

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT THROUGH
WOMEN’S EXPERIENCES: THE CASE OF İKİZKÖY

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submitted by **FATMA CEREN ÜLKÜ** in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of **Master of Science in Political Science and Public
Administration, the Graduate School of Social Sciences of Middle East
Technical University** by,

Prof. Dr. Sadettin KIRAZCI
Dean
Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Hüseyin Tarık ŞENGÜL
Head of Department
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aslı ÇIRAKMAN DEVECİ
Supervisor
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Examining Committee Members:

Prof. Dr. Kürşad ERTUĞRUL (Head of the Examining Committee)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aslı ÇIRAKMAN DEVECİ (Supervisor)
Middle East Technical University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Prof. Dr. Ömer Aykut ÇELEBİ
Ankara University
Department of Political Science and Public Administration



I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last Name: Fatma Ceren Ülkü

Signature:

ABSTRACT

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ÜLKÜ, Fatma Ceren

M.S., The Department of Political Science and Public Administration

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Aslı ÇIRAKMAN DEVECİ

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The main aim of this study is to analyze how peasant women involved in the environmental movement in the Akbelen Forest perceive their relationship with the forest as well as the effects of defending the forest in their everyday life. Women play an essential role in the increasing number of environmental movements in Turkey. Women, considered one of the fragile groups in the face of the environmental destruction in the literature, actively involved in various environmental movements to protect nature and living spaces. Ecofeminism examines the relationship between women and nature by discussing the connection between humankind's domination over nature and men's domination over women. Accordingly, the destruction of nature and the life of women are closely related. In this study, within the framework of ecofeminist theory, the experiences of women struggling to protect the Akbelen Forest in İkizköy neighborhood of Milas district of Muğla against the cutting of trees that started with the mining activity are examined. Based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with women involved in protests, this study investigates women's perception of nature, the effects of deforestation on their daily lives, and the experiences of taking part in the environmental movement as a woman. This thesis claims that long-standing protests transform both their

relationship with nature and their daily life practices. Participating in the environmental movement enhances women's role in decision-making processes and empowers them.

Keywords: women, nature, ecofeminism, İkizköy, environmental movements



ÖZ

ÇEVRE MÜCADELESİNİN KADIN DENEYİMLERİ ÜZERİNDEN ANALİZİ: İKİZKÖY ÖRNEĞİ

ÜLKÜ, Fatma Ceren

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Aslı ÇIRAKMAN DEVECİ

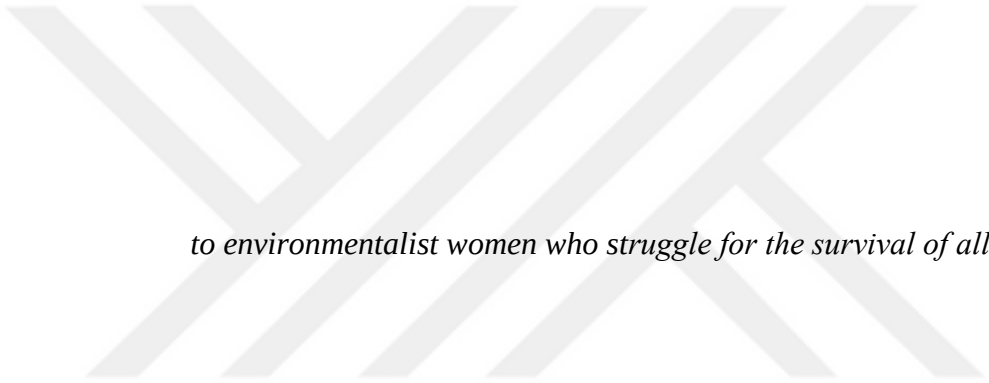
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Bu çalışmanın ana amacı, Akbelen Ormanı'ndaki çevre hareketinde yer alan köylü kadınların hem ormanla kurdukları ilişkiyi nasıl algıladıklarını hem de ormanı savunmanın onların gündelik hayatları üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmektir. Türkiye'de artarak devam eden çevre hareketlerinde kadınların önemli bir rol oynadıkları bilinmektedir. Literatürde iklim krizi ve çevre tahribatı karşısında kırılgan gruplardan biri olarak değerlendirilen kadınlar, doğayı ve yaşam alanlarını korumak amacıyla çeşitli çevre mücadelelerinde aktif olarak yer almaktadırlar. Ekofeminizm, kadınlar ve doğa arasında kurulan ilişkiyi, insanın doğa üzerindeki tahakkümü ve erkeklerin kadınlar üzerindeki tahakkümü arasındaki bağlantıyı tartışarak inceler. Buna göre, doğanın tahribatı ve kadınların yaşamı birbiriyle yakından ilişkilidir. Bu çalışmada, ekofeminist teori çerçevesinde, Muğla'nın Milas ilçesine bağlı İkizköy mahallesindeki Akbelen Ormanı'nı madencilik faaliyetiyle birlikte başlayan ağaçların kesimine karşı korumak için mücadele eden kadınların deneyimleri incelenmektedir. Protestolara katılan kadınlarla yarı-yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmelere dayanan bu çalışma, kadınların ormanı algılama biçimlerini, ormansızlaşmanın kadınların gündelik yaşamlarındaki etkilerini ve çevre hareketinde bir kadın olarak yer alma deneyimlerini incelemektedir. Bu tezde, uzun

süredir devam eden protestoların hem onların doğayla kurdukları ilişkiyi hem de gündelik hayat pratiklerini dönüştürdüğü iddia edilmektedir. Çevre hareketinde yer almak kadınların karar alma süreçlerindeki rollerini artırmakta ve onları güçlendirmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: kadın, doğa, ekofeminizm, İkizköy, çevre hareketleri





to environmentalist women who struggle for the survival of all...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A lonely woman laments among the ruins, where there is no color other than a pale grey. The woman's trembling voice is accompanied by no other sound but the sound of work machines. The woman says in her lament: "hearts cannot stand it, I raised my lambs here, I made them play on the swings in the olive trees, it destroyed the ground, god damn coal, every moment of my life is stuck in these collapsed buildings." This image is from Akbelen Forest, located in İikizk y in Muęla's Milas district. It is from a video recording that a village woman living across the forest showed me in the garden of her new house. It is her last image of her house, which was destroyed by a coal mine in Işıkdere in 2017, another neighborhood very close to İikizk y. The dust cloud and the color of that debris remind me of the earthquake that took place in Turkey on February 6, 2023, where many people lost their lives, loved ones, and homes. On the other hand, apart from the precautions that should have been taken during the earthquake, what happened in İikizk y is not a natural disaster, but is caused by humanbeings. For this, the villagers have been struggling since 2019 to prevent the mining activity from spreading to other areas of Muęla and to protect the homes of both people and other living creatures.

This thesis aims to examine the experiences of İikizk y women who play an active role in environmental movement in Muęla/Turkey. Environmental movements in Turkey have emerged since the 1970s and increased along with the global environmental problems and objections/demands regarding those problems (Duru, 2002). Like many other countries, women seem to be taking a great interest in environmental problems and playing a prominent role in environmental movements (Yavuz & řendeniz, 2013; Dermenci, 2015; G rg , 2015). The resistance of İikizk y women to preserve Akbelen Forest constitutes an important example of women's leading role in environmental movements.

Akbelen Forest is located in the Aegean Region of Turkey in the İkizköy Village of Milas/Muğla. Akbelen Forest has been preserved by locals since 2019 through administrative and legal means and direct activism since 2021. Environmental protestors are resisting a coal mining company that tries to wipe out Akbelen Forest for open-cast lignite mining activities to feed the thermal power plants in the region (İkizköy Çevre Komitesi, 2023). There are three thermal power plants in Muğla and coal mining activities have been continuing in the region since 1979 to feed the three thermal power plants (İkizköy Çevre Komitesi, 2023).

Mining activities destroyed 55 decare land including the forests and fertile agricultural areas. More than 20 villages in Milas and Yatağan have been wiped out partially or completely (İkizköy Çevre Komitesi, 2023). People have been deprived of their homeland, their homes, and their means of livelihood. Villagers have been forced to migrate from their homes, being forced to work in salaried jobs for livelihood instead of relying on the revenue of their own agricultural products.

Mining activities and thermal power plants polluted the air, soil, and water resources, decreased the fertility of the land and crops (İkizköy Çevre Komitesi, 2023). It affected the olive cultivation adversely, which is one of the main means of livelihood for the local people. Although olive trees are protected by legislation in Turkey, and cutting off olive trees and building toxin-emitting facilities near olive cultivation areas is forbidden, mining activities and thermal power plants continue their activities with the extensive support of the government.

In 2019, women of İkizköy prevented the cutting of the trees and protested the destruction of the forest. Then, they sought legal advice from environmentalist lawyers, applied to the Forestry Operation Directorate of Milas, and paused the destruction of Akbelen Forest. In 2021, the company entered the forest with the help of law-enforcement forces to destroy the Akbelen forest. This event marked the beginning of guarding the forest day and night. Villagers are organized around the guardianship of the forest, taking turns, helping each other, and trying to incorporate the resistance within their daily lives.

They organize regular meetings with villagers, listening to the ideas of the participants of the movement and collectively deciding what to do. They constantly

interact with environmentalist groups, political parties, and members of the parliament who come to support the resistance, running campaigns on social media or through their personal relationships with neighboring villages. They are an open community that warmly welcomes anyone who supports or is interested in their shared goal of forest protection. They try to raise awareness about the irreversible damage that coal mines and thermal power plants have caused and will cause. They continue their protests, celebrating their second year of direct political action (protests and incessant guarding of forest) short before I conducted my interviews, trying to make themselves heard. Even after two years of direct action and four years of resistance, the atmosphere in protests reflects the exuberance of participants to continue resistance without hesitation, as most of the interviewees stated, even if they were left alone in the resistance.

The struggle, which started in 2019, continued by using various forms of activism such as, keeping night watch in the forest, filing lawsuits, connecting with environmentalists and environmentalist organizations, connecting with political parties writing petitions to parliament and activism through social media. The conflict in the area still continues and in 24th of July 2023, watch area and local environmentalists were disbanded with gendarme intervention and lots of trees were cut down. Environmentalists that were forced to leave their watch area gathered in somewhere else (Akdemir, 2023). Rumbles of the dynamite explosions keep harassing the villagers in the area to intimidate protestors and discourage those who do not want to leave their land (Evrensel, 2023).

The resistance of İkizköy women to preserve Akbelen Forest is a recent example of women's prominent role in environmental movements; but why are the women in the frontlines in the environmental movements? This study does not consider the environmental movement in Akbelen Forest as an example of ecofeminist movement. Rather, ecofeminism provides an explanatory framework pointing out the relationship between women and nature. King (1989) asserts a strong link between the animosity towards women and the animosity towards the environment; these two forms of hostility are interconnected and bolster each other (p.18). This similarity between the approach towards women and nature brings the criticism of ecologists

and feminist approaches that only deal with nature or women. However, it should be noted that the aim is not to develop arguments that will enable the rejection of ecologists and feminism. Instead, it is intended to develop both sets of thinking. In other words, it is essential to adopt both ecologist and feminist perspectives for an ecofeminist approach.

Although there are essential differences between theorists, a definition that may be common to all can be formulated as follows: Ecofeminism is a perspective rooted in both ecological and feminist thought, which perceives the subjugation of women and the degradation of nature as interconnected issues (Ortner, 1972; Plumwood, 1986; King, 1989; Merchant, 1981; Dixon, 1996; Merchant, 1996; Warren, 2000; Mallory, 2010). Ecofeminism rejects hierarchical structures and embraces diversity within both the natural world and human society. It advocates for an ethical framework to eradicate all forms of societal domination and exploitation. In this view, coexisting harmoniously with the environment is seen as inherently linked to fostering harmony within human communities.

The protests, which started as a local struggle, over time led to encounters with supporters outside the village, such as environmentalists and political party representatives. Considering these encounters, collective action and forms of solidarity, the struggles in Akbelen Forest can be considered as a social movement (Diani, 1992). The ecological character of the social movements that emerged in various parts of the world and the fact that women are at the forefront of these movements have resulted in ecofeminism being deeply related to the social movements literature.

Studies conducted with an ecofeminist perspective underline the dominant and essential role of women in environmental movements (Shive, 1993; Warren, 1997; Gibbs, 1998; Muthuki, 2006; Agarwal, 2009; Shivhare & Agarwal, 2022). In this study, the experiences of women who have been keeping watch in the forest for a long time with the intention of preventing the destruction of the Akbelen Forest for the expansion of the mining area will be discussed from an ecofeminist perspective. Thus, the relationship that ecofeminism establishes between women and nature will be analyzed based on women's experiences.

Since women in rural areas engage in both agricultural activities and household cleaning, it can be said that forest, soil and clean water are the center of their lives. Therefore, environmental destruction directly affects the daily lives of women. In addition, I think it is crucial to understand how being politicized over a two-year struggle is experienced considering power relations within the household. In other words, whether the rise of their voices in the public sphere creates a change in the private sphere where power relations manifest themselves is one of the questions this thesis tries to answer. How women perceive themselves and their capabilities are closely related to the local environment where empowerment occurs (Akyüz et al., 2019). Therefore, effects of the participation in the environmental movement on women's lives in terms of their relationship with nature and environmental issues, their daily lives and their intra-household issues will be investigated.

This thesis aims to contribute to the ecofeminist literature by studying the women's experiences in an environmental movement, motivations of their participation and its effects on their lives in terms of their relationship with environmental issues and patriarchal power hierarchies in the society. It also aims to contribute to the publicity of the women's struggle for preservation of the nature. The second point became even more apparent after what I witnessed when I went to the action area to conduct the interviews. Akbelen Forest has a much more significant meaning for the women living there than for people like me who try to make remote evaluations think. For them, the forest is life itself. Therefore, I hope this work will contribute to the publicity of their struggle for survival. Finally, I believe that analyzing the events in Akbelen through the data obtained from the interviews will contribute to the further discussion of women's experiences and ecofeminism in the academic literature in Turkey.

1.1. Research Question and Method

The main research question of this study is: What is the relationship between the women struggling in İkizköy and nature, and how do they experience being a woman in an environmental struggle both in the field of watch and in their daily life practices?

In this context, the study focuses on the way women in the environmental movement perceive the forest and how they experience taking part in the movement. It is also examined whether this experience is not limited to the field of action and whether it creates a transformation in family and neighborhood relations and domestic orders. In this respect, this study examines the reasons for women to take part in the protest while also focusing on daily life practices. The focus of the study is to examine the effects of taking part in the environmental movement on both the way women relate to nature and their daily life practices rather than examining a social movement.

There are four reasons why the protests in the Akbelen Forest will be studied:

- It is one of Turkey's most prolonged ongoing environmental struggles. It has been going on for four years. For the last two years, every day vigil has been kept.
- Women have been at the forefront since the beginning of the protest process. The lawsuit against the protests was only against women, although many people with different identities participated in the protests. Issues such as women's exposure to harsh interventions by the gendarmerie reveal that women are targeted. This is due, as I have mentioned, to their leading role in action.
- The destruction to be experienced in İzköy will make possible the destruction of other areas because the company operating in the region aims to expand the mining area as much as possible. Therefore, the resistance in İzköy has a symbolic importance in preventing the destruction that will be experienced in other regions.
- It is an example of environmental movements in Turkey in the recent period.

In order to answer the research question, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with 12 women. The women to be interviewed were determined according to two criteria: living in İzköy and participating in the protests. The snowball sampling method was adopted to determine the people to be interviewed. The snowball sampling method has a significant disadvantage. This disadvantage is that the interviewee recommends people from similar social, political, and economic circles (Morgan, 2008, p. 816). This may result in the handling of a part of the case,

which is limited to routing. The most practical way to overcome this difficulty is to pluralize the starting point (Morgan, 2008, p. 816). The fact that the people interviewed in the case I discussed were already in the same place and a similar social environment made it difficult for such a limitation to arise. Nevertheless, to avoid such a problem, I tried to communicate with women through several channels instead of contacting women through a single communication channel. In the initial stage, I tried to communicate with the region's people through the contact information on the website called *İkizköy Direniyor*, which was organized to announce the action in the Akbelen Forest. At the same time, I looked for ways to communicate through my network. As I mentioned, the limited number of women activists in the same place resulted in all these communication channels leading me to a common point. Although I had not communicated before, I also interviewed people I met in the field of action and met my criteria.

Nine of the interviewees were interviewed one-on-one. In order to make them feel comfortable, I made sure that no one other than me and the interviewee were present in the interview area. I had a group interview with two women. Although I stated that I only wanted to listen to the women, the husband of one of the women I interviewed, who was at home, sometimes interfered with the interview. However, this situation was not at a level that prevented the woman I interviewed from answering my questions. During the interviews, 22 questions were asked, including various sub-questions, and organized according to a thematic division. These themes are personal questions, livelihood, the protest process, being a woman in an environmental struggle, and the effects on daily life (See Appendix B). There were difficulties I encountered in the research process. First, it was difficult to create an environment where we would be alone with the women I interviewed. Secondly, the fact that the dialect used by the people of the region was difficult to understand created some difficulties during communication.

Interviews provide a means to gain a thorough and firsthand insight into an individual's perspectives and approaches (Mosley, 2013, p. 2). With this perspective, in order to obtain a holistic and in-depth approach, the anecdotes told by the interviewees while answering the questions were listened to without interruption.

The interviews were recorded with the help of a tape recorder. Before the interview, the person was asked to carefully examine the issues in the Consent Form and to indicate if there was anything that he disapproved of. All interviewees declared that they approved the issues in the relevant form. The audio recording of the interview was transcribed with minor changes that did not change the meaning to ensure sentence integrity. It has been translated word for word into English.

Finally, it should be noted that only the data obtained from the interviews are not used in the study. Additionally, the observations obtained in the field of watch also provide essential data. Spending time with activist women and witnessing how they lived their daily lives was necessary to answer the research question.

1.2. Outline of the Study

The next chapter critically analyzes the literature on the subject of the study. It presents the conceptual approach and theoretical framework. Four bodies of literature are discussed for a complete and in-depth review. First, I will present conceptual discussions on ecofeminism. Next, I will consider social movements in general and environmental movements more specifically in relation to ecofeminism. The last section analyzes the literature on the environmental movement in Turkey.

In the third chapter, I will present the protest process in the Akbelen Forest, how women consider taking part in the action area as a woman, and their perception of nature. In the first section, I will present the reasons for the protests. Then, the means by which the protests are carried out, and the impact and approaches of various groups/institutions on the actions are discussed. Next, it presents the treatment women face for participating in protests and how they find the strength to cope with it. In the last section, women's perception of nature is discussed.

Chapter four discusses whether actions make an impact on women's everyday lives. First, the observed changes in domestic relations are discussed. Then, the solidarity networks developed among the people living in the same and neighboring villages are analyzed. Finally, it is debated whether the actions empower women.

The final section presents and discusses the overall conclusions drawn from the study. It also offers suggestions and clues for future work.



CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, a comprehensive examination of the relevant literature pertaining to the research's subject is undertaken. This chapter encompasses the state of art and theoretical framework. To provide a comprehensive review, four bodies of literature will be scrutinized. Initially, the focus will be on conceptual approaches surrounding ecofeminism. Subsequently, an examination of social movements in a broader context, as well as their specific connection to environmental movements within the scope of ecofeminism, will be described. The final section presents an analysis of the literature pertaining to the environmental movement in Turkey.

2.1. Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is an approach that integrates ecological and feminist thinking rooted in their intellectual tradition and different movements. Ecofeminism research arises from the intersection of feminism and ecology. According to the ecofeminist approach, the domination of man over nature and the domination of man over woman are inseparable.

2.1.1. Overview of Ecofeminism

With the flourishing of the environmental and feminist movement in the 1970s, the concept was first used Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974 with her appeal to women to defend nature (Warren, 2000). At the "Women and Life on Earth" conference held in Massachusetts in 1980, the discussion of women and nature together started the discussions in the field of ecofeminism (Merchant, 1996). There are different ecofeminist perspectives and discussions around ecofeminism. Ecofeminism critiqued ecological thinking for disregarding the importance of women in its

analyses of anthropocentrism. Also, ecofeminism critiques feminisms that are indifferent to ecological issues, missing the relationship between the perception of nature and the perception of women. Ecofeminism challenges the anthropocentrism of other feminisms, including the oppression of nature in its analysis.

Moreover, the ecofeminist perspective includes all kinds of oppression in society concerning race, gender, species, and so on. While it is criticized by other feminists for essentialism, ethnocentrism, or losing its focus; ecofeminism criticizes other perspectives for speciesism, anthropocentrism, or ignoring racial issues and other social injustices. In this section, I will describe the main principles of ecofeminism and its philosophical roots, then present an overview of different ecofeminist perspectives and analyze the critiques of ecofeminist perspective.

Ecofeminism stands at the intersection between ecology and feminism, emphasizing their need for an intrinsic connection with each other. Ecofeminism does not separate the social and environmental issues. It finds a direct relation between the oppression or objectification of women and nature, stressing the dualities, i.e., hierarchies between nature and culture in a patriarchal society. As King (1989) states, "The hatred of women and the hatred of nature are intimately connected and mutually reinforcing" (p. 18).

King (1989), one of the prominent theoreticians of ecofeminism, discusses the relationship between women and nature in her article *Ecology of Feminism and Feminism of Ecology*. According to King, a feminist perspective is needed to understand the human-nature relationship. Although the dominance over nature can arguably be discussed in relevance with all humans and nonhumans, she suggests that it is more pertinent to women because women are viewed closer to nature than men in our culture. King (1989) begins with the examination of ecology in her article. Ecology aims to consider nature, humans, and nonhumans together and proposes to create a new social order by harmonizing society with the natural environment. She focuses primarily on social ecology, defining its objective as finding social, cultural, and economic ways to enable humans to "live in harmony with nonhuman nature" (King, 1989, p. 19). She adopts the social ecology

perspective of Bookchin, which takes both social and biological perspectives into consideration in dealing with the relationship between human and nonhuman nature. Social ecology finds connections between the exploitation of nature and hierarchical structures in society.

Although social ecology indicates the relationship between the domination of nature and domination in society, it falls short in exploring areas of domination in human society and thus requires a feminist perspective. Ecofeminism points out these connections, creating a framework for the function and goal of social ecology; analyses of social ecology remain incomplete without a feminist perspective. Social ecology refuses the nature-culture dualism; ecofeminism shows how this dualistic thinking interacts with and contributes to the subjugation of women in our society.

King (1989) explains the ecofeminist account, indicating four main tenets of ecofeminist thinking. Firstly, ecofeminist embraces all life struggles in nature as their own because the exploitation of nature is connected with domination over women, the former justifying the latter due to women being identified with nature. The second principle is the refusal of all hierarchies in nature and society in ecofeminist thinking: "There is no natural hierarchy in nature; human hierarchy is projected onto nature and then used to justify social domination" (King, 1989, p. 20). Thirdly, ecofeminism cherishes the diversity in society, just like the importance of diversity in nature. All kinds of simplification in society correspond to the extinction of species in a balanced ecosystem, threatening its proper function. Thus, ecofeminism potentially concerns itself with all kinds of domination beyond women's subjugation. Lastly, ecofeminism proposes the "radical restructuring of human society according to the feminist and ecological principle," defying the nature-culture duality that perpetuates the hegemony of men on both nature and women (King, 1989, p. 20).

Consequently, ecofeminism can be defined as ecological, feminist thinking that considers the domination of women and nature inseparable, refuses hierarchies, values diversity in nature and human society, and proposes an ethics that aims to eliminate all kinds of domination and exploitation in society. Living in harmony with nonhuman nature is viewed as directly connected to living in harmony within human society.

2.1.2. Ecofeminisms: Thinking Beyond Dualities

There are different perspectives that try to explain the roots of women / nature and men / culture dualities and men's domination of women and culture. Although these dualities and secondary status of women/nature are social constructs, they are analyzed in terms of social, familial, and economic structures in society and their historical development.

Ecofeminism focuses on the human/nature relationship, bringing a feminist perspective to ecological thinking and an ecological perspective to feminist thinking. Although the main framework or objectives of ecofeminism, that is, improving human/nature relationships and facing the patriarchal order that results in the subjugation of both women and nature, is shared by different ecofeminist thinkers, there are different ecofeminist approaches. We might also say that different feminist approaches offer different perspectives on the relationship between ecology and feminism. Some of these ecofeminist perspectives are liberal ecofeminism, cultural ecofeminism, and socialist ecofeminism (Merchant, 1996). In fact, these different approaches can be considered as views of different feminist approaches to environmental issues. While liberal ecofeminists seek to oppose the domination of women and nature through legislation, cultural ecofeminists advocate direct political action for the subversion of patriarchal domination of women and nature.

Plumwood (1986), categorizes different ecofeminist perspectives according to their approaches to women/nature duality. She categorizes ecofeminist positions into three groups: those who trace the origin of women/nature dualism in premodern ideas or belief systems, those who find the origins of women/nature dualism in the Scientific Revolution and rationalism and those who take an essential position by explaining the women / nature duality in terms of the difference between male/female sexuality or personality (p. 121).

Merchant (1996) set forth a historical perspective on women/nature association and the domination of women/nature by men/culture. Firstly, she explores the premodern conception of nature in Gaia in Greek mythology, Eve from Christianity, and Isis

from Egypt. For her, in premodern societies, these goddesses represented as bringers of life, sources of fruitfulness, and redeemers of the world from chaos. She thinks that the Renaissance's perception of nature also restricts the subjugation of nature, viewing nature as a caregiver and nurturer. However, with the rise of capitalism and the Scientific Revolution, nature lost her divine connotations and got to be considered a lifeless resource to be exploited for men's ambitions. As Merchant (1996) puts it:

During the rise of mercantile capitalism and the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century, the world was reconceptualized as a machine made of dead atoms, God was an engineer, and society a sum of self-interested individuals. An environmental ethic of restraint gave away to a sanction for the domination of nature (p. 18).

Merchant (1981) follows the traces of women/nature men/culture dualisms to ancient times and mythologies. She puts these dualities into historical perspective. She finds the roots of the worldview that enables men's exploitation of women/nature in the rise of capitalism. Also, industrialism and capitalism decreased the women's interaction with the earth and their major role in family subsistence restricting their labor to domestic areas. Thus, it resulted in the disempowerment of both women and nature. However, as the women's direct interaction with the earth lessened with capitalism, capitalism also "produced a middle class of women who studied, appreciated, and conserved the natural world, shielding large areas from further exploitative development." (Merchant, 1981, p. 19). So, she thinks that women's role of direct interaction with nature for family subsistence transform into role of preservation of nature with the rise of capitalism. Women's efforts and activities for nature preservation might be interpreted as their effort to reinstate the recognition of women/nature as active actors.

Plumwood (1996) follows the roots of men / women and nature / culture dualities in Greek tradition and rationality. She criticizes rationality for creating nature/culture, masculine/feminine, and reason/emotion, emphasizing the superiority of male values thereby justifying the domination of men over women / nature. She also tries to show the connections between androcentrism and anthropocentrism in the rationalist tradition, stressing that fighting anthropocentrism is crucial for feminist thinking, and

so is fighting androcentrism for ecological thinkers. Ecofeminism reveals those connections and aims to end all kinds of domination against women or nonhuman nature.

Merchant (1996) and Plumwood (1996) present elaborate historical perspectives on women / nature and men / culture dualities. While Merchant (1996) finds the roots of dualities that justify domination in the rise of capitalism and industrialism, Plumwood (1996) follows the roots of dualities in Greek philosophical tradition and rationality. Although these ecofeminist thinkers provide historical perspectives, they do not actually touch upon the reasons behind those dualities. Historical analyses might answer the "how" and "when" questions, but it leaves "why" questions unanswered. Identifying a historical turning point is important yet not sufficient to understand the roots of dualism.

Ortner (1972), in her article, *Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?* investigates the origins of the women / nature and men / culture associations in society, trying to find reasons for women's secondary status. She claims that the connection between women and nature and the secondary status of women/nature in comparison to men/culture are cultural constructs yet universal phenomena. For her, there are physical, social, and psychological reasons that make women appear to be closer to nature. Physical reason is related to the woman's body and its functions. The female body seems to be closer to nature because the functions of this body, such as fertility, assign women a social role. Social reason is related to family structure and women's role in socialization. Childcare roles and domestic work are assigned to women in different societies, making women appear to be closer to nature. The psychological reason is explained in terms of women's role in the socialization of the baby, giving them a mediating role between culture and nature (Ortner, 1972).

