

UNDERSTANDING IMAGES OF ENVIRONMENTAL
RESISTANCE:
VILLAGE WOMEN
FROM ‘GOKOVA’ TO ‘YESIL YOL’

A Master’s Thesis

by

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Ankara

September 2016



To my mother and my grandmother...

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Graduate School of Economics and Social Sciences
of
İhsan Doğramacı Bilkent University

by

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ANKARA

SEPTEMBER 2016

I certify that I have read this thesis and have found that it is fully adequate, in scope and in quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Media and Visual Studies.



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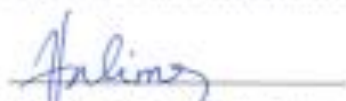
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ABSTRACT

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In 1984, a group of women occupied the road of Gökova to block the experts of electric institution who came to Gökova for technical measure works for the thermal power plant construction. The newspapers wrote the event as “Women say ‘no’ to the plant!” In the following years, while the projects of power plants and appeared, the reactions of locals and environmentalists increasingly continued. And in almost all reactions the village women appeared as the faces of movements.

This study began through a desire to understand the village women images of grassroots environmental movements. It attempts to figure out how these images are represented by the media. To this aim, we look at news reports of ten different grassroots environmental movements, which were published in the Turkish newspapers. By looking at visual and textual discourse of the news reports, we explore the images according to three main approaches; composition of images, the signs of social subjects and differences, and the relationship with the context.

Keywords: village women, resistance, image, grassroots environmental movements

ÖZET

ÇEVRE DİRENİŞİ İMAJLARINI ANLAMAK: KÖY KADINLARI GÖKOVA'DAN YEŞİL YOL'A

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Yüksek Lisans, İletişim ve Tasarım Bölümü

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1984 yılında bir grup kadın, Gökova'da yapılacak termik santralin ölçümleri için gelen uzmanların yolunu keserek, köye girmelerini engelledi. Gazeteler bu olayı “Kadınlar santrale ‘hayır’ dedi!” şeklinde yazdılar. Devam eden yıllarda santral ve maden projelerinin çoğalmasıyla, köylülerin ve çevrecilerin tepkileri giderek arttı. Bu tepkilerin çoğunda köy kadınları eylemlerin yüzü olarak ortaya çıktı.

Bu çalışma yerel çevresel hareketlerdeki direnişçi köy kadını imajları ve medyadaki temsili üzerine bir söylem analizi sunmaktadır. Bu amaçla, on farklı yerel çevresel hareketin gazete haberlerine bakılmıştır. Haberlerin görsel ve yazınsal metinlerine bakarak, imajların kompozisyonu, fotoğraflardaki toplumsal öznelerin izlerine ve bağlamla olan ilişkisi irdelenmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: köy kadını, direniş, imaj, yerel çevresel hareketler,

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

*And the women,
our women
with their awesome, sacred hands,
pointed little chins, and big eyes,
our mothers, lovers, wives,
who die without ever having lived,
who get fed at our tables
after the oxen,
who we abduct and carry off to the hills
and go to prison for,
who harvest grain, cut tobacco, chop wood, and barter
in
the market,
who we harness to our plows,
and who with their bell and undulant heavy hips
surrender to us in sheepfolds
in the gleam of knives stuck in the ground –
the women, our women
— Nazım Hikmet, 1982*

In 2015 autumn, a controversial highway project that is environmentally harmful had started to connect the roads of eight highlands in Rize, located in Turkey's northeast region. The region is legally protected area, which is also famed for its biodiversity and green forest. The 2,600 kilometer road project, titled "Green Road Project", was planned for development of tourism by opening the region for constructions. After the operations started, the local people of highlands and environmentalists voiced their fears about the undesirable results of the project and touristic facilities as disruption of biodiversity. The District Governor rejected the reservations of people and the protests had begun. In July 11, the local people and environmental activists gathered and reacted to operating bulldozer in Samistal, one of the highlands involved in the project. Full-armed gendarmes intervened against the group to ease the operation by using tear gas and force. A video which was captured while the disturbance continued had changed the flow of protests strikingly. An old local woman who sat down in front of the bulldozers which were escorted by gendarmerie forces. By holding a wooden walking stick and wearing a conventional headscarf, she said "[T]he roads of the highlands will not be connected. We never accept it. Who is the State? Who is the Governor? I am the people!"(Kaçar 2015, June 11).

The video¹ was recorded by the camera of a professional journalist, Muhammed Kaçar from Dogan News Agency, and it was published in the agency's website firstly. In the following hours, the video and photographs of the old-resister-woman got viral

¹ Yeşil Yol'a Havva Ana İsyanı: 'Halkım Ben!' (2015, July 11). Retrieved August 8, 2016, from http://webtv.hurriyet.com.tr/haber/rizeli-yine-dur-dedi_116024

immediately. The woman's name is Rabia Bekar but she was anonymously called as "*Havva Ana*" (See, Figure 1) – means 'Eve' in English – in social media. Millions of supporting tweets had been posted with #HavvaAna hashtags on Twitter. The video was watched thousand times on newspaper's websites, Youtube and similar video sharing sites. The video also received a widespread press coverage in conventional printed media in the name of Havva Ana as well.



Figure 1: “Who is the State? I am the people!!” (Hürriyet 2015, June 11)

Havva Ana could imprint on the memories as a powerful image by symbolizing the protests of Green Road Project. As an image that embodies a critical and strong stance against the environmentally disruptive attempts and the authorities that lead up to these attempts, she portrays ‘a resistance of villager women’ who is the real owner of that highlands, with her traditional headscarf, local accent, wooden stick. She represents the locality of protests and her words summarize feelings of almost all the grassroots environmental movements; “I am the people!”

As a matter of fact, the picture of local resister woman is a familiar image through the grassroots environmental movements in Turkey. The first example of influential grassroots environmental movement came into the picture in an Aegean village, Gökova, in 1984. After the news about the construction of a thermal power plant, the villagers of Gökova, Bodrum, Milas and other locals of Muğla came together to protest. As Şevket Özdemir addressed, the first attempt against construction of plant came from the local women. While men of Gökova village went to Ankara, the capital city, to tell their objections against a thermal plant construction to governors, women had stayed in the village and crossed the Turkish Electricity Institution's path to block technical measure works for construction (Özdemir, 1998; 59). This is a photograph remained from the movement which was published in the newspapers of the time (See, Figure 2). And it is the first document that recorded the local's positions through environmental movements of Turkey. In the following years, while the state has become more interventionist at the geographies they live, in order to build nuclear, thermal and hydro power plants, to sink gold mines and privatize of public spheres for touristic facilities, the reactions of locals and environmentalists was no difference Bergama, Cerrattepe and Ulukışla Gold Mine Construction Plans, Hydro Electric Power Plant Plans of Fırtına Valley, Yuvarlakçay and Senoz River, and Geze Thermal Power Plant Construction Plans are just few of the important instances that involve strong resistance against the interventions. And in almost all reactions we read and watch the movements from the media channels the local women, like Havva Ana, appear as the faces of movements.

Considering these facts, the central question then becomes: what do the women images in the photographs of conventional media tell us about their representation? And, how are they positioned in these grassroots environmental movements?

1.1. Purpose of the Study

As a matter of fact, the environmental problems are not gender-specific issues. However, as Sturgeon notes, the effects of environmental degradation and destructions are disproportionate for women, especially in developing countries' rural sides. In the light of eco-feminist theorizing, Noel Sturgeon (1997) conceptualizes the special connection between women and nature in a number of the relationships. According to Sturgeon, patriarchy equates women and nature. She claims that "where women are degraded, nature will be degraded and where women are thought to be eternally giving and nurturing, nature will be thought of as endlessly fertile and exploitable" (1997:28). On the other hand they have a "predominant role in agricultural production and the managing of household economies worldwide." This role, for sure, makes women affected by the environmental degradation more quickly.

As it will be seen in the following sections of this study, this equation is also functioned by media as well. Media channels consolidates and reproduces this equation while representing the environmental issues by using pictures of women through environmental issues. As the Havva Ana example, we came across with a lot of women images through environmental issues in newspapers while our research. It is fair to say that women images are used as spectators and subjects of environmental issues for media. The news about environment, as degradation, landslide, protests and demonstrations, are given with the photographs that generally include women images in different sizes and scales.

By taking into account all these facts, this study aims to present a portrayal of local resister women images of grassroots environmental movements in terms of discourse analysis. We think that examining to images discursively would release the

nature of grassroots environmental movements and place of women at the level of representation.

1.2. Structure of the Study

To this aim, we will draw a frame for ‘image’ conceptually in the following chapter. In order to make a proper textual and visual discourse analysis, this study takes off from the studies of Gillian Rose’s *Visual Methodologies* (2001) and Teun A. van Dijk’s *Discourse and Context* (2008).

In the third chapter, we give a brief timeline of the environmental movements’ evolution from 1900s to 1980s. We are indicating the turning points of environmentally-concerning attempts in Turkey and the world simultaneously. This chapter seeks to summarize the contextual background of the environmental movements.

Fourth chapter is the core section of the study that consists the discourse analyses of ten selected grassroots environmental reactions’ representation on newspapers. The reactions are selected according to their times, scales and contents. Depending on the type of reactions and protests, we analyze more than one news reports for some of the movements. It is fair to say that each reactions and their representation on media bring different phenomena along. Therefore, the reader is going to encounter different reflections and conclusion.

The last chapter is an overall conclusion and evaluation of the thesis. There are also further suggestions on the subject.

CHAPTER 2

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF IMAGE

Over the last two decades, we are sharply surrounded by the technologies as television, computer and smart phones that expose us to face with various visual images. Social movements, wars, politics, advertisements, sports, and many other issues come to us through images. It takes us under a practice that we, every single day, watch, read, think with and even live in conveyed pictures. W.J.T. Mitchell names this age as 'pictorial turn' which is "a convergence of spectacle and surveillance in television news, films, and forms of art address a public sphere" (1994: 43).

In her study of "Images of Woman", Sarah Graham-Brown claims that "[W]hen we are looking at photographs in the context social history, a number of other forms of meaning have to be taken into consideration"(1988: 3). These meanings are embedded on "the context in which the photograph was taken; the relationship of power and authority between photographer's choice of subject; the way photograph might interpreted by its viewer..." In many cases, she argues, photographs that come into sight without clues and attempts to notice their meaning can be only a matter of

informed guesswork. An informed guesswork is the only way that can reveal the discourse of image. And to release the discourse would tell how the images, the resister village woman, are positioned in the frame and what the meaning of images is.

Therefore, to look profoundly at the images needs to have an idea about the context and its relationship with power. The notion of 'context' is frequently used in order to place and explain the current events and situations in their political, social and historical climates. In addition, according to Teun A. van Dijk, "each communicative situation is thus subjectively represented in a complex way where each of a variety social properties may be more or less salient in a given situation (or event)" (2008: 115). For example, while in an event gender identity might be more related than class or religious identity, occupational identity would be more deterministic for another event, "depending on the nature of the current activity and its aims or other situational factors". Secondly, this is a fact that the photographs, texts and images, are conveyed by the media channels are strong apparatuses of the notion of authority. Regardless of the ideological roots, the media and its lenses turn to events within a given perspective lead them to see and represent the events according to their ethos. Lastly, the meaning of a photograph, for Barthes, comes to the light within the gaze of individual viewer. However, it is an indisputable fact that the context and relationship that images have evolved have deterministic role on the meaning in individual's mind. Image has its own effects on the course of events too.

All the different sorts of mediums and images present a space, which is constituted by representation of the world. Different lives, stories and meanings occur in images. They render the social life within visual terms. However the rendering, even by photographs, is never innocent (Rose, 2001). Images interpret the world; they display it in particular way. As Gillian Rose points:

“Images are reproduced, and may be moved, displayed, sold, censored, venerated, discarded, stared at, hidden, recycled, glanced at, damaged, destroyed, touched, and reworked. Images are made and used in all sorts of ways by different people for different reasons, and the makings and uses are crucial to the meanings an images carries.” (2001: 14)

In other words, images are ‘refined’ versions of social relations coming from the filter of various eyes. While some of them spread over lots of people, others remain at large. But they are all ‘socially constructed’ items; all of them have a social impact and function.

According to Gillian Rose, it is possible to think images (visuality) as a sort of discourse. The images are certain things which are visible in particular ways and other things, subjects would be produced and they act within the field of vision. That is to say; ‘various eyes’ refining the social relations and condition that spread out or make lose are the facts of power that drives images in the discourse.

‘Discourse’ is a concept that constitutes the centre of Foucauldian genealogy. It is a living organism including all power relations that shape and regulate the order of social structure with all beliefs, ideas, values, symbols, words, norms, traditions and institutions. Discourse is everywhere and nobody can stay out of it. As Foucault clearly mentions in *The Discourse of Language*, in every society the production of discourse is simultaneously “controlled, selected, organized, redistributed” according to a series of producers whose role is “to avert its powers and its dangers, to cope with change events, to evade its ponderous, awesome materiality” (1971:216).

In pursuant of Foucauldian thought, discourse is a form of discipline that lead us to think about power. Power is not something top down and it is not always a repressive practice. It disciplines subjects operating discourse through objects, relations and scenes. Knowledge is the main source of power which is structured on the claim of absolute truth that is handled in the intersection of knowledge and power. Michel

Foucault touches upon the intersection of knowledge and power in his controversial study *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of Prison* as follows:

“We should admit... that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves or by applying it because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.” (1977: 27)

Foucault lays emphasis on that knowledge and power are complementary phenomena. It is to say that discourse is not only about knowledge, it is also a source of power. The main ground of a strong discourse, in terms of the productiveness of its social impacts, is the truth of knowledge. The term of ‘regime of truth’ is ‘agents’ which is both part of the regime and its producer. Therefore, to look images under a discourse analysis would tell us about ‘how particular images are given specific meaning.’

“Images are only particular signs from social world, but something like an actor on the historical stage, a presence of character endowed with legendary status, a history that parallels and participates in the stories” (Mitchell, 1986: 9). Therefore, images are not only the reflection of social relations but also the ones that make immense contribution to configuration of these relations. Specifically, an image itself becomes an ‘agent’ through the relations. We will recognize this argument as our benchmark for looking at the images.

“The way of seeing” is the other part that constitutes the meanings of images and what we see. John Berger claims that we never look at just one thing:

“[W]e are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves. Our vision is continually moving, continually holding things in a circle around itself, constituting what it presents to us as we are.” (Berger, 1972: 9)

Images, in that sense, show how something or somebody had once seen a frame of the world thanks to the reproduction of appearances. He suggests that an image became a

record of how X had seen Y through their positions in time and space. It is safe to say that these 'positions' are deeply politicized due to the fact that they are offered in a specific context, time, to an audience, via specific medium. From this point of view, photographic images become an ideal medium for naturalizing both, but separately, 'repressive' sign and 'productive' element in discourse. Some people could absorb images as symbol of themselves or some of them could regard them as a way to think or to see. From this point of view, we can argue that images could impose and also reproduce the normative conceptions of social categorizations as gender, race and class.

