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Environmental Movements Against the Coalition of the State and Capital: Anti-Gold Mining Struggles in Turkey

Hayriye ÖZEN

Political science and Public Administration, Atilim University, Ankara, Turkey

Şükrü ÖZEN

Yildirim Beyazıt University, Ankara, Turkey

Abstract

This paper focuses upon the question of how interactions between environmental movements and corporations and the state shape environmental conflicts and influence the consequences of these conflicts. It comparatively examines three cases that involve different levels of conflicts on the issue of gold-mining in a range of local settings in Turkey, namely, Artvin, Uşak, and, Izmir. The data of the study is collected by conducting field research that includes in-depth interviews with the protestors, local people, company managers, and local governmental authorities, and by doing document analysis on the basis of the news in the daily newspapers, company reports, and web sites. Our findings indicate that state authorities and mining multinationals form a ‘pro-mining’ coalition against environmental protesters, developing common strategies and tactics against the protests. The intensity of conflicts between the environmental protest movements and the pro-mining coalition is highly related with the effectiveness of the strategies and tactics that each party to the struggle followed. In those cases where one party is highly effective while the other is not, particularly Artvin and Efemcukuru cases, the conflict is at the lowest level. While the protest movement was the dominant party in the Artvin case, the pro-mining coalition has been the dominant actor in the Efemcukuru case. In Esme case, both protest movements and pro-mining coalition are effective to some extent, making the conflict relatively more intense. Accordingly, environmental movement in Artvin is the most successful one in terms of producing intended outcomes, whereas the movement in Efemcukuru is the least successful one. In Esme, both parties to the struggle have some successes and failures.

Introduction

The number of conflicts between local communities and national and multinational corporations has increased as developing countries adopted neoliberal policies and privatized mining sector accordingly (Moody, 1996). Turkey has also been experiencing similar conflicts in different areas such as İzmir, Uşak, Artvin, and Balıkesir (Özen ve Özen, 2009). In order to grasp these conflicts, which should be resolved for social peace, a new inter-disciplinary approach that takes into account multi-dimensional and multi-actor nature of these conflicts is needed. To date, these conflicts have been studied within the framework of either management and organization theories that view the issue only from the perspective of companies (Powell ve DiMaggio, 1991; Schwartz ve Carroll, 2003; Donaldson ve Preston, 1995), or social movement approaches that focus only on the protesting groups (McCarthy and Zald, 1977; Tilly, 1978; McAdam, 1982; Tarrow, 1998; della Porta and Diani, 1999). The studies focused on the environmental issues in Turkey also reflected the

similar compartmentalization: some analyzed the issue from the business side ([Küskü and Zarkada-Freiser, 2004](#); [Şengül and Sümer, 2008](#); [Top and Öner, 2008](#); [Özdemir, Sefer, and Türkdoğan, 2008](#); [Karabulut, 2004](#)), some focused on environmental protest movements ([Öncü and Koçan, 2001](#); [Arsel, 2003](#); [Keskin, 2003](#); [Çoban, 2004](#); [Arsel, 2005](#)), and some others focused solely on the formal environmental associations ([Nohl, 1995](#); [Dinçer, 1996](#); [Atauz, 2000](#); [Uyar, 2003](#); [Adem, 2005](#); [Aydın, 2005](#)).

In addition to being one-sided, the existing studies also ignore both the historical process of the conflicts, and the interaction between different levels. For a better understanding of these conflicts, this paper offers a dynamic and interactive conceptual framework. With this new framework, it is aimed to examine the interaction between the collective action of protest campaigns and the strategic responses of companies without ignoring the influence of the response of the state to the conflict, as well as the influence of local, national and international political, economical, and cultural contexts.

This study examines three different conflicts ([Uşak-Eşme](#), [İzmir-Efemçukuru](#), [Artvin-Cerattepe](#)) in a comparative way within this conceptual framework. These three different conflicts are analyzed in terms of the collective actions of the protest campaigns, strategic responses of the corporations to these actions, the interventions of the local and national authorities to the conflicts, the judicial decisions on the issue, the process of the conflict from its start to date, and the consequences of the conflicts.

The empirical data of the study were collected through the use of both primary and secondary sources. While primary data were collected by conducting in-depth interviews with leading protesters and company officials, the secondary data were collected through the use of published and visual materials. The collected data were analyzed by employing discourse analysis, which is a qualitative data analysis technique, and the relations between variables were examined by using comparative case study method. Following this approach, the aim of this paper is to develop a conceptual framework that explains why those cases that are embedded in common macro-institutional field (gold-mining field in Turkey) involve different sorts of

conflicts and produce different outcomes. The purpose of the study is not to test a predetermined theory through empirical data, but to develop a theory through an empirical study.