King (1989) explores the connection between men's hatred of women and hatred of nature by referring to the ideas of Simone de Beauvoir on transcendence and culture. For Beauvoir, nature and women, with their procreative powers, undermine men's denial of mortality and reach transcendence through culture and creation. Women and nature remind men of their lack of creativity and mortality, thus resulting in

men's desire for objectification of nature and women as an “other” to be exploited and used when it is necessary.

When we think about the identification of women with nature and identification of culture with men, there might be different feminist positions suggesting different approaches to those dualities. Some approaches suggest an integration of women in men's cultural production, challenging the women-nature connection by showing that the women-nature connection can be cut off and women can accommodate themselves in cultural production. However, this approach means the compliance of women to patriarchal order hinders their autonomy and difference. Other feminist perspectives suggest the acceptance and consolidation of women/nature men/culture dualities. However, these approaches do not question the dualities and their socially constructed aspects. The ecofeminist position, on the other hand, differs from these two approaches. Ecofeminism does consider socially constructed aspects of women/nature men/culture dualities but does not cut off these dualities. Because cutting off these dualities might mean compliance with the patriarchal order, and sheer reinforcement of them misses the social construction aspects of dualities, but choosing to keep those dualities can give women a chance to think beyond these dualities and create a more integrative approach to their own. As I will mention in the following pages, ecofeminism is criticized for its essentialist attitude towards men / women but we can also consider it as a tactical position beyond rejection or acceptance of dualities but rather provisional acceptance to think and create a society outside of these dualities. Ecofeminism is not only a research area at the intersection of ecology and feminism, showing the domination of nature and women are connected but it is also a philosophy that cherishes the diversity in nature and society aiming to promote an ethics that fosters live in harmony with nonhuman nature. There are different formulations of ethical relationships with nonhuman nature shifting from the ethics of androcentric and anthropocentric understandings.

Merchant (1996) investigates a premodern worldview that attributes divine powers to women / nature and a modern worldview that regards them as objects for exploitation and subjugation. Merchant (1996) suggests a “partnership ethics,” which she also calls “earthcare ethics”, based on ecofeminist thinking. She suggests that

humans should be in partnership with nature, a dynamic relationship based on mutual recognition. She suggests “Earthcare ethics” as opposed to egocentric and homocentric ethics that lead to domination and exploitation and advocate partnership between human and nonhuman. She criticizes egocentric ethics for prioritizing the benefits of privileged minorities based on the essentialist idea of rational humans and capitalism. She also criticizes homocentric ethics for falling to “environmental racism,” reflecting anthropocentrism. However, more importantly, Merchant (1996) criticizes ecocentric ethics “for privileging the whole at the expense of the individual (holistic fascism).” (p. 216) and missing the positive aspects of homocentric ethics. As Merchant (1996) puts it:

A partnership ethic draws on the principles and advantages of both the homocentric social-interest ethic and the ecocentric environmental ethic while rejecting the egocentric ethic associated with capitalist exploitation of people and nature (p. 216).

Merchant's (1996) perspective does not sanctify nature nor assign women a role for nature preservation, but she suggests an ethical approach that human and nonhuman can exist co-dependently based on feminist ecological thinking. Although historical treatment of the domination of men over nature and women is useful, we should also understand the logical structures that are inscribed in our way of thinking that enables the perpetuation of that domination.

Warren (2000) presents her views on ecofeminist philosophy in her book *"Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters."* She argues that ecofeminist philosophy should not be “limited to ‘describing’ reality or reporting ‘facts’; it involves advancing positions, advocating strategies, and recommending solutions.” So, she goes beyond the historical or descriptive analyses of domination over nature and women to an analysis of the logic of domination. Karen Warren examines the “oppressive conceptual frameworks” that help to perpetuate patriarchal domination over women and nature. Warren identifies five features of oppressive conceptual frameworks: first, value-hierarchical thinking that defines upper and lower and values the one in an upper position, secondly, oppositional value dualisms that conceive diversity as oppositional rather than complementary, thirdly, conception of power as power-over power, fourthly,

creating privileges that perpetuate dominant-subordinate relationships, finally, logic of domination that refers to the logic that “assumes that superiority justifies subordination” (2000, pp. 46-49). Warren's (2000) analysis of “oppressive conceptual frameworks” is very insightful because these frameworks might be operating not only within the discourses of “ism of domination” such as androcentrism or anthropocentrism but also, they can also infiltrate the “ism of liberation” such as feminism and environmentalism impairing the efforts of challenging the patriarchal order.

2.1.3. Critiques of Ecofeminism

There is a lot of criticism to ecofeminism within the feminist circles. Most criticisms are centered around accusing ecofeminism of essentialism. Feminists criticized ecofeminist thinkers for essentializing femininity through their celebration of femininity and women's connection with the environment. Dixon (1996), in her article “The Feminist Connection of Women and Animals,” argues that viewing women as closer to nature implies that there is one singular experience of femininity and thus assumes an essential category. She also cannot see the relevance of animal or natural liberation with women's liberation at any level. Although gendering nature as female or viewing women closer to nature seems problematic, as we have seen in the sections above, most of the ecofeminist thinkers actually avoid essentialism and biologism, viewing dualities as social constructs but still find investigating the relationship between the subjugation of women and nature meaningful.

Ecofeminists' spiritual attributions to nature and femininity celebrating the ancient goddesses are also criticized by various feminist thinkers and stamped as essentialist and apolitical (Gaard, 2011). However, ecofeminists' approaches are based on activism and aim to restructure society on the grounds of ethics of care and living in harmony with nature. So, the ecofeminist approach and their understanding of spirituality cannot be viewed as apolitical; on the contrary, their activism and spirituality support each other (Mallory, 2010).

Ecofeminism is also criticized for losing its focus, extending its concern to environmental, gender, race, economic, and all other forms of domination.

Ecofeminist, on the other hand, views all kinds of domination in society, including the domination of nonhumans, as connected with the domination of women. It shows the relationship between androcentrism and anthropocentrism, emphasizing the importance of a more comprehensive approach to the liberation of women and nature from patriarchal subjugation (Gaard, 2011).

2.1.4. Women and Forest Preservation

Why do women take an active role in nature preservation? What does the environment have to do with feminism? There are different answers to these questions focusing on history of women's association with nature, women's identification with nature as an object of domination and subjugation, shifting ethical perspectives with the rise of capitalism and industrialism that assigned to women the role of preservation, feminisms' disillusionment that shows all kinds of domination are interrelated including racism, heterosexism, androcentrism and anthropocentrism and all of them should be addressed for liberation of women; physical, biological or psychological reasons and so on to explain the connection between women and environmental preservation.

Warren (1997) seeks an empirical answer to these questions beyond theoretical, academic, or historical perspectives. She examines the reasons for women's participation in the Chipko movement in 1974 in northern India. Chipko is an Indian word that gives the movement its name, meaning “to hug” or “to embrace,” describing the nonviolent resistance of women to cutting off the trees. Women hugged the trees in protests to protect them. The authorities tried to cut the trees and plant eucalyptus trees, thus reducing the diversity in the forest. For Warren (1997), women took a prominent role in forest preservation because women's contribution to the household economy is dependent on the products of the forest. Women know how to utilize the forest in terms of food, fuel, and household utensils and turn them into income or contributions to their household economy.

Another reason is the male-biased nature of modern forestry, which stresses the importance of experts who know how to make use of forests better than local indigenous people of the region. While experts focus on how to turn forest products

into commercial products more efficiently following the logic of industrial capitalism, local women appreciate the diversity in the forest that answers their different daily needs. So, local women actually know how to make use of forests better than experts. Women can appreciate the various products of forests, considering their needs beyond their commodity value. Experts' approach based on commodification and reductionism destroys nature's diversity and women's livelihood. Therefore, we can say that the destruction of indigenous forests is a feminist issue because women are the primary victims of deforestation, being deprived of their living environment and livelihood (Warren, 1997). In other words, women are more affected by deforestation due to patriarchal relations in their everyday life. The forest can exist as a socialization area for women. Considering gender roles in the home, the forest can be a place of escape from home for women. Therefore, it can be said that deforestation makes patriarchal relations more visible.

Pollution of water, decline of agriculture, and emission of toxins are also ecofeminist issues because women's lives are more affected by them. This empirical approach to the subject shows that women's participation and prominent roles in environmental movements, such as protests against deforestation, due to their disproportionate grievances from those issues in comparison to men (Warren, 1997).

Agarwal (2009), in her study on forest governance in Nepal and India, showed that increased participation of women in forest governance and executive committees of forest management results in better forest preservation. She showed that women's participation not only increases forest preservation but also helps improve the conditions of the forest and contribute to its regeneration. This study also shows that women are better preservers of nature, thinking beyond reductionist approaches of patriarchy in forestry.

2.1.5. Ecofeminism in Action

There are various movements and environmentalist resistances that can be interpreted with ecofeminist approaches because of the women's significant roles in those movements. Thinking about ecofeminism is not to think about whether women should preserve nature, but it is to think about the fact that women do preserve

nature. There are examples of women taking prominent roles in the preservation of forests and natural environments all around the world.

Green Belt Movement in Kenya (Muthuki, 2006), Chipko Movement in India (Shiva, 2003), Love Canal Campaign in the USA (Gibbs, 1998), Navdanya Movement in India (Shivhare & Agarwal, 2022) Resistance of local women of Çamlıhemşin against Green Road in Turkey and resistance of women in İkizköy against power plant and coal mines to preserve Akbelen Forest as I will be investigating in this thesis can be examples of women's prominent role in environmental movements.

As we can see from the various examples of women's role in environmental movements, the ecofeminist approach is not merely an academic discourse that connects the domination of nature and the domination of women by anthropocentrism/androcentrism pointing out their theoretical and historical links; rather it arises from collective contentious actions of women in order to preserve nature. Protests in Akbelen can also be considered as a social movement because, as we will see from the interviews, it constitutes not only a collective action of people to preserve their local forest but also a social movement that aims to and does transform their relationship with nature and the state authorities. The local struggle of İkizköy women turned into a social movement through networks of informal interactions and their encounters during the years of resistance. Hence, we need to have a social movement perspective for our study.

2.1.6. Ecofeminism and Women's Empowerment

As we have seen from the examples ecofeminism does not only point out the relation between women's subordination and exploitation of nature viewing them as a result of patriarchy; it also suggests that environmental activism of women can empower women and serve women's struggle against patriarchy. One of the main questions of this thesis is whether participating in the environmental movement changed women's lives or their relationship with patriarchy, in other words, whether participation in resistance empowered the village women. Hence, in this section, I will present some definitions of women's empowerment, the ways women feel and are empowered and

discuss the effects of participation in the environmental movement on women's empowerment in the context of relevant literature.

Defining and conceptualizing the concept of empowerment is difficult and the concept itself contains some ambiguities. For example, compliance with patriarchal discourses might give women some power but it cannot be considered as empowerment. What do we mean when we say this policy or discourse or action empowered women? Although it may not be possible nor reasonable to measure empowerment, we can present some criterion for the empowerment.

For this problem, Naila Kabeer (1999) discusses the instrumentalist approach of empowerment and defines empowerment as acquiring "the ability to exercise choice" (p. 435). She presents three indicators of empowerment which are resources, agency, and achievement. Resources refer to authority in a certain social context; the agency can be defined as the ability to act upon and strive for self-determined goals. Resources and agency result in the achievement of one's living by her own values instead of values that are forced on her.

Kabeer also distinguishes empowerment from being powerful because empowerment is linked to initial dis-empowerment and not being able to make choices that precede the struggles for empowerment. As she puts it:

People who exercise a great deal of choice in their lives may be very powerful, but they are not empowered in the sense in which I am using the word, because they were never disempowered in the first place (1999, p. 137).

For example, in our case, the coal mine company and thermal power plant administration have the power to exercise the choice to destroy the forest and turn it into a coal mine site; however, women in İkizköy are empowered through solidarity and environmental activism thus in the process of acquiring the ability to exercise choice over their living space.

Empowerment is sometimes viewed in terms of welfare (Duflo, 2012). However, this approach to empowerment might be problematic. Because patriarchy might offer

welfare opportunities to women without necessarily empowering women, that is, without challenging the patriarchy. Empowerment is not simply about being in a better condition, but it is a process of gaining the ability to define what is a better condition for an individual.

It is important to define empowerment as one's ability to live by her values because if we define empowerment as the ability to pursue welfare then it might be confused with objective measures of welfare thus missing the personal nature of empowerment and living by one's own values. For example, in our case, women in resistance declare that even if they were compensated abundantly for their land that might enable them to live luxuriously, they would continue their resistance because they choose to live in their village where their memories are, and they value their forest more than economic welfare. Thermal power plant and coal mines might provide employment or increase the value of their land, but they refuse to live by patriarchal values. We can say that empowerment should include some form of challenging the patriarchal subordination and rejecting to live by the values of patriarchy. Otherwise, empowerment strategies such as giving economic opportunities to women without challenging the gender roles might not necessarily result in the empowerment of women and leave the patriarchal domination intact (Khader, 2014). Charad points out the importance multi-faceted approach to empowerment and women's agency. She states that:

...women's agency needs to be conceptualized in relation to the entrenched power hierarchies existing in all societies around the world as well as the factors of social class, race and ethnicity. Women's agency is also configured in relation to the macro level structures such as economy and politics as well as meso level and micro level structures such as family and interpersonal relations (2010, p. 519).

Women's empowerment cannot be reduced to economic or social or private spheres; empowerment should be viewed in terms of all the disempowering hierarchies in the society that deny women their choice in their lives.

Khader (2018) presents a view of empowerment that goes beyond the understanding of empowerment as agency. She suggests that disempowerment of women does not

necessarily operate on decreasing the agency of women, on the contrary, increasing agency might disempower women by burdening too much responsibility between the implausible choices that they have to make. For her, we need to reconceptualize power as “structuring the field of available actions in ways that affect the relative position of social groups” (2018, p. 141).

There is a vast literature on the empowerment of women, especially through some programs and policies. Cornwall (2016) reviews the comprehensive research program (Pathways of Women’s Empowerment) that studies ways of women’s empowerment in different countries. Cornwall (2016) presents the example of the Empowering Skills Training Program (Chapeu de Palha Mulher) in Brazil. This program is carried out with the collaboration of the state and civil society. They trained sugar cane worker women on public policies (“consciousness raising”) and then provided vocational training according to women’s choice. It is suggested that the program enabled women to be more economically independent and raised consciousness on entitlement in terms of citizenship. Another example is the Cash Transfer Program in Egypt which is basically transfer of money to women’s accounts as compensation of their unrecognized domestic work. This program also includes training about citizenship that raises the awareness of women (Sholkamy, 2011, 2014 cited in Cornwall, 2016).

There are other examples from Pakistan (Khan, 2014), and India (Sashu, 2013 cited in Cornwall 2016; Janssens, 2010) that usually focus on the economic participation of women. Economic participation is an important pathway to women’s empowerment. Because women’s labor is usually domestic and unpaid, their contribution to the household is not recognized. Unpaid domestic labor disempowers women and denies their choice on spending. When women earn money and have economic independence, they gain agency to choose how and where to spend their money. However economic participation or economic independence does not necessarily lead to empowerment. The ways of earning money might also be disempowering for women. For example, in İkizköy, women might take jobs in thermal power plant but they do not find hourly-paid work suitable to their life-style isolating them from their living space. They prefer selling vegetables in the local

market or selling their crop and dairy products. Women resist not only to preserve their subsistence but also to preserve their choice of how to live and earn their livelihood.

Some scholars criticize the abuse of the term empowerment reducing it to bettering of women's condition and interventions thus taking out its politically subversive nature. Batliwala (2007) in her article "*Taking the power out of empowerment – an experiential account*" states that empowerment was "...once a powerful idea and practice of women's empowerment degenerated into a set of largely apolitical, technocratic, and narrow interventions that create nothing like the radical transformation envisaged by early women's movement leaders – and how it was brought to serve neo-liberal economic ends." (p. 114).

Rowlands (1998) also stresses the importance of avoiding the mistake of understanding empowerment in terms of "dominant culture of Western capitalism" (p. 11). Hence, when we think about the empowerment of women, we should be careful not to think in terms of dominant patriarchal discourse, letting subversive discourse of women's empowerment be assimilated into dominant discourse. This is one of the reasons ecofeminist thinking and women's environmental activism can and do play an important role in women's empowerment because it challenges the patriarchal view that exploits the environment to co-existing with the environment. In İkizköy, women not only preserve the Akbelen Forest but also, resist and subvert the exploitative approach of patriarchy to nature. Therefore, environmental activism of women should be considered as challenging power relations and should be studied in the context of empowerment in public and private spheres.

We should also address the difference between empowerment through political participation and empowerment through environmental activism. Narayanan (2003) reviews some examples of state- or NGO-led political participation programs to empower the marginalized people and discusses the effects of those programs. He suggests that although participation denotes a positive sense, restricted participation might also be a tool for domination giving a false sense of involvement in decision-making processes. His analysis shows that environmental or political activism might

have a greater impact on power relations thereby having a greater role in empowerment.

2.2. Social Movements

In order to study the case of İkizköy as an environmental or ecofeminist movement, we need to present the features and constituents of social movements and review the discussions around the concept.

Collective actions and protests are no longer considered unconventional or radical behaviors; on the contrary, they come to be viewed as ordinary parts of the democracies and normal functioning of the societies (della Porta & Diani, 2006). Even the term “movement society” is used by scholars to indicate the normalization of conflictual collective behaviors (Rucht & Neidhardt, 2002; Melucci, 1996; Mayer & Throw, 1998). However, the multiplicity and diversity of collective conflictual behaviors constitute a challenge for the differential definition and the analyses of social movements; hence, many different approaches and accounts of social movements have been suggested in the social movement literature inquiring about the “what”, “why” and “how” of the social movements. I will try to integrate and discuss these definitions and accounts in relevance to my current study.

Diani (1992) embarks on defining the concept of social movement. He identified four distinctive features of social movements, synthesizing the literature on social movements. He proposed that social movements include: “a) networks of informal interaction; b) shared beliefs and solidarity; c) collective action on conflictual issues; d) action which displays largely outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of social life.” (Diani, 1992, p. 7).

Firstly, “network of information interaction” refers to participants’ constant exchange of information within the social movements. This exchange emphasizes the plurality in social movements; that is, resources and information for collective behavior are exchanged. Decisions are not made by singular actors and obeyed by others but rather arise as a result of constant interactions and negotiations among

participants. This interaction space not only facilitates the collaborative regulation and mobilization of collective action but also enables actors of the social movement to maintain their autonomy while engaging in collective contentious behavior. These nonhierarchical information networks render leadership roles in social movements more fluid and create opportunities for expression for each participant. Diane (2003) conducted an empirical study on environmental movement in Milan to investigate leadership in social movements. He analyzes the networks within the social movement and finds some convergence points in these networks. However, He suggests that convergence points of interaction networks in social movements are playing more of a brokerage role rather than a conventional leadership role.

Secondly, “shared beliefs and solidarity” refers to collective identity building within the social movements. Social movements are not just a collection of individuals pursuing a shared goal. This would make social movements dissimilar to interest groups. Participants in social movements should also have feelings of belongingness and common fate. Collective identity-building in social movements differentiates social movements from coalitions, where people come together and create solidarity networks to pursue a common goal against a distinct opponent but without necessarily building a shared identity. What does this shared identity refer to? As we will see in the following section of this thesis and interviews, people in social movements mourn for previous losses in other localities have a feeling of belonging and a common future even with people who show no interest in their particular resistance but will be affected by the broader consequences of their protests showing their protests and resistance pass beyond their local goals.

Of course, this shared identity does not wave aside the heterogeneity in social movement. Individuals' degree of involvement in collective identity can be evaluated in social movement analysis, but their homogeneity cannot be assumed or expected; on the contrary, the process of building a collective identity should be considered as constant negotiation and realignment (Melucci, 2013; Snow et al., 1986). Snow et al. (1986), using Goffman's (1974) frame analysis in order to understand participation and mobilization in social movements, suggested that frame realignment is a dynamic process in social movements and this realignment is an “interactional and

ongoing accomplishment” for the movement rather than static consensus (Snow et al., 1986, p. 464).

The transformative power of social movement relies on its power of collective identity building. Social movements are different from singular events or local struggles where people collectively pursue a common goal against distinct adversaries; in order for social movement dynamics to be in play, participants of the collective action should feel like a part of similar resistances and mobilizations (della Porta & Diani, 2006). This feeling of representation not only strengthens solidarity but also contributes to the transformation of an individual by discrete events, enabling them to support similar mobilizations in the future (Diani, 1995; Duyvendak, 1995). So, activists of a social movement can be considered active supporters of this movement even after a particular or local goal is attained and public activity is paused. Their personal and collective gains from activity expand and reproduce themselves in their lives even in the long latent periods (Melucci, 1984; Taylor, 1989).

The third feature of social movements is that they should include “collective action on conflictual issues.” Collective action basically refers to individuals putting together their efforts and resources to achieve collectively desired outcomes. But this desired outcome should also be in conflict with certain opponents. All the approaches to social movement stress the central role of conflicts in social movements (Diani, 1992). Social movements should be conflictual collective behaviors; that is, they should determine specific and distinct adversaries. This conflictual quality distinguishes movements from consensual collective acts, where people act collectively for the common good or charity-like collectivities (Giugni & Passy, 2001). However, the definition and areas of conflict might vary in different approaches. Conflict presupposes two or more opposing parties and a “field” of conflict or interests, which is a valued end that is desired by those opponents and damages the interest of one opponent if accomplished by the other. Touraine (1985) suggests that social movements should not necessarily be viewed as oppositions that aim to challenge or change the social order; he contends that so-called “social order” should also be examined as a social movement of the ruling class, so, for him, social movements can be defensive as well as being subversive.

He proposes six kinds of social conflict including defensive and offensive conflicts that occur in organizational processes, political institutions, and cultural orientations. I will briefly explain Touraine' (1985) six kinds of conflict since they can provide us with insights into the relationship between social conflicts and social movements. At the organizational level, in "pursuit of collective interests," the opponent is the power elite or management, and the field of conflict is profit maximization, whereas in "reconstruction of a social, cultural and political identity," the opponent is defined as "invader" and the field of conflict is the destruction/preservation of values that are at stake. Conflicts concerning political institutions are conflicts that are related to "political force aims at changing the rules of the game," such as unions and so on, as opposed to "defense of a status or privileges." In terms of conflicts of cultural orientations, he proposes conflicts of "social control of the main cultural patterns" and "creation of new order" (Touraine, 1985, pp. 750-756). For him, social movements are specific types of social conflict. However, we might think that any one of these conflicts can create a social movement under different circumstances. His reference to the "social movements of the ruling class" provides insights about power relations, stressing the historicity of the current state of affairs but at the same time obscures the concept of social movements as mobilization and mechanism for cultural, political, organizational change blurring the lines between contentious acts and defensive acts.

Lastly, the fourth feature of social movements is that they should involve "action which primarily occurs outside the institutional sphere and the routine procedures of social life." I have deliberately used the word "involve" because social movements might involve both collective and organizational and can involve disruptive protests and acts that are unconventional for pursuing a goal in the current state of affairs or pursue their end within the legal and social standards of the society. That does not mean that these features are not just contingent qualities of social movements, they are integral parts of the social movements, differentiating it from other forms of collective actions. However, social movements might change over time, and disruptive acts and non-institutionalization might be crucial for "nascent" or "effervescent" states of social movements to turn into more organized and institutionalized states (Calhoun, 1984 reviewing Alberoni, 1984). But, on the other

hand, that does not mean that if a social movement has not been institutionalized, it should be considered in its “nascent” state. Diani (1995), analyzing the Italian ecology movement, suggests that if the community ties and collective identity are strong in a movement, the movement can continue collective action without turning into a more organized structure, which does not necessarily indicate a nascent state for a movement.

So, we can define social movements as collective actions against a distinct adversary on the grounds of pursuing a common goal, mutually shared identity, and information-sharing network involving disruptive acts that occur mostly outside of organized structures. Though this definition seems compassing, we should also keep in mind that this is a working definition, and social phenomena do not necessarily keep up with definitions and theories; that is, each individual movement has its own dynamics varying according to its field of conflict and goal, adversaries, history, culture, participants and so on. As the contentious social phenomena and their manifestations vary, theories and definitions also transform with them.

Additionally, the understanding of social movements might differ in different countries according to their sociological traditions and specific features of social movements in that country. In social movement studies, the main distinction is made between European and American understandings of social movements. Olofsson (1988) summarizes the difference between European and American perspectives of social movements in three areas. For him, in the European perspective, the type of conflict is more central, the goal and conflict relationship are more comprehensive, and goals of social movement are considered as “permanent representation interest,” whereas in the American perspective, types of conflict are more marginal, and organization of social movement is considered as momentary mobilization for a single issue. These approaches are not necessarily contradictory or incompatible with each other; we might rather consider them as signifying different levels of analysis for the phenomena of social movements and theoretical efforts to make sense of the contentious social phenomena in their country.

Until the 1960s, social movements mostly concentrated on issues around workers and nations, and the main approaches to the study of social movements were the

Marxist model and the structural-functionalist model (della Porta & Diani, 2006). However, social transformations after the Second World War introduced new types of social stratifications and conflicts. With the advent of new social movements, social movements are no longer viewed as homogenous entities, and studies and theories about social movements are developed. Multiplicities of social movements have started to be recognized and studied (Touraine, 1981). These theories focus on motivations and conditions for contentious social behavior, organization of social movements, new fields of conflicts, participants of social movements, the role of emotions and identity building, new ways of protests and spaces of expression, conflicts within the movements, interactions between the movements, democracy, and social movements, role of culture and so on. Here, I will briefly review two approaches to social movement studies, which are resource mobilization theory, focusing on the organizational aspects of social movements, and new social movement theory, focusing on the cultural aspects of social movements.

One of the dominant theories of social movements is the resource mobilization theory. Resource mobilization theory focuses on rational aspects of social movements, questioning the theoretical centrality of the frustrations or grievances, i.e., the psychology of collective actors in social movements and social movement organizations (McCarthy & Zald, 1977). McCarthy and Zald (1977) suggest that regarding social movements as collective and deliberate behaviors of rational decision-maker individuals might help us understand the mobilization of movements. They challenge the “collective behavior” approaches that view grievances and deprivation caused by social and political structures, and a general understanding of the causes of this deprivation is a precondition, and maybe even sufficient, for contentious collective action (Turner & Killian, 1957).

Turner & Killian (1957) view social movements as collective behaviors reflecting the insufficiency of traditional social norms to motivate social action without giving much consideration to the organization of the collectivity. McCarthy and Zald (1977) take the emphasis away from individual actors and their grievances, stressing the importance of organizational processes for the birth, growth, and success of social movements. They refer to a lack of empirical support for relation with individual and

collective deprivation and participation in or occurrence of social movements (Crawford & Naditch, 1970; Snyder & Tilly, 1972). They even suggest that "grievances and discontent may be defined, created, and manipulated by issue entrepreneurs and organizations" (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p.1215), giving the utmost priority to organizational structures in the study of social movements. The resource mobilization approach proposes that social movement activity requires resources such as money and labor. Gathering and directing those resources necessitates some kind of administration and external support. So, the resource mobilization approach mostly theorizes and concerns itself with social movement organizations, which are formal organizations that identify as internalized or identified with the goals of a social movement.

Supporters of a social movement are not necessarily the grieyed individuals who believe in the cause of the movement or will directly benefit from an achievement of the movement. Those who believe in the cause of the social movement are called "adherents," and those who support and supply resources for the movement are called "constituents." Adherents may or may not benefit from the achievement of the goal, and constituents do not necessarily directly benefit from the movement or believe in the movement. The task of resource mobilization is to "turn non-adherents to adherents" and convert adherents into constituents and maintain constituent involvement" (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1221). Therefore, social movement organizations take on the strategic task of social movements and utilize society and its resources as an infrastructure for the attainment of the target goal.

Resource mobilization theory takes a rational approach to the study of social movements and links the success or failure of social movements with the availability and successful organization of resources rather than the agitations of collected individuals. It is no coincidence that they use the terms "social movement industry" or "social movement sector" because their understanding of social movement is not very different from the success or failure of a publicly traded company. Although resource mobilization theory provides insights into the role of organizations in social movements, it is criticized for missing the structural conflicts motivating the individual actors in social movements (Melucci, 1980). Also, their analysis of social

movements obscures the difference between social movements and social movement organizations.