Similarly, we can also discuss another function of images beyond their reflective and productive manner. Images could also be a scene for resistance. Contrary to many interpretations, Foucault tells us the possibilities of resistance in many cases. He argues that, "where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never a position of exteriority in relation to power" (1976: 95). Discourse, in this manner, could be a source for both power and resistance. In this sense resistance is possible, necessary and improbable. It is distributed in an irregular frame and it is "spread over time and space at varying densities, at time mobilizing groups or individuals in a definitive way, inflaming certain points of the body, certain moments in life, certain type of behavior" (Foucault, 1976: 96). Above all else, images could be one of the certain parts of resistance as both its producer and product. Images especially the ones that are disclosed by the media are deeply politicized mediums in context and relationship with power. And the sphere of influence mostly depends on a given conjuncture.

2.1. Methodology

As Mitchell argues “images are not only particular signs of social world, but something like an actor on the historical stage” (Mitchell, 1986: 9). They do not only display the world particularly, they also give us an interpretation the world. To understand how images work, Gillian Rose gives us five major points:

“...an image may have its own visual effects. These effects, through the ways of seeing mobilized by the image, are crucial in the production and reproduction of visions of social difference; but these effects always intersect with the social context of its viewing and the visual ties its spectators bring to their viewing” (2001: 15).

According to Gillian Rose, we should – firstly – take the visual representation seriously in itself. This is because every visual images have various formal components. And these components are caused by the circumstances which form the image itself. For example, to realize that the photograph is staged/edited may or may not may tell us lots of important things before the context. Therefore, by approving beforehand, images have their own effects. To think about the social conditions and effects of visual objects is the second key for a proper interpretation of an image. Looking at the cultural spectators will pave the way for revealing “the articulations of meanings about the world, in the negotiation of conflicts or in the production of social subject” (Rose, 2001: 15). Lastly, the context is a deterministic fact that shape the meaning of an image. *Discourse and Context*, Virgil van Dijk states “[I]t is generally assumed that situations, or some of the features – such as class, status, gender, ethnicity, age, power, networks and communities of practice – influence the way we speak or write...” (2008, 118). I believe that to see or interpret an image is also in the same category. The meaning of an image is changeable according to the context. Therefore, while thinking about an image, we should definitely take the context into consideration. Van Dijk composes a model of context under a few headings: time,

place, position, identity, attribute, communicative, relations with other images (van Dijk, 2008: 119).

In addition, while thinking about images are given by media channels, we should also consider about the text. Although images and texts are used as complementary tools of media, the relationship between wording and images are not likely tell us the same story. Therefore to look at the differences between image and text will also important for reaching the frame of representation through discourse.

Within this scope, this study will present a set of discourse analysis of local resister women images within the newspapers. There will be seen in ten different grassroots environmental movements, which are handled according to the size and scale and media coverage.

After 1980s – especially with the 90s – hundreds of environmentally-concerning protests, walks, demonstrations and meetings had been organized. Although most of them could be subjected to newscasts, only a few of them could have significant media coverage. There are two main parameters behind the reason why we choose these specific ten newscasts in this study. The first is more technical one. The visual definition photographs and meanings of news reports' text is important to prepare a clear analysis. Due to the fact that we aim to present a discourse analysis study, the textual and visual images should have to show us something readable about our purpose. For this study 'readability' depends on the content of photographs and texts that should help us to understand social characteristics of the news and also event. Therefore, while searching for the images in the archives, we pay attention to the readability of textual and visual images. The second reason is social characteristics of the events. The place of event in collective memory, the action practices of local people and its sphere of influence are deterministic characteristics of the events and their news

reports to choose for analyzing in this study. The news reports, which had been published until 2000, were collected from the online newspaper archive of daily Milliyet (<http://gazetearsivi.milliyet.com.tr/>). And the other reports were collected other mainstream newspapers.

By looking at visibility and texts of newspapers, the study examines the images of local resister women images by three main components. Firstly we consider the image itself by focusing on the composition of image whether it is a staged photograph or not, which parts of the frame is on focus or out of focus. Secondly; production and reproduction of subject and social differences are the points that we care about. The component of the images such as figurality, customs, banners, bodies, gender population and mimics are the important spectators about the meaning of image. The last parameter that we discuss is the context. The temporal political climate of the photographic images, the power relations and attitude of sides (protesters and security forces) are the main components of the context that we examine.

CHAPTER 3

THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS FROM 1900s TO PRESENT

Environmental movements, in general term, could be defined as sort of environmentally-concerning collective actions. It is common in the literature on environmental movements “to classify these movements according to aims, demands, definitions of the perceived threat, ideologies, actors, strategies, medium of action, duration over time, scope, location, organizational design, foes, the degree of radicalism, and so forth” (Çoban, 2004: 439). In conjunction with the contexts of time and place, the affairs of movements evolve in different and various reasons. In the following section, we will explore the term environmental movements according to its historical contexts.

3.1. Traditional Environmentalism

It is an accurate fact that the projects of modernity bring the environmental problems and the reactions along. “Modernity entails measurement, standardization, and administrative ordering of nature and society, based on rationalization, bureaucratization and the application of science and technology” (Mihaylov and

Perkins, 2015: 125). This view is built on a progressive paradigm of replacing the traditional circle of economy, society, style of administration and way of life with the 'modern' ones. The concept of modernity is enlarging the circle through a limitless and effective understanding of developmentalism. And the push factors of this enlargement, as well as the projects, could be regarded as industrialization and urbanization.

The environmental movements occurred in the second half of 19th Century. The first wave of modernization did spread along the urban sites due to the fact that the flow of capital were around the cities. The manufacturing and factories were surrounded the city centers. In addition, the urbanization plans started to transform cities for functional use. The common awareness about environment was regarding the nature as an object of human needs for survival. In such a climate, the environmental concerns came to light through perspectives of 'preservation' and 'conservation.' Preservation attempts concentrated on the keeping the natural world undisturbed for people's needs as recreation. On the other hand, conservation side pursued more utilitarian purposes as ensuring the natural resources. By summarizing the debate between John Muir and Gifford Pinchot, Mihaylov and Perkins interpret these perspectives as 'environmental discourses' which "were reactions to the effects of early capitalism; they were, however, centered around similar assumptions of modernity and utilitarianism that brought about the industrial revolution and its environmental consequences in the first place"(Mihaylov and Perkins,2015: 123). Times of the first wave of modernity coincided with the early Republican era of Turkey.

Although an environmental consciousness could not be institutionalized and well-socialized and even the existing reactions remained limited, almost all certain attempts that harm the environment were questioned and got reaction from people.

3.2. The Environmental Attempts at the Early Republican Era of Turkey

With the establishment of the Republic, the state-led industrialization and urbanization attempts began in 1920s. Due to the fact that the industrialization was limited, the public works and urbanization of big towns were the main topics. The environmental problems were mostly about dirtiness, deforestation, soil erosion, air pollution, forest fires in those years. In this period, the first civil-initiatives were seen by considering on health, preservation and beautification. In regard to Gencer Baykan's study, new and small associations as the Prince Islands Settlement Association, Association for the Beautification of Çamlıca, Society of Bosphorus Lovers, and Association for the Protection of Trees and the Association of Protection Animals were established, especially in Istanbul, with the efforts of intellectuals (2013: 8). However it did not mean that activities of civil initiatives had increased constantly. The activities of the organizations were under the state control. On the other hand, the first institutionalized environment-concerning non-governmental organization, Forester's Association of Turkey was established in 1924. Although the influence of modernization had started to show itself on the environment as pollution and contamination, industrialization was grown within urban eras. Therefore we could only find the early attempts in the urban areas. When it comes to the 1950s, the picture was started to change.

3.3. New Environmentalism between 1960 and 1980

1960s could be defined as a revolutionary times for environmentalism, especially in the West. After World War II, economic growth, industrialization, and urbanization increased the level of environmental disruption. In parallel with the increase, the consciousness about environmental issues turned to human health issues, and “that humans are not apart from nature; a response to ecological threats to human health was necessary” (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2015: 123).

The rapid and damaging extension of industrialization has already absorbed urban areas and it started to expand towards rural areas. In the meantime, air, water and soil pollution had started to affect people’s everyday life adversely. As it might be expected, the environmental problems and their conceptions would differ from countries according to their economic and cultural structures. Especially in the industrialized countries such as the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, some terrifying cases had been experienced. The 1948 Donora smog was one of the historical air inversion cases resulting in a wall of smog that killed 20 people and sickened 7.000 more in Donora, Pennsylvania. The incident was described by The New York Times as one of the worst air pollution disasters in the nation’s history. People rose up in Mississippi, due to the leakage of pesticide residue, millions of fishes and birds had killed throughout the Mississippi River in 1960s. The long efforts of fishers and nature lovers to stop industries’ contaminating impacts on the Rhine Valley in Germany and many further instances had driven the attention to environmental problems. In addition, it had gotten substructure of environmental movements ready during the 1950s and 1960s.

The milestone of environmental movements came in 1969, after seeing the damage done by a massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. On January 28, 1969,

Union's Oil's platform experienced an uncontrolled blowout in the Dos Cuadras field that lasted for approximately ten days. The spill of approximately 80,000 to 100,000 barrels of crude oil affected over forty miles of coastline. The disaster did spread through the region, thousands of birds and fishes had died and the environment poisoned in epic proportions. After this incident, in October, 1969, the National UNESCO Conference became a scene for an influential step for environmental movements. A peace activist, John McConnell realized that if he could infuse that energy with an emerging public consciousness about air and water pollution, it would force environmental protection onto the national political agenda. He proposed a global celebration day of life and beauty to alert and draw attention to threatened ecological balances upon which all life on Earth depends. The proposal got strong support and was followed by an Earth Day Proclamation by the City of San Francisco, and the very first celebration of Earth Day on March 21, 1970. Approximately 2 million American people from universities, colleges, local communities, and environment protection associations took to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate and react for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies. It was the first massive ecology-concerning demonstration that did open a new page for environmental movements.

3.4. Raise of Environmental Awareness in Turkey

“The transition to multiparty period provided opportunities for political and social participation of citizens into various associations to represent different interests” (Özdemir, 2003: 4). The living space for civil society organizations and political parties had enlarged. The increasing population, expanding industrialization, and rapid urbanization with changing social and economic structure had brought a dozen of

environmental problems along. Besides the air, water and soil pollution coming from the industry and urbanization, the upcoming construction plans to supply incremental energy demand would make larger the circle of devastation. Between 1950 and 1970, the urban side tried to attract attentions to pollutions and came together around beautification and conservation-driven actions. The movement went on well-organized associations and NGOs. Green Forester's Association of Turkey (1950), Association of Assistant Forest Engineers (1951), Turkish Association for Conservation of Nature (1954), Society for the Protection of Nature (1975), Environmental Issues Foundation of Turkey (1978) are some of the visible examples which still continue to their activities. As Baykan mentions, we see certain professional groups as doctors, biologists, geologists, botanists, climatologists and ecologists more. In addition to these groups, former ministers and public officials also became part of the environmental movements through the foundations. People in Ankara and Istanbul participated dominantly to the associations. And mostly middle and upper class people were dominant in the actions. At the end of 1970s, the level of problems and impact of industrialization and construction plans for the sake of rapid development had raised. And the reactions did spread to different segments of society.

Environmental awareness in Turkey had arisen within the context of global environmental movements and global environmental consciousness. Therefore, 1970s could be regarded as the beginning of environmental-concerning reactions in Turkey. Although they were not so powerful and influential, the first reactions of people in the name of environment had appeared yet. While the environmental reactions and activities were evolved to social movements in the West, it was inevitable to see their reflections on other countries like Turkey. However the mainstay of the reactions did not rely on the consideration on contaminating influence of rapid industrialization, in

both social and environmental manner. Instead of regarding and criticizing the development policies as the main reason of pollution, people mostly focus on devastation around their livelihood. The evolution of environmental-concerns to social and political movement would come out in the middle of 1980s for the environmental movements.

The reactions occurred because of the factories' pollution that affected the local people's everyday life by harming farms, crops and gardens in those years. It mostly remained at a legal level as appealing to law. The first documented reaction of local people occurred in 1975, Murgul. Because the poisonous waste harmed the farms, the villagers brought an action against Eti Bank Copper Enterprise of Murgul. The silent march of 21 tobacco growing villages suffered from the toxic gases released from Samsun İzabe facilities occurred in the same year. People from Ordu preceded the factories in Çarşamba lowland because for the same reason, pollution. The locals in Elmadağ, a countryside of Ankara, complained about powder and cement factories of state. 1977 Silifke Fishers Cooperative could be regarded as an early example of environmental reactions that rose against the nuclear power plant that was planned to build in Akkuyu. In 1977, the fishers of İzmit conducted a protest against the pollution and unpleasant smell of industries with their boats.

To sum up, the period until 1980s, 'conservation' and 'preservation' views were seen by people as no longer adequate to notice interwoven relationship of human and nature. A mass movement of 'new' environmentalism has emerged. The environmental movements share important themes with the new social movements of this period, namely "post-materialist values (with questioning of economic growth), and the promotion of autonomy, self-determination and oppositional collective

identity with call for a green lifestyle and independence from governmental or corporate control” (Mihaylov and Perkins, 2015: 123).

3.5. The Climate of 1980s and the New Social Movements

1980s could be defined as the restructuring times of capitalism. On the one hand, the economy of the 1970s had forced the states to give priority for growth and capital accumulation. On the other hand, there was a strong paradigm shift in the economy management with neo-liberalism. The industry-based economy started to give its place to information-based order of economy. The regulatory and interventionist character of state turned towards neoliberal administrations that led private initiatives encourage for investment. Although the new paradigm started a de-industrialization flow during which manufactures started to be removed from cities to rural sites. The energy consumption has been on the rise. In short, the capital began to geographically disperse around both rural and urban sites.

The flow of ‘new social movements’ centered on various causes such as environmental concerns, antinuclear and specific rights, and identity issues, minorities, women, immigrants and native people. From a structural perspective, it could be interpreted as a product of the shift from an industrial to a post-industrial society which involves information based service sector, and the new middle class. Under these circumstances, economic class-based identification of groups has passed to more personalized structure relying on “postmodern values that stress issues of identity, participation and quality of life concerns rather than economic matters (Pichardo, 1997: 421).” The groups gained more heterogeneous mobilization in diverse causes such as economic justice, environmental protection, and war and peace, from local to national and transnational and from government to business (Bennet, 2012; 20).

Therefore, the social movements of postmodern era bring open, decentralized, participatory and non-hierarchical form within flexible and fragmented organizational structure.

Today, by focusing environmental movements, LGBTI, second and third waves of feminism, ethnic or religious communities, we can argue that there are the politicization of previously nonpolitical actors and terrains where “the personal is political” has become the heart of new social movements.

