Istanbul Bilgi University
Graduate School of Social Sciences

The Politics of Nature and Neoliberalism: an Assessment of the Impact of Hydroelectric Power Plants on Local Populations

Sıla Pelin Oğuz

May 2016
Istanbul

A thesis submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences of
Istanbul Bilgi University

by

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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy at the Department of International Relations

May 2016
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Committee in charge: Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya, the Chair

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Pınar Uyan-Semerci

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Hande Paker

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Keywords:	**Anahtar Kelimeler:**
Neoliberalism Nature Environmentalism recognition commodification privatization water development renewable energy hydro-electric power plants Turkey.	Neoliberalleşme doğa çevrecilik tanınma metalaşma özelleşme su kalkınma yenilenebilir enerji hidroelektrik santraller Türkiye.

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Abstract

The Politics of Nature and Neoliberalism: an Assessment of the Impact of Hydroelectric Power Plants on Local Populations

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya
May 2016
192 pages, 58734 words

This dissertation is a critical investigation of neoliberalization of nature and privatization of water, particularly in the form of hydroelectric power plants (HEPPs) in the eastern Black Sea region. The main purpose of this investigation is to understand the affects of neoliberal governance on local population and the local population's reactions in response. This dissertation analyzes a sample of local population of the eastern Black Sea region asking the following questions: *How does the implementation of neoliberal forms of environmental governance affect local populations in Turkey, in the case of HEPPs?* In order to understand the core question of this thesis, the following preliminary questions are addressed: (1) *What kind of social reactions can be observed in response to the implementation of HEPPs as a part of anthropogenic environmental change? (2) How can this response be evaluated within the framework of environmentalism?* Finally, *(3) to what extent does neoliberal governmentality play a role in environmental governance in Turkey?*

In order to answer these questions the current research takes on ethnographic method with qualitative properties where the data is collected by semi-structured, unstructured in-depth interviews and informal interviews for the duration of two months from the three cities *Trabzon*, *Rize* and *Artvin* in the eastern Black Sea region.

This work draws on theories from a range of fields, geography, political science and economy. Due to the complexity of the issue, the literature that largely been used in this work includes but not limited to the literature on 'neoliberalization of nature', 'environmental governmentality', and 'environmentalism'. Further conceptualizations are used in order to understand environmental governance in Turkey such as: 'sustainable development', 'modernization', and 'recognition'.

This dissertation work shows that the neoliberal environmental governance of the current government recklessly pushing forward for the implementation of HEPPs by using the discourses of 'sustainable development', 'modernization' and 'eco-efficiency' create vulnerabilities among the local population and for the future of the country. It also reveals the components of the struggle against HEPP construction and neoliberalization of nature. Finally, the data gathered from eastern Black Sea region suggest that the valuation languages (Martinez-Alier et al., 2010; Martinez-Alier, 2014), recognition (Fraser, 2000; Işlar, 2012; Schlosberg, 2004), government's perspective and attitude towards nature that is prioritizing 'development' and the 'efficient use of resources' (as in the gospel of eco-efficiency) play a tremendous role in determining the population's motivation for resistance.

Keywords: Neoliberalism, nature, environmentalism, recognition, commodification, privatization, water, development, renewable energy, hydro-electric power plants, Turkey.

Özet

Danışman: Prof. Dr. Ayhan Kaya
Mayıs 2016
192 sayfa, 58734 kelime

Bu tez, doğanın neoliberalleştirilmesi ve suyun özelleştirilmesinin eleştirel bir incelemesi olup özellikle Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi'ndeki Hidro-Elektrik Santrallere (HES) odaklanmaktadır. Bu incelemenin ana amacı, neoliberal çevre yönetimin yerel halk üzerindeki etkisi ile yerel halkın tepkisini anlamaktır. Bu tez Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi'nde yerleşik halktan bir örneklemi şu soru ile analiz etmektedir: *Çevre yönetiminin HES'ler özelinde neoliberal şekilde uygulanması, Türkiye'deki yerel halkları nasıl etkilemektedir?* Bu tezin en temel sorusunu anlamak için ise ilk etapta şu sorulara yanıt aranmaktadır: (1) *İnsan eliyle yapılan çevresel değişimin bir parçası olarak HES'lerin uygulamaya geçirilmelerine ne tür sosyal tepkilerin verildiği görülmektedir? (2) Bu tepkiler çevrecilik çerçevesinde nasıl değerlendirilebilir?* Son olarak ise, *(3) Neoliberal 'yönetim zihniyeti' (governmentality) Türkiye'de çevre yönetiminde nasıl bir rol oynamaktadır?*

Bu soruları yanıtlamak için nitel özellikler taşıyan bu çalışma kapsamında etnografik bir metot kullanılmış; veriler, Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi'nde Trabzon, Rize ve Artvin illerinde iki ay boyunca gerçekleştirilen bir saha çalışmasıyla toplanmıştır. Saha çalışması verileri yarı-yapılanmış, yapılanmamış ve gayrı-resmi derinlemesine mülakatlara dayanmaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın kapsamı gereği coğrafya, siyaset bilimi ve ekonomi gibi çeşitli alanların teorilerinden faydalanılmıştır. Konunun karmaşıklığı nedeniyle çalışma 'doğanın neoliberalleştirilmesi' (*neoliberalization of nature*), 'çevre yönetimi zihniyeti' (*environmental governmentality*), ve 'çevrecilik' (*environmentalism*) gibi birçok farklı literatürü kullanmaktadır. Türkiye'deki çevre yönetimini anlamak için 'sürdürülebilir kalkınma' (*sustainable development*), 'modernleşme' (*modernization*) ve 'farklı grupların tanınmalarıyla oluşan kabul' (*recognition*) gibi farklı kavramsallaştırmalar da kullanılmıştır.

Bu tez çalışması, halihazırdaki hükümetin, neoliberal çevre yönetimi ile uzun vadeli etkilerini dikkate almaksızın HES uygulamalarını 'sürdürülebilir kalkınma', 'modernleşme' ve 'eko-verimlilik' (eco-*efficiency*) söylemleri ile yürürlüğe sokmasının, yerel halk ve ülkenin geleceği açısından endişe verici olduğunu savunmaktadır. Çalışma aynı zamanda HES inşaatlarına ve doğanın metalaştırılmasına karşı verilen mücadelenin unsurlarını da görünür kılmaktadır. Son olarak Doğu Karadeniz Bölgesi'nden toplanan veriler; değerleme dilleri (*valuation languages*) (Martinez-Alier et al., 2010; Martinez-Alier, 2014), tanınmayla oluşan kabul (*recognition*) (Fraser, 2000; Işlar, 2012; Schlosberg, 2004), hükümetin doğaya bakış açısı, bunun yanı sıra 'kalkınma' (development), 'kaynakların verimli kullanılması' (eko-verimliliğin anahtar sözlerinden biri olarak) konularını önceleyen tavrının halkın başkaldırısının güdülenmesi açısından önemli derecede etkisi olduğuna işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Neoliberalleşme, doğa, çevrecilik, tanınma, metalaşma, özelleşme, su, kalkınma, yenilenebilir enerji, hidroelektrik santraller, Türkiye.

Acknowledgements

This dissertation writing has been a long journey, which could not have been finished today without the support and care of many individuals. It has been an emotional rollercoaster that eventually made me grow intellectually and emotionally. First of all, I would like to express my gratitude to my advisor, Ayhan Kaya, for always believing in me from the beginning, for his supervision, guidance, support, care and very fast return to my emails. I am also very grateful to Pınar Uyan-Semerci, for her sharp intelligence, constructive comments and encouragement. Even though sometimes I was reluctant to present them my feelings, their encouragement made me continue. I also feel fortunate to add Semra Cerit-Mazlum to the committee. Her comments and constructive thoughts provided invaluable assistance for my progress. I would also like to thank the members of dissertation defense jury, Ali Alper Akyüz and Hande Paker for their efforts and constructive comments.

I would like to thank to my participants many of whom opened their houses, welcomed me and helped me in so many ways during my fieldwork in Trabzon, Rize and Artvin. I feel fortunate to have a group of friends who supported me in so many ways through out the years. For their emotional support, I would like to thank all the members of 'hot peppers', 'apabi' and 'PsP'. I am also indebted to my friend and colleague Sema Akboğa for her constructive feedback, and editing especially during the process of writing my article. Especially in the final stages of my dissertation I would like to thank Deniz Ilkbaşaran for editing some parts of my work in a very short notice and her consistent support over the years; Deniz Karcı Korfalı for providing me the necessary books besides her emotional support; to Ayçin Eren for her assistance in editing, her unconditional support, love and care.

I would like to thank my beloved parents, who did whatever they can in their possession for me to finish my writing until the very end. I am indebted to them for always believing in my spirit, for their unconditional love, for spending time with Alp while I have to work. I am beyond grateful to have them in my life. I also feel fortunate to become a member of Oğuz family who were always there for me. I would like to thank them for welcoming me in their family as a daughter, sister and aunt to my little niece and nephew, Elif and Emre. I would love it if my grandparents and my aunt's husband were able to see I've finally finished it. I also would like to thank my extended family from both sides, my husband's and my side, for all their love and support. Without this support group making my life enjoyable even at the times I was feeling miserable, none of this would have been possible. Especially for their help with Alp during the last stages of my dissertation, I would like to thank Tunç Aksoy, Selin Türegün, Kaan Türegün, and Hande Heper. I also would like to thank Gizem Ürüm for her logistic support. Thanks to her and my husband my readers in the committee have the final copies of my dissertation.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my little family starting with my husband, Sait, for dealing with the worst of me in times of devastation, being always there for me and for Alp, for his unconditional love and care and for believing in me and for making me laugh. I would like to thank my 3,5 year-old son, Alp, for being the joy of our life and for his hugs and kisses. And finally, I would like to thank my one-month old son Tan for giving me a firm deadline to hand in my final copy of dissertation before his birth.

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Maps and Figures

List of Abbreviations

AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
CDM	Clean Development Mechanism
DEKAP	Derelerin Kardeşliği Platformu (Brotherhood of Rivers)
DSİ	Devlet Su İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü (General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works)
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EMRA	Energy Market Regulatory Authority
EU	European Union
ET	Emissions trading
GAP	Greater Anatolian Project
GHG	Greenhouse Gases
HEPP	Hydroelectric power plants
HLRN	Housing Land Rights Network
IEN	Indigenous Environmental Network
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change
IMF	International Monetary Fund
JI	Joint Implementation
MW	megawatt
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NGO	non-governmental organizations
NOAA	National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
QEERT	Quantified Economy-wide Emissions Reduction Targets
REDD	Reduced Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
TEK	Türkiye Elektrik Kurumu (Turkish Electricity Institution)
TEMA	Türkiye Erozyonla Mücadele, Ağaçlandırma ve Doğal Varlıkları Koruma Vakfı (The Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, For Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats)
TÜSİAD	Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen Association)
UN	United Nations
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Commission
WCD	World Commission on Dams
WWF	World Wild Fund
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WWII	World War Two

INTRODUCTION

"For years our approach to water in this country was "water flows, the Turk watches" but now we don't want to be watching. Now that we are saying "water flows, the Turk makes", but we are being stopped. These waters of ours should not flow to the seas and go to waste. Let's all take advantage of them"

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan (PM) (Vatan 2010).

Prime minister at the time, president since 2014, Erdoğan's words clearly summarizes the general attitude of government towards hydro-electric power plant construction in Turkey. But yet, the other side of the coin indicates a different picture. The commodification of water is causing vulnerabilities among the local population and cause further environmental degradation in the region mainly due to the implication of manipulative environmental policies. As a response, the local population is standing against these 'modern', 'sustainable', 'eco-friendly' 'development' projects. Where does it all begin? Why water? Why now?

The world has witnessed major changes starting in the late 20th century with the increased adoption of new technologies, which indeed accelerated the processes of globalization and created invisible ties (political, economical, cultural) among human populations regardless of their geographies, ethnicities, cultures, and/or nations. This new form of modernity (alternatively conceptualized as "liquid modernity" (Bauman, 2000) or "second modernity" (Beck, 2006)) has enabled easy access to information, increased connectedness and interdependence among peoples, nations, and institutions. This new lifestyle of humanity requires more energy in order to sustain today's accustomed quality of life. Technological improvements increased our capabilities in life but inevitably increased our demand for energy. In other words, as the "humanity" progressed, the energy consumption increased.

Much of the world's energy today is retrieved from fossil fuels. Humans have been dependent on fossil fuels primarily for electricity, transportation, heating, cooling, and industrial processes (Dow & Downing, 2007, p. 42). However, burning fossil fuels such as oil, natural gas, and coal increased the concentration of greenhouse gases (GHG) in the earth's atmosphere, which is seen as the major cause of global warming (Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) 2011, p. 3).

Global warming and the consequent climate [1] change are the greatest challenges that the world has to struggle with, both today and tomorrow. This challenge neither accepts national boundaries nor excludes any species. Nonetheless, the consequences will be more severe for some populations than others.

According to Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) 2007 report, many species will become extinct and the diversity of the ecosystems will be reduced due to climate change (Schneider et al. 2007, p. 792). Many different stressors including human development cause such an outcome by reducing the resilience of ecosystems and species, increasing their vulnerability to changes in their environment (Schneider et al. 2007, p. 792).

As the reality of climate change has become more evident, the methods of mitigation and adaptation have become important. International agreements are brought on the table as a part of the mitigation efforts, because reducing the GHGs to a safer level (if that is even possible) requires international cooperation (Dow & Downing, 2007, p. 69). But yet, unanimous commitment of the developed countries to the treaties could not be achieved (Dow & Downing, 2007, p. 69).

The latest IPCC report indicates that it is still possible to keep the temperature change caused by anthropogenic GHG emissions less than 2 degrees relative to the

1 Global warming and climate change are concepts that are well infused into one other. In some cases, they may be used interchangeably. For more information on the usage of these concepts and their political tendencies behind please refer to Whitmarsh 2009 and Schuldt 2011.

pre-industrial period by 2100, if the governments act now (IPCC, 2014, p. 10). Delaying the efforts will substantially increase the difficulty of transition to lower GHG emission levels and will narrow down the options that would lead to maintaining the temperature change below 2 degrees relative to the pre-industrial period (IPCC, 2014, p.13). The final step towards this goal is taken in December 12, 2015 in Paris, at the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations (UN) Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 21). The Paris Agreement reaffirms the goal of keeping the global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius, and if possible even to limit it to 1.5 degrees (Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES), 2015)[2]. However, to what extent this goal will to be achieved in practice is yet another question. Regardless of the steps taken by the humanity to stop or to slow down global warming, recent research shows us that the problem is real and deepening. Accordingly, the latest report of National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) confirms that 2014 was the warmest year across the world's land and ocean surfaces among all years in the 135-year period of record (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 2014). Besides the fact that 2014 was the warmest year globally since the beginning of record keeping in 1880, the following top nine warmest years have also occurred since the year 2000 (NOAA, 2014).

Despite the lack of commitment by some developing countries to bind themselves with international regulations to mitigate global warming or to act globally in tackling with the challenges it poses, the alarming levels of GHG emissions brought up the discourse of sustainability. The global trend of sustainable development with renewable energy resources became a part of the policy agendas of

[2] http://www.c2es.org/international/negotiations/cop21-paris/summary

many developed and some developing countries. Especially, with the increasing effects of climate change on human populations, renewable energy sources that are environmentally friendly are high in demand.

The use of renewable energy sources to provide power is an important way of reducing greenhouse gases and mitigating[3] the adverse effects of climate change (IPCC, 2011, p. 4). Alongside conventional power generating technologies using coal, oil, natural gas or nuclear sources, the non-conventional ones like hydropower, wind and solar energy (World Commission on Dams (WCD), 2000, p. 153) gained recognition with the title of "clean energy sources".

Implementation of such decisions concerning the environment is not excluded from a given country's political decision-making processes as a whole. Simultaneously, a disorganized capitalism (Lash & Urry, 1987) in the name of neoliberalism that is feeding off globalization (scattered yet connected and dependent nature of things, peoples, institutions) became the major discourse dominating all political, economic and cultural aspects related to human populations. Due to neoliberalism's dominance in global governance, it has been one of the major frameworks under scrutiny among different academic disciplines. In a similar fashion, it is the main determinant in any kind of policy decisions in many countries, including Turkey.

The global discourse of neoliberalism is playing a determining role in the governance of nature and natural resources in Turkey. The overall framework of neoliberalism is thus useful in understanding the relationship between the society and environmental governance. However, since the link between neoliberalism and the

[3] As a part of the mitigation efforts, some the countries take measures to meet their "nationally determined contributions" (NDCs) by using "internationally transferred mitigation outcomes" meaning carbon trade. Further information about the carbon trade and the Turkey's position within is discussed in chapter 2.

environment is still under explored, this project aims to contribute to academic literature by investigating neoliberal environmental governance using a case study from Turkey.

The complex relationship between neoliberal developmental projects in Turkey and local populations of concern is going to be explored particularly in the sector of water and hydroelectric power plants (HEPP). In other words, HEPPs that are being established in the name of sustainable development as a part of the neoliberal policies of the Turkish government will be critically evaluated from the perspective of the local population in question.

In line with the above statement, the primarily goal of this project is to answer the following question: *How does the implementation of neoliberal forms of environmental governance affect local populations in Turkey, in the case of HEPPs?* In order to understand the core question of this study, the following preliminary questions are also going to be addressed: (1) *What kind of social reactions can be observed in response to the implementation of HEPPs as a part of anthropogenic environmental change? (2) How can this response be evaluated within the framework of environmentalism?* Finally, *(3) to what extent does neoliberal governmentality play a role in environmental governance in Turkey?*

Prior to addressing these questions through the findings of this project, the theoretical framework of the study will be established starting with the conceptualization of neoliberalism and the neoliberal governance of nature, particularly focusing on privatization and the commodification of natural resources. Consequently, privatization of water resources will be discussed in the context of the energy debate and sustainable development discourse. And finally, all of these elements will be considered in the light of the environmentalism discourse around

HEPPs in Turkey.

Rationale of the Research

What is nature? In our intellectual capacity what do we make of it? Goldman (1998) bluntly points out the fact that women, nature, peasants, workers, etc. became relevant in a society in their commodified form (Goldman, 1998, p. 15). In other words, they are valorized, as they become value useful to the economy. But yet, this obsession with increasing value ignores the social reality of people who are struggling for their rights of livelihood and community.

Especially in this era, a country's modernization and active participation in the global economy often requires economic growth. But yet, this economic growth was rarely equitable or sustainable. On the contrary, this tendency paves the way for further destruction of certain people's lives, livelihoods, and communities. The deprioritization of social justice in the processes of so-called development has resulted in significant vulnerabilities among local populations who live around cites of production, be it of goods or energy. Since neither the market nor the state is present to attend to the wounds of these compromised local communities, they organize around their own struggles over the right of their resources and protect their living space at all costs. With this thesis, I aim to understand the reactions of those communities towards "greenwashing"[4] of their immediate environment, in the context of neoliberalism where the most basic human needs are commodified. Such deeper understanding of the concerns voiced by compromised communities is also more likely to help us better understand the relationship between the state and society.

Academic literature concerning HEPPs in Turkey has grown significantly in

[4] Greenwashing is a practice that enables the company, product or a technology to seem environmentally friendly whereas in reality it doesn't go beyond being an unsubstantiated and a misleading claim.

the past decade. There are studies concerning the place of HEPPs in energy production (Evrendilek & Ertekin, 2003; Kentel & Alp, 2013; Küçükali & Barış, 2009), the eastern Black Sea region's potential regarding hydropower (Karstarlı et al., 2011; Başkaya et al., 2011; Akpınar et al., 2011) and environmental impacts of HEPPs (Aksungur et al., 2011; Berkün, 2011; Uzlu et al., 2011), which are mostly technical in nature. However, there are also others who are working on environmentalism and neoliberalization of nature. There are studies focusing on the role of women in HEPP resistance (Yavuz & Şendeniz, 2013), on renewable energy and sustainable development (S. Yılmaz & G. Yılmaz, 2011), as well as those elaborating on the nexus of neoliberalism-water and Turkey (Kadirbeyoğlu & Özertan, 2010; Gündüz, 2015; Şengül, 2008; Işlar, 2012). We can also give prominent examples in the field of environmentalism specializing in Turkey (Adaman & Arsel, 2005; Harris, 2011; Paker, Adaman, Kadirbeyoğlu & Özkaynak, 2013; Akbulut, 2014).

Acknowledging the above-mentioned studies, this thesis aims to make significant contributions to literature on neoliberalization of nature and environmentalism. Due to the nature of the subject, it requires elaboration on the literatures regarding neoliberalization of nature, governmentality, development and environmentalism. Even though there are publications on the neoliberalization of nature, the extent to which neoliberal governmentality plays a role in environmental governance in Turkey that is evolving around modernization and development axis is yet to be explored. Especially regarding the use and comparison of fieldwork data across the eastern Black Sea region of Turkey, this study goes beyond the scope of the above-mentioned studies. This fieldwork data is utmost important in enabling access to concepts like 'protectionism', 'environmentalism', 'recognition', 'development'

and 'neoliberal governmentality'.

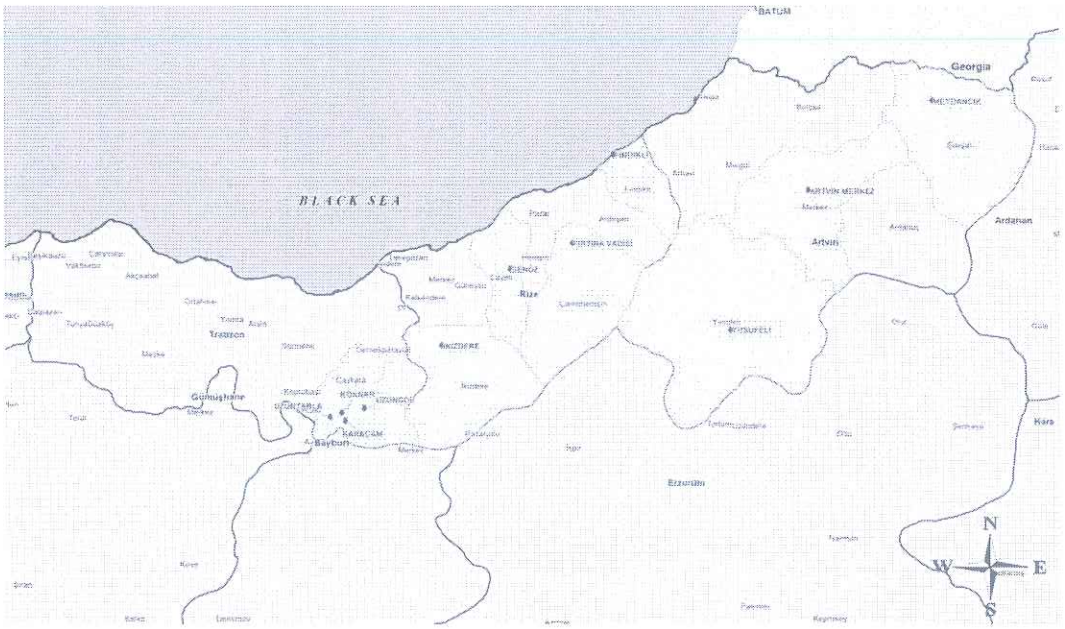
Background and Methodology

In order to understand the effects of HEPP implementation on the local communities, the research I conducted was largely qualitative[5] in nature. The project includes both a participant ethnography with in-depth interviews, as well as a review of secondary literature such as books, articles, reports, newspaper clippings and statements of civil society organizations. Additionally, I used relevant websites and statistical figures in order to gather all possible and relevant information to elaborate on and to situate the problem.

Background: the Universe of the Research

The fieldwork took place in the northeastern part of Turkey, in the eastern Black Sea Region. I selected three cities *Trabzon, Rize* and *Artvin* (See Map 1), for mainly three reasons that will be discussed next: (1) the density of HEPP projects, (2) the threat of degradation of one of the most environmentally rich regions of Turkey, and (3) the response of the local populations.

5 For further information of qualitative research please refer to Babbie, 2007; chapter 10 (Qualitative Field Research) and chapter 13 (Qualitative data analysis) and also Corbetta, 2003; Chapters 9-11 and Corbin-Strauss, 2008.



Map 1. Eastern Black Sea Region and the research field is marked with shade

With regards to geographical distribution, hydroelectric power plants are scattered around Anatolia, but really densely located in the eastern Black Sea region, located at the northeastern most part of Turkey. Thus, the density of the HEPP projects in this region is the first determining factor for the selection of this region. According to the report of the civil society organization called *"Derelerin Kardeşliği"* (Brotherhood of the Rivers), there are currently over 700 HEPPs planned to be built in this region (Şan, 2010). 400 of the planned have prepared their project design, 80 of them have acquired permission to start the construction and 20 of the constructions have been stopped by judicial decision (Şan, 2010, p. 2).

The second factor is the major threat of degradation that this region faces with the construction of HEPPs despite the fact that this region is well known for its natural beauty and greenness in Turkey. Besides its recognized fame in Turkey, this region is recognized as a part of the Caucuses Ecoregion, and also known as one of the 25 most diverse and endangered hotspots on the planet according to World Wild

Fund (WWF) (Williams, 2006, p. 6). It is the greenest region in Anatolia due to the frequency of precipitation, which also contributes to enrich its flora and fauna and makes it a home for many endemic species. Additionally, it includes one of 26 water basins in Turkey (Zaman, 2008, p. 6) and one of the major biosphere reserves listed by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), called *Camili-Macahel*, in *Artvin* (UNESCO, 2005)[6]. The list goes on with a forest that is listed, as one of 100 must protect forests in *Fırtına* Valley, *Çamlıhemşin/Rize*. Despite its recognized fame, the neoliberal thinking and the logic of profit maximization are eager to dry this region out with its people.

The third factor lies within the reaction of people in this region. The northeastern part of Turkey was one of the earliest places where protests against HEPPs were initiated. Additionally, with the efforts of local organizations *Rize* Administrative Tribunal took many decisions to stop the constructions in this region. Nonetheless, the efforts of the local communities in question were not enough to totally eliminate the danger that these projects pose for the region.

Apart from the above determining factors to choose this region for my fieldwork, this region offers many other appealing qualities, which makes it very interesting to conduct a field research. For example, even though this region may be naturally beautiful, it has one of the toughest geographies to live within the boundaries of Turkey. The mountains are parallel to the sea, which significantly complicates transportation from the seaside to inner land. Many of the villages are located in the skirts of these mountains.

Up until a decade ago, before the construction of *Karadeniz* (Black Sea) Highway[7] that goes along by the sea, transportation was very difficult between the

[6] http://www.unesco.org/mabdb/br/brdir/directory/biores.asp?mode=all&code=TUR+01

[7] The benefit of the highway in terms of easing the transportation in the region is evident but yet the

west and the east parts of this region. The main source of living is agriculture (tea, and corn production), fishing and ecotourism. Tea production is done in very steep skirts of these mountains, and harvested manually by mostly women, which is another indicator of how challenging life is there. People who live in this region are also known for their strength, which actually comes from the tough geography that they have to survive in. Some even speculate that the geography and the steep skirts of mountains for tea cultivation may be the source of their stubbornness, a quality that is stereotypically attributed to the people of the region.

Additionally, the Turkish dialect spoken in this region of the Black Sea is one of the very distinctive qualities of the people live in that area. Besides this distinctive dialect of Turkish, languages like Georgian and Lazi (both of which belongs to Caucasian language group), as well as Hemshin (belongs to the language branch of Greek and Armenian) are also spoken in northeastern part of Turkey (Gökdağ, 2011, pp. 120-132).

Aside from the general characteristics of this region, each of the three cities has a lot of interesting characteristics to offer through an in-depth evaluation. In *Trabzon* the selected villages are from the *Solaklı* Valley, namely Uzungöl, *Uzuntarla*, *Köknar* and *Karaçam*. Map 2 shows the location of these villages within Trabzon.

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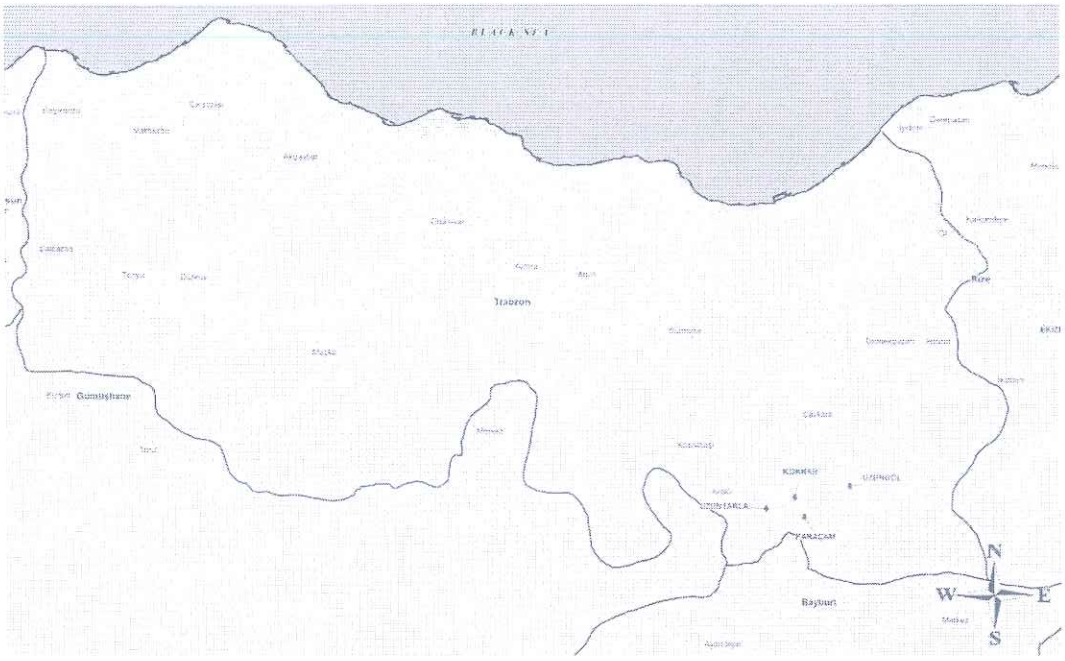
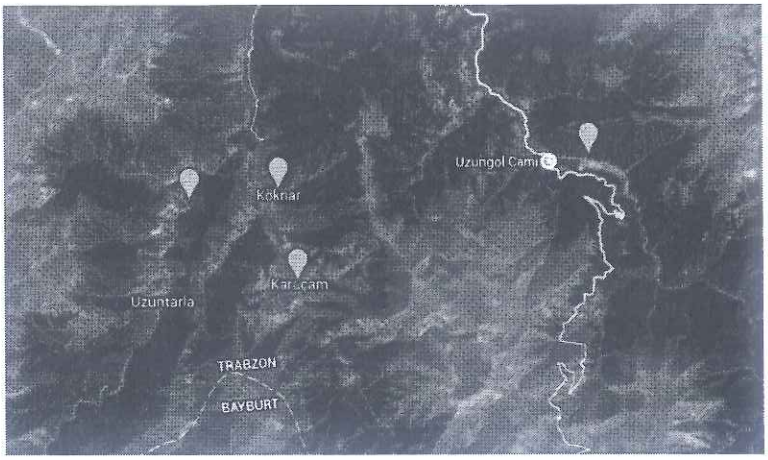
affect of having such a highway on nature-society relations is highly controversial. This highway clearly cut the connection of local population from the sea, which indeed in the long run will have a huge impact on their culture. Additionally, since the land beside the highway became more valuable, the high buildings even taller than many skyscrapers in Istanbul emerged along the side of the highway. All this is not inherent in the culture of people in the region. In other words, all these changes as a part of "modernization" is tearing the people from their land, from the their production styles and forcing them to live in the predetermined forms created by neoliberalism and rent culture by turning them into consumers.



Map 2. Map of *Trabzon*; showing the selected sites *Uzuntarla, Köknar, Karaçam* and *Uzungöl*

Solaklı Valley, (See Map 3. below) is one of the elevated valleys of Trabzon. It is far from the city center and from the closest municipality center, where people reside at an altitude of 1500-1700 meters. I identified it as one of the research locations for this project, because it is an area where an outrageous number of 36 HEPP projects are planned for and a spectacular resistance against these projects has been taking place. Geographically, if you follow the controversial *Karadeniz* highway by the seaside in the direction of *Batum* and turn right from *Of* municipality to climb up the mountains you first reach to *Çaykara* center which is the center of *Çaykara* municipality where all these villages are connected to administratively. If you pass the center after driving 24 km. along the steep hills you will reach *Uzuntarla*, then *Köknar*, and finally *Karaçam* on the way to *Bayburt*. However, if you don't turn right to *Bayburt* road after *Çaykara* center and go straight then you will reach to *Uzungöl*.



Map 3. Location of the villages of Solaklı valley vis a vis each other

Uzungöl is the touristic one amongst the four selected villages in this region. The natural beauty of the lake *Uzungöl* and the surroundings appeal many local and foreign tourists, especially in summer. The HEPP project in this region has not yet started. The main concern of the local business owners is that the ecosystem of *Uzungöl* is going to be adversely affected with the construction of a HEPP project, which indeed will eliminate the touristic appeal of this region.

Uzuntarla, is the lower village on the way to *Bayburt* before *Köknar* and *Karaçam*. The distinctive quality of this village amongst the four is the initial willingness and support of the local population for the HEPP project. The *muhtar* of *Uzuntarla* and many of its residents saw this construction as an employment opportunity. Once it was completed, their views were not quite the same, upon seeing that the benefits did not last beyond the construction period. Nonetheless, they have been living with a HEPP, which has been functioning since 2011.

Köknar and *Karaçam* can be described as the 'naughty kids' on the block. They both have been struggling with and clearly against the HEPP construction in the region, putting aside the small differences among them. The two villages have supported one another against the harsh governmental interventions, in the name of private companies who are willing to make HEPP investments in the region. The

resistance in the region managed to delay the construction company to start excavating the region but unfortunately as of fall 2012, the construction has started at *Derebaşı*, the source of the river in *Karaçam*.