The relationship between social movements and organizations is studied in social movement literature extensively. Although the resource mobilization approach stresses the integral role of organizational processes and social movement organizations, the non-institutional character of social movements is also underlined by various researchers trying to avoid reducing social movements to social movement organizations of the social movement sector (della Porta & Diani, 2006). Sometimes, organizations are confused with social movements. Organizations can be a part of a social movement, support and even publicly represent a social movement, but an organization cannot in and of itself be a social movement (Oliver, 1989). Organizations have certain hierarchies and structures that social movements do not have. Also, even if organizations might have a common goal, sense of belonging and collective identity, this identity formation and loyalty are more likely exerted on the “members,” and it is dissimilar to identity transformation, which occurs more spontaneously and dynamically social movements (Diani, 2003). As Kreşçi (1996) pointed out, formal networks, that is, social movement organizations, such as “supportive organizations, movement associations, and parties and interest groups,” go hand in hand with more informal networks, such as friendship and kinship groups and various informal community networks (p. 152). So, social movement organizations, although they can be integral parts of social movements, cannot constitute a social movement.

Just like SMOs, political parties can also be part of social movements, or sometimes social movements can even pave the way for the forming of political parties like the case of green parties (Kitschelt, 1989; Richardson & Rootes, 1994); however, social movements transcend these parties and interest groups. As we will see in the interviews, the Party of Greens and Left Future, although it is one of the prominent supporters of the protests, is just another supportive political party for the people of İkitiköy, along with the ultranationalist, conservative, or socialist political parties. Detachment of political parties and social movements is more emphasized in new social movements than in past labor and workers' movements.

Relation between political parties and social movements fades away in new social movements. New social movements are no longer extensions of political parties exhibiting the deepening detachment of the state and civil society. However, some scholars who seek to integrate even new social movements around some central conflicts in society argue that this detachment might also lead to the segmentation of social movements, turning them into advocacy for minorities or local struggles (Touraine, 1985, p. 780).

Another important approach to social movement studies is the new social movement theory. New social movement theory actually consists of many different perspectives on social movements in the post-industrial era. In the industrial era, social movements were mostly considered to be contentious acts of the working class focusing on labor and focusing on economic redistribution following Marxist ideas (Pichardo, 1997). However, the naissance of social movements outside of class conflicts and economic instrumentality, such as student movements, women's movements, gay movements, and environmental movements, challenged the classical Marxist understandings of social movements (Eyerman, 1984). Although new social movement theory comprises very different perspectives and approaches, their main claim is that the new social movements are results of the post-industrial economy, and they are qualitatively different from social movements of the industrial era and should be examined differently (Pichardo, 1997; Olofsson, 1988). New social movements are considered to be unique in terms of their ideology and goals, structure, tactics, and participants (Dalton & Kuechler, 1990).

Movements in the post-industrial era do not primarily concentrate on instrumental issues about labor or redistribution of resources but rather reflect concerns about the quality of life and lifestyle (Buechler, 1995). The ideology of social movement does not center on economic redistribution but rather on autonomy and identity. New social movements challenge representative democracy by creating spaces of discussion for direct participation beyond electoral accountability (della Porta, 2005). Also, identity claims are central in new social movements stressing the belief that "identity itself—its elaboration, expression, or affirmation—is and should be a fundamental focus of political work resulting in the politicization of previously nonpolitical terrains" (Kaufmann, 2001, p. 23).

In terms of their tactics and structure, the new social movement mostly prefers opening areas outside of normal political channels with their non-institutional character. Their nonhierarchical structure makes them more responsive to the needs of the individual. New social movements “oppose the bureaucratization of society in economics and politics that allegedly suffocates the ability of individual citizens to participate in the definition of collective goods and identities. Instead, they call for a culturally libertarian transformation of social institutions that gives more leeway to individual choice and collective self-organization outside the economic commodity cycle or bureaucratic political organization” (Kitschelt, 1993, p. 15). New social movements’ structure reflects the type of democracy that they want.

In terms of participants, participation in new social movements is not determined by economic classes but rather based on concerns about social issues. “It is an ideological, rather than ethnic, religious, or class-based community.” sharing common values without necessarily belonging to the same economic class (Pichardo, 1997, p. 417). Also, there is a general claim that participants of popular oppositions and protests are mostly rootless individuals who try to bask themselves in the marginalization of the group without any real ties to solidarity. However, that does not seem to be true because these individuals mostly participate in the movements later on, not until the movement is organized (Oberschall, 1978, p. 135). Additionally, because new social movements politicize many different areas of life, “new middle class” participants might also have real ties to resistance suffering from the grievances of the conflict, such as in environmental issues or women's movements and so on.

Although cultural aspects of new social movements seem dominant, Buechler (1995) suggests a distinction between political and cultural aspects of new social movements. Beuchler (1995) views cultural aspects of new social movements as diffuse and decentralized and prioritizes symbolic expression rather than instrumental action, operating on micro- or mesh-level. However, new social movements cannot be considered as homogeneous entities. The diversity of new social movements results in a diversity of theories of new social movements. However, they might be considered complementary approaches. Rucht and

Neidhardt (2002) try to integrate different levels of analysis into social movements. They identify three levels of analysis for understanding motivations, mobilization, and stabilization of the movements. These three levels are “individual experience level,” “collective interpretation level,” and “structural level.” Each level of analysis might be meaningful, but in order to make sense of social movements, we should take all three levels into consideration.

Individual experiences of deprivation or dissatisfaction provide motivation and meaning for collective action, creating solidarity through constant interaction and communication. The collective interpretation level refers to the “framing” process, which is the collective interpretation and understanding of conflict that goes beyond individual experiences, creating a “we” in opposition to “they” in social movements (Gamson, 2013). This process is also called “consensus formation” (Klandermans, 1984). However, this should not be considered merely a convergence of individual grievances but rather a dynamic process of collectively defining and redefining the goals, motivations, tactics, and meaning of the social movement. The structural level comprises macro-level societal conflicts that go beyond particular resistance or movement, that is, the interaction between macro-sociological issues and individual movements. Different theories emphasize the different levels of analysis focusing on micro-, meso- or macro-level analysis, besides being aware of other levels of analysis, thereby contributing to the comprehensive understanding of social movement phenomena (Rucht & Neidhardt, 2002).

Resistance of women in Akbelen can be considered as social movement since it is a conflictual collective action “network of informal interaction” based on “shared beliefs and solidarity” that is “outside of institutional sphere and routine procedures of social life” (Diani, 1992). When we consider the integrative analysis of social movement theories by Rucht and Neidhardt (2002), our case study seems to be focusing on micro-level analysis, that is, individual experiences and grievances; however, we see in our interviews that participants show shared beliefs and discourses and solidarity with not only villagers but also with environmentalists all around the country. Great interest of national media and political parties shows that Protests in Akbelen is not merely a local struggle but constitutes a movement with

greater implications, especially in Turkey where the largest mobilization against state authorities in recent history started as environmental protest such as Gezi Protests.

2.3. Environmental Movements

With the emergence of new social movements, social movements multiplied and diversified in their concerns, including the issues of racism, sexism, heterosexism, environmental issues, student movements, peace movements, and so on. Among the multiplicity of social movements, environmental movements have the most durable effects in terms of their impact on policies of the governments, professionalization of their activities, and compassing wide range of areas from local protests for environmental activism to impact on national and international or global level policy-making (Rootes, 1999). Green Parties are increasing their popularity in Western democracies, having more and more impact on policy-making, and gaining strength from environmental movements and global environmental crises. Forming of environmental ministries and increasing sensitivity among people shows the success and continuance of the impacts of environmental movements.

Castells (1997) even characterizes environmental movement as “the most comprehensive and influential movement of our time,” showing the special place of environmental movements among social movements (1997, p. 67). The centrality of environmental movements stems from the connections of environmental activism with other social movements and the global implications of environmental movements reaching beyond the local struggles and national policies. In this section, I will define the environmental movements and their local and global implications with examples of environmental movements in the world. Then, I will examine a few examples from Turkey. Finally, I will touch upon the issue of women’s involvement in environmental movements. Environmental movements are a broad category and difficult to define. Environmentalist organizations, NGOs, green parties, and local environmentalist groups can all be considered as parts of environmental movements. Objectives of environmental movements vary from local preservation of nature to global issues. Despite its complexity, environmental movements can be defined as “broad networks of people and organizations engaged in collective actions in the pursuit of environmental benefits” (Rootes, 1999, p. 2).

The institutionalization of social movements is extensively discussed in the literature, as I have referred to in the social movements section. Environmental movements are one of the most well-organized and institutionalized social movements. Neither environmental organizations nor singular environmental protests are sufficient to form environmental movements. Some scholars argue that the institutionalization of a movement is not compatible with the definition of social movement (Eyerman & Jamison, 1991). Some others view direct contentious political action as an integral part of social movements and environmental movements (Doherty et al., 2002). However, if we consider the fact that protests and demonstrations are as conventional as organizations in democratic countries, we can better position the environmental movement organizations within the environmental movements. Environmental movements can be understood as a network of interactions involving local struggles, protest actions, organizations that gather resources and negotiate with policy-makers, and political parties that use political power for the implementation of environmentalist policies and bring the environmentalist approach to political issues (Roots, 2004).

Some scholars make a distinction between “brown” environmental concerns, which are related to the pollution of the environment and emission of toxins, and “green” environmental concerns, which are related to the preservation of wild nature (Pakulski et al., 1998). This distinction is important because it helps us to understand the difference between personal complaints about environmental issues and environmental awareness. Almost everyone is worried about “brown” concerns, which results in personal complaints; however, “green” concerns are much more associated with environmental activism, turning those concerns into “global concerns” beyond personal affliction (Zeus & Reif, 1990). Even if local concerns engender protests and struggles, global environmental concerns differentiate environmentalism from NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard) movements that are merely interested in local grievances from environmental destruction (Michaud et al., 2008; Feldman & Turner, 2010).

Bosso (2000) argues that the fragmentation of environmental movements turns them into an “interest group community” along with other interest groups in the political

landscape. However, social movements, or in this case environmental movements, differ from other interest groups with respect to the sense of belonging and shared identity of their participants. However, we can question the concepts of shared identity and sense of belonging as the movement started to get global because it is difficult to imagine one shared identity for environmentalists from different regions or different parts of the world, even if they share common values. So, we might say that there are multiple environmental movements cooperating with each other and have the potential to be considered as a unified movement, if not thoroughly, but maybe virtually. Fragmentation might be interpreted as a division of labor and cooperation as well. Rootes (1999) showed that different environmental movement organizations in the UK do not consider each other as competitors but as contributors to common goals with different styles.

Also, even if there is a global environmental concern in environmentalism, no single movement or discourse can encompass the particular characteristic of each and every environmental resistance. So, we can say that there is a dynamic relationship between local environmental struggles and local, national, and global environmental organizations. Moreover, local environmental struggles might raise environmental awareness in people who participate in protests. As we will see in this study, women of İkizköy started their struggle in order to preserve the Akbelen Forest that provides their livelihood, moderates their climate, supplies water, or represents their memories and feeling of belonging to their homeland. They gained awareness of global environmental issues through contemplation on their struggle and constant interaction with each other and other environmentalists. So, there is a reciprocating relationship between local struggles and environmental movement. Environmental movements use either direct political action or tactics of negotiation with policy-makers on a more organizational level, trying to moderate the effects of environmental destruction. The repertoire of action is not only related to the attitude of different environmentalist approaches but also related to the specific issue of environmental movement, that is, specific areas of conflict. While some environmental concerns, such as pollution and toxins, can be dealt with in moderation, some of the struggles are a zero-sum game. In forest preservation or nuclear plants, either the forest will be preserved or not, or the nuclear plant will be

built or not, so these kind of struggles necessitates direct action and might result in more violent actions (Seel & Plows, 2000).

2.4. Environmental Movements in Turkey

Environmentalism in Turkey can be traced to the 1970s in parallel with environmentalist discourses in the world; however, environmentalist awareness of the relationship between environmental issues and political and economic issues started to be gained in the 1980s (Duru, 2002). Protest against the environmental damage of crop smelting facilities in Murgul and Samsun in 1974 and protest against gunpowder and cement factories in Elmadağ in 1977 can be considered precursors of environmental movements in Turkey. However, these protests can be regarded as local struggles without necessarily showing environmental awareness (Öztürk, 2017). Protests against the nuclear power plant in Akkuyu in 1979 were another protest that brought attention to environmental issues in Turkey. Also, protests against thermal power plants in Yatağan and Aliğa in the late 1970s and in Gökova in the early 1980s indicate the early examples of environmental actions in Turkey.

Reflections of environmentalist ideas showed themselves at both the state and social levels. The formation of the Environmental Research Committee in 1972 and the Ministry of Environment in 1983 shows the effects of environmental mobilization on the Turkish state. However, Şahin (2007) suggests that the adoption of sustainable development policies by political parties with conflicting ideologies makes environmentalism look like an apolitical movement. Although viewing environmentalism as apolitical might have contributed to the development of environmentalism in post-coup Turkey in the 1980s, it hindered the rise of political awareness of environmental issues, resulting in environmentalist organizations that are in relation with different industrial or political circles. These organizations reduced environmentalism to collecting plastic waste or forestation, thus ripping off environmentalism from politically subversive implications. They rather took the role of educating the public and raising awareness on environmental issues without necessarily linking environmental problems with industrial capitalism.

The establishment of the Green Party in 1988 can be regarded as an important yet unsuccessful attempt at the politicization of environmental movements in Turkey

(Duru, 2002). Failure of the Green Party to differentiate itself from all other political parties that allegedly support sustainable development prevents it from fulfilling its function and gaining popularity. Also, because Turkey is an economically developing country and still in the process of industrialization, environmental movements cannot gain widespread participation because some of the objectives of environmentalism contradict people's wishes. As Duru (2013) expresses:

The most important disadvantage of the green movement in Turkey is due to the discrepancy between its own *raison d'être* and the wishes of people. The wish to live in better conditions within the existing economic and social system is only possible by damaging the environment (p. 4).

Economic development and prevention of poverty can be actualized with environmental policies, but discourses of progress might be dominating the discourses of environmentalism in an economically underdeveloped country like Turkey. However, we witnessed an increase in environmental resistance in the 2010s. Kalonya (2021) identified 700 environmental protests between 2009 and 2019 through media analysis. These environmental movements include protests and mobilizations on the issues of environmental destruction, environmental pollution, mines, hydroelectric or nuclear or thermal power plants, stone quarries, and animal rights (Kalonya, 2021, p. 457). The study also shows the increase in environmental mobilization after 2013 with the major influence of Gezi Park Protests. Gezi Park Protests can also be considered a milestone for the politicization of environmentalism in Turkey, showing its potential for social and political restructuring.

2.4.1. Women in Environmental Movements in Turkey

Zelezny, Chua, and Aldrich (2000) investigated the difference between environmental attitudes and pro-environmental behaviors of men and women in 14 countries. They found that women have more positive attitudes towards the environment, also showing more pro-environment attitudes. Women's prominent role in environmental movements is observed in various environmental movements. Green Belt Movement in Kenya, the Chipko Movement in India (Shiva, 1993), the

Love Canal Campaign in the USA (Gibbs, 1998), and the Navdanya Movement in India (Shivhare & Agarwal, 2022) are examples of women's leading role in the preservation of the environment.

Women's prominent role in environmental movements can also be observed in environmental movements in Turkey. Kalonya (2021), analyzing the media coverage of 700 environmental movements in Turkey between 2009 and 2019, showed that women are visible or taking leading roles in more than 70 percent of those environmental movements. This exemplifies the women's important role in environmental activism in Turkey. Çoban (2004) examines the Bergama Movement in Turkey against gold mining in the region. He interprets the rationale behind the resistance in terms of community-environment symbiosis. He refers to the leading role of women in the Bergama Movement, interpreting it as women's stronger connection with nature and grieving more from the destruction of the environment in terms of means of livelihood (contamination food resources) and health (sickness due to poisoned soil, miscarriages, malnutrition of children).

Another example of women's environmental resistance in Turkey is Fındıklı Resistance against hydroelectric power plants in Rize, in Black Sea Region of Turkey. Yavuz and Şendeniz (2013) investigated the women's experiences in Fındıklı Resistance. They found that women of Fındıklı consider hydroelectric power plants as a threat to their survival and deprivation from water resources as being bereaved from their children. They defend values such as production from agriculture and children's joy in swimming in the creek against the commodification of their land.

Women's resistance to a thermal power plant in Çırpılar village in Çanakkale (Marmara Region of Turkey) expressing their concerns about the threat of power plant to their health and agriculture (Dermenci, 2015) and women's resistance in Çamlıhemşin in Rize against green road project that is planned in Black Sea Region (Görgü, 2015) are other examples of women's taking prominent roles in environmental movements in Turkey. When we look at the geographical distribution of the protests; they are places where the nature is protected and means of livelihood of people highly depends on natural resources.

CHAPTER 3

BEING A WOMAN ACTIVIST AND THEIR APPROACH TOWARDS NATURE

This chapter will delve into the protest dynamics within the Akbelen Forest in Milas, Muğla. It will explore how women engage with the protest environment from a gender perspective and their connection to nature. The first section will elucidate the motivations behind the protests. It will then detail the methods employed during the protests and assess the influence and stances of various groups and institutions involved. Following that, it will shed light on the challenges women encounter due to their participation in the protests and how they gather the resilience to address them. Lastly, the chapter will examine women's perceptions of nature.

3.1. Overview of Akbelen Forest

Akbelen Forest is located in the southwest of Turkey in the İkizköy Village of Milas / Muğla. Akbelen Forest has been preserved by locals since 2019 through administrative and legal means and direct activism since 2021. A coal mining company in the region tries to wipe out Akbelen Forest for open-cast lignite mining activities to feed the thermal power plants in the region (İkizköy Çevre Komitesi, 2023). Although environmental resistance is relatively new in the regions, the grievances of people date back to the 1980s. There are three thermal power plants in Muğla: one in Yatağan and two in Milas. Yatağan thermal power plant was activated in 1983, and thermal power plants in Milas, Yeniköy, and Kemerköy thermal power plants were activated in 1986 and 1993. These thermal power plants, which pollute the air and water, pose a threat to both the people living there and the biodiversity in the region. Coal mining activities have continued in the region since 1979 to feed the three thermal power plants (İkizköy Çevre Komitesi, 2023). Due to mining activities, 55 decares of land has been destroyed, the majority of which consists of forests and

fertile agricultural areas. More than 20 villages in Milas and Yatağan have been wiped out partially or completely (İkizköy Çevre Komitesi, 2023). People have been deprived of their homeland, their homes, and their means of livelihood. Villagers have been forced to migrate from their homes, being forced to work in salaried jobs for livelihood instead of relying on the revenue of their own agricultural products.

Olive cultivation is one of the main means of livelihood for the local citizens. Also, natural forest products such as different plants and mushrooms are both used and sold by the women in the market to contribute to the household economy. Mining activities and thermal power plants' fertility of the land affect crops negatively by polluting the air, soil, and water resources (İkizköy Çevre Komitesi, 2023). Although olive trees are protected by legislation in Turkey, and cutting off olive trees and building toxin-emitting facilities near olive cultivation areas is forbidden, mining activities and thermal power plants continue their activities with the extensive support of the government.

When we look at the women's stories about the beginning of resistance, we can say that their disillusionment with the devastating impact of thermal power plants and coal mines commenced with the total wipe-out of Işıkdere, neighboring district of İkizköy, in 2017. They relate the stories about how villagers of Işıkdere were deceived into selling their land with intimidation and threats to appropriate their land without any compensation.

Those who are forced to migrate from Işıkdere express their regrets and blame their ignorance about their rights and unawareness of the potentialities of activism. One of the interviewees, Havva, was forced to migrate from Işıkdere to İkizköy, and now she is forced again to leave her home. She expresses her regrets for her loss in Işıkdere and her persistence to defend Akbelen Forest:

We did not know my child; we were surrounded by forest (in Işıkdere) just like Akbelen Forest. This forest was destroyed. Then we went to the destroyed forest to collect firewood and piled it up in front of our house, loads of firewood as if the village would not be destroyed as well; I am still using them here. As I have said, we did not know if we knew the existence of environmentalists, we would not collect firewood, nor would we let our village and nature be destroyed. We did not know such a thing. Since we are

peasants and they reckon peasants as ignorant, they deceived us. What happened now? Peasant became the master of people, embark upon to protect their land. (Havva)¹

In 2019, women of İkizköy opposed cutting the trees and stopped the destruction of the forest. Then, they sought legal advice from environmentalist lawyers, applied to the Forestry Operation Directorate of Milas, and paused the destruction of Akbelen Forest. In 2021, the company entered the forest with the help of law-enforcement forces to destroy the Akbelen forest. This event marked the beginning of guarding the forest day and night. Villagers are organized around the guardianship of the forest, taking turns, helping each other, and trying to incorporate the resistance within their daily lives. However, with the raid of the gendarmerie on July 24, 2023, trees began to be cut down “as if separating a mother from her child” (Akdemir, 2023).

They organize regular meetings with villagers, listening to the ideas of the participants of the movement and collectively deciding what to do. They constantly interact with environmentalist groups, political parties, and members of the parliament who come to support the resistance, running campaigns on social media or through their personal relationships with neighboring villages. They are an open community that warmly welcomes anyone who supports or is interested in their shared goal of forest protection. They try to raise awareness about the irreversible damage that coal mines and thermal power plants have caused and will cause. They continue their protests, celebrating their second year of direct political action (protests and incessant guarding of forest), trying to make themselves heard. Even after two years of direct action and four years of resistance, the atmosphere in protests reflects the exuberance of participants to continue resistance without hesitation, as most of the interviewees stated, even if they were left alone in the resistance.

¹ Bilmiyorduk çocuğum, bizim üst tarafımız hep ormandı, aynı Akbelen Ormanı gibi orman vardı bizim tepemizde. O ormanlar yok oldu. O ormanlara gittik de kestikten sonra ince odunları, odun yığdık evin önüne, odun çektik evin önüne, sanki köy kalkmayacak gibi dünyanın odunu, hala daha yakıyorum buraya geldiğimde. Odun yaptık, böyle bilmiyorduk ki dedim ya çevreci diye adet olduğunu bilseydik ne odun yapar giderdik ne de o köyümüzü yok ettirirdik, ne o doğamızı yok ettirirdik orada. Bilmiyorduk ki öyle bir şeyi. Biz köylüyüz diye köylüleri cahil gördüklerinden kovdular geçtiler yani. Ama şimdi ne oldu, köylü milletin efendisi oldu, köylü yerine sahip çıkmaya çıktı... (Havva)

3.2. Protests in Akbelen

The struggle, which started in 2019 when the company sent a warning for the fields without informing the villagers, continues until now. The villagers, almost all of whom make their living from agriculture and animal husbandry, struggle not to leave both the agricultural lands that are their source of income and İkizköy, to which they belong. Moreover, they do not give up their struggle to preserve nature, access to clean air and clean water, and the ecological balance within the Akbelen Forest. During this four-year period, villagers use various action tools such as filing lawsuits and keeping watch in the forest. In this section, I will first explain how the struggle began, using data obtained from interviews and news. Then, based on my observations and interviews in Akbelen Forest, I will evaluate the watch that has been ongoing for two years, from 2021 to today.

The notice sent by the company to take the villagers' lands created pressure on the villagers. Hülya expresses the concern that the warning sent to her in 2019 aroused in her with the following words:

There are so many bad things written in the notice that came... You have to protest. You feel like all your rights are going to be taken away. They tried to confront with a fait accompli. You already think you are a victim. You think that all your rights are gone. That is why you immediately run to the protest area. We learned about the situation for the first time in 2019. (Hülya)²

Havva, who moved to another house near Akbelen Forest after her house in Işıkdere was demolished in 2017, was asked to evict her house again by the company in 2019. Havva, who stated that she would not leave her house, stated that she was very sad and angry when the warning came:

I felt crazy. I felt like I was dead. Boiling water poured down my head. How can a person handle it? They told me to build a house here. Now, they want to demolish it again. (Havva)³

² Gelen ihbarnamede öyle kötü şeyler yazıyor ki... Protesto etmek zorunda kalıyorsun. Bütün hakların elinden alınacakmış gibi hissediyorsun. Oldu bittiye getirilmeye çalışıldı. Zaten mağdur olduğuna düşünüyorsun. Tüm haklarım gidiyor diye düşünüyorsun. Hemen eylem alanına koşuyorsun bu yüzden. Biz ilke kez 2019'da öğrendik durumu. (Hülya)

³ Delirmiş gibi hissettim. Ölmüş gibi hissettim. Kafamdan aşağı kaynar sular döküldü. Bir insan bunu nasıl kaldırıbilir? Onlar bana buraya ev yap dediler. Şimdi tekrar yıkmak istiyorlar. (Havva)

The villagers, who are aware of how the company bought the lands in Işıkdere in 2017 before coming to Akbelen and are still angry, have created a solidarity network among the villagers to prevent them from giving their lands, unlike previous events:

We gathered as villagers. We said we would not give up our land. Nobody wanted to give it away. Then we said why don't we act together? We stood against them. We learned what our rights were when we asked lawyers or something. (Havva)⁴

Their experiences stand out as a learning process for them. Establishing this solidarity and carrying out various activities are closely related to this learning process. To put it in the words of Havva, struggling has made them no longer ignorant:

We know what to do now because we have experienced this before. We know the value of what we have. However, we did not know beforehand. We were ignorant. They did this thinking that 'the villager is ignorant. (Havva)⁵

The villagers, who collected signatures to protect their lands in 2019, state that they came to Ankara and conveyed these signatures to the members of parliament. They stated that during this process, they reached out to volunteer lawyers and negotiated by submitting petitions to various bureaucratic institutions. With the solidarity network established among the villagers, the İkizköy Environmental Committee and KARDOK Association were established. Associationization enabled the peasants' struggle to be strengthened legally. They filed various lawsuits as an association to prevent tree cutting (Diken, 2021). With the first tree felling in 2021, they started to keep watch in the forest every day. The villagers, from the youngest to 93-year-old Meryem, wait in the forest to protect it from any logging. Based on my observations, they decide who will wait in the forest during the day and at night by communicating among themselves. Some days, there are only a few people waiting, and some days they are crowded.

⁴ Köylüler olarak toplandık. Toprağımızı vermeyeceğiz dedik. Kimse vermek istemiyordu. O zaman niye birlikte hareket etmiyoruz dedik. Onların karşısında durduk. Haklarımız neler avukatlara falan sorduk öğrendik. (Havva)

⁵ Biz bunları önceden yaşadığımız için şimdi ne yapacağımızı biliyoruz. Elimizde olanın kıymetini biliyoruz. Ama önceden bilmiyorduk. Cahildik. 'Köylü cahildir' diye düşünerek yaptılar bunları. (Havva)

According to my observations, the vigil creates different encounters for the villagers. On one of those days I was there, two young women traveling around Turkey stopped by Akbelen Forest for a few hours and expressed that they wanted to greet the resistance. In addition, a retired lawyer visiting from Bodrum spent the day chatting with them. These conversations have a wide range of content, from everyday health conversations to being vegan, from the taste of watermelon to the climate crisis. For example, one evening, one of the village women told other women what alternative methods she now uses when washing dishes instead of using toxic detergents that will pollute the water. In other words, being in the forest also creates the opportunity to learn about the ecological way of life. Additionally, the watch area is nourished by artistic encounters. The first day I arrived there, I witnessed a man living in Milas placing various collage works he had prepared about the environment and women among the trees. Village women were examining these works by talking to each other. Therefore, the watch area has not only a political meaning for the villagers but also an experiential meaning that changes depending on the encounters.

The non-institutional character, which is a feature of the new social movements, is also a feature of the İkizköy environmental movement. Even though there is practically a spokesperson for the İkizköy Environmental Committee, the initiatives of individuals come to the fore in their decision-making processes and political mobilizations. Rather than an institutional structure, individuals have a wide range of actions other than practical requirements (Kitschelt, 1993). For example, Havva states that she will continue to struggle even if she is alone:

I will die here. My mother's and father's graves are visible opposite. I will be buried next to them. I will die here. I will never leave. Even if everyone leaves their house, I will not. (Havva)⁶

Two factors that affect the environmental movement in İkizköy stand out: the relationship established by environmentalists with the village people and the attitude of political parties towards the movement. Since understanding the struggle in Akbelen would be incomplete without evaluating these two elements, I will touch on them briefly.