The 12 September 1980 coup d'état stopped the political and social life in Turkey. The government, political parties and civil society organizations were closed by the coup forces. And following three years later the coup, the junta had a strong influence on the politics as well. The period was also witnessed for the paradigm shift through the official ideology of the Republic from a state-led economy to neo-liberalism. The import-substituting industrialization methods transformed to export-led industrialization. With the implementation of liberal policies, the circle of economic growth expanded. Large scale construction projects and operations on infrastructure, transportation and power plants dramatically increased the ecological contamination in urban and rural areas. Massive energy projects such as nuclear power plants, coal burning power plants, hydro-electric, geothermal and wind power projects, industrial zones led air and water pollution. In addition, tourism plans started to threat the ecology and people by dispossessing the lands to build facilities. Due to the fact that the projects were operated under the protection and encouragement of the state, an uncontrollable process for environment had begun. It should be noted that the projects were not only disruptive for the natural environment; but also destructive for regional sociology.

“Struggles against the energy and tourism projects particularly in the Aegean and Mediterranean regions (the Blacksea articulated these groups a decade later) made it necessary for the local actors to become part of the environmental movement on one hand establishing international connections on the other” (Baykan, 2013: 9). Previous examples of the socialization of environmental movements show a huge variety. The reactions occurred in Yatağan, Aliğa, Bursa and Gökova against thermal power plants, in Dalyan against hotel construction on the breeding grounds of the caretta caretta, in Güvenpark and Zaferpark against construction of parking area, in Bergama against mining activities, dam projects in Allinoi and Hasankeyf, Fırtına Valley and anti-nuclear movements were early examples for the socialization of environmental movements in Turkey during the 1980s and 1990s (Adem, 2005; Ertürk, 1996; Özen, 2011; Paker, 2013). However these could not turn into a nation-wide movements.

The coup and its consequences affected the environmental movements in two different layers. In a politically tight period, gathering under a political organization or to be articulating to an existing organization was not possible. For this reason, the movements with environmental concern were perceived as apolitical reflexes. “Developed in the 1980s, the environmental movements in Turkey were local, fragmented, and based on protest” (Atauz and Bora, 1993: 282). Although some certain and organizational attempts were tried in the case of Green Party, they were not able to go on.

On the other hand, the influence of authoritative period on catching media coverage and being able to create a powerful impression had a leverage effect for environmental movements as well. Comparing to the radical and conflict spirit of the late 1970s and early 1980s political flow, a movement which did not evolve around an existing ideological group could be regarded as safe according to the junta and its successors.

Therefore it was not worthwhile to suppress as harshly as other movements of 1980s. As a matter of fact, such a perception have took its form thanks to the attitudes and discourse of local people who constituted the backbone of environmental movement after 1980s.

3.7 The Grassroots Environmental Movements

“An environment particularizes or contextualizes a community, situating it within and bonding it to both the natural world and the larger ‘containing’ society... (Communities are) conjoined to and interpenetrated by particular environment which they transform and partially construct and which in turn transform and partially construct them. Far from being mere passive backdrops or props in an essentially (or exclusively) human play, environments so conceived are the embodiment, or material extension of communities... Communities, then, are as much results as they are causes of their own environments. ... [C]ommunities and their constitutive environments are inseparable; they are the unit of development and change. All development is, for better or worse, co-development of communities and environments” (Whitt and Slack, 1994: 21-22).

While devastating impacts of modernity continue, the awareness of people about nature has entered into a certain change. The next wave of environmentalism were constructed on the realization that humans are, indeed, part of nature. Besides the greens and environmental activists from the urban sites, the base of environmental movements after 1980s emerged from the experiences of newcomers who are the frustrated social groups living in polluted communities sacrificed for economic growth. This is the fact that geographical dispersion of capital through local scales started to encroach the rural places where the interconnectedness and symbiotic relation between nature and society is experiencing at a high level in comparison with the urban life. Therefore, any interruption that brings the potential of degradation and contamination are perceived as a threat against the community’s life on the local scale.

Mihaylov and Perkins defines ‘the local environmental grassroots activism’ as a part of the New Social Movements:

“because contentious politics of a locality often possesses some or all of these characteristics: it is based on or in defense of a shared place identity; it is submerged in residents’ everyday lives and interpersonal networks within a place; it is reactive to the intrusion of outside state or corporate forces; and it is particularistic, often turned inward to a self-defined way of life (2015: 127).

In his study *Community-based Ecological Resistance: The Bergama Movement in Turkey*, Aykut Çoban summarizes the characteristics of local environmental movements as ‘defensive’, ‘reflexive’ and ‘reactive’ attempts in response to a threat. He argues that “the mobilization evolve around the strong demand for a return to the earlier condition of the community’s way of life (2004:441).” They try to defense their livelihood against an irrevocable change.

CHAPTER 4

DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF LOCAL RESISTER WOMEN IMAGES IN TEN GRASSROOTS ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

4.1. The First Milestone: Gökova Thermal Power Plant Protests

Regarded as a turning point for environmental movements in Turkey, Gökova – Kemerköy Thermal Power Plant Protests is worth to examine due to its composition that involve the first clues about the characteristics of local resistance, roles and conception of environmental problems for upcoming events.

1980's Gökova was a small, fertile and productive soil of the Aegean region. The people of Gökova were mostly engaged in agriculture. Additionally, after the Gökova was distinguished as a frequent destination of a famous sea route, the tourism potential were realized and focused in those years.

The Gökova – Kemerköy Thermal Power Plant construction had started in 1974 by Turkish Electricity Institution (TEK). Since the beginning of the construction plan, from old bureaucrats to experts, a lot of people argued about the potential dangers of a thermal plant and indicated hazardous air pollution. While the Environment Office

had announced their objections about the plan, the Ministry of Public Works and Housing declared that construction the plant to Gökova is an obligation because of economic reasons. In October 1984, the works in the construction area were expedited. According to the Ministry's declaration, the Prime Minister of the time, *Turgut Özal*, was expected to come for the sod-cutting ceremony of construction in October 15.

In November, fifty women villagers occupied the road of the plant. They crossed the road and started a long wait to prevent the entrances of workers and experts to the construction area. They came up with an explanation to the Provincial District Governor who came to the village to control process. They said; "Our purpose is not to revolt the state. We only intent to protect our soil" (Özdemir, 1988: 100). Next day, the 'women resistance' took its place on the newspapers as "Women says NO to plant!", "Women occupied the road", "villagers against the power plant", etc.

It is possible to say that attracting the attention of media added a new dimension to the protests. After the first and unexpected reaction of the women villagers, the thermal plant issue came to the front on the national agenda. The ceremony, that the Prime Minister would participate, was postponed. The opposition parties and some of the institutionalized civil society organizations got involved to the process and resorted jurisdiction for cancellation of the project. Besides the meetings and protests, the media did continue to hold the issue on agenda by publishing interviews with scientists, experts and people from the region.

Almost all the explanations were about the wrong location choice and potential risks of the power plant. According to Özdemir, the villagers were not against a power plant construction. Their objections were about the choice of place. The village headman made a statement to the press and said:

"The Gökova Gulf surrounded by fertile soils. We are harvesting twice a year. Furthermore, the coastline of village is on the way of world-

wide 'blue-cruise'. If the thermal power plant is constructed to here, the agriculture will come to harm and tourism will suffer certain loss. Therefore, we are opposing to the construction of the power plant" (Özdemir, 1998: 59).

In spite of all the objections, discussions and resistance, the thermal power plant construction started in the late 1980s and completed in 1994.

4.1.1. "Women say 'no' to the plant !"

The protest against the Gökova Kemerköy Power Plant was organized to protect the agricultural lands of people primarily. Protecting natural values and tourism potential were articulated as other reasons. By expanding to national level, the protests had started a discussion about environment. It was the first time that an environmental issue entered to the national agenda.



Figure 2: Women said 'no' to the plant. (Milliyet 1984, November 23)

This is a fact that, beyond being just the first local environmental resistance, which could affect the ongoing process, the Gökova Thermal Power Plant Protests drew the first ‘resister’ village women image in an environmental movement, in Turkey. The photograph was published in most of the daily newspapers. The Figure 1 is from Milliyet’s front page. It was published in November 10, 1984.

The report gives the protests with the headline that says ‘[W]omen says ‘no’ to the plant’ with bold letters. By highlighting postponement of the ceremony, it is written that “[T]he only wish of 6,500 people is to stop the construction of plant” (1984). Throughout the report, the details about the occupation protest are given. In following part of the report, which is in fifth page of the newspaper, the Former Environment Counsellor Refet Erim’s, and statement is placed. He claims that “...if the construction is completed, Gökova will be a complete mess” (Ibid.). In addition to that we can read only one sentence about the ideas of the protester women, which is given anonymously as; “such a construction will be out of the question around the world, except of Turkey”.

In the photograph, we see tens of women posed to the camera by sitting on edge to edge a dirt road. All of them wear ‘basma salwar’ and skirt, and covered white, monotype, headscarf. ‘Basma’ skirt and salwar are very common clothes in most rural parts of Anatolia. It includes various figures on the cotton. It could be regarded as a kind of symbolic clothes of village women. As Emine Onaran İncirlioğlu (1998) notes that the village woman image has an ambiguous image that hides specific and also paradoxical characteristics in Turkish society.

İncirlioğlu argues that, on the other hand, the villager woman is “strong, wise, powerful, and confident; on the other, she is backbreaking overworked, undervalued, ignorant, and submissive - imply downtrodden” (1998; 200).

Most of them crouched on the road and are looking to the ground. Some of the women are folding their hands. They are waiting, not only the experts from the Electricity Institution for preparations, but also for the decision of the governors. Are their soils invaded by the plant? Do their lifestyles change after the construction is completed? Can they go to cultivate once again? Beyond their faces and mimics, there is no word or voice that we can hear these questions. It is a silent wait, women are waiting embarrassedly. Probably, it is the first resistance action of these women against a decision of authority. They would not know to protest, to shouting slogan or to prepare a banner. It can be the first time for these women to appear in a public sphere alone, without their men. However, for sure, it does not mean that the men are not in the resistance. Although the news report points the resistance with bold words by saying “Women, says ‘no’ to the plant,” women do not say anything or we cannot hear their voices from media. They are just sitting on the road and waiting. There is no specific subject or name of women.

4.2. The Pictorial Turn of Grassroots Environmental Movements in Turkey: Bergama Gold Mine Resistance

In 1988, Eurogold Limited which was a multinationally-owned corporation, conducted a prospecting and extracting license for gold mining at 10 kilometer distance to the countryside of İzmir, Bergama. The license allowed the project for a huge field as 100 hectare. After the prospection, the company declared that they found gold and preparations started in the early 1990s. The mining site was surrounded by 17 villages with a population over 10.000 people. The area contained one the most fertile soils of the Aegean Region, which consisted of agricultural, vegetable and fruit fields, and olive, poplar and pine trees. People of the villages earned their lives from

farming and animal breeding. And the project was proposing establishment of a gold mine within close proximity to their homes and fields in the district of Bergama.

The locals welcomed the gold mine idea at first. However the exploratory drilling, compound usage of water supplies and uses of chemical substances had started to contaminate the water. Although Eurogold pronounced the way of use was not harmful to supplies, several households of the villages made complaint that contaminated water caused stomach and headaches. The incident produced a high level suspicion about the gold mine project. After holding meetings within community and with academics, which were invited to provide more information about the mine, local people found out that their means of subsistence, their local environment and animal species would be destroyed by the hazardous mining activity “where tons of cyanide would be used to leach the gold and silver from the area; tons of heavy metals would be left behind, and the dust arising from the crushing and grinding would contaminate the air and land” (Çoban, 2004: 442). And the movement began. It was the first long-running and large scale environmental struggle of the villagers in Turkey.

Both as action practices and the discourse that stemmed from the Bergama resistance set a model for the following events. It should be definitely noted that women were the pioneers of the process with their courage, self-abnegation and persistence.

The first attempt against the mine occurred in 1994. The Ministry of Environment gave the legal permission to Eurogold for extracting and processing gold in Bergama, in 1994. And after the controlled explosions within the site caused large crack in homes of villages, the resistance had started. 652 people and lawyer from Bergama brought three different actions to cancel the legal permission of the Ministry of Environment. In the beginning of 1996, 3.000 pine and 1.500 olive tree were cut down. According

to villagers the trees were cut during the night. And the first action of villagers sparked in the Bergama district in 15 November 1996. Over five thousand local protesters blockaded the busy Dikili highway for six hours. The blockade was the first attempt of Bergama villagers' action that came to the fore on public agenda and it had started with a series of protests. It was also the first step of the politicization of villagers, especially for women.

In the book of Üstün Bilgen Reinart, "*Biz Toprağı Bilirik! Bergama Köylüleri Anlatıyor*", a conversation with one of the women who participated to the blockade protests describe clearly the condition of Bergama's women. Rahime Özyaylalı, from Çamköy, states that

"[W]e went to the highway on foot. Our first protest, we blocked the highway. I was so afraid while moving on the way! The trees were cut down and their voice were even heard from the highway. There was no construction. A huge crowd was there. We were scared before going there. In past, the gendarmerie came to the village for collecting taxes and the villagers were so scared from them and hide away. We stood against the Governor of District (Kaymakam). The women were very vengeful... Men were saying 'stop, he is Kaymakam.' 'It doesn't matter whom we are facing with whether it is district governor or not! We want to express our concerns' said women. Everybody were with stones and sticks. They went there to save the motherland..." (Reinart, 2003: 52)

Up until the blockade protest, none of the women in village participated any protests as well. However the revival did not take a long time to see women in the movements. The actions continued in various forms including demonstrations, marches, sit-in acts, petitions, picnics, lobbying activities. Not only participating, they were, in fact, the locomotives and the most determined participants of the movement.

Aykut Çoban notes that, “in May 1997, the villagers decided to put a board on the village square in Çamköy to write their aims, views, determination friends and foes of movement” (2004: 443). The local people’s statements were about ‘protecting all living things above and bellows the ground. The villagers identified their lives with the things above and below the ground. Tobacco leaf, olive, breeding, were their means of living and their family ties, cultural heritage and everyday practices strongly depended on the land. “They were accustomed to and knew only the earth of Bergama” (Reinart, 2003). Recognizing that communities’ relationship to land is central to their identity and survival. Gold mining violates the right to life by destroying ‘the spiritual, cultural, political, social and economic lives of people as well as entire ecosystem” (Çoban, 2004: 444).

Every new attempt of the company in order to continue to construction was bringing new reactions of the villagers along. The Occupation of mining site was one of the prior and influential actions that could have a certain media coverage.

4.2.1. First Selected Action: “Occupation of Cyanosis Gold”

According to the report that was given by the daily Milliyet in April 23, 1997, approximately two thousand people occupied the mining site of Eurogold. With Turkish Flags, the crowd, “including women and children, walked through the site by shouting slogans as ‘We want to live,’ ‘Get away Eurogold,’ ‘Ankara hear us!’” (Önal, 1997). There was not any police interruption to the protest and the crowd spread through the mining site. The protest took ten hours. The protesters said: “We don’t want the extraction of gold by cyanide. The occupation was the last solution for us.

Do not oblige us to use force! Instead of dying with cyanide, kill us with guns!” (Önal, 1997)



Figure 3: Occupation of Cyanosis Gold. (Milliyet 1997, April 23)

Although the photograph consists of a mass of village women, the text defines the protester group as “a crowd that women and children are ‘also’ participated”. It is a common statement that refers the participation of women and children as additional or as underlined information.