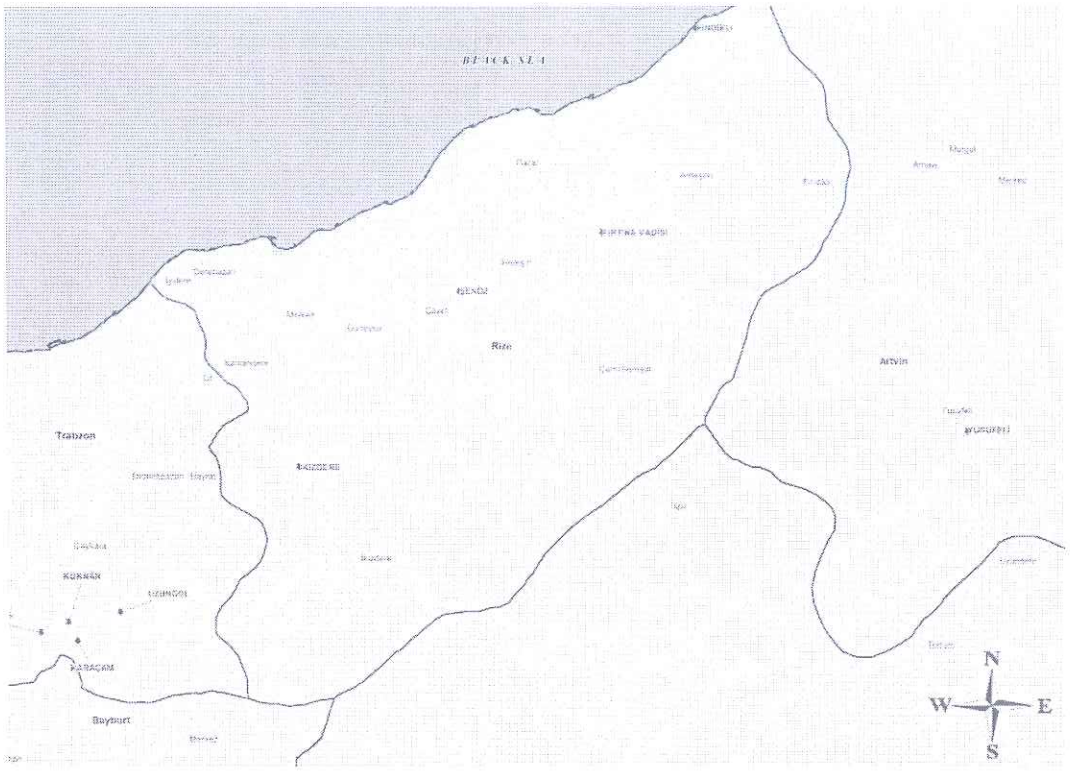
As a common characteristic, the villages that are in the north of *Çaykara* have a particular culture of their own. One of the distinct qualities of people living there is their local language. They speak *Romeyka*[8], which is a language that is found to be very close to ancient Greek and unique to this region. It is defined as a Greek dialect and is spoken only in 50 villages of Trabzon with slight differences (Gökdağ, 2011, p. 115). Peter Mackridge was one of the pioneer linguists who studied this dialect where he defined it as "Muslim Pontic" in 1987 (Sitaridou, 2013, p. 98). Recently Ionna Sitaridou from Cambridge University started to define it as *Romeyka* in order to separate it from other Greek language varieties (98).

Linguists have identified that this language is a form of Ancient Greek that is influenced by Turkish, Lazi and Persian languages. However, the number of people who speak this language is declining since it is mainly passed on to the next generations orally as a spoken language. It is important to note that the people who speak these different languages are bilingual since they also speak Turkish. Considering their linguistic and cultural heritage, as well as the regions importance for Pontus Greeks historically, the HEPP projects in the region are a great concern.

The second stop on my way to *Batum* is *Rize*. I conducted interviews in *Fırtına* Valley (*Çamlıhemşin*), *Senöz* Valley (*Çayeli*), *İkizdere* and *Fındıklı* (See Map 4.). *Fırtına* Valley has a unique place among the sites in northern Black Sea region. The valley is within the borders of National Park of *Kaçkar* Mountains and is recognized as a natural protected area (*doğal sit alanı*). *Fırtına* Valley is well known

[8] Further detailed information about *Romeyka* can be found in Chapter 4.

with its natural beauty and is listed as one of the 200 ecological sites worldwide worth to be protected and one of the 100 forests that has to be protected urgently by World Wild Fund (WWF)[9]. Besides all these qualities, it is the first location in the region where the struggle and a fierce resistance against HEPPs begun, as early as 1996.



Map 4. Map of *Rize*; showing the selected sites of *Fındıklı, Fırtına Vadisi, Senöz, İkizdere*

The decree law numbered 95/7598 that was enacted on 7 December 1995 gave the company called BM Engineering the guarantee to construct the HEPP and sell the electricity that is produced by this HEPP to TEAS/TEDAS (Turkish Electricity Distribution Company) (*Derelerin Kardeşliği Platformu* (DEKAP), 2010) [10] . Consequently, in 1996 the water use rights agreement is done with DSI (*Devlet Su İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü*- General Directorate of State Hydraulic Works). Following these steps, the Prime Minister of the time *Mesut Yılmaz* and the Minister of Energy

[9] http://www.worldwildlife.org/publications/global-200
[10] http://derelerinkardesligi.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=9

and Natural Resources *Cumhur Ersümer* performed a groundbreaking ceremony in June 1998 regardless of the fact that the area had been declared as a "natural protection site" by the Council of Protection of Culture and Wild Life of Trabzon (*Trabzon Kültür ve Tabiat Varlıklarını Koruma Kurulu*) earlier in May 1998 (DEKAP, 2010). Finally, after many protests and legal objections the court canceled the project by recognizing the claim of 305 people of *Çamlıhemşin*.

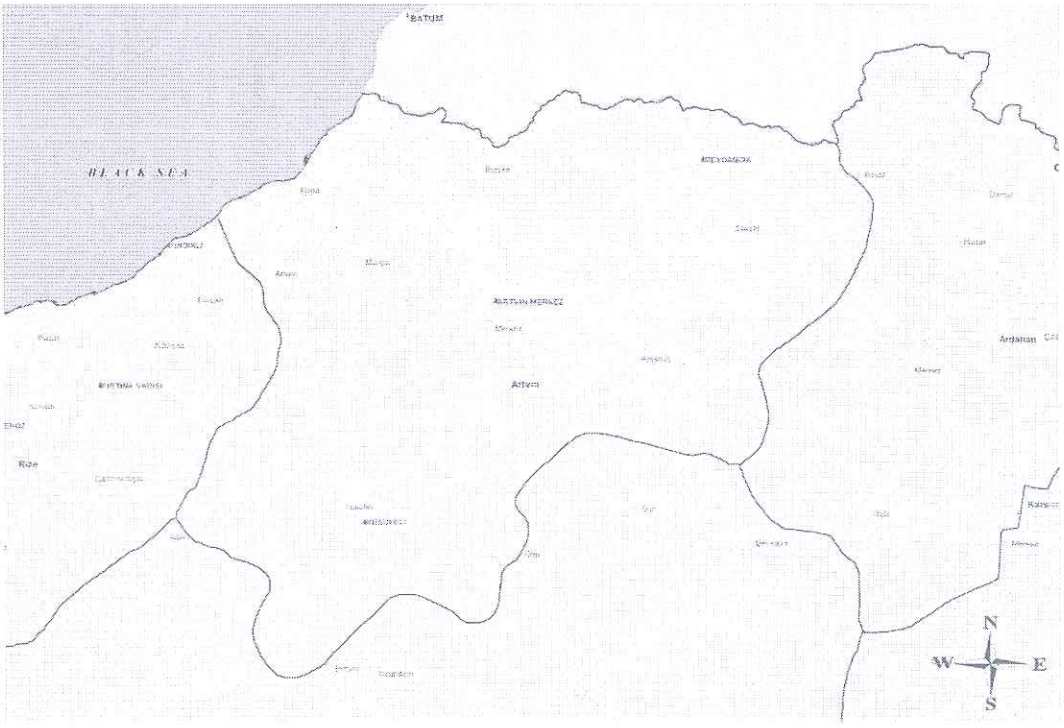
The second valley I visited in *Rize* is *Senöz* valley. There are over 12 HEPP projects planned for the region, one amongst them is currently operational with 3 consequent projects that are about to be finished. One of the unique qualities of this valley is the consequent projects using the same riverbed that are about to be operational, which indeed will have an accumulative impact on the ecology of the region. However, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) documents included in the project files are far from reflecting the reality since they don't take into consideration the accumulative impact of all the consecutive projects. The local people in question resisted towards the constructions by applying to the court several times to stay of executions because of the content of the EIA reports.

The other valley I visited in *Rize* is *Ikizdere*, also the largest district of *Rize*. On the way to *Ikizdere*, in *Güneysu* there are 3 operational HEPPs recently built. But in *İkizdere* municipality only one is operational which was built in 1961 and was transferred to a big company in 2008. As of 2009, 21 projects are planned (Şan, 2010). Some local civil society organizations are trying to prevent HEPP construction in the region not only solely on the purpose of protection of the nature but also mainly to be able to utilize the tourism potential of the area with its natural hot springs.

Finally, *Fındıklı* is the last but one of the most interesting districts among those I selected from *Rize*. The demographics and characteristics of *Fındıklı*

population show distinct features from others in *Rize,* mainly the permanent residency and the open-minded mentality of its people. With regards to the latter, this region resembles *Artvin* than *Rize*. Its proximity to the seaside makes it more accessible and maybe even played a role in people's decision to permanently reside in the region. In many other parts of *Trabzon* and *Rize* there are currents of seasonal or permanent migration from nearby areas, whereas in *Fındıklı* the situation is different. Consequently, this factor enabled them to sustain a determined mob resisting the HEPPs. Thus, they have managed to prevent any HEPP construction in their two valleys, *Arılı* and *Çağlayan*.

The final city that I have visited within the field is *Artvin* (See Map 5. below). *Artvin* city center, *Meydancık* and *Yusufeli* are the places that I had gathered my data.



Map 5. Map of *Artvin*; showing the sites *Yusufeli*, *Artvin* city center, and *Meydancık*

As I traveled towards *Batum* the whole atmosphere of people start to change from the way they live and the way react to situations. The conservative nature of *Trabzon* and *Rize* is not apparent in *Artvin*. In one of my visits to the region in 2011 it was the

Muslim fasting time, Ramadan. In *Trabzon* and *Rize* most of the people were fasting and eating on the street was not very welcomed whereas in *Artvin* the Ramadan pressure was not visible in everyday life. The leftist tendency is quite dominant in many areas of *Artvin* especially in *Hopa*.

Another unique feature of *Artvin* is its different climate within the northeastern Black Sea Region. The big river basin of *Çoruh* and its arteries constitute a microclimate, which is similar to the Mediterranean climate (southern region of Turkey). Besides having a unique climate in the Black Sea region, *Artvin* is also the home for one of the major biosphere reserves listed by UNESCO. Nonetheless, it has been experiencing anthropogenic environmental degradation by the searches for metals like gold and copper since 1990s and recently by construction of HEPPs and dams for over a decade. There are currently 15 big dams and 20 HEPPs under construction in *Artvin* where in total reaches up to 176 HEPPs.[11]

Artvin city center is located up on steep hills surrounded by large dam constructions. Unlike the other two cities, the conservative nature of eastern Black Sea region is not visible here. There is rather a modern atmosphere with its people and physical environment layout. The Green *Artvin* Society (*Yeşil Artvin Derneği*) is the most well-known and supported civil society initiative that had been fighting against mining, dams and HEPPs in the region.

Meydancık, is smaller and remote compared to *Yusufeli* and *Artvin* city center. On the way to *Meydancık*, 2 HEPPs that are operational can be seen. The court canceled the 4 consecutive HEPPs that were planned for the *Papart* valley, which is further up in the hills of *Meydancık*, after the resistance organized by the district. Since the land is not that fertile and it is located in a remote area, many people

[11] Personal interview by the author, male, Bedrettin Kalın, 8 September 2012, Artvin.

migrated from the region.

The last region I selected from *Artvin* is *Yusufeli*. It is located far away from the city center of *Artvin* much closer to the administrative border of *Erzurum*. The interesting feature about *Yusufeli* is the region's ambiguous future, which has not been settled for more than a decade. The region was to be evacuated since a big dam was planned for this region, but the company who supposed to build the dam changed hands from one consortium to another. Nonetheless, this indefinite start date of the construction created an unsettled way of living in this area. Aside of this big dam that is supposedly going to relocate the whole district, there are also 24 other HEPPs planned for the region. Even though there are decisions to stay of execution by the court, they only manage to halt the construction for a little while until the construction company prepares the necessary papers.

Methodology: Research Procedure and Data Collection

I have started doing the research for this thesis in 2011. The issue of HEPPs was quite a hot but an unknown topic at the time. The political participation was quite low compared to today. But yet the activism concerning the issue was quite the similar since it goes up and down in time accordingly to the nature of social movements. The relevant literature was non-existing or very few. Even though there are researches conducted on similar topics today, the literature concerning HEPPs in social and political science is still quite few.

Besides the scholarly attention, it is also important to mention the civil initiatives increasing the visibility of the issue of HEPPs and environmental degradation caused by the humanity. The first big civil initiative took place in *Rize* in 2010, which was open to all who knows the water is not flowing for nothing (Türkiye

Erozyonla Mücadele, Ağaçlandırma ve Doğal Varlıkları Koruma Vakfı (TEMA)[12]. The initiative is called "*Türkiye Su Meclisi*" (Water Assembly of Turkey). Even though the motivation and their efforts were successful, the management of the civil initiative was not as groundbreaking as it should be. Thus, it didn't last as strong as it was initially planned.

The second big movement of preservation of nature from human degradation was "*Büyük Anadolu Yürüyüşü*" (the Big Anatolian March). Even though many in Turkey didn't hear about it, there was the big awakening for nature where the villagers of different parts of Anatolia from 11 different areas started to march to *Ankara* (the capital) protesting nature's destruction by humanity and also protesting the enabling structure, which is the Turkish government. Their march started as early as April 2011 and finished in *Ankara*, *Gölbaşı* on May 2011 (NTV, 2011). This movement is known as "*Anadolu'yu Vermeyeceğiz*" (We are not giving away Anatolia), which also included some civil society institutions.

Additionally, in popular culture the awareness of the issue has increased tremendously by movies, documentaries, and TV series following one another. As early as 2011, in IF Film Festival in *Istanbul* a documentary named "*Bir Avuç Cesur İnsan*" (A Few Brave People) was released, which conveys the message that the struggle against HEPPs by the local population in question will continue since they are not going to let further destruction to take place in their living environment. In 2012, "*Vadi*" (means valley in Turkish) a TV-documentary series concerning HEPPs in *Senoz* Valley has started, which was mainly portraying the daily lives of local population. Consequently, another documentary was released in 2012, "*İşte Böyle*"

[12] http://tema.org.tr/web_14966-2_1/entitialfocus.aspx?primary_id=600&type=2&target=categorial1&detail=single&sp_table=&sp_primary=&sp_table_extra=&openfrom=sortial

(Damn the Dams, the English title), telling the story of the struggle against HEPPs in Erzurum. Furthermore, a movie was released the same year "*Akıntıya Karşı*" (Against the Current), giving voice to valleys that are under destruction by HEPPs from *Trabzon* to *Artvin*. Besides TV, radio stations like *Açık Radyo* increased awareness with their programs problematizing ecology, climate change and environment. Inevitably, over the course of the years the local bits and pieces found a larger audience, which also contributed to the understanding of the bigger picture.

As the topic was so hot and unexplored at the time, it was very intriguing to do a fieldwork. As a part of the qualitative research I started collecting information about HEPPs and their relevant sites. I selected the following sites for my fieldwork for the reasons mentioned in detail in the earlier part of the introduction under the heading 'Background: the universe of the research': *Solaklı* valley (*Uzungöl*, *Uzuntarla*, *Köknar* and *Karaçam*) in *Trabzon*; *Fırtına* Valley (*Çamlıhemşin*), *Senöz* Valley (*Çayeli*), *İkizdere* and *Fındıklı* in *Rize*; *Meydancık, Yusufeli* and *Artvin* city center in *Artvin*.

In the indicated sites of *Trabzon*, *Rize* and *Artvin*, I interviewed the regular local people, activists of the social movements, lawyers of HEPP cases, official representatives of the local and central governments like *muhtars* (local administrative authority in the villages)[13], and mayors[14]. Additionally, in order to understand the complex relationship between the agencies and actors of the problem I made some interviews in Istanbul with participants of civil society organizations, activists, academicians, and selected company officials who had obtained the right to produce electricity by hydropower.

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[13] *Muhtar* is an elected official in the villages. The local population in the village chooses who will be the head of the village that will connect them to upper administrative structures.

[14] Even though I have used fake names within the text for the informants to ensure anonymity, some real names are used for the government officials and some lawyers with their consent to use their real names.

Overall I conducted 56 interviews. 8 were from Istanbul and the rest were from the eastern Black Sea region. 25% of the interviews were with women. Among all the interviewers 5 were over the age of 80, 11 were between 50-60, the rest were between 28-45.

I collected the fieldwork data over the course of two consecutive summers 2011 and 2012 within the duration of two months. My first visit in summer 2011 was short. The goal of this visit was mainly to conduct a preliminary research, in order to get an overview of the region and to establish contacts for future visits. Having the chance to talk to some of the same people of the previous year gave me a deeper understanding about their lives and their thoughts during my visit the following year. In some cases, my persistence to come this tough region for the second time impressed some locals with whom our friendship has deepened.

The fieldwork is a part of the qualitative research where I collected the data by semi-structured/unstructured in-depth interviews and informal interviews. One of the main reasons of using semi-structured/unstructured types is to get people to express themselves in their own way with minimum intervention (Bernard, 2006, p. 211). These unstructured and semi-structured interviews helped me to follow new leads without losing the control of the conversation so much. Aside from the formal interview with predetermined questions, in many cases the exchange of information was not only limited to the actual interview time since I had a chance to spent more time with the respondents consequently. Thus, informal interviewing was also used.

It wasn't easy to find a place to stay in the villages as an outsider, but this also gave me the opportunity to stay with the families as their guests in the villages. This gave me the opportunity to participate in many of their daily activities for the duration of my stay. I had a chance to constantly observe the people I have interviewed in

many different contexts and understand their line of reasoning by spending more time with them beyond the duration of the interviews. I was either travelling with them, eating with them, going to the tea field with them or helping them (i.e., wash their dishes after supper, playing with their children), which indeed helped me overcome the trust barrier much easily, especially considering that they are suspicious of people coming to the region mainly about HEPPs. Thus, apart from the interviews constant observation enhanced my grasp over the region.

In order to select the people to interview, I used a non-probability sampling in the form of convenience or snowball sampling[15]. I am aware of the risks associated with these types of non-probability sampling. One of the main concerns is that data collection relies on the availability of the subjects. However, as Bernard argues considering it for a relatively small population of people who are likely to be in contact with one another, it can be an affective way to build a sample frame (Bernard, 2006, pp. 192-193). This thesis has no concern of external validity since due to its methodology it is not going to be generalizable. The aim is to have a deeper understanding of the issue at hand and to give voice to the local communities in question.

One of the important parts of such ethnographic, anthropological research is to build a greater rapport within the community that you are doing the research on (Bernard, 2006, p. 211, p.356). One of my informants from the region told me not to explicitly tell people about my research of HEPPs since many are quite suspicious about outsiders. But this indeed brings in the issue of ethical dilemma of gaining rapport (369). Thus, in my second visit to the region I took the position to be open and objective about my research. And since they have seen me before, admiring my

15 For further enquiries please refer to Babbie, 2007 (chapter 7: The Logic of Sampling).

persistence to come the region helped me to lower their reactivity. I openly declared that I was trying to be objective. But of course, objectivity doesn't mean neutrality (Bernard, 2006, p. 372). In other words, I was objectively doing my research but I wasn't neutral towards the construction of HEPPs.

Besides these, assuring people of anonymity and confidentiality is a very important part of maintaining trust (Bernard, 2006, p. 214). In all my conversations, I assured my informants that I would preserve their anonymity. As a consequence, throughout the thesis I changed my informants' names and used pseudonyms while referring to my data. In the semi-structured and unstructured interviews I mostly used a voice recorder for which I asked the permission to record at first hand. But rarely, within the nature of the conversation the permission to ask for recording seemed like a mood killer thus, I only asked for a permission to take notes. In the rare cases where I sense reluctance to talk, I didn't ask for names or any personal information and waited for the interview to end to quickly jot down some of the main ideas from our conversation. There were also cases where voice recording was not allowed. In one particular case in *Rize*, I had to prove that I wasn't a spy of one of the construction companies. The key informant who refused to give interviews to former researchers in the field finally agreed to open up after two days time that I have spent with his family.

Another important factor that needs to be acknowledged for people who are doing fieldwork is gender (Mead, 1986). According to Mead gender has two consequences; one is that it limits access to the field and the second is that it influences the researcher's perception (Mead, 1986, pp. 293-332). Being an expecting woman for five months at the time of the fieldwork enabled me to immediately gain attention especially among women. Wherever I went, the baby was a conversation

opener. Doing fieldwork under such a condition even stimulated some to produce more information. Additionally, some had to make sure that I was well fed before leaving, which in some cases inevitably increased the time I have spent with them. With men, it created an unspoken sympathy. I must not be a spy after all since in such condition I still come and look for answers. In some cases, my pregnancy became an issue of worry for the villagers, because I was travelling alone and long distances between the villages. Thus, local people passing me from one to another to shorten my stay, establishing further contacts on my behalf in my destination for my accommodation and research helped me immensely during my fieldwork.

Scope of the Study and the Organization of the Dissertation

The **Introduction** part of the thesis presents the research question and the rationale of the research. Consequently, the universe in which the research has been done is clearly illustrated to make sure that the reader is familiar to the region in question. Then, finally the methodology of the research and scope of the study can be found at the end of this part.

Chapter 1 of the thesis conceptualizes the necessary theoretical framework to understand the field more in depth. Mainly it conceptualizes 'neoliberalism', 'neoliberalization of nature', 'governmentality' and 'environmentalism'. Neoliberalism is the major discourse that determines the contextual framework that the states mostly behave within. Thus, in many different ways it is used by governments as a tool for governmentality. But how did this discourse become dominant globally? How can we conceptualize neoliberalism? These are the questions to be answered in this chapter under **section 1.1**. Especially in the case of environmental governance neoliberalism plays a deterministic role. But what really is

distinctive about neoliberalism concerning its relationship with nature? The neoliberalization of nature is conceptualized in **section 1.2.** Here, commodification and privatization are discussed as the two important features of the neoliberalization of nature. More specifically, one of the dominant ways of environmental governance through neoliberalization of nature is discussed with its proponents and opponents. Finally, the section ends by noting the consequences of the neoliberalization of nature for humans and the environment. **Section 1.3** of this chapter mainly focuses on the governmentality and its relation with environment. Neoliberal forms of governmentality that are generated by modern states is used as a tool to govern compelling subjects during neoliberalization of nature. The utilitarian and interest based methods and sometimes even the coercive methods used by the state towards neoliberalization, commodification of nature lead the community bond to be strengthened and push for environmental activism. Moreover, the motivation to resist and that inner power of the community comes out as a consequence of malrecognition and lack of participation. To what extent recognition and justice claims can be counted as a part of the motivation for resistance? Finally, **section 1.4** of this chapter illustrates how we perceive nature as humans and how we seek to protect it. The biocentric and anthropocentric attitudes towards nature are explained. Consequently, the three major ways of protecting the nature are presented: the cult of wilderness, the gospel of eco-efficiency, and the environmentalism of the poor. The extensions of these approaches to other types of environmentalisms can also be found in this section.

Chapter 2 is mainly about Turkey and HEPPs. **Section 2.1** elaborates on neoliberalization of nature in Turkey touching on the important discourses used by the government such as 'sustainable development', and 'modernization'. Furthermore,

the historical background on how the discourse of neoliberalism became dominant in Turkey is presented. **Sub-section 2.1.1** enlarges the issue of carbon trade and its relevance for Turkey. In order to understand the struggle and concerns about HEPPs **section 2.2** presents the ways of harnessing the water and the common understanding of HEPPs in Turkey. **Section 2.3** gives the historical background the legal framework for HEPPs and dams in Turkey. Finally the last section of this chapter, **section 2.4**, mainly brings into light the common problematic issues of HEPP construction in Turkey by making a vulnerability assessment for the local population in question.

Chapter 3 gets its power from the field data that is collected in eastern Black Sea region, particularly from *Trabzon*, *Rize* and *Artvin*. This chapter aims to shed light on the big picture concerning HEPP construction in Turkey. By giving voice to people, in the form of interviews, it aims for a deeper understanding of the reactions of local population against HEPP construction and their perceptions about 'state', 'water', 'neoliberal governmentality', 'environmentalism' and 'protectionism' in *Trabzon*, *Rize* and *Artvin* consequently. Each city is given a section; **section 3.1** is about Trabzon, **section 3.2** is about *Rize* and **section 3.3** is about *Artvin*. Finally, **section 3.4** presents the overall assessment of how the data contributes to the theoretical framework.

Chapter 4 is the enlarged picture of *Trabzon*, *Solaklı* Valley. It presents the struggle of the local population against HEPP construction from the framework of environmentalism and questions whether the environmentalism of the poor approach has any power in the field. **Section 4.1** presents the approaches of nature conservation in Turkey. This is mainly the reflection of the three main types of environmentalism (that were theoretically explained in chapter 1) being applied in Turkey. **Section 4.2** illustrates with interviews the struggle of the people of Solaklı to

protect their living spaces. Their relation to and perception of water is clearly illustrated with examples from the region with the aim of contributing to the understanding of their environmentalism. Finally, **section 4.3** is an assessment that tries to answer the question to what extent this conceptualization works in the field.

Finally, the **conclusion** section is the closing part of the thesis where the theoretical framework and the data gathered from the field are brought together, while discussing the ways in which this work contributes to existing academic literature on this topic.

CHAPTER 1:

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this section, a theoretical framework will be laid out for the thesis. In the first part of this chapter; neoliberalism, one of the central concepts of this thesis will be conceptualized. Even though it is not easy to clearly define neoliberalism, its conceptualization provides us the tools necessary to understand contemporary political and economic trends in terms of governance. It is the dominant discourse that shapes the life of many in different ways depending on each government's own policy implementations.

In the second part of this chapter, the links between neoliberalism and nature will be explored. Neoliberalism as the dominant discourse transformed people's socioeconomic relationship with nature. Also, the relationship between state and nature is mainly determined by the boundaries of neoliberalism. In order to understand that relationship, important links between nature and neoliberalism, privatization, commodification and deregulation are going to be elaborated on.

The third part of this chapter will briefly summarize neoliberalism, governmentality and the place of justice and recognition in environmental governance, as well as their relation with environmentalism. In the fourth part of this chapter, the concerns of the local population will be explored and discussed. Their reaction towards the construction, towards HEPPs in general, and towards the change of regulation will be analyzed within the premises of environmentalism. What is understood from protection of nature? How should nature be managed or governed? These are the questions to be addressed in this chapter.

1.1. Conceptualization of Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism has become the major discourse/ideology dominating the political, economic and cultural life of many societies since the early 1970s. Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, and Deng Xaioping were the pioneers in implementing these political-economic practices in the USA, Great Britain and China respectively (Harvey, 2005, p. 2). It is the new form of capitalism embracing globalization. But, what is neoliberalism? Is it a concept that can help us analyze today's economic and political trends? In order to understand neoliberalism and its relationship with the environmental governance, one should first start with the definition of neoliberalism and the process in which it has become the dominant global hegemonic discourse today.

The conceptualization of neoliberalism may be a complex issue. Even though the implementation of policies driven by neoliberalism seems to follow pretty much the same path in many countries -especially among the developing ones-, case studies may show us its various outcomes. Its conceptualization depends on the perspective and the context in which one wishes to analyze it. Some argue that it is much more of a political project rather than a developmental or an economic one (Davis, 2006, p. 89). Some argue that it is a social, or an ideological project as well as an economic one (Jessop, 2002, Peck & Tickell, 2002 in Davis, 2006, p. 89). Overall, some see it as a process (Bakker, 2005; Heynen & Robbins, 2005; Kingfisher & Maskovsky, 2008; Liverman & Vilas, 2006), some criticize it (Bourdieu, 1998, Giddens, 1998, Chomsky, 1999, Touraine, 2001, Harvey, 2005 in Thorsen, 2010, p. 197; Harvey, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2005; Castree, 2006), and some even praise it for environmental governance (Bakker, 2003, Perraut 2005 in Davis, 2006, p. 89).

This thesis acknowledges the complexity of its conceptualization[16]. Defining it along the lines of a "thing" may not necessarily be helpful in understanding its spatial and temporal aspect. For the purposes of this thesis, neoliberalism is regarded as a lens through which I aim to analyze environmental governance. And this lens is a combination of perceptions of neoliberalism as a theory, practice and a discourse. In other words, this project aims to analyze neoliberalism as an economic project, political discourse, and practical tool for governmentality especially when linked with environmental governance.

From an economic point of view, Ludwig von Mises (1881-1973) and his pupil Friedrich von Hayek (1899-1992) are known as the forefathers of propagating neoliberal ideas. According to them, an economy cannot be designed by planning. Rather, it has to emerge by itself with a complex interaction among agents (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, p. 80). The classical economic liberals like the two, advocated *laissez-faire* capitalism where eliminating any kind of limitations on trade ends the state's subsidization of economy. In other words, they did not want the government regulating the market (Peet & Hartwick 2009, p. 81).

Subsequently, Milton Friedman (1912-2006) -a colleague of von Hayek from the University of Chicago- with some other members of Chicago School formulated the central concepts in mainstream economics known as neoliberalism (Peet & Hartwick, 2009, pp. 79-83). Thus, neoliberalism's appeal today in a way lies with the liberal ideas of Mises and Hayek. "Neo" refers to classical liberalism (Liverman & Vilas 2006, p. 329) where "economic valuation" was the core idea, which today is borrowed by neoliberalism.

Describing neoliberalism as a theory of political economy is one of the first

16 For different conceptualizations of neoliberalism please refer to Bakker 2010.

steps in understanding how it is linked with environmental governance. Perhaps David Harvey's well known definition of neoliberalism could be a starting point for our discussion:

> "**Neoliberalism** is a theory of political economic practices that proposes human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong **property rights**, **free markets**, and **free trade**" (Harvey, 2005, p. 2).

According to the ideal that neoliberal theory proposes, human well-being can be best advanced by market regulations, and by maximizing the entrepreneurial freedoms (Harvey, 2007, p. 22). Market efficiency is usually at the heart of the discussion among the proponents of neoliberalism. They argue that government intervention is usually highly costly (Liverman & Vilas 2006, p. 329). Nevertheless, they assign some responsibilities to the government so that the market can smoothly regulate itself. In other words, the role of the state is rather limited; it has to guarantee an institutional framework in order for neoliberalism to properly function. The limited role of the state is legitimized with a belief in the argument that "*the state cannot possibly posses enough information to second guess market signals (prices)*" and also the state would be biased in its intervention since it will act according to its own benefits (Harvey, 2007, p. 23).

In line with the above argument, the minimization of government is one of the corner stones of neoliberalism in general. It could be done voluntarily by the nation-states themselves or involuntarily -mainly in developing countries- through structural adjustments required by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as part of the credit terms, or by the stabilization policies of the World Bank (Narsiah & Ahmed 2012, p. 3). Since the government's role is reduced to 'babysit' the market for it to run efficiently its course through which economic growth can be achieved, social welfare

policies are often neglected in the making (Haque, 1999, p. 204). The policies like spending for health care or education is rolled back (Davis, 2006, p. 89) whereas new restructuring of economy is prioritized. The policies of such restructuring, which is also referred as "Washington consensus"[17] would include elimination or reduction of state subsidies, following export-oriented economic policies (Narsiah & Ahmed 2012, p. 3), and more importantly include two features that play a very significant role for environmental governance: privatization and deregulation (Peet, 1999, p. 86).

Many countries have adopted their economies and politics in accordance with this new political economic theory. Particularly, for many developing countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America this global trend is often proliferated as a part of the structural adjustment programs by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) or World Bank (Haque, 1999, p. 204). It is also important to keep in mind that variety of determinants act together in the decision for a country to choose the path of embracing neoliberalism. In many different cases even from different geographies, USA was seen as the imperial force behind the rapid spread of neoliberal forms starting from mid-1970s. It indeed might be true for many Latin American countries, especially for the Chile (Harvey, 2005, p. 9). It still could be argued in the case of recent intervention of the USA to Iraq where the former tried to impose neoliberal state apparatus in the latter, which was done in the name of creating foundation for democratic government and individual liberty (Harvey, 2007, p. 26). But yet, this argument does not hold for Britain who started implementing neoliberalizing measures with Thatcher's regime in 1979, for China where such policies were

17 Washington Consensus refers to the progressive reform ideals of interest groups such as American Enterprise Institute & Heritage Foundation, which are organized and formulated as policy instruments that are mainly applied by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank to the credit receiving countries. They include: fiscal discipline, reducing public expenditure, tax reform, market determined interest rates, competitive exchange rates, trade liberalization, encouraging foreign direct investment, privatization, deregulation and securing property rights (Peet, 1999, pp. 85-86).

implemented in 1978, or for Sweden that implemented such policies in 1990s (Harvey, 2005, p.9).

The adaptation of neoliberalism in Latin America, especially the Chilean case, is quite similar to the Turkish experience. Historically, in Latin America, the liberals fostered an open trade in the 19th century, giving way to export-oriented market economies. Mexico, Argentina, Guatemala, Bolivia followed such policies consecutively (Liverman & Vilas, 2006, p. 329)[18]. Nevertheless, the neoliberal state formation was first experienced by Chile after 1973 with Pinochet's overthrow of democratically elected government of Salvador Allende (Harvey, 2005, p. 7). The coup was backed by the US. It suppressed any kind of social movements, and leftist organizations. So, the trade unions could no longer pose an obstacle in this new economic system. The international organizations like the IMF stepped in. A structural adjustment program was implemented with reversing nationalization in many sectors. Most of the public assets and natural resources were privatized. An export-oriented economic model started to be implemented. All in all, a new form of economic understanding was in force. This was, thanks to the USA acting as an imperial power. And, this imperial power influenced Chilean economy through the Chilean economists who were trained in USA in 1950s, also known as the Chicago boys[19] (Harvey, 2005, p. 8). Chilean experiment was followed by Argentina's military take over with similar consequences.

When we look at Latin America today, the consequent practices brought regional and hemispheric free trade agreements, different structural adjustments,

[18] Liverman & Vilas, 2006, examines how neoliberal policies changed environmental policies in Latin America with case studies including different sectors. They especially look at privatization, pricing of environmental services and common property resources.