⁶ Burada öleceğim. Annemin ve babamın mezarı karşıda görünüyor. Onların yanına defnedileceğim. Burada öleceğim. Asla terk etmeyeceğim. Herkes evini terk etse de ben etmeyeceğim. (Havva)

3.2.1. “Guarding Angels”: Encounter with the Environmentalists

The elements that transform a local struggle into an environmental movement are the interactions established between inside and outside (Rootes, 2004). This interaction can take place between local people and environmental organizations. When the villagers in İkizköy decided to resist, they contacted the Muğla Environment Platform and expanded the solidarity network they had established among the villagers. In this process, besides learning about their rights, they developed a new perspective on the increasing health problems in the region due to air pollution. For example, Hülya states that after meeting environmentalists, they realized that there is a connection between increase in the number of cancer patients and air pollution:

Some environmental engineers, public health experts, etc., came from the Muğla Environment Platform. There are many people dying of cancer around here. We learned late that this situation was caused by the coal operation here. We found out five years ago. We learned it when the protests started. They told us that you have the right to live in a clean environment. They said you have a duty to protect the forest. We did not know these. We thought that the state would protect the forest. They said you have the right to live in a clean environment. There is an olive law. We learned it. After learning, we complained, why did not we know about this law in 2017. Because if we had known in 2017, they would not have demolished Işıkdere. We would not allow it. (Hülya)⁷

The support of environmentalists is of vital importance for the villagers, both from the interviews reported and from their welcoming approach to the people who came to support them. Similarly, it is quite striking that Havva, who lost her house in Işıkdere, describes environmentalists as guardian angels:

If I had known that we had such environmentalists and such guardian angels... Look, you are an angel right now. If I had known about your existence, I would never have left my home, my child. (Havva)⁸

⁷ Muğla Çevre Platformu'ndan geldi bazı çevre mühendisleri, halk sağlığı uzmanları falan. Buralarda kanserden ölen çok insan var. Bu durum, buradaki kömür işletmesinden kaynaklandığını geç öğrendik. Beş sene önce öğrendik. Protestolar başladığında öğrendik. Bize, sizin temiz bir çevrede yaşama hakkınız var dediler. Ormanı koruma göreviniz var dediler. Biz bunları bilmiyorduk. Ormanı devlet korur zannediyorduk. Temiz bir çevrede yaşama hakkın var dediler. Zeytin yasası varmış. Onu öğrendik. Öğrendikten sonra 'biz bu yasayı neden 2017'de öğrenmedik' diye yakındık. Çünkü 2017'de biliyor olsaydık Işıkdere'yi yıkamazlardı. İzin vermezdik. (Hülya)

⁸ Ben böyle çevrecilerin, böyle koruyucu meleklerimizin olduğunu bilseydim... Bak, siz bir meleksiniz şu anda. Varlığınızı bilseydim kesinlikle ve kesinlikle evimi terk etmezdim çocuğum. (Havva)

Participants who learned about the Olive Law with the support of environmentalists, state that they draw their strength from this solidarity. For example, Elif stated that she was very stressed due to the pressure created by the company and was using psychological medication. Considering this situation, it can be seen that environmentalists are the ones who give Elif the most strength. In order to convey the strength of the bond they have established with environmentalists she compares this bond with the family bond:

My friends here give me strength. Before, there was no one here to advise us. There was no one to say anything. However, it is not like that anymore. There is an area where we spend time together. I would be very sad if this place disappeared. It feels good to resist together. I feel strong. I learn a lot of things from people. They became my family. Even more special people for me. (Elif)⁹

It can be said that environmentalists who are in contact with the local people in local struggles are of vital importance for the struggle in question. This importance is closely related to the power to create wider public opinion and diversify the means of struggle. At the same time, according to my observations, the support of environmentalists changes the level of awareness of local people about the environment. For example, it is eye-opening for those who come to Akbelen Forest from the Ecology Union to chat about veganism and environmental pollution.

3.2.2. Relations with Political Parties

Political parties from both right and left ideologies came to support Akbelen Forest. Considering the slippery relationship between the new social movements and political parties, it can be seen that although this support is effective in creating public opinion, they are not in the position of the main actor of the movement (Richardson & Rootes, 1994). In İkizköy, there is a commitment to environmentalists, as I explained, rather than loyalty to political parties. For example, Neslihan expressed her distrust of political parties by emphasizing the elections:

⁹ Buradaki arkadaşlarım güç veriyor. Önceden burada bize akıl veren yoktu. Bir şeyler anlatan yoktu. Ama artık öyle değil. Burada beraber vakit geçirdiğimiz bir alan var. Burası yok olursa çok üzülürüm. Birlikte direnmek çok iyi geliyor. Güçlü hissediyorum. Bir sürü şey öğreniyorum insanlardan. Onlar benim ailem oldular. Hatta daha özel insanlar benim için. (Elif)

Election time comes, and they pretend to support. However, it is not clear whether they really support it. There are people from many political parties here. However, I do not know if they are coming to support or for something else. (Neslihan)¹⁰

Regarding whether the support of political parties contributed to the Akbelen struggle, Serpil thinks that the incoming political parties did not contribute because they were not in power. Although he did not express it directly, this statement shows that she established a connection between the ruling party, AKP, and the environmental destruction in Akbelen Forest. In other words, it is stated that the person who holds the power has the power to prevent or continue the cutting of trees. The fact that the opposition stated that they “did not” win the election shows that the election is actually a hope for them. According to Serpil:

The opposition did not win the election. He made a lot of promises to us, too. However, since he could not win the election anyway, he cannot help. (Serpil)¹¹

On the other hand, Havva states that AKP and MHP did not come to support. Her tone of voice and facial expression while expressing these showed that she was not surprised that they did not come. She states that she finds the support of left-wing parties important:

Two of them did not come; all the rest did. From the Left Party to the Green Left Party, they all came to support. They also brought us a lot of things. They were very supportive. (Havva)¹²

Nazlı, who clearly emphasized the link between the AKP and environmental destruction in Turkey, talked about the rent relationship established with companies. Stating that the state is legally obliged to protect the forests, Nazlı states that the ruling party has committed a constitutional crime:

¹⁰ Seçim zamanı gelip destek veriyormuş gibi yapıyorlar. Ama gerçekten destek oluyorlar mı belli değil. Burada birçok siyasi partiden insan bulunuyor. Ama desteklemek için mi geliyorlar, başka bir şey için mi geliyorlar bilmiyorum. (Neslihan)

¹¹ Muhalefet seçimi kazanamadı. Bir sürü vaatte bulundu bize de. Ama zaten seçimi kazanamadığı için bir yardımı da olmuyor. (Serpil)

¹² İki gelmedi, geri kalanların hepsi geldi. Sol Parti'den Yeşil Sol Parti'ye kadar hepsi destek vermeye geldi. Bize bir sürü şey de getirdiler. Çok destek oldular. (Havva)

I did not think they would come here anyway because it is clear who the ruling party is. The company here is a company that has close relations with them. The company often used this relationship to threaten us. I guess you have to be an idiot not to understand this. They are committing crimes. According to the constitution, the government has to protect forests. They are violating the Constitution with their actions. They sell the forest for money. Moreover, they came to cut trees while the case was ongoing. Such injustices continue. They obstruct justice. The government does this, too. (Nazlı)¹³

In summary, the relationship that the İkizköy environmental movement has established with political parties has a meaning limited to support rather than a strong commitment. In other words, political parties could not be strongly integrated into the İkizköy environmental movement. In this sense, the İkizköy environmental movement has an autonomous area with its own local power and the solidarity networks it has established. Another important issue is that the İkizköy environmental movement may seem, at first glance, to be a local struggle confined to a narrow area. However, it is understood from the participants' statements that they have a perspective that goes beyond the local. In other words, it appears that their demands are not limited to local ones but are in direct conflict with the government. They separate those who have power and those who do not. Considering the structural level analysis of social movements, the conflict between the particular and the societal is remarkable (Rucht & Neidhardt, 2002). In this respect, it can be said that the İkizköy environmental movement has gone beyond the borders of İkizköy.

3.3. Women in Protests

As I mentioned in the section above (Chapter 3.2), on July 24, 2023, in Akbelen Forest, tree-cutting activities were started in the company of the gendarmerie to realize the activities planned as the expansion of the mining area. As experienced in previous initiatives, this initiative met with intense reactions from the region's people and environmentalists. The protesters who advocated the cessation of logging and, more generally, the cancellation of the planned project were tried to be removed

¹³ Onların buraya geleceğini zaten düşünmüyordum. Çünkü iktidar partisinin kim olduğu belli. Buradaki şirkette onlarla yakın ilişkileri olan bir şirket. Şirket bu ilişkiyi bizi tehdit etmek için sıklıkla kullandı. Bunu anlamamak için salak olmak gerek herhalde. Suç işliyorlar. Anayasaya göre hükümet, ormanları korumak zorunda. Yaptıklarıyla anayasayı ihlal ediyorlar. Ormanı para karşılığında satıyorlar. Dahası, dava devam ederken ağaç kesimi yapmaya geldiler. Bu tür hukuksuzluklar devam ediyor. Adaletin sağlanmasına engel oluyorlar. Bunu da iktidar yapıyor. (Nazlı)

from the area by the gendarmerie. A photograph taken during the conflict and resistance on July 24 and the following days was evaluated in the national and international press as the symbol of the process going on in Akbelen for two years. In this photograph, an older woman, called Zehra Nine by the locals, hugged a tree, hoping to show her demand and will (Gerçek Gazete, 2023). The photograph presents a lot of things worth thinking about and analyzing about the ongoing protests in Akbelen. The most striking point he shows is the role of women in the place of the watch and the conflict process. In this section, I will present how taking part in protests as a woman is evaluated for themselves and others.

3.3.1. Defending the Living Space

For women in Akbelen, one of the essential motivations for taking an active role in the protests is to defend their living spaces. For them, the forest is beyond being something that makes it possible for them to make a living; it is a place where they socialize and relate to nature. Therefore, they believe that it should be defended with everything. The results of the destruction in Işıkdere contributed to the strengthening of this belief. Hülya explained what happened there meant for them as follows:

As I said, my memories are here; my past is here. My ancestral heritage, my ancestral land. My husband has been using medication for the last four years; his psychology has deteriorated due to the destruction of the village there. We could not consider that the destruction would be this big. The previous state of that village comes before our eyes, and the current state comes to mind. What if this place is like there? That psychology destroys us. I think it is our loss in Işıkdere that makes us so stubborn and resistant. (Hülya)¹⁴

While it is possible to look for the origins of this 'stubbornness' in past experiences, what will be lost in the end of defeat to the protesters must be emphasized. As can be seen, advocating that the trees in the Akbelen Forest should not be cut down is considered as protecting a heritage. Defending this heritage was called “protecting the homeland” by some of the interviewees. According to Nurcan:

¹⁴ Ya hani dedim ya benim anılarım burada, geçmişim burada. Ata mirasım, ata toprağım. Eşim o dört senedir ilaç kullanıyor, psikolojisi bozuldu oradaki köyün yok edilmesinden dolayı... Biz yıkımın bu kadar büyük olacağını hesap edemedik ya. O köyün önceki hali gözümüzün önüne geliyor, bir de şimdiki hali geliyor. Burası da öyle olursa? O psikoloji bizi mahveder. Hani bizi bence bu kadar inatçı, direngen yapan o Işıkdere'deki kaybımız. (Hülya)

Protecting our homeland is always something to be proud of. The land where you were born, the land where you live, people should always take care of it. This is our ancestor's word. It is always good to take care of the land where you were born. We lived here, we were born here, we grew up here. Do not we claim this place? We always claim it. (Nurcan)¹⁵

This mission, which they set for it while describing their actions, brings with them the belief that they can do anything for him. Nurcan replied to the question about whether she was afraid of gendarme intervention:

People are not afraid to protect their homeland. If they kill, let them kill; if they beat, let them beat. A person is not afraid at all while protecting her homeland. We die, yet we do not leave our homeland. I feel no fear, never. (Nurcan)¹⁶

Similarly, Meryem underlined that she took part in the protests despite the physical difficulties caused by her age:

I am not in a position to go anywhere. They take me by car, and that is how I go. It was like that until my age, but I went for the forest. (Meryem)¹⁷

This belonging does not indicate a one-sided relationship. On the contrary, it is thought that the forest itself establishes a relationship with the region's people. Describing a day when the gendarmerie intervened, Elif said that she felt that nature was reacting to what happened:

Dogs were shouting in this area; the mountains were groaning at each other. (Elif)¹⁸

It is possible to draw two conclusions. For some protesters, the actions taken are seen as defending the homeland. Therefore, the relationship established with the

¹⁵ Vatanımızı korumak her zaman gururlu bir şeydir. Doğduğun büyüdüğün topraklar, yaşadığı toprağa insan her zaman için sahip çıkmalıdır. Atamızın sözü zaten bu. Doğduğun büyüdüğün toprağa sahip çıkmak her zaman iyidir. Biz burada yaşadık, burada doğduk, büyüdük. Yerimize sahip çıkmaz mıyız? Her zaman sahip çıkarız. (Nurcan)

¹⁶ İnsan vatanını korumaktan korkmaz. Öldürürse öldürsünler, döverlerse dövsünler. İnsan vatanı için hiç korkmaz. Ölürüz, yine de vatanımızı terk etmeyiz. Hiç öyle korku hissetmem, asla. (Nurcan)

¹⁷ Benim öyle bir yerden bir yere gidecek durumum yok. Beni arabayla götürüyorlar da öyle gidiyorum. Bu yaşa kadar da öyleydi. Ama orman için gittim. (Meryem)

¹⁸ Bu alanda köpekler bağıyor, dağlar birbirlerine iniyorlardı. (Elif)

'homeland' is not a bureaucratic relationship. On the contrary, the living space itself is seen as the homeland, and what makes it homeland is thought to be the time spent there, the things experienced, the memories. Secondly, this relationship with the forest reveals the will to enable the continuation of the protests. For them, the forest is also a living space. Giving up the living space is considered to be giving up on life itself.

3.3.2. Being a Woman in Protests

Two women, Füsün Kayra and Gülören Demir, were tried and sentenced for “resistance to a public official” due to their participation in the Akbelen protests. Füsün Kayra formulated the incident that led to her punishment as the right of civil disobedience in her defense and expressed it as follows:

As an ecology activist, I chained myself to a tree using my right to civil disobedience against this unlawful situation that has no legal basis. Even though such a disproportionate force was used, I did not respond. I just resisted their wanting to take me away by force. With myself chained to a tree and unable to make any counter-movement, I was harassed both physically and verbally by the gendarmes. I was dragged on the ground at a distance of about 100 meters by six female gendarmes after breaking the chain by force. I was forced out of the forest. In the meantime, I was exposed to verbal insults and humiliations. Despite all these beatings and heavy beatings, I did not push or drop any gendarme. I did not say anything offensive or threatening. As can be seen in the recorded gendarmerie videos and the videos we have submitted to your court, it will be seen that I have only used my constitutional right and declared out loud (Bodrum Gündem, 2022).

What is striking in these events is that although many people with different identities participate in the protests, the ones on trial are women. As a matter of fact, Nejla Işık, who lives in İkizköy, underlined this issue in a press statement made after one of the hearings of the case where two women were tried and stated that the target was women:

They think that women will be silent and leave Akbelen Forest. These women are on trial for protecting their forests. Those who should be tried here are those who turned the fire into an opportunity and killed 105 trees. We have protected every inch of land, air, and water in our village, and we continue to do so. You do it to silence women. However, women will never shut up (Evrensel, 2023).

As stated in the previous sections, one of the most important reasons for this is that women are at the forefront of the protest process. The treatment of women is not limited to litigation. Sometimes, women face harsh interventions during tense moments or conflicts between the gendarmerie and the protesters. Nurcan described what she experienced and felt in one of these moments as follows:

At that time, they battered the women a lot. They were dragged to the ground. We were at home when the meeting was held. I came from work. There was a lot of shouting that day. Our people were persecuted when the gendarmes came. I was distraught as if I had been there at that moment; I was in a position to go for the jugular of the gendarmes. I think it is a very bad feeling to be tortured in one's own country. (Nurcan)¹⁹

The most important reasons for this situation can be evaluated by considering the leading role of women. Nazlı also underlines this point and emphasizes that the reason for the gendarme's attitude towards them is to ensure that the resistance is ended:

The fact that women were more resistant were at the forefront of the struggle, and their feet were on the ground actually caused them to suffer more violence. In other words, because women have more voices and can say, 'You are doing it wrong; you cannot do this,' they were actually exposed to more violence. They used this violence more intensely against women. For example, our friend used her right to civil disobedience and chained herself to a tree but did no harm anywhere. She just chained herself to the tree and said, "It is illegal for you to take me out of here. I am not leaving here, and I am protecting this forest." She was beaten a lot. In fact, when we look at the women here, they are very courageous people who genuinely embrace the struggle, who are always at the forefront and put everything before anything else. Now, what to do to break a struggle? First of all, it is necessary to start with those people so that the resistance of that struggle can be broken more easily. That is why, at the forefront of this struggle, the pressure was concentrated on women since those courageous people were mostly women. That is why it was the same in the gendarmerie intervention here. (Nazlı)²⁰

¹⁹ O zaman biz o olayda yoktık ama kadınlarımızı falan çok darbe yapmışlar o zaman, sürüklemişler. Ama burada evdeydik biz toplantı olduğunda ben işten geldiydim, çok çığırntı bağırıntı oldu o gün. Jandarmalar geldiği zaman milletimiz çok eziyet gördü, çığırntı bağırıntı oldu. Hani çok sürüklemişler oradan çıkarmak için. (Nurcan)

²⁰ Kadınların daha direngen olması, mücadelede ön planda olması, ayaklarının yere basması aslında onların daha fazla şiddete uğramasına sebep oldu. Yani kadınların daha fazla sesi çıktığı için, "siz yanlış yapıyorsunuz, bunu yapamazsınız" diyebildiği için aslında daha fazla şiddete maruz kaldı. Bu şiddeti kadınlara dönük olarak daha yoğun kullandılar. Örneğin, bir arkadaşımız sivil itaatsizlik hakkını kullanarak kendini ağaca zincirledi, ama hiçbir yere hiçbir zarar vermedi. Sadece kendini

The main conclusion drawn from the quotes is that women and their role in the protests are the primary source of the reaction directed against them by the state. They are judged and subjected to violence. Thus, the state aims to get them to end the protests. Despite the violence against them and the threat of prosecution, none of the women interviewed said that they hesitated to continue the struggle. Of course, for some, fear is too intense a feeling to ignore. However, it should be noted that the will to continue defending the forest is more strongly emphasized. One of the sources that enables this will to prevail is their togetherness and the strength they receive from each other.

3.3.3. Source of Power and Responsibility

As mentioned in the previous section, the watch has many meanings for the protesters, such as meeting, socializing, discussing, producing, acting together, and continuing to protect the forest. Moreover, it is possible to argue that it is one of the most important venues that enables the protest process to be long-term. Serpil underlined the togetherness and encounters in this place:

We are very happy. We met everyone who came here. For example, they became brothers and sisters to us. Two people came here from the Kaz Mountains. (Serpil)²¹

Similarly, all interviewees said that fighting together gives them strength. Although there are things that are personally feared and worried, fighting shoulder to shoulder and trying to defend the forest makes it possible to push these feelings into the background, and thus, it is possible to continue the protests. This partnership has two aspects. The first is the satisfaction and feeling of power created by feeling able to act together and be self-sufficient. Hülya expressed this togetherness as follows:

ağaca zincirledi ve dedi ki “beni buradan çıkarmanız hukuksuz, ben buradan çıkmayacağım, ve ben bu ormanı koruyorum.” O çok fazla darp edildi. Aslında baktığımızda kadınlar burada mücadeleyi gerçekten çok yürekten sahiplenen, hep en önde olan, her şeyin önüne geçen çok cesaretli insanlar. Şimdi bir mücadeleyi kırmak için ne yapmak lazım? Önce o insanlardan başlamak lazım ki o mücadelenin direnci daha kolay kırılabilin. O yüzden de bu mücadelenin ön planında o cesaretli insanlar, daha çok kadınlardan oluştuğu için kadınların üzerinde yoğunlaştı baskı. O yüzden burada jandarma müdahalesinde de öyleydi. (Nazlı)

²¹ Çok mutluyuz. Buraya gelen herkesle tanıştık. Bize abi, abla oldular mesela. Ta Kaz Dağları’ndan iki kişi geldi buraya. (Serpil)

Oh, I think it is beautiful. I created a menu; for example, I created a menu, like a watch list. Everyone knew her day; for example, she would cook a meal and bring it to the field that day. We have had incredibly large meetings here for two years. And we never took outside food. We have always done it with our own strength, collaboratively. Here is what I was saying, for example, “What can you do?” She was like, “What should I do?”, “Can you do this?” I was saying. ‘I will,’ she was saying. The work that women put in here can never be overlooked. We kept watch. We made our meal. We went in front of the gendarmerie. We hugged the olive tree. We hugged the pine tree. (Hülya)²²

This sense of power brings with it an important responsibility. According to Nazlı:

I always say ‘woman,’ but really, women have a lot of weight on their shoulders in every sense. Maybe we can talk about that division of responsibility in the field of duty. In fact, women are the people who rush into everything, who take the most responsibility among the power of all this work, and who try so hard. Whether it is about cooking, cleaning, arranging shifts... What men do is to go and stand guard there at night. This is also an important thing, but the other responsibility... (Nazlı)²³

In summary, it can be argued that one of the most important factors that ensures that the will to continue the struggle remains strong despite all the difficulties experienced is that women do something together. This situation enables them to both feel powerful because they can do that job and get strength from each other. Therefore, togetherness is one of the most essential elements of women's struggle in Akbelen. However, the same issue brings with it a heavy responsibility. Issues such as cooking and cleaning that Nazlı and Hülya mentioned can be considered in the context of this responsibility.

²² Ya çok güzel bence. Bir yemek listesi oluşturdum mesela bir nöbet listesi gibi yemek listesi oluşturdum. Herkes gününü biliyordu mesela yemek yapacak o gün alana getirecek. Biz iki senedir burada inanılmaz büyük toplantılar yaptık. Ve hiç dışarıdan yemek almadık. Hep kendi gücümüzle, imece usulüyle yaptık. İşte şey diyordum mesela “sen ne yapabilirsin?”, o da “ne yapayım” diyordu. “Şunu yapabilir misin,” diyordum. “Yaparım” diyordu. Kadınların buraya verdiği emek asla şey göz ardı edilemez. Nöbet tuttuk. Yemeğimizi yaptık. Jandarmanın önüne çıktık. Zeytin ağacına sarıldık. Çam ağacına sarıldık. (Hülya)

²³ Hep ‘kadın’ diyorum ama gerçekten kadınların omuzlarında her anlamda çok fazla yük var. Belki nöbet alanındaki o sorumluluk paylaşımı ile ilgili konuşabiliriz. Kadınlar her şeye koşturan, bu kadar işin gücün arasında bir de en fazla orada sorumluluk alan, o kadar uğraşan insanlar aslında. Yemek yapma konusunda olsun, temizlik yapma konusunda olsun, nöbet ayarlama konusunda olsun. Erkeklerin yaptığı gece gidip orada nöbet tutmak. Bu da önemli bir şey, ama diğer sorumluluk... (Nazlı)

There is another aspect of this responsibility that needs to be emphasized. It should be noted that the watch area is not only a place where women take part. It is accessible to everyone. On the other hand, things that need to be done (such as cooking) are considered women's responsibility. This point reveals an aspect of the seizure field that is worth considering: sexism.

3.3.4. Sexism in the Place of Watch

The watch area is much more than a place designed to hold meetings or entertain visitors at certain times of the day. According to my observations and the information I obtained in the interviews, it is an area that is open to everyone's access at all hours of the day and, therefore, is constantly kept alive. Therefore, things that are needed in daily life (eating, washing dishes, washing clothes, etc.) emerge as needs that need to be met in the field of watch. The division of labor made to meet these needs makes it possible to understand the sexist side of the relations in the field. Nazlı expressed the sexist character of the division of labor in the field with these words:

This is something I am furious about. In other words, we do not only talk about women and men in the village but also for everyone who comes there: there is a lot of work that falls on women. Meeting the basic needs is seen as something that women should do. In other words, we are struggling with what we are fighting about gender roles at home today, both in the field and in the place we all call our shared living space. Now, I am struggling with this in my own home here as a woman. However, it is a shared living space; It is not mine, it is not yours, it is not anyone's place, it is not anyone's from this village, and it is not going to be anyone's. It is an area where the concept of ownership loses its validity. If it is the living space of all of us, someone's work must not be done by others for a partnership to be a genuine partnership. For example, when someone comes to the place, a man, for example, he drinks his tea and leaves his glass on the table. He eats his food and leaves the dishes on the counter. His tent gets wet; he can leave everything there and go. For example, something will be washed. For example, they have dirty things. Pillows and sheets need to be washed. He leaves them there. In other words, the things that are seen as the responsibility of women at home are still on women. Here is the issue of cleaning the area, for example. For example, I was cleaning containers the other day; both our big blue tent was cleaned, and the container was cleaned. General cleaning was done in preparation for the second-anniversary events. At that time, for example, there were always women. We deliberately invited men as well. I specifically said. "Mom," I said, "call the men, whoever is available," I said,

“there will be a common division of labor”. It was only women who came here. Most of the men said, “I have a job; I am not available.” (Nazlı)²⁴

It is possible to argue that women take on a heavy responsibility both at home and in the field of watch as the work to be done is seen as the natural duty of women and expected to be performed by them. According to Hülya:

Men came and kept watch one night at a time. However, at the most critical times, during the earthquake, there was no one left here; during the election time, there was no one left here. Women both look after the house and the animals and have an hour's free time during the day. I said to the women, come to the field, and let's have our meal in the field. I am asking men. They say, “I am out; I have work,” and pass it off. (Hülya)²⁵

It is hard to say that this unequal and sexist division of labor was ‘naturalized’ only by those who lived in the region and participated in the protests. As I mentioned, the watch area is frequently visited by people from outside (supporters from the surrounding villages, researchers, journalists, lawyers, etc.). It can be argued that they also behave in an attitude that approves of this division of labor. Therefore, the origins of this sexist approach are not related to the fact that the person is educated or from the city, etc. The patriarchy, which surpasses all these qualities and is naturalized in daily life practices, emerges as the reason for this situation. It is

²⁴ Bu benim çok öfkeli olduğum bir konu. Yani şöyle ki sadece köydeki kadın ve erkekler özelinde konuşmuyorum, oraya gelen herkes özelinde: kadınların yıkılan bir iş çokluğu var aslında. Temel ihtiyaçların giderilmesi kadınların yapması gereken şeyler gibi görülüyor. Yani biz bugün evlerde cinsiyet rolleri ile ilgili nelerle mücadele ediyorsak alanda da, hepimizin ortak yaşam alanı dediğimiz yerde de, aynı şeyle mücadele ediyoruz. Şimdi ben kendi evimde burada bununla ilgili bir kadın olarak mücadele ediyorum. Ama orası ortak bir yaşam alanı; orası benim değil, senin değil, oraya gelen herhangi birinin değil, bu köyden herhangi birinin değil ve kimsenin olmayacak. Orası mülkiyet kavramının geçerliliğini kaybettiği bir alan. Orası hepimizin yaşam alanıysa, birilerinin işlerinin diğerleri tarafından yerine getirilmemesi lazım ortaklığın gerçek bir ortaklık olabilmesi için. Mesela alana geliyor birisi, işte bir erkek, örneğin, çayını içiyor bardağını masada bırakıyor. Yemeğini yiyor, bulaşıkları tezgahta bırakıyor. Çadırı ıslanıyor her şeyi orada bırakıp gidebiliyor. Bir şeyler yıkanacak mesela. Kirlenmiş şeyleri var mesela. Yastığın, çarşafın yıkanması lazım. Onları orada bırakıyor. Yani evde de kadınların sorumluluğu olarak görülen şeyler yine kadınların üzerine kalıyor. İşte alanın temizliği konusu mesela. Mesela geçen gün konteyner temizliyordum; hem bizim büyük mavi çadırımız temizlendi hem de konteyner temizlendi. Genel temizlik yapıldı ikinci yıl dönümü etkinliklerinin hazırlığı için. O zaman mesela kadınlar vardı hep yani. Erkekleri de çağırdık bilerek. Ben özellikle söyledim. “Anne” dedim, “erkekleri de çağır kim müsaitse gelsin,” ortak iş bölümü yapılacak dedim. Buraya gelen bir tek kadınlardı. Erkeklerin çoğu işte “benim şu işim var bu işim var müsait değilim” dedi. (Nazlı)