The women wear ‘basma’ salwar and headscarf, as the women of Gökova. It is important to note that, this time, a peaceful and enthusiastic climate dominated the protest. The faces of women are smiling ones. Most of the village women are clapping and they seem like shouting slogans. From now on, as Rahime Özyaylalı claimed before, “they want to express their concerns” (Reinart, 2003; 52) and it does not matter whom they are facing.

All the women are looking to the same direction. Probably it is the mining site, which is the “opponent” – even the enemy – side. Two women, in front side of the group, are holding two Turkish Flags as if they were in a national football match.

There is no man in between the group. If we look at carefully the photograph, the men sit around the women group. Only the women are actively protesting. Furthermore, the police forces are seen behind the women group on the top left corner of the photographic frame. It means that the village women group does not pose any threat for the police, or the state authority.

In spite of the fact that the Mining Site Occupation Protests portrays a strong and even rebellious reaction, the signs do not draw an action towards the state. The tones of slogans and/or places of national flags reflects the position of protester through the State, and official ideology. The picture and words are like in a nationalistic protection of soil. It is clear that, with the occupation, the village women are no longer on the stage and start to struggle against the invasion of their living areas.

Through the 1997 spring, Eurogold accelerated the works and built an embankment cyanide. After this attempt, which imposed a new level of anxiety about the environment and public health, the Bergama Resistance entered into its strongest and most active phase. The villager protesters organized numerous local, regional and national protests. Especially, two of them stand out as key and ‘image’ events of the resistance.

4.2.2. Second Selected Action: “The Protest of Bergama on the Bosphorus Bridge”

The first one occurred in August 26, 1997, Istanbul. Three bus load of protesters went up to the Bosphorus Bridge. They stopped the traffic for two hours by lashing

themselves to the bridge's safety rail with chains. It was the first small-scale but the most visible demonstration. The action could receive remarkable media attention.

The action was given with the headline of "The Protest of Bergama on the Bosphorus Bridge" in the daily *Milliyet*, dated 27 August 1997. According to the report, approximately 250 people from Bergama came to Istanbul to protest the Gold Mine construction. As it is written in the text "the group, holding Atatürk posters and Turkish Flags, demonstrate on the Bosphorus Bridge with banners that say 'No to prospecting gold with cyanide until we die!'" After the slogans, the protesters do sit-in act on the bridge. The bridge traffic stopped however most of the drivers supported the protestors by sounding their horns and clapping. Although the demonstration was organized in the peak times of the bridge, there was no police interruption.

When looking at the Figure 4 without reading the text, the protest could be understood as a specific protest of villager women. But it is not. Although the protest is organized by approximately 250 people from Bergama, the only frame reflected to the newspapers is of a group of women's portrait. The protesters position vertically and there are five women in front of the group and they raise their hands. They are village women. They are shouting slogans. The tallest woman of frontiers holds the Turkish flag. Although there is no barricade or line, they stand behind an invisible line and they are looking to the camera. The protesters seem untouchable. The police forces behind and parallel to the group and waiting on the road to prevent protesters' passing through the road. Although it is the rush hour of the bridge, there is no police interruption to the group. The climate of protest is peaceful and the protesters' faces are also smiling.



Figure 4: Protest of Bergama on the Bosphorus Bridge. (Milliyet 1997, August 27)

The Protest of the Bosphorus Bridge could be named as an 'image event' that brings some certain symbolic codes to the protest actions. In the study of Image Politics: The New Rhetoric of Environmental Activism, Kevin Michael DeLuca puts the concept forward to explain the radical acts of environmental activists as Greenpeace, Earth First!, etc. The term is defined as 'the stage acts of protests designed for media dissemination' (Delicath and Deluca, 2003: 315). The places and action are planned according to this strategic purpose. The last act of Greenpeace activists could be given as a proper example for image event in this manner. As it is published in the Guardian's official website, in April 18, 2016, two Greenpeace activists have climbed

Nelson's column in central London to fit a gas mask to the statue as part of a city-wide protest over air pollution (2016). In the following days, the activists of Greenpeace repeated the act on other famous sculptures of London as Oliver Cromwell near Big Ben, Winston Churchill.

To organize an action on the most busy and central bridge brings a strong potential to be fore front of the media coverage. Therefore there is only the cameras in front of the protesters, and also protesters position through the camera as well. Probably, the event was organized for the camera(s). Secondly, the discourse of Bergama's people consolidated with this action. They are on the side of the State, they are not against the police forces or any 'official' authority. They recognize and legitimize themselves with Atatürk posters and Turkish flags. Thirdly the women represent as the pioneers of the protest as the main owner of the soil, farm and animals. Additionally, media, even though it does not mention in written discourse, also regards the women as frontiers of the protests.

4.2.3. Third Selected Action: “Kuvati Milliye (National Forces) Walk to Çanakkale”

In the middle of November 2000, ten of them women, 62 Bergama's villagers walked from Bergama to Çanakkale (Gallipoli). They named the 300 kilometer of walk as “*Kuvayi Milliye*,” which refers to the revolutionaries of Turkish War of Independence. Plus, Çanakkale has an important meaning for the people of Turkey. It is the place where the army, under the command of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, fought to prevent the invasion of multinational forces to Anatolia, the Turkish motherland, during the First World War. The number of loss does also make another meaning of *Çanakkale*. More than 50,000 dead were from each the Turkish side and the opponents, which were Australians, New Zealanders, and French's. In common sense, Çanakkale

is regarded as a ‘spirit’ that symbolizes a power, which helps the Turks to overcome enemies under unequal and difficult conditions.

The term “Kuvayi Milliye”, which means the National Forces, also hides a similar spiritual meaning. Kuvayi Milliye was the national resistance forces that appeared during the Turkish War of Independence. “The National Forces were highly heterogeneous, including not only soldiers, but also civil servants, landowners..., peasants, nomads..., women and children- all united in reaction to the occupation and determined to be free” (Shaw, 1977: 341). Therefore, the term is embraced by most the Turkish society, especially the nationalists.



Figure 5: Kuvayi Milliye Walk. (Milliyet 2000, September 14)

By considering these two symbolic signs, it is not to assume the essential tendency behind naming the walk to Çanakkale in the name of “Kuvayi Milliye.” Besides the ecological concerns, it is to say that, the Bergama Resistance turned to a living space struggle that the Mine had started to be perceived as an invasion of foreign forces. And the villagers positioned themselves as fighters against that forces. They were not against the State. The Bergama Villagers objected to the politicians who betray the

people and they fought against the Eurogold, an Australian company. The news report also touches on this situation with a few words that mentions the name of walk, flags and Atatürk posters as a kind of shield. When we examine the photograph of the walk, we see two different photographic frames. One of the photograph is much bigger than the other according to the scale. It is the man's picture. By juxtaposing, a dozen of men holding a banner that is written "The Walk of Kuvayi Milliye, Bergama Villagers 2000." They are around 40s and 50s, and all of them wear similar hats, which are mostly wore in the countryside of Turkey. There is no woman in between the group, except of the woman in white vest who stood one step ahead, at the end of line. The men aligned vertically, resembling a barricade that prevent any passing behind the group.

The second photograph is women's. The size of photograph is nearly ten time smaller than the men's figure and under the bigger one. It seems like to show that 'even' women are in the Walk. There are three villager women in there. The frontier women carries an Atatürk poster. They are walking in a single line and a man, who is the leader of group, is walking near the front women. In this respect, a question may come to minds; is there a constructed hierarchy of size and scale through the photographs? In my opinion yes there is. Beyond the fact, as the fewness of women population in the Walk, this time we see the villager men as the main characters of the walk. On the other hand a small frame is articulated on the lower left corner of the main photograph. It is like to say "even women" are in the Walk, near the men as supporters, not the frontiers or main actors.

Their entrance to Çanakale welcomed by citizens with flowers and acclamations. They firstly went to the Martyrs Memorial of Çanakkale and stood in silent homage. Then they stood homage in front of the memorial of Atatürk by taping their mouths

with a banner which noted “we said a lot, the judgment does have to talk now” (Reinart, 2003).

4.2.4. Fourth Selected Action: Celebrations

Throughout the 22 years legal struggle, the Court ruled the danger of the Mine and its closure for several occasions. The first closure took less than 24 hours, in 1997. In addition to that, in the same year, the court also decided closure of mining site because of its hazardous dangers two times. In August 2004, the mine was closed for the second time and opened after one month later. It is operating from that day on. Arif Cangı, who is one of the lawyer of the resistance, claims that “after 2000s, the movement started to lose its excitement and intensity because of unimplemented decisions” (İnce, 2014: 2).

The captions are selected from two of the celebrations which were taken after the court ruling that were made for the Bergama Villagers. The figure 5, which is published under the headline of “Bergama is drunk with victory,” is from the first celebration of the first court decision about the closure of the mining site. The celebration is written as “the villagers, which are struggling against the cyanide gold mine construction with interesting actions, burst during the night.” According to the report, the leader of group, the district head of Republican People’s Party, Oktay Konyar claimed that “the villagers made a history.” The last sentence is about Zehra Ana, who is the women on the caption: “by holding a Turkish flag all over the night, Zehra Ana (Mother) (65) shouted out as “our soil and nature is like as it is gold.” The text of Figure 6 says; “Easier said than done, the Bergama’s people celebrated the decision of Local Administrative Court of İzmir after 8 years struggle, with halay and songs.



Figure 6: Victory of Bergama.
(Milliyet 1997, October 18)



Figure 7: Bergama was Triumphant.
(Milliyet 1997, July 24)

Both two photographs are in the same tone. They portray the victories with enthusiastic and happy celebrations. In both two photographs, as it is most of the grassroots environmental movements' actions, the main characters are the villager women images and holding Turkish flags... As Micheal Billig claims in his controversial book Banal Nationalism, flags bring a 'sacred character of a nation', which it is glorified by loyal citizens and "ritually defiled by those who wish to make a protest" (1995: 40). In this respect, flags are a pragmatically useful means of communication strategy as it is during the Bergama Resistance.

It is fair to say that, the Turkish flags were the main item for the women. In the mining site occupation they were waved against the mine site. The origin of the mine company was Australian, which was an opponent of Turkey in the First World War. Therefore, it was like an invasion to 'our' sacred soil. And the villagers had to show the real owners of that soil to the entrepreneurs' of the mining site and governors, who were the compradors of the enemies. Therefore, the direction of the flags were against the mining site, the enemy. They were defending their soil and nation. And it was used as a complementary symbol for the occupation act. For the protest on the Bosphorus

Bridge, the flag was held by the tallest women on the front line with slogans. For this time, I perceive the attitude behind the flag as to legitimize the protests and to show that the protesters, the villager women, are the 'loyal citizens.' In spite of the fact that in almost all protests, the protesters underlined that they were not against the State and they were not rebellions. They were only against the 'foreign' gold mine, which came to invade the motherland with their investments. They objected to the comprador politician. The villagers, who paid their taxes regularly, saturated the national with their crops and the warriors of Independence War, were the real owners of their soil, their nation and their flag. They were on the most visible place of the country and they had to show their rightfulness. They were loyal citizens, but the State betrayed them for the first time. When it comes the flags in the celebrations, we could find a similar frame. As it is mentioned in the newspapers, the court decisions were regarded as the victories of the villagers. It could be noted that, to put the same photograph for a national holiday news report, nothing will change. A celebration of national victory. They won the mine, the Australians and the politicians.

As it is stated before, Arif Cangı, who is one of the lawyer of Bergama Resistance, claims that after 2000s, the movement started to lose its excitement and intensity because of unimplemented juridical decision (İnce, 2014: 2).

4.2.5. A Critique on Bergama Resistance

When all the facts considered, as a grassroots environmental movement, the Bergama Gold Mine Resistance could be emphasized as a popular and political symbol that the influence goes beyond the environmental sphere. Although many environmentally-concerned reactions had occurred in before the Bergama case, it is a significant watershed for protest movements in Turkey with various reasons (Öncü

and Koçan, 2002; Çoban, 2004; Reinart; Arsel, 2005). According to Murat Arsel, the movement demonstrated the possibility and desirability of community action against economic and social structure (2005: 275). Furthermore, it was the first and explicit attempt that criticize the developmental politics of the neoliberal Turkey. It was a successful instance. It might be the first time that the Anatolian Villager could challenge the legitimacy of the state as well as the inescapable expansion of capitalism. The resistance, on the other hand, has important results for other local oppositions and environmental movements. Not on has the Bergama Resistance provided an example for other communities facing gold mining, it has also brought the originally site-specific issue to the national agenda where gold mining has become a hot political issue (Çoban, 2004: 455). Considering the practices of protests, “the state could not legitimize this movement as it had done with previous ones which had confronted its politics because of the peaceful nature of most movement events and the positive coverage the media received in the media” (Kadirbeyoğlu, 2005: 103). “Through carefully staged events, the printed press and nationally syndicated TV news, ‘lifestyle’ and documentary shows on mainstream television channels such as ATV, Show TV and Kanal D covered the demonstrations in a largely supportive tones” (Arsel, 2005: 268).

The struggle has politicized the community in such a way that almost all the villagers who had not previously participated in any political action became activists. As Çoban notes that while the demonstrations, “the community members mobilized and used their own resources production tools, livestock, savings and mostly their bodies” (2004: 448). This is a fact that the environment is inseparable from a community life. Living habits, places, source of income and almost all things that make their lives meaningful nested in the environment which was under a certain treat

of contamination and degeneration. And the main responsible was the State, which betrayed its ‘loyal’ citizens, the Anatolian and ‘Turkish’ citizens. To stand against that injustice, they were blocking the highway of İzmir, occupying a mining site, protesting on the Bosphorus Bridge, walking to Çanakkale as ‘Bergama Villagers’ to protect and defend their living space and environment against degradation. They did not want to ‘revolt’ to the State and they are not as other rebellions!

In such a climate, undoubtedly, the active participation of women to the movement should be regarded as remarkable. This is because, traditional village is patriarchal and although the women labor almost fully participates to the rural circle, in both economy and culture, as Kandiyoti notes, women’s place in production is unrecognized and the public dealing remains in the male sphere (1977: 72). In such a climate, to see the woman as the faces of a social movement, especially about a ‘local issue’ which women, generally, do not have a recognized ‘public dealing’ could be regarded as a milestone that made local women’s presence felt on public issues.

4.3. First Resistance against Hydro-Electric Power Plant – Firtına Valley

While more than two thousand hydro electrical power plant projects are realised around Turkey, citizens from the dedicated project zones are forming organized resistance movements against the projects. Due to the legal battles fought by local environmentalist, there are court decisions ordering to stay of execution or cancellation of that particular projects.

The issue of hydro electrical power plants caught the public eye during the construction of Dilek-Güroluk Regulator project developed by BM Holding on Firtına Valley of the Çamlıhemşin district of the province of Rize. The plan drafted in 1965 by the General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works projected the construction of 6

regulators, 5 dams and 10 hydro electrical power plants, total of 21 energy infrastructure buildings. The constructions started by 1998 and quickly followed by protests.