19 "The Chicago boys" is the name given to the Chilean students who came to study in the USA in the 1950s and later became the pioneers of the economic transformation that happened in Chile in the late 1970s. It was indeed a US funded program in order to train people to counteract with left wing tendencies in Latin America (Harvey, 2005, p. 7).

privatization of property rights of resources, which was commonly, or state owned before (Liverman & Vilas 2006, p. 330). But contrary to what the neoliberal policies propose to bring to enrich the lives of human beings, many experiments with neoliberalism showed that the benefits of revived capital accumulation were highly restricted and accessed by few under forced privatization (Harvey, 2005, p. 16). The ones who are benefitting from such policies are only the top one percent of the society (Harvey, 2005, p. 17). Thus, it is inevitable that social inequalities would be a side product of such policies.

Why and how did neoliberalism become a hegemonic discourse? Up until the World War Two (WWII), the dominant discourse was classical liberalism. However, after the great depression and the World War II the classical system was completely abandoned and the nations tried to find a way to operationalize liberal economic model by exercising certain controls to the "invisible hand" (Regil, 2001, p. 3). There was also the need to reconstruct economies after the devastating effects of WWII. A new international financial regulatory framework was introduced. It included institutions like IMF and World Bank, which are also referred to as the Bretton Woods institutions[20]. Within this new world order USA became a hegemonic power. Therefore, the institutions in a way were securing the USA's interests.

For about thirty years Europe[21], North America[22], Iberian America, Eastern

20 Bretton Woods system is established in 1944 and ratified by many countries in 1945. With this new monetary policy the exchange rate is tied to US dollar. And the dollar was convertible to Gold at a fixed price. For 35 $, you could buy one troy once of gold (which is approximately 31.1 gr.). The USA left this system in 1971. Fixed exchange rate system is abandoned; floating exchange rate system has started. There is no longer any attempt to control the float. After this the base of international money, which was once gold, was no longer the case (Harvey, 2005, pp. 10-12).

21 Europe's recovery was sponsored by USA. Sixteen countries in Europe including Germany received $ 13 billion, which was a part of Marshall Plan (1947). And since Europe had not much to sell, the supply again came from USA (Regil, 2001, p. 13). Thus, Europe's recovery also fuels USA's economy.

22 USA expanded its economy by investing on development and research. Many US multinational corporations opened up branches in different parts of the world. The economic prosperity came with social progress. Middle class expanded, many people joined the work force (around 2 million between 1945-60), the standard of living had ameliorated, social security system was established

Asia, Japan[23] and the British Common Wealth members experienced economic and social progress (Regil, 2001, pp. 12-13). The Keynesian model -even though it was not wholly implemented as Keynes provisioned- ultimately wanted to reach the construction of a welfare state which had somewhat been achieved. Despite the fact that visible portions of populations were still suffering from poverty, the implemented version of Keynesian economy brought dynamism into the lives of many. That said, Keynesianism encountered a new challenge at the end of 1960s and early 1970s that indeed led the Bretton Woods system to disintegrate. When USA encountered unmanageable costs of Vietnam War and increasing inflation, instead of devaluating the dollar it announced that it unilaterally left the Gold Standards[24] (Regil, 2001, p. 16).

Additionally, Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) unilaterally increased the oil prices, which caused the oil crises of 1973. The increase in oil prices caused the rise of inflation and the increasing dependency of oil-deficient countries to credit institutions, mainly to the IMF and especially to its structural adjustment programs (Regil, 2001, p. 18). Finally, with the lack of cooperation among the G7 nations the Bretton Woods system had collapsed. And, the new alternative came to be called the neoliberal system. This new generation liberalism was based on market efficiency and profit rather than having a concern for carrying social objectives (Narsiah & Ahmed, 2012, p. 9). And today, it is globally the hegemonic discourse that determines political, economic and even social relations within nations. Specifically, the discourse around the governance of nature is no exception to this

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and social movements in terms of the rights of the black population had been successful in moving the country towards a more just society (Regil, 2001, pp. 14-15).

23 Japan experienced impressive growth after signing a mutual defense treaty with USA. With the financial aid it received from USA as a part of this agreement, Japan managed to put together its economy back on track by building up on its pre-war industrial base (Regil, 2001, p. 13).

24 It is mainly referred as the Nixon shock since Nixon decided to unilaterally withdraw from this system. Only the close advisors around him knew about his decision (Harvey, 2005, p. 10).

dominant global framework.

1.2. Neoliberalization of Nature and its Consequences

The idea of conserving nature brought about a new group of investors who are putting nature into shapes and commodifying it by new valuation are making money out of saving the planet (Arsel & Buscher, 2012, p. 57). In a nutshell, this is how they portray today's environmental policies: "Nature is dead. Long live Nature™ Inc.!" (Arsel & Buscher, 2012, p. 53). Arsel and Buscher argue that because only when nature in the all-encompassing understanding is dead, a new type of dissolution brings out the possibility of nature's incorporation. (Arsel & Buscher, 2012, p. 62). Within this incorporation, the nature is defined as an entity outside of society and economy where it is reduced to tradable manageable commodities (Arsel & Buscher, 2012, p. 59). Within this approach the inherent and the interrelated structure of nature to society and its complex and interwoven relationship is disregarded. However, Marx reads the relationship between the nature and society as dialectical, in that, both are socially produced (Arsel & Bucher, 2012, p. 64).

Understanding the dialectical relationship between society and nature, critical geographers working within the Marxist tradition[25] have paid attention to historically specific ways of how society and nature have shaped one another (Roberts 2008: 537). Contrary to the idea that ontologically nature exits separately from society, they argue that it is rather a production of historically specific social relations (537).

In today's world, the hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism has dramatically transformed the socioeconomic relationship with nature (Smith, 2006, p. 17). Many scholars have illustrated that the hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism and its

[25] For a review of Marxist scholars writing on nature please refer to Castree (1995).

practices produces distinct historical, geographical, and social transformations (Bakker, 2005; Peck & Tickell, 2002; Castree, 2006).

In the field of geography, many like Karen Bakker, Nik Heynen, Alex Loftus, Becky Mansfield, James McCarthy, Scott Prudham, and Erik Swyngedouw have questioned the neoliberalization of nature. Castree points out that even though governmentality was once an approach to nature's liberalization, not very many geographers currently use it now (Castree, 2008, p. 132). Since many critical geographers who study nature's neoliberalization pay attention to the materiality of the non-human world, and since this type of research covers diverse regions and countries, many of their studies are potentially beneficial for understanding the neoliberalization of nature and for further research concerning the topic (Castree, 2008, p.133). In anthropology the approach to neoliberalism varies; "neoliberalism as culture", "as a system", and "as governmentality" are the three main versions so far (Hilgers, 2011, pp. 351-363).

It is also important to note that the extent to which neoliberalism is helpful in understanding environmental transformation is still being debated among scholars. Why does the main discussion revolve around neoliberalism rather than simply capitalism? In other words, when we try to find the linkage between neoliberalism and nature/environmental governance why do we talk about "neoliberalism"?

Neoliberal thought and practice has been becoming dominant in a variety of fields over the last thirty years (Castree, 2008, p. 136). But yet, Castree himself has concerns whether this endeavor being a 'potential dead end' when analyzing neoliberalism's environmental impacts (Castree, 2006, p. 2). He further explains that neoliberalism only exists as a "thought-abstraction not a 'real entity' because 'it' only exists in articulation with actors, institutions, and agendas" (Castree, 2006, p. 2).

Thus, under these circumstances how can we hold neoliberalism responsible for anything? Additionally, there are others like Wendy Larner (2003) and Jamie Peck (2004) who argue that identifying neoliberalism as a unified and hegemonic entity turns it into a static structure, which has immense powers. However, both Peck and Larner strongly stress the geographical varieties and diverse nature of local forms. Larner proposes that "we take spatial and universal conceptions of neoliberalism and render them geographical" (Larner, 2003, p. 509). Respecting the diverse scales and geographical differences, such an overarching structure might be necessary for empirical local research to make sense in a globalized world. In the words of Castree:

> "I suspect 'neoliberalism' will remain a necessary illusion... something we know does not exist as such, but the idea of whose existence allows our 'local' research finding to connect to a much bigger and apparently important conversation" (Castree, 2006, p. 6).

Bakker raises the question as: "What (if anything) is distinctive about neoliberal natures?" (Bakker, 2010, p. 726). One of the answers given to this question is by Buscher. According to Buscher, the idea that that nature can only be protected by "its submission to capital and by its subsequent revaluation in capitalist terms" is mainly what is new about neoliberal conservation (Buscher, 2009, p. 91). Additionally, Bakker answers the same question by rethinking the genealogies of neoliberalization. The distinctive input of neoliberalism is the difference in capital accumulation, which has been the case over the couple of decades (Bakker, 2010, p. 726). In numerous literature the understanding of primitive accumulation[26] of Marx is reconsidered and applied to today's environmental governance (O'Connor, 1988; Harvey, 2003, 2005; McCarthy, 2004). David Harvey builds on Marx's primitive accumulation as "accumulation by dispossession" within the neoliberal discourse

[26] For a further discussion about primitive accumulation of water, please refer to Roberts, 2008, pp.540-549; Glassman, 2006, pp. 608-623.

(Harvey, 2005, pp. 178-79). According to Harvey, privatization and enclosure of the commons are the main ways for accumulation by dispossession. It is actually capital accumulation of 1970s, which brought the new form of capitalism known as neoliberalism. Even though capitalism is held accountable for the ecological crises that we face today, neoliberalism doesn't see it as a "problem" (Şengül, 2008, p. 67). This (not seeing it as a problem) indeed in itself is one of the biggest problems since neoliberalism finds ways/ 'solutions' for environmental "sustainability". But nonetheless, neoliberalism provides a necessary contextual tool to understand the transformation of nature today.

Two of the major features of neoliberalism are often times pronounced as privatization and deregulation. They are the links between neoliberalism and environment. But also besides the two, Castree adds 'reregulation', which is largely related to revaluation. Castree defines reregulation as "the use of states to transform previously untradeable things into tradable commodities" (Castree, 2008). Igoe and Brockington (2007) argue that neoliberalization of nature involves reregulation of nature through different forms of commodification, territorialisation (Vandergeest & Peluso, 1995) being one them. Through territorialisation, the revaluation and the control of the resources, land and even the control of local communities in question is possible, which often times works for the detriment of local communities (Igoe & Brockington, 2007, p. 432). Thus, privatization, deregulation and reregulation are largely related to one other within the understanding of neoliberalization of nature.

In line with that thinking, neoliberalism provides the larger context within which the relationship between the environment and the state can be best described through wide privatization of the formerly common land, water and resources (Liverman & Vilas 2006, p. 330). So, neoliberalization of nature begins through

manipulations of governance, increased privatization, enclosure, and market valuation (Heynen & Robins, 2005, p. 7).

According to the proponents of neoliberalism establishing private property rights on resources that were previously commonly owned or government owned is the way to efficiently preserve and sustain resources. Similarly, "nature is protected through investment and consumption" (Hartwick & Peet, 2003). Thus, this new valuation or in Liverman's words "pricing the nature's services" is regarded as one of the ways of protecting the environment. In other words, some would argue that commodification[27] itself: assigning property rights and marketization is argued to be a way to protect or to manage the environment (Daily, 1997; Anderson & Leal, 2001).

In line with the assumption above, this form of management is captured as "market environmentalism" (Anderson & Leal, 2001). The core of market environmentalism consists of well-specified property rights (Anderson & Leal, 2001, p. 4). The main motivation behind this argument is that of the environment being best managed when these "*rights are definable, defendable and divestible*" (Liverman & Vilas, 2006, p. 330). In a way, market environmentalism is portrayed as a solution to environmental problems rather than the cause (Bakker, 2005, pp. 543-544). Additionally, Brundtland Report, and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Green Economy report both follow a similar pattern of thinking where they put economic growth and market environmentalism as a solution to environmental crises. Both promote further intensification of economic growth to reach sustainable development (WCED, 1987, UNEP, 2011 in Arsel & Buscher, 2012, p. 65).

Karen Bakker argues that water privatization[28] in England and Wales, which

27 Commodification and privatization are two related but distinct concepts. For further clarification see Bakker (2005).

28 When we talk about water privatization, Latin America and the 'water war in Cochabamba, Bolivia' comes into mind. It is one of the most important examples of water privatization and social protest

started in 1989 (Bakker, 2005, p. 549) can be characterized as a success in terms of market environmentalism. This is mainly due to a unique process of reregulation under which the state has played an interventionist role in the post-privatization period (560). The main consideration of the state was the ecological and possible public health consequences, which prevented direct competition. There was also political resistance against metering and price increases, while the majority of the domestic users did not have meters. Instead these domestic users were paying relative to the property value of their homes rather than paying the amount they used (552). Continuously, as a part of post-privatization regulatory framework, the government reinserted social considerations into the pricing framework for the vulnerable population. On top of all this, the legislation of water quality standards of European Union also had been critical in finally achieving improvements in drinking water and environmental water quality (560). In her argument, Bakker praises reregulation, which indeed may lead to improvements in environmental quality without commodification of nature. The resources according to her are protected in better quality through privatization. But it is important to note that she does make a distinction between commodification, commercialization, marketization, and privatization (544). She argues that due to the particular characteristics of water's geography, water was not commodified within this process in the case of England and Wales. She suggests that the series of factors behind the failure in the commodification of water were, (1) the possible public health consequences that made direct competition problematic, (2) the resistance against metering and price increases, and finally (3) the difficulty of creating an efficient environmental valuation techniques (559).

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in Latin America. For further information please refer to Oscar Olivera and Tom Lewis's book *Water War in Bolivia* (2004).

She concludes with the fact that for developing countries market environmentalism with wider reregulation may bring new opportunities in achieving improvements in environmental quality (561). In other words, she sees the market as a part of the solution rather than the cause for environmental problems. This kind of an understanding coalesces with Hardin's theory of "tragedy of the commons" (Liverman & Vilas, 2006, p. 331). This is one of the earlier enlightening theories about the "commons". Commons metaphor is quite important for development world and understanding environmental management. According to Hardin "tragedy of commons" is described as such:

> "Picture a pasture open to all. It is to be expected that each herdsman will try to keep as many cattle as possible on the commons. Such an agreement may work reasonably satisfactorily for centuries because tribal wars, poaching and disease keep the numbers of both man and beast well below the carrying capacity of the land…finally, the long-desired goal of social stability becomes a reality…As a rational being, each herdsman seeks to maximize his gain…the only sensible course for him to pursue is to add another animal to his heard. And another, and another…but this is the conclusion reached by each and every rational herdsman sharing commons. Therein is the tragedy" (Hardin, 1968, p. 1244).

Hardin argues that when the resources are left to a common management, the result is often devastating for the environment, because people as rational beings often try to get as much as they want without taking into consideration the sustainability of the resource itself. Thus, the immediate personal benefit exceeds the long-term preservation of the resource. Hence, in the long run people in that region will damage the environment by unaccountable exploitation (Hardin, 1968, p. 1244).

Even though many had challenged Hardin's theory of 'tragedy of the commons', it is an important framework for understanding the 'development world'. The idea in Hardin's theory was merely concerning the local commons who are

individually depleting the resources in one area. This discourse/tragedy has turned out to be also useful in saving the 'global commons'. In other words, the grey, overarching areas where supranational decision making is required such as the earth's ozone, the North and South poles...etc. (Goldman, 1998, p. 21). The global commons became a great concern for the international organizations. But as Goldman clearly puts, in some cases these international organizations that are not free from politics are putting commoners throughout the world at greater risk, since their agenda is not to stop destructive practices but to normalize and institutionalize them (Goldman, 1998, p. 38). This is one of the biggest challenges of humanity concerning the survival of our planet.

Additionally, Goldman explains that "tragedy of commons" dates back to Anglo-American critique of community and common property in the fourteenth century (Goldman, 1998, p. 24) The misery of common land which was not used properly and efficiently by the serfs was a major obstacle in agricultural productivity and thus turning the common land into private holdings have consolidated the efficient use of idle land (Goldman, 1998, p. 24). In the end this movement known as "Enclosure Movement[29]" is described as one of the predecessors of Industrial Revolution of England.

Similarly, the question of the commons is a controversial topic among Human ecologists, development experts, global resource managers, institutions and policy

[29] Enclosure movement is particular to England. The parliament passes the Enclosure act, which requires properties to be fenced and enclosed. The common land, which was in the use of the local community, is also fenced and privatized. At the end, the landless peasants who were once using that common land to graze their animals and do farming, no longer have access to these land. Some of that population became a part of cottage industry, which is known as proto-industrialization in small towns of England. Some had left to look for a better future in the cities, which indeed created the labor force of Industrial Revolution. Thus, the Enclosure Movement together with Agricultural Revolution in England, which made agriculture more efficient, are the backbones for Industrial Revolution in England. For further detail about Enclosure movement in England, please refer to "Commoners: Common Right, Enclosure and Social Change in England, 1700-1920" by J.M. Neeson (1996).

makers. Tragedy proponents argue that enclosure of the commons is an important step in modernization (Goldman, 1998, p. 25). Additionally, for the economic and ecological prosperity the project managers prefer to use the terms privatization and sustainability instead. Development experts and human ecologists criticize the oversimplification in the tragedy of the commons theory by pointing the importance of local community and local institutions in management (Goldman, 1998, p. 28). This doesn't necessarily mean that they are in opposition with the theory but their institutionalization of it is different.

On the other side of the token of neoliberalization of nature, this assumption that environment is best managed by implication of neoliberal measures is criticized. The enclosure of the commons, in order to introduce capitalist mode of production and export oriented farming operations (McCarthy & Prudham, 2004, p. 277), privatization, and/or commodification are questioned in the extent to which they are able to preserve the sustainability of the resource. While such practices increase economic growth, does it cause accumulation by dispossession?[30] This is an important question, but Swyngedouw claims that with well-created arguments "accumulation by dispossession" even becomes desirable within the current wave of neoliberalism (Sywngedouw, 2005, p. 83).

Swyngedouw (2005) describes privatization as a form of accumulation by dispossession. More specifically, he describes privatization as

> "...a process through which activities, resources, and the like, which had not been formally privately owned, managed or organized, are taken away from whoever or whatever owned them before and transferred to a new property configuration that is based on some form of private ownership or control" (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 82).

30 "Accumulation by dispossession" is quite explanatory in the case of management of the resources. For further information please refer to Harvey, 2003, pp. 63-87 and Harvey, 2005, pp. 178-79.

He therefore equates this process to a form of "dispossession" and even a form of "theft" (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 82). According to him there are two lines of arguments that solidify such acts of theft as desirable or even legitimate. The first leg of that ideological discursive frame is created by the arguments that any form of non-private mode of social organization is a "failure". Especially, the state is exemplified as a failed institution to provide many services that are later transferred to a privatized market-based system (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 83). The second leg that this frame stands on is "the unequivocal celebration of market forces and private ownership" (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 83). Many moral arguments like 'tragedy of commons' that are portraying privatization as the most optimal output has been praised which at the end renders that form as desirable (Swyngedouw, 2005, p. 83).

In other words, even though according to neoliberalism, privatization is the only way to achieve efficient preservation of the resources: the commodification of the resources increases the vulnerability of the population who had formerly free access to them as well as the ecosystems and animals who are already a part of it. Thus, even though for some privatization or monetization seem to be an efficient way of conserving the nature, others argue that nature is best managed by common property or by well regulated governments since the market's valuation of resources will never come close the actual value of the resources.

In line with the last argument, in her book, Elinor Ostrom, illustrates different ways to manage resources. She argues that in some of the literature about 'tragedy of commons' the state is praised as the institution that controls most of the natural resources to prevent their destruction whereas in others it is the private sector (Ostrom, 1990, p. 1). But yet, she argues that there is no real situation in the world where one or the other is uniformly successful in sustaining long-term, efficient use of

natural resources. Instead, throughout the book she gives examples of communities of individuals governing some resource systems with reasonable degrees of success (ibid). She argues that for water and forest, common management could be an alternative if the border of the community and the people living in it are definable (Liverman & Vilas, 2006, p. 333).

The core of her argument lies in the understanding that people are not only driven by their economical interests but are mainly motivated by the community rules that they are a part of. But the reason they live within the rules of the community is simple; they don't want to be left outside or punished. Thus, aside from the rules people's behavior would not be purified from utilitarianism. In her understanding, the relationship of people and nature is again defined through the lines of utilizing the resource. Even though, her work is one of the turning points in similar literature, it leaves out equality and power relations within and outside the community itself.

Despite the few exceptions, the dominant way of governing the nature often coincides with market environmentalism. And in most cases neoliberalizing nature begins with manipulation of governance, privatization and commodification. Of course, this dominant attitude toward nature has devastating consequences for humans and the environment including all different kind of species. Keeping in mind the critique towards this type of environmental governance, one has to answer to what extent this type of environmental governance stimulates growth? But more importantly to what cost?

In relation to the following chapter the following question can be raised: To what extent this type of environmental governance can be maintained? Are all the resources going to be exploited relentlessly for governments to achieve some kind of control over their population? To what extent neoliberal governmentality plays a role

in environmental governance?

1.3. Neoliberalism and Governmentality and Their Relation with Environmentalism

The definition of neoliberalism as the free market environment, where market is a separate entity regulating itself, is challenged by Foucault when it first appeared in the world scene (Fletcher, 2010, p. 173). From the English translation of his earlier writings 1978-79 College de France lecture series entitled "The birth of biopolitics" (Foucault, 2008), we can draw conclusions for the present day neoliberal practices. Contrary to the promoters of neoliberalism, he argued that government intervention and regulation is necessary for the market to survive (Foucault, 2008, p. 132). In other words, he claims that the envisioned free and self-regulating market is not possible or sustainable without a government giving it a shape. Since the market is a construction and not a natural phenomenon, it has to be created and constantly maintained by different forms of governance (Fletcher, 2010, p. 173).

The way that Foucault uses the term governmentality develops through out his lectures. He introduces the concept by situating it within "sovereignty-discipline-government triad", but later he uses it mainly as a "conducting conduct" (Fletcher, 2010, p. 173). Finally, in the following year's lectures he makes a distinction between 'disciplinary' and 'neoliberal' modes of governmentality. 'Disciplinary governmentality' comes out of internalization of ethical standards and social norms, such that the fear of not abiding by the rules acts as a motivator for individuals to exercise these norms over themselves and one another (Foucault, 2008, p. 260). Neoliberal governmentality drives from the manipulation of incentives for individuals to behave appropriately (Fletcher, 2010, p. 174). Rather than internal suppression of

individuals it has more of an external characteristic, which acts on the environment by constantly shaping it (Foucault, 2008, p. 271).

Besides the above-mentioned two forms of governmentality, Foucault describes two others; sovereign power as another form of governmentality (Foucault, 2008, p. 312) and the 'art of government according to truth' (311). Within sovereign power as a form of governmentality, obedience to sovereign power through the fear of punishment described as the key to overcome the compelling subjects (Fletcher, 2010, p. 176). It is important to keep in mind that all these governmentalities are not mutually exclusive to one another[31]. However, the fourth one is yet a bit different than the rest, which relies on spiritual forces and perception of the nature of life. It is called the 'art of government according to truth' (Foucault, 2008, p. 311).

Fletcher describes these Foucauldian governmentalities within the debate of conservation and environmentalism as distinct environmentalities (Fletcher, 2010, pp. 176-178). 'Neoliberal environmentality' as mentioned earlier is a market-based one, which is related to commodification, marketization and privatization of resources. 'Disciplinary environmentality' on the other hand prioritizes the creation of 'environmental subjects' through the dissemination of ethical norms (Fletcher, 2010, p. 176). Additionally, he relates 'sovereign environmentality' to conservation approach within which the protection of the area is done by "fences and fines strategy" (Fletcher, 2010, p.176). Lastly, the fourth type of environmentality that is related to Foucault's 'art of government according to truth' can be seen in the indigenous societies where traditional knowledge plays an important role in alternative use of resources (Berkes, 2008).

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[31] For further elaboration on disciplinary power, sovereign power and biopower, please refer to Foucault's earlier (1976-1967) lecture series *Society must be defended* (2003). Additionally, Lemke's *'The birth of bio-politics': Michel Foucault's lecture at the College de France on neoliberal governmentality* (2001) is a good source for understanding Foucault's account of neoliberal governmentality.

By neoliberalism rendering the social domain economic, the reduction of (welfare) state services necessitates the increasing need of 'personal responsibility' and 'self-care' (Lemke, 2001, p. 203). Rather than the state providing welfare services, the citizens themselves acquire the necessary motivation to do so themselves. Thus, being a member of the community or a family and relying on its protective shield rather than that of the state (Larner, 2000, p. 246), is one of the common inevitable results that can be seen within a neoliberal form of governmentality.

Neoliberal forms of governmentality generated by modern states makes the state's coercive methods applicable in the administration of the individual and collective existence of the community. On one hand the use of it gives them a legitimate tool to govern the compelling subjects through one of the most suitable ways of neoliberalization of nature, which is commodification of natural resources.

On the other hand, it changes the valuation of nature, which indeed at the end gives the community a new motivation or a bond to fight for their living environment that is threatened by the development ideal of the state. To overcome the feeling of insecurity, isolation and loneliness, their community bond is strengthened (Kaya, 2012, p. 15). It is not a bond created by ethnicity but mostly the material conditions (Wimmer, 2009). The "puissance" in Michel Maffesoli's terminology, the inherent energy and vital force of these people is indeed quite powerful compared to the power of formal institutions (Maffesoli, 1996, p. 1). As they realize the internal power they got which is shaped within a community, they become ardent supporters for the survival of their environment, hence the 'activist' environmentalists.

Swyngedouw (2006) links social power and water where he describes the politically excluded, socially marginalized and economically disadvantaged groups as

the groups that suffer the most in the case of holding on to their water, which is the opposite case of powerful social groups (Swyngedouw, 2006, p. 63). This kind of power is also linked to the issue of recognition, which is a significant component of justice (Işlar, 2012, p. 322; Schlosberg, 1999, p. 12). In understanding the injustice to societies or talk about an environmental injustice specifically we have to understand how the society or the group in question is recognized. It is only then we can understand their main motivation for struggle and resistance.

Justice has always been an issue related to distribution. Fraser (1997, 1998, 2000), Young (1990) and Schlosberg (1999, 2004) argue that while recognition is also a big part of this process, it has often been neglected until recently. Authors argue that they are not trying to move beyond distribution or in anyway reject the distributional approach, but believe recognition is not automatically included in such theories as it should have been (Schlosberg, 2004, p. 521). Especially for the environmental justice movements, it should be taken as a key element since their main demand is participation, which they have been deprived of as a result of malrecognition (523). This is quite evident in larger projects like REDD[32] (as mentioned in Chapter 2 under carbon trade and Turkey) concerning the indigenous communities. They seek for recognition of their cultural ties with nature. Moreover, this is also an issue in environmental justice movements mainly in small or developing countries with the issues of privatization of natural resources. Therefore, understanding the local community attribution to nature and privatization of these natural resources where in most cases they have been excluded from participation and have become alienated is quite important to deepen the understanding of how they become environmental activists themselves.

[32] REDD is a program of UN-Reduced emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. Further details can be found in Chapter 2 under 2.1.1.

1.4. Environmentalism: the Protection and Management of Nature

Seeing nature no more than an economic resource was the common perception among political thinkers until 1960s. This is mainly changed by the realization of such exploitation of nature may well be the end of human beings (Heywood, 1992, p. 242). In other words, as the consequences of nature's exploitation became visible to human beings, they got concerned about their own future.

Environmentalism[33] however is a term that is used since 1950s, which at its heart accepts the belief that "human life can only be understood in the context of the natural world" (Heywood, 1992, p. 243). Modern environmental politics dates back to 1960s, whereas many have suggested that the root of that environmentalism goes even way back than that, much to ancient pagan religions, or to Eastern religions such as Hunduism, Buddhism and Taoism (the concept of Earth Mother) (Martinez-Alier, 2002, p. 2; Heywood, 1992, p. 243).

The conventional political thought enables us to see how human beings have perceived the world. Needless to say, it is mainly anthropocentric where human beings are perceived as the centerpiece of existence. "In the words of John Locke: they became the masters and possessors of nature" (Heywood, 1992, p. 245). Environmentalism tries to differentiate itself from the anthropocentric worldview. Within this new style of politics, human beings no longer are the centerpiece but regarded as an inseparable part of nature. Thus, environmentalism defines nature "as a network of precious but fragile relationships between living species, including the

[33] Definition or classification of environmentalism is quite hard since it includes many different categories. As Schlosberg says "environmentalism is simply a convenience" (Schlosberg, 1999, p. 3). Even the narrative that conceptualizes major waves of environmentalism that is used in this thesis is excluding many other valid definitions and leaves out an array of other urban environmentalisms. It is important to acknowledge the diversity in the movement. However, this thesis has no claim to analyze or classify all the available types of environmentalisms since that is indeed a big task in itself.

human race, and the natural environment" (Heywood ,1992, p. 246).

The central piece of all forms of environmentalism is ecology. The term ecology, which used as early as 1858 by Ernst Haeckel refer to "a branch of biology, which studies the relationship amongst living organisms and their environment" (Heywood, 1992, p. 243).

There are differing views among environmentalists regarding their vision of nature and the place of human beings within it. Some see ecology as a tool to human survival and wellbeing. Thus, within this understanding the nature is protected, conserved and valued only to sustain human life (Heywood, 1992, p. 248). On the contrary, some within the environmental movement believe that human superiority within nature is a belief that should be tossed away since human life is only one of the elements to help sustain life, not the other way around (248). This idea is mainly centered on the vision of nature being an interrelated whole where humankind is merely one organism within (248).

Within this 'biocentric' attitude protecting nature for its own sake and seeing it sacred are the common values that have no common standard of measurement for valuation. This biocentric attitude is mainly held by the 'deep ecology movement'[34],

[34] 'Deep ecology movement' is an all-encompassing philosophical understanding that truly defends the preservation of nature. The general goal of deep ecology is preserving the nature as 'wild and free' and possibly by limiting any human impact on nature (Barry, 1999, p. 14). "Wilderness preservation, human population control and simple living" are defined as the basic goals of this movement (Barry, 1999, p. 14). Arne Naess is the founder of deep ecology movement. His primary works can be listed as "*The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A summary*" (1973), "*Intuition, Intrinsic value and Deep Ecology*" (1984), "*Deep Ecology and Ultimate Premises" (1988), "Community, Ecology and Lifestyle*" (1989). He has been largely affected by Rachel Carson's book of "*Silent Spring*" (1962). This book that largely affects his vision in creating deep ecology movement is largely referred as one of the most influential books of its time. In her book Rachel Carson portrays with case studies the harmful effects of the use of chemical pesticides. In short, this book created a major consciousness about the detrimental effects of using unnatural ways to interfere the Nature. A selection of Naess's works, which gives an overview about deep ecology, can be found in Dregson and Inoue eds. "*The Deep Ecology Movement: An Introductory Anthology*" (1995). Dregson and Inoue see the 1990s environmentalism as the "shallow" environmentalism, which "advocates economic growth and environmental protection by means technological innovation (such as catalytic converters), 'scientific' resource management (such as sustained yield forestry), and mild changes in lifestyle (such as recycling)". Whereas deep ecology deals with questions like values, worldviews and personal

which mainly is in opposition to anthropocentric attitude (Martinez-Alier, 2002, p. 3). This attitude led humans to behave as if nature exists on the outside and with a mindset to rule over it in the relationship they have formed with nature. This is due to the understanding born of this mindset that concepts such as 'protection' and 'conservation'[35] have appeared in language as they pertain to nature.

The first views and practices that shaped the protective field based on the relationship between nature and humans are called the ***cult of wilderness***. This concept was developed to describe how humans miss nature, as their connection to nature has declined with modernization, and the attitude they have towards nature as a result (Martinez-Alier, 2002; Nash, 2014). According to Nash, this uniquely American concept is built on the idea that wild life needs protection and saving from humans to survive (Nash, 2014). The establishment of the first national parks and the first natural conservation acts are the results of such an environmental protection oriented approach. On the other hand, as an extension of this approach, local communities have been displaced, as they are seen to be consuming the natural resources in these areas and constituting a threat for the continuation of wild life (Talbot, 1998, p. 326). Thus, this mindset excludes nature and humans as an idealized part of nature, in a sense, because it is based on the idea that nature should be

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lifestyles which indeed would be transformed by examining the roots of our environmental problems (Dregson, A.; Inoue, Y.; 1995, xix).
"Naess uses the term deep ecology movement to refer to a broad ecocentric grassroots effort, as contrasted with an anthropocentric, technocratic approach, to achieve an ecologically balanced future". And reserves the term deep ecology as a part of environmental philosophy of 'self-realization' (ibid, xxi).

[35] "Protection" and "Conservation" are quite problematic conceptualizations. Especially in a market mechanism it is impossible to protect the original qualities of a nature's being. As Gaye Yılmaz points out, this is particularly important since this understanding paves the way for commodification of cultural and natural beings. For further reading please refer to Yılmaz (2011). Gaye Yılmaz, "'Koruma'dan, 'Kurtarma'ya Geçiş Sürecinde Doğal Varlıklar: Doğa ve Kültürün Metalaşması" *Koruma ve Peyzaj Mimarlığı Sempozyumu* Bildiriler Kitabı, 2011. Within the scope of this thesis, the differences between the historical, intellectual and practical usage of these concepts are disregarded.

protected without human contact/intervention.

The second basic relationship forged with nature that aims to protect nature is defined as the *gospel of eco-efficiency* (Martinez-Alier, 2002). Dating back to the late 19th century-early 20th century, this movement developed for the more efficient use and conservation of natural resources in the rapidly industrializing United States of America, and later took on a defining role in the relationship between society and nature in the face of the environmental destruction during the industrialization in Europe as well (Martinez-Alier, 2002, p. 8). The movement led by Gifford Pinchot is based on sustainable development, ecological modernization and the rational use of resources (5). Instead of seeing nature itself as 'wild life' or as the holy unity of flora and fauna, it utilizes a more economic and technological lens to manage nature and ensure its efficient use. It is thus that natural 'resources' and 'environmental benefit' that are used more often in this approach have replaced nature as terms (Martinez-Alier, 2002, pp. 5-7).

Within this context, the *gospel of eco-efficiency* can be tied into Hardin's *tragedy of commons* theory (Hardin 1968). As noted in the previous section, Hardin holds that unless common spaces are regulated according to certain rules, penalties and property relations, it is inevitable that users will prioritize their own interests and abuse natural resources (Hardin, 1968, pp. 1243-1248). In other words, according to Hardin, users will behave in a utilitarian manner in their use of common spaces, which will result consumption of the unregulated common wealth. This in turn will conclude with the total exploitation of the resources of that area. In the case of nature, this type of sharing and use could have irrevocable, tragic consequences. Hence, Hardin suggests that these areas should be privatized and regulated within a private property framework to ensure efficient use. Private spaces with clear boundaries and whose

ownership is known are to create more efficient results in terms of nature's sustainability. The rational use of natural resources and the regulation of owner-less areas could prevent waste and environmental destruction. Thus, both approaches support the production of green energy for a more sustainable nature. In fact, for them, creating energy using water and privatizing and gaining control over resources may even seem like an excellent idea.