²⁵ Erkekler birer gece gelip nöbet tuttular. Ama en kritik noktalarda, depremi zamanında hiç kimse kalmadı burada, seçim zamanında hiç kimse kalmadı burada. Kadınlar hem evin içine bakıyor hem hayvanlara bakıyor, gündüz bir saatlik boşluğu var. Ben kadınlara dedim, alana gelin alanda yapalım yemeğimizi. Erkeklerle soruyorum. “Ben dışarıdayım, işim var,” falan deyip geçiştiriyorlar. (Hülya)

possible to say that various ways have been sought to overcome this situation. According to Nazlı:

We have actually been trying to change this lately. For example, I try to at least make them understand the situation by talking to the visitors one-on-one and voicing our complaints about this issue. Other than that, we talk in public, for example. Also, I wondered if we should have watch rules, for example. We have been thinking about it for a long time, but you know, sometimes, just because something is a rule means it is violated. That is why we were indecisive and did not do anything. Now we tried to prepare it. We determined some rules. For example, we will probably hang this there as a painting. This includes dishes, cleaning your belongings, taking responsibility, and knowing your own responsibility. I think maybe things will change a little more. So, we are taking steps and trying to find solutions, but I wish we did not have to do this. (Nazlı)²⁶

It should be emphasized again that inequality in the division of labor is not just something naturalized by the people of the region. It was frequently underlined that the people who came to visit the watch area had a similar attitude:

First of all, those who come here should know the purpose of their arrival. Coming here means helping. In addition, even a small thing one will do for this place means making a contribution here. This includes making your own bed when you get up, washing your own dishes, preparing your own breakfast, and asking people, “What more can I do?” What I really want is to reduce the responsibility placed on women. (Nazlı)²⁷

One of the most critical periods when sexism can be observed on watch place is during meetings where the current situation is evaluated, or new decisions are taken to improve the fight. Nazlı expressed the functioning of the decision-making processes as follows:

²⁶ Son zamanlarda bunu değiştirmeye çalışıyoruz aslında. Gelenlerle birebir konuşarak, bu konuyla ilgili şikayetleri dile getirirerek en azından durumun onun tarafından anlaşılmasını sağlamaya çalışıyorum mesela. Onun haricinde ortalık yerde konuşuyoruz mesela. Ayrıca, mesela nöbet kurallarımız mı olsa diye düşündüm. Uzun zamandır düşünüyorduk ama hani bir şeyin kural olması ihlal edilmesi anlamına da geliyor ya bazen. O yüzden kararsız kalıp yapmadığımız bir şey oldu. Şimdi hazırlamaya çalıştık işte. Bir şeyler belirledik. Bunu mesela oraya tablo olarak asacağız muhtemelen. Bunun içinde işte bulaşık konusu var, eşyalarını temizleme işte orada sorumluluk alma, kendi sorumluluğunu bilme konusu var. Belki bir şeyler biraz daha değişir diye düşünüyorum. Yani adımlar atıyoruz çözümler üretmeye çalışıyoruz ama keşke yani bunu yapmak zorunda kalmasak. (Nazlı)

²⁷ Buraya gelenlerin geliş amacını bilmesi lazım her şeyden önce. Buraya gelmek demek destek olmak demek. Ayrıca burası için yapacağımız küçük bir şey bile buraya bir katkı sunmak demek. Buna kalktığına kendi yatağını toplamak da kendi bulaşığını yıkamak da kendi kahvaltını hazırlamak da insanlara ‘ben daha fazla ne yapabilirim’ diye sormak da dahil. Yani o yüzden benim istediğim aslında, kadınlara yüklenen sorumluluğun azaltılması. (Nazlı)

This is one of the issues that makes me very sad. So, when we look at it, women have a lot of roles and influence in terms of responsibility, in terms of doing things, in terms of execution and advancement. However, the situation changes during meeting times. Women are also present at the meetings, yes. Do they have a say? Yes. However, there is a situation where men use their right to speak more. It should not be like this. That field is actually an area where women find strength and support from each other. However, for example, the situation with men is like this: if someone does not agree with something, they probably talked among themselves before the meeting. In fact, there is an effort to establish dominance as a result of someone coming out and telling him about it and others supporting him. (Nazlı)²⁸

Hülya, with a similar approach, stated that she observed that women do not have the same right to speak with men at the meetings and stated that she complained about this situation by saying, “Men take the floor first in the main decision process.” This sexist approach, which can also be observed in meetings, goes hand in hand with the domination that is being tried to be established on young women because of their age. As a young woman, Nazlı especially complained about the approach of older men towards her:

Age hierarchy is something that is deeply felt and culturally transmitted in our society. And here, too, I feel the age and gender hierarchy. As a young woman, I can observe a state of caring and listening. For example, in the beginning, it was much more. Things have changed over time for many reasons. For example, when I think about the past, I can see that the situation is different. For example, when I spoke, they would listen in a different way. This is because I am both a woman and young person. I was saying something. I would feel like I was not listened to, that I was not cared for. This was evident from the way the older men began to speak, their demeanor, and wording. This attitude is not limited to the villagers. Many people came and went here. Many meetings were held, for example. For example, you see that men want to dominate. It is not just that they are old. (Nazlı)²⁹

²⁸ Bu, beni bu konuda çok üzen konulardan bir tanesi. Yani baktığımızda sorumluluk anlamında, bir şeyler yapma anlamında, yürütme, ilerletme anlamında kadınların rolü ve etkisi çok çok fazla. Ama toplantı zamanlarında durum değişiyor. Kadınlar da toplantılarda var, evet. Söz sahibi oluyorlar mı? Evet. Ama erkeklerin daha çok söz hakkını kullandığı bir durum var. Bu böyle olmamalı. O alan, kadınların birbirlerinden güç ve destek bulduğu bir alan aslında. Ama mesela erkeklerde durum şöyle oluyor: birisi bir şeye katılmıyorsa muhtemelen toplantı öncesi kendi aralarında konuşmuşlardır. Birisinin ortaya çıkıp onu anlatması, diğerlerinin de ona destek olması sonucunda bir hakimiyet kurma çabası var aslında. (Nazlı)

²⁹ Yaş hiyerarşisi zaten bizim toplumumuzda çok derinden hissedilen ve kültürel olarak da aktarılan bir şey. Ve burada da yaş ve cinsiyet hiyerarşisini her şeyiyle hissediyorum. Genç bir kadın olarak, önemseme ve anlatılanları dinleme halini gözlemleyebiliyorum. Mesela ilk zamanlarda çok daha fazlaydı. Zamanla birçok sebepte ötürü bazı şeyler değişti. Ama mesela geçmişi düşündüğümde durumun farklı olduğunu görebiliyorum. Ben söz aldığımında daha farklı şekilde dinlenirdi mesela.

On the other hand, she stated that women's attitudes towards her were very different from others:

I told the older women when I went, and they all listened to me with admiration. In other words, my age or being a woman was never a determining factor. There was someone talking to them, touching them. The bond I formed with them was effective. That state of communion led to this attention being given to me. (Nazlı)³⁰

In sum, it can be argued that sexism is an observable phenomenon in the field of watch as well. Therefore, it is not only detectable in the attitude of the state towards them. In addition, it should not be thought that sexism only emerges in the attitudes and behaviors of the villagers living in that region. As Nazlı puts it, “It is not about being a villager or a city dweller; masculinity is the determining factor in attitudes.”

3.4. Women’s Perception of Nature

As we have said before, resistance in Akbelen began and persisted with the intense involvement of women. In ecofeminist thinking, women are viewed as closer to nature, both as oppressed and objectified by patriarchy. According to Ortner (1972), women appear to have a closer relationship with nature due to their role in the social structure. The way women perceive Akbelen Forest is not separate from the social. In other words, this way of perception is not limited to reasons inherent to being a woman. While some women stated that they see Akbelen Forest the same as men, some stated that they see it differently due to emotions specific to women. What they have in common is the issues closely related to gender roles. Women in Akbelen explain their causes of resistance with different reasons such as their compassion for nature, connection with the living environment, cultural values based on forest and environment, and generational linkage, i.e., desire to sustain the environment for

Hem kadın hem de genç olmamdan kaynaklanıyor bu. Bir şey söylüyordum. Dinlenilmediğimi, umursanmadığımı hissedirdim. Daha yaşlı erkeklerin konuşma başladığındaki halinden, tavrından, üslubundan belli oluyordu bu. Bu tutum sadece köylülerle sınırlı değil. Buraya birçok kişi geldi gitti. Birçok toplantı yapıldı mesela. Erkeklerin çok daha fazla hakimiyet kurma isteğini görüyorsun mesela. Mesele sadece yaşlı olmaları da değil. (Nazlı)

³⁰ Yaşlı kadınlara gittiğimde anlattım ve hepsi beni hayranlıkla dinlediler. Yani yaşıma ya da kadın oluşuma hiç belirleyici olmadı. Karşılarında konuşan onlara dokunan birisi vardı. Benim onlarda orada kurduğum o bağ etkili oldu. O duygudaşlık hali bana karşı bu dikkatlerin verilmesini sağladı. (Nazlı)

their children. As can be seen in the interviews, the forest also represents economic freedom and the contribution of women to family livelihood from the domestic sphere, production, self-sufficiency, freedom of leisure, and autonomy. In this section, I will present reasons for women's prominent role in Akbelen protests in the context of women's perception of nature and representations of the forest.

3.4.1. Economic Reasons for Defending Akbelen Forest

9 out of 12 participants earn their living from agriculture and animal husbandry. 2 of the remaining 3 participants also indirectly meet their financial needs from agriculture and animal husbandry. One is Meryem, who has made a living from agriculture and stockbreeding all her life, and because she is 93 years old, she is now economically living on what her neighbors give her from her own field. Another participant, 23-year-old Nazlı, who has just started to do psychological counseling, is also concerned by the fact that agricultural lands will be destroyed economically due to her family's dealing with agriculture and animal husbandry. The other participant, Nurcan, works as a packer in a fishery. Therefore, it is seen that economic reasons also come to the fore in women's reasons for defending the forests. Making a living from farming, Elif conveys her livelihood concerns while talking about the importance of nature to her:

I have been engaged in farming since we came to Akbelen, that is, with my cows, goats, and sheep. When I pick a fresh fruit from my garden, I put it in front of my kids. I do not have insurance. I am unemployed. I cannot go anywhere else. I find peace with the earth. We do not want coal. Whether it is the olive trees I grew up with as a child or the fig trees inherited from our grandmothers and grandfathers, they will all perish. I mean, I do not want this place as a desert. (Elif)³¹

Worried that if she has to move from her house in the village, she will have difficulty in caring for her children because she cannot do any other job, Elif also sees the olive groves as a legacy from her family. Therefore, besides the livelihood concern, olive

³¹ Akbelen'e geldiğimizden beri çiftçilikle uğraşıyorum, yani ineklerimle, keçilerimle, koyunlarımla. Bahçemden taze bir meyve topladığımda çocuklarımın önüne koyuyorum. Sigortam yok. İşsizim. Başka yere gidecek imkanım yok. Toprakla huzur buluyorum. Kömürü istemiyoruz. Benim çocuk gibi büyüttüğüm zeytinler olsun, babaannemden, dedelerimizden kalan incir ağaçlarımız olsun, hepsi mahvolacak. Biz yani, burasını çöl olarak istemiyorum. (Elif)

groves, which are given intergenerational importance, also mean the responsibility to protect them.

The fact that what is being defended is a living space is not limited to being an environment that enables them to belong or socialize. Indeed, they need plants grown in the forest to survive. Therefore, not only agricultural areas but also the existence of the forest itself is of vital importance for their economic needs. According to Hülya:

Mushrooms and blueberries abound here. When you find plenty, you sell it in the market since you cannot eat it every day. Prices have also increased. Asparagus, for example. Now, it is something the rich can afford. Here, we make eggs with asparagus and eat them. We can easily fill our stomachs here. (Hülya)³²

Similarly, for Serpil, nature has a meaning both in terms of financial income and in meeting her basic needs, such as heating. However, she also complains that they cannot make enough use of the forest due to air pollution caused by coal:

For example, we have bees. We could get pollen from it. Now, we cannot do anything. There is only dry wood in the forest. There is nothing else. (Serpil)³³

Accordingly, although economic reasons, which is one of the ways women perceive nature, bring an anthropocentric understanding at first glance, the desire to survive and to live together with nature is interconnected. Therefore, defending nature has meanings for them, such as meeting the needs of their children, being able to stay warm, and eating healthy. At the same time, this perspective is important in that it shows that women's relationship with nature is built for social and economic reasons rather than their biological nature, although economic justification is not their only motivation.

³² Burada mantarı ve yaban mersini bol olur. Bol bulduğün zaman, kendin her gün yiyemeyeceğine göre pazarda satarsın. Fiyatlar da artık arttı. Kuşkonmaz mesela. Artık zenginlerin alabileceği bir şey oldu. Bir burada kuşkonmazlı yumurta yapar yeriz. Biz burada karnımızı çok rahat doyururuz. (Hülya)

³³ Arılarımız var mesela. Ondan polen alabiliyorduk. Şimdi hiçbir şey yapamıyoruz. Sadece kuru odun var ormanda. Başka hiçbir şey yok. (Serpil)

3.4.2. Nature as an Opportunity for Freedom

The fact that nature is an opportunity for freedom for women is related to both economic and social reasons. Women who spend their time outside the home with agriculture and animal husbandry also find the opportunity to socialize in this way. Therefore, leaving their homes in İkizköy and living in the city means being stuck between four walls for them. Nazlı expressed it as follows:

It is much more difficult for women. Why? The people who are engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry here are generally women. Men are always helpful. For example, my father goes to Bodrum; he is a car painter. After all, he comes home after work. For example, he takes cows from here and brings them here. Sometimes, when he has time, he helps my mother with small chores or something. However, in fact, the person who spends most of his day here and takes care of them is mostly my mother. My father also comes and tries to take care of it, but his job prevents this as a result. The same is true for other men. The employees at the power plant go to work; they come at a certain time. Animals, like children, need constant care. They are given, given water, and taken care of. Who is doing these? Mainly, women do. There are also women who make a living thanks to this forest. If these trees are cut down, that will not be possible either. If she lived in the city, she probably would not be able to work anywhere. Until now, she has made a living only from agriculture and animal husbandry. It is very difficult for a woman to enter a place and work, get used to it, and survive that way. However, she already has an economic power here. And with this power, she also makes her child study; at least she buys something she wants. She has the power to do whatever she wants here. (Nazlı)³⁴

Similarly, 77-year-old Füsün expresses that she cannot stand the city life with these words, “I cannot get used to it. I walk in the fields.”³⁵

³⁴ Kadın için çok daha zor. Neden? Burada asıl tarım ve hayvancılıkla uğraşan kişiler genelde kadınlardır. Erkekler hep yardımcı konumdadır. Mesela benim babam, Bodrum'a gidiyor, oto boyacısı. Sonuçta iş çıkışında eve geliyor. Şuradan inekleri alıp buraya getiriyor mesela. Bazen zamanı olduğunda anneme ufak tefek işlerde yardım eder falan. Ama aslında burada gününün çoğunu buna ayıran, bunlarla ilgilenen kişi daha çok annem mesela. Babam da gelir, ilgilenmeye çalışır falan ama işi buna engel oluyor sonuç olarak. Diğer erkekler için de durum böyle. Santralde çalışanlar işe gidiyorlar, belli bir saatte geliyorlar. Hayvanlar çocuk gibi, sürekli bakıma muhtaçlar. Onlar veriliyor, su veriliyor, ilgileniliyor. Bunları kim yapıyor? Asıl olarak kadınlar yapıyor. Ayrıca bu orman sayesinde geçimini sağlayan kadınlar var. Eğer bu ağaçlar kesilirse bu da mümkün olmayacak. Şehirde yaşasa hiçbir yerde çalışamayacak muhtemelen. Şimdiye kadar sadece tarım ve hayvancılıkla geçimini sağlamış. Bir yere girip çalışmak, buna alışmak, o şekilde hayatta kalmak bir kadın için çok zor. Ama burada halihazırda bir ekonomik gücü var. Ve bu güçle çocuğunu da okutuyor, evde kendi istediği bir şeyi de alıyor en azından. Kendi istediği şeyi kendi yapabilme gücüne sahip burada. (Nazlı)

³⁵ Ona alışamamam. Ben tarlalarda gezerim. (Füsün)

Living in harmony with nature has an important meaning for women's freedom compared to men. Serpil, who thinks that men can socialize more easily than women in city life, describes life outside the village as a prison. Therefore, nature means openness and sociability for Serpil. Serpil, who conveys the loneliness of those who left her village through the experience of women, states that nature creates an area that also strengthens the relationship between women. According to her:

There is no way you can get some air between these four walls. Men at least go to the market, to coffee, etc. However, women live in prison all day. (Serpil)³⁶

Dealing with agriculture and animal husbandry in the village rather than working in another job is also important for women to create free time for themselves. Hülya describes a lifestyle without free time as slavery:

Why do I have to work like a slave in a job? I get up here at half past six in the morning. I finish my work by nine o'clock. After that, I rest until three o'clock. Not so when you work outside. (Hülya)³⁷

As a result, nature seems to be an opportunity for freedom for women due to both economic and social reasons. Establishing a life outside the village means that they will be deprived of their economic freedom as well as their social environment. All of the women I interviewed stated that they earn income by selling food such as milk and mushrooms they collect from the forest. They emphasized that they could spend more easily with the money they earned. Therefore, the money earned because of their own labor gives them a certain degree of economic independence from their husbands. On the other hand, they fear that they will not be able to work if they must move from the village. This fear is the fear of both being socially isolated and becoming economically dependent on their husbands. One of the things that caught my attention is that they usually say “I” instead of “we” when expressing the expenses they spend on their children or their home. An expression of pride was

³⁶ Böyle dört duvarın arasında hava almanın imkânın yok. Erkekler hiç olmazsa çarşıya, kahveye falan gidiyor. Ama kadınlar tüm gün hapisanede yaşıyorlar. (Serpil)

³⁷ Ben niye bir işte köle gibi çalışmaya mecburum? Ben burada sabah beş buçuk altıda kalkarım. Saat dokuza kadar işlerimi bitiririm. Ondan sonra saat üçe kadar dinlenirim. Dışarıda çalıştığın zaman öyle değil ki. (Hülya)

evident in their voices as they stated that they had made such an expense. Therefore, nature is a space where women are not confined to the home and feel free. Accordingly, the fact that women are at the forefront of the struggle for the Akbelen Forest is also closely related to their struggle for their freedom.

3.4.3. Nature as a Value in Its Own

Although resistance in Akbelen seems to be considered as an attack on means of livelihood in the people of Akbelen, the relationship between women of İkizköy and Akbelen Forest goes beyond instrumental relationship. One of the interviewees, Hülya, expressed her intense concern for animals and wildlife in Akbelen forest and her strong emotional connection:

We somehow survive. However, where will the dozens of birds and dozens of creatures in the forest go? For example, when I sit, I see sheep and turtles, and I cry. So, we somehow go somewhere. We somehow live in the city. So where will these animals go? In other words, Akbelen Forest is a key point in wildlife. (Hülya)³⁸

Hülya expresses her compassion for nature. Her attachment to life in nature even transcends the concerns of her comfort. She compares her distress from the thermal power plant and the destruction of her living environment with the distress of animals in the forest, prioritizing the natural life beyond her interests. This comparison shows that Hülya feels her grievances are no different from the animals in the forest. This motivates her to participate in resistance beyond negotiations for self-interests.

Hülya also indicates that men's reasons for participation are different from women's participation, remarking the women's more emotional attachment to nature. Hülya explains her emotional connection with nature by referring to the proactive capacities of women, the influence of motherhood, and intensive engagement with earth, which make women more prone to identify with nature:

³⁸ Biz bir şekilde hayatımızı idame ettiririz. Ama ormanın içindeki onlarca kuş, onlarca canlı nereye gidecek? Oturduğum zaman koyun, kaplumbağa görüyordum ve ağlıyordum mesela. Yani biz bir şekilde bir yerlere gideriz. Bir şekilde şehirde de yaşarız. Peki bu hayvanlar nereye gidecek? Yani Akbelen Ormanı yaban hayatın içinde tam kilit nokta. (Hülya)

Women are more emotional. Maybe it has to do with being fertile. Maybe it is about getting involved with the soil and being productive. Women look at the issue differently. (Hülya)³⁹

Another interviewee, Zeynep, also emphasized the helplessness of nature against the exploitations of men. She speaks of trees in the forest as she is talking about helpless babies, representing them as needing her help and care. As she states:

They cannot say, “Do not kill me.” They are helpless beings. Can they say they are thirsty? (Zeynep)⁴⁰

She considers herself and her resistance to the forest’s preservation to be the voice of helpless nature. She expresses her concern not only in terms of the destruction of forests but also about the deprivation of forests from water. As I mentioned before, when the resistance began, the power plant company cut off the water of the village; she associates their need for water for life with the forests’ need for water. She builds a connection with nature on the grounds of survival. Both the forest and the people of İkizköy are experiencing the oppression of the power plant company, threatening their survival, which leads to her identification with the forest.

The collapse of the ecosystem is another concern for the women of İkizköy. As the forest fires increase in the region and power plants pollute the air and earth of the land, they observe the destitute of animals in nature. Serpil expresses her compassion for animals that are affected by the imbalance of the ecosystem by referring to the starvation of boars coming to the village, disturbing the people to find food:

There was a fire, and all of those animals died. There was a fire last year. A rabbit came running to the fountain. It looked for a place to stop and rest. In the past, there were beautiful insects and beautiful animals in the forest. For example, they say that pigs are in the city now. What will animals do? It is human, too. It will fill your stomach. (Serpil)⁴¹

³⁹ Kadınlar daha duygusal. Belki doğurgan olmakla alakalıdır bu. Belki de toprakla haşır neşir olup üretken olmakla ilgilidir. Kadınlar daha farklı bakıyor bu olaya. (Hülya)

⁴⁰ 'Beni öldürme' diyemiyorlar. Aciz varlıklar onlar. Susadık diyebiliyorlar mı? (Zeynep)

⁴¹ Yangın çıktı, hepsi öldü o hayvancıkların. Geçen sene bir yangın çıktı. Bir tane tavşan koşmuş gelmiş böyle çeşmenin oraya. Durup dinlenecek bir yer aramış. Eskiden ormanın içinde ne güzel

Serpil describes the discomfort of villagers from wild animals seeking food, but she does not put it in a way that animals are stepping into her living environment; on the contrary, she thinks people are depriving animals of their livelihood and tries to emphasize their hunger. Even she considers them human by saying, “It is also human.” However, that should not be interpreted as an anthropocentric point of view but as an expression of consideration of nature and the human world on common grounds, severing the human and nature duality.



böcekler, ne güzel hayvanlar vardı. Domuz şehre indi diyorlar mesela. Hayvan ne yapacak? O da insan. Karnını doyuracak. (Serpil)

CHAPTER 4

THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF PROTESTS IN EVERYDAY LIFE

In this chapter, the focus shifts towards evaluating the influence of these actions on the daily lives of women. Local characteristics, such as relationships within the household and neighborhood relationships, are areas that should not be overlooked to discuss empowerment (Akyüz et al., 2019). It begins by examining the shifts observed in domestic relationships. Following that, it analyzes the networks of solidarity that have developed among individuals residing in the same village as well as those in neighboring areas. Ultimately, the chapter engages in a discussion regarding whether these actions have empowered women.

4.1. Domestic Relations in İkizköy

In this section, I will scrutinize the change that the actions in Akbelen have created in the relationships and daily life practices of women living in the region and playing an active role in the protests. Examining this issue provides clues as to what is experienced in the watch area, encounters, conversations, and participation in the action itself, and what changes are in other areas of their lives.

First, the change in the domestic order of activist women will be discussed. Next, I will analyze how the active role of women in the protests was evaluated by both the nuclear and extended family and what the positive and negative responses considered for the activists.

4.1.1. Changes in Domestic Layout

The interviewees expressed the change in domestic order in two ways: being away from home and the learning process.

4.1.1.1. Being Away from Home

The protests in Akbelen are much more than just forms of protest where people gather at regular intervals, and demands and complaints are voiced through slogans or press releases. There is a promise made by the activists to themselves and each other about the designated watch area and not to leave that area. Therefore, this continuity of agency has significant consequences.

The first point to be emphasized is the consequences of the long time spent in the field of action. Since the activists know that leaving the forest means they cannot return there, they spend most of the day in the protest area. Therefore, the time they spend at home or the time they allocate for things to do at home decreases. Havva expressed the change in domestic order as follows:

We changed the order for the house as follows: I used to vacuum my house every other day, now I can clean it every fifteen to twenty days because we are in the forest day and night. We come home to eat. There are certain times when some work needs to be done. When the time comes when the cow needs to be milked or fed, I come and get things done. Then I go back. Sometimes I go earlier. For example, I say to my husband, “You take care of this; come in an hour or two.” Our priority is our nature, our forest. (Havva)⁴²

Hülya also stated that she had to make similar changes. Moreover, she underlined that these changes had negative consequences for her:

Domestic order has changed. I could never take care of the house. For example, four of my sheep died. We were on guard duty here. We were always interested in what was going on here. Some people come, we run here, for example. For example, I visited Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, and Antalya. We tried to go everywhere to protect this place. We went both to support places struggling like us and to receive awards. Most of the time, there is no one other than me to represent this place. For example, sometimes they say things like, ‘I need to take care of my animals; I cannot leave my child.’ In this case, I have to step in. That is why I could not do much of my housework. (Hülya)⁴³

⁴² Ev için düzeni şöyle değiştirdik: eskiden evimi gün aşırı süpürüyorken artık on beş-yirmi günde bir temizleyebiliyorum. Gece gündüz ormandayız çünkü. Yemek yemeye gelebiliyoruz eve. Bir de bazı işlerin yapılması gereken saatleri var. İneğin sağılması gereken ya da yemlenmesi gereken zaman geldiğinde gelip işlerimi hallediyorum. Sonra geri gidiyorum. Bazen ben önceden gidiyorum. Eşime “sen bunları hallet, bir iki saat sonra gel” diyorum mesela. Öncelik doğamızın, ormanımızın. (Havva)

⁴³ Ev-içi düzen değişti. Evle hiç ilgilenemedim ben. Dört tane koyunum öldü mesela. Burada nöbet tutuyorduk. Hep burada olup bitenlerle ilgilendik. Birileri geliyor, buraya koşturuyoruz mesela.