According to Uğur Biryol's column in bianet.org (2006); after the groundbreaking ceremony which the Prime Minister of the time Mesut Yılmaz also attended, hundreds of people originated from Çamlıhemşin started to appeal to the courts against the projects both in the district of Çamlıhemşin and to the other courts around country where they live. Names of 305 people were added to the court file. Within the same year; protests were held in the province of Rize as well as other major cities of Turkey such as Ankara, Istanbul and Izmir and many news stories were held in the media.

4.3.1. The Selected News Report: “Who Will Stop It?”

The report was written by Ulaş Özdemir, a reporter, with the heading of “Who will stop it?” (1998). The forest decimation continues in Fırtına Valley, which is under protection of the world” in the daily *Milliyet* in 26 November 1998. It is not an event report, it is a descriptive text that aims to indicate the destructions on the forest. Özdemir gives places to two different statements. The first one is of Yakup Okumuşoğlu, who is an activist lawyer and the spokesperson of Çamlıhemşin Initiative. In the interview, Okumuşoğlu points the endemic plants, flora and fauna, which must be protected for the continuity of the nature. Additionally, he highlights that “although the fauna and flora were under protection of regulations, the company did not take the rules in consideration and they cut the trees” (Özdemir, 1988). By adding the application of criminal complaint, he says that “they are committing illegal acts, somebody has to say them ‘stop’!”.

Within a divided column in the same report, Özdemir gives another statement with the headline, ‘The Action of Women.’ He writes that “the women of Çamlıhemşin, who are distinguished with their actions, will organize a protests in İzmir, 21 November.” He gives place for ‘a spokesperson of women of Çamlıhemşin, Şahinaz Hacaloğlu. She claims that “At the same time, there will be organized press meeting in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Trabzon and Samsun. Those who contributed most to Çamlıhemşin is us, women. They want to destroy our labor.”



Figure 7: Who Will Stop It? (Milliyet 1998, November 26)

Figure 8 indicates three women, who wag their finger at the destroyed rocks, tree roots and landslide. Most probably the shambles is caused by the operations of power plant. It is given as an instance to indicate how the plant could harm the land. If we focus on the women, all of them wear traditional ‘Hemşin’ headscarf. That headscarf

could be regarded as a folkloric symbol that is not covered in daily life. It is, in fact, for special days, as weddings, celebrations, parties. However, such headscarves are also recognized as a symbol of regional identity like ‘basma salwar’ Anatolia. In addition, when we look at the photograph in detail, we see that the faces of women are smiling. Considering these situation, near the shambles, their faces and elaborated clothes tell us that, speculatively, it is an ‘amateur’ staged photograph. Under these circumstances, in my opinion, there is a question we should ask; ‘why was the photograph, which shows the consequences of damage to the nature, staged with the villager women?’ In other words, “why is an environmental damage represented through women in particular?”.

This is a fact that news media provides regular updates about local-national-international agenda topic of the day. However, as we mentioned before, the news come to the audience in a contextual vacuum. Although the aim of news is to inform people about the developments and events, they are not value-free texts or photographs as well. They are particular way of understanding the world and representing the world with different inclusions and exclusions. In such a climate, “the ways in which women are represented in news media and important messages to the viewing, listening, and reading publics about women’s place, women’s role, and women’s lives” (Byerly&Ross, 39: 2006).

As a matter of fact that, at the first sight, the text and the photographs could be regarded as complementary features of the report. Okumuşoğlu’s statements about the damages and destructions on the nature and Hacaloğlu’s claim that highlights the contributions of women on the land could be connected to the overthrown rocks and the villager women. However, when we pay attention to the photograph, we can easily

realize that there is a composition on the frame: the village women figure is used and utilized as a complementary factor to the statement of man authority.

There are three women. One of the women, most probably the oldest one, looks to the rocks apprehensively. By contrast, other two women look at two different point, presumably to two different cameras in different aspects, by indicating the rocks and destroyed tree roots. They have a smiling face like posing for a memory photograph. As might be expected, they were called by the journalists to give this pose.

Byerly and Ross argue that “one of the most frequent frames of women in news discourse is as victim, and the media’s fascination with the fragile female form and her vulnerability to violation...” (42: 2006). By relying on different quantitative studies about the representation of women image in the media, they note that the repetitive framing of women as victim, object and as body also contribute the circulation of passive femininity.

I think the argument works in this frame too. Because of three variety that we can extract from the discourse of the photograph. The first one is use of their body (with traditional clothes, headscarves) as a symbol of locality. Secondly, although we read an active and offensive statements from the spokesperson of ‘women of Çamlıhemşin,’ we see three women, as media spectacles, with no name and explanation. And lastly, they are positioned by reporters as the figures of victims, whose labor is also destroyed with the power plant construction.

4.4. Ulukışla Gold Mine Protests

In Ulukışla Maden Village, a countryside of Niğde, the locals reacted in the course of contact and information meeting, which was organized by company officials of the Ulukışla Gold Mine Project in April 2009. According to the project, the extraction process will be processed with cyanide. Approximately 400 people, from 6 villages

close to Ulukışla, gathered in the public square for protesting the construction operations. They shouted and held banners by saying ‘our gold is cherry,’ ‘dead people don’t wear a gold chain,’ and ‘we don’t want to breath toxic.’ After the protest, by giving collective petition against the Gold Mine Construction, the residents of village caused to cancellation of the contact meeting.

As a matter fact, it was only one example of the protests that occurred in Ulukışla. Since the beginning of 2008, the people of Ulukışla, consist of 6 villages and approximately one thousand people, were on the action against the gold mine.

4.4.1. First Selected News Report: “The Villagers United against the Gold Mine”



Figure 8: The Villagers United Against the Gold Mine. (Bianet 2009, December 19)

The Figure 9 is given by bianet.org as a caption of the interview with the Village Headman, Hüseyin Özçelik. It is taken from the protest of information meeting, which was organized by the villagers of the six villages around the Ulukışla, in Hasangazi Village. The Figure is given with the headline that says “the Villagers unite against

the Gold Mine.” İkbâl Polat, the reporter, points that the six villages struggling against gold mining aim to revive local economy and to make ecological agriculture. In addition, she highlights the equal representation and participation of women in the decision-making process of resistance in the light of the explanations of the headman.

In the interview, the village headman Hüseyin Özçelik tells the details of the Gold Mine operations, judicial processes, decision making process within the villager and their resistance.

The villager women banded together. There was no man within the group. They have on their daily dresses, traditional headscarves and salwar. Most of them were smiling and clapping their hands. It is an enthusiastic photograph, which could be regarded as a contrary instance to Gökova’s women. Although the caption refers to the villager in general and the report mostly to do with the Muhtar, we only see the women as the protesters of Ulukışla Resistance.

4.4.2 Second Selected News Report: “People Hope for Support against the Gold Miners at Ulukışla”

With the acceleration of operations in the mine site, people who locate around Ulukışla call for support and solidarity against the Mine Company, Gümüştaş. By pointing Aydın Doğan, who is owner of one of a media group and the owner of the Mine, the report places call of villagers;

“We established village assemblies and resistance communities. We have assemblies in each villages in the mine basin. With your supports, we want to make our voices heard all over the world. Our villages turn to police stations. All we want is to live in peaceful and healthy environment. We do not want pollution in our lands” (bianet.org, 2010)



Figure 9: People Are Waiting For Support Against The Gold Miners At Ulukışla. (Bianet 2010, February 5).

The Figure 10 is another photograph, given by bianet.org to describe the call of villagers for supporting the resistance. A lot of people gathered in a public square of the village with banners. An old villager woman is in the middle of the group by raising her one hand like inducing and holding a banner with the other. The words on the banner is “No to Cyanide.” Probably she call people loudly and nervously. The photograph could be regarded as the portrayal of villagers’ call by the villager women.

4.4.2. Third Selected News Report: “The Villagers had Raised Up, What’s up Mr. Aydın

The last example is of Yeni Akit. The daily newspaper is known for its fundamentalist tendency. The ideological tendency of the paper is close to Islamic extremism and the writings are in supportive tones for militant Islamic organizations. It is, especially, known for resorting to hate speech against the groups that out of their religion and ideology. Furthermore, Yeni Akit is overtly targeting people, mostly

opponents and non-Muslim journalists. In parallel with the AKP, Yeni Akit criticizes the developments with an exclusionist language.



Figure 10: The Villagers had raisen up, what's up Mr. Aydın. (Yeni Akit 2014, April 22)

The caption is from the times that relations between AKP and Doğan Media Group broke down. The newspaper targets Aydın Doğan with gold smuggling by indicating Doğan's partner's investment of Ulukışla Gold Mine. By adding the critical attitude of Hürriyet, one newspaper of the Doğan Media's newspaper, about the amendment that cancels the obligation to Environmental Impact Assessment on the forestry regulation. And they indicate the protests of locals. Beyond the content of the news, the significant side of the caption for our study is the choice of photograph. Although it is not totally about the resistance of Ulukışla villagers, Yeni Akit prefers to give the news with a photograph from the protests. The images are the same of other photographs. Most of the protesters in the frame are villager women. They raised their hands and shouted. There is no man at all. They are on the right side of the frame and we can only see a few of them clearly. Apart from the old traditionally dressed man, they wore casual clothes. There are three thick wooden sticks, which are raised by men

on the right side of the frame. Although Yeni Akit tries to tell a different story about Ulukışla, we are seeing similar signs with other pictures of grassroots environmental movements.

As it could be seen in the news of Ulukışla, and also in other similar resistances, the use of women images become a repetitive fact whether or not the event is about the villager women. As well as we will discuss that meaning of repetition in the following section, after seeing more examples, I could argue that the most representations of grassroots environmental movements are portrayed with the image of village women. In addition, we can say that there is a common way to represent the grassroots environmental movements in mainstream and alternative media, even in extremists.

4.5. Watch for Yuvarlakçay Hydro-Electric Power Plant

In February 2010, after the cutting started in the forest, including the monumental trees, for the construction of hydro-electric powerplant, the residents of Pınarköyü village, an Aegean countryside, started a watch against the company under plastic tents. Throughout the action, which was lasted for two months, most of the locals had waited in the place where the power plant will be built.

4.5.1. First Selected News Report: “The Villagers on Watch Environment”

The daily Radikal gave the report with the headline that says “the villagers are on the Watch for environment” (2010, February 11).

The residents of Pınarköyü village, whom oppose to the establishment of the hydroelectric power plant on Yuvarlakçay river at Beyobasi neighborhood, started to protest against it by erecting tents made by nylon materials 45 days ago in and around

Topgözü area, where the power plant would be constructed, right after the first trees chopped down.

The women who are “on watch” in the tents approximately 50 meters from Yuvarlakçay river are collecting firewood for heating from the surrounding area.

Meanwhile, those villagers “on watch” in the tents, are cooking collectively in a rambling kitchen located under the trees. The food is distributed among those staying in tents. The ingredients for the meals are provided by villagers and by citizens who support the protesting movement.

As Yuvarlakçay Protection Platform spokesperson, Murat Demirci, mentioned in the interview with daily Radikal, there were approximately a hundred people on the Watch and sixty of them were women and children. According to Demirci, “for a villager, water means life. They do not want to lose their water source. It is more valuable than gold.”



Figure 11: The Villagers are on the Watch. (Radikal 2010, February 11)

In the following parts of the news report, *Radikal* gives statements of two women from the Watch about the resistance within ‘only’ one line for each. And the lines paraphrase the words of women except for their original sayings. The first sentence is given as “55 year old Saike Sıtkın mentioned that she came to the field to support reactions against the hydro-electric power plant.” The second is of Fatma Sarıtaş. She came to the Watch with her two year old son and says that “despite the bad weather conditions, we will not give up our resistance.”

The Figure 12, from the daily *Radikal*, is not very different than other pictures of grassroots environmental movements. Women are at the forefront of the frame by holding the banner that writes ‘No to hydro-electric power plant in Yuvarlakçay!’. Again, there is no man in the group. When we count people in the frame, there are only eight men positioned back of or near the women. All the women wear their daily clothes and headscarves. There is no one that seems like shouting slogans.

As a matter of fact, the report of *Radikal*, dated 11 February 2010, brings similar and repetitive characteristics with other reactions. First of all, although it is an environmentally-oriented protest, we read and see women on the front lines. Just in the beginning of the report text, firewood collection action of women is pointed out. In addition, although they are ‘paraphrased words’, we read the statement of women as participants of the protests. By contrast, the detailed explanation about the Watch and process of the protests are given by the spokesperson of the platform, who is a man. On the other hand, we can only see one picture of the Watch that women are at the forefront.

4.6. Senoz Valley Hydro-Electric Power Plant Protests

The Senoz Valley Hydro-Electric Power Plant construction plan was one of the thousand hydroelectric power plant plans in the Black Sea region. The process of the

plant had started in 2006 with certain oppositions of locals in both physical and judicial level. Throughout nine years, the court had decided to the cancelation of project plan for 12 times. However, with bureaucratic interruptions on the protection regulations and changes on the project, the company could go beyond the decisions. During the process, people of Senoz Valley, Rize, showed their decisiveness and resisted to the project through many protests. In 2015, the 13th decision of Supreme Court put the project aside and the locals of Senoz succeeded.

4.6.1. First Selected News Report: “Obstacle against the Plant of Senoz”



Figure 12: The obstacle of EIA against the Hydro-Electric Power Plant of Senoz. (Internethaber 2011, August)

For 9 years, the protests of Senoz Valley subjected to the news and captions for many times. The protest which was organized in August 15, 2011 was one of the proper examples that summarizes the nine years. After the Environment and Urbanization Ministry's decision that adjudges about the necessity of environmental

impact assessment, people of Senoz gathered on the site with banners and placards. Only a few newspapers and TV channels broadcasted the protests.

Rather than the protest, the news text give the details of the Court decision. When it comes to the frame, Figure 15, as it is in previous examples, there are a dozen of old women holding a banner that consists a sentence written with Black Sea accent. The sentence mean “from now on, if anybody (referring to the company) will enter Senoz Valley, it will get lost.” Behind the banner, we also see many different cardboard banners. All of the villager women wear headscarf and they are smiling. Men behind the group, and the frontiers of protests, as it is understood from the figure are women as well. We can say that, with this photograph, the composition of resister local women images is no longer settled fact for the news reports.

4.6.2. Second Selected News Report: “We are Free as long as Rivers Flow Free”

With respect to Senoz Valley hydro-electric power plant protests, in my opinion, the most considerable frame for our study is a meeting of two women on a bridge of Senoz River. One of them is an old woman who lives in the northern side of Turkey, a neighborhood of Rize, Senoz Valley. Her name is İlmiye Akçal. She was born in the Valley and actively participated the protests for nine years to protect her living area. And the other one is from the south of Turkey, Taurus Mountains. She is a member of the last nomadic tribe of Anatolia, Sarıkeçililer. She is also a powerful activist who tries to maintain the nomadic lifestyle of her tribe. In other words, she is also in a struggle of a living space. She is founder and head of the Collaboration Foundation of Sarıkeçililer. She applied to UNESCO to register her tribe as a World Cultural Heritage. She dropped out the primary school. Her name is Pervin Saran.