A look at movements related to the environment reveals that the first two schools of thought are still alive and that the 'protection' and 'conservation' perception in terms of nature manifest themselves in different ways. The timing and origin of the 'protection' and 'conservation' perception in societies has been a topic of discussion in the social sciences, as well. Inglehart (1977) says that these perceptions could be referred to as post-materialist and only come about when the material needs necessary for survival are more or less fulfilled. In other words, in situations where survival is the main concern, this kind of a perception is not present. This explains why environmentalism, human rights protection, animal rights activism and other social concerns and work led by NGOs are more prevalent in societies where certain material needs are met. For example, Inglehart attributes the high sensitivity of Scandinavian countries towards environmental issues, despite their lack of pollution, to the level of prosperity and to their possession of post materialistic values (Inglehart, 1995, p. 57).

This is not to say that the perception of environmentalism or the struggle for the environment only appears in societies where material needs are met. There are certainly situations to the contrary. In fact, the theoretical claim that environmentalism is seen in societies with little financial concern does not explain how environmental problems can have adverse effects on the livelihood/living

standards/prosperity of people, nor the type of environmentalism that can appear when it limits their ability to fulfill their material needs. Therefore, the post materialistic understanding has received much criticism and been found wanting (Martinez-Alier, 2002; Dunlap &York, 2008, pp. 529-563).

Regardless of the claim that higher levels of prosperity is conducive to the appearance of awareness on issues such as environmentalism, research shows that environmentalism is not an idea monopolized by wealthier countries (Martinez-Alier, 2002, 2010, pp.58-87; Dunlap & York, 2008). To the contrary, citizens in less well off countries have similar – sometimes greater degrees of- sensitivity to the environment (Martinez-Alier, 2010, p. 58). In support of this argument, the third type of relationship described below makes up for this insufficiency of the post materialistic protection understanding.

Martinez-Alier and Ramachandra Guha define a third form of relationship within the field of nature protection and refer to it as the ***environmentalism of the poor***. This movement that is seen since the mid1980s, is also known as the *livelihood ecology* (Gari, 2000 in Martinez-Alier, 2002) or the *liberation ecology* (Peet & Watts, 2004). This relatively new nature protectionist wave was born of the local, regional and global ecological distribution disparities caused by economic development and social inequalities, and developed within the framework of the struggle of the poor who had internalized a lifestyle integrated into nature against threats to their living space (Martinez-Alier, 2002, p. 14).

The environmentalism of the poor sees it necessary to protect nature not for the sake of its aesthetic beauty as in the *wildlife cult*, but for the economic dependence of the locals on nature. Therefore, they feel obliged to protect the environment in order to sustain their lives (Martinez-Alier, 2002, p. 1). Although this movement says that

the poor act in order to protect the environment against companies and government that mean to destroy nature, it does not claim that they will always act in the interest of the environment. To the contrary, it also states that some of what they do in their daily lives can harm the environment. However, the fact that nature and the environment are an irreplaceable part of their livelihood is suggested as a fundamental factor encouraging their environmentalism (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, 2014, p. 169).

The environmentalism of the poor framework has been adapted to many places especially in the developing world. Adaman, Akbulut, and Arsel in their forthcoming publication found the theoretical framework missing to complete the picture in *Artvin* concerning HEPPs. As they question Martinez-Alier's theorization of environmentalism of the poor they introduce a concept as "environmentalism of the malcontent" based on their empirical research in *Artvin*. Akbulut (2014) used this conceptualization to explain the motivation for resistance against the coal plant in *Gerze*. Adaman, Akbulut, and Arsel argue that the main motivation behind the resistance of HEPPs is not the protection of local community's livelihood but mainly is their long lasting opposition to state and the struggle with neoliberal transformation forced by the state (Adaman, Akbulut & Arsel, forthcoming). This could be the case for some places of *Artvin* but not necessarily a whole encompassing framework for HEPP resistance.

The theoretical framework of the environmentalism of the poor was revisited by Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier (2014) and Martinez-Alier (2014) assessed in the light of new societal dynamics. According to Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, the struggles the poor and the local residents put up are usually defined based on economic valuations, but also often they are seen to protest against environmental

destruction through rights, cultural values and emotional connection. The valuation languages play an important role in this regard (Martinez-Alier, 2014, p. 239-241). Accordingly, the fact that communities protect their living spaces based on their emotional ties to nature, a sense of the sacred and cultural values adds a new dimension to the understanding of the environmentalism of the poor. Chapter 4 of this thesis elaborates on this framework with the latest contribution of Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier concerning the HEPP resistance in *Solaklı* Valley, Trabzon. In fact, Martinez-Alier state that this movement also defined with the concepts of *"popular environmentalism, livelihood ecology, liberation ecology and the movement for environmental justice"* will play an integral part in the progress that societies make in the direction of social justice and ecological sustainability (Martinez-Alier, 2014, p.241).

Therefore, for the sake of this thesis understanding the local community and their attribution to the nature and water enables us to further understand how they become the ardent environmentalists concerning their living space. Rather than the first theorization of environmentalism of the poor the later contributions to the theory bring out the cultural dimension (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, 2014) and importance of valuation languages (Martinez-Alier, 2014) especially for environmentalism and environmental justice movements. Within formation of the struggle that is observed in the eastern Black Sea region, the valuation languages (Martinez-Alier et al., 2010; Martinez-Alier, 2014), recognition (Fraser 2000; Schlosberg 2004; Işlar 2012), perspective and governance of the state towards nature play a tremendous role.

As a part of the governance of the state towards nature it is important to keep in mind the modernization and development ideal that the state relentlessly pursues.

Without it further legitimization of state's authority or persuasion for its development projects cannot be understood. Thus, understanding the nature of resistance among the local community against such projects would be incomplete without a through elaboration of the role of the state in line with the pursued development and modernization ideals and how neoliberal governmentality plays a role in environmental governance.

CHAPTER 2:

TURKEY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUH HYDROPOWER: GROWTH FETISHISM

This chapter specifically focuses on the understanding of sustainable development in Turkey, particularly concerning hydropower. This understanding of development is one of the keystones for understanding how government policies turn into action in environmental governance.

Turkey is in a problematic zone with regards to environmental protection since one of its major priorities has always been development. Also, when development is confused with growth, the picture gets even more complicated. The current AKP (Justice and Development Party) government in Turkey, who has been in power since 2002, has prioritized "development", and the capital inflow to the country thus fulfilled its duty as a state to provide the necessary changes that the last stage of capitalism, neoliberalism demands from states. That is why; the first part of this chapter is focusing on how neoliberalism has taken its course in Turkey and how it becomes a dominant discourse in nature's governance.

The second part of this chapter, the sections 2.2, 2.3, and 2.4, aims to lay out the role of HEPPs and hydropower as a part of the sustainable development ideal in Turkey. First part, aims to answer the questions like what the HEPPs are, how they work, and what the advantages and disadvantages are of using hydropower. The picture in Turkey concerning HEPPs gives references to other countries in the world in a comparative perspective.

In the third part of this chapter, in section 2.3, the legal framework for HEPPs will be clarified. This is one of the major concerns of the local population in question concerning HEPPs. The change of legal framework regarding HEPPs leaves many areas problematic and hence creates vulnerabilities for the local communities near HEPP construction sites. Following this framework, the final part of this chapter, section 2.4, tries to assess the vulnerabilities of those local communities using a rights based approach.

2.1. Neoliberalization of Nature in Turkey: Growth Fetishism and Sustainable Development

In order to understand the intertwined relationship between the capital, development, ecology and their reflections in Turkey, we have to understand how neoliberalism (the latest version of capital accumulation today) perceives nature[36]. Neoliberalism actually behaves as if it is a "solution" to the 1970s accumulation crises, which indeed excelled capitalism to its latest version (Şengül 2008: 67). In other words, it seems like neoliberalism fulfills the capital's expectations while providing the "solution". Even though it is portrayed as a solution, its ecological results are often fatal for the environment.

According to neoliberalism, environment and natural resources are the important values and more importantly the means of production in capital accumulation. Unfortunately, one way or the other nature is commodified. Those natural resources (seeing it as a 'resource' for production in itself is problematic) are turned into commodities valued by their exchange value.

Proponents of the neoliberal market promote market tools to protect nature,

[36] The details of neoliberalization of nature can be found in Chapter 1, within the theoretical framework of the thesis.

like privatization and commodification, as it was mentioned earlier in more detail in the previous theoretical chapter. Because according to many who are ardent supporters of neoliberalism, this is the only way to protect nature and to sustain development and it is combined in the "sustainable development" paradigm (Şengül, 2008, p. 72). However, the critics of neoliberal policies argue that such policies have destructing impact on the environment and in no way are contributing to sustainable development since the competitive market forces are exploiting whatever they can for profit and accumulation (Haque, 1999, p. 206). The market is prioritized under the neoliberal state (pro-market state), which also means that welfare policies are rolled back. Particularly, in developing countries such neglect of social welfare has created worsening of conditions in terms of poverty and inequality (206). Despite the arguments to the contrary, implementation of the neoliberal regime in developing countries has serious adverse effects on the realization of sustainable development (Haque, 1999, p. 211). Haque argues that the overemphasis of the economic growth in sustainable development in reality neglected the inequalities in income distribution and the growing poverty, which at the end caused sustainable development to be a never achieved goal (214). Whether that is particularly a goal that can be sustainable for the environment is yet another question.

Especially USA and European countries' rapid industrialization during Cold War Era deepened the ecological crises. However, they found ways to overcome the accumulation crises and ecological crises by globally distributing the production where they exported environmentally destructive production lines to the rest of the world (Şengül, 2008, p. 69). Therefore, the ecological crises in such periphery countries are intertwined with the neoliberal accumulation model. This is the main reason why underdeveloped and developing countries couldn't cry out for protecting

their environment for so long. Their first priority under these circumstances is "development" (Şengül, 2008, p. 69). In other words, this development ideal undermines the ecological crises in such countries.

Turkey is not really an exception in that respect. Development is the core of neoliberal transformation in Turkey. Since 1980s the transformation in economy and integration to the global markets with a smaller state took place in Turkey. One of the major areas that affected from this is nature. The transformation of nature took place within the framework of "sustainable development", which indeed opts for the "commodification and privatization" of the resources (Şengül, 2008, p. 68).

Development ideal in Turkey is not new. It has been the project of the Turkish Republic from its foundation in 1923 (Şengül, 2008, p. 72). Capitalism began growing its roots as early as 1908 in Turkey (Boratav, 2004, p. 202). The state tried to create a national economy through the accumulation of capital in the hands of a national bourgeoisie. Many incentives were given in order to support the creation of this Muslim-Turkish bourgeoisie (Toprak, 1995, p. 7) and this was perceived as the corner stone of modernization[37] and development in Turkey (Boratav, 2004, p. 40). The two, modernization and development supposedly move hand in hand.

The first attempt of industrialization took place in the 1930s with State Economic Enterprises (SEEs). SEEs were trying to substitute the production of imported goods within the Turkish state via the newly established factories (Pamuk, 2000, pp. 321-338). The great depression of 1929 was one of the turning points in Turkish economy where inward looking import substitution methods have started to be used (Boratav, 1992, pp. 264-301). Having copper and iron-steel factories, places

[37] Especially in the provinces of Turkey the modernization process had to create its own structure. Micheal Meeker (2001) examines the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic focusing on the Black Sea region of Turkey. He argues that a state-oriented provincial oligarchy played an important role in determining the outcome of the modernization process. This network of key individuals and rooted families are key for any reforms or programs there to be implemented.

like Karabük and Murgul are among those that initially encountered environmental problems during this period (Şengül, 2008, p. 73).

Environmental concerns were not a priority during WWII and its aftermath until the 1970s. This was parallel to global trends, not unique to Turkey. The 3rd Five Year Development Plan (1973-1977) prioritizes development, especially in the form of sustainable development, which can be regarded as one of the first documents of environmental policies of Turkey (Şengül, 2008, p. 74).

Continuing with the development ideal, a new era of economic liberalization namely neoliberalism started in Turkey after 1980. The start date for a new era for economy in Turkey was 24 January 1980. The government has reconstructed economy with a new package, which opened country borders to foreign capital. This was the beginning of privatization, deregulation, export subventions and trade liberalization (Gündüz, 2015, p. 41). The government at the time of the intervention was called the Justice Party (Adalet Partisi) headed by Süleyman Demirel. Within that government Turgut Özal, who will be known with his later duties mostly, was responsible of planning this economic restructuring. Couple months later, the military coup of 1980 took place, and the full control of the state was in the hands of the military for 3 years to come. With the suspension of parliamentary politics, closure of the political parties and the suppression of any kind of civil society or labor union movement created a possible environment for 24 January Decisions to be applied without any opposition (Önder, 2007, p. 235). The Import Substitution Industrialization model that was in practice since 1960 was left and a new Export Oriented Economic model was implemented [38]. Therefore, it won't be an

[38] For further information on ISI and Export-oriented economy the following references can be used: Aydın, Z. (2005) "The State." *The Political Economy of Turkey*, London: Pluto Press; Boratav, K. (2004) "VII. İçe Dönük, Dışa Bağımlı Genişleme (1962-1976) ve Yeni Bunalım (1977-1979)" *1908-2005 Türkiye İktisat Tarihi*, Ankara: İmge Kitabevi;

exaggeration to argue that neoliberalism has been embraced in Turkey mainly after the 1980 military intervention. Especially, with the 1982 constitution[39] the power of the executive is increased, which enabled the government to implement and take rapid decisions. This indeed made the government and the prime minister quite powerful concerning with regards to economic policy (Önder, 2007, p. 235). The consequent civil government in 1983 led by Turgut Özal started the implementation of neoliberal economic policies as a part of the structural adjustment program of IMF. Any kind of leftist organizations were suppressed, restrictions on trade was lifted, and the government was no longer subsidizing the small farmers or peasants but giving credits to those who are doing trade. New regulations that eased the trade made many who are closer to the government to get rich. A new area has started with export-oriented economic model. As a part of this neoliberal discourse, privatization has begun.

In the beginning of the 1990s, one of the major steps for neoliberal transformation was initiated by the World Bank by the credits given to privatization of some sectors such as infrastructure, energy and water (Şengül, 2008, p. 84). But yet, the transformation accelerated with a great pace during 2000s especially after 2005 with the changes in regulations (Şengül, 2008, p. 84).

The rise of Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi, AKP)

Utkulu, U. (2001) "The Turkish Economy: Past and Present", in D. Lowatt (ed.), *Turkey since 1970: Politics, Economics and Society*, New York: Palgrave; Boratav, K.; Ç. Keyder and S. Pamuk 1984 *Krizin Gelisimi ve Türkiye'nin Alternatif Sorunu.* Istanbul: Kaynak Yayınları; Boratav, K. 1988 *Türkiye Iktisat Tarihi 1908-1985.* Istanbul: Gerçek Yayinevi; Eralp, A. 1990 "The Politics of Turkish Development Strategies." in A. Finkel and N. Sirman (eds.) *Turkish State, Turkish Society.* London and New York: Routledge.

[39] Within the 1982 constitution there is even an article concerning the environment. Article 56: "Everybody has the right to live in a healthy and balanced environment and that improving the environment, protecting the health of environment and preventing environmental pollution is the duty of both the state and individual" (Harris & Işlar, 2013, p. 54). But yet, despite this language Turkish state's relation with the environment is mainly determined by the growth and developmental discourse (Cerit-Mazlum, 2006).

that came to power in 2002 marks the beginning of neoliberalism's culmination in Turkey. The Islamist party had managed to combine cultural-religious conservatism with liberal economy (Gündüz, 2015, p. 41). The party became an ardent supporter of private capital and neoliberal market. Under the rule of AKP, since the state had no role in production, it eased the procedure for private companies to produce. According to Gündüz, the two main premises of the party's economic plan are consumer credits, and rant gains via commercialization of the commons (Gündüz, 2015, p. 42).

The aftermath of the 2001 crisis was a favorable environment for privatization in Turkey. One of the major actors of this experience was the AKP government who managed to put together a 'pro-privatization coalition' (Öniş, 2011, p. 708). According to Öniş, power of the external anchors should not be underestimated within such processes of privatization. Especially the 2001 crisis made Turkey dependent on the IMF and World Bank more than the position of Turkey in 1999 crisis (Öniş, 2011, p. 718). Thus, with the lead of these institutions a new wave of regulatory reforms took place, which indeed accelerated the privatization in Turkey for foreign and national companies (719). The big sales like the privatization of TÜPRAŞ (2005), a major oil-refining complex, the sale of Erdemir, a steel manufacturing enterprise (2005) and the privatization of TEKEL, a tobacco products manufacturer (2009-2010) created major opposition in different circles and with the lay-offs it produced left many vulnerable economically (Öniş, 2011, p. 719-721). However, as Önder argues the neoliberal reforms and transformation in Turkey has been disappointing since the economic crisis continued to reoccur with increased inequalities and political tensions (Önder, 2007, p. 230). The privatization efforts did not end there and also continued in the previously uncommodified elements such as earth-land, and water. This type of

privatization is done in the name of "sustainable development". Moreover, the economic growth is shown as a support for the government actions.

The fixation on economic growth has fatal costs for the environment, commons and humans. Development, a major discourse utilized by the government, is often times confused with growth. The government opts for a 'modern' Turkey with unplanned, rant oriented 'development' projects, which ostensibly stimulate 'growth'. The construction of the third bridge over the Bosporus and the third airport in the lungs of Istanbul, the unstoppable construction of shopping malls, residences, implementation of nuclear plants, thermal and hydroelectric power plants are portrayed by the government as "development" projects for 'modernization' of Turkey. But the cost is too high. Recklessness, rant oriented projects cost the lives of many[40] in the mining sector (very recently happened in Soma[41]), in the construction sector (during the construction of the 3rd bridge[42], in Tuzla[43], in construction sites all over Turkey but mainly in Istanbul), and the livelihoods of local population in many villages (like Yırca[44]).

One of major discourses that the government uses in order to achieve growth

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[40] The latest almanac 2015 for workers' death/murder was released by *Adalet Arayana Destek Grubu* (Support Group for those who search for Justice). According to their research 1703 workers died in 2015, 45 of them were children. Available at: http://www.agos.com.tr/tr/yazi/14328/is-cinayetleri-almanagi-2015-cikti

[41] For a detailed analysis about the *Soma* incident in Turkey, with the record of largest number casualties so far, you can refer to Spada & Burgher 2016.

[42] Bianet, "3. Köprü İnşaatında 3 İşçi öldü", April 6, 2014 available at: http://bianet.org/bianet/toplum/154742-3-kopru-insaatinda-3-isci-oldu. Furthermore, another incident took place in May 2015: Bianet, "İş Cinayetleri Durmuyor, Üçüncü Köprü Ölüm Saçmaya Devam Ediyor" May 8, 2015 available at http://www.birgun.net/haber-detay/is-cinayetleri-durmuyor-ucuncu-kopru-olum-sacmaya-devam-ediyor-78544.html

[43] Saymaz, İ. (2013, May 17). Tuzla tersanelerinde 159. ölüm nasıl geldi? *Radikal*. Available at: http://www.radikal.com.tr/ekonomi/tuzla-tersanelerinde-159-olum-nasil-geldi-1133861/

[44] A great destruction of the environment and the destruction of the livelihood of local population took place in *Yırca* by cutting down over 6600 olive trees. The years old trees where cut down in order for a private company called *Kolin* to build a thermal power plant in the area. Greenpeace *Akdeniz*, "Yırca'da Neler Oldu?" May 20, 2015 available at: http://www.greenpeace.org/turkey/tr/news/yircada-neler-oldu-200515/.

and further development in Turkey for a 'modern' Turkey is to eliminate energy dependency. Turkey imports 98.6 percent of its gas, 93 percent of its oil, and 92 percent of its coal (Gündüz, 2015, p. 44). Therefore, the government's discourse is framed as if Turkey is not utilizing its own natural resources to provide for its energy needs. Even though these numbers can be utilized in favor of government's efforts to extract more, and exploit more natural resources to provide energy, Gündüz declares that the government projections of energy need is not accurate, indeed at least 25 percent higher than the reality (Gündüz, 2015, p. 46).

Rather than the numbers regarding energy needs and consumption in Turkey, it is important to keep in mind how the government targets its goal of non-dependency in the energy sector. The whole process of extraction of natural resources, building thermal and nuclear power plants are very problematic and addressed by many of the leading environmental groups and non-governmental organizations in Turkey. Apart from that, the renewable potential in Turkey is portrayed as a solution by many of these environmental groups but yet its human and social costs are being disregarded.

The major arguments/discourses that the current AKP government uses to push for renewable energy resources can be listed as follows. As mentioned above, one of the major arguments to prioritize the exploitation of national resources such as water is to achieve non-dependency in the energy sector. And generating energy from water is ostensibly accepted as one of the clean ways of doing it. It is also evident in the understanding of ministries related to water and State Hydraulic Works (*Devlet Su İşleri Genel Müdürlüğü* (DSI)) that they see water as an economic good to be utilized for the good of the society[45]. The uninterrupted ideal of development, wins over the

[45] Their mission statement is as follows: "The Mission of DSI is to utilize water resources of Turkey, safeguard against losses of floods and droughts, and develop land and water resources taking into

protection and sustainability of nature every time since the stakes is too high to be overlooked by the capital.

As Öniş was arguing the external anchors and supposedly as a candidate country aligning with the European Union[46] (EU) *acquis* is another major discourse strengthens the hand of the government (Harris & Işlar 2013, p. 67). The coalition of the capital and government gives the government further space to maneuver to promote these kind of developmental projects. The privatization of natural resources especially with small-scale projects is largely favored by the credit agencies such as the European Credit Agencies and World Bank. The hydroelectric power plants are regarded as small projects by those external anchors and given credits much more easily than the other big scale projects (Harris & Işlar 2013, p. 56).

Besides these external anchors, available credit agencies, eliminating energy dependency with a clean solution, HEPPs present a significant option for business. Being a part of the carbon market is considered as an option to reduce GHG emissions and it's beneficial for business. In Turkey, however due to factors mentioned below

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account scientific and technical principles, and nation's interests" (DSI, 2012a, p. 7). DSI sees water as a resource that is in possession of the state, which indeed should be used regarding the national interests. From an anthropocentric view water is there to serve humans. This indeed is largely in line with the government's views that is quoted in current President, *Erdoğan's* speech in Chapter 4 claiming that the "water is running in vein" (*Sular boşa akıyor*) concerning the need to capture them and exploit whatever we can from them through HEPPs. Moreover, with a structural reform in 2011 Ministry of Forestry and Environment is separated into two ministries; Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs (Harris & Işlar 2013, p. 57). DSİ is put under the second one. Even this separation needs further research to accurately determine state's perception and use of nature. Having a ministry of two controversial concepts like Environment and urbanization, where the latter includes the destruction of the former in may ways, does add up to the anthropocentric attitude of the state towards nature even to the extent of utilitarianism. But this might be a topic for further research since the scope of this thesis does not cover it.

[46] European Union has over 561 laws and legislations concerning the environment. Thus, EU standards for environment can be considered as one of the highest and encompassing legislative framework in the world (Tuncay 2006). For further information about Turkish adaptation of the legislation concerning the environment please refer to *TÜSİAD* report "*Avrupa Birliği Çevre Mevzuatına Uyum süreci*" (pp.37-97). EU has been an anchor for Turkey for many legislations. But yet, in the process of harmonization with EU laws Turkey has yet to address several sections of the environmental framework. Particularly for water, there is Water Framework Directive (WFD) created to address the issues related to integrated river basin management for Europe. Many countries face challenges during its implementation. Moroglu, M., & Yazgan, M. S. (2008) elaborate on the implementation of EU water framework directive in Turkey.

the system is not fully operational but the potential for the private companies is nonetheless mouth watering. But how does carbon trade/market work? What is the position of Turkey within? The following section explains carbon trade and how much Turkey is integrated in it.

2.1.1 Turkey and the Carbon Trade

One of the important mitigation efforts for global warming is formulated by Kyoto Protocol in 1997 where countries decided to reduce GHG emissions. Under the protocol the countries are divided into three different categories according to their commitment to reduce emission by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN, 1998)[47]: Annex I (obliged to reduce GHG emissions), Annex II (The OECD[48] countries at the year 1992-obliged to transfer environmentally friendly technologies), and non-Annex countries (are encouraged to reduce GHG emissions).

The Annex I countries later also listed as Annex B, has given privileges to meet their target of reduction. The protocol introduced flexible market-based measures for these countries to meet the emission targets in a cost-effective manner. These incentives can be listed as Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), Joint Implementation (JI), and Emissions trading (ET) (United Nations (UN), 1998)[49]. But Turkey cannot benefit from these mechanisms here is why. Since Turkey is an OECD country, it was listed in both Annex I and II. With its rejection, it became listed only in Annex I but with its "special circumstances", which differentiates it from other Annex I countries. Therefore, since 2002 Turkey is listed in Annex I only. It became a party to the protocol in 2009. But due to its special status it didn't take part in

[47] http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf

[48] OECD stands for: The Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development.
[49] http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/convkp/kpeng.pdf

Annex B of the protocol, which means that it didn't undertake any emission reduction commitment (Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)) [50]. It is stated in the Turkish Republic's Foreign Ministry's website that Turkey is not going to take part in the second period of the Kyoto protocol, which covers 2012 to 2016 (MFA). Finally, it is stated that Turkey doesn't have "any quantified economy-wide Emissions Reduction Targets (QEERTs) under Kyoto Protocol until 2020" (Başsüllü & Tolunay, 2014, p. 159). Therefore, it is not a participant in flexible market mechanisms of the protocol (160). Turkey can only be a part of the voluntary carbon market. The introduction of Turkey to carbon market requires structural and institutional changes all of which are being planned until 2023 by the current AKP government. But yet, it is not easy to integrate Turkey to the Emission Trading System. It is also important to keep in mind that that integration would make a huge difference in carbon price. Market price in a voluntary market would be 5 Euros for a tone of carbon whereas in mandatory carbon market it raises up to 12-15 Euros.

However, carbon credits and the Emission Trading System are globally being utilized in different forms. One way is within the country itself. The governments decide on the limitation and quotas for pollution that the companies can make every year by issuing them carbon credits. Cleaner companies sell the credits that they don't use to companies that pollute too much. This could also be done between the countries. Secondly there is another way for a company that struggles to reduce their emissions. Such companies can buy carbon units by helping a factory/company/funding a project to reduce their carbon emissions in a developing country[51].

For example REDD, the United Nations Collaborative Programme on

[50] http://www.mfa.gov.tr/united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change-_unfccc_-and-the-kyoto-protocol.en.mfa

[51] http://ec.europa.eu/clima/policies/ets/index_en.htm

Reducing Emissions from deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries, is investing in forests of the global south to compensate for the pollution of northern industrialized countries[52]. The figure below shows how the carbon offset system actually works.

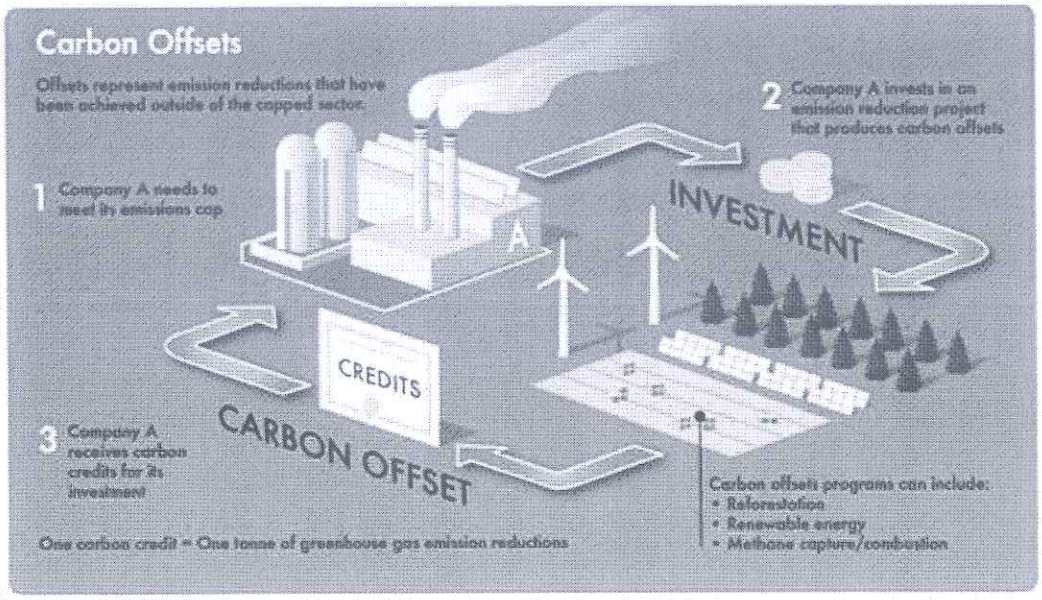

Figure 1. Carbon Offset mechanism, source: www.kusamala.org

Thus, it is criticized by many indigenous groups and environmental activists. The major reason behind their rejection of REDD is the privatization of natural resources. They believe that REDD is a carbon offset mechanism that buys the forests in the global south to be able to keep polluting in the industrialized north (Indigenous Environmental Network, (IEN)) [53]. The director of Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN), Tom B.K. Goldtooth, bluntly describes the issue as 'green washing their pollution'[54].

[52] http://www.un-redd.org
[53] IEN: Indigenous Environmental Network. It was established in 1990, in USA. Available at: www.ienearth.org
[54] For further information you can visit the official United Nations site available at: http://www.un-redd.org

2.2. Harnessing the Water and Common Understanding of HEPPs in Turkey

In order to understand the HEPP's, we should understand the hydraulic cycle and how humans intervened in the cycle. Hydraulic cycle is usually defined as a natural sequence of events in which water goes through all three physical states -gas, liquid, and solid- (not necessarily in this order). Water passes from the atmosphere to oceans and to land going through transformations, like evaporation, precipitation, freezing and melting. (Feitelson, 2000, pp. 535-536). The human intervention to the hydraulic cycle goes back to the Neolithic era, when farmers changed the course of the water from rivers for irrigation. The intervention however became quite complex and sophisticated in the modern world.

According to the findings of world commission on Dams (WCD) intervention for different purposes such as irrigation, domestic and industrial consumption, electricity generation and flood control has created benefits for many people in the world (World Commission on Dams (WCD), 2000, p. 9). The most common way of intervention is in the surface flows, mainly by constructing dams (Feitelson, 2000, p. 535). Especially, in the 20th century generating electricity was very much associated with constructing large dams (Paish, 2002, p. 538). Particularly the first half of the 20th century hydropower was the main force in energy generation before oil kicked in during the second half. But yet, in Europe and North America the decline of hydropower has been reversed with this new understanding of sustainability and search for renewable resources notably in the last two decades (Paish, 2002, p. 539-540).

Especially, with the increasing affects of climate change on human population, the renewable energy sources that are environment friendly are high in demand. However, recent data confirm that the share of renewable energy in the global energy

supply is only 12.9 percent (IPCC, 2011, p. 4). In that 12.9 percent share of renewable energy supply, biomass holds the first place with 10.2 percent whereas hydropower follows it with 2.3 percent (ibid). Nonetheless, among the energy sources, hydropower plants are found to be more efficient in generating electricity: They can convert 95 percent of the water's energy to electricity whereas the efficiency of fossil-fuel plants is about 60 percent and solar panel is only 18 percent (Dünya Enerji Konseyi Türk Milli Komitesi (DEKTMK), 2010, p. 69).

Besides its efficiency and its significant potential in reducing greenhouse gases (IPCC, 2011, p. 5), hydropower is also commonly preferred because it is cheaper and sustainable (Akpınar et al. 2011, p. 676). In other words, hydropower plants have the lowest operating costs and the longer period of facility life compared to the other electricity generating sources (676). Globally, 159 countries use hydropower for electricity generation (Kumar et al., 2011, p. 23). China, Canada, Brazil, the USA and Russia are the leading countries in world's hydropower production (World Energy Council (WEC), 2010, p. 53). By having a total of 83.2 percent and 58 percent share, Brazil and Canada respectively are the two important countries generating electricity with hydropower. Whereas the share of Russia, 17.6 percent, China 15.2 percent and US, 7.4 percent are much smaller compared to Brazil and Canada (Soito & Freitas, 2011, p. 3166).

Besides its clear advantages, the potential adverse affects of constructing hydropower plants have recently been discussed in literature (Mahanta, 2010; Brown, Magee & Xu, 2008; Vermeer, 2011). Even though China still holds its place as one of the leading countries in investing in hydropower plants, a slowdown can be observed in the approval and implementation of hydropower projects in China (Vermeer, 2011, p. 3). According to statistics provided by Vermeer between 1950-2000, two million

hectares of farmland were submerged and 12.5 million people were resettled as a result of the construction of 86.000 reservoirs in China (Vermeer, 2011, p. 10). The scholars are now analyzing the social consequences of these constructions together with the policy adaptations. Emerging evidence shows that these displaced populations are vulnerable to landlessness, joblessness, homelessness and food insecurity among many other adverse affects of resettlement (Brown et al., 2008, p. 21). Similar consequences were observed in Turkey in the case of dams with reservoirs like *Atatürk* Dam before, and now became an issue of concern with the upcoming construction of *Ilısu* Dam in southeastern part of Turkey within the framework of the Greater Anatolian Project (GAP). Even though GAP project has been researched in terms of its cultural impact and also its social impact on the populations in question mainly in the form of migration, the HEPPs still remain under-explored.

Besides dams another way of harnessing the water is done by tubes or canals mainly referred as HEPPs in Turkey. At this point it is important to clarify what HEPPs are in the context of Turkey by mentioning the distinction between the ways in which water is harnessed. Generally, there are two types of hydroelectric power plants one type is with storage referred as "dams"; an the other is without storage which is called the "river type hydroelectric power plants" with tubes or "canal type hydroelectric power plants" (Kumar et al., 2011, p. 16). Thus, the term would mean either one if no distinction is made in terms of whether they have a reservoir or not. Nonetheless, in Turkey the common usage of the term hydroelectric power plants usually refers to the second type, which is the river type with tubes (Hamsici, 2010, p. 33) or also referred as run-of-river type hydroelectric power plants (Özalp, Kurtoğlu, Yüksel & Yıldırımer, 2010; Kurdoğlu & Özalp 2010). Thus, for the purpose of this

project I use hydroelectric power plants (HEPP's) for the plants that are constructed as run-of-river type with tubes as shown in figure 2 below.