One of the critical adverse effects of these changes regarding the domestic order is related to the changing characteristics of the relationship between family members. Women in the field of action cannot spend enough time with their families. This situation causes various problems in the family to come to the fore. Although her family took part in the protests, Nazlı underlined that the new domestic order caused tensions in the family:

In the meantime, as a family, we were very worn out in this process. The things we do together have dwindled. We still cannot even sit at the table and eat together. One of us is in a meeting. One of us is out. One of us is on guard duty. One of us is in another place. One day I thought and said: “We are in the same house and maybe I have not seen you for days. We do not even talk much, except for the struggle stuff.” This causes family conflicts. (Nazlı)⁴⁴

One of these conflict situations was described by Hülya as follows:

My son is a high school student. This year is crucial for him. He is now in the twelfth grade. He prepares for university exams. Normally, I visit all my other daughter's teachers, for example. I am interested to see if there is anything missing. I did not even get a job just because of that. However, during this action process, I could neither attend the parent meetings nor could I call and ask. I cannot even communicate with my kids. For example, my son said, “Mom, please take care of me a little bit now.” He reproached a little. Every evening, I come to the action area. I cannot take care of him. (Hülya)⁴⁵

To sum up, it can be argued that the act of keeping watch at all hours of the day has essential consequences in women's daily lives. The first changes can be detected in

İstanbul’a, İzmir’e, Ankara’ya, Antalya’ya gittim mesela. Her yere gitmeye çalıştık burayı savunmak için. Bizim gibi mücadele eden yerlere destek amaçlı da gittik, ödül almak için de. Çoğu zaman burayı temsil edecek benim dışımda kimse olmuyor. ‘Hayvanlarımla ilgilenmem gerek, çocuğumu bırakamam’ gibi şeyler diyorlar mesela bazen. Bu durumda ben devreye girmek zorunda kalıyorum. Bu yüzden evle ilgili işlerimi pek yapamadım. (Hülya)

⁴⁴ Bu arada aile olarak da çok yıprandık bu süreçte. Birlikte yaptığımız şeyler azaldı. Hep beraber sofrada oturup yemek bile yiyemez hala geldik. Birimiz toplantıdayız, birimiz dışarı çıkmışız, birimiz nöbete gitmişiz, birimiz başka bir yerde. Bir gün düşündüm ve dedim ki: “Biz aynı evin içindeyiz ve ben belki de sizi günlerdir görmüyorum. Mücadele ile ilgili şeyler dışında pek konuşmuyoruz bile.” Bu durum da aile içi çatışmalara sebep oluyor. (Nazlı)

⁴⁵ Oğlum lise öğrencisi benim. Bu sene çok önemli. Artık on ikinci sınıfa geçti. Üniversite sınavlarına hazırlanacak. Normalde, diğer kızımın bütün öğretmenleriyle görüşürüm mesela. Bir eksiği var mı diye ilgilenirim. Hatta sırf bu yüzden bir işte çalışmadım bile. Ama bu eylem sürecinde ne veli toplantılarına katılabildim ne de arayıp sorabildim. Çocuklarımla sohbet bile edemedim. Oğlum, “anne artık biraz da benimle ilgilen” dedi mesela. Biraz sitem etti. Çünkü her akşam eylem alanına geliyorum. İlgilenemiyorum. (Hülya)

their relationship with their families and the domestic order. The time they spend at home has decreased. This situation necessitated the implementation of a new order.

4.1.1.2. Learning Process

The second significant change regarding the domestic order is that the action and the time spent in the action area have also been a learning process for women. Conversations with each other and with people they had just met in the field of action and their observations of each other's actions made it possible for them to review and change their own practices. Many of these changes are directly related to the very thing they protect. Trying to protect nature and the forest has enabled the actions in the house to be rearranged for the same purpose. Neslihan described this situation as follows:

We know the waters will run out. That is why I made some changes in my work in the kitchen. For example, I fill a bucket with the accumulated water while washing dishes, and I water the flowers. I water the trees. Instead of pouring the water accumulated in the bathroom into the sink, I use it after the toilet. I try not to use too much water. There are animals on my doorstep. I take food and feed them. I put water in front of the door for them. I have acquired such habits. The actions have been very beneficial. We have made so many friends. We started learning things we did not know. Let us say our horizons have expanded. Of course, we still have a lot to learn. The learning process continues as long as we live. We have to learn. We must learn to leave a legacy of good things to future generations. Maybe there is not much we can do for ourselves after that. However, we can do something for the young, for the animals. This is our aim now. (Neslihan)⁴⁶

These changes stated by Neslihan were also one of the topics discussed in the watch area. Women were sharing with each other how they washed dishes without polluting the environment. These changes can also be observed in family

⁴⁶ Suların tükeneceğini biliyoruz. Onun için mutfakta yaptığım işlerde bazı değişiklikler yaptım. Mesela, bulaşık yıkarken biriken suları bir kovaya doldurup çiçekleri suluyorum. Ağaçları suluyorum. Banyoda biriken suyu lavaboya dökmek yerine tuvaletten sonra kullanıyorum. Çok fazla su kullanmamaya çalışıyorum. Kapımın önünde hayvanlar var. Mama alıp onları besliyorum. Onlar için kapının önüne su koyuyorum. Böyle alışkanlıklar edindim. Bu eylemlerin çok faydası oldu. Çok fazla arkadaş edindik. Bilmediğimiz şeyleri öğrenmeye başladık. Ufkumuz genişledi diyeyim. Tabii, daha öğreneceğimiz çok şey var. Yaşadığımız sürece öğrenme süreci devam ediyor. Öğrenmek zorundayız. Gelecek nesillere iyi şeyler miras bırakmak için öğrenmek zorundayız. Bundan sonra kendimiz için yapabileceğimiz pek bir şey yok belki. Ama gençler için, hayvanlar için bir şeyler yapabiliriz. Amacımız bu oldu artık. (Neslihan)

relationships. The opportunity to feel empowered and socialize offered by the field of action has also transformed women's relationships within the family. Elif emphasized an aspect of her relationship with her husband that changed after the actions:

My husband told me the other day, "Make a meal." I said, "Do it yourself; I am going to my friends." I said, "I do not want our forest to disappear; what if something happened to my friends?" I left the house and came to the watch area. (Elif)⁴⁷

The protests aimed at preventing forest destruction caused significant changes in the lives of women living in Akbelen. These changes cannot be identified as wholly positive or negative. Although the transformation of daily life practices enabled them to learn and practice new things, it caused problems in family relations. In the next section, I will discuss how women's active participation in demonstrations is welcomed or criticized and responded to by both the nuclear and extended family.

4.1.2. Family Relations

The approach of other family members to women's participation in the action is critical in making them feel safer and more robust. The first result that can be determined as a result of the interviews is as follows: the nuclear family has always supported the woman who participated in the protest. On the other hand, extended family members take a more critical approach. Elif stated that this support was vital for her and said:

My husband has always been with me. "I trust you," he said. So do my children. They say, 'Mama, let us not let the trees inherited from our grandfathers be cut down.' They say, 'We will fight to the end.' 'We take care of other chores inside our house; we do the cleaning. You go to your friends, support them,' they say. (Elif)⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Eşim bana geçen gün "yemek yap, hanım" dedi. Ben de "kendin yap, ben arkadaşlarımın yanına gidiyorum" dedim. "Ormanımız yok olsun istemiyorum, ya arkadaşlarımın başına bir şey gelmişse?" dedim. Evden çıktım, nöbet yerine geldim. (Elif)

⁴⁸ Eşim hep yanımda oldu. 'Ben sana güveniyorum' dedi. Çocuklarım da aynı şekilde. 'Dedelerimizden kalma ağaçların kesilmesine izin vermeyelim anne' diyorlar. 'Sonuna kadar direneceğiz' diyorlar. 'Biz evimizin içinde diğer işleri hallederiz, temizlik yaparız. Sen arkadaşlarımızın yanına git, destek ol,' diyorlar. (Elif)

Nurcan emphasized that she will not stop resisting despite the possibility that her participation in the protests will result in the dismissal of her husband and that she continues to receive support from her husband and children:

My children are always supportive. They do not object in any way. My husband works at the thermal power plant. Several times, his manager called him. He said, “Your wife talks a lot.” He said it a couple of times. However, I still did not give up. If they fire my husband, let them quit. We will work the land and make our living. I mean, I will not give up just because they did it that way. My husband continued to be supportive after all that was said. (Nurcan)⁴⁹

It should be noted that some family members are concerned about the possible consequences of being at the forefront of actions. For example, some feel the need to warn their mothers who participated in the protest:

One of my sons reacted to my participation in the demonstrations. “Mom, I am not saying do not go, do not protect nature. However, you are always at the forefront. If you get hurt, I will kill myself.” he said. And I replied, “Son, you did not say these things; I did not hear them either.” I said, “I was born once, I will die once.” (Havva)⁵⁰

As can be seen, the source of this warning is not the belief that the actions are unjust. It arises from the concern that will arise from the harm caused by those who participate in the action. Support for their actions and will is felt, albeit implicitly. Despite this support from nuclear family members, some relatives of women activists do not find their participation in protests appropriate. For example, Nermin stated that some objected to her participation, but she convinced them. On the other hand, Hülya stated that she cut off communication with some of her relatives because of her participation in the protests, and this situation upset her:

⁴⁹ Çocuklarım her zaman için destek oluyorlar. Hiçbir şekilde itiraz etmezler. Benim eşim termik santralde çalışıyor. Birkaç sefer müdürü onu çağırmış. ‘Senin eşin çok konuşuyormuş’ demişler. Bir iki sefer söylemişler. Ama ben yine de vazgeçmedim. Eşimi işten çıkarırlarsa da çıkarsınlar. Toprağı işler, geçimimizi sağlarız. Onlar böyle öyle yaptı diye vazgeçmem yani. Kocam o söylenenlerden sonra da destek olmaya devam etti. (Nurcan)

⁵⁰ Oğullarımdan biri eylemlere katılmam konusunda tepki gösterdi. ‘Anne gitme, doğayı koruma demiyorum. Ama her zaman en önde yer alıyorsun. Sana zarar gelirse ben kendimi öldürürüm’ dedi. Ben de cevap olarak “oğlum sen bunları dememiş ol ben de duymamış olayım; ben bir kere doğdum, bir kere öleceğim” dedim. (Havva)

My children, my wife, and my parents have always supported me. Only my cousins objected to my participation in the protests. This is because some of their children work at the thermal power plant. They still oppose it. We are offended; we do not talk anymore. When we encounter somewhere, we do not even say “hello” to each other. This is something that saddens me deeply because they used to be people I saw as my brothers. They were the people with whom I shared my every sadness and pain. (Hülya)⁵¹

It should also be noted that the most important reason for this critical approach from relatives stems from the same reason as the warnings of nuclear family members: the possible consequences of participation in actions. Despite all these warnings, all interviewees stated that they were determined to continue their actions. Elif underlines that the source of this will is “feeling strong”:

I trusted myself. I felt strong. I got strength from my friends. Thus, I was able to continue on my way. (Elif)⁵²

It is critical to underline what Elif emphasized as ‘power’ and to emphasize its crucial role in the continuity of the actions. Women spending time in a commonplace, expressing their demands commonly, meeting new people, and learning new things made it possible to postpone the solution of problems in family relations or to ignore warnings. Moreover, the alternative life opportunities created by this place even made them review their family relationships:

I think about the values I used to believe in. I say, “I have lived in vain” This really upset me. For example, some of my relatives did not support me. My wife, my children, and my parents have been supportive. People who did not know me at all, who came from another place, supported me. However, some of my relatives did not support me. My ideas about family structure have changed. We say “Akbelen is a family”; it is real for me. I have a different view of the people who came to support us in our most difficult times when our morale was at our lowest. Now I have another family. (Hülya)⁵³

⁵¹ Çocukların, eşim, ebeveynlerim bana hep destek oldular. Sadece kuzenlerim eylemlere katılmama itiraz ettiler. Bunun sebebi, onların çocuklarının bir kısmının termik santralde çalışıyor olmaları. Hala karşı çıkıyorlar. Artık küstük, konuşmuyoruz. Bir yerde karşılaştığımızda, birbirimize “merhaba” bile demiyoruz yani. Bu da beni derinden üzen bir şey. Çünkü eskiden onlar benim kardeşim gibi gördüğüm insanlardı. Her üzüntümü, acımı paylaştığım insanlardı. (Hülya)

⁵² Kendime güvendim. Güçlü hissettim. Arkadaşımdan güç aldım. Böylece yoluma devam edebildim. (Elif)

⁵³ Eskiden inandığım değerleri düşünüyorum. “Boşuna yaşamışım” diyorum. Bu beni hakikaten çok üzdü. Bazı akrabalarım bana destek vermedi mesela. Eşim, çocuklarım, ebeveynlerim destek oldular.

It should be noted that the support of family members and even resistance together has an exceptional meaning for the activists. Family support strengthens the activist when they are disheartened due to difficulties of protests. For instance, Nazlı, who was at the forefront of the protests with her mother, expressed the meaning of the support and this unity for her as follows:

Sometimes, it is tough to convey some feelings, to put them into words. It is really impossible to describe some feelings. We are in an arduous struggle. Something that really takes courage and strength. We all have limited power. I have had times when I was hurt, overwhelmed, and pessimistic sometimes. There is another side to this field: You should not project your hopelessness and pessimism onto people. You have no right to make someone else feel that hopelessness and fatigue in this place. You have to be more resilient. However, you also feel resentful. You feel tired. You want to rest. In these moments, my mother has always been my biggest supporter. One of the people who understand me best in life. In fact, the person who understands me best is my mother. My mother has been very different since I was a child. Her well-being is more important to me than anything else. It was devastating for me to see her worn out, tired, and broken in this process. We experienced everything together with my mother. I tried not to let her handle bad things alone. I tried to hold her hand. She did the same for me. It is nice to know that if I fall, there is someone to pick me up. This is something very comforting. This bond between me and my mother is unique. The fact that we try to overcome everything together in this struggle is what makes me strong. Without this, perhaps it would not have been possible to continue. She has always been very supportive. What we have been doing together with my mother so far is to draw strength from each other. (Nazlı)⁵⁴

Beni hiç tanımayan, başka bir yerden gelen insanlar destek oldular. Ama bazı akrabalarım destek olmadı. Aile yapısına ilişkin fikirlerim değişti. “Akbelen bir aile” diyoruz ya, benim için gerçekten öyle. En zor zamanımızda, moralimizin en bozuk olduğu zamanlarda gelip bize destek olan insanlara bakışım artık çok farklı. Artık başka bir ailem oldu. (Hülya)

⁵⁴ Bazen bazı hisleri aktarmak, kelimelere dökmek çok zor. Bazı hisleri tarif etmek mümkün olmuyor gerçekten. Çok zor bir mücadele içindeyiz. Gerçekten cesaret ve güç isteyen bir şey. Hepimizin de gücü sınırlı. Bazen yaralandığım, bunaldığım, karamsar hissettiğim zamanlar yaşadım burada. Bu alanın şöyle bir yanı var bir de: yaşadığın umutsuzluğu, karamsarlığı insanlara yansıtmaman gerekiyor. Başkasına o umutsuzluğu, yorgunluğu hissettirmeye hakkın yok burada. Daha dirençli durmak zorundasın. Ama bir yandan da kırgın hissediyorsun. Yorgun hissediyorsun. Dinlenmek istiyorsun. Bu anlarda, annem, hep en büyük destekçim oldu. Hayatta beni en iyi anlayan insanlardan biri. Hatta belki de beni en iyi anlayan insan annemdir. Benim için çocukluğumdan beri çok farklıdır annem. Onun iyi olması benim için her şeyden daha önemli. Bu süreçte, onun yıprandığını, yorulduğunu, kırıldığını görmek benim için çok yıkıcıydı. Biz her şeyi birlikte yaşadık annemle. Onun kötü şeylerin tek başına üstesinden gelmesine izin vermemeye çalıştım. Onun elini tutmaya çalıştım. O da benim için aynısını yaptı. Şunu bilmek çok güzel bir şey: düşersem, kaldıracak birisi var. Bu insanı çok rahatlatan bir şey. Annemle aramdaki bu bağ benzersiz benim için. Bu mücadelede de her şeyin üstesinden birlikte gelmeye çalışmamız beni hala güçlü kılan şey. Bu olmasa, devam etmek mümkün olmayacaktı belki de. O hep çok destekleyici oldu. Şu ana kadar annemle beraber yaptığımız şey, birbirimizden güç almak oldu. (Nazlı)

4.2. Solidarity in Village

In this section, I will examine the relations in the village, focusing on solidarity between participants of resistance, relations between İkizköy and neighboring villages, oppositions and disbelief among the villagers who remain outside of resistance, and the company's tactics to use relations in the village in its advantage.

Although all the interviewees in this study and maybe all the participants of the protests from İkizköy participated in protests for the first time, they were never afraid of authorities or legal enforcement or violence of the gendarme. When they are asked about the source of this strength, solidarity is an almost unanime response. Women in İkizköy gain their strength from each other, from the ties of solidarity created by the sense of common goal and cooperation and collective determination to pursue that common goal. They knew that when there was a problem, they could always call for help from one of the villagers. Nazlı explains the persistent strength of the protests despite numerous challenges from the company and government by referring to the solidarity among the participants of the protests.

I believe that people take strength from each other. It happens in the struggles; there are figures who function in leadership positions if not a leader per se, those who gather people around and organize them, those who can administer, who are more involved with the work, who take responsibility... usually heads are turned to them when something happened, good or bad. How does she reach? How much did she collapse? So, where will we turn our heads and look at those lawsuits specifically against women? We will look at the women. The strength of those women is their bold and audacious attitudes, which influence other people automatically. In a sense, there is, in fact, an invisible connection in this regard. Women impress other people in this respect. Women influence other women, people, villagers, and other life-preservers with their courage, hope, solidarity, and assurance. For example, their tough stance and resistance; when they are asked if they are afraid, their assurance to reply with 'no we are not afraid, what can they do?' (Nazlı)⁵⁵

⁵⁵ Ya ben insanları birbirinden çok güç aldığına inanıyorum. Bir de mücadelelerde olan bir şey bu; bazı, lider demeyeceğim aslında da baktığımızda lider görevi gören insanlar oluyor ya, hani o toparlayıcılığı olan, insanları organize edebilen, işte bir şeyleri yönetebilen falan insanlar oluyor ya hani biraz daha baktığında çok fazla şeyle daha fazla uğraşan, daha fazla sorumluluk alan kişiler... Genelde kafalar onlara çevriliyor baktığımızda; herhangi bir şey olduğunda, iyi ya da kötü, nasıl bir tepki veriyor, ne kadar yıkıldı falan. O yüzden burada mesela bu daha çok bu kadınlar özelinde örneğin kadınlara açılan bu davada kime bakacağız biz kafamızı çevirip kadınlara bakacağız. O kadınların öyle güçlü durabilmesi, onların öyle yürekli ve cesaretli olabilmesi, ne yapıyor, diğer

Additionally, solidarity between women is even stronger in protests. While men prioritize their work or might make excuses when they are needed, women prioritize the protection of forests and solidarity among themselves. Hülya states the difference between the strength of solidarity among women and men:

Solidarity is good, I mean. Well, when we call someone, for example, I was observing an activity in the forest. I called a man, Azra, for example, and he said I cannot come; I am working. I call the other one, and he says I am in the forest, and another one is on the farm, but when I call a woman and say you should come immediately, she comes, leaving whatever she is doing. (Hülya)⁵⁶

Hülya shows that women build stronger connections with the protection of the forest, which results in increasing participation and solidarity among women. While protesters have strong relationships in terms of solidarity and cooperation, there are villagers who are indifferent to protests, view them as a lost cause, or consider them marginal from the outside. Nazlı stresses the importance of personal connections and networks in overcoming prejudices.

For example, recently, we started to visit villages. Why? In order to communicate with people one-on-one. We explain the struggle to each individual. (Nazlı)⁵⁷

The company also spreads misinformation about resistance, designating them as radicals or lies about winning the ongoing lawsuits, thus trying to keep people away from resistance, describing it as hopeless and useless, and the state can take people's lands even without any compensation. Nurcan describes the people who sell their lands due to the spread of misinformation and hopelessness by the company:

insanları de etkiliyor otomatik olarak. Yani bu birbiriyle görünmez bir bağı var gerçekten bu konuda. Ve bu aşılana bir şey aslında, kadınlardan diğer insanlara aşılana bir şey. Diğer bur kadınlar bu cesareti, bu umudu, bu dayanışma halini, bu inancı aslında diğer insanlara diğer köylülere, diğer yaşam savunucularına aşıyorlar. Mesela onların bu şekilde dik durması, buraya gelip konuştuklarında, korkuyor musunuz yanınızdayız dediklerinde, hayır korkmuyoruz ya ne yapabilirler ki falan diye bu şekilde konuşabilmeleri, bunu göğüsleyebilmeleri... (Nazlı)

⁵⁶ Dayanışma güzel yani. Hani birisini aradığımız zaman, ben mesela iki sene önce işte ormanda hareket görüyordum. Erkekleri arıyorum işte Azraları mesela diyor ki, ben çalışıyorum işteyim, gelemem. Diğeriniz çalışıyor mu, diğerini arıyorum o da aynı, öteki ormandayım diyor. Bir diğeri tarladayım diyor ama ben kadınları aradığım zaman hemen koşup gelmen lazım dediğimde hemen işini bırakıp geliyor. (Hülya)

⁵⁷ Mesela ben son zamanlarda köy gezmelerine çıktık. Neden, insanlarla birebir iletişim kurmak için. Mücadeleyi tek tek anlatıyoruz. (Nazlı)

I do not know really (why they are selling their lands); they think that it will be taken eventually, if not today, then tomorrow. The opinion that their lands might be taken with lesser prices if the state appropriates their lands if they do not sell it for a good price now affects them is spread, and they believe it. (Nurcan)⁵⁸

Nazlı thinks that misinformation that is spread by the company can only be overcome by individual connections. Destruction of Akbelen Forest will affect not only İkizköy but whole villages in the region, so raising awareness for their participation is also important.

As I have said, I visited people door to door and tried to explain why we are resisting for Akbelen Forest. We tried to be careful with the language that we used. It is not like meeting; we went to connect with people one-to-one, asking them, “How are you doing?”, “Are you fine?”, “Do you need anything?” (Nazlı)⁵⁹

They then ask about what they heard about the resistance, trying to learn about the spread of misinformation. Relations in movements do not solely depend on common goals but also on personal connections and networks, acquaintances, friends, and relatives. This door-to-door activism was effective in Akbelen, and the celebration of the resistance’s second year happened with the broad participation of neighboring villages. Also, this approach was particularly useful in this context because the company not only spread misinformation but also used tactics of deterrence by using the preexisting social fractures in the region. So, strengthening personal relationships can be considered a tactical improvement against opponents, i.e., the coal mine company and thermal power plants.

The coal mine company puts pressure on people by using the villagers working in the coal mine company or thermal power plant and the village headman who also works in the thermal power plant. Because of that pressure, some villagers support the goals

⁵⁸ Valla ne bileyim bilmiyorum ki işte nasıl olsa alacak düşüncesinde onlar. Bugün olmazsa yarın alacak düşüncesindeler. Hani bugün şeye gitmezse fiyatı şeyse yarın düşürürler, kanun devlet el koyarsa daha ucuza giderler diye kanı oluşturulunca, işte akıllarına böyle sokuyorlar onlar da inanıyorlar. (Nurcan)

⁵⁹ Ben dediğim gibi tek tek kapı kapı dolaşıp insanlara şunu aktarmaya çalıştım şimdiye kadar; dedim ki hani Akbelen... biz neden orada mücadele ediyoruz? Burada şey de değil hani kullandığım dile de dikkat etmeye... kullandığımız dile de dikkat ettik aslında. Böyle toplantı yaparmış gibi değil. Gittik, birebir bağ kurmak aslında; nasılsın, iyi misin, bir ihtiyacın var mı diye sormak. (Nazlı)

of the protests; however, they cannot participate because of the pressure on their relatives who work in the coal mine company or thermal power plant. Hülya views the passive support of those villagers as positive because even if they do not participate in the protests, they at least support their goal by not selling their land.

Those who work in the company and power plant cannot come here, but when we talk to them, they express their concerns about the pressure of the company by saying ‘we cannot come here because pictures are taken, and the company puts pressure on us, and that is why we cannot be visible around there, but you should know that we are with you and we will not sell our land.’ They support by not selling their land at least by saying we cannot live somewhere else. (Hülya)⁶⁰

Some people do not support the protests, but they are beneficiaries of the protests in the sense of the company’s dramatic increase in land prices. Although they do not support the protests in terms of their real goals, they appreciate the protests’ contribution to their interests. Hülya expresses both her delight from hearing that contributions to the protests are appreciated and her disappointment because those people eventually sold their land with the increased prices.

I hear that they appreciate; for example, I heard that they said to the harvesters from Denizli, ‘There is Hülya in here who takes the lead and guides people. If we could sell our land for 250, it would be in the favor of people in protest and Hülya. We did not suffer economic loss or victimized. They said those with a thanking tone. It is nice for me to hear those, but it is also upsetting. I wish they would not have sold their land and contributed to our struggle even if they did not participate in the protests. (Hülya)⁶¹

In conclusion, relations in the village are transformed by the environmental protests.

While strong solidarity is established among participants, especially among women,

⁶⁰ İşte o şirkette santralde çalışanlar evet buraya gelemiyor ama gidip konuştuğumuzda biz nöbet alanına gelemiyoruz çünkü hemen fotoğraf çekilip atılıyor ve şirket bize baskı yapıyor, o yüzden orada gözükmeyoruz ama bilin ki biz sizinleyiz, yanınızdayız, işte toprağımızı satmayacağız. Yani biz buradan bir yerde başka bir yerde duramayız, yaşayamayız deyip en azından toprağını satmayarak destek veriyor. (Hülya)

⁶¹ Daha böyle çok takdir ettiklerini duyuyorum mesela şey demişler geçen Akbelen’deki köylüler, biçerciler var Denizli’den gelen, yani burada Hülya var, liderlik yaptı, önderlik yaptı. Biz topraklarımızda hani 250’ye sattıysak, hani onların oradakilerin ve Hülya’nın sayesinde. Hani şey olmadık yani zarara uğramadık, mağdur olmadık diye. Hani bunları söylemişler, sağ olsun falan diye. Bunları duymak benim için güzel ama bir yandan da üzücü yani. Hani keşke satmasalar da hani hep beraber şey yapsaydık yani mücadelede, hani buraya gelmeselerdi ama keşke de yerlerini satmasalardı yani. (Hülya)

disruptive tactics of the company to spread misinformation and divide people, scratching the preexisting fractures in the village, perpetuated the struggle not only in the direct political action but also in the sphere of social relationships. Innovative tactics of one-to-one communication with villagers and other people around the region are implemented in order to improve the social relationship in the region and increase support, considering the lack of communication.

4.3. Women's Empowerment

Women's empowerment can be defined as the process in which women discover their power to make attentive and favorable decisions in their life journey and subsequently benefit from this newfound potential to bring about positive changes (Moghadam, 1996; Kabeer, 1999; Goldman & Little, 2015). This issue should be considered "an attempt to understand how, why women are oppressed" (Datta & Gailey, 2012, p. 570). This awareness of women and the potential they discover in themselves brings about change in their lives. In this section, the protest process in Akbelen will be discussed in light of women's empowerment.

This issue has two related aspects. The first is that women's relationships with nature and their understanding of it have transformed. Women who oppose the destruction of their living spaces have rediscovered that living space and had the opportunity to get to know it better. Neslihan expressed this transformation as follows:

A lot has changed. Our perspective on everything has changed. We learned how to struggle to better benefit from the opportunities the forest provides us. We had the opportunity to explain this to people. Everywhere we go to visit, we think, 'How can we save the mountains and the forest'. We think about how we can save the environment. We are thinking about how we can plant more trees and keep the air cleaner. We put water in some places so that the animals do not get dehydrated in the heat and can continue to live. We start to care less about ourselves now. We started to fight for the environment and for animals. We are now worried about how we can fully revitalize ecological life. (Neslihan)⁶²

⁶² Çok şey değişti. Her şeye bakış açımız değişti. Ormanın bize sağladığı imkanlardan daha iyi yararlanabilmek için nasıl mücadele etmemiz gerektiğini öğrendik. Bunu insanlara anlatma imkanımız oldu. Ziyarete gittiğimiz her yerde 'dağları, ormanı nasıl kurtarabiliriz' diye düşünüyoruz. Çevreyi nasıl kurtarabiliriz diye düşünüyoruz. Bir daha ağaç dikip havayı nasıl daha temiz tutarız diye düşünüyoruz. Hayvanlar sıcakta susuz kalmasınlar, yaşamaya devam edebilsinler diye bazı yerlere su

The most important reason why this change has been evaluated under the title of empowerment is the self-confident attitude of women when explaining this change during the interview. Doing something that is better, more correct, and more beneficial for them makes them feel self-confident and conscious. Another issue is that what they experience and learn from the action process transforms their daily life practices. While expressing the transformation that the protests created in her life, Havva underlined that her relationship with her husband has changed:

I used to sweep the house, wash the dishes, and serve my wife. Now, things have changed. I tell my wife, “Life is collective; I will not do everything; you will too.” (Havva)⁶³

This point that Havva underlines is quite critical when considered together with ecofeminism's arguments regarding the similarities of domination over women and nature. The objection to the destruction of the forest brought about the objection to the unequal character of family relations.