Figure 13: “We are free as long as rivers can flow free.” (Radikal 2011, August 15)

After the protests had started, as an activist, Pervin Saran visited to the Senoz Valley to support the people. During the visit, a journalist from Radikal made an interview with these two women together. Their answers indicated that the resistances of these two women are more than an environmental movement or protection of their living spaces.

The first question of the journalist was “what makes you come together?”. For Pervin Saran, the reason is consumption habits of modern people and thinking nothing about the result of their individual choices. She says that “it seem like somebody out of the Earth decides about the world.” And İlmiye Akçal adds that “ignorance of people, their selfishness made us together.” When the journalist asks about the end of these processes, İlmiye Akçal gives a strong-minded answer that “I am a woman. I give promise. Nobody can enter this valley without killing me. I do not care about the end...” By giving example from other parts of Anatolia, İlmiye Akçal mentions that

“[I]t is not the same only in Taurus or Kaçkar Mountains, all parts of Anatolia stand up against the pillage of living spaces. We are so strong and our voice is loud.”

Women’s last words of interview summarizes the general conditions of living space struggles in respect to the residents. Ilmiye Akçal claims that “I was deeply worried about our river until I met Pervin. And I understood that she also has the same problem. There is no difference between us, I will go to Taurus.” Pervin Saran adds that “I understand the problem is not only ours. We live in the same world and our pain, concerns, problems and sorrow are the same. I saw that we are not alone in this struggle and we are so powerful together.”

As we see in the Figure 14, two women from two different environmental resistance shared similar concerns in similar struggles. They are villager women, they carry their cultures on their words, thoughts, clothes and sticks. They strive at the same thing in different places.

4.7. Meeting with the Other Face of the State: Gerze Thermal Power Plant Resistance

The resistance of locals and environmentalists against the Gerze Thermal Power Plant Construction Plan ended after the Environment and Urbanization Ministry’s decision of execution after years. Gerze is one of the ‘naturally protected area’ with its forestry lands and coastal trip in Sinop, Black Sea region. Therefore, the plant, which has a potential to harm the environment, will be an illegal attempt. In addition, people earn their lives mostly from fishery, agriculture, forests products and tourism. Thermal plant and its wastes would damage the life circle of Gerze in its all seriousness.

The first crowded protest was organized thanks to the participation of 5,000 people to restrain the environmental impact assessment meeting of the company in

May 2010 (bianet.org, 14 March 2015). In the meantime, more than thousand letters of application had given to the court. Although necessary permission did not have received, the company started to the construction in September 5, 2011. That day, machines entered the village, the locals and environmentalists gathered around the construction site and a huge protest started.

It is also to say that the protest of September 5 was the first demonstration that the police forces responded brutally. The crowd were dispersed by using a huge amount of tear gas and pressurized water. In addition, the riot control vehicles, known as TOMA, entered to the scene of grassroots environmental protests with Gerze. At the end of protests, there were more than 50 injured, and around hundred people were taken into custody.

On the following 2 years, the struggle continued on the legal side. Şengül Şahin, one of the activists wrote on bianet.org, claims that approximately 10,000 letter of application had been resented to the Ministry and Courts. On the other hand, the Company revised the environmental impact assessment report for two times, in 2012 and 2013. However, because both reports could not response to the regulation, the ministry of Environment and Urbanization, officially, cancelled the Thermal Power Plant Project of Gerze in February 2016. After a dozen protests and thousands of applications, the locals and environmentalists won the struggle of environment and living space.

The Gerze Thermal Power Plant Protests was one of the most influential and intensive experience throughout the environmental movements and living space struggles of Turkey. The main role was on the locals. They established a platform to organize the protests and judicial processes in the name of the Environment Platform of Green Gerze (YEGEP). Right alongside YEGEP, some of the civil society

organizations such as the Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) and Greenpeace supported the locals.

4.7.1. First Selected Report: “Trouble in the Watch for Thermal”

The news report that we select is about a trouble in an action of watch dated 23 August 2011. The daily Radikal gives the news with the headline “Trouble in the Watch for Thermal.” The report continues as “[E]nvironmentalists those on watch at the construction site of planned thermal power plant in Gerze district of the province of Sinop tried to stop 4 trucks which came for drilling activities.” Environmentalists who oppose the construction of the Thermal power plant by Anadolu Group in the area of Çakıroğlu close to Yaykıl village of the district of Gerze mobilized when they heard the officials from the construction company will come to the construction site of the power plant. According to the report, “after the police interruption, people blew the tires, cut the cables of boring machine and broke the truck’s glasses.” After the trouble, approximately 600 locals and environmentalist started a sit-in act in front of the police and construction machines.

As well as the photograph is given in a news report that gives information about a certain aggression between the environmentalists/locals and the security forces, there is a relatively ‘silent’ climate on the frame. In addition, although the report mentions about 600 people’s participation to sit-in act, we could see only a dozen of women in the paragraph.



Figure 14: Trouble in the Watch for Thermal. (Radikal 2011, August 23)

On the one side, there is a group of women. They sit down in the shade of the truck, which came for construction operations of thermal power plant. The group consists of the villager women. They are waiting silently and apprehensively. On the other side, a well-armed gendarmerie team is waiting as a wall of flesh to prevent pass through the mine site. With their head gears, shields and body armours, they are ready to attack the resisters. One move ahead of the team, a gendarmerie commander remains standing upright position. He keeps a close watch, a surveillance, to the group of woman. In other words, most probably, the State shows its grim and cold face to its loyal citizens, who are the Anatolian villagers, for the first time.

Until the protests of Gerze, we were used to see more tolerant and soft interruption of the State to the grassroots environmental movements. The police forces that we saw them behind the group of women of Bergama on the Bosphoprus, from now on, are on the opposite side.

4.7.2. Second News Report: “This is how do We Prevent the Thermal Power Plant in Gerze

As the Spokeperson of Green Gerze Enrivronment Platform since 2009, Şengül Çalışkan Sahin’s article published in bianet.org would help us to have a brief insight into the resistance movement in Gerze within the discourse and viewpoint of the protesters themselves.

Her story is not necessarily different from those told before. With its strong financial capacity, Anadolu Group picks Gerze due to its logistically advantageous location. Politicians and local villagers enthusiastically support the project considering the economic benefits of the plant. And the story begins.

The company had to purchase 2000 decare of land as the first issue, however it was able to buy only 400 decare by giving 20 to 1. According the Sengül Şahin, those who sold the land are generally the grandsons/granddaughters who did not reside in the village and whose grandparents are passed away.

“A woman around 80 years of age who did not want to sell her land could only resist to her grandchildren for 8 months. We weep together in that woman porch for days” (Şahin, 2014).

The company receives the construction license in 20 November 2008. After this news was herd the platform is established and become active. “We started to gather people by creating a Facebook page and started to spread the news” says Şahin. The legal battle also started simultaneously. “While we were informing people by traveling door to door, street to street about the dangers of the thermal power plant we said ‘protecting the living environment is a constitutional right, anything that has been done to protect this right had a legal basis.’“

This was the root of our passive yet effective resistance. These quickly followed by Environment Evaluation Report (ÇED) process, protests, company’s donations to

the district in order to convince people, acknowledgement meetings and finally the famous date of 5 September 2011. “Gezi Park did not go through what Gerze gone through” says Şengül Şahin.

For the first time in the western Anatolian region, villagers who tried to protect their lands and agricultural fields are faced and put down by brutal police response. Gas bombs, pressurized water and batons are used by the police. Empty gas canisters are carried by ambulances. The protest is concluded with 50 injured persons, 6 custodies and interrogation processes for more than 300 people.

Şengül Aydın also adds, during the 6 years of struggle, significant amount of support from local environmentalist movements such as Bergama, Alakır and international ecological movements also came.

She concludes by saying, the honorable voices which came together become a single voice for a struggle of life, the resistance and uprising of the people of Gerze and Yaykıl village may set an example for the world.

The photographs that are used in the essay of Şahin give us the general and summative picture of protests. Especially two of the photographs consists of distinctive images that tell us something different then the classical protest images. It is important to note that there is no specific information about the dates and places of photographs.

The photograph, Figure 16, is from a protest walk. There is a huge crowded on the frame. The front line of the crowd consists of a dozen of women, standing together by holding a banner. Under the name of ‘Yaykıl Villagers’, it is written with capital letters that ‘we want to live, we do not want to a thermal plant.’ At the first side, the photograph is a classical grassroots environmental protest picture that a group on walk and a group of women, that wear their local clothes, walk in front of the group.

However, this time the picture is a bit different than others. The women wear the type of salwar and the same color of headscarves. They seem like in a uniform, which is formed according to the local appearance



Figure 15: We want to live, we do not want to thermal plant. (Bianet 2014, March 14)

The second photograph, Figure 17, reflects a similar frame of an enthusiastic group of protesters. They are cheerfully clapping and shouting. It is a female-dominated photograph that 5 women protesters are on the front line and 5 another position on step back. They are not necessary the images of villager women with their daily headscarves and salwar with a difference. They also wear the same type of aprons.

By considering the previous pictures of grassroots environmental movements, we can argue that, there is a marginalization of using local images through the protesters. From the Gökova to Gerze, and also we will see similar tendencies in 'Yeşil Yol Protests,' the local clothes, especially on women bodies, attract the attentions as one of the most repetitive image



Figure 16: Gerze does not want to Thermal. (Bianet 2014, March 14)

As a matter of fact, seeing the usage of traditional clothing such as headscarves and salvars as a form of strategy in the grassroots environmentalist movements would not be wrong to assume. The strategy could be regarded as a way of expression that comes from their collective identity, which could be “expressed in cultural materials – names, narrative, symbols, clothes and so on” (Poletta and Jasper, 2001: 298). By showing ‘who they are’ through their appearance, they could take their position into a legitimate way. The legitimacy comes from a basic reference that hide in the appearance; sense of belonging and the given image of Turkish villager women.

The nature of environmental movements that we have already discussed in the beginning of the study involves a reactionary sense against any temporary physical change and harm in rural areas. There are lots of reasons behind this reactionary sense. The important part for our study is the belonging sense of villagers to their lands and lifestyles. This is the fact that social and economic life in rural areas directly depends on natural environment. People who live there could only earn their lives from soil, forest or sea. Furthermore, their relation with space is not only about economic reasons, their culture and living habits that make them ‘who they are’ are also vital

reasons that motivate these people to react. Consequently, with salvar, traditional headscarves which are the symbols of their local life.

4.8. Occupation of Briefing Meeting in Zonguldak

“The villager women invaded (occupied) the briefing meeting of Devrek Hydro Electric Power Plant Construction. The women did not listen the experts of State Hydraulic Works (DSİ) and they said their own words that ‘take your hands off our rivers’” (sendika.org, 2016). Based upon the Dogan News Agency’s report, sendika10.org gives the event, which was occurred in Devrek.

4.8.1. The Selected News: “Our Water, Our Land!”

In 26 May 2014, the experts of State Hydraulic Works and officials from Reis Group organized a meeting to inform and to persuade the locals about the hydroelectric power plant project that was started eight months before in Devrek, a neighborhood of Zonguldak. The meeting was occupied by a group women, most of them were over the age of 50.

As it was explained in the later parts of the news, during the company briefing the women villagers who carry banners that says ‘no to hydroelectric power plants’, ‘water is life’, ‘the land is ours, the water is ours’, ‘take your hands, eyes, companies off of my environment’ gather in front of the conference table which officials from the company and State Hydraulic Works were talking, and prevent them from continuing.

In the news report, a statement of Muammer Bayır from the construction company is also included. According to Bayır, the project is a world scale one and eventually benefits the locals. While the locals are supporting the project he also named the protest of the women as “artificial and concentrated” one.



Figure 17: “Our water, our land!” (Sendika10 2015, May 25)

In addition, the statement of Prof Dr. Beyza Üstün from Yıldız Technical University who is also an environment activist included in the news where she said “what has been done (by company) is not a legitimate act. Instead, people’s struggle is a legitimate one”. Villagers decided to form a platform with representatives from the villages of the region and decided to struggle until the project would be cancelled.



Figure 18: “Water flows free” (Sendika10 2015, May 25)

It seems that both who photographs are captured from the same perspective during the protest. It is a spontaneous frame that no one is looking to the camera or pose to the lens. There is a group of angry women that stand around the table. They fill the area of meeting. They are all looking to a man who is most probably an official. Women look like reproaching to the man. All the banners are directed to the table. We are seeing three banners that say “the problem is where the hydroelectric plant is there,” “do not disturb the natural balance,” and “river flows free.”

The news report was caught during the briefing meeting. It was not a protest that was announced before. The event could not appear effectively on national media. We could only reach the news in some unpopular news websites.

Although it could not have a certain media coverage, the reason behind choosing this photograph is to show a real-time example of a women’s protests. The act is not an image-event that is done to make the issue public. For this time, women, without men or activists, occupy the meeting.

4.9. From 90’s to Present: Cerattepe Resistance

In March 2011, Energy and Natural Resources Ministry initiated tenders through 1343 different fields for mining and touristic facility constructions. This time Genya district, which is known for its rich biodiversity and natural beauty, was in the selected fields with Cerattepe. Ozaltın Company won the tender of Cerattepe and Genya districts to explore mine and copper in February 2012. After the tender, an investigation of Republican People’s Party Deputy, the main opposition party, found out that the tender were given to the company for the sake of a pro-government businessman’s company was involved in many corruption scandal.

The operation had begun without environmental impact assessment report. Thereupon the locals sued the project for cancellation of tender. While the case

continued, the environmental impact assessment report had finished with “positive” decision by the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. Close to 300 people, consisting of locals and civil society representatives, went to law again by claiming that ‘the mine does not protect the living areas of people.’

In 19 June 2015, the company started to chop trees in the planning mine site and the active local resistance began. Locals occupied the mine site and the operation machines obliged to go back. After a month, the operation machines went to accompany with gendarmeries at 05.00 a.m. Hundreds of people gathered and blocked the road as soon as they heard the news. And the following days, the protests continued pertinaciously.

4.9.1. First Selected News Report: “Undefeatable People of Artvin”



Figure 19: “Ormancıların kestiği ağaçlarla yola barikat kurdular” (Hürriyet 2015, July 2)

The Figure 20 could be regarded as one of the iconic photographs of Cerattepe Gold Mine Resistance, which was took place in 2 July 2015. Most of the mainstream media channels, daily Milliyet, Hürriyet, Posta, Cumhuriyet, even BBC published the

same photograph with similar headlines. It was took by the protesters while the resisters were trying to construct a barricade to block the heavy construction machineries. The photograph was spread by the supporters of resistance via social media under the name of “300 Artvinli” (300 people of Artvin), referring to the animation movie ‘300 Sparta’s.’ Cnnturk.com, based on Dogan News Agency, gave the event as “the struggle continues in Artvin Cerattepe” (02.07.2015). The first explanation was given from the head of Green Artvin Association, Neşe Kahraman by the channel. She said:

“[T]he company and Ministry impose is their illegal and lawless actions. They suppose that we will fail. We will be always here! At any moment, in every hour we will take stand against them. They went back after learned us one more time. In all conditions, our resistance will continue. They should stick this to their mind” (cnnturk.com 2015, July 7)

In the following sections of the news, the channel gave explanation of the associate of Green Artvin Association Hasan Yüksel. He claimed that “they find a resister for each tree.”