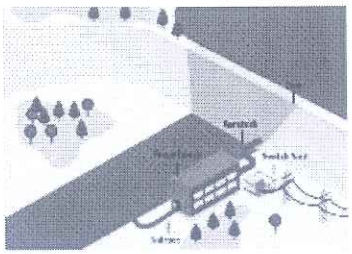

Figure 2. A hydropower plant with reservoir (source: Kumar et. al 2011: 17)

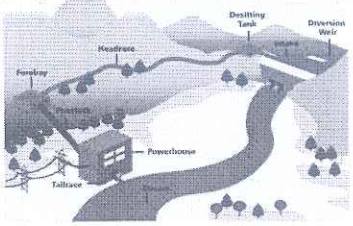

Figure 3. A typical run-off river hydropower plant (source: Kumar et al. 2011:17)

Hydroelectric power plants function simply by taking the water from its waterbed and then shooting it down from an elevation to turn some turbines, which produces electricity (Kumar et al., 2011, p. 17). Even though at first sight, it seems as if it has not much environmental or social impact. However, in some circumstances the positive contribution has been exceeded by negative social and economic impacts of these constructions. Especially the way the HEPPs are built in Turkey creates great concern among the people. However, the social impacts of constructing the HEPPs as they are constructed in Turkey cannot be found in the literature produced in Turkey. Mainly, the articles are discussing some of the environmental effects hydropower electric production.

The scholarly articles written in Turkey concerning the issue of hydropower commonly point out the fact that Turkey is an energy dependent country. Since its main indigenous energy resources are hydro and lignite, it should invest on the new renewable energy resources, mainly the hydropower (Akpınar et al., 2011, p. 1209). A recent study found that *Çoruh* river basin has a large potential for hydropower production particularly because of its topographic conditions (Akpınar et al., 2011,

pp. 1203-1209). Another case study found that *Zonguldak Ulutan* Dam is economically feasible and in accordance with the energy policy of Turkish government (Küçükali, 2010, pp. 2003-2007). But yet, in most of the literature the environmental impacts of these constructions are not addressed.

As an exception, some of the recent literature mention the environmental impacts of construction of dams and HEPPs. For example, there is a small section for environmental impacts of generating energy through hydropower in Uzlu, Akpınar & Kömürcü (2011) "The restructuring of Turkey's electricity market and the share of hydropower energy: The case of Eastern Black Sea Basin". In this section Uzlu et al. briefly state that in practice all forms of energy production have some kind of effects on the environment. For the case of HEPPs in Turkey preventing the connection between upstream and downstream of the facility can be counted as one (Uzlu et al., 2011, p. 686). Mainly, this problem has detectable effects on fish passages and the sediment transport (688). Nonetheless, the article concludes by stating that Eastern Black Sea basin in Turkey is one of the richest in hydroelectric energy potential that corresponds to 8.44% of the total electricity production in Turkey which equals to 10.42 % of the net electricity consumption of Turkey (Uzlu et al., 2011, p. 676-688).

Additionally, Aksungur, Ak & Özdemir (2011) points out the importance of diligence during the construction and management stages of these facilities since it has a large impact on the aquatic ecosystem particularly on fish passage (Aksungur et al., 2011, pp. 85-90). Similarly, Berkün (2011) states that although there are many benefits of hydropower, they have negative impacts on the environment. These constructions, especially dams, slow down river's velocity and cause changes in sediment transport. Furthermore, he sees irrigation as one of the interventions, which indeed have complex consequences. In short, according to him the construction of

these facilities can cause problems in agriculture, soil erosion and salinization (Berkün, 2011, p. 649).

According to the statistics in 2007 hydropower report provided by the World Energy Council, Turkey's gross theoretical hydropower potential is 433 Twh/yr, technically feasible potential is 216 Twh/yr and economically feasible potential is 130Twh/yr. Thus, the hydro output of 35.1 Twh/yr in 2005 demonstrates the clear developmental potential of hydropower in Turkey (WEC, 2007, p. 311). Keeping in mind the great potential for hydropower electric generation further research is needed in order to understand the impacts of the construction of HEPPs on the local communities. Further evaluation of these impacts especially the negative ones on the local population is necessary for planning the realization of the above mentioned potential in Turkey. Before moving on to the problematic aspects and the adverse affects of building HEPPs on the local communities, it is important to understand the history of the legal framework of construction of HEPPs in Turkey.

2.3. History and Legal Framework for HEPP's and Dams in Turkey: privatization and deregulation

The hydroelectric potential of Turkey was acknowledged and exploited by the governments since 1950s. Until 1980s, Turkish Electricity Institution (TEK) monopolized the electricity production (Uzlu et al., 2011, p. 676). But after 1980, with the new economic policy neoliberalism embraced by Turkey, which indeed was a global trend, many things have changed. The idea of privatization, commodification, and marketization outweighed the old economic and political system[55].

Turkey, being one of the major developing countries in the Middle East, and

[55] Neoliberalism as a concept is elaborated on in the theoretical chapter of this thesis.

one of Europe's dynamic economies, has gone through a major transformation especially during the last decade. Since the year 2000 the governments eased the way to carry out ambitious development projects by making the necessary changes in energy sector and environment regulations. These changes indeed indicate the way in which nature is neoliberalized in Turkey. As theoretically explained in the previous chapter, manipulations of governance, privatization, deregulation and reregulation (Castree 2008) are mainly the links between neoliberalism and nature. With further changes in legislation, private companies gained the right to use the water for 49 years to produce electricity out of it. Since the private company possesses full control and access to water, the local population is excluded from the use of it, which once was a part of commons.

The Electricity Market Law, no. 4628 was first passed on February 20th, 2001 (Resmi Gazete (*Official Gazette*), 2001)[56]. The law's enforcement was followed by new regulations, which then led to privatization of electric production and distribution (Türkiye Su Meclisi-TSM (Turkish Water Assembly), 2011: p. 5). With another regulation enacted in June 26th, 2003 the State Hydraulic Works (DSI) started selling the right to use water to private companies for the duration of 49 years by giving guarantees to buy the energy that is produced (Resmi Gazete, 2003). These water-use right agreements transferred the rights of using water to the private sector to produce electricity for the duration of 49 years. The licenses for electricity production are given by the Energy Market Regulatory Authority-EMRA (*Enerji Piyasası Denetleme Kurulu-EPDK*) (EMRA, 2010) [57]. The companies that sign the water-use right agreement with DSİ and got the license to produce electricity from EMRA are clear to move on to the next step, which is mainly the process of Environmental Impact

[56] The law amended many times, the latest version was put into force by publishing it in the Official Paper on 30 March 2013 (Resmi Gazete, 2013). The new number of the law is 6446.

[57] http://www.emra.org.tr/documents/electricity/publishments/ElectricityMarketReport2010.pdf

Assessment (EIA). The report of EIA is obtained from the ministry of Environment and Urbanization (Ürker & Çobanoğlu, 2012, p. 73). Unfortunately, the ministry wants the project to be active immediately rather than care for its environmental impact. Therefore, rather than an on premise, through assessment it doesn't go beyond a piece of procedure to be cleared. Going through the EIA process[58] after all the agreement and licenses are cleared is quite problematic itself.

With the incentives and easy procedures, HEPP construction became quite appealing for the private sector. As a result of the involvement of the private sector, the HEPP and dam construction increased in number. Compared to the construction plans of the government before this new regulation, a four-fold increase can be observed with the private sector involvement (TSM, 2011, p. 7). As the energy is produced, EMRA buys it from the company (Işlar, 2012, p. 321). Besides a guarantee to sell, the state gives many incentives to the private sector to produce energy.

The amendments to laws and regulations concerning the energy sector that were a part of neoliberalization of nature in Turkey created a great concern among the affected population and the civil society organizations that have emerged during the course of these events. Evaluation of all the laws and regulations is beyond the scope of this thesis, thus only some of the changes that has an impact on the villagers will be discussed in the next paragraph in order to draw rough lines of neoliberalization of nature in Turkey, particularly in the sector of water.

With the initiative of the government in August 4th, 2002 the dams and HEPP's that produce below 50 MW are accepted as renewable energy[59] (Resmi

[58] The process of EIA is largely detailed as one of main problems in the section below, labelled as Section 2.4.

59 The article 4 clause 55 classifies the renewable energy sources and among them it lists the 'the canal or river type hydroelectric production facilities which has the installed capacity below 50 megawatt (MW)' as renewable energy sources. This law was subject to change twice in February 28, 2003 and February 24, 2005. Before these changes the ones below 20 MW were classified as renewable energy.

Gazete, 2002) whereas the upper limit for green energy classification in Europe is 10 MW (Şenlik, 2013, p. 46). On February 20th, 2003 the government decided to give financial support to HEPPs by allowing the investors to pay 1 percent of the license fee and pay the rest over the period of 8 years. Without conducting any social impact assessments the Energy Market Regulation Council is given the authority to expropriate the land of local communities (May 24th, 2006). Consequently, for the dams and HEPP's below 25 MW, the decision whether to apply the EIA procedure or not is transferred to the local governorships. They can decide whether or not to implement EIA procedure (August 12th, 2008). Additionally, HEPP's became government policy by State Planning Organization's declaration to finalize HEPP constructions until 2023 (September 19th, 2009). Finally on December 28th, 2010 with an amendment to Renewable Energy Law dam and HEPP construction became available in all the protected areas (TSM, 2011, p. 7). In the following section, the author tries to clarify how the construction of HEPPs creates vulnerability among the population in the subject area.

2.4. The HEPPs and Vulnerability Assessment: Right to Water as a Means to Right to Living Space/Environment

In many of the cases documented by different civil society organizations[60], platforms, documentaries and books, the way the HEPPs are constructed in Turkey deprives

[60] There are many local civil society organizations *TEMA*, *Doğa Derneği*, *Sarı Keçiçililer Derneği*, *Yeşil Artvin Derneği*, and *Derelerin Kardeşliği Platformu*; together with global civil society organizations like Greenpeace and WWF who are against neoliberalization of nature protested the changes regulated by the current government, which indeed created vulnerabilities among the local populations. They even collaborated up to a certain extend during the formation of *Türkiye Su Meclisi* (Turkish Water Assembly) in 2011, which is an association concerned about the neoliberalization of nature, particularly water. Even though this initiative tried to avoid putting forward the names of the NGOs whose representatives constitute its general committee, some came forward and tried to take the possession of the movement. This indeed caused some disagreements among the civil society organizations and brought the end of the initiative.

people of their basic right to water and their right to an adequate standard of living.[61] In accordance with the international law, the governments are required to respect and protect the human rights, and must prevent peoples' rights from being violated by third parties (Mearns & Norton, 2010, p. 12). But yet, in Turkey the state's regulations concerning the construction of dams and HEPPs deprive people of enjoying their basic rights, and make them vulnerable to the adverse effects of human induced environmental change.

This section discusses five major deficiencies of the Turkish state in protecting the basic human rights of local communities during the whole process of HEPP construction. The way of *expropriation of the land*, *the amendment to law of Renewable Energy Sources*, the lack of *participation* of all the stake holders in planning, lack of *environmental impact assessment reports* in most of the cases, and the unregulated amount of *vital water* make the local communities in question more vulnerable to environmental changes. These are general problematic issues that can be found in different parts of Turkey concerning the HEPPs.

The legislation that regulates the *expropriation of the land* puts people in a vulnerable position and deprives them of their basic right of housing. In many cases the affected population becomes vulnerable since there is no exact resettlement plan. This is especially evident in the case of large dam constructions such as construction of *Ilısu* Dam on Tigris River and in the unprecedented case of *Yusufeli* Dam project in *Artvin*, which puts the local community in limbo for the last decade with its uncertain future. The gaps in the Turkish legislation in terms of expropriation and resettlement put people at great risk in the case of displacement (Eberlein, Drillish, Ayboğa & Wenidoppler, 2010, p. 296).

61 And particularly in the case of the dams, these constructions deprive them of right to take part in cultural life.

Legislation concerning the expropriation of the land[62] (Law no. 2942) and resettlement (Law no. 5543) do not provide the adequate compensation for the restoration of livelihoods of affected people (CounterCurrent – GegenStrömung, 2011, p. 5). In the Annex 1 of the United Nations Human Rights Commission (UNHRC, 2007) general assembly document HRC/4/18, entitled as the Basic Principles and Guidelines on Development-Based evictions and Displacement, it is stated that the states should ensure the participation and consultation of the affected people in the whole process of resettlement (CounterCurrent, 2011, p.13). Article 56.i in the Basic Principles specifically states "the entire resettlement process should be carried out with full participation by and with affected persons, groups and communities. States should, in particular, take into account all alternative plans proposed by the affected persons, groups and communities..." (A/HRC/4/18).[63]

However, according to law no.2942 of Turkey, "expropriation is possible and done in many cases without the participation of the owners" (CounterCurrent, 2011, p. 13). This situation bound by law puts the owners, who are the affected population, in an unfavorable position. But the major concern of the civil society organizations that are advocating the rights of the local population is the article 27 of the expropriation law. This article allows for an "immediate expropriation" in the case of emergences accepted by the government decrees (13). And, this is the common practice concerning the expropriation for the latest HEPP projects (Hamsici, 2010). As it is stated in many of the documentaries[64], brought up in the interviews with the local population conducted by the author in northeastern part of Turkey, and affirmed in the statements of civil society organizations, the procedure happens like this; the

[62] For further detail on the issue of expropriation and its legal extensions please refer to Mengi & Duru 2010, "Kamulaştırmanın Çevreye Etkileri Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme".

[63] Originally published in 2007 by HLRN (Housing Land Rights Network in 2007) http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Housing/Guidelines_en.pdf

64"*Anadolu'nun İsyanı*", anonymous, available at http://anadolunehirleri.org/tr.html

courts order the expropriation money, determined by the value commission, to be deposited in the bank account in one of the public banks, Agricultural Bank (*Ziraat Bankası*), opened on behalf of the owner. But yet, the owner does not have a say in the process. Only after the expropriation is done, he/she can appeal to the court concerning the amount of the compensation value (CounterCurrent, 2011, p. 13). So, this kind of expropriation of land, which excludes the participation of the affected people, deprives them of necessary tools to restore their livelihoods and obtain an adequate standard of living. Therefore, the state creates a slippery ground for itself by violating the basic human right stated in Universal Declaration of Human Rights Art. 25, which give everyone "the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing..." (UN, 1948)[65]. In order to avoid the complaints of the local population, the construction companies started to buy the land for more than its regular value. The interviews with local population indicated that some people enjoyed selling their land over the regular price whereas not all had the same opportunity.[66] Especially in Rize and Trabzon, some from the local population mentioned that the ones who are selling their land are the ones that are not regularly living in these villages. Their land is not being used for cattle or agriculture and they sell it for more than its value.

The second important legislation that creates great concern is the *amendment to the law concerning electricity production by Renewable Energy Sources.*[67] According to the amendment the facilities depending on the renewable energy sources are permitted to be constructed in "natural parks, protected forests, natural monuments, nature protection areas, wildlife protected areas and special environment

[65] http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/

[66] Personal interviews by the author, July 2012, Rize-Trabzon.

[67] http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2011/01/20110108-3.htm

protected areas" (Resmi Gazete, 2011). The related paragraph of the law is as follows:

> "National park, natural park and nature protection areas, forests, wild life preservation and development areas, and the regions that are listed as 'special environmental protection zones' will be under the jurisdiction of related Ministry. In natural preservation zones the related 'protection board of related region' will have the jurisdiction. With the approval of related competent authorities listed above the permission to construct facilities for electricity production based on renewable energy sources can be granted in these regions" (Resmi Gazete, 2010).[68]

By this law, those areas formerly listed to be under special protection are now open to construction of HEPPs. In the words of the many lawyers who are well known in this field, the "protected site"[69] will not be enough to protect these areas against HEPP construction.[70]

More specifically, before this amendment was enacted enlisting a place as a part of the protected areas was resulting with the cancellation of any kind of construction in that area. Thus, it was important for the struggle against the construction of HEPPs. For example, in 1999 *Fırtına* valley[71] in *Çamlıhemşin*, *Rize* was declared as a protected area. Thus, HEPP projects in the area were cancelled. The same happened in 2010 in *İkizdere* valley, *Rize*. Thus, by the law enacted by the Council of Protection of Nature and Natural Life of Trabzon, *İkizdere* became a part of protected areas. Hence, twenty-two HEPP projects in that area were cancelled

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[68] The original paragraph is as follows: *"Milli park, tabiat parkı, tabiat anıtı ile tabiatı koruma alanlarında, muhafaza ormanlarında, yaban hayatı geliştirme sahalarında, özel çevre koruma bölgelerinde ilgili Bakanlığın, doğal sit alanlarında ise ilgili koruma bölge kurulunun olumlu görüşü alınmak kaydıyla yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarına dayalı elektrik üretim tesislerinin kurulmasına izin verilir."*

[69] "Protected site" means "*sit alanı*" in Turkish.

[70] Personal interview by the author, male, Yakup Okumusoğlu, 27 June 2012, Karadeniz Ereğlisi.

71 "Fırtına" means "storm" in Turkish. World Wild Fund declared this valley as one of the hundred forests that are in danger and should be protected. The valley is a natural habitat of a great biodiversity; 537 plants, 136 birds, 30 mammals, 21 reptiles of different kinds and 116 endemic plants (DEKAP, 2010, p. 3).

(CNNTurk, 2010)[72]. But as of January 2011, those areas are also under the risk of implementation of new HEPP projects. Overall, the legislation in Turkey concerning the energy sources; procedures of implementation of HEPP and dam projects have been gradually developed since 2001 deprives the people of legal objections.

The third issue arises during the planning and construction process of the facilities is ignorance of *Environmental Impact Assessments* (EIA). [73] World commission on Dams indicates the importance of Environmental Impact Assessment reports before and after the implementation. It is adopted in the 1980s and approved by most of the developing countries in 1990s and became a major tool for assessing the environmental impact of constructing such facilities (WCD, 2000, p. 182). However, many of the governments and financing institutions in hydropower plant construction see EIA as an administrative obstacle that should be cleared (WCD, 2000, p. 183).

Similarly, in Turkey EIA does not go beyond being a procedure to be cleared along the way. EIA procedure started in 1993 but was subject to change soon afterwards (Cangı, 2013, p. 23). Even the lawyers are struggling to follow the changes. With the change of 2013, the EIA requirement is extended for the projects that are accepted within the investment program before 1997. So, instead of 1993, 1997 is going to be the new start date for the EIA requirement. According to this change, the projects that have started before 1997 and that are in the process of planning before April 5, 2013 or that their competitive bidding process is over or the projects that are already in use are exempt from EIA (Cangı, 2013, p. 23). This means

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72 http://www.cnnturk.com/2010/turkiye/10/22/ikizdere.vadisinde.heslere.sit.engeli/593969.0/index.html

73 The related government web page concerning EIA can be found here: <http://www.csb.gov.tr/gm/ced/index.php?Sayfa=sayfaicerikhtml&IcId=691&detId=736&ustId=691>

that most of the projects that the protests are being held against is getting a clear pass from the political authorities. Furthermore, with the changes in 2014 projects that are below 10 megawatts (MW) were exempt from the EIA. The ones that will produce more than 10 MW are subject to EIA (Resmi Gazete, 2014)[74]. This indeed clearly solves most of the problems for the ongoing struggles that the companies have been facing concerning the EIA reports.

Moreover, in most of the cases EIA reports were not done properly[75], or were not even found necessary. There are even cases that were filed on the same day that the construction is beginning (Hamsici, 2010, p. 139). As a consequence, the local people appealed to courts and the cases mostly resulted in favor of the plaintiff[76]. The interviews showed that in most of the cases no contact was made between the EIA reporters and local communities and even the local site, which the EIA is written on[77].

This indeed brings us to the fourth problem, which is the lack of *participation* of the local communities/affected people in the whole process. In many cases, the villagers learned about the process when the machinery appeared in the site.[78] Neither they were informed about the project before hand nor they were made a party in planning of the whole process. The local community and the related civil society

[74] EIA processes in Turkey have been quite problematic from the beginning. The regulation that determines the process has been subject to change 17 times since 1993 (Duru, 2014). All those changes aimed to ease the procedural problems on the side of investors. Thus, the state aims to serve the interests of the investors by undermining this procedure as a requirement to be cleared. In other words, content wise unfruitful reports clear the way for further environmental degradation.

[75] It is also important to mention yet another problem with EIA, which is the lack of cumulative impact assessment (Kentel & Alp, 2013, p. 41). In most cases, there are more than one HEPP projects along the river. However, the EIA's are prepared individually, without taking into consideration the accumulative impact of these projects following one another on the same river.

[76] Personal interview by the author, male, Yakup Okumusoğlu, 27 June 2012, Karadeniz Ereğlisi.

[77] The interviews with the lawyers in this field, confirms that these reports were not properly done hence they are in most cases are the first issues to be objected in HEPP trials. Additionally, in most of all court cases that use the EIA objection, the court decided to stay of execution.

[78] Personal interviews in July-August 2012, Trabzon and Rize. In many villages, the rumors start about a possible construction and the villagers become aware of them as the machines appear on the site. This is true especially for Rize and Trabzon.

institutions are usually excluded during the planning or in construction.[79] However, indigenous knowledge is very important, and should be included in environmental impact assessments (Appiah-Opoku, 2001, p. 59). The conscious exclusion of the local people in planning creates a failure to understand the impacts of this construction on people.

The last point I would like to mention concerning the way that HEPPs are constructed in Turkey is again related with environmental impact assessment, which is the *issue of vital water*. Vital water that is necessary for the aquatic life to continue that should be released to the riverbed is not under strict supervision. Thus, most of the companies who got the license to control the water for 49 years do not release the necessary water to the riverbed, which is the source of life for the livelihood in the villages (TSM, 2011, p. 14).

The "vital water" that is required for the ecosystem to continue, is measured with different methods which progressed from simple to more complicated ones over the years since 1970 (Aksungur et al., 2011, p. 88). According to the environmental scientists this determination of vital water is not always enough to protect the water resources. The flow terms of water is as important as determining the amount of water that is vital. The water flow should be continuous; any interruption in the flow would create catastrophic results in the oxygen levels of the water, which indeed are vital for the survival of fish and many other species (Aksungur et. al., 2011, p. 89). It is also stated by the experts that the vital water is not necessarily enough for the plants to grow alongside the riverbed. But yet, those plants are quite important for holding the

79 It is also important to note that, in some villages some of the villagers are welcoming the HEPP projects since they started working for them. In such villages like Uzuntarla, Trabzon; Ikizdere, Rize many admitted that they welcomed the projects since there will be work in the village. However, within the aftermath of the construction, the HEPPs didn't bring any prosperity to the region since they require few people, mainly experts, at the time of operation. Thus, people in these villages regret their approval of construction at the beginning for a short-term gain.

soil alongside the riverbed. Thus, lack of these plants could increase the risk of floods in the rainy season (Muluk, Turak, Yılmaz, Zeydanlı & Bilgin, 2009, p. 51).

However, in Turkey the amount of vital water is determined as 10% according to the Regulation on Water Use Rights for the last ten years. No assessment or measurement is done in the riverbed before granting the permissions for HEPP projects (TSM, 2011, p.15). In the EIA reports, no specific regulation exists for the fish passages (Muluk et. al., 2009, p. 52). And all of these together put many species at risk, which are finding life thanks to that water. Besides the countless plants, animals, endemic species, the adverse affects of water shortage also affects local communities whose livelihood is depended on the water for their animals, for farming and fishing. There is also the concern about the underground water because as well as the surface water, the underground water is going to change its flow with the construction of HEPPs. This indeed has a grave impact on the fauna and the ecosystem of the surrounding areas (Muluk et al., 2009, p. 56). For a "very good" and "excellent" ecosystem quality, the vital water should be around 40-60% (Kurdoğlu & Özalp, 2010, p. 695).

All of the above mentioned points are common in all locations of HEPP constructions. Local resistance and grassroots organization formations are enhancing the capacity and capabilities of affected populations. People's perspectives and local knowledge are very important in assessing people's vulnerabilities (Heijmans, 2004, p. 117). Since 1990s the voice of grassroots organizations started to get louder in the cases of a threat to their livelihoods with the development projects (Heijmans, 2004, p. 124)[80].

Similarly, according to Casiple "development becomes *development*

[80] For example, according to Heijmans in Philippines local communities see the governments' development projects as being more disastrous than natural hazards (Heijmans, 2004, p. 124).

aggression when people become the victims, not the beneficiaries, when the people are set aside in development planning, not partners in development" (Casiple, 1996, p. 43). In the case of Turkey, the current government's energy policy includes gaps in providing the basic needs and protecting the affected population's basic rights which indeed make the state more fragile. Hence, the struggle initiated by the local population in question and the social pressure they created could be referred as the only ways against the *development aggression* followed by the state.

CHAPTER 3:

THE HEPPs IN EASTERN BLACK SEA REGION: *Trabzon-Rize-Artvin*

Understanding of neoliberalism of nature and the reasons for resistance in the Eastern Black Sea region

The HEPPs built around Turkey, at times with more than one on the same river, are concentrated around the Black Sea region, particularly in the eastern Black Sea region, and are causing great concern for the future among the residents of the area. This concern elicited strong reactions from the public and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in many places against the companies. This chapter particularly aims for a deeper understanding of the reactions of local population against HEPP construction and of their perceptions about the 'state', 'water', 'neoliberal governmentality', 'environmentalism' and 'protectionism' in *Trabzon*, *Rize* and *Artvin* consequently. Supported by the fieldwork data, it aims to contribute in the understanding of the concepts such as 'neoliberalization of nature' 'environmentalism', and 'development'. Each city has its own unique qualities, thus deserves an in-depth evaluation and analysis. For that reason, this chapter is organized by the city and village names. However, in the conclusion section of this chapter the commonalities and differences among them are pointed out, along with possible links to the forthcoming chapters.

3.1.Trabzon: *Uzungöl, Uzuntarla, Köknar, Karaçam*

This section aims to elaborate on the public reactions towards HEPP construction in a

particular region of Trabzon: *Solaklı* Valley. Each one of the four villages that are covered in this section offers an important insight for understanding the reactions towards the HEPP construction. *Uzungöl,* sees the nature as a big part of their livelihood. *Uzuntarla,* thinks not much is to be done against a "government project". Finally, *Köknar* and *Karaçam* act as the brave hearts of the region holding their firm stance against HEPPs.

***Uzungöl*: "Nature is our livelihood!"**

Uzungöl is one of the touristic places of *Trabzon.* Its natural beauty is one of the compelling factors for especially Arab tourists to visit the region. People of *Uzungöl* became aware of these HEPP projects initially by the *Çamlıkaya* HES[81], which is located on the way to *Uzungöl.* Residents of *Uzungöl* portray themselves as not being against the energy investments but they particularly resent the fact that their opinion was not considered in the whole process. Thus, for them, the lack of participation into any decision-making process is a concern.

Without exception, all of my informants in *Uzungöl* have stated their concern for the HEPP project that is planned for the region, which is going to be a disaster for the environment of that area.

> "The construction will be the end of it! There is not much animal husbandry or farming here, all we have is tourism…the natural beauty of this place. Most say it is heaven. The economic gain of HEPP would be nothing compared to the tourism potential of Uzungöl. We are not against energy investments but nobody asked us our opinion"[82] (Salim, male, 37 years old)

Salim's statement above highlights the importance of the natural beauty of the

81 One of the first HEPP projects in the Solaklı Valley.

[82]Personal interview by the author, male, Salim, 5 July 2012, Uzungöl.

region. They believe they are particularly great supporters of protection of the environment since they are defending the nature's preservation in their region. In that respect their stance is very similar to Martinez-Alier's description of environmentalism of the poor (without the latest contribution that I articulate in the 4th Chapter). According to him, people's economic dependency to nature pushes them to be ardent supporters of environmentalism to protect their livelihood. In other words, since locals are dependent on nature to sustain their livelihoods, they become environmentalists in the case of a threat to their connection with nature. *Uzungöl* could be a good example, because the livelihood of people in the region depends on tourism, which is only possible if nature is preserved.

However, even though the locals condemn the construction of such a project, they are not necessarily aware of their own current contribution to environmental degradation in the region. The interesting thing about this region is the local community's understanding of environmental management or particularly environmental protection. According to them, the meaning of environmental protection does not exclusively give the environment the priority within the process of development in the region. A closer observation around the lake *Uzungöl* clearly captures how local stakeholders act according to their short-term interests in the expense of nature's sustainability. This is evident in their way of disposing garbage, constructing their buildings and designing the vicinities of their facilities. Although they are currently unaware, what they understand from protecting nature is not necessarily in contradiction with the neoliberalization of nature, as long as they see tourism as their main source of living. They are not against the commodification of nature in the way they do it by building unnatural structures, by increasing

consumption leading to large carbon footprints and servicing the nature in a molded shape in line with the likes of Arab tourists.

As most say, one of the main objections of the local community concerning HEPPs in the region is 'the unreliable attitude of the government towards nature'. As the issue comes up in daily conversations, most of the community members express their resentment about the government's special treatment and attitude regarding the construction of HEPPs. The particular resentment stems from the government changing regulations to enable such construction in the region whereas local investors have suffered from it over the past couple decades. *Uzungöl* was once considered within a special environmental protection program (*Özel Çevre Koruma Programı*)[83]. Thus, the local investors were not able to alter their environment via construction. This protection program prohibited any change in the silhouette of the region. However, now with special permits, HEPP projects are allowed to destroy the beauty and natural tranquility of this environment. Many have stated their concern of the double-sided nature of the government's attitude. This indeed is very much in line with manipulations of governance becoming prevalent during neoliberalization of nature. In the words of Metin (48);

> "Over 150 people have been taken to court due to mal practice of construction. We want to do a restoration of our house. It's one of the authentic houses with a certificate. We gave many projects to Special Environmental Protection Program. But nothing passes, not even a slightest alteration…I have friends trying to ameliorate the situation of their hotels but they are not allowed given

[83] In order to protect biodiversity and endangered species, Turkey became a party to international agreements such as Bern and Barcelona Conventions. Consequently, as a part of the Barcelona convention an additional protocol has been signed covering Mediterranean countries. Relating to these conventions and protocols Turkey has created Special environmental protection zones in its territory and tied them up to a special directorate with decrees signed by the government. Uzungöl is listed as one of those protection zones. Related information about special environmental program in Turkey can be found here; http://www2.ormansu.gov.tr/COB/Files/durum_rapor/ockkb/ockkb_ild.pdf. The pages concerning Uzungöl are between 87 and 91.

the reason not to change the environment of Uzungöl. So, how is this possible then? Building a HEPP is going to be a total degradation of the environment and habitat in Uzungöl."[84]

Locals resent the fact that now these private companies were given all the necessary permissions, whereas touching the environment in the slightest used to be a taboo previously. They also feel that this new practice is in contradiction with previous government attempts to protect this region. This again is an indicator of their understanding of environmental protection, which is subject to utilitarianism.

Interestingly, the locals believe that if this were an investment on the part of the government itself, they would feel differently. The main reason stated for that is that the government/the state would not do it the same way as these private companies are doing it. Since the main motivation of these private companies is profit, they don't care much about the environment but if this were a state project that wouldn't be the case. The idea of state in their mind is all encompassing, patriarchal, and bureaucratically unreachable. Most feel that a regular individual/citizen does not have the necessary means to intervene in the upper structures of the state apparatus. But at the same time they are loyal to this upper structure that supposedly looks after their well being as a fatherly figure. Such an attitude towards the government is inevitable with the state holding the image and the discourse of being the ardent supporter of the development ideal. Whatever the state does the locals perceive it as a part of the modernization and development project of Turkey. Thus, giving consent to such a project, would be for their own good considering that it is the state initiating it.

It is hard to argue that the political affiliation of local residents plays a major role in their resistance against the HEPPs. On the contrary, most of them have voted for the current AKP government in the last elections and have stated that they would

[84] Personal interview by the author, male, Metin, 5 July 2012, Uzungöl.

vote for this party again if there were new elections. For some reason[85], their resistance against HEPPs does not appear to turn into a political statement or change their political position. Additionally, my data shows that they mostly see themselves as patriots. Yet, interestingly, because they are resisting the construction of HEPPs, the locals are often perceived as traitors in the eyes of the state.

***Köknar:* "No passage for HEPPs!"**

According to many villagers that I had a chance to talk to at the main coffee house located at the center of the village, construction companies greatly damage the environment. During the construction process, the excavated debris and dynamites are often thrown in the riverbed, resulting in severe consequences for nature. When the riverbed is filled with all this, it is really hard to talk about any existing fauna or flora. Particularly, fish life is very much affected since there is no passage for fish. This indeed is a common problem that echoed in many villages where the HEPPs are being built.

It seems like the private companies monopolize damaging the environment due to their wild capitalist attitudes. Villagers believe that things could have been different if these HEPPs were being built by the state. Due to the fact that state looks out for its citizen, it would probably do less harm than the private companies who

[85] The fieldwork indicates that the locals still continue to support AKP government regardless of AKP's current contribution of environmental degradation with its policies. In other words, the people of *Uzungöl* are against the government's HEPP projects but still continue to support the party. One reason could be that they see the party's ideology separate from implementation of its policies. But understanding why this resistance in *Uzungöl* does not turn into a political statement or change the local's political party preference requires further research specifically on the voters preferences and the factors affecting them. A similar kind of an ethnographic research could be of use to explain why the locals also do not prefer to bring up the name of the owner of that HEPP project in their region. It is *Trabzonspor* (one of the five biggest football teams in Turkey) who owns the project. And inevitably *Trabzonspor* is the pride of *Trabzon*. Interesting enough, this attitude of being against the HEPP project does not turn into any reaction towards *Trabzonspor* itself. This indeed could be the result of a lack of integrated thinking or a proof of compartmentalized emotions.

primarily seek for profit. Hence, their perception of the state is all encompassing such that state knows what is best for its citizens and, isolated from the capitalist interest, would seek the best favoring the wellbeing of its citizen. One villager in *Köknar* pointed out the common perception regarding the state:

> "I swear to God, that if it was the state, it wouldn't do this to its citizen. The companies are working irregularly, disregarding common procedure. When this is the case, they destruct the most. They usually say 'the fine should pay itself' so they destroy what's left of nature."[86]

The major bone of contention both in *Köknar* and *Karaçam* (the village above *Köknar*) is the attitude of the gendarmerie in the region. The use of force is not well received by the local population. The general population living in *Köknar* village, which is approximately 700-800 people, sees the gendarmerie as the private security force of the companies. The incident of May 2012 about the *Derebaşı* HEPP project strengthened this perception.