Also, an anecdote that Nazlı told about other women provides critical data about the change in the lives of all activist women and their empowerment:

We have a friend who comes here from time to time. He has a caravan. He came recently and said, “Should we all go and swim in the sea together? You are not going anywhere; you are here every day,” he said. The women said, “Why not?” However, they were a little hesitant about whether to go or not. They are not people who swim very often. Also, they are not used to those environments. Moreover, there will be a lot of other men where they are going. That is why, at first, they said, “Let’s go, but we will not swim.” Then, they went. They all started to swim in the sea, one by one. Then they did not want to leave. Beforehand, they would have prevented themselves from this pleasure. After all, just imagine they are going to the sea with a man they do not know. Moreover, there are a lot of foreign people there too. However, they all found strength in each other and overcame this. Many things like this have changed. Old habits have changed. Things have changed in other matters as well. While they used to have a more reserved and fragile nature,

koyuyoruz. Artık kendimizi daha az umursamaya başladık. Çevre için, hayvanlar için mücadele etmeye başladık. Ekolojik yaşamı tamamen nasıl canlandırabiliriz derdine düştük artık biz. (Neslihan)

⁶³ Eskiden evi süpürürdüm, bulaşık yıkardım, eşime hizmet ederdim. Şimdi işler değişti. Eşime “hayat müşterek, her işi ben yapmayacağım, sen de yapacaksın” diyorum. (Havva)

now they act more resilient and self-confident. For example, one of the women was going to give a speech in the early days of the protests. I organized the speech. However, she could not speak. She was very scared, even upset. Again, the same woman had the opportunity to speak at events held for the second anniversary. She explained what happened in such a simple language and so beautifully... Someone who could not express himself in the beginning and was shy even when asked her name can now express the things she defends very well. I witnessed this process. This is something that fascinates me. (Nazlı)⁶⁴

According to Nazlı, the transformation in men is much more limited than in women. She argues that the protests “gave women a perspective and transformed them.” It made them feel stronger. As a matter of fact, all of the women interviewed underlined that what they learned during the protest process would continue to affect their lives after the protests ended. Hülya answered questions about this subject by questioning her past:

I was not alive before 2018. I did not know anything. For example, I did not know what the Gezi events were. I did not know anything. However, participating in the demonstrations and telling people about our struggles taught me a lot. In the beginning, we were saying to the people who came here to support us, “Help us; make our voices heard by other people.” Do you know what we are saying now? “You are not alone, we are not alone, we will succeed together.” We both learned to hope and helped people hope. (Hülya)⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Zaman zaman buraya gelen bir arkadaşımız var. Onun karavanı var. Geçtiğimiz günlerde geldi, dedi ki, “hep beraber gidip denize mi girsek, hiçbir yere gitmiyorsunuz, her gün buradasınız” dedi. Kadınlar, “neden olmasın” dediler. Ama biraz da çekindiler gidip gitmemek konusunda. Çok sık denize giren insanlar değiller. Ayrıca, o ortamlara alışık da değildir. Dahası, gidecekleri yerde bir sürü başka erkek de olacak. O yüzden ilk başta “gidelim ama biz denize girmeyiz” demişler. Sonra gittiler. Hepsı tek tek, sırayla denize girmeye başlamış. Sonra da denizden çıkmak istememişler. Önceden olsa kendilerini bu zevkten alıkoyacaklardı. Sonuçta düşünsene, tanımadıkları bir adamla beraber denize gidiyorlar. Üstelik orada da bir sürü yabancı insan var falan. Ama hepsi birbirinden güç bulup bunu aşmışlar. Bunun gibi birçok şey değişti. Eski alışkanlıklar değişti. Başka konularda da bazı şeyler dönüştü. Eskiden çok daha çekimser, kırılgan bir yapıları varken artık daha dirençli, özgüvenli davranıyorlar. Mesela kadınlardan biri, protestoların ilk zamanlarında bir konuşma yapacaktı. Konuşmayı ben organize ettim. Ama konuşamadı. Çok çekindi, üzüldü hatta. Yine aynı kadın, ikinci yıl dönümü için yapılan etkinliklerde konuşma yapma fırsatı buldu. Olup bitenleri o kadar yalın bir dille, o kadar güzel anlattı ki... Başlarda kendini ifade edemeyen, ismi sorulduğunda bile çekinip söylemeyen birisi, artık savunduğu şeyleri çok güzel bir şekilde ifade edebiliyor. Ben bu sürece tanık oldum. Bu beni büyüleyen bir şey. (Nazlı)

⁶⁵ 2018 yılında önce ben yaşamıyordum. Hiçbir şeyden haberim yoktu. Gezi olaylarının ne olduğunu bilmiyordum mesela. Hiçbir şey haberim yoktu. Ama eylemlere katılmak, mücadelemizi insanlara anlatmak birçok şey öğretti bana. Başlarda, buraya desteğe gelen insanlara “bize yardım edin, sesimizi diğer insanlara duyurun” diyorduk. Şimdi ne diyoruz biliyor musun? “Yalnız değilsiniz, yalnız değiliz, birlikte başaracağız.” Hem umut etmeyi öğrendik hem de insanların umut etmesini sağladık. (Hülya)

Drawing on the fact that the practice of doing action has become very important for her, Havva said in somewhat humorous language:

If we win this struggle, I will dance because my village is not destroyed. I will do this out of joy. I will make friends. I will call you. I say, “Come, let’s have tea and coffee.” I will protest because they could not take my land from me. (Havva)⁶⁶

There is a special meaning when Havva emphasizes “making friends” while expressing her approach. It is the company of women that allows them to learn and apply new practices and do what they believe is better for themselves. This togetherness and spending time together in the forest enabled women to learn from each other. Also, it should be noted that the fact that the watch area is accessible to everyone also contributed to the empowerment process. Meeting new people, chatting with them, and learning from them enabled them to acquire new habits, feel stronger, and gain deep insights into the source of the problems:

My friends here give me strength. Before, there was no one here to advise us. There was no one to say anything. However, it is not like that anymore. There is an area where we spend time together. I would be very sad if this place disappeared. It feels good to resist together. I feel strong. I learn a lot of things from people. (Elif)⁶⁷

⁶⁶ Biz bu mücadeleyi kazanırsak köyüm yıkılmadığı için dans edeceğim. Sevincimden yaparım bunu. Arkadaş edinirim. Seni çağırırım. “Gel, çay kahve içelim” derim. Toprağımı elimden alamadılar diye eylem yapacağım. (Havva)

⁶⁷ Buradaki arkadaşlarım güç veriyor. Önceden burada bize akıl veren yoktu. Bir şeyler anlatan yoktu. Ama artık öyle değil. Burada beraber vakit geçirdiğimiz bir alan var. Burası yok olursa çok üzülürüm. Birlikte direnmek çok iyi geliyor. Güçlü hissediyorum. Bir sürü şey öğreniyorum insanlardan. (Elif)

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the experiences of women defending the Akbelen Forest in Milas / Muğla. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted and women's experiences in protests, women's perception of nature, effects of protests on women's daily life and transformation of their relationship with nature and each other through environmental protests were analyzed.

Women's prominent role in defending Akbelen Forest is another example of women's extensive involvement in environmental issues and leading role in nature preservation. Ecofeminism provides us with an explanatory framework to understand women's special role in forest preservation and their relationship with nature. Women's perception of nature does affect their participation and strong initiative in preservation of the Akbelen Forest; however, process of preservation of the forest, that is, the resistance and naissance of the environmental movement also transformed women's perception of nature and their relationship with patriarchal power hierarchies embedded in their community. Thus, the process of the environmental movement in Akbelen Forest increased İikizköy women's awareness about environmental issues and also empowered them enabling them to challenge the patriarchal power hierarchies through their participation and prominent role in the preservation of the Akbelen Forest and their changing daily life activities during the process.

The objective of the study can be considered in two directions which are reasons behind protests and the effects of the protests on their personal lives. Firstly, understanding the reasons and motivations behind women's taking part in the environmental movement and persisting in their demands for the preservation of forest despite many adverse conditions is important because it enables us to

understand the relationship between women and forest and also informs us about the organization of the social movement. Secondly, understanding the effects of taking part in the environmental movement on women's relationship with nature and daily life practices shows us the transformative power of environmental activism. This helps us understand if environmental movement (collective action, collective identity, common goal, encounters with environmentalists) have transformed the women in terms of their experiences, perception of nature, and daily lives beyond winning or losing the case of Akbelen Forest preservation.

For the reasons behind environmental movement, this study showed that women have various motivations for the preservation of movement. They defend their living space and land that their memories are attached, and their wish to preserve their culture that is attached to the land and agriculture. Another reason is to preserve means of livelihood for women. Forest provides women with various the means of livelihood including edible plants, collecting firewood, apiculture, and so on. Also, the preservation of the forest is essential for agriculture which mostly constitutes women's contribution to the household economy while men work in salaried jobs in other places. That shows women are more affected by environmental destruction (Warren, 1997).

Another reason that is related to the preservation of agriculture and means of livelihood is women's wish to protect their autonomy and leisure. Women who work in agriculture can have their leisure time outside of domestic and agricultural activities and being forced to salaried jobs hinders their autonomy and restricts their leisure time. Moreover, women's motivations for the preservation of the forest transcend the instrumental benefits of the forest. They also view the forest and its inhabitants as their children. They feel compassion for the animals and trees in the forest. This showed that women's deeper connection with nature corresponding with ecofeminist perspectives. Women do not reduce forest to economic interest appreciating the diversity in the forest and also better utilize this diversity in harmony with nature (Agarwal, 2009)

This study revealed that ecofeminism is not an adequate theoretical framework to analyze the experiences of women in the Akbelen Forest. Although ecofeminist

theory is significant to discuss women's relationships with nature, the interviews conducted for this study demonstrated that analyzing the changes in women's everyday life necessitated the introduction of the concept of empowerment. In this respect, the perspective of empowerment is required to analyze their capabilities in intra-household relations and local environment. For the effects of taking part in the environmental movement on women, participation in protests changed their daily lives and family relations of women. Since they spend their time in protest and outside of their house, they prioritize the preservation of the forest instead of domestic responsibilities which makes them reconsider the household division of responsibilities. They state that their husbands can also do chores such as cleaning, instead of gender roles assigned to them from outside. Furthermore, they appear to take responsibility for their own decisions in family conflicts. Participation in protests also contributed to the politicization of women of İkizköy. They expressed their interest in other environmental movements even if they won their case about the preservation of Akbelen Forest. This shows the transformative power of participation in the environmental movement. Protests also changed the relations in the village. While the solidarity ties among participants are strengthened, their relationships with other villagers who do not support the resistance is weakened. Also, encounters with environmentalists turned their closed community of village to be opened to outside world enriching their world view creating new networks and friendships. Based on these, it seems that the transformative aspect of the protests empowered women in İkizköy.

Defending the forest and collective act created informal communication networks within the village women and with environmentalists that enabled women to consider and learn the ecological way of life. Protests for the preservation of Akbelen Forest and interactions and encounters in the process of resistance had an educative value for the women of İkizköy village. Resistance in Akbelen created a learning space for women about various subjects including their legal rights, Olive Law, environmental activism, the destruction caused by pollution such as health risks and global warming, and so on. This learning process opened their horizon and turned them into environmentalists who do not use detergent in order not to pollute soil and water from villagers who just do not want to leave their homeland and their forest to be preserved.

Protests in Akbelen still continue and the last intervention of the gendarme happened in 24th July 2023. Women in Akbelen does not define themselves as environmentalist or feminist or ecofeminists. Although their resistance looks like a local struggle for the preservation of their living space and means of livelihood, our study suggests that women gained environmental awareness through their resistance and constant interaction with environmentalists. Women think beyond their local interest and the economic damage caused by the coal mining company thus their relationship with the forest is not solely on instrumental grounds. Even if the forest provides a means of livelihood for them, they also express their compassion for the animals and trees in the forest viewing them as their helpless child.

Key findings from the quantitative study can be summarized with few points. Firstly, women have a prominent role in organization of resistance for the preservation of the Akbelen Forest in İkizköy. Their motivations are to preserve their living space, their agriculture and means of livelihood; however, their motivation for resistance goes beyond economic interest. They view the forest as living organism and have compassion for the living animals and plants in it. Village women's approach to Akbelen Forest is in congruence with ecofeminist thinking, thus ecofeminism, linking the domination of patriarchy over nature and women, can provide a useful framework for the analysis of the resistance in Akbelen. Secondly, resistance in İkizköy has started as a local struggle but transformed into environmental movement as the village women have organized around common goal of preservation of the forest, created collective identity, identified their adversaries and encountered with them, also encountered with environmentalists, learned about their rights and environmental resistances around the world. Thirdly, ecofeminism, providing a useful framework for the analysis of the movement stressing the links between women's differing perception of nature and their prominent role in the environmental movement; however, there is a reciprocal relationship between women's perception of nature and participation in environmental movement. They initiated the resistance with the intentions of preserving their forest and protecting their life and culture that intertwine with the forest; however, resistance process also transformed their approach towards nature, increasing their awareness in environmental issues in general. Lastly, environmental protests in Akbelen, which includes resistance against

mine company and thermal power plant cooperating with state authorities, not only transformed their perception of nature, but also participation in the movement and their environmental awareness spread to their daily lives, changing the dynamics of power relations in intra-household issues enhanced their role in decision-making processes. Participating in environmental movement enabled women to challenge the patriarchal power hierarchies within their community thus empowered them.

This study has many limitations. This study's participants are local women who take part in resistance to the preservation of Akbelen Forest. Future studies might include the experiences of environmentalist women that comes to the area and participate in the movement. Also, although women are at the forefront of the resistance lots of local men support and participate in the resistance as well. I asked women to compare their perspectives with men's but the comparative perspective that includes both men and women might be useful to understand the difference and similarities between women's and men's perceptions of nature and the reasons for the preservation of the forest. Also, since there is no designated leader of the movement, organizational processes, decision-making mechanisms, and relationship with organizational structures can be studied more thoroughly focusing on the democratization of society through environmental and social movements.

The relationship between political parties and Akbelen resistance is examined only in terms of women's reactions to support of political parties. The role of political parties can also be examined more thoroughly in future studies. Although women have a rudimentary understanding of why some political parties visit and support them while others do not support then by referring to the relationship between those political parties and coal mine company, they still consider their mobilization principally apolitical thus reflecting the depoliticized conception of environmental movements in Turkey even after the Gezi Protests. Conditions that enable the durability of the movement can also be studied considering the rise of autocratic regime in Turkey that suppresses the social mobilizations. Also, Akbelen case can be studied with a legal perspective. Juridical processes in environmental movements are controversial in autocratic regime of Turkey. Considering the fact that the court allowed the mining company's operations in Akbelen on the grounds of public

interest, juridical process can be studied discussing the concept of public interest. Hence, studying the environmental movement in Akbelen with legal and sociological perspective can be useful. Finally, various regions of Turkey reflect different cultural characteristics. Therefore, to what extent the space and the sociological features it creates differentiate the experience of women in environmental movements is another dimension that needs to be discussed. In this respect, the environmental movement in the Akbelen Forest can be examined comparatively with other environmental movements.



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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER

DÜMLUPINAR BULVARI 06800
ÇANKAYA ANKARA/TURKEY
T: +90 312 210 22 91
F: +90 312 210 79 59
ueam@metu.edu.tr
www.ueam.metu.edu.tr



ORTA DOĞU TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

16 AĞUSTOS 2023

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Aşlı Çırakman Deveci

Danışmanlığımı yürüttüğünüz Fatma Ceren Ülkü'nün "*Çevre Mücadelesinin Kadın Deneyimleri Üzerinden Analizi: İkizköy Örneği*" başlıklı araştırmanız İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek 0356-ODTÜİAEK-2023 protokol numarası ile onaylanmıştır.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN
Başkan

Prof. Dr. İ. Semih AKÇOMAK
Üye

Doç. Dr. Ali Emre Turgut
Üye

Doç. Dr. Şerife SEVİNÇ
Üye

Doç. Dr. Murat Perit ÇAKIR
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Süreyya ÖZCAN KABASAKAL
Üye

Dr. Öğretim Üyesi Müge GÜNDÜZ
Üye

B. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS / MÜLAKAT SORULARI

Bölüm 1 - Kişisel Sorular

1. Kendinizden bahseder misiniz?
 - i. İkizköy’de mi doğdunuz? (Doğmamışsa) Ne kadar zamandır burada yaşıyorsunuz?
 - ii. Kaç yaşındasınız?
 - iii. Evli misiniz?
 - iv. Çocuğunuz var mı?
 - v. Eğitim durumunuz hakkında bilgi verebilir misiniz? (İlkokul / Lise / Üniversite / Hiçbiri)

Bölüm 2 - Geçim

2. Maden şirketi buraya gelmeden önce nasıl geçiniyordunuz?
3. Aile içindeki iş bölümü nasıldı?
 - i. (Evliyse) Eşiniz çalışıyor mu?
 - ii. (Varsa) Çocuklarla kim ilgileniyor?
4. Şu anda nasıl geçiniyorsunuz?
 - i. Zeytin ağaçlarının kesilmesi ekonomik olarak sizi etkiledi mi?
 - ii. (Etkilediyse) Nasıl etkiledi?
5. Köyde kömür havzası kurulunca ağaçları, toprağı bırakıp orada çalışmayı hiç düşündünüz mü?

Bölüm 3 - Protesto Süreci

6. Akbelen Ormanı’ndaki ağaçların kesilip kömür havzası kurulacağını ilk nasıl öğrendiniz? Geldiklerinde mi öğrendiniz yoksa öncesinde bilgilendirilmiş miydiniz?
 - i. (Bilgilendirilmişse) Kim haber verdi? Şirket mi, yerel yönetim birimleri mi, sivil toplum kuruluşları mı? Nasıl oldu? Size ne dediler?
 - ii. (Bilgilendirilmemişse) Nasıl öğrendiniz?
7. Şirketin başlangıçtaki tutumu nasıldı burada yaşayanlara?

- i. Köyü boşaltmanızı istediler mi?
 - i. (İstemişlerse) Ne hissettiniz bunu duyunca?
 - ii. Köyden gidenler oldu mu? (Olmuşsa) Siz neden burayı bırakmadınız?
8. Şirketin köye gelmesinden hemen sonra mı başladı eylemler? İki yıldır nöbet tutuyorsunuz, nöbetten önce nasıldı?
 - i. Onlara da katıldınız mı? Sizi katılmaya iten gerekçeniz neydi?
 - ii. Ormanda nöbet tutmaya başlamanızın nedeni neydi?
9. Muhtar veya diğer yerel yönetim birimleri buraya destek olmak için geliyorlar mı?
 - i. (Geliyorlarsa) Bir katkısı oluyor mu sizce?
 - ii. (Gelmiyorlarsa) Onlardan destek görmemek nasıl etkiliyor mücadelenizi?

Bölüm 4 - Çevre Mücadelesinde Kadın Olmak

10. Bu mücadelede yer alma gerekçeniz nedir?
 - i. Geçim kaygısıyla ilgili mi?
 - ii. Zeytinlikler size ne anlam ifade ediyor? Orman sizin için neden önemli?
 - iii. Karşı olduğunuz şey sadece Akbelen Ormanı'nın yok edilmesi mi?
11. Sizce ormanı korurken erkeklerden farklı olan gerekçeleriniz var mı? Varsa, bunlar neler?
12. Nöbet tutarken ve eylemlerde yer alırken bir kadın olarak orada bulunmak size ne ifade ediyor?
13. İkizköy'ü savunanlar olarak yöre halkı arasında yapılan toplantılarda karar alma süreçleri nasıl işliyor? Bu süreçlere dahil ediliyor musunuz?
 - i. Sizce erkeklerle eşit söz hakkına sahip misiniz? Dikkate alıyorlar mı düşüncelerinizi?
 - i. Yaşlı erkeklerin sizin orada bulunmanıza yaklaşımı nasıl?
 - ii. (Dahil edilmemişse) Neden dahil değilsiniz? Siz mi istemediniz yoksa başka sebepler var mı?
14. Eylemler ve nöbet sırasında erkeklerin size karşı tutumu nasıl?
15. Jandarmanın müdahalelerinde sizce erkeklere ve kadınlara yönelik tutum farklılığı var mı?
 - i. Müdahale edilince direnmekten vazgeçmeyi düşündüğünüz zamanlar oldu mu?

i. (Olduysa) Sizi devam etmeye iten şey neydi?

16. Burada veya civardaki köylerdeki kadınlarla birlikte kurduğunuz bir dayanışma ağı var mı? Kadınların birbiriyle ilişkisi nasıl?

Bölüm 5 - Gündelik Hayat Üzerindeki Etkiler

17. Eylemlere katılmaya karar verdiğinizde ailenizin, çevrenizin tepkisi ne oldu?

i. (Evliyse) Eşiniz itiraz etti mi? Ne hissettiniz, nasıl ikna ettiniz?

18. Nöbet sürecinin başından bu yana ev içi düzeninizde değişiklikler oldu mu?

i. Yemek hazırlama, (varsa) çocuk bakımı gibi işleri nasıl yapıyorsunuz?

ii. (Evliyse) Eşinizle veya eşinizin ailesiyle ilişkilerinizde bir değişiklik olduysa ne gibi değişiklikler var?

19. Sularınızın kesildiğine dair haberler çıktı, bu durum hayatınızı nasıl etkiledi?

20. Komşularla ilişkilerinizde bir değişiklik oldu mu?

i. Eyleme katılmayanların bakışı size karşı değişti mi?

ii. Nöbet dolayısıyla birbirinize gündelik hayat içerisinde destek oluyor musunuz?

21. Bir kadın olarak hayatınızı, eylemlerin öncesi ve sonrasını düşünerek kıyaslarsanız ne düşünürsünüz?

22. Şirket köyde kömür çıkarmaktan vazgeçse, siz kazansanız, sizce bundan sonra hayat sizin için nasıl olur? Gündelik hayatınızdaki ilişkilerinizde, alışkanlıklarınızda (varsa) değişen şeyler devam eder mi?

C. PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES / GÖRÜŞMECİLERİN PROFİLİ

Name (Pseudonym)	Age	Marital Status
Neslihan	63	Married
Neriman	77	Married
Fusun	77	Married
Feride	-	Married
Elif	38	Married
Zeynep	54	Married
Nurcan	51	Married
Serpil	-	Married
Havva	54	Married
Nazlı	23	Single
Meryem	93	Single
Hülya	43	Married

D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TRKE ZET

Bu tezde, Muęla'ya baęlı İıkızky mahallesinde yer alan Akbelen Ormanı'ndaki evre hareketinde aktif rol alan kadınların deneyimleri incelenmektedir. 2019 yılında Yeniky-Kemerky termik santralleri iin maden sahasının geniřletilmek istenmesi sebebiyle Akbelen Ormanı'ndaki aęalar kesilmek istenmiřtir. Bu sebeple, kyller yařam alanlarını kaybetmek tehlikesiyle karřı karřıya kalmıřtır. Evlerini terk etmek istemeyen kyller eřitli mcadele araları kullanmıřlardır. Akbelen Ormanı'ndaki aęa kesiminin engellenmesi amacıyla 2021'den bugne kadar eřitli davalar amıř ve ormanın iinde gn boyu sren nbete bařlamıřlardır. Bu alıřmada, Akbelen Ormanı'nda nbet tutan on iki kadınla yarı-yapılandırılmıř mlakatlar yapılmıřtır. Grřlecek kadınlar iki kritere gre belirlenmiřtir: İıkızky'de yařamak ve eylemlere katılmak. Arařtırmada yalnızca grřmelerden elde edilen verilerin kullanılmadıęını belirtmek gerekir. Ayrıca nbet alanında elde edilen gzlemler de nemli veriler saęlamaktadır. alıřma, kadınların hem ormanı algılama biimlerini incelemekte hem de bir kadın olarak evre hareketinde yer almanın onların gndelik hayatlarında yarattıęı etkileri arařtırmaktadır.

Beř ana blmden oluřan bu tezin giriř blmnde Akbelen Ormanı'nda 2019'dan bugne nelerin yařandıęı, kadınların doęayla kurdukları iliřkiyi ele alan ekofeminist yaklařımlar ve toplumsal hareket literatr zetlenmiřtir. Aynı zamanda, giriř blmnde alıřmanın temel arařtırma sorusu ve yntemi ele alınmıřtır. Bu tezde, İıkızky'de mcadele eden kadınların ormanla kurdukları iliřkinin nasıl olduęu ve bu mcadelenin ev dzenleri ile aile ve komřuluk iliřkilerinde bir dnřme yol aıp amadıęı incelenmektedir. Arařtırma iin Akbelen Ormanı'nın seilmesinin ise drt temel sebebi vardır. Birincisi, mcadelenin drt yılı ařmıř olması ve iki yıldır her gn nbet tutulması sebebiyle Trkiye evre hareketleri tarihinde nemli bir yere sahip olmasıdır. İıncisi, protestoların bařından itibaren kadınların n planda olduęu bir harekettir. Nbet alanında erkekler de olmasına raęmen, aılan davaların yalnızca kadınlara olması dikkat ekicidir. Bu durum, eylemlerde kadınların aktif rol almasıyla iliřkilidir. ncs, Akbelen Ormanı'nda aęaların kesilmesi dięer

bölgelerde de çevresel yıkımın önünü açacağı için önemlidir. Bu nedenle, İzikköy'deki direniş Milas'ın diğer bölgeleri için de sembolik bir öneme sahiptir. Son olarak, son dönemde gerek medyada gerek mecliste gündem olan bir çevre hareketi örneği olması sebebiyle önemlidir.

Tezin kavramsal çerçevesini oluşturması bakımından ekofeminizm, sosyal hareketler, çevre hareketleri ve güçlendirme (empowerment) literatürleri gözden geçirildi. İlk olarak tezin kavramsal olarak başlangıç noktasını oluşturması açısından ekofeminizm incelendi. Ekofeminizm, farklı entelektüel geleneklere ve farklı hareketlere dayanan ekolojik ve feminist düşüncüyü bütünleştiren bir yaklaşımdır. Ekofeminizm araştırmaları feminizm ve ekolojinin kesişiminden doğar. Ekofeminist yaklaşıma göre erkeğin doğa üzerindeki tahakkümü ile erkeğin kadın üzerindeki tahakkümü birbirinden ayrılamaz. Kavram ilk kez 1970'lerde çevreci ve feminist hareketin gelişmesiyle birlikte kavram 1974'te Françoise d'Eaubonne'un kadınlara doğayı savunma çağrısıyla kullanılmıştır (Warren, 2000).

Ekofeminizm, kadın ve doğa üzerindeki tahakkümü ayrılmaz gören, hiyerarşileri reddeden, doğadaki ve insan toplumundaki çeşitliliğe değer veren, toplumdaki her türlü tahakküm ve sömürüyü ortadan kaldırmayı amaçlayan bir etik öneren ekolojik ve feminist bir düşünce olarak tanımlanabilir (King, 1989). Ekofeminist yaklaşımda insan dışı doğayla uyum içinde yaşamak, insan toplumu içinde uyum içinde yaşamakla doğrudan bağlantılı olarak görülmektedir.

Ekofeminizm kadın/erkek ve doğa/kültür ikiliklerinin toplumsal olarak inşa edilmiş yapılar olarak görür ancak bu ikilikleri doğrudan reddetmek yerine bu ikilikler üzerine düşünmeye bizi davet eder. Kadının doğayla, kültürün de erkeklerle özdeşleştirilmesini düşündüğümüzde bu ikiliklere farklı yaklaşımlar öneren farklı feminist yaklaşımlar görülmektedir. Bazı yaklaşımlar, kadınların erkeğin kültürel üretimine entegre edilmesini, kadın-doğa bağlantısının kesilebileceğini ve kadınların kültürel üretime uyum sağlayabileceğini göstererek kadın-doğa bağlantısını koparmayı önermektedir. Ancak bu yaklaşım, kadınların ataerkil düzene uyumu anlamına gelmektedir ve kadınların özerkliğini ve farklılığını göz ardı etmektedir. Diğer feminist bakış açıları kadın/doğa erkek/kültür ikiliklerinin kabul edilmesini ve

pekiştirilmesini önerir. Ancak bu yaklaşımlar da ikilikleri ve bunların toplumsal olarak inşa edilmiş yönlerini sorgulamaz. Ekofeminist konum ise bu iki yaklaşımdan da farklıdır. Ekofeminizm kadın / doğa ve erkek / kültür ikiliklerinin toplumsal olarak inşa edilmiş yönlerini dikkate alır ancak bu ikilikleri kesmez. Çünkü bu ikilikleri ortadan kaldırmak ataerki düzene uyum anlamına gelebilir ve bunların tamamen güçlendirilmesi ikiliklerin sosyal inşa yönlerini gözden kaçırır, ancak bu ikilikleri korumayı seçmek kadınlara bu ikiliklerin ötesinde düşünme ve daha bütünleştirici bir yaklaşım yaratma şansı verebilmektedir.