Except of two women (one of is young and the other one is “Neşe Abla”), the Figure 19 could be regarded as a ‘masculine’ image. A lot of men lined edge to edge on the road. They posed by setting their feet on a wood block and holding sticks. The photograph is like a fiction scene that reflects the readiness portrait of battlefield and waiting for a fight. It is fair to say that to name the men as “300 Artvinli” was an extension of referring popular culture products, a movie, with reference to defense. The order of men, their intense looks and nervous faces show us a picture of powerful people who are defending their homelands. They are brave. And they are in a ‘wait’ to stop the invasion of Gold Mine.

We can definitely say that the Cerattepe Resistance is not a male-dominated movement. However, because of the marginal attitude of the photograph, I want to make a comparison between the previous women images through the grassroots environmental movements, especially with other ‘waits.’ The first wait was on the Gökova Thermal Power Plant Protests. The women occupied the road and started a ‘wait.’ It was a silent and we highlighted the faces of women specifically. They seem like embarrassed, their faces were looking down to the road and did not smile. Although they occupied the road, and also the newspapers wrote the act in an aggressive tone for the women, the picture was not similar. Both of them, 300 Artvinli and the women of Gökova, were on a resistance to stop the invasion of mining companies. However, the reflections were different. The difference, in my opinion, hides behind the cultural constructions of the sex roles.

In his ‘panoramic’ anthropological study of *Manhood in the Making*, David D. Gilmour set a cross-cultural analysis of how masculinity is understood and lived around the world. According to Gilmour, for most societies there is a consensual understanding of masculinity and femininity. On the one hand, the guiding images of genders could differ from culture to culture. On the other hand, “there is substantial similarities to be found pan-culturally in the traits ascribed to men and women” (1990: 10). He argues:

“Wherever “real” manhood is emphasized, even lightly, and for whatever reasons, three moral injunctions seem to come into focus... to impregnate women, protect dependents from danger, and provision kith and kin” (Gilmour, 1990: 223).

In short, a ‘real man’ is like a man the impregnator, protector and provider. These threefold images function as the criteria’s of male role-playing. Specifically for our study, I focus on the role of ‘protector’ which is represented in the picture of 300 Artvinli. The basis of protect is based on a need for guard of boundaries, which is

regarded as the safe lines of society. For the role of protection, males should be strong, brave and especially deterrent. Considering such a socially constructed role-play of men, the Figure 8 gives us the proper answers. The men of Artvin are waiting to protect their living spaces. They are strong and give a ‘deterrent’ image to us.

It should not be forgotten that the male-dominance is a Figure 20 specific issue.

4.9.2. Second Selected News Report: “Police Attack to the Women, Walking to the Mine”

In 21 February 2016, to the call of the Green Artvin Association, 2,000 women started a walk the mine site. According to the news of daily Cumhuriyet, by holding Turkish flags, the group shouted slogans as “Runaway Cengiz (the name of Mine Company), women come!” When they came close to the mining site, the police forces stopped the group and did not permit them to pass. Nur Neşe Karahan, the head of the Association, said to the chief of police that “only women want to go to Cerattepe. Please, let us to go there” (Cumhuriyet, 2015). However, the police did not allow them and announced group to end their walk.

In the column, daily Cumhuriyet also gives the explanations of two women from the group. One of them is 61-year-old Şadiye Sönmez. She claimed that “...They tell us as ‘terrorists,’ the real terrorists are themselves. They blocked our road, and threw tear gas. Cerattepe is our land and it will remain ours” Another woman from the group, Müesser Şeyhoğlu noted that “We will not allow the mine. If they do not let us to go there, they have to come and talk to us. We are Turks and we are here with our Turkish flags. How do they get this right to cut the tree? The forest is not their property. We only want to go to see what they do to our forest!”.



Figure 20: Police Attack to the Women, Walking to the Mine. (Radikal 2016, February 21)

The Figure 21 could be described as a proper portrayal and also summary of the Walk through Mine. A huge and enthusiastic group of women are going up. Most of them are clapping while they are walking. Some of them shout slogans and are whistling. The front row consists of the old women, who hold Turkish flags. Different from the other grassroots environmental movement, there is no women who wear any local cloth. It is to say that only the accordion was there as a symbol of locality, which is a folkloric instrument of Artvin.

As well as bringing similar characteristics through wording and images, the Walk also indicates some certain differences to the previous grassroots environmental movements. Some similarities could be noted as the clear emphasis on Turkishness and the Turkish flag. As in the other protests, it is used as a legitimization and proof of being loyal citizen. Furthermore, it indicates us the protesters' sense of belonging to the place against the capitalist of mines and betrayer politicians. Another similarity is the physical order of the Walk that from the front side to back of the group. There

is a spontaneous arrangement that the old women are on the front line and they are bringing the flags.

The difference hides in process and especially at the end of the Walk as well. Until the Cerattepe protests, we do not have experienced a harsh police attack to the local women. For example, the police did not interrupt to the women on the Bosphorus Bridge even though the action was organized in the peak hours. Further examples could be given. Speculatively, the reason behind attack might be about the double-face of the State toward people that coming, or representing, rural-village and urban. As the photograph reflects that the protesters are urban people, that we can understand it from their clothes and attitudes. There is nothing traditional or rural in the Walk.

After the blockade, the group waited for two hours in front of the police forces. At the end of the second hour, the police attack women to disrupt the wait by using plastic bullets and tear gas. One of the attack was critically, 26 people were injured.

4.9.3. The Big Sister of Resistance: “Neşe Ablâ”

For 20 years, the chair of association is Nur Neşe Karahan, also known as Neşe Ablâ (big sister). She is one of the influential leaders of movement in Artvin. In an interview with Kadınların Postası (Women’s Post), she tells the story of resistance to Atlas Arslan by attracting the attention to the collectivity during the ‘vital’ struggle of Artvin people. She claims:

“We are always together as arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder. Without any gender discrimination, we are acting in the resistance against the gold mine. In a word, there is democracy and equality in Artvin. This is the same in our villages. We are looking for everything based on humanity. Women, men, children, everybody are equal here. Nothing could be done without the support of women. The resistance and the struggle have to be together. And we achieve it here” (Arslan, 2016).

Over 700 people and sixty lawyer brought action against the mine project and operation for cancellation. Almost every day the locals gathered in the center Artvin for months. The struggle on the streets and judiciary were organized under the Green Artvin Association, which was established in 1995 by the people of Artvin who came together to protect the nature and living spaces.



Figure 21: The head of Green Artvin Association, Nur Neşe Karahan is under custody! (Radikal 2016, February 17)

Comparing to other grassroots environmental movements, the Artvin Gold Mine Resistance includes small but important differences for both the action practices and representation. In my opinion, Nur Neşe Karahan is one of the influential figure of the movements who brings some certain characteristics of the movement on her body and mind. Although we do not have enough formal information about her in the written sources, we meet her from her explanations, interviews and the comments about her from different sources, as forums, websites and news reports.

The most popular comment about Neşe Ablâ is “to be one of the symbol of Artvin resistance” and her 20 years of contribution to the resistance. First of all, as we mentioned before, she is the head of Green Artvin Association. The resistance is executed under guidance of the Green Artvin Association. For both actions in judiciary and in streets, the Association plays an organizer role. On the other hand, the participation of local people to the Association and also its legitimacy on people is really high. Almost all statements and declarations are given account of the Association and Neşe Ablâ, in general, makes the statements. In most of the interviews, news reports and the photographs of the protests, we see Neşe Ablâ as well. Neşe Ablâ is one of ‘face’ of the resistance.

This ‘face’ is one of middle-aged women. Comparing to other women of the movements, she is an urban women. She has natural white hair and glasses. There is no photograph that Neşe Ablâ wears a traditional cloth. On the one hand, whether the condition is, she portrays a calm attitude. She is one of three smiling faces and one of the only two women of the 300 Artvinli photograph for example. The tone of her explanations is always decisive. On the other hand, she is regarded as the leader of the movement.

In February 2016, over 300 protesters blocked the road while the heavy construction machines were going to the mine site in company with the police forces once again. To disrupt the protesters, police used tear gas and at the end, three activists, involving Neşe Ablâ, were taken into custody. According to the reports of Radikal in 17 February, the detentions, especially of Neşe Ablâ, had increased the tension of people in Artvin. They were released two days later. The protests and sit down strikes lasted until the end of February.

In response to increasing tension, the Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu invited a committee from Artvin to Çankaya Palace. Neşe Abı, the General Secretary of Green Artvin Association Bedrettin Kalın participated to the invitation of Prime Minister in behalf of the resistance. In addition to the group, the Minister of Forestry, the Municipal of Artvin, AKP and CHP deputies, the provincial chairman's of MHP, CHP and AKP, the head of Artvin Trade Association, representatives of syndicates and academics from Karadeniz Technical University took part in the meeting.

After the meeting, Ahmet Davutoğlu claimed that “[A]ll the operations in the field are stopped until the court decision about the site would be explained. Everybody has to respect the legal rights. We will not permit any attempt to abuse the affair.” (t24, 2016). By introducing the site as ‘environmentally friendly,’ he suggested that “surely, there will be ‘close-gallery’ application in the site. The Mine will not be processed in the field. The operation will care about the colorful trees.” And he warned the protesters; “we have to establish and maintain public order. If there will be any improper action, we do what is necessary.”

In her speech, the head of Green Artvin Association, Nur Neşe Kahraman said that “the Prime Minister made a commitment and instructed to stop the operation until the court decision explained. It is positive development. We request to regress the police and gendarmerie forces, and the operation machines. They took our requests but we do not receive an answer yet. We hope our requests will be full filled.”

4.10. Green Road Protests and Havva Ana

In 2015 autumn, an environmentally controversial highway project had been started in the Black Sea region of Turkey. The 2,600 kilometer “Green Road” project seeks to connect eight highlands in Turkey’s northeast region, an area famed for its biodiversity and lush, green forest. However, locals had expressed their fears that the

project will result in the construction of unwanted tourist facilities in the area as well as the destruction of the biodiversity.

The municipality, and following governors, rejected the concerned demands of locals and reactions had begun. In July 11, locals and activists gathered and reacted to heavy equipment of project before and after the machines came to Samistal, a highland which is a part of project in Rize. It was a spontaneous event that people gathered after the machineries went to the highland. Gendarmeries intervened against the group to ease the work of machineries by using force and tear gas. A video, which captured the protests against the heavy machines working and gendarme's intervention, had changed the flow of protests strikingly.

The video was of a speech of an old villager women who sat down in front of the bulldozers which were escorted by gendarmerie forces. There are also the protesters behind the women. By holding a wooden walking stick, wearing a conventional headscarf, she said "[T]he roads of the highlands will not be connected. We never accept it. Who is the state, who is the governors? I am the people itself" (DHA 2015, June 11).

The video was recorded by the camera of a journalist, Muhammed Kaçar from Dogan News Agency, and it was published in the agency's website firstly. In the following hours, the video and photographs of the old-resister-women got viral immediately. The women's name is Rabia Bekar but she was anonymously called as "Havva Ana" – Eve – in social media. Millions of supporting tweets had been posted with #HavvaAna hashtags on Twitter. The video was watched thousand times on newspaper's websites, Youtube and similar video sharing sites. Also conventional printed media and TV channels saw the protests in the name of Havva Ana as well.

Except of the pro-AKP media and contrary to previous grassroots environmental movements, the event could have a certain media coverage.

4.10.1. The News Report of Green Road: Mutiny of Havva Ana against the Green Road; “I’m the people”

One of the best-selling Turkish newspaper, Posta captioned the event as “Natural Resistance, Holding a Wooden Stick - People protests to the 2,600 kilometer ‘Green Road Project’, which will connect eight highlands’ roads one to another. While the construction machines started to work, people began to resist. Rabia Bekar nicknamed as ‘Havva Ana’, became the symbol of resistance by sitting down in front of the bulldozers.” (2015, July 12) Taraf, which is a liberal newspaper, wrote the protests with the headline of “I’m the people. By sitting in front of the construction machines, Havva Ana said; ‘The road of the plateaus will not be connected. We never accept it.’” (2015, July 12) In the same day, we read the caption of “Mother of People Spoke – I am the People” in Cumhuriyet. Additionally, Zaman which is a conservative anti-government media, wrote that “the first pleasing news has come about “Green Road” which came to the fore with the resistance of Havva Ana”, two days later. Pro-government media organs passed the news about Green Road Project and Havva Ana throughout the days of issue. After four days, the newspapers of Takvim, Yeni Akit, Star and Akşam captioned the same news with the same words; “The illegal farm of Havva Ana has found.” (2015, July 16) By presenting the same photograph of document, they blamed Havva Ana with managing a restaurant which is built in a protected site. Although all the pro-government media channels wrote the same headlines, they did not say anything about Green Road Protests or the words of Havva Ana.

4.10.2. An Analysis on the Speech of Havva Ana



Figure 22: “Who is the State? I am the people!” (Hürriyet 2015, June 11)

The Figure 23 and 24 are a scene shot which was given through the headlines of newspapers and websites, from the video of Havva Ana. She sits down between the protesters and gendarmeries. She holds a wooden stick and wears a traditional headscarf and also traditional inlaid socks. There is an angry expression on her face. On the one side, a dozen of full-armed gendarmerie are waiting behind Havva Ana, they leave after a while during her speech. On the other side, the protesters are standing with banners. As a matter of fact, both two photographs are familiar pictures that consists of similar images with the other grassroots environmental protests

Beyond the visibility, the words of Havva Ana is the essence of matter that create a certain impression not only for the Green Road protests specifically, but also people could find some other reflections about their feelings and thoughts according to the time serious political context. The conversation actually starts when Havva Ana started to shout after an activist that says ‘we will stop this through court’. The full of the conversation is as following;

“What court? The court lies on itself (points to ground by referring to the martyrs). Our grandfathers lie in this ground. Are you gone crazy? What is a court? We are the court (At this point soldiers started to step back). What is the State? There is only People! What is the state huh? State is a state thanks to us! Our grandfathers joined the army from the Kavrun with barefoot and they became martyrs. Highlands shall not be connected through this road! Every highland had its own route. I definitely did not want this! You, the governor huh? And us, couple of marauders (*capulcu*)? We are moulded by these lands. I was shepherd here when I was eleven! Who is the governor, district governor? I, I, I, I am the people! What is your purpose, you infidels? Is there a road for people who walk? There is! So people will walk these roads and became enchanted by its beauty!”(Hürriyet 2015, June 11)



Figure 23: “Who is the State? I am the people!!” (Hürriyet 2015, June 11)

As Dijk argues that to indicate a phenomenon “needs to be seen in relationship to its environment, that is, its ‘surrounding’ conditions and consequences” (2008: 3). The conditions and consequences, as it is mentioned in the Methodology, consist of time, place, institutions, political actions, participants and audiences identities. Within this frame, the impact of texts and talks, and even their meanings, would be changeable. In addition, the words and texts are not only produced by their contexts, but also lead to form their contexts (van Dijk, 2008). Therefore, while trying to understand how the words of Havva Ana could create such an impression, we should also focus on the context of the time.