The *Derebaşı* HEPP project is one of the 36 projects that is planned to be built in the *Solaklı* valley. It is projected for *Karaçam* village, *Derebaşı* region. The HEPP's power is expected to be 11,3 MW, and it has major consequences for *Solaklı* valley. The villagers of *Köknar* and *Karaçam* came together many times and protested against the project's realization. The resistance reached to a different level when they were faced with unequal use of force by the gendarmerie.

The *Köknar* and *Karaçam* villagers gathered around six different campfires on a snowy November night in 2011 at the site of the planned HEPP, resisting the investor company and the armed forces acting as if they were the company's private security personnel and faced some of the harshest interventions

[86] Personal interview by the author, male, Salih, 6 July 2012, Köknar.

the region has ever seen.

> "We are at Derebaşı, 1900 meters high. The valley is dark and foggy. It began snowing. It's really cold. About 200 of us are trying to warm up by the campfires we have lit. But we aren't giving up the resistance. Minibuses bring us sustenance in the form of warm bread and wood. We keep vigil by the fires and the riot police and the gendarme are in the minibuses they arrived in... The first intervention happens at daybreak. Suddenly a voice from a loudspeaker says: 'Clear out! If you don't, we will clear you out!'"87

After the announcement, the barricade is dispersed by force, and people are gassed with pepper spray. This is at *Karaçam, Derebaşı*[88], on November 3, 2011. Police interventions as violent as those, which are to take place at the *Gezi* protests the following year as well, bring about 200 villagers up against gendarme and riot police outnumbering them at 1900 meters. The lawsuits brought against the company and the legal proceedings as well as the struggle to physically take over the situation and prevent the construction have become a part of their daily lives.

A similar incident took place soon after in June 2012. Once winter was over and Spring arrived, the region livened up again. The construction company wanted to revive the Derebaşı HEPP project, which was expected to be annulled, given that legal procedures were still underway. Attempts were made to get the construction machinery that had been pulled out due to the reactions back on the construction site. Early in the morning on June 1st, having heard that construction machinery and company employees would be headed towards the construction site, villagers attempted to cut the procession off by blocking the only road in the village that leads to the site. Despite all their efforts and some tension however, the machinery was

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87 Personal interview, male, Fikret, 6 July 2012, Karaçam.

88 The area called Derebaşı/Pınarbaşı is at an altitude of 1900 meters, with no human settlement, and under the Karaçam Municipality.

brought to the site, accompanied by 638[89] gendarme and riot police (Şan, 2012)[90]. This naturally reinforced the perception that the gendarme and the riot police were the private bodyguards of the company and has led to the locals' rebellion. During my interviews with local residents, those describing the shock they felt when confronted with the 'circle of security' express grave disappointment, stating that they weren't expecting such a protective shield. The villagers' account of the goings-on and the attitude of the gendarme are as follows:

> " They say to us 'We are going to do this even if we need to wait here for 49 years!'... This is what the gendarme said... Who are you? Who are protecting against whom? How is this even possible? What is your duty?...They are our sons too. They are putting us face to face with the security forces. This, of course heightens the tension in the region."[91]

The determined attitude of the gendarmerie, which happens to be solidified against the local people who are opposing the HEPPs in their region, happens to be one of the major concerns of the locals. The state legitimizes its coercive use of force by hiding behind the neoliberal form of governmentality. The compelling subjects are mostly subdued by the state showing them as traitors, villains and/or obstacles in the way to the further development of 'Big Turkey' ideal. The *muhtar* of the village explains the issue as such;

> "...they (the state) show us as the villain, and the traitor against the state which indeed legitimizes their use of force in the region. That's how they bring this many state force to the region"... "...they said 'the people who are making a scene is a couple of looters, nothing more!'...then why do you

[89] The locals give the number of 638 in conversations, whereas in the newspapers it's referred as around 650 gendarme and riot police.

[90] 30 May 2012. "Solaklı'da HES gerilimi" http://muhalefet.org/haber-solaklıda-hes-tepkisi-dinmiyor-12-2587.aspx

[91] Personal interview by the author, male, Mehmet, 6 July 2012, Köknar .

send 638 soldiers to the region? For 3-5 looters?"[92]

Another villager resents the government's use of force, especially by accusing the ones who are resisting for their living space as traitors to the state:

> "They are making the people out here to be terrorism supporters. That's how they are able to request armed force support. The request for the Gendarme to provide security for the company is legitimized. How dare you do anything here without my consent...!"[93]

Another support mechanism that is activated to legitimize the government's stance towards these projects comes from the village itself. *Muhtar* also argues that the stance of the local authority figure is quite important in the struggle. This is also visible in all villages. Once the company gets the consent of the *muhtar* who happens to be the local notable, it's easier to earn trust and build supporters around the construction. This happened in many villages where the company made allies from the heart of the village. However, it is also important to keep in mind that some of these local notables have behaved differently than their counterparts. The *muhtar* of *Köknar* explains his own experience with the company;

> "…they (the company directors) also came to me. They said think about your future, your family's future. Your children can be in a better place, we can make a deal with you...but as I got more into this struggle, I saw that the resistance is priceless."[94]

This understanding and the idea of resistance have shaped the minds of many people in the region. It created a community bond between the people within and across villages. Both *Köknar* and *Karaçam* residents claim that they see each other more often than before. *Muhtar* and others in the village cafe all indicate that they had some

[92] Personal interview by the author, male, Ahmet, 6 July 2012, Köknar.
[93] Personal interview by the author, male, Ali, 6 July 2012, Köknar.
[94] Personal interview by the author, male, Abdullah, 6 July 2012, Köknar.

problems with *Karaçam* village before such as the water issue, the upland meadow issue... but now most of it is left behind with their new cause of cooperation. It seems like it gave them a purpose to come together and talk about new strategies against the company's next predictable move. In the village cafe, sooner or later the issue comes up. As they understood that they are excluded from participating to the decision making process for their environment, they started to seek support among their own community where they understood their own power as a community. This power comes by the material conditions that they live in. In Maffesoli's terms, the external factors have led them find their inherent energy and vital force.

They appealed to the legal authorities and brought their concerns before the court. But their lawsuits were not concluded. Most believe that nothing much is going to come out of this legal resistance. What they care more is to stop the companies physically invading their territories. In order to prevent that from happening all the villagers, men and women do things together, like guarding the source of the river.

***Uzuntarla:* "It's all in vein!"**

This small village is in the south of *Karaçam* and *Köknar*. This is the first village in the region where the HEPP is completed and currently running. It is the second project that began working after the *Çamlıkaya* HEPP project, which is located down south of the whole region where there is no residency.

Uzuntarla's population is approximately 400-450 people, going down to 200s in the winter period. 80% of the population is retired. They mostly spend their winters in Bursa or Cyprus, and come to their village in the spring. In August 2011, they have witnessed the devastating affects of poor construction of the HEPP at first hand. The cement canal, which is located at the upper side of the village, had exploded causing a

big flood carrying huge cement particles, rocks and trees very near to the village giving only material damage. Fortunately, this accident did not cause any fatalities since all that has been carried by the water had settled in an elevated open area. If it wasn't for the available open space, it could have destroyed the whole town.

In 2011, when I visited the village after the explosion, many were resentful to the construction of HEPP. When I talked to the women of the village, a 67-year-old woman stated,

> "Yes, we are furious but what can we do? They spent a lot of money to build this...how could we resist against the government, and its project? It would be a shame to throw all that government's money away."[95]

In a way, she clearly indicates that she sees these projects as government projects. And because these are government projects, they cannot be opposed. Because this all encompassing, patriarchal figure ought to seek the best for them in her mind. The state's image in her head legitimizes neoliberalization of nature. She accepts what has happened as a part of faith.

The *muhtar* of *Uzuntarla* states that besides this explosion they haven't seen any bad results of the HEPP in their region. The only complaint is about the specific location of the HEPP. They think that the company should have built the project above its existing location so that it would be completely out of sight from the center of the village.

According to him, the HEPP construction did not affect the runoff water of the river. He says the amount of runoff water of the river is at normal levels[96]. But interestingly, many in the region are complaining about the accumulation of garbage in the river by which they argue the level is not the same. This indeed points to

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[95] Personal interview by the author, female, Fatma, 10 August 2011, Uzuntarla.
[96] Personal interview by the author, male, Sinan, 6 July 2012, Uzuntarla.

another tragic fact about the villagers and their usage of river. Consequently, the idea that their garbage is going to be carried away by the river introduces a new debate of their understanding of the environmentalism. Debates centering on whether or not this struggle is a product of environmentalism or utilitarianism can be of use here.

The fish has also disappeared many say in the region where as the *muhtar* claims differently. The current *muhtar* has been there for 3 years. When he came to power most of the project (%70) was finished. The one before him had some kind of a connection with the construction company and he is being accused of getting money from the company to ease their construction in the region. He himself persuaded most of the people in the village by talking to them about the job opportunities, or about selling their properties at higher prices. Accordingly, with those kinds of initiatives the company managed to start the project. This indeed shows the importance of local authorities, especially *muhtars*, in persuasion or manipulation of the people for the project to start in the region. Another man in the village states that

> "We believed in the *muhtar* that our children will find jobs, the company is going to make our village better...but it wasn't for long...work was for a short time and then finished, the roads are still the same, some put some money in their pockets and then all is finished... we should have resisted from the beginning but we didn't know...there is not much to do now."[97]

To varying degrees, all of the responses convey some kind of fatalism (*kadercilik*). It was also present in the conversation I had in the region with one of the older men of 79:

> "If we had known that this would be a disaster for the village, no one would have said yes. We protected our environment, the trees, the river as much as we can, we didn't break anything for our own pleasure...the government cut down many trees for high voltage-line...what can we do, if

[97] Personal interview by the author, male, Osman, 10 August 2011, Uzuntarla.

the government lets them...as people we can do nothing, only God has the mighty power."[98]

Reference to "faith" is something common especially among the older generation. It is common interestingly enough among older men. The women on the other hand don't express it as much. Nonetheless, this fatalism in *Uzuntarla* is very much related to the finished project of HEPP. The local population feels that they have nothing in their hands to turn it back since the project is completed and currently running.

***Karaçam:* "We will not give up our right to nature!"**

Karaçam is the largest of the four villages. Particularly, it is one of the toughest places where the resistance still continues. *Solaklı* valley is known for its resistance by this village. When some construction machines were first brought to the region, some radicals wrecked them. Consequently, many people were detained. The use of force by the government through its military forces is not uncommon to the region. Hence, it is the region where most of the physical resistance in the form of protests and physical violence takes place. The villagers were quite strict about letting foreign cars to pass through their village. The young people in the village control the village by its small narrow entrance. There is only one narrow road that enters the village, which is marked as "there is no access for HEPPs (*HES'lere geçiş yok*)" with a big poster that welcomes you in the entrance of the village. Young or old, regardless of age, resistance to HEPPs became the main concern of local population in *Karaçam*.

In line with the current state of farming in Turkey, there is not much farming or husbandry in the region, only enough for local consumption. Mostly corn and

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[98] Personal interview by the author, male, Hakkı, 6 July 2012, Uzuntarla.

winter vegetables are cultivated. Red-scaled trout is quite famous in the region. Women usually work the cultivated area or gather weed for the animals. Men go fishing. The workload of women is not comparable to men. Women are the ones who sustain the living in the village; men are mostly there during summers since they are working in foreign land or in the big cities during winters.

In 2011, during my visit to the region, villagers were quite divided about the issue of HEPP, which is going to be built in the place called "*Pınarbaşı/ Derebaşı*"- source of the river. Some were arguing that it is quite far away from the residential area that it is not going to affect the village at the end. But some were arguing the opposite since it's going to affect the riverbed as a whole, hence the whole people living under.

In summer 2012, the situation was quite different. The process has started with the implementation of construction hardware in *Derebaşı*. And the people in the village cafe's or women in the fields, or in home gatherings all talk about this project and how they can be the force to resist the construction. It seemed like the villagers are more eager to learn about the legal procedures that are going on around HEPPs. Since the municipality in the region gave access to the company, it was harder for people resist. They filed a law suit with the reason of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) had not been properly done. However, this has only slowed down the process not yielding a cancellation of the project.

While the legal resistance continued, the protests and physical guarding of the *Derebaşı* continued as well. In one of those protests as mentioned earlier during the winter of 2012, the gendarmerie came with 638 soldiers, which exacerbated the problem in the region. This incident has been perceived as a show on the side of the government portraying themselves as the protective force of the construction

company. This unequal use of force created a deep resentment within the villagers' perceptions of the state as elaborated extensively in the previous subsection of this chapter.

Besides the extensive use of force, which turned the community inwards to find its own strength to resist, lack of recognition of local people's relation with nature also pushed them further to make environmental justice claims over their territory and water. In the interviews with the people of *Karaçam* especially, people were mentioning the cultural heritage of these villages where *Romeyka*[99] is still a common spoken language. The emotional and cultural ties to the region are quite explanatory for their reaction to the privatization of water. 67 year-old woman from *Karaçam* explains to me what she thinks of Romeyka and its future:

> "My daughter, we speak this language for over 1000 years. It has been like this, and it will be like this. But what happens if our water is gone?... who will stay here? All of us will be dispersed in different places. Can a language survive like that?"[100]

The fear of alienation and displacement are also quite prevalent in some villages. There will be nothing left for their survival in the area if such projects are completed. The river, which once was freely flowing, will no longer be in their reach. Since the waterbed will not be regularly meeting with water, the whole environment will change. This might even mean that their living space is no longer available for them hence they have to find a new place.

Even though with similar concerns the people in eastern part of Black Sea region resist against HEPPs, the efforts are mostly local. The resistance is not

[99] Romeyka is an ancient form of Greek, which has recently been studied by the academics Mackridge and Sitaridou. People in the region above Of and especially within the Çaykara municipality still fluently speak this language. In the introduction and in the next chapter (chapter 4) further details have been given about this language.

[100] Personal interview by the author, female, Hafize, 8 July 2012, Karaçam.

centrally organized, everybody tries to defend their own valley, *Fikret* (37) says[101]. *Fikret* believes that the commoners should decide the use of the water. He says,

> "Look at the nature itself, a deer, a bird does not take more than it needs from the river...it should be the same for people...don't take more than you need for your own survival. But also, in order for them not to exploit the resources, an impartial committee consists of experts from different fields should be created and the government should assure its control. Thus, this scientific committee should be the one that decides after through examination of the region maybe in 5-10 years, whether any kind of construction is sustainable."[102]

Fikret's views on the use of water sheds light into the debate centering on whether or not the nature needs intervention for its protection. The local understanding of use of water disapproves Hardin's theory of 'tragedy of the commons'. Similar responses in nature were given to the question of how to use the resources in that particular local area.

Even though many had challenged Hardin's theory of 'tragedy of the commons', it is an important framework for understanding the 'development world' (Goldman, 1998, p. 22). Contrary to Hardin's theory concerning the local commons who are individually depleting the resources in one area, Fikret's views are closer to Ostrom. Like her, he thinks by local cooperation and will to protect their living spaces, they can find a way to manage the natural resources. He also doesn't disregard the non-human beings that have rights over the nature. He even takes their way of using the resources as an example to follow where they don't exceed their need when using them. According to him, privatization of a resource for protection is ridiculous since the access of humans and non-humans who had former access to them are no longer available. Such an exclusionist way is not going to be sustainable since profit

[101] Personal interview by the author, male, Fikret, 7 July 2012, Karaçam.
[102] Personal interview by the author, male, Fikret, 9 July 2012, Karaçam.

seeking companies are not going to care about sustainability of the resource itself. Thus, this restructuring the commons through privatization is a clear example of suppressing the locals' right to living space, right to environment.

3.2. Rize: *Çamlıhemşin (Fırtına Vadisi), Çayeli (Senöz), İkizdere, Fındıklı*

Rize is one of the three cities of Eastern Black Sea region. Along the northern shore it comes after Trabzon. Within the city *Rize*, *Güneysu*, *Salarha* Valley, *Fındıklı*, *Çayeli-Senöz*, *İkizdere* and *Çamlıhemşin-Fırtına* Valleys are some of regions that are affected from the whole process of degradation of the environment, specifically due to HEPP projects. There are currently 62 projects planned for the region (Kork & Özer, 2008). Among the ones listed above *Fındıklı*, *Çamlıhemşin*, *Çayeli* (*Senöz*) and *İkizdere* are visited for the purpose of this thesis.

Çamlıhemşin, Fırtına Valley

Rize-Çamlıhemşin is one of the first places where struggle against HEPPs have began. It was the summer of 1998 when Mesut Yılmaz, then the prime minister, and Cumhur Ersümer, then the minister of Energy and Natural Resources, initiated the first HEPP project in *Çamlıhemşin-Fırtına* Valley. After the legal and the democratic struggle of the local people in *Çamlıhemşin-Fırtına* Valley, the court finally cancelled the project in 2001 (Şan, 2010).

For conservation purposes against any kind of anthropogenic environmental degradation, *Fırtına* Valley was declared as a "Natural preservation Area[103]" (*Doğal*

[103] Trabzon's cultural and natural assets protection committee decided that *Fırtına* River and its branches (including *Palovit* and *Hala* rivers) are third degree natural protection zones; and *Zilkale* and *Kale-i Bala* are first-degree archeological sites. The decree numbered 3148 was accepted on May 19th, 1998 (Şan, 2010).

SİT Alanı) in 1998 (Şan, 2010).[104] This protective shield helped the local people in their legal struggle against the related ministries' positive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports. "Positive EIA" or "EIA is not necessary" are the two statuses that are required to start the construction of HEPPs in one region. Thus, an EIA report's reliability is one of the main arguments used in most court cases[105]. Regardless of court's final decision in 2001, various companies continued with the process of application for electricity production licenses to the Energy Market Regulation Authority (EMRA). But none has managed to start construction in the region.

Additionally, further developments that took place recently have put the *Fırtına* Valley and the areas similar in nature under great danger. More specifically, the recent amendments to Renewable Energy Law in 2010 have further lifted the protective shield of many areas that are listed as "natural preservation areas" or "national parks" (Resmi Gazete, 2010). According to these changes, the protective barrier of specifically defined sites/regions has been removed and these places are now exposed to any kind of construction as long as these constructions fulfill the criteria of being renewable energy production.

In most of the coffee houses or in the center of the village one of the most common responses to construction of HEPPs evolves around the idea of the total disregard by the companies and the state for the sustainability of the region. The region's qualifications are known more or less by many of the local population. Their attribution to uniqueness of their region is usually present in their conversations concerning the HEPP project proposals for the region. In most cases, they refer to these qualifications to bring out the tourism potential of the region. According to

[104] http://derelerinkardesligi.org/web/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=20&Itemid=9
[105] Personal interview by the author, male, Yakup Okumuşoğlu, 27 June 2012, Karadeniz Ereğlisi.

them, without the natural beauty, the appeal of the region will no longer be available.

Their attribution concerning the uniqueness of the region is also certified and approved by national and international well-known institutions. Birdlife International and Association Protecting the Natural Life (DHKD) have declared Eastern Black Sea region as one of the 100 important bird zones. Additionally, the wild mountain rooster (*dağ horozu*) endemic to this region gave the region the recognition of being one of the 217 prioritized regions in the world to be protected. Within the Eastern Black Sea region *Kaçkar* Mountains are also listed as one of the 200 important ecological zones in the world by World Wild Fund (WWF) [106], International BirdLife [107] and Wetlands[108]. Last but not least, WWF categorized *Fırtına* Valley as one of the 100 hot spots (in terms of forests) in Europe to be protected.

Besides the unique qualities of the region, the villagers also use the argument that the Environmental Impact Assessment in the region concerning the HEPPs has only been done as a part of a procedure and does not reflect the quality of the region. The legal authorities approved the 305 signatories who do not want construction of HEPPs in their region and cancelled the projects. But as mentioned above, with new amendments to laws the region's vulnerability still continues. The villagers' rejection of HEPPs in their own words can be summarized in this quote of a man of 78 who had a chance to live and work abroad and return back to his village after his retirement:

> "Yes, there is energy problem in Turkey. But using the already produced energy efficiently should be one of the major concerns…They [the government] blamed us to be against energy production. But there is a way

[106] http://www.worldwildlife.org

[107] http://www.birdlife.org
[108] https://www.wetlands.org

> to do it. The way they do it is neither efficient nor sustainable. You cannot erect high voltage lines through such a dense forest…They decided without making a thorough ground survey. You have to do a 300 meters deep ground survey in every 200 meters. It's not easy. And they didn't do it. "[109]

says one of the retired engineers of this region who still lives in the region and owns a small hotel. Many others are quite critical of construction of HEPPs saying that the electricity that HEPPs will produce here are not for this region but the degradation that it causes will stay with the local population. 56-year-old man from the village clearly illustrates this argument:

> "…Is it for electricity really? I don't believe that! Is this going to save Turkey?!...They are saying our upland areas will be modernized with easy access (with roads) and electricity. We will not be using it here anyway…We light one bulb up in our upland in summers when we are there. There is no need. But now they are erecting huge high voltage lines through the dense forests causing the harvest of many trees…we can't let you to take electricity and leave behind a unlivable environment for us."[110]

The older generation who lives in the region most of the year is quite conscious about the destruction of such anthropogenic changes to nature. But there is also a return on the part of fresh blood to the region, which adds up to the defense of the region more fiercely. In other words, apart from the constant migration flow to cities, there is a new trend among the younger generations to return to this region. In most cases, these young people in their early 30s were born in the cities in which their families have moved earlier. Their experience in this village was no more than occasional visits to the region. But now they are moving back to settle. Regardless of their educational background, they are deeply concerned about the environmental issues. They are also quite committed to the continuation of the traditions in the region and the protection

[109] Personal interview by the author, male, Turgut, 14 July 2012, Rize.
[110] Personal interview by the author, male, Mustafa, 14 July 2012, Rize.

of the region from environmental degradation. The newly opened hotel/coffee shop and book houses are the hidden gems of the region. These younger generations got their hands on what the region is offering them.

> "We have been long been detached from our roots. It is time to get back the essence of life. It is the nature that gives us hope and will to get up every morning. We will do whatever we can and is possible to maintain the free flow of *Fırtına* river"[111]

says one (34) of the enlightened few that has turned a fresh page in their life by returning to *Fırtına* valley. The younger generation's motivation to bring back the old charm to the valley with modern but authentic initiatives is also welcomed by the local population who currently live there. These people are no strangers after all; they are the educated work force that happened to be living in big cities that decided to turn back to their roots, to their own villages. According to these few who return, this type of a return entails the need and desire to live closer to nature, closer to 'real life' where they felt that they have been entrapped into a vicious circle in big cities.

Fındıklı

Fındıklı is the last region of *Rize* before you reach the city lines of *Artvin* along the Black Sea shore. Its geographical proximity to *Artvin* coincides with its similarity to *Artvin's* popular culture. The population in *Fındıklı* do know what the resistance means.

The region is different than *Çamlıhemşin* or the inner parts of *Rize* in terms of its inhabitants' profiles. The residents of this region in most cases are permanently there. They are not only coming to visit their region in summer and work elsewhere. Most of *Fındıklı's* population is residing in *Fındıklı*. The second unique feature about

[111] Personal interview by the author, female, Pınar, 14 July 2012, Rize-Çamlıhemşin.

this region is its level of conservativeness. Compared to the city center of *Rize*, they are much less conservative. The nationalist attitude, which was visible in city centers of *Rize* and *Trabzon* is not quite visible here. On the contrary the leftist culture prevails in most areas of *Fındıklı*. And this oppositional culture seems quite similar to *Artvin* where the resistance can be questioned within the framework of environmentalism of the 'malcontent' (Adaman, Akbulut & Arsel, forthcoming) where the pressure of the state and neoliberal transformation are the main motivations to resist.

One of the interesting features of the region is the level of knowledge about HEPPs in the region. In most of the interviews it is quite prevalent that the level of knowledge about HEPPs is really high in *Fındıklı*. This is due to many different factors in combination. First of all, there is an educated mass that permanently lives in the center of *Fındıklı* from which the leftist tendency strives. And it is this permanent residency in this region, especially in the center, that enables the sustainability of the resistance. Also up in the villages, the local population is every much aware of what's going on and very keenly connected to the struggle. One of the villagers (42) of *Çağlayan* Valley- *Fındıklı* tells her story of how the level of knowledge increased in this region as such:

> "*Fındıklı* was conscious about these projects from the very beginning. There are many intellectuals here. Especially, in the center many teachers, intellectuals live…But also, we had the benefit of seeing what's happening at first hand by visiting the places where HEPPs have started to be built…The local people there shared their regrets and pain with us, and told us not to do the same for ourselves."[112]

Another important characteristic of the region, which increases its level of knowledge and connectivity of its population within and outside *Fındıklı*, is its

[112] Personal interview by the author, female, Mehtap, 7 August 2012, Rize-Fındıklı.

civil initiated platform. Both within its upper villages and center, *Fındıklı* is the place where one of the first organized resistances is formed. *Fındıklı* Brotherhood of Rivers (*Derelerin Kardeşliği Platformu-DEKAP*) originates from this region. One of the activists (52) in this platform explains the aim of this organization as such:

> "Brotherhood of Rivers originates from *Fındıklı*. We wanted it to be a facilitator; an organization that provides logistical support and that widens the horizon of other valleys. We wanted the movement to spread widely without any hierarchical structure…Most importantly we wanted to share our experience, our local struggle with others…it started in 2007 to address all environmental problems/issues…we have representatives in small villages (*köy*)."[113]

This organization not only increases the level of knowledge, it also brings people much closer. In the meetings they all come together, educated or not, and put down a solid stance against HEPPs in their region. But also, they point out the importance of local population's participation in such resistances. One of the activists from the region puts an emphasis on the rootedness of resistance, which according to him should be striving from that local area. In his words;

> "We were invited to give support to the protests against stone quarry in *Senöz* in 2008. We participated with two minibuses. We gave support as much as we can. Even one of the old women from *Senöz* who was among the protesters thought that we were more courageous than the people in her own village…After that protest we also kept in contact with the people of *Senöz* valley for the HEPP projects. We can give all the support we can but we cannot be 'villagers of *Senöz*' for them…people from this valley have to own their land, their water. Doing protests in big metropolitans is not going to pay off if you don't have any connection with the people in the region…In *Fındıklı*, we really did sacrificed a lot to this cause, we spent

[113] Personal interview by the author, male, Samim, 17 July 2012, Rize-Fındıklı.

> what we can for the platform from our own individual accounts. We did it in order to be free from the pressure of any sponsors. We are putting a distance to the organizations that are defining themselves as "environmentalist" or labeled as "environmental organization" but of course our doors are open to all who are sincere about environment and who embrace our principles."[114]

Similar to his ideas, many in the region give utmost importance to local participation in resistance. Whether that is the real case or not, they believe the reason for HEPPs is not really energy. According to them the ostensible reason is getting the right of usage for the water for constructing HEPPs and generating electricity but most believe that this is not case and soon the local people will be excluded from any relation with water.

> "For me, the aim of HEPPs is getting the water, bottling it and selling it. Nothing else. If there really were need for energy in Turkey, they would be meeting that need quite differently. Soon we will be outsiders and will not be able to go near to the riverbed from which we drink water with our hands…but it is also thought provoking how much of this water will still be present in the up coming years if HEPPs were to be constructed…we all know at first hand what will happen if the water is not here anymore. It is already at a lower level than in my childhood. And if HEPPs were to happen, they will be putting the water into tubes giving only vital water [*can suyu,* one of the contested subject within HEPPs]. There is no way we can live here like that. Production of tea largely depends on balanced climatic conditions, which are specific to this region. If there were sun for 10 days in a row, your tea would dry out. If there is sudden cold, it won't sprout. It shouldn't be too cold or too hot. Tea likes humidified moderate temperatures. Therefore, the tea would be good if it's protected around the riverbed or up in the mountains protected within forests…Also, we need the water for our animals. In most of the houses, they have at least one

[114] Personal interview by the author, male, Samim, 17 July 2012, Rize-Fındıklı.

animal. What are we going to do without water?"[115]

Further support for the claim that HEPPs are being built for reasons other than energy need comes from another villager (45). In his own words;

> "...we know the water is scarce. It's loud and clear that in the world the next generation of wars is going to be for water. The scientists say so. And what do you [he means the government] do? You are selling these rivers for 49 years. Why? You say we need energy, but don't care about lost or unauthorized use of electricity. The real motivation is money. You privatized these rivers without any kind of consideration neither for future generations nor for us. We won't be able to reach the only vital thing for our lives, water. "[116]

The understanding of privatization of water resources and their commodification is greatly emphasized in their reasons for resistance. They are quite aware of the fact that this type of neoliberal environmental governmentality excludes them from their own living space. The meaning attributed to water is beyond their physical needs. Besides the physical need for water in the area, there is also the psychological need for water, which is perceived as the source of life. The older generation, especially the women have closer relationship with nature. This is perhaps due to the conditions that they have lived through. In the past, the nature and human kind were closely related since the mobility of people was not easy. Going back and forth between cities and villages was not really a life style. Many people lived in the villages for their whole life. Thus, humans have learned how to live with nature without depleting the resources. One of the elder women (84) describes what water means to her:

> "If the river disappears, we will disappear. We were born, raised and spent our days in these rivers. I didn't swim myself but all kids have...in the old

[115] Personal interview by the author, female, Mehtap, 7 August 2012, Rize-Fındıklı.
[116] Personal interview by the author, male, Mustafa, 7 August 2012, Rize-Fındıklı.

> days, was it like this? We didn't touch one branch of the tree unnecessarily. We collected the old branches…if there is no river, there will be no green. Without the sound of the river, what will we do? They can cut our heads and get the river. There is no other way."[117]

Another woman from younger generation who works in the field believes having the running water is like natural therapy:

> "…I wake up with the river, with the sound of the birds. When I come home, the sound of the river sooths me. We wake up early around 5.30 and go early to the field. In most cases we come back around 17.30-18.00 or in summer around 20.00-21.00. When we come home we can relax. Without the fresh air, this serenity how can we be refreshed? Next day, we start over refreshed without any sign of fatigue. There is no need for psycho-therapy, we have it naturally right here."[118]

From the above statements we can understand that the perception of water is far beyond the physical need. It entails cultural extensions, life experiences, memories and traditions. Therefore, it is not only physically but also psychologically indispensible which is something that the state fails to comprehend.

Senöz

The area that contains 12 villages after the quarry is named as *Senöz* valley. The population that live here are from Hemshin origin, different than the ones in the downward area before the quarry. Similar to other regions, the local population became aware of the projects as the construction company first started excavation in the region. It was one of the first constructions of HEPP in *Rize*, which started in 2007. In terms of the environmental degradation and the importance of the stance of the local community this HEPP project experience was a precedent in

[117] Personal interview by the author, female, Halime, 7 August 2012, Rize-Fındıklı.
[118] Personal interview by the author, female, Mehtap, 7 August 2012, Rize-Fındıklı.

Rize from which the local population in *Fındıklı* drew lessons.

During the process of the second project, which also started in 2007, the local population immediately went to court to stay of execution due to the decision of EIA not being necessary. But this time the court decided that EIA is not necessary. But during the trial the company continued the construction and almost finished it. The local population appealed to an upper court and this time it decided to stay of execution. The construction has stopped. The company, this time wanted to open up a dialogue to find a solution to continue their investment by applying to *Senöz* Association (*Senöz Derneği*). One of the founding members of this association Selim (66) talks about the process:

> "The company came to us for negotiation of course with an underlying aim of putting this project to work. They are saying that 'we made 130 million dollars worth of investment and started the production already. The damage to the environment is already done. We need to operationalize this investment again. It is a waste of country's resources'. And in return we replied that we will not negotiate with them and that we have stated all our demands at the court…Finally, we signed an agreement deciding that the second project of the same company will not start at all, the company is going to help us plan the river basin, the damage given to the environment is going to be repaired by the company by planting trees, cleaning up the riverbed from the excavation dirt, designing and constructing fish passages. They agreed and started the operation."[119]

Additionally, there are two other projects besides the two mentioned above. The third one started also with an EIA not necessary report and made big damage to the region. The court decided at first in favor of EIA report but then against EIA, which enabled the company to move freely to finish. The fourth one also is stopped for now by the court with the decision of stay of execution due to EIA

[119] Personal interview by the author, male, Selim, 15 July 2015, Senöz/Rize.

violation. But, these stay of execution decisions concerning HEPPs are in most cases stopping the constructions for some time but not necessarily cancelling the projects. The construction company in most cases appeal with a regulated EIA report, which enables them to continue their work.

One of the important characteristics of the region is that it is the exemplar of consequent HEPP construction. The HEPPs in this valley are following one another. In other words, the water that is given back to the river by the upper HEPP is taken back again by a new one that is below, which makes it even more damaging for the environment. The consequent HEPPs' accumulative damage is not being calculated in EIA reports. The EIA is only done for each HEPPs individually. The total damage to the river by having these consequent structures is not taken into consideration.

The local community in *Senöz* circling around *Senöz* association has appealed to the court, organized protests with the help of some NGOs from big cities but as the local community their physical appearance on the scene was not the same as the people in *Solaklı, Trabzon*. Even though many in the region believe that the companies have worked cruelly without any control damaged the environment, the struggle does not continue in the area. As a result, the companies are currently finishing up one HEPP after the other.

One of the weaknesses of *Senöz* valley is the fact that most people in Senöz are not regular inhabitants of the region. Predominantly, the elderly are the ones who stay there in winters. But most have migrated to different regions and they are only coming back for summer vacation to the region. Besides *Senöz* Association, which was originally founded to resist against environmental hazards and a respected few, the local population is not communicating among each other

over the issues of environment between the villages. The efforts of Istanbul NGOs, or the people from outside of the region can only take the issue to a certain point. Therefore, this example is important in the way it shows how local community participation in such environmental struggles is one of the keys for success.

İkizdere

76 km long *İkizdere* Valley is also suffering from the construction of HEPPs in the region. The valley is facing 26 projects in total. The story about HEPPs in the region starts in 1956 with a government project (*Çamlık* HES), which is sold to a private company in 2000s. Consequently in 2007, another project (*Cevizlik* HES) has begun in the downward section of the valley. The few people who lived there accepted the generous offer of the company, which was grabbing the land for construction. Similarly, there are two others (*Yokuşlu* HES, *Adalı* HES) that are currently operational in production since 2010.