Ekofeminizm kadınların çevre hareketlerine yoğun katılımını, çevre hareketlerindeki kadınların deneyimlerini ve dönüşümlerini anlamlandırmamız için faydalı bir kavramsal çerçeve sunmaktadır. Ekofeminizm erkeğin kadına olan tahakkümü ile insanın doğaya olan tahakkümünü birlikte ele alan teorik bir yaklaşım olarak kadınların doğaya olan tahakkümle olan mücadelesinin gündelik hayattaki kadınlık deneyimlerini ve ataerki ile ilişkilerini dönüştürebileceğini düşünmemizi sağlayan kavramsal çerçeveyi oluşturmaktadır.

Kadınların bu hareketler içindeki önemli rolleri nedeniyle ekofeminist yaklaşımlarla yorumlanabilecek çeşitli hareketler ve çevreci direnişler bulunmaktadır. Ekofeminizm hakkında düşünmek, kadınların doğayı koruması gerekip gerekmediğini düşünmek değildir, bilakis kadınların çevre hareketlerindeki öncü rolü ve yüksek duyarlılığı ekofeminist düşünceyi beslemiştir. Dünyanın her yerinde ormanların ve doğal çevrelerin korunmasında kadınların önemli roller üstlendiği örnekler bulunmaktadır. Kenya'da Yeşil Kuşak Hareketi, Hindistan'da Chipko Hareketi, ABD'de Aşk Kanalı Kampanyası, Hindistan'da Navdanya Hareketi, Çamlıhemşinli yerel kadınların direnişi Türkiye'de Yeşil Yol'a karşı mücadele ve bu tezde inceleyeceğim Akbelen Ormanı'nın korunması için İkizköy'de kadınların termik santral ve kömür madenlerine karşı direnişi, kadınların çevre hareketlerindeki öne çıkan rolüne örnek olarak verilebilir.

Kadınların çevre hareketlerindeki rolüne dair çeşitli örneklerden de görebileceğimiz gibi ekofeminist yaklaşım, doğanın tahakkümünü ve kadınların insanmerkezcilik / erkekmerkezcilik tarafından tahakküm altına alınmasını birbirine bağlayan, bunların

teorik ve tarihsel bağlantılarına işaret eden akademik bir söylem değildir; daha çok kadınların doğayı korumaya yönelik kolektif eylemlerinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Akbelen'deki protestolar aynı zamanda toplumsal bir hareket olarak da değerlendirilebilir. Mülakatlarda da görülebileceği gibi, sadece insanların yerel ormanlarını korumaya yönelik kolektif bir eylemi değil, aynı zamanda doğayla ilişkilerini dönüştürmeyi amaçlayan ve dönüştüren toplumsal bir harekettir. İkizköy kadınlarının yerel mücadelesi, direniş yıllarında gayri resmi etkileşim ağları ve karşılaşmalarıyla toplumsal bir harekete dönüşmüştür. Dolayısıyla çalışmamız için toplumsal hareket perspektifine sahip olmamız gerekiyor. Bu bağlamda toplumsal hareketler literatürü tezin kavram çerçevesi bağlamında ele alındı.

Toplumsal hareketlerin tanımlanması, birçok çeşitliliği içinde barındırması açısından, sosyal bilimciler açısından birçok zorluk getirmektedir. Diani (1992) konu hakkındaki makalesinde toplumsal hareket kavramını tanımlamaya girişmiştir. Toplumsal hareketlerle ilgili literatürü sentezleyerek toplumsal hareketlerin dört ayırt edici özelliğini belirlemiştir. Sosyal hareketlerin şunları içerdiğini öne sürer: "a) resmi olmayan etkileşim ağları; b) ortak inançlar ve dayanışma; c) çatışmalı bir konuda kolektif eylem; d) büyük ölçüde kurumsal alanın ve toplumsal yaşamın rutin prosedürlerinin dışında sergilenen eylem." (Diani, 1992, s.7). Bu özelliklere bakarak toplumsal hareketleri, çoğunlukla örgütlü yapıların dışında gerçekleşen, yıkıcı eylemleri içeren ortak bir hedef, karşılıklı paylaşılan kimlik ve bilgi paylaşım ağı temelinde belirli bir çatışmaya karşı kolektif eylemler olarak tanımlayabiliriz. Mülakatlarda da ifade edildiği üzere, Akbelen Ormanı'na gelen çevre mühendisleri, çevre aktivistleri (Hülya), çevrecilerin koruyucu bir melek olarak nitelendirilmesi (Havva), dayanışma olarak birbirlerinden güç aldıklarının ifade edilmesi (Elif) bu etkileşim ağlarıyla birlikte oluşan kolektif bir eylem olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu tanım çerçevesinde İkizköy'deki Akbelen Ormanı'nı koruma eylemlerini toplumsal hareket olarak değerlendirebiliriz.

Toplumsal hareketler arasında çevre hareketleri, hükümetlerin politikaları üzerindeki etkisi, faaliyetlerinin profesyonelleşmesi ve çevre aktivizmine yönelik yerel protestolardan ulusal, uluslararası veya küresel ölçekteki etkilerine kadar geniş bir alanı kapsamı açısından en kalıcı etkilere sahiptir. (Rootes, 1999). Yeşil Partiler

Batı demokrasilerinde popülaritelerini artırmakta, politika oluşturma üzerinde giderek daha fazla etkiye sahip olmakta ve çevre hareketlerinden ve küresel çevre krizlerinden güç kazanmaktadır. Çevre bakanlıklarının oluşması ve halk arasında duyarlılığın artması, çevre hareketlerinin başarısını ve etkilerinin sürekliliğini göstermektedir.

Hatta Castells (1997) çevre hareketini “zamanımızın en kapsamlı ve etkili hareketi” olarak niteleyerek çevre hareketlerinin toplumsal hareketler arasındaki özel yerini göstermektedir (Castells, 1997, s. 67). Çevre hareketlerinin merkeziliği, çevre aktivizminin diğer toplumsal hareketlerle olan bağlantılarından ve çevre hareketlerinin yerel mücadelelerin ve ulusal politikaların ötesine geçen küresel sonuçlarından kaynaklanmaktadır. İkizköy’deki kadınların direnişi de bir çevre hareketi olarak değerlendirilmektedir. Bu bağlamda çevre hareketlerini tanımlamak, dünyadan ve Türkiye’den bazı örneklerini göstermek çalışmanın kavramsal çerçevesi açısından gereklidir. Çevresel hareketler geniş bir kategoridir ve tanımlanması zordur. Çevreci örgütler, STK'lar, yeşil partiler ve yerel çevreci grupların tümü çevre hareketlerinin parçaları olarak değerlendirilebilir. Çevre hareketlerinin hedefleri doğanın yerel olarak korunmasından küresel konulara kadar çeşitlilik göstermektedir. Karmaşıklığına rağmen çevre hareketleri, “çevresel faydalar peşinde kolektif eylemlerde bulunan kişi ve kuruluşların oluşturduğu geniş ağlar” olarak tanımlanabilir (Rootes, 1999, s.2).

Toplumsal hareketlerin kurumsallaşması literatürde kapsamlı bir şekilde tartışılmaktadır. Çevre hareketleri en iyi örgütlenmiş ve kurumsallaşmış toplumsal hareketlerden biridir. Ne çevre örgütleri ne de tekil çevre protestoları çevre hareketlerini tek başına kapsamamaktadır. Çevre hareketi çevrenin korunması üzerine çeşitli çabaların bir birleşimi olarak görülmelidir. Bazı akademisyenler bir hareketin kurumsallaşmasının toplumsal hareketin tanımıyla bağdaşmadığını ileri sürmekte (Eyerman ve Jamison, 1991) ve doğrudan çekişmeli siyasi eylemi toplumsal hareketlerin ve çevresel hareketlerin ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak görmektedir (Doherty ve diğerleri, 2002). Ancak protesto ve gösterilerin demokratik ülkelerdeki örgütlenmeler kadar geleneksel olduğu gerçeğini göz önünde bulundurursak, çevre hareketi örgütlerini çevre hareketleri içerisinde daha iyi konumlandırabiliriz. Çevre hareketleri, yerel mücadeleleri, protesto eylemlerini,

kaynak toplayan ve politika yapıcılarla müzakere eden örgütleri, çevreci politikaların uygulanması için siyasi gücü kullanan ve siyasi konulara çevreci yaklaşımı getiren siyasi partileri içeren bir etkileşim ağı olarak anlaşılabilir. (Rootes, 2004).

Ayrıca çevrecilikte küresel bir çevre kaygısı söz konusu olsa bile hiçbir hareket veya söylem tek başına her bir çevre direnişinin kendine has özelliğini kapsayamaz. Dolayısıyla yerel çevre mücadeleleri ile yerel, ulusal ve küresel çevre örgütleri arasında dinamik bir ilişki olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Ayrıca yerel çevre mücadeleleri protestolara katılan kişilerde çevre bilincini artırabilir. Bu çalışmada da gördüğümüz gibi İkizköylü kadınlar, geçimlerini sağlayan, iklimlerini ılımanlaştıran, su sağlayan ya da anılarını ve memleketlerine ait olma duygusunu temsil eden Akbelen Ormanı'nı korumak için mücadeleye başlamış; mücadeleleri üzerine düşünerek, birbirleriyle ve diğer çevrecilerle sürekli etkileşim içinde olarak küresel çevre bilinci kazanmışlardır. Ormanda nöbet sırasında kadınların birbirleriyle doğayı kirletmeyen alternatif bulaşık yıkama yöntemlerini paylaşması, nöbet alanının temiz tutulmaya çalışılırken toprağın öneminden bahsedilmesi benim saha çalışması sırasında gözlemlediğim önemli durumlardandı. Benzer şekilde, mülakatlarda da, Akbelen Ormanı'ndaki mücadelenin onlara çevreye karşı daha farklı bir duyarlılık kazandırdığı, eylemlerden önceki yaşantılarından daha farklı oldukları belirtilmiştir.

Çevresel hareketler ya doğrudan siyasi eylemi ya da politika yapıcılarla daha örgütsel düzeyde müzakere taktiklerini kullanarak çevresel yıkımın etkilerini hafifletmeye çalışmaktadır. Eylem repertuarı yalnızca farklı çevreci yaklaşımların tutumuyla değil, aynı zamanda çevre hareketinin spesifik konusuyla, yani belirli çatışma alanlarıyla da ilgilidir. Kirlilik ve toksinler gibi bazı çevresel kaygılar ölçülü bir şekilde ele alınabilirken, bazı mücadeleler sıfır toplamı bir oyundur. Orman koruma veya nükleer santrallerde orman ya korunacak ya da korunmayacak ya da nükleer santral kurulacak ya da kurulmayacaktır, dolayısıyla bu tür mücadeleler doğrudan eylemi zorunlu kılmakta ve daha şiddetli eylemlerle sonuçlanabilmektedir (Seel ve Ploughs, 2000).

Daha önce de ifade ettiğim gibi kadınlar çevre hareketlerinden öncü bir rol oynamaktadır. Zelezny, Chua ve Aldrich (2000) 14 ülkede erkek ve kadınların

çevresel tutumları ile çevre yanlısı davranışları arasındaki farkı araştırmışlardır. Kadınların çevreye karşı daha olumlu tutumlara sahip olduklarını, aynı zamanda daha fazla çevre yanlısı tutum sergilediklerini bulmuşlardır. Kadınların çevre hareketlerinde öne çıkan rolü çeşitli çevre hareketlerinde de görülmektedir. Kenya'daki Yeşil Kuşak Hareketi, Hindistan'daki Chipko Hareketi, ABD'deki Aşk Kanalı Kampanyası ve Hindistan'daki Navdanya Hareketi kadınların çevre hareketlerindeki öncü rolüne örnektir.

Kadınların çevre hareketlerinde öne çıkan rolünü Türkiye'deki çevre hareketlerinde de görmek mümkün. 2009-2019 yılları arasında Türkiye'deki 700 çevre hareketinin medyadaki yansımalarını analiz eden Kalonya (2021), bu çevre hareketlerinin yüzde 70'inden fazlasında kadınların görünür olduğunu ya da öncü rol üstlendiğini göstermiştir. Bu, Türkiye'de çevre aktivizminde kadınların önemli rolünün bir örneğidir. Çoban (2004), Türkiye'deki Bergama Hareketi'ni bölgedeki altın madenciliğine karşı incelemektedir. Direnişin ardındaki mantığı ve kadının öncü rolünü toplum-çevre birlikteliği açısından; yani kadının doğayla daha güçlü bir bağ kurması, geçim kaynakları (gıda kaynaklarının kirlenmesi) ve sağlık (zehirli toprak nedeniyle hastalık, düşükler, çocukların yetersiz beslenmesi) üzerinden yorumlamaktadır. Akbelen Ormanı'nın savunulmasında kadınların öne çıkan rolü, kadınların çevre sorunlarına yoğun katılımının ve doğanın korunmasındaki öncü rolünün bir başka örneğidir. Benzer şekilde, İkizköy'de yaşayan köylülerin geçim kaynaklarının önemli bir kısmını zeytincilik oluşturmaktadır. İkinci olarak, saha araştırmam sırasında gittiğim neredeyse her evde bölgede akciğer kanserinin artışından söz edilmiştir. Dolayısıyla, Akbelen Ormanı'nda da Bergama'daki sebeplerle büyük benzerlikler gösteren özellikler söz konusudur.

Kadınların çevre direnişinin Türkiye'deki bir diğer örneği de Karadeniz'in Rize ilçesinde hidroelektrik santrallerine karşı yapılan Fındıklı Direnişi'dir. Yavuz ve Şendeniz (2013), Fındıklı Direnişi'nde kadınların deneyimlerini araştırmıştır. Fındıklılı kadınların hidroelektrik santralleri yaşamları için bir tehdit olarak gördükleri, su kaynaklarından mahrum kalmayı ise çocuklarından mahrum kalmak olarak gördüklerini çalışmalarında göstermişlerdir. Kadınlar topraklarının metalaşmasına karşı tarımdan üretim, çocukların dereye yüzme keyfi gibi değerleri

savunmuşlardır. Benzer şekilde, Akbelen Ormanı'ndaki kadınlar da, anılarından bahsederek çocuklarının salıncak kurup oynayabildiği ağaçları savunmak istediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Aynı zamanda, bunun ötesine geçerek, ağaçların kendisini de çocukları gibi gördüklerini vurgulamışlardır.

Ekofeminizm bize ormanların korunmasında kadınların özel rolünü ve doğayla ilişkilerini anlamamız için açıklayıcı bir çerçeve sağlamaktadır. Kadınların doğa algısı, Akbelen Ormanı'nın korunmasına katılımlarına ve bu konudaki öncü rollerine katkıda bulunmaktadır; ancak ormanın korunması süreci, yani çevre hareketinin direnişi ve doğuşu aynı zamanda kadınların doğa algısını ve toplumlarındaki ataerkil iktidar hiyerarşileriyle ilişkilerini de değiştirdiği görülmüştür. Böylelikle Akbelen Ormanı'ndaki çevre hareketi süreci, yukarıda da bahsettiğim gibi, İkizköylü kadınların çevre sorunlarına ilişkin farkındalığını artırmıştır. Aynı zamanda, bu süreç Akbelen Ormanı'nın korunmasında katılımları ile değişen günlük yaşam aktiviteleriyle ataerkil iktidar hiyerarşilerini fark etmelerini ve değiştirmek için adımlar atmalarını sağlayarak onları güçlendirdi. Örneğin, mülakatlarda da görülebileceği gibi, kadınlar kendilerine atanan haneçi toplumsal cinsiyet rollerinin dışına çıkmaya başlamışlardır. Bir kısmı eskisi gibi sık bir şekilde temizlik yapmadığını, bir kısmı eşi kendisinden yemek yapmasını istediğinde “kendin yap” dediğini ifade etmişlerdir. Çalışmada, çevre hareketinde yer almanın kadınlar üzerindeki etkileri açısından protestolara katılımın kadınların günlük yaşamlarını ve aile ilişkilerini değiştirdiği görülmüştür. Kadınlar zamanlarını protesto amacıyla ve evin dışında geçirdikleri için ev içi sorumluluklar yerine ormanın korunmasını ön planda tuttuklarını ifade ettiler, bu da onlara evdeki sorumluluk dağılımını yeniden gözden geçirmelerini sağlamak ve onları güçlendirmektedir.

Çalışmanın amacı, protestoların nedenleri ve protestoların kişisel yaşamlara etkileri olmak üzere iki yönde ele alınabilir. Öncelikle kadınların çevre hareketine katılmalarının ve birçok olumsuz koşula rağmen ormanın korunması yönündeki taleplerinde ısrarcı olmalarının ardındaki nedenleri ve motivasyonları anlamak, kadın ve orman arasındaki ilişkiyi anlamamızı sağlaması ve aynı zamanda toplumsal hareketin örgütlenmesi hakkında bizi bilgilendirmesi açısından önemlidir. İkinci olarak çevre hareketinde yer almanın kadınların doğayla ilişkilerine ve günlük yaşam

pratiklerine etkilerini anlamak bize çevre aktivizminin dönüştürücü gücünü göstermektedir. Bu, çevre hareketinin (kolektif eylem, kolektif kimlik, ortak hedef, çevrecilerle karşılaşmalar) Akbelen Ormanı koruma davasını kazanmanın ya da kaybetmenin ötesinde kadınların deneyimleri, doğa algıları ve günlük yaşamları açısından dönüştürüp dönüştürmediğini anlamamıza yardımcı olmaktadır.

Çevresel hareketin ardındaki nedenleri açısından bu çalışma, kadınların hareketin korunmasına yönelik çeşitli motivasyonlara sahip olduğunu göstermiştir. Kadınlar, anılarının bağlı olduğu yaşam alanlarını ve topraklarını, toprağa ve tarıma bağlı kültürlerini koruma isteklerini ifade ettiler. Bir diğer neden ise kadınların geçim kaynaklarının korunmasıdır. Orman, kadınlara yenilebilir bitkiler, yakacak odun toplama, arıcılık vb. gibi çeşitli geçim kaynakları sağlamaktadır. Ayrıca, çoğunlukla kadınların ev ekonomisine katkı sağladığı, erkeklerin ise başka yerlerde ücretli işlerde çalıştığı tarım için de ormanların korunması kadınlar için büyük önem taşıyor. Bu durum kadınların çevresel yıkımdan daha fazla etkilendiğini göstermektedir (Warren, 1997). Tarımın ve geçim kaynaklarının korunmasıyla ilgili bir diğer neden ise kadınların özerkliğini ve boş zamanlarını koruma isteğidir. Kadınlar, tarımda çalışan kadınların boş zamanlarını ev ve tarım faaliyetleri dışında da değerlendirebildiklerini ve ücretli işlerin onların özerkliğini engellemekte ve boş zamanlarını kısıtlamakta olduğunu ifade etmişlerdir. Bu özgürlüğü ifade ederlerken, ücretli işlerde çalışmayı kölelik olarak nitelendirmeleri dikkate değerdir. Ancak kadınların ormanın korunmasına yönelik motivasyonları, ormanın araçsal faydalarının çok ötesindedir. Kadınlar ormanı ve orada yaşayanları çocukları gibi gördüklerini, ormandaki hayvanlara ve ağaçlara şefkat duyduklarını ifade etmişlerdir. Bu, kadınların doğayla daha derin bağlarının ekofeminist bakış açılarıyla örtüştüğünü göstermektedir. Kadınlar, ormandaki çeşitliliği takdir ederek ormanı ekonomik çıkara indirgememekte ve bu çeşitliliği doğayla uyum içinde daha iyi kullanmaktadırlar (Agarwal, 2009)

Çalışmada protestoların köydeki ilişkileri de değiştirdiği görülmüştür. Direnişe katılanlar arasındaki dayanışma bağları güçlenirken direnişe destek vermeyen diğer köylülerle ilişkiler zayıflamıştır. Ayrıca çevrecilerle karşılaşmalar, nispeten dışarı kapalı köy topluluklarını dış dünyaya açarak dünya görüşlerini zenginleştirmiş ve

yeni ilişkiler ve dostluklar kurmalarını sağlamıştır. Protestolara katılım İkizköylü kadınların siyasallaşmasına da katkı sağlamıştır. Kendi mücadelelerini kazansalar bile diğer çevre hareketlerine katkıda bulunmayı istediklerini dile getirmişlerdir. Protestolardan önce, politik olarak farkında veya haberdar olmadıkları çeşitli önemli olaylardan artık Akbelen Ormanı sayesinde haberdar olduklarını belirten kadınlar olmuştur.

Bunların yanında çevre hareketine katılımın kadınların güçlendirilmesine katkıda bulunduğu da görüldü. Kadınların çevre hareketine katılımlarının onların ataerki ile ilişkilerini dönüştürmesi bağlamında güçlendirme literatürü incelenmiştir. Güçlendirme kavramını tanımlamak zordur ve kavramın kendisi de bazı belirsizlikler içermektedir. Örneğin ataerki söylemlere uymak kadınlara bir miktar güç verebilir ancak bu bir güçlenme olarak değerlendirilemez. Peki belirli bir politikanın, söylemin ya da eylemin kadınları güçlendirdiğini söylerken ne demek istiyoruz? Güçlenmeyi niceliksel olarak ölçmek mümkün ve makul olmasa da konu hakkındaki literatüre dayanarak güçlendirmeye yönelik bazı kriterler sunabiliriz.

Naila Kabeer (1999) güçlendirmeyi “seçim yapma yeteneğinin” kazanılması olarak tanımlamaktadır (s.435). Kaynaklar, faillik ve başarı olmak üzere üç güçlendirme göstergesi sunuyor. Kaynaklar belirli bir sosyal bağlamda otoriteye atıfta bulunur; faillik, kendi belirlediği hedeflere göre hareket etme ve bu hedefler için çaba gösterme yeteneği olarak tanımlanabilir. Kaynaklar ve faillik, kişinin kendisine dayatılan değerler yerine kendi değerlerine göre yaşamasını sağlamasıyla sonuçlanır. Kabeer (1999) aynı zamanda güçlenmeyi güçlü olmaktan da ayırır çünkü güçlenme başlangıçtaki güçsüzlükle ve güçlenme mücadelelerinden önce gelen seçimleri yapamamakla bağlantılıdır.

Örneğin bizim vakamızda kömür madeni şirketi ve termik santral idaresi ormanı yok etme ve kömür madeni sahasına çevirme seçeneğini kullanma yetkisine sahip; ancak İkizköy'deki kadınlar dayanışma ve çevre aktivizmi yoluyla güçlenmekte, dolayısıyla yaşam alanları üzerinde seçim yapma becerisi kazanma sürecindedir. Güçlendirme bazen refah açısından ele alınmaktadır (Duflo, 2012). Ancak güçlendirmeye yönelik bu yaklaşım bazı sorunları beraberinde getirmektedir. Çünkü ataerkillik, kadınları

güçlendirmeden, yani ataerkilliği sarsmadan, kadınlara refah fırsatları sunabilir. Güçlendirme sadece daha iyi bir durumda olmakla ilgili değildir, aynı zamanda birey için neyin daha iyi bir durumda olduğunu tanımlama yeteneğini kazanma sürecidir.

Güçlendirmeyi kişinin kendi değerlerine göre yaşama yeteneği olarak tanımlamak önemlidir, çünkü eğer güçlendirmeyi refahı takip etme yeteneği olarak tanımlarsak, o zaman nesnel refah ölçümleriyle karıştırılabilir, dolayısıyla güçlenmenin kişisel doğası ve kişinin kendi değerlerine göre yaşaması gözden kaçırılabilir. Örneğin İkizköy direnişindeki kadınlar, toprakları için kendilerine lüks yaşamalarına olanak sağlayacak bol miktarda tazminat verilse bile, anılarının olduğu köylerinde yaşamayı seçtikleri ve değerlerine değer verdikleri için direnişlerini sürdüreceklerini belirtmektedirler. Ormanı ekonomik refahın önüne koymaktadırlar. Termik santral ve kömür madenleri istihdam sağlayabilir, arazilerinin değerini artırabilir ama onlar için doğa, orman ve yaşam alanlarının bu genel geçer ataerkil refah ölçütlerinden daha değerli olduğu görülmektedir.

Bazı akademisyenler, güçlendirme teriminin kötüye kullanılmasını, onu kadınların durumunu iyileştirmeye ve müdahalelere indirgeyerek, siyasi açıdan yıkıcı doğasını ortadan kaldırmayı eleştiriyorlar. Batliwala (2007) “Güçlendirmeden gücü çekip almak – deneyimsel bir çalışma” başlıklı makalesinde güçlendirmenin “...bir zamanlar kadınların güçlendirilmesine ilişkin güçlü bir fikir ve uygulama, hiçbir şey yaratmayan büyük ölçüde apolitik, teknokratik ve dar müdahaleler dizisine dönüşmüş” olduğunu belirtmektedir. Tıpkı ilk kadın hareketi liderlerinin öngördüğü radikal dönüşüm ve bunun neoliberal ekonomik amaçlara hizmet edecek hale getirildiği gibi.” (s. 114). Rowlands (1998) da güçlendirmeyi “Batı kapitalizminin hakim kültürü” (s.11) açısından anlama hatasından kaçınmanın önemini vurgulamaktadır. Bu nedenle, kadınların güçlendirilmesini düşündüğümüzde, baskın ataerkil söylem çerçevesinde düşünmemeye dikkat etmeli, kadınların güçlenmesine ilişkin politik söylemin baskın söylem içinde özümsemesine izin vermemeliyiz. İkizköy'de kadınlar sadece Akbelen Ormanı'nı korumamakta, aynı zamanda ataerkilliğin doğaya yönelik sömürücü yaklaşımına direnmekte ve onu yıkmaktadır. Bu nedenle bu çalışmada, kadınların çevresel aktivizmi, güç ilişkilerine meydan okuyan bir olgu olarak görülmüş ve kamusal ve özel alanda güçlenme bağlamında

incelenmiştir. Kısacası, güçlendirmenin, ataerkil itaate meydan okumayı ve ataerkilliğin değerlerine göre yaşamayı reddetmeyi bir şekilde içermesi gerektiğini söyleyebiliriz. Aksi takdirde, cinsiyet rollerine meydan okumadan kadınlara ekonomik fırsatlar vermek gibi güçlendirme stratejileri, mutlaka kadınların güçlendirilmesiyle sonuçlanmayabilir ve ataerkil tahakkümün sürmesine aracı olabilmektedir (Khader, 2014).

Sonuç olarak, bu tez, kadınların çevre hareketindeki deneyimlerini, katılım motivasyonlarını ve bunun gündelik hayatları üzerindeki etkilerini çevre sorunları ve toplumdaki ataerkil iktidar hiyerarşileriyle ilişkileri açısından inceleyerek ekofeminist literatüre katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ormanı yaşayan bir organizma olarak görmeleri ve diğer canlılarla kurdukları duygusal bağ, temel motivasyonlarının yalnızca ekonomik gerekçeler olmadığını göstermektedir. Bu çalışma, kadınların doğayla kurdukları ilişkiyi anlamak için ekofeminist düşüncenin önemli bir teorik çerçeve sunmasına rağmen, mülakatlar gündelik hayatlarındaki dönüşümleri anlamak için güçlendirme kavramının da analize dahil edilmesi gerektiğini göstermiştir. Toplumsal hareketlerde yer almanın katılımcıların hayatlarındaki dönüştürücü bir gücü olduğu söylenebilir. Bu açıdan, İkizköy'deki kadınların yalnızca gündelik hayatları değil, doğayı algılama biçimleri de süreç içerisinde çevrecilerle etkileşim ağları sayesinde çeşitli dönüşümlere uğramıştır.

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YAZARIN / AUTHOR

Soyadı / Surname : Ülkü
Adı / Name : Fatma Ceren
Bölümü / Department : Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi / Political Science and Public Administration

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