During the AKP government, “from 2002 to the present, the vacuum of authoritarianism left by the military bureaucracy seemed to be filled by the AKP cadres” (Atay, 2013: 40). As Tayfun Atay claims “the AK Party moved away from the leading for civil-plural democracy to being the architect in the construction of a new identity and culture in Turkey” (2013: 41). Majoritarian tendencies of government rather than pluralism, constraints on private life, hate speeches of the politicians against their opposes, outlaw regulations of mine and power plant projects and suspicions of seculars among the religious references on public spheres are the major reasons that create a strong anti-AKP sense. Although some of the large scale demonstrations were organized, as *Cumhuriyet Mitingleri*, against the policies of AKP, the June 2013 was the scene of the biggest demonstration experience of the contemporary Turkish history. The demonstrations sparked after the environmentalist sit-in act to protect the trees of Gezi Park was suppressed violently by the police forces. Approximately 3.5 million people took active part during the protests across Turkey. The abusive use of force by law enforcement officials, from police officers to district governors and the Government officials boosted the tension of the events day by day. As it is monitored in the report of Amnesty International on Gezi Park (2013), 400,000 tear gas canister, tons of pressure water with water cannons used against the protesters by the security forces. 11 were killed and more than 8,000 were injured.

Besides the reasons of majoritarian tendencies, exclusive discourse and outlaw regulations, Gezi Park Protests were one of the crucial turning point that had changed the attitude of the people who are opposed to the AKP. Almost all of the opponents of AKP are started to be stigmatized and excluded by defining them as traitors and marauders (*capulcu*) by the government officials. In addition, the reactions of the police against any protest became more harsh and unmerciful. After the Gezi Park,

almost all pictures of protests, in manners of both grassroots and urban ones, occurred in similar order of images; on the one side there are people who try to assert their rights, and on the other side well-armed security forces with baton, tear gas, plastic bullets and water cannons... For the people, who try to assert their rights, the legitimacy of state and politician started to be criticized because of the exclusive acts and discourse of the government.

The importance of *Havva Ana*'s words that is "Who is the State? I am the People!" bring some certain meanings beside its actual tones. First of all, it was the embodied version of opponents' displeasure that was accumulated for 12 years. Her speech could properly reflect the opponents' feelings that is for the exclusionary attempts, unlawful regulations and the decisions that disregard the people's thoughts and decisions of the AKP rule. Secondly, as is the case with Bergama, she directly indicate the people as the real owners of land against the State and capital. Furthermore, in contrast to Begrama and similar movements that practices in the frame of 'image events, the words and picture of *Havva Ana* were not constructed. It is fair to say that she came to the stage spontaneously with a powerful sense of belonging that is relied on the ancestral roots of people with the land. Finally, it was a powerful image, also could be defined as *punctum* that weakens the hegemonic power of conservative and patriarchal authority mechanism through discursive level as the 'loyal' citizen, which is a villager women and mother.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION



Figure 24: “Chipko Women Hugging Trees.” (Wikipedia 1974, March 26)

As a matter of fact, women have been active, influential participants, and the pioneers, on environmental issues and grassroots environmental movements. That active presence of women in the events makes women much closer contact with the environmental problems and that provides women's empowerment and commitment for where they live.

Mostly probably, the 'Chipko Movement' was one of the early examples of environmental movements that resister village women images occurred. In 1970s' Northern India, village women organized a passive resistance. The story of resistance relies on a commercial logging operation had started in the forests of Chipko. To slow down the rapid deforestation, a group of women went to the field and confronted the loggers. When the loggers started threatening women with their guns, the group hugged the trees to keep from to be destroyed. The act lasted for hours, until the cutters left the village. It was a precursor event that gave us the first iconic act and image of resister women for the grassroots environmental movements. Furthermore, the hugging protest became an iconic act for environmental movements and it is still used as well. And as we see in the examples of Turkey, the women, especially locals and villagers, make their presence felt constantly.

At this juncture, I think, it is relevant to ask the questions of 'what do the women images in the photographic frames of newspapers tell about their representation?' And, 'how are they positioned in these grassroots environmental movements?'

This study began through a desire to understand the village women images of grassroots environmental movements. It attempts to figure out how these images are represented by the media. To this aim, we look at news reports of ten different grassroots environmental movements, which were published in the Turkish

newspapers. The cases are handled according to the size, scale and media coverage level of the events. By looking at visual and textual elements of the news reports, we explore the images according to three main approaches; composition of images, the signs of social subjects and differences, and the relationship with the context.

Beyond any doubt, the women are ‘in’ the grassroots environmental movements as the active participants and pioneers. As we see in this study, women appeared in almost all movements. From the first environmentalist reaction, which was the Gökova Thermal Power Plant protests, to the ongoing resistances, we see women on the front sides of movements. And the image of village women have a strong representative power in the environmental movements.

When it comes to what the resister village women images of grassroots environmental movements in the newspapers tell us about the problems of representation, by taking into account all the research, we reach three main answers.

First, as it is referred to Incirlioglu’s term in the beginning of previous chapter, the picture of resister village women is constructed upon ‘ambiguous images’ that brings paradoxical characteristics depending on the context. On the one hand, there are women who are “backbreaking overworked, undervalued, ignorant, and submissive-imply downtrodden” (1998: 200). We see them in the resistances as the potential victims of environmental degradations. Although almost all news reports of grassroots environmental movements are given with the photographs of the women, we cannot hear voices or read their statements in the texts. Moreover, until Cerattepe and Green Road Protests, we even do not know the names of women as well. Instead of the women, the texts give the statements and declarations of the spokespersons, experts and governors who are almost all man. We can see the marginal example of this situation with the news report of the Hydro-Electric Power Plant in Firtına Valley.

The report was given a staged photograph that three women, wearing traditional clothes, posed to the camera by showing the landslide and destroyed places. The photograph (See, Figure 8) was supported with the women spokesperson's statements who is not also in the frame. She said: "... those who contributed most to Camlihemsin is us, women. They want to destroy our labor." However the same report gives a wide coverage to the statements of activist lawyer about the process and we still do not know the names of women in the photographic frame.

On the other hand, the resister village women images are represented as "strong, wise, powerful and confident." For example, the Bergama Resistance obviously showed us that the women who did not have an active role in public sphere could realize their potential in the protests. As Halime Özyaylalı, one of the active participants of the Resistance, noted that "...women were (no longer) very vengeful..." (Reinart, 2003:52) and they started "...to express their concerns" to the authority whether a governor or other figures of authority. Beyond the texts, and depending on the type of action as marches or mass protests, the women are seen as the 'frontiers' of marches and protests in almost all reactions. They walk on the front row of marches. They hold banners, shouting and clapping in front of the groups. They call people to come together against the mining companies as the old village women in Ulukışla (See, Figure 10). It is fair to say that these two contradictory positions are the two sides of the same coin. In different examples, it is possible to come across with one or another.

Secondly, the resister village women images are invoked for representation of environment and local values, which are under the threat of degradation and even destruction. Indeed, this is a reciprocal representation that is used by both media and protesters. As it is in the cases of Bergama, Gerze, Fırtına Valley (See, Figure 6-7-8-

14), although the news reports and recommendations about the cases are given under the photographs of village women. The photographs are used as the spectacles of the nature and environmental destructions. Moreover, they are represented as embodiment of local values. Except of Cerratepe, all of the instances that we examine portrays similar pictures of resister village women images. There are women on the photographic frames, wearing traditional clothes depending on the geography and culture. While we are seeing women who wear ‘basma salvar’ in country-sides of Anatolia and the Aegean districts, the women wear traditional headscarves in Black Sea. On the other hand it could be argued that such a traditional appearance is tactically used as a part of image events. As it is defined in the previous chapters, image events are a commonly used method in environmental movements that uses some symbolic and spectacular acts, items and places to attract the media attention into more the specific-issues, which is tried to deal by the activists. For example, although the protest on the Bosphorous Bridge was organized by approximately a hundred people who came from Bergama, we can only see the village women as the faces and bodies of the protest. They were of the center of the city as the people of Bergama (See, Figure 4). They reflected this belonging with their appearance firstly and slogans in local accent. The protests of Gerze Thermal Power Plant is a proper further instance, which is constructed upon the images of local women throughout the movement.

The Gerze Protests were one of the nation-wide movement that had a huge number participants to the actions. We can follow the protests from the news reports that consisted of similar types of photographs with other examples. However, the movement of Gerze differs from the other with the systematic use of women and also women images through the protests. As we examine the process of Gerze, thanks to Şengül Şahin’s essay, who told the story according to her experiences, all of the

photographs that were published with the essay were of women's as well. Moreover, as it is understood from the Figure 15, that reflects a group of women who are on the front sides of the March and wear the same type of salwar and headscarves are there as symbols of the protests. It was an obvious fact that locality, customs and environment are embodied on those women as a tactical representation that are supposed to increase impression of the news for the protests.

And lastly, the meaning of the images and their influence might show changeable characteristics according to context, they are in. As we quoted before, "situations or some of the features – such as class, status, gender, ethnicity, age, power, networks and practices – influence the way we speak or write..." (van Dijk, 2008: 118) We can also add; these features affects the meaning of influence sphere of the images. Meanings are changeable for the time, place, position, identity, attribute and the communicative relations with other images. The case of Havva Ana could be regarded as a concrete example for the importance of context. As a matter of fact, the loud question of Havva Ana – "who is the state?" – was not the first example that a women criticized the governors. For example, the women of Bergama stood against the district governor in a protest. Although the newspapers wrote the event, the stand of women could not take an influential media coverage. When it comes to more recent instances, the shouts of Gerze women could not be heard enough by Turkish media although the protest was suppressed brutally.

The reason behind widespread influence of Havva Ana image can be explained in three respects. One of which is related to the conditions that depend and vary in accordance with time. The sensual picture and question of Havva Ana was a reflection of displeasure that was accumulated for 12 years of AKP rule. In the time that Havva Ana spoke, most of the unlawful regulations and exclusionary actions of the

Government lead the opponents to criticize the existence of rulers. In addition, Gezi Park Protests, which sparked after an environmentally concerning act and did spread through all over the country, increase the sensibility on the environmental issues. The other respect is her characteristics. The image indicates the women like Havva Ana as the real owners of the lands. This is because, she is a women who was born in there and manage the nature with her labour. The last respect that made the image influential is its stance in front of the power. As we mentioned before, it was a powerful image that weakened the hegemonic power of conservative and patriarchal authority mechanism through discursive level as the 'loyal' citizen, as a village women and as a mother.

1970s' eco-feminists had highlighted the 'innocence' of women on the degradation of environment. The main reason behind environmental destruction locates in the dominative and subsequently contaminative nature of developmental capitalism which is a masculinist way of seeing according to feminist thinking. By referring Carolyn Merchant's study of the *Death of Nature*, Turpin and Lorentzen argues that as emancipatory projects, the Enlightenment and modern capitalism were limited; "it was for man and from nature" (1996: 28). In addition to that, by emphasizing rational thought and scientific world process, "both nature and women become objects to be used and controlled" in order to sustain the development.

As we mentioned before, the environmental problems are not gender-specific issues. However the effects of environmental degradation and destructions are disproportionate for women, especially in developing countries' rural sides. This is because "women are the key to the management of environmental systems: as food producers as well as the world's food preparers; to manage water supply as well as use it; to provide fuel as well as burn it" (Turpin&Lorentzon, 1996, 16). Due to the fact

that the status of women and their roles directly depend on the nature, any attempt that has a potential to disrupt the daily flow would reflect to women as structural violence. Therefore, women are the first victims of environmental degradation. In addition, “the environmental management is linked to women’s experience not in positive way that continues to support the marginalization of both the women/environment connection and the participation of women in environmental decision-making” (Turpin & Lorentzen, 1996: 25). It is also a popular way that conventional media appeals to code the environmental movements to represent. Although the pictures of grassroots environmental movements are given with the village images and the women seems like the main characters of the movements, they are left out of the discussions about the benefits or threats of the projects. The statements are mostly of the experts or governors, who are men by majority.

For example, as stated above, the Bergama Resistance obviously showed us that the women who did not have an active role in public sphere could realize their potential in the protests. As Halime Özyaylalı, one of the active participants of the Resistance, noted that “...women were (no longer) very vengeful...” (Reinart, 2003:52) and they started to “want to express their concerns” to the authority whether a governor or other figures of authority. We could hear similar “voices of liberation and transformation” in almost all protests as we examine as in Gerze, Zonguldak, Ulukışla, Green Road, and others.

All in all, since the Gökova Protests, which occurred with the village women’s ‘silent’ resistance against the government official, the women’s voice raise more powerful, and their confidential stance during the action become consolidated. On the other hand media also constructs the representation of the environmental issues through women images as well. And this case does not only exist in the events that

women are dominantly participate, media also presents staged pictures to portray the environmental issues as well.



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APPENDIX

Timeline of the Selected Movements



1984 | Gökova Thermal Power Plant Protest

1984, April | Women said 'no' to the plant. (Figure 2)

1997 – 2000 | Bergama Gold Mine Resistance

1997, April | Occupation of Cyanosis Gold. (Figure 3)

Siyanürlü altın işgali



1997, August | Protest of Bergama on Bosphorus Bridge. (Figure, 4)



1997 | Celebrations. (Figure, 6 & 7)



Kim durduracak?



1998 | Fırtına Valley Hydro Electric Power Plant

1998, November | Who Will Stop It? (Figure, 8)

2000, September | Kuvayi Milliye Walk. (Figure, 5)



2009 | Ulukışla Gold Mine Protests

2009, December | The Villagers United Against the Gold Mine (Figure, 9)



2010, February | People are Waiting for Support against the Gold Miner at Ulukışla. (Figure, 10)





2010 | Watch for Yuvarlakçay Hydro Electric Power Plant

2010, February | The
Villagers are on the Watch
(Figure, 12)

2011 | Senoz Valley Hydro- Electric Power Plant Protests

2011, August | The Obstacle
of EIA against the Hydro-
Electric Power Plant of
Senoz. (Figure, 13)



2011, August | We are Free
as long as Rivers can Flow
Free.
(Figure, 14)





2011 | Gerze Thermal Power Plant Resistance

2011, August | Trouble in the Watch for Thermal.
(Figure, 15)



2014, March | We Want to Live, We do not Want to Thermal Plant.
(Figure, 16)



2014, March | Gerze does not Want to Thermal.
(Figure, 17)

2015 | Occupation of Briefing Meeting in

2015, May | Our Water, Our Land! (Figure, 18 and 19)





2015 | Cerattepe Gold Mine Resistance

2015, May | 300 Artvinli.
(Figure, 20)



2016, February | Police Attack to
the Women, Walking to the Mine.
(Figure, 21)



2016, February | The Head of
Green Artvin Associatiin, Nur
Neşe Karahan is Under
Custody! (Figure, 22)

2015 | ‘Yeşil Yol’ Protests

2015, June | Who is the State?
I am the People! (Figure, 23-24)