The protests of the local community and their appeal to the court cancelled one project and stalled the others due to their EIA reports. They finally thought that the valley would be free from HEPP projects since they managed to enlist the valley as a "protected area" (*sit alanı*) in 2010[120]. However, the government's amendment to renewable energy law, which was explained earlier in the chapter, unveils the protective shield of the region against HEPPs.

There are controversial views in the region concerning HEPPs. The ones who favor them mainly wanted jobs or wanted to sell their properties for a price much higher than the market value. Of course, this was only available for a few in

[120] http://bianet.org/bianet/cevre-ekoloji/125614-ikizdere-artik-sit-alani

the region. The ones that are against them, want to protect the region not only for the sake of the nature itself but also and mainly for their utilitarian aims. They want to develop their region though tourism. Uğur (44) from the region explains it as such:

> "We want to sustain our lives with tourism here. If the HEPPs were to be constructed the quality of the region in terms of eco-tourism would be gone. This region is famous for upland meadow trekking, rafting, and for its hot springs. There are many opportunities as such but they will dry them all out with HEPP projects."[121]

Besides this, there is also a tendency that is similar in most sites in *Rize* and Trabzon. If these projects were government projects, in most cases people agree that they would not oppose them. One of the reasons for the acceptance is the understanding that is derived from "common good". According to their line of thinking if the state were to do something, it would seek out for the common good. It is one way or another beneficial to the community or the country. Plus, almost all think that the state would not be harmful as the private companies are to the nature. The reason for that is, in their eyes the private companies are seeking out for profit only disregarding the environmental degradation but the state would not do that. It is all encompassing and like a father figure who seeks out the interest of its people and their living environment. In Sadık's (43) words:

> "If the state were to do it, they wouldn't be giving that much of a damage to the environment...If this energy politics and if it is necessary, we will sacrifice our *Ikizdere* to supply 3%-5% of Turkey's energy need."[122]

It is evident in Sadık's words that state's understanding is all encompassing and patriarchal since he believes the state is going to prioritize the population's needs

[121] Personal interview by the author, male, Uğur, 18 July 2012, İkizdere.
[122] Personal interview by the author, male, Sadık, 18 July 2015, İkizdere/Rize.

and natural sustainability of their habitat. Additionally, like him many are quite patriotic when it comes to national interests. They are indeed ready to make sacrifices if necessary for their country. However, whether these sacrifices are in nature's best interest in the long term is something that is not in their current agenda.

3.3. Artvin: *Meydancık, Artvin city center, Yusufeli*

The last city on the eastern Black Sea coast that I have visited is *Artvin*. Among the three cities in eastern Black Sea *Artvin* strikes out due to its multicultural structure, its proximity to Georgia, its climatic qualities that is similar to Mediterranean Sea region and its peoples' open-minded characteristics.

These characteristics of *Artvin* are visible on site even with a short visit to *Artvin*. The conservative nature of *Rize* and Trabzon sharply changes as you pass to *Artvin*. Especially in *Hopa*, the leftist culture that is stemming from the political association of People's Houses (*Halk Evleri)* gives the people a more receptive attitude against the ongoing *development aggression* (Casiple 1996). Due to the need for further elaboration on its political culture *Hopa* is left out within the scope of this thesis. But yet, this receptive attitude is not only specific to *Hopa*. It is one of the general characteristics of *Artvin*. The sites that are going to be analyzed for this thesis are *Meydancık*, the city center of *Artvin*, and *Yusufeli*. But the HEPP construction unfortunately is not limited to these areas. Including *Meydancık*, *Şavşat*, *Murgul Kabaca* Valley, *Yusufeli*, *Borçka*, *Arhavi*, *Ardanuç* and central province, there are overall 129 projects planned for the city of *Artvin* but the locals talk about even more projects.[123]

The environmental struggle in *Artvin* is multifaceted since the environmental

[123] Personal interview by the author, male, Bedrettin Kalın, 8 September 2012, Artvin.

degradation is not only caused by HEPPs but also by consequent large dams and by prospecting. Prospecting was the beginning for the general realization of environmental degradation in *Artvin* in 1990s. The struggle against prospecting is mainly about an area in the upper section of the mountains of *Artvin,* which is called Cerattepe. The legal battle still continues. 760 plaintiff appealing to court to cancel the "EIA report being positive" made this case the biggest environmental case since 1993.[124] The protests and the physical struggle are still continuing with the leadership of *Yeşil Artvin Derneği* (Green Artvin Association).

The city center of *Artvin*

The environmental degradation in *Artvin* through prospecting, large dams and HEPPs are the major concern of many in *Artvin.* The non-governmental organization, called Green *Artvin* Association, is the one that many with environmental concerns have circled around in *Artvin.* The Brotherhood of Rivers (*Derelerin Kardeşliği*) and political groups like People's Houses are also the actors that are concerned with environmental protection.

The most common belief about HEPPs in the region is the purpose of depopulation. Many believe that HEPPs are triggering migration, which is already one of the major problems of the region. Repeated by most of the interviewees, depopulation of the region unveils the preclusion before the prospecting companies.

65 year-old pastry shop owner is very conscious about what's going on with HEPPs and *Yeşil Yol* (Green Road)[125]:

"Çoruh is something different. Because of Çoruh river and the alignment of

[124] http://www.haberturk.com/gundem/haber/1101430-cerattepe-icin-20-saattir-tbmm-nobetinde

[125] *Yeşil Yol* is a government project that connects the upper meadows with an autobahn in eastern Black Sea region. The people of the region are against such a project, which is going to end the whole characteristic of untouched plateaus of Black Sea region. For further information on *Yeşil Yol*, please refer to Uğur Biryol's article "Yeşil Yol Ne Yana Düşer Usta, Doğa Ne Yana?" in newly edited book by Deniz Yıldırım and Evren Haspolat "Değişen Karadeniz'i Anlamak". Also, the book by Timur Danış "Yeşil Yol'a Karşı Samistal'da 50 Gün" is the account of the first hand experience of the resistance against *Yeşil Yol* in 2015.

> mountains here, this region is unique. We have a climate similar to Mediterranean. But you probably have seen all this construction of empty dams on the way coming here...shame rings of development strangling the nature…Like that wasn't enough, the environment is under grave danger with HEPPs. But all this is not new. We became environmental activists here to protect our environment with the threat of prospecting, long before the HEPPs was an issue. And this is all a big part of it. They know that we are against prospecting so they are pushing us from all different angles possible. With HEPPs they are planning to depopulate the villages so that the area will be clear for prospecting. No one will be there, so no one will oppose their projects of prospecting or big roads they think."[126]

Most of the people who are living in the city believe that with the construction of HEPPs in the region, the already existing problem of environmental degradation is going to reach a climax. They stress that the villages where HEPPs are being built or already in use are going to change the village structure and eventually force people to migrate. They believe this is a way of governance to eliminate obstacles in the way of privatization of natural resources.

Meydancık

Meydancık is in a quite remote location, which sits 83 km away from Artvin city center. On the way to *Meydancık* it is possible to see two operational consequent HEPP projects, *Elite* HES and *Diyoban* HES and two more that are under construction. The first one is in a location where there is no inhabitance thus none of the local population have opposed its construction. The ones in the upper sections of *Meydancık* in the *Papart* valley (Cüneyt 1,2,3,4) are all cancelled with the decision of the court. *Papart* valley is one of the important ecological zones of *Meydancık* with its natural habitat.

[126] Personal interview by the author, female, Emel, 8 September 2012, Artvin.

Similar to many regions in eastern Black Sea, the animal husbandry and agriculture are not the main sources for the livelihood of the local community. Most of them are retired. According to many in the region, they get their guarantee in life by retirement and then come back to their village to enjoy. Thus, there is not much dependence on land for the livelihood. But yet, in the upper meadow of the village people depend on this water coming from the upper valley called *Papart*. Thus, with the legal resistance organized against HEPP construction in this valley the court's decision was in favor of the plaintiff.

There has never been a physical struggle in the valley; only the legal struggle took place in courts. Many people are either afraid or do not know how to react legally under the circumstances says Tarık[127] (55) from the village. Apart from few in the village, many refrain from taking any political stance against the state's motivation for "development with HEPPs".

Yusufeli

Yusufeli is almost 80 km away from the city center of *Artvin*. Driving that road gives you the opportunity to see the large dams one after the other along the *Çoruh* River. The ongoing constructions of dams show you the face of development aggression at first hand. Arriving finally in your destination exacerbates the situation even more. The main reason for that is the decade long limbo the local community is in. Due to the uncertain future that awaiting them, the local population cannot invest or repair their properties. For the last decade, many consortiums were to build a large dam over *Yusufeli* village. This has not yet been realized. But sooner or later, people believe that it will. The whole village has to be moved.

To varying degrees all of the responses to large dam construction circles

[127] Personal interview by the author, male, Tarık, 8 September 2012, Meydancık.

around the inevitableness of the situation. Most say it is faith. Yakup (60) says, "There are few people that say 'we still can stop this by resisting'. The rest says 'it is faith. We will get our money and begin a new life'"[128] Some even see it as a state developmental project. Their full confidence to state being all encompassing and trustworthy makes it harder to organize a resistance against dam or HEPP construction.

My general impression that most of the local population has already accepted the large dam construction, which is yet to begin but they are still concerned about HEPPs. One of the locals, Haluk (45) puts this thought into words:

> "In our village Tekkale, %90 don't want HEPPs… Okay, there is a plan about the big Yusufeli Dam but what will the people here will do if our water is also gone. You cannot be a bully against the state, we accepted the dam but at least you [state] should take your hands off the villages!"[129]

The court case concerning EIA in *Tekkale* resulted in favor of the plaintiffs but the case still continues about the project. The upper land rivers in the villages are necessary for the villagers to use in irrigation.

3.4. Overall Assessment of *Trabzon*, *Rize* and *Artvin*: the Contribution of the Data to the Theoretical Framework

The right to generate electricity by using the water in the rivers is given to the private companies for 49 years with special agreements by State Hydraulic Works (DSI) and Energy Market Regulatory Authority (EMRA). Thus, this is in line with the idea of neoliberalizing nature through privatization. As mentioned earlier, privatization and deregulation are the main features of neoliberalization of nature. But yet, explaining

[128] Personal interview by the author, male, Yakup, 10 September 2012,Yusufeli.
[129] Personal interview by the author, male, Haluk, 10 September 2012, Tekkale/Yusufeli.

the role of the state only within the framework of neoliberalization would be incomplete. The question of the 21st century: Does the state protect its people or be the ardent protector of the big companies? What is the main duty of the state?

Creating jobs, creating rant have always been prioritized at the expense of high environmental costs by governments in Turkey regardless of their political stance (Paker, Adaman, Kadirbeyoğlu, & Özkaynak, 2013, p. 763). The HEPP construction in Turkey is no different and it is supported by the government/state[130]. There are three main ways in which this has been realized in Turkey: by changing laws/regulations in favor of the construction companies within the framework of development, by using force (both the gendarmerie, and the police) as a way of coercive mechanism to create docile bodies to the authority (in the Foucauldian sense), by villainisation of people who are against the construction.

When state uses coercion *vis-a-vis* persuasion in the case of HEPPs, this brings in the question of democracy in that country. By showing the people who are trying to protect their environment for life as villains, the state tries to legitimize its authority and its use of force. The assertive governmental authority, which excludes challenge of any kind, is quite successful in creating citizens/individuals who are idealizing the state as all encompassing, patriarchal, and bureaucratically unreachable. Consequently, in some areas/regions local people feel that they cannot intervene in the upper structures of the state apparatus. Their political participation is only limited to voting. This is mostly the case where the HEPP construction is accepted by the local population or seen as a work of faith. This kind of behavior of local community in that region can be read as a new way to refrain from the guilt and responsibility for future generations.

[130] Since all the state apparatus of the Turkish state is filled with the cadre of the leading party of Turkey which at the same time constituting the government. The separation between state and government is no longer apparent.

In the areas where the resistance is still continuing, the coercion by the state is still intact in many different ways but the local response is different. In such regions/areas the local population see themselves as the drive for change. In the case of relative deprivation and exclusion by the state concerning their life tied to their environment, they uphold the right to resist. In other words, as the local people are denied participation in the management of their environment, they become insurgent citizens to seek out for their rights themselves.

For the resistance to continue, "local" participation and persistence are the two key features. As the respondents clearly point out in daily conversations the only major force that keeps them together is themselves. Resistance cannot be imported. It can be supported by civil society organizations and the city dwellers but the motivation; the flame should be set at site.

In the case of *Rize* and *Trabzon*, the conservative culture and political affiliations do not mean much in shaping the resistance but the leftist culture in *Fındıklı* (*Rize*) and *Artvin* contribute largely formulating the resistance. It may not necessarily be the cause but it definitely is a facilitator. Without doubt, understanding of "environmentalism" and "resistance" shapes the identity of people who resist. It gives them a sense of belonging, a new purpose and a new cause for cooperation.

Overall, the HEPP construction in Turkey is not regulated to sustain the current status of the environment but on the contrary it mainly is one of the major forces of environmental degradation in Turkey. The development projects in the age of neoliberalism that is prioritizing economy and rant instead of nature as in the case of the 3rd airport, the 3rd bridge in Istanbul, the phase of unstoppable erection of high buildings with total disregard of environmental sustainability has its reflections in the villages of eastern Black Sea region in the shape of HEPPs.

The next chapter is going to focus on the struggle in the *Solaklı* Valley where all the above-mentioned pieces are going to be put together within the framework of environmentalism. *Solaklı* Valley particularly stands out as one of the intense places where the struggle against HEPPs took place.

Chapter 4:

The Struggle of the People of *Trabzon Solaklı* Valley: Environmentalism of the Poor?

As the previous chapter clearly illustrates manipulations of governance, changing the laws and regulations in line with the capitals needs; using coercive methods legitimized as a part of neoliberal form of governmentality; excluding and marginalizing people with malrecognition and villainisation have been largely present in the area of question, namely Trabzon, Artvin, Rize in different levels. This chapter especially focuses on Trabzon, *Solaklı* Valley where one of the major resistances against HEPPs took place. This time the issue of neoliberalization of nature through privatization of water is going to be elaborated from the perspective of the local population in question.

In particular, the *Solaklı* Valley in the town of *Çaykara* in Trabzon, with its 36 HEPPs, mostly planned consequently, is one of the most important and prominent points of the resistance against HEPPs. Although the reactions where HEPPs were being built around Turkey and the motivations behind them varied throughout the country, the particular violence and conflict against environmentalists that took place in the *Solaklı* valley changed the way society viewed the government and added a new dimension to the struggle. In other words, it played a key role in shaping the resistance towards HEPPs and in rendering *Solaklı* as a multilayered and a unique example.

Then what does all this mean for those living in the *Solaklı* valley? What is it

that distinguishes *Ogene*[131] from the others? Why was the most noise made here when there are protests in so many other places around Turkey? How would one go about conceptualizing the particular environmental protection(ism)/environmentalism that was born in this rough landscape far from civilization with its distinct culture and intense conflict?

Theoretically, Martinez-Alier and Guha (2002), as presented in greater detail in theoretical chapter, have coined the term, 'environmentalism of the poor' to refer to the form of resistance that communities with lives integrated into nature have developed in reaction to threats. This mindset, which became more widespread as of the 1980s is based on the transformation of these communities' reaction against threats to their economic ties to nature into a struggle. In other words, they became environmental protectors, as their economic relationship to nature is broken. However, the latest theoretical contributions made by Angueloski & Martinez-Alier (2014) to this area of study have relieved the issue of protecting living spaces of the stronghold of economic survival, thereby laying the groundwork for defining the struggle of impoverished locals based on rights and cultural values (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, 2014). Following from this, in this chapter I aim to conceptualize the struggle to protect the living spaces in *Solaklı* not by reducing it to economic values but based on an environmentalism of the poor approach that involves rights and cultural values as well. This way I aim to put recognition, power and justice aspects into the picture by seeking the roots of the resistance in the *Ogene* villages with their rough, mountainous landscape in culture and particularly in language.

In addition to seeking answers to the aforementioned questions, in line with the aim of this thesis this chapter aims to give voice to the local actors of the

[131] The *Romeykan* (the language currently alive that is described in detail below) name for the area, which is still in use.

resistance against the HEPPs and gain an understanding of how they perceive these projects. It focuses more in depth on the struggle of the residents of the area to protect their living space. Furthermore, it aims to highlight the heretofore-unexpressed cultural and regional allegiances they have for the land and for their living space that the struggle is rooted in.

It is important at this point to more closely examine the terms "protection" and "rescue/conservation" to ensure a better understanding of the relationship between humans and nature before going onto a detailed examination of the area. The perception of protecting the living spaces within the context of Turkey and HEPPs will be investigated with an eye to the basic relationship forms between humans and nature as explained in the earlier chapters. The first part of the chapter is made up of the theoretical framework of different approaches to nature conservation being implemented in Turkey, and is followed by the structural context of the region and its general characteristics. Finally, the theoretical framework is combined with the fieldwork data to contribute to an understanding of the region.

4.1.The Approaches of Nature Conservation in Turkey

What kind of a picture do we see when these various approaches of nature protection reflected in Turkey? The first of the relationship forms between humans and nature, i.e., the *wildlife cult,* aims to maintain nature as is, without damaging its aesthetics, as mentioned above. In the case of the wildlife cult understanding as it pertains to the national parks and conservation in Turkey, there are protection related problems. First of all, there are no areas where wild life continues without human intervention in Turkey. The national parks in Turkey, in contrast to those in the US and Europe, contain settlements, and these parts are seen as the cultural extension of

national parks (Arda, 2003, p. 100). Therefore, the extent of the protection offered for nature within these areas, which cover about 1% of the country's area, is questionable.

Mining activities and HEPPs in particular have led the conservationist approach to take a back seat to economic interests, and through legal amendments, many areas have lost their 'conservation' status. Within the neoliberal context of the present, it does not seem realistic that the conservationist element within these national parks will be maintained in Turkey for very long. It seems inevitable that more and more national parks will be under threat. Among these are the *Kazdağı* National Park, under threat of gold mine prospecting, The *Munzur* Valley National Park under threat of being flooded by dam waters, the *Köprülü* Canyon National Park, and *Fırtına* Valley, *Papart* Valley and *Maçahel*, all threatened by HEPPs.

Destruction is imminent for these areas, which could easily be stripped of their conservation status. In fact, the protective shield has already been pierced with changing the regulation as a part of governance of nature. For example, the 2010[132] amendments made to the act on Renewable Energy Sources (Resmi Gazete, 2010) have made it possible to build facilities to produce electrical energy using renewable sources in several conservation sites, which has rendered many valleys under "conservation" status vulnerable to unregulated HEPP destruction.

Furthermore, with the Act for the Protection of Nature and Biological Diversity, currently on hold but still controversial, the status of natural areas are to be reviewed in Parliament, which means the protective status of many will now be at the mercy of politics. A closer look at the above-mentioned law that has been accepted by the environmental commission on June 20th, 2012 (Şahin, 2013, p. 20) clearly indicates

[132] Accordingly close 8 of the law no. 5346 has changed which indeed ended the protective shield for HEPP construction. The original text was mentioned in the earlier chapter (Resmi Gazete, 2010).

that the law does not aim to protect the nature or natural diversity, on the contrary it paves the way for legitimization of the "usage" or in other words "consumption" of nature by easing the ways in which humans can penetrate nature.

As many of the non-governmental organizations, lawyers, and environmental organizations claim, the "protection" in the name of this law is ironic since the main aim is to eliminate all there is to protect that of nature by eradicating the "discomfort" and "limitations" that the companies who invest in 'developmental projects' face.

The main aim in such a law would be to define the lines where human intervention to nature should stop for the survival and subsistence of nature itself. These protected natural reserves ought to be defined in terms of borders. And within such borders, a way of environmental management ought to take place (Şahin, 2013, p. 21). As Şahin indicates above what the aim of such a law should be, it is possible to imagine that such law would lead to the protection of nature. But as we clearly see, the government opens it up for total consumption and destruction by using the exact same words only by reading and legitimizing them quite differently.

The usage and protection of nature is still defined in terms of borders but the environmental management within unfortunately undermines the nature's sustainability. The protective shield that this law ought to provide is constantly being poked by human intervention to nature since the government had legitimized it due the higher good that these environmental projects serve.

In simpler words, the law clearly indicates that political authorities have the right to decide whether the usage of nature serves for general welfare (common good). If so, the destruction of nature is inevitable. This is a clear indication that the wild life cult will not take much of a hold in Turkey in the field of environmental protection.

The second form of relationship between nature and humans as defined above is the *ecological efficiency* approach (*gospel of eco-efficiency*), which, in the case of Turkey, may seem like a good way of producing energy from renewable energy sources and meeting the country's energy demands and preventing its dependence on other countries. This way, natural resources are to be used rationally and through clean energy production, claimed to be environmentally friendly, the destruction of the environment is to be avoided. This movement is mainly concerned with the elimination of the negative effects of industrialization and economic growth on humans and nature, which will be possible through this type of production. While this approach seems viable for a sustainable environment, in reality its manifestation through HEPPs seems to contribute to the sustainability of anything but the environment.

One small visit to the construction site would be enough to understand that environmental sustainability is not the true concern of HEPPs. Those visits and conversations with the local residents bring out their concern about the government-supported destruction. The government has taken on the idea that natural resources can be protected when they are taken under control and managed, but practical concerns lead to serious doubts in terms of the sustainability of nature. In fact, the energy and development policies implemented despite these concerns and doubts could be interpreted as the government's efforts to legitimize its position through pretenses of 'ecological sustainability'.

To put it even more clearly, the government has encouraged the production of electricity without harming the environment through the more 'rational' use of water via HEPPs, all the legal hurdles that might prevent companies from doing this have been eliminated (which is a typical example of deregulation-reregulation), those

opposing or resisting this have been accused of treason and a discourse independent of the destruction in practice has been established. Within this context, the position of the government is revealed through the reaction of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who was prime minister at the time, related the 2010 decision of the Trabzon Culture and Nature Protection Board proclaiming *İkizdere* Valley in *Rize* as a protected site. Erdoğan was extremely critical of the cancellation of the HEPPs planned for the region due to the establishment of the conservation zone, which rendered the country externally dependent, which indeed is one the major discourses repeatedly used by current government. The general view of the government is that HEPPs will prevent resource waste and the "water going to waste" can be transformed into value that can "benefit" the country. The following words by Erdoğan clearly reveal as much:

> "For years our approach to water in this country was "water flows, the Turk watches" but now we don't want to be watching. Now that we are saying "waters flows, the Turk makes", but we are being stopped. These waters of ours should not flow to the seas and go to waste. Let's all take advantage of them" (Vatan 2010).[133]

According to this understanding, economic growth should be taken as the basis for development and modernization, with resources being used to benefit humans and not going to waste. This is one of the dangerous pitfalls of neoliberalism 'growth' misinterpreted for 'development'. In this regard, it overlaps with the ecological efficiency approach, which highlights mutual benefits rather than protection. "The water going to waste" argument is also frequently used by DSİ. If nothing is produced out of water that flows directly to the sea, then it is wasted (Işlar, 2012, p. 323). Işlar rightly argues that this could also be an example of a case of lack of recognition since it doesn't recognize the other uses of water (Işlar, 2012, p. 323).

[133] Vatan, 23 October 2010. "Bugüne kadar neredeydiniz?" http://www.gazetevatan.com/bugune-kadar-neredeydiniz--336222-gundem/

Especially in the case of HEPPs, we can argue that the cultural and emotional attributions to water by the local communities are largely not recognized by the government. It is in a way a part of neoliberal governmentality where the state legitimizes its own policies using the earlier accepted discourses like development and patriarchal structure of the state and expects its citizens to be no more than docile bodies submitting to the upper intelligence who to thinks and acts in their best interest.

Although the ecological efficiency approach is used by the government to legitimize its own policies, it bears remembering that there are international organizations and NGOs that are actually fighting to this end. These types of organizations and institutions active in Turkey as well are proponents of increasing efficiency while preventing the destruction of nature.

Apart from such international organizations and NGOs making efforts within an environmental protection approach, a new environmental approach stemming locally is necessary to explain the culture of resistance towards environmental destruction locally. The source, basis and underlying reasons of this understanding of the resistance that took place locally and was reflected in the literature of social movements can only be understood by examining the resistance against HEPPs in Turkey. The locals in *Trabzon's Solaklı* Valley position their struggle against the private company that owns the HEPP, and when necessary, against the gendarme and even the government. In other words, they are resisting all of the elements intervening in their living space. To what extent can this struggle be explained within the framework of the environmentalism of the poor? What other contributions can this case make within the borders of environmentalism? Next part of this chapter will explore the case of *Solaklı* Valley in detail for an understanding of the difference of

resistance to HEPPs and will evaluate the struggle in the region from an environmentalist point of view.

4.2.The Struggle to Protect Living Spaces in the Case of the *Solaklı* Valley

The *Solaklı* Valley in Trabzon has attained a rather unique position in the struggle against HEPPs with the 36 planned HEPPs and the resistance of the locals. A true understanding of what the region stands to lose with HEPPs is only possible through a thorough understanding of the region's characteristics. Due to its physical location, the *Solaklı* Valley is within the province of Trabzon, under the jurisdiction of the *Çaykara* Municipality. Following the controversial coastal road by the Black Sea, a ride up to *Of*, past the center of *Çaykara*, the road to *Bayburt* goes through *Uzuntarla*, *Köknar* and finally *Karaçam* at the top. Instead of turning towards *Bayburt*, if one continues on, the road leads to *Uzungöl*.

To reach one of the highest villages, *Karaçam*, 1900m above sea level, one needs to travel for several minutes along a cliff, on the edge of steep mountainsides. Life is lived on a vertical plane in these villages settled one after another on these steep mountainsides far from the center. This is a part of daily life. For example, the agricultural method employed in this region to avoid erosion due to its steepness is rather interesting. The earth that shifts down the hill while ploughing is filled into baskets and carried back up the hill by the villagers before sowing begins.

On the one hand, establishing a life on the steep mountainsides is difficult, but on the other hand, the separation from the center provides the villagers a certain freedom. It has enabled them to protect their own values. For example, that the very special language called *Romeyka*, which will be explained in greater detail below, has survived since it lives in an area high in the mountains, far from the center. In

addition to living away from the center having protected their unique culture, it has influenced the way the locals connect with nature and with each other. In addition, it has enabled them to avoid the government throughout history to a great extent.

It seems plausible to well embrace the remoteness factor in understanding the struggle and the preservation of the traditions and values. *Solaklı* Valley behaves as an exception by its local people resisting to the construction of HEPP project even though it is not going to be directly affecting their daily life in the economic sense. In practice, the water used in the household is coming from another source; not the one that the project is supposed to be built on. Additionally, the overall reduction of farming and animal husbandry in Turkey also has a reflection on eastern Black Sea region. *Solaklı* Valley is no exception to this. There are no more than a handful of people who are still engaged in animal husbandry or farming. The ones who are still continuing are doing it just enough for themselves. Thus, the people's livelihood does not depend on the land or the water since in most households has some family members working in other cities or abroad to bring income to the household. In other words, the real income is generated by seasonal or immigrant workers in each household. Thus, their imminent economic livelihood does not depend on the environment.

So, what then makes them rebel against the HEPP project this fiercely and passionately? Could it be because of "remoteness"? Yes, it is up in hills and away from the seaside but is "remoteness" explanatory for this situation of HEPPs? "Remoteness" not necessarily is limited to geographical location. Rather, it refers to "a way of being" (Harms, Hussain, & Sheniderman, 2014, p. 362). Harms et al. describe the marginal position of people is often times determined by the concept of "social edginess". Mainly, living on the edge either pushes them away in the ways of

disempowering them or bringing new opportunities in ways of empowering them (Harms et. al., 2014, p. 363). Thus, their relationship to the larger city determines whether they uphold a marginal position. If they define themselves as outsiders in relationship to the inner circle of the city, they are considered as marginalized which indeed is a good indicator of social edginess (Harms et. al., 2014, pp. 361-363). Thus, this notion of social edginess gives remoteness the meaning beyond its common understanding such as the place, which is related to its geographical standing but rather encompasses the idea of its position "it's a way of being".

Harms explains on his book of "Saigon's edge" how people experienced the social edginess. More interestingly he points out the fact that the people on Saigon's edge played on their marginalized position in a way to benefit themselves. In other words, it was a strategic and conscious embracement of their position to get as much opportunities as they can out of this situation (Harms et. al., 2014, p. 363). The similar tendency was also present in *Solaklı*. The local community in *Solaklı* has in the past used their position in their favor. But now, they cannot free themselves from tightly connecting to bigger living districts with bigger roads and development projects. Even though, the 'remoteness' of the area says a lot about the region and the characteristics of the population where the language and traditions were well kept, it unfortunately doesn't have the power to solely explain the struggle in the region.

To put it into a better perspective, the selected places in *Solaklı* are going to be enlarged in the upcoming paragraphs. All of the places in *Solaklı* that have been included in the study have unique characteristics, an investigation of which will provide a better understanding of the region as a whole. *Uzungöl* distinguishes itself with tourism; *Uzuntarla* is home to the first HEPP built in the residential area and witnessed environmental destruction first-hand; and the villages *Karaçam* and *Köknar*

saw great violence and solidarity.

Uzungöl is the most touristic one among the four areas. In the summer, domestic and international tourists, Arab tourists in particular, visit the area for its natural beauty. Business owners especially are concerned that the local economy and the natural beauty will be irreparably hurt by HEPPs. The HEPP planned in the area has been temporarily prevented by a State Council decision.

Uzuntarla is a village lower down the mountains on the *Bayburt* road, before *Köknar* and *Karaçam*. What sets *Uzuntarla* apart from the other places is that the locals actually supported the construction of the HEPP there. Even though they changed their opinion later, for the time being, they have been living with an operational HEPP since 2011.

Köknar and *Karaçam*, on the other hand, could be described as the center of the resistance in the valley. These villages managed to find common ground despite the small differences and gathered around their cause of preventing the construction of a HEPP. In fact, they supported each other through the harshest interventions ever seen in *Solaklı*. Despite all their pushback, they were unable to stop the construction of the *Derebaşı* HEPP above *Karaçam* and the *Gavlatan* HEPP below *Köknar*.

Regardless of their efforts to be seen as more than a passive aspect in development policies, the residents here with their deep connection to the water, soil and air are unable to make any claims on the management and control of the water, the very basis of the living space. Neoliberal development policies, while describing the privatization of water so that it is under the control of companies is the rational use of resources, cause concern for a business owner in *Uzungöl* who is critical of the development policies in Turkey as they relate to HEPPs. His criticism is centered around the fact that values that are forsaken in the interest of development and growth

will irrevocably change the lifestyles of communities and will abolish the understanding that humans are a part of nature. Ismet (45) states:

> "...What I've seen in recent years is that anything that brings in money is fine. This is the mentality. If in doubt, money wins. The country needs energy, the country will develop – these are the sorts of things they say. But it shouldn't grow if that means growth. If it means destroying people's important values, the things that give them peace, it shouldn't grow. If it has no streams, no humans, no greetings, culture, humanity, embraces, *horon* dances, [musical instruments] it shouldn't grow, what good would it be? If we stand to lose these values, we will be worse off than we are now."[134]

The one on one interviews carried out in *Uzungöl* revealed the common opinion that the touristic appeal of *Uzungöl* would be lost if a HEPP is built. While the Special Environment Protection Act passed to protect the environment prevents from hammering in so much as a nail, the fact the immunity of the region is being lifted for the construction of a HEPP is cause for concern among the residents. This concern is rooted in their dependence on nature for their livelihood.

The process in *Uzuntarla*, which is located directly below the villages of *Köknar* and *Karaçam*, was quite different. Although it differed at first compared to the other villages, the current prevalent view among the villagers is not as different. At first, the villagers in *Uzuntarla* and the former mayor supported the construction of the HEPP, which they thought would benefit them. But now, after the construction, the interviews conducted reveal that they are not very happy and that they do not believe anything will change any time soon. A 64-year-old woman, in *Uzuntarla*, summarizes what happened following an explosion right after the plant was built:

> The engineers said, 'it isn't what we had feared it might be'. Look here, good thing this part is this way, they said, if the stream didn't widen here, the rocks

[134] Personal interview by the author, male, İsmet, 5 July 2012, Uzungöl.

it dragged here would have taken the whole village away. The place they really fear is apparently directly above us. We told the mayor we should do something as soon as this happened and not wait. But they invested so much; nothing will change now…we should have kept them from getting in in the first place. Everyone agreed just for a few coins. They said they would build roads, offer employment, and nothing has happened. There was some employment at first then it was finished…[135]

The same resignation is observed in the interviews conducted in the same place a few years later. Especially among the elderly there is the tendency to leave things up to fatalism, as they believe they no longer can have an impact for change. An 83-year-old man thinks there is nothing to be done:

"At first we said yes to the construction. The *muhtar* told us, the roads will be made, there will be jobs for young people, and we even get money for the fields we don't even use…of course, non of that happened as they were idealized to be…If we had known how it would turn out, no one would have stood for it. How do we know? Who is left here to protect anyway? They're all abroad... What can we do? They didn't tell us properly what would happen. No one can do anything anymore. Now it is up to God [to punish the guilty ones]."[136]

In the villages of *Köknar* and *Karaçam* in the *Solaklı* valley, which could be considered the 'brave hearts' of the valley, the primary concern has always been the protection of their living spaces. Instead of using fatalist or benefit oriented discourses, the locals made an effort to determine their own destiny, resisting armed forces, the government and private companies using every method at their disposal and supported each other against interventions.

The entire struggle began when the locals started resisting what was going on and received support throughout the region. Although the resistance of the

[135] Personal interview by the author, female, Şehnaz, 10 August 2011, Uzuntarla.
[136] Personal interview by the author, male, İdris, 6 July 2012, Uzuntarla.

inhabitants of this town now renowned for its true struggle against the HEPPs through physical resistance, occasional fights, arrests and vigil was played down as "the work of a handful of looters" by the government, the events that took place in the region tell a different story. The events of November 2011 and June 2012[137], in particular, are important examples of how the tension in the region was escalated.

