of women themselves and in the eyes of men of the local community. The partial transformation of gender relations should be accepted as a social and cultural outcome of the movement. The establishment of associations and women's platforms along with the support of social media empowered locals in terms of further mobilization and resistance. By this means, they managed to place their issue on the public agenda for a long time and raised environmental awareness and the capacity for resistance to any environmental exploitation. This is true especially in other eastern parts of the Black Sea region where especially local women claim that women's resistance in the region against dams, HEPPs, and mines encourage them to show a more determined resistance.

In addition to that, prime minister of Turkey, Davutoğlu, had a meeting with the representatives of the antimining resistance; who are the members of Green Artvin Association, academicians and political party leaders; on February 24, 2016 and pledged that the mining activities in the region would be "paused until a court decision."<sup>8</sup> Taking into consideration the fact that these efforts were not successful in terms of stop the mining in Cerattepe, this meeting may be overlooked. However, it shows how an environmental movement has succeeded in attracting attention from the state and, how one of the state's most powerful authorities, a prime minister, has agreed to negotiate with representatives of an environmental incident. Along with other social as well as gender-related outcomes of the movement, this meeting also should be regarded as a success of the movement as it shows how a local environmental resistance can evolve something bigger in time, attracting the attention of the state and taking seriously by highest authorities of the political power.

Therefore, environmental movements, like all other kinds of social movements, can have unforeseen consequences. Environmental movements generally perform like a *glue* binding different dissatisfactions. The existing literature

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8 "Disputed Mine Work in Turkey's Artvin Halted, Pm Calls for End to Protests", February 24, 2016, Hürriyet Daily News, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/disputed-mine-work-in-turkeys-artvin-halted-pm-calls-for-end-to-protests-95642>.

shows that environmental movements often produce unforeseen social, political, and cultural consequences. As we can see from movements like Chipko and Green Belt, women's empowerment can also be one of these unforeseen consequences. In the case of Cerattepe, this is particularly true for local women of the region as they began to act, decide, and make choices within the movement as well as perform untraditional acts and behaviors while resisting the mine. The increasing politicization and socialization of women in the process was not an identified or stated goal of the Cerattepe movement but can be seen as a spillover effect. Additionally, along with the ongoing social and legal struggles, the determined resistance of locals postponed mining until 2017. Given that the struggle began in 1989, this can be accepted as a success.

There are, inevitably, limitations to this research. Despite the fact that this study deliberately focuses on the women's experiences, the collection of data about men's experiences would also be worthwhile, especially in terms of understanding changing perceptions about women in the community.

Activist women's perception of masculinity, women's interpretation of men's relation with nature and their understanding of the reasons that make them different from men in relation to their environmental activism will also provide significant data for this study. In other words, is it true to accept that these women place themselves in a higher position than men in the sense of environmental consciousness and do not trust them on environmental subjects? Are they labeling themselves as resisters against both the environmental deterioration and the men; who are the executors of these kinds of harmful decisions? From the answers I got from the interviews, women seem to be accepted the role of the protector of the environment. One of my interviewees states that "If women did not look after their lands and their homes, the men would sell everything and destroy every establishment in the world." Others emphasize that "Women are more sensitive than men in every situation. This is also valid in relation to nature.", "We really perceived ourselves as 'go-getters.' We realized that if we wanted to be, we could be three steps ahead of men –forget about being a step behind them". From there on, it is possible to state that women often struggle against environmental degradation and indicate men on the subversive side in this fight most of the time. Nevertheless, a group of men I spoke with during my field research claim that they are very proud

of how their wives, sisters or daughters went out on the streets and protected Cerattepe.

It is clear from that both the women's perception of masculinity and the interpretation of men about women's participation in Cerattepe incident need further research and the relation between increasing women participation in environmental movements and their placement masculinity in their environmental discourses may be a subject for another thesis. Within the scope of this, it may also be questioned who these women actually oppose; the state or the patriarchal relations in the society, or both.

This kind of research; which questioning the women's perception about men's role in environmental degradation or masculinity in general; will certainly provide a powerful insight into the study. However, in this thesis the main aim was to give a voice to local women and their experiences, as I acknowledged them as the agents of the Cerattepe resistance.

The existing research into environmental resistance mentions women's experiences only as a subheading and it automatically makes them the recipients of decisions taken in the process. However, as a participant observer, both my observations and interviews indicate that the women of the region have self-confident in the process. With their active participation in all the layers of the movement, they became the executors of decisions. However, to mention about a complete agency aspect, their intimate and familial relations should be analyzed using a different research design. Most of the time, their newly gained "partial agency" was tested by a wide range of actors from their husbands to the state to the judiciary to civil society. Taking this into account, the durability of this partial agency should also be examined.

Thus, there are shortcomings to the snowball sampling method. It may cause the exclusion of certain perspectives from the study, as participants may share similar opinions and experiences. A further study may be to conduct focus groups to analyze long-term gender-related outcomes of the movement and in that way compare different perceptions about the subject. However, the interviews I made with thirteen women serve to provide a starting point for further research.

To claim that environmental movements have transformed gender relations in society, empowered women, and made them autonomous individuals

is obviously exaggerated. As I discussed above, the empowerment, autonomy, and agency of women are multidimensional and context-based, so in every different situation the outcomes of women's participation in any given social movement will be different from others. However, I argue that women are increasingly more involved in environmental movements in Turkey as well as in the world. Especially within the scope of local environmental resistance, the context of an environmental movement can be *emancipatory* for local women. Consciously or not, it can be concluded from several examples that women may use these environmental struggles as a basis for future liberating feminist resistance. Changes to their daily habits and behaviors along with the changing perceptions of men of the community about women may not indicate a major transformation in gender relations. However, they pave the way for a more gender-neutral, liberating, and potentially emancipatory context for women by creating a non-traditional image of an activist woman who may possibly get out of the safe feminine zone of environmental activism in the future.

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