Gold-mining projects in Artvin, Eşme, and Efemçukuru

The main features of the three gold-mining projects in Artvin, Eşme, and Efemçukuru, which we examine in this paper are presented in Table 1.

Artvin is one of the very first places where a multi-national gold-mining company started operations in 1992. The MNCs in the other two regions either started or intensified their operations in the late 1990s: mainly 1997 for Eşme, 1999 for Efemçukuru (although the company had obtained the exploration license in Efemçukuru as early as 1992). The companies in all three cases were multi-nationals; Cominco from Canada in Artvin, and Eldorado from Canada in Eşme and Efemçukuru. Eldorado conducted its operations in Eşme and Efemçukuru through its subsidiary in Turkey, known as Tüprag Metal Madencilik.

Table 1 A Comparison of the Characteristics of Three Cases

Features	Artvin	Eşme	Efemçukuru
Starting year	1992	1997	1999
Company	Cominco	Eldorado	Eldorado
Gold reserve	8 tons	140 tons	27 tons
Production stage	Exploration	Processing	Extraction
Distance from	5 km	1 km	1 km
Socioecon. level	43th	30th	3rd
Resistance level	High	Moderate	Low

Sources: Turkish Statistical Institute (www.tuik.gov.tr), Tüprag Madencilik web site (www.tuprag.com.tr), YerelNet (www.yerelnet.org.tr).

In terms of the expected total amount of gold reserves, the greatest reserve is in Eşme, which, as claimed by the company, is the largest in Europe. The other two projects, Efemçukuru and Artvin, have far smaller gold reserves. With respect to the stage of production in mining sites (i.e., exploration, extraction, and processing), the Artvin project was at the exploration stage and the operations ended without extraction, thus falling short of using cyanide-leaching technology for extraction. However, in Eşme, the company has been extracting the ore and processing it using the open leach method with cyanide which has been seen by environmentalists as a seriously harmful processing method. Eldorado announced that it would transfer the ore extracted in Efemçukuru to its leaching facilities at its site in Eşme. As compared to the distances of the mining sites to the settlement areas, which determine to what extent local communities directly experience the environmental impacts of mining operations, all three mining sites are very close to the settlement areas. In Artvin, mining operations took place in the Cerattepe area, five kilometers away from the city center of Artvin. In Eşme, the mining site is located at the mountain range of Kışladağ surrounded by ten villages of the Eşme and Ulubey districts. The villages are close to the mining site in various extents; three villages closest to the site, Gümüşkol, Bekişli, and İnay are one, two and eight kilometers away from the site, respectively. The Efemçukuru mining site is one kilometer away from the Efemçukuru village and 20 kilometers away from the city of İzmir.

In terms of degrees of economic development, Efemçukuru and Eşme are located in a comparatively more developed region of Turkey, the Aegean in the West; whereas Artvin is located in less developed regions, the north eastern Black Sea. Considering the socio-economic statistics for the provinces to which these three areas belong, Efemçukuru is in the 3rd most developed province among 81 provinces in

Turkey, İzmir. Eşme is in the 30th developed province, Uşak, and Artvin itself is the 43rd developed province. The people of Efemçukuru live in the third most developed province mostly as farmers who make a living from agriculture, particularly grape. In the villages of Eşme, people are also farmers, but less resourceful than Efemçukuru villagers because some of them, particularly most of those in Gümüşkol and Bekişli, do not possess land. Artvin is a city where the economy is mainly based on agriculture, particularly tea and hazelnuts.

As for the current conditions in the three locations, except Artvin, the gold-mining operations are still continuing. After three years of exploration, Cominco called for a meeting with the people of Artvin and officially declared that it would start its operations to extract gold. However, due to the fierce opposition of the people of Artvin, and the court decisions in favor of the protesters as well, the company failed to extract gold and decided not to invest any further in that mine, eventually leaving the region altogether in 2008. In Eşme, Eldorado has followed an extensive and generous philanthropy policy since 1992, particularly towards the surrounding villages, and intensified its extraction activities since 2004 when an extremely liberal mining law was enacted in Turkey. In spite of the protests of local communities - though not as fierce as Artvin, and the unfavorable court decisions, the company is continuing its operations in Eşme. As in Eşme, Eldorado engaged in extensive philanthropic activities in Efemçukuru and faced a comparatively low level of opposition from the locals, except for some protests by environmentalists from İzmir. The company currently continues its operations. All in all, the levels of conflict between local communities and the MNCs, when this study was being conducted in 2010 and 2011 lower in Artvin and Efemçukuru, but moderately high in Eşme. In

other words, the local resistance to the mining projects is the strongest in Artvin, and moderately high in Eşme and lowest in Efemçukuru.