The experiences of the struggle, the violence faced and the public reaction for the struggle in *Solaklı* served to unite the locals within the context of HEPPs. The resistance against HEPPs, in the words of the locals, 'is to protect their living spaces'. For those living in the area, water is the most basic source of life. A woman from the *Karaçam* village expresses what water means to them:

> What can we do without our water? Would this place [be the same] without this stream that has been running for years? What could we do here without this green, this nature? If this continues, we won't even be able to find grass for our animals. [138]

Even though the amount of agricultural production and animal husbandry in these villages is only enough for their own sustenance, and the water they consume comes from springs, they define water as their reason for being. An 82-year-old woman explains her loyalty to her village and the stream with these words:

> Did they ever come and ask [us]? What would these people here do?...Does water ever go to waste, my daughter, could this place even exist without the sounds of this stream?... When the stream disappears, so will we. Since the day we were born we have lived around streams. I didn't swim but all the kids did. They can cut our throats and take the streams…that's the only way they can. Would this green be here if not for this stream? They can go mess with their

[137] These events were elaborated on in the previous chapter. For details and sequence of these events please refer to chapter 3.
[138] Personal interview by the author, female, Sakine, 8 July 2012, Karaçam.

own streams, not with ours.[139]

Others like the quote above could be mentioned here for the women and elderly in the village. Just as in other villages in the Eastern Black Sea region, those who have bonded the most with nature are the elderly, the women in particular. The bond they have with nature could be stated using the biological term symbiosis; i.e., living together. In fact, within this form of living, it could be referred to as "mutualistic symbiosis," in that it benefits both of the creatures coexisting. For them, protecting nature is not leaving nature untouched, but ensuring its survival with all living things apart from humans. They have not cut any unnecessary branches or made interventions that may change the ecosystem, instead using the traditional knowledge transferred from generation to generation to benefit from nature without harming the sustainability of the environment. Of course, there are still those among the new generation who connect with animals and nature, living interdependent lives, but theirs is not as deep-rooted as the elderly's. The relationship the elderly have with the soil caused them to take root and blossom themselves. The traditional knowledge that rendered these villages inhabitable can no longer be passed onto the new generations as much. Unable to survive on the products of the earth or their livestock, the villagers leave their home to look for alternative employment.

Like the elderly, the women see this lifestyle as an extension of their social position and have internalized it. Before running water was introduced to the homes from the springs, the women constantly carried water home for all of their household needs. They ploughed, sowed, harvested the earth, carried the produce around and lived dependent on the soil and water here. When the men were leaving to find employment elsewhere, they stayed in the villages and survived under all

[139] Personal interview by the author, female, Emine, 7 July 2012, Köknar.

circumstances. Even if the men returned, these women continued to be the heads of the household in the way only Black Sea women can, and as expected, they were on the frontlines throughout the struggle for the environment. Their response is direct and unequivocal to this destruction of the environment with the maturity and openness of being solely responsible for all of the nature related work and household work. These women[140] who have carried the heaviest of burdens have no qualms about jumping to the front of the line for nature.

The *muhtar* of *Köknar* explains the role of the women in the struggle in their village as follows:

> "Around here the old, young and the women – they are all involved. Even the children, as soon as they see a container or an unfamiliar car they let us know... the women's reaction is even stronger. We tease them saying 'Don't rush over there, you use disproportionate force'.... The other day, the gendarme came. They said they were here to collect the women who had been involved in the incidents. They first told me to bring them with me, and I told them, how should I know? All I can do is tell you whether someone you have a warrant for resides here or not. I am not authorized for anything more... Then they showed up with a list. They wanted to take them to the station in order to take their depositions. I also went with them. I didn't leave the women alone. We went to the station to give statements. As soon as we got back, the women said they were going to the stream to keep vigil. They don't give up easily! They are tough!"[141]

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[140] My research indicates women are more motivated for resistance. But yet, interestingly it is men who talk more about it. As a part of this thesis the formal semi-structured interviews are mostly done with men; only 25 percent is done with women. One of the major reasons for this would be related to issues of gender (in)equality. The gender roles embraced by women and men in the region are supportive to this outcome. An interesting study can be of use here concerning the masculinity formation in the Black Sea region of Turkey. Especially, in contemporary *Trabzon*, masculinities are constructed as an outcome of men's superior and almost unquestionable position in the family, together with nationalist and exclusionist tendencies towards diversity molded by Islam (Bozok 2013). These characteristics of masculinity are visible in the interviews of locals concerning the HEPP projects. This is one of the main reasons why the respondents are mostly male. But yet, a lot of the information is gathered during informal conversations with women.

[141] Personal interview by the author, male, Abdullah, 6 July 2012, Köknar.

The connection of women to nature of *Köknar* is no different than any other village where the resistance is continuing. Women's devotion to the cause can only be explained by their embracing attitude and co-existence with nature in their daily shores. Some other women also clearly stated that the river is their main artery for life; they would never give it up. That's their main reason that they live there. This is especially true not only for older generations but also for younger women of *Karaçam* and *Köknar*. Another older woman from *Köknar* village tells her story about the unequal use of force in *Karaçam*.

> "we were in *Karaçam* when 638 soldiers came. They sprayed pepper-spray on us. What is that? It felt like a chicken peed in my mouth...look at my cane, I will hit their head with it! We are not giving up our river"[142]

In a similar instance, an 84-year-old woman shows the cane next to her as she is sitting down and explains her attitude and stance with anger and determination. She states she will continue resisting as long as she is alive and continues:

> "...see this cane, my daughter? I will crack this over their heads. Just let them come....that is not going to happen, we won't give them our water. As long as we are here, they can't take our water. Water is life!"[143]

The HEPPs, whose way of construction represents an obstacle for the integrated life of people and nature in the Eastern Black Sea region, is a grave concern for the locals, who see water as their reason for existence. Their concern is based on their belief that they cannot continue to live in the same place without water. The current regression in agriculture and animal husbandry around Turkey has introduced these villages like countless others to the concept of employment elsewhere and led to a decrease in the

[142] Personal interview by the author, female, Adile, 8 July 2012, Köknar.
[143] Personal interview by the author, female, Adile, 6 July 2012, Köknar.

number of inhabitants. When HEPPs are added to the existing challenges, the land they live in is no longer something the villagers can return home to. In fact, many are concerned that with the HEPPs, the villages will no longer exist due to people leaving. The author's interviews in the region revealed that the locals believe they will be excluded from the living spaces with the construction of the HEPPs and the use of the water is controlled by private companies, and that this will force them to relocate. They are not unfamiliar with relocation nor can they be forced to migrate due to lack of choice; rather, it would be the result of their irrevocably damaged emotional and cultural ties to the nature in the region due to the construction of HEPPs.

According to young Ali, who lives in the region, HEPPs will trigger cultural migration and will lead to people deserting the area:

> "No one thought how much the people would be destroyed culturally. It is only seen as something that impacts nature; that will hurt the environment. But it is obvious that a cultural migration will begin here with these HEPPs. Why are we here? There is no income from agriculture or animal husbandry. Some do enough to sustain themselves. The reason people are hanging onto this place is the natural beauty here. Black Sea people cannot be separated from nature. When you take away one piece of this, these people will be like fish out of water, they will be forced to relocate. You also destroy a 1000-year-old culture as well. It's obvious that there will be problems... If I don't have my stream to swim in, to catch fish in, to daydream by, or that tree, why should I stay?"[144]

Many similar quotes could be found in the struggles against HEPPs in many places in Turkey. People are displaced in many areas due to HEPP and dam construction. In the case of *Solaklı*, however, this migration is accompanied by the threat of the loss of a deep-rooted culture and a special language. Culture and language are the two main

[144] Personal interview by the author, male, Ali, 9 July 2012, Karaçam.

elements of setting roots. The need to set roots is fundamentally necessary to complete the sense of belonging and identity formation. In this context, it becomes clearer how much of an impact the displacement of people will have on them. As illustrated in the example above, the bonds that the locals have with the soil and water can be explained through culture, emotions, language and the sense of belonging and identity these lead to, rather than the economics of survival. This need to set roots and the sense of belonging has made nature indispensable for the locals. This perspective underlines a bond between nature and humans that is rarely expressed in so many words.

Language, as one of the basic elements of culture, also has an interesting story not many know of that is unique to the region. There is a common language other than Turkish spoken in the villages higher up than *Çaykara* in Trabzon called *Romeyka*[145], which is old Greek. Newspapers mentioned the villagers in Trabzon saying, 'they speak the language of Plato', which pleasantly implies that this region is being explored by scientists (Sabah, 2011).[146] In fact, in the villages studied here, especially in *Karaçam*, *Köknar* and *Uzuntarla*, *Romeyka* is still spoken by many people, old and young. This language is not among the minority languages stated in the Lausanne Agreement. The most basic reason for this is that the Muslims speaking *Romeyka* never had such a demand. This is not to say that this group does not have a distinctive cultural identity (Sitaridou, 2013, p. 110). On the contrary, they are very enthusiastic about documenting the language spoken in the area, and do not want to be invisible

[145] Peter Mackridge's pioneer work is well known for this relatively undocumented language until now. He defined this language as "Muslim Pontic" (Mackridge, 1981, p. 11). More recently, İonna Sitaridou from Cambridge University did a research around *Of* and its surroundings where she defined the language as *Romeyka* in order to separate it from other Greek dialects (Sitaridou, 2013, p. 98). Within the scope of this thesis the ancient Greek language that is spoken in Solaklı is referred as *Romeyka*.

[146] Sabah, 4 January 2011. "Trabzon köylüsü Sokrat ve Plato'nun dilini konuşuyor" http://www.sabah.com.tr/Yasam/2011/01/04/trabzon_koylusu_sokrat_ve_platonun_dilini_konusuyor

any longer, as they repeat during the work they do in cooperation with visiting linguists (111). What is more, it is possible to see firsthand during visits that *Romeyka* is spoken more prevalently than Turkish in the region.

The research on the area (Mackridge, 1987; Sitaridou, 2013; Gökdağ, 2011) has revealed that the locals are not monolingual, and *Romeyka* is their first choice when it comes to speaking. According to the data Sitaridou (2013) provides: Women over 60 (mostly illiterate) in particular prefer *Romeyka*, while this is less for men. Men and women between 30-40 years of age use *Romeyka* in similar amounts while this is not the case for the residents in their twenties. Within the 20-year-old age group most young women speak Romeyka but there is a difference in grammar from the older female generation. Among the children he situation may vary as there are female children who understand and use *Romeyka* as their first language, more prefer it as their second language (Sitaridou, 2013, p. 104). The fact that this language is still spoken in the villages and is taught to the children could be cited as the best example of the deep-rooted culture in the region. Having only survived orally, this language runs the risk of disappearing once the locals are forced to move due to the construction of the HEPPs.

Historically speaking, the fact that the first language in the region is Greek has not distanced them from the Muslim religion as some may think (Asan, 2009, pp. 179-195). To the contrary, the official report on the people in the region in the final years of the Ottoman Empire as told in the *Trabzon Vilayeti Salnamesi* states: "...On the contrary, the Muslims here have great faith, are very pious and take great care to obey the holy orders of the sharia" (Asan, 2009, p. 178). To this day, the area has a predominantly Muslim population, like the rest of Turkey. Despite the efforts to "Turkify" the population within the framework of the efforts to create a

homogeneous, monolingual society as part of the project to create a nation-state during the Republican era, they have managed to protect their language until today.

The official documents (*Vilayet Belgeleri*) from 1930-1940 are important as a concrete example of the 'Turkification' efforts. According to the documents, "...[in the region] while there are some elderly who speak a language reminiscent of Greek, the new generation hates using this language..." (Asan, 2009, p. 179). However, we know from Sitaridou's work and observations in the area that this is not the case, and that the efforts to turn people off this language have failed, and that new generations have learned this language in contemporary Turkey from their elders.

The fact that this language is still spoken is significant in that it reflects the culture. The traditions of the local people of the area with the integration of Turkish and Pontus Greek cultures, the *Romeyka* language being spoken and the religion in the area being Muslim are signs of a unique community. For instance, *Kalandar* (good month) celebrations take place on the 13th of January annually. A member of the community, Fikret, talks about this occasion:

> "Each year on January 13th *Galandar* is celebrated...like a type of New Year's celebration. In Greek, Kala means good – that's where *Galandar* (Kalandar) comes from. [The locals say 'gala' instead of the Greek '*kala*', meaning good.] The children dress up on the evening of the 13th and go door-to-door collecting nuts, pears and apples. They used to get corn, which is very valuable. The kids would sell the corn at the market and turn it into money. Now they are given corn and most of the time just money when they come around to the houses. This is a tradition left over from the old Greeks. The reason the New Year is celebrated on January 13th is that the *Rumi* calendar is 13 days behind. In fact, most still use this calendar for planning. It is believed that some days are lucky, some are unlucky. In fact, on the unlucky ones, people don't plant crops."[147]

[147] Personal Interview by the author, male, Fikret, 10 August 2011, Karaçam.

Furthermore, the women continue the tradition of singing elegies in the Greek language (*Romeyka*). The locals say that besides funerals, at *Derebaşı* in *Karaçam* elegies were sung and *horon*[148] dances took place. Zeliha (41) from *Karaçam* expresses the meaning of *Derebaşı* for them as follows:

> *"Derebaşı* was used a great deal more 20 years ago. People used to leave the village together, dance the *horon* and eat. In fact, in the old days, elegies were sung for those who died while working on plants and wood. It is a place that is considered holy. It is filled with memories. Before the construction began, it was used a lot even if not as much as before. The men would go there themselves, usually go fishing. We go ourselves, pick plants and sit. We breathe there..."[149]

Just as it would be wrong to reduce the resistance against HEPPs in *Solaklı* to language and culture, a discourse that does not include these would not suffice. As explained above, the language spoken in the region has been preserved and kept alive due to the physical distance between the villages and the center. The resulting culture that survived has become a part of the community's identity and reinforced the emotional bonds they have to the area.

In short, the resistance in *Solaklı* is a struggle to protect the locals' living space. Like that in the environmentalism of the poor, one cannot speak of economic bonds with nature in the case of a region where agriculture and animal husbandry is waning. For some living in *Uzungöl*, despite the economic bond forged with nature, this is not the case for the other regions. Rather than an economic connection to nature, an emotional bond exists with nature as a part of living space. The view that the water, soil, air and the entirety of the living things will be harmed by the HEPPs has urged the locals to protect this area, which they feel they are a part of. As

[148] *Horon*, is a special folk dance particular to Black Sea region. It is danced in circles men and women together with the accompany of *tulum* which is bagpipe.
[149] Personal Interview by the author, female, Zeliha, 8 July 2012, Karaçam.

mentioned in the theory section, when we look at the environmentalism of the poor from the perspective of this emotional bond, the locals seem to be defending the area against destruction based on rights and cultural values, not economic values. Therefore, a multilayered and more meaningful image of the region appears when the environmentalism of the poor approach is read within the contexts of popular environmentalism or environmental justice movement. This is conducive to a better understanding of the communities defending their right to live in the region.

4.3. Rethinking Environmentalism of the Poor: To What Extent Does This Conceptualization Work in the Field?

The HEPP construction processes as an example of the imposition of the neoliberal development policies in Turkey entail several problems from beginning to end. These problems could be listed as follows: The public is not included in the decision-making processes to the extent that it should; an extensive evaluation of the environmental impact the HEPPs will have is not carried out prior to approval; any obstacles in the way of constructing HEPPs are removed via new laws or amendments, thereby encouraging the exploitation of nature rather than its protection, and being exempt from any destruction left in their wake; the government's security forces are used against the local communities as the private companies' bodyguards despite the protests of the residents; the community is left in conflict with the gendarme and riot police, whose duty is to protect them and violence results; and so on. All of these problems are due to economic benefits overriding the need to protect the environment.

The nature protection approach is more on par with the 'gospel of eco-efficiency' when considered at the government level than the 'wild life cult'. The sustainable development underlying the gospel of eco-efficiency as well as ecological

modernization and the rational use of natural resources, appeals as a nature protection approach to the Justice and Development Party government, which has development and growth as its goal. HEPPs in particular are in keeping with the party's fundamental environment policy. HEPPs are to ensure that water resources are used rationally and running water is not wasted. More importantly, the dependence of the country on outside energy sources is to be prevented through the environment 'friendly' production of electricity. Therefore, the perception that energy produced using water is renewable has become a convenient cover for the environmental destruction in practice.

Neoliberal policies, which legitimize the transfer to private companies the use and management of water, one of the most basic human needs, with the goal of producing electricity, may promise the ecological efficiency, and the rational use of 'natural resources', but it has been protested by many locals, young and old. While the resistance of these people, who care deeply about the struggle they have initiated to defend their living spaces by defining themselves, as a part of nature does not quite overlap with the environmentalism of the poor, it presents some commonalities with new theoretical additions.

The environmentalism of the poor is defined through the resistance of those living lives integrated with nature when this lifestyle they have internalized and their living spaces are threatened. According to this understanding, the residents of the area need water, soil and nature for their survival. When a situation arises that may pose a threat to this irreplaceable bond they have with nature, they fight tooth and nail to eliminate it. This resistance usually takes place against the government or the private company held responsible for the environmental destruction. This resistance in order to protect the environment does not always mean that they approach nature as

something to be protected. However, in general, their more or less environmental protection type of stance has its basis in livelihood-based necessities and the conservation of cultural values.

Therefore, the resistance in *Solaklı* could be described as a community's fight to live against private companies that want to operate in the area, despite the government's violent interventions to keep withhold their water, soil and culture. Locals, some of whom used to feel it was 'normal' to litter in the running stream, are now reacting to the decreasing water, which now only trickles in places due to the HEPP built on it. They express their reaction mostly based on the fear of irrevocably losing the water, soil and green in the region. For them, the water and nature they feel a part of, is no less than life itself.

The word 'poor' in the concept of the environmentalism of the poor refers to people or groups that live below a certain income level or who perceive themselves as poor. According to this understanding, these people will experience great hardship when their relationship to nature, on which their survival depends, is limited because they have nothing to replace it with. Therefore they resist with their whole being. This runs the risk of reducing the environmentalism of the poor to the need for the environment as an economic necessity. The basic element in these people's definition as poor is that they would not be able to find an alternative source of livelihood without it.

There are economic concerns about the environmental destruction that will take place in *Uzungöl*. Even though they criticize the fact that they were prohibited from hammering in even a nail with the Special Environment Protection Law, that the HEPP will detract from the natural beauty of the area is a source of concern for the villagers who earn a living from natural tourism. This encourages them to join the

resistance against the HEPPs. In other words, those in *Uzungöl* are worried they may lose their income from their source of survival, or tourism, in the event that HEPPs are built. In this context, while the concept of 'poor' remains vague and unexplanatory, the fact that they base their resistance on the need they have for nature to survive overlaps with the concept of the environmentalism of the poor.

However, livelihood in *Solaklı*, in the villages of *Köknar*, *Karaçam* and *Uzuntarla* is not based on agriculture and animal husbandry but on seasonal labor, and nature does not carry any economic value for the residents of the area. Losing nature would not make them poorer, economically speaking. Furthermore, it would not be accurate to describe these people as poor. However, they could be described as politically and economically marginalized groups. The distance to the center, the 'remoteness' has played an important role in this matter. However, the fact that the residents of the places other than *Uzungöl* do not entail an economic bond with nature does not mean that it is not indispensable for their lives. To the contrary, the most basic ties they have to the region are emotional and cultural.

As mentioned previously in the quotes, water is indispensable for them; it is part of their identity, their past and their roots. Though the last thing they want is to be ripped away from their roots, they say that they will need to move away once the streams dry up and the nature they live in is destroyed. Since this means that the ancient traditions and *Romeyka*, which has been kept alive through use in daily life, will disappear, they know that it is imperative that the resistance against HEPPs and the protection of their living spaces continue until they are recognized.

As Martinez-Alier mentions in a recent work, the language of valuation in the environmentalism of the poor is varied in many instances (Martinez-Alier et al., 2010; Martinez-Alier, 2014). While some use an economic valuation language, for some the

language has become one for defending rights, cultural and sacred values (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier 2014). When it remains in this limited form as it was coined in the 1990s, while only its economic context is underlined as in livelihood ecology, today, this movement is seen as part of the environmental justice movement (Martinez-Alier, 2014, p.241). In this context, the concepts of popular environmentalism and environmental justice appear to replace the environmentalism of the poor.

The understanding in *Solaklı* that the water needs to run freely in order for a language as the last of its kind and facing extinction, a culture and nature to survive has made them a community that withstands the harshest of interventions. While at first glance the aspects of the resistance that overlap with the environmentalism of the poor are not clear, a reading of their resistance with a different language of valuation, this concept and even the more recent concepts of popular environmentalism and environmental justice explain a great deal.

The resistance continues despite the government's aims to defuse it with the violence the gendarme inflicts upon the locals, who have been made to get involved in the HEPP construction processes, as well as quick amendments to laws in keeping with so-called 'development' targets removing obstacles in private companies' way.

What is more, the resistance has paved the way for the creation of a new identity and sense of belonging for the local community. This new identity has led them to disregard their differences through 'popular environmentalism', which has appeared as a result of the community's own desire and will, and formed a new sense of belonging to a new group. The new sense of belonging and this new group they have formed during the struggle to protect their space could also serve a liberating and integrative function in their search for their rights on many fronts.

Conclusion

As mentioned in the earlier chapters, global warming and the resulting climate change are defined as the greatest challenges facing humanity to date. The increase in frequency of extraordinary weather events, disappearing seasons, and melting icecaps has become more visible than ever in the last few decades. This challenge did not just appear out of nowhere. To the contrary, humankind prepared its ending with its own two hands. Rant oriented politics, consumption oriented lifestyle and the increasing need for energy due to technological necessity resulted in the increased exploitation of the environment. This abuse manifested itself as the commodification of nature by capitalism.

In the neoliberal order, which could be defined as the reinforced version of capitalism, since the most basic needs of humankind can be purchased and sold, water, the most basic need of humankind and all living things, is no exception. Water sources diminishing by the minute, pollution, underground waters consumed thoughtlessly coinciding with global warming and accompanied by the increasing need for energy led to an appealing idea: Taking advantage of 'renewable' energy sources.

All of this environmental destruction was to stop once the transition was made to so-called environmentally friendly renewable energy. In fact, 'green' or 'environmentally friendly' projects created to mitigate climate change served to open up a brand new domain for humankind to abuse. I argue that in the case of Turkey, these projects expected to contribute to the sustainability of nature have turned into a government-supported raid, threatening the living space off all creatures.

At first, it was a bright idea to produce electricity by using particularly water sources in Turkey. However, this was more complicated, as the adverse effects on the

rivers were apparent even to the untrained eye. The government and relevant ministries of the Turkish Republic, on the other hand, were claiming this was "all because of necessity" and "to eliminate energy dependency", which is a part of the development ideal that the country has long been pursuing. The authorities saw nothing wrong with the increasing energy needs of Turkey being met through HEPPs producing "clean" energy that "did not destroy the environment". It would be ludicrous for a country with such potential to produce energy to be dependent on outside sources.

It was thus that the Ministry of Forest and Water Works granted private companies 49 year long licenses to use rivers for the production of electricity to prevent dependence on outside sources, based on the theme "water running to waste". Without wasting any time, many rivers of various sizes were taken under control and water was rerouted through pipes. Rivers were ripped from their beds and forced to turn turbines all for the sake of 'clean' energy.

I argue in this thesis that neoliberalization of nature and neoliberal form of governmentality in the case of governing nature, especially in the form of privatization of water with HEPPs is a tool used by the Turkish government for suppressing compelling subjects against development projects that would 'modernize' and 'enrich' the society. From the perspective of the local population in question however the same picture is reflected as the ignorance of government of the cultural, emotional ties and traditional values of those communities by not recognizing their relation with and their perception of water.

The contextual framework of the thesis is taken as neoliberalism being an economic project, a political discourse and a practical tool for governmentality especially when linked with environmental governance. Even though it has been

argued whether this larger global context is distinctive when it comes to environmental governance, the explanatory power of neoliberalism over the behavior of the state is still quite significant. When it is taken as a hegemonic entity it may become static thus excludes geographical varieties as Larner (2003) and Peck (2004) would argue. But, it could be used as a contextual tool with the acceptance of its diverse implications, which would give comparative understanding of state's behaviors. Thus, it remains as a 'necessary illusion' (Castree, 2006).

The proponents of protection of nature by using neoliberal measures argue that commodification, assigning property rights, privatization and marketization would be the solution for protecting and managing the environment (Daily, 1997; Anderson & Leal, 2001; Bakker, 2005) very much in line with Hardin's (1968) theory of 'Tragedy of Commons'. But is this kind of market environmentalism really sustainable for the resources? What would be the consequences for humans and all other species? The problem of accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2003, 2005; Swyngedouw, 2005), justice and recognition (Fraser, 2000; Schlosberg, 1999, 2004), and lack of participation rather than common management (Ostrom, 1990) cause the exclusion and alienation of local population from their living spaces and this indeed motivate the community members to fight for their environment.

Up until now the government legitimized its actions by leaning back on the long pursued ideal of development. Using the discourse of neoliberalism, development and modernization, the government legitimized the privatization of water resources and created an image that they are the protectors of nature by using renewable energy generated from these HEPP constructions. Furthermore, the government uses the non-dependency in the energy sector card as a part of the developmental discourse as it gives further incentives to private companies to build

more HEPPs. It is important to bear in mind the external appealing factors behind the use of renewable energy and HEPP construction such as cheap credits provided by EU, IMF and World Bank and the role of the voluntary carbon market, which has the potential of providing more if Turkey enters into the Emission Trading System.

As a part of the encouragement of the private sector to invest in HEPPs, reregulation (Castree, 2008), deregulation and privatization (Peet, 1999) took place neoliberalizing the nature and treating water as a commodity. The frequent changes in laws and regulations made by the current government that are elaborated in depth in the previous chapters enabled easy access for the companies to reach the resources, which indeed bring out many problems and created vulnerabilities for the population in question.

One of the main problems for the communities is privatizing the water for 49 years, which is cutting their connection with water. There will be no access to water since the water is no longer for the most part using its riverbed. The second problem is about the unregulated expropriation of the land, which indeed created inequality among the population within one village. The third one is the lack of participation and malrecognition of the community. The community's emotional, cultural ties with nature, traditional values, perception of water, experiences and memories are disregarded in construction of HEPPs in their region, which are mostly done without the consent or the participation of the residents. The fourth problem is the general relentless rant-seeking attitude of the government when giving out licenses, which indeed results in a total disregard for the environment. One of the best examples for this would be the procedural EIA reports that the companies ought to present to start the construction. These reports being non-reflective of environmental degradation that the projects would cause is the reflection of government's idea to stimulate

growth in the expense of the environment. Having no regulation or auditing mechanisms to control the construction done by private companies would be the fifth problem presented in this thesis. Especially, concerning the issue of vital water and the damage of the environment during and aftermath of the construction are not regulated or controlled by the government. And finally the last major problem that is discussed in this thesis is the attitude of the government acting as if they are the personal sponsors of the private companies by providing security forces for the protection of the private company (gendarme and the police), giving great incentives and changing the regulation and laws to enable further HEPP construction or just easing the process for the company, which indeed is done by sacrificing the wellbeing of local population in the region and integrity of the environment.

These problems are prevalent in most cases of HEPP construction in Turkey. But particularly for eastern Black Sea region they are quite frequently encountered since this region holds the first place in the density of HEPP projects. Especially, the changes in regulation and laws ripped off the protective shield of national parks and protected sites (*SİT alanı)* in this part of Turkey. Moreover, the construction of consequent HEPPs in this region without an accumulative impact assessment creates a bigger threat for the environment and the people. Additionally, the neoliberal governmentality implemented in this region is forcefully implied that some places in this region stand out as examples where the government uses coercive measures to subdue compelling subjects who are resisting against 'the country's wellbeing'. Particularly, *Solaklı* Valley stands out as one of the examples where one of the fierce struggles took place against the government's use of unequal force.

Moreover, Trabzon, *Solaklı* Valley stands out as a micro example representing different kinds of attitudes towards nature. In *Uzungöl*, the local population sees

nature as a big part of their livelihood. Since tourism is mainly the source of living, their environmentalism represents an example for environmentalism of the poor (Martinez-Alier 2002). They became environmental activists/protectors of their environment due to the imminent threat of HEPPs destroying their integrated lifestyle with nature upon which their livelihood largely depends. In *Uzuntarla* however, the construction of HEPP is already finished and it is in use. It is the place where no resistance against HEPPs took place. But now, most of the interviews in the region express that there is a resentment of what could have been done in the first place. Yet, now after all is done, fatalism mask has been put on to renounce any further responsibility towards nature and future generations.

Köknar and *Karaçam* on the other hand are the firm liners against HEPP construction in their region in the name of protecting their living space. Their main argument is the lack of participation and malrecognition of their community during the implementation of such 'development' project. Therefore their justice claim is also including recognition (Fraser, 2000; Schlosberg, 1999). Their connection with nature and water is totally disregarded during the whole project. Their special language *Romeyka,* traditions, culture, and emotional ties with nature are not recognized by the state but are given great attribution by the community. Therefore their resistance cannot only be explained with environmentalism of the poor (Martinez-Alier, 2002) since there is no case where their economic bond to nature is broken. However, the latest contribution to this theory (Anguelovski & Martinez-Alier, 2014) has more explanatory power emphasizing the cultural dimension and importance of valuation languages in the formation of the resistance. On top of that, as these values they give importance to are not regarded by the state, they are portrayed as the villain and traitor by the government due to their resistance against

HEPP construction in their region. It is indeed a discourse used by the government legitimizing the use of unequal force to suppress these compelling subjects. In a way, the government (or the state, which is the same in their mind) is trying to create docile bodies submissive to the rule of authority by the use of force. There are many other ways that the current government is trying to achieve that aim all around Turkey but especially this research in *Solaklı* illustrates that in the case of HEPPs they are doing it by using the tool of environmental governmentality.

It is also important to note that the perception of the state in the minds of people which is all encompassing, patriarchal and bureaucratically unreachable for a regular citizen enabled the state to freely maneuver from persuasion with rational tools to the use of coercive methods. This is not only particular to Trabzon, Solaklı but also very frequently articulated in Rize. Regardless of the fact that local population is resisting towards state's use of force or state's manipulation of regulation easing the way for constructing HEPPs, within many interviews it is stated "*if these were government/state's projects, they wouldn't be destructive since the state would not do that to its citizens*". Ironically, the resistance towards HEPPs does not turn into a political statement against government. The nationalist and conservative nature of the two cities prevents this resentment towards the state concerning HEPPs to turn into a political statement.

On the contrary, in *Fındıklı* (only *Fındıklı* as a part of *Rize*) and in *Artvin* the general opposition towards the government feeding off from the leftist tendency prevalent in the region, the resistance against HEPPs or prospecting can be regarded as reflections of local population's disagreement with state pressure and neoliberal governance of nature. It is constantly stated in the interviews that the local population in the region is against the commodification of nature in any sense.

Especially, in the case of *Fındıklı,* the commodification and privatization of water were given as the answers to why they resist against HEPP construction in their region. In the case of *Fındıklı* and *Artvin* the leftist culture, local participation and rejecting state's pressure and neoliberal transformation of the nature result in environmental activism in the region. This kind of environmentalism has a lot in common with 'environmentalism of the malcontent' as Akbulut (2014) argues concerning the *Gerze* resistance and Adaman, Akbulut & Arsel argue in their forthcoming publication about *Artvin.*

One other significant aspect that comes out of the interviews in all these three cities is the importance of locally rooted resistance. Even though there were attempts at organizing bigger platforms of collaboration, the locally organized resistance by the residents of that area has been more successful, which indeed is largely related to the synergy that the people in the region create when they gather together and find their inherit reasons and power to resist. Therefore local participation and persistence are the two important features of resistance.

Finally, this thesis tried to answer the question of *how the implementation of neoliberal forms of environmental governance affects local populations in Turkey, in the case of HEPPs* by using a qualitative research method based on ethnographic fieldwork covering the eastern Black Sea Region of Turkey.

Neoliberalization of nature, which entails manipulations of governance, increased privatization, enclosure and market valuation (Heynen & Robins, 2005), is embraced by the current government as a way of protecting nature. Consequently, the government uses reregulation, deregulation and privatization as a part of environmental governance by situating it within the global context of neoliberalism. It uses the discourses of eco-efficiency (the efficient use of resources), non-dependency

within the energy sector, usage of renewable energy in line with sustainable development paradigm and development ideal long pursued by the state. However, with the support of the empirical evidence I argue that regardless of the discourses of the government, the privatization of water and HEPP construction in Turkey create vulnerabilities for the local population and eventually for the whole country. The government eliminates all obstacles for private companies via changing laws and regulations, in the expense of piercing the protective shield of national parks and protected sites. In addition, it uses coercive force of police and gendarme against its own population as if they are the personal security forces for the private companies. In general the current government has different tools to create submissive citizens to its authoritarian rule in Turkey. In the case of HEPPs, and privatization of water neoliberal form of environmental governmentality used by the state, can be regarded as a legitimacy tool to use coercive methods to eliminate resistance and to suppress compelling subjects.

Additionally, neoliberal governmentality also entails outsourcing the state's responsibility of ensuring the wellbeing of its population since the state is subordinated to the requirements of the market. In such a case, the population in a way has the look after itself. This takes us to the sub questions of this thesis concerning the response of the local population to the environmental governance of the state. The perception of nature/water by the local community plays an important role in their reactions against the neoliberalization of nature by the government.

As it turns out these three cities offer diverse forms of responses to the neoliberal governmentality perpetuated by the state. As a result of neoliberal governance of nature, complicated and multilayered answers were given by the communities in the form of environmentalism. Rather than the first theorization of environmentalism of

the poor the later contributions by bringing out the cultural dimension and importance of valuation languages especially for environmentalism and environmental justice movements can be of use here. Thus, overall we can say that within formation of the struggle that is observed in the eastern Black Sea region, the valuation languages (Martinez-Alier, 2010, 2014), recognition (Fraser, 2000; Schlosberg, 2004; Işlar, 2012), perspective and government's attitude towards nature that is prioritizing 'development' and the 'efficient use of resources' (as in the gospel of eco-efficiency) play a tremendous role.

The main aim of the thesis was to give voice to the local community threatened by neoliberalization of nature, particularly by the construction of HEPPs. Due to its methodology, it is not generalizable but yet it still gives a significant reflection of the bigger picture of HEPP construction and its consequences in Turkey. The environmentalism that is brought forward in eastern Black Sea region as a response to these constructions cannot be reduced to a single kind or categorized by a single approach. The complex and the multilayered motivations for people's resistance can only be understood by taking into account of the background and the political culture city; its remoteness and former relations with the state; and the presence of its local residents. Of course, the list is not exhausted and open to further contributions. For the sake of this thesis, understanding the alternate valuation languages of the state and the community concerning the nature is utmost important for understanding the behavior of each side which with further theorization would enlighten us about state-society relations.

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