In the following sections, there will be in-depth discussions as to the reasons why conflict levels differ across the cases. Suffice it to mention here that some economic, social and technical characteristics of the cases, such as the ownership of the company, the amount of gold reserves, the technology used, and socio-economic development of the regions, do not seem to be related with what makes the locals protesters. This is because some of these characteristics do play a role in the mobilization of locals against goldmines in some cases, but not in others. For instance, in all locations, there are “multinational” companies. Thus, the foreignness of the companies did not directly play a role in the emergence of opposition. As demonstrated later, it does play a role to the extent that it is considered in the anti-mining discourse as a liability. Similarly, the amount of gold reserves, the use of cyanide leaching technology and the distance of mining sites to the nearest settlements became influential in mobilizations depending on their employment in the anti-mining discourse. For instance, although the amount of gold reserves in Artvin was the smallest, the resistance of locals was the highest there as compared to Eşme where the gold reserve was the greatest. In a similar vein, the technology used in gold-mining do not also seem to predict the level of resistance. For instance, there was only a moderate level of resistance in Eşme where the cyanide leaching technology was used, whereas the resistance was the strongest in Artvin although the cyanide technology was not used. As to the distance of mining sites to the settlement, which ranges from 1 to 5 km, one again sees that it does not play the same role in the mobilization of the local people in different cases. Thus, the question is not whether to experience the environmental impact of mining sites (noise, dust, dynamite,

cyanide, etc.) directly and closely, or not at all. Different from the other features, the socio-economic development levels of the region, a measure that includes economic and education as indicators, do seem to be related with the level of local resistance. As seen in the table, there is a negative association between the socio-economic development level and the resistance level: as the development level decreases, the resistance level increases. This is surprising because it is contradictory with the common belief that the people living in less developed regions are more welcome to the mining projects with the economic expectations from the projects. This is not the case here. As we will illustrate in the following sections, this surprising association may be due to the some social differences between locations. For instance, although Artvin has a lowest level of socio-economic development, it is a “city” while other cases involves districts and mostly villagers. Besides, Artvin is more populated than Eşme and Efemçukuru: the number of people who would be affected by the mining projects was 213,000 in Artvin, whereas 1,400 in Eşme, and 532 in Efemçukuru. Additionally, a deeper analysis shows that the education level in Artvin is higher than Eşme and Efemçukuru. This implies that increasing urban, rather than rural, population may enhance, although not guarantee, the possibilities for the emergence of a protest movement such as a number of people, their social and political skills, resources and networks. However, once there is some number of “people”, how and why they resist or not would depend on how they make sense of the case and construct the related discourse, which we will discuss in the following sections.

Anti-mining discourse: The locals and environmentalists

At the start of all of the cases, the locals did not directly give a response, be it negative or positive, to the proposal of the goldmines; rather, they tried to come to

terms with what was going on. Although neo-liberal ideology was becoming increasingly hegemonic in the Turkish context, the operation of mining multinationals in the vicinity of their residential areas was highly new and, therefore, not inherently meaningful for the people of Artvin, Eşme, and Efemçukuru. At first, the only discourse available for the locals was the pro-mining discourse of the companies, which placed special emphasis on the economic benefits of the goldmines both locally and nationally. Accordingly, it articulated that the mines would employ locals, and contribute to the economic development of the nation as a whole. It also stressed that goldmines are environmentally safe if necessary measures are taken. The company officials voiced this discourse at the meetings organized with the locals in order to inform them about such mines.

However, a rival discourse to the pro-mining one was articulated in Artvin and Eşme by a few mostly consisting of professionals, politicians and activists - in short, organic intellectuals - and in Efemçukuru by environmentalists from İzmir. These people were all left-wings people ranging from social democrats to socialists. Some of them had been active in the leftist movement of the 1970s, which apparently played a critical role in their early mobilization against a foreign corporation. Particularly in Artvin, organic intellectuals were highly active, starting to take actions against the mining projects immediately after the mining company organized its first meeting with the locals (interview with Karahan, 2010; Akdemir, 2011). After collecting technical information and documents about gold-mining and its environmental impacts from academics, they decided to mobilize against such mines. To this end, they established the *Green Artvin Society* and began publicizing the negative environmental impacts of gold-mining.

In the Eşme case, the process of constituting an anti-mining discourse was quite different. It was mainly led by a few individuals from one of the villages, İnay, in the neighborhoods of the mining site in Eşme town. These people were also left-leaning and had been highly active in the 1970s. However, the activities of these intellectuals did not start immediately after the proposal of the mining project in 1999, but rather after the start of the mining activities. Unlike the organic intellectuals in Artvin, those in Eşme were quite familiar with the protests against goldmines because Eşme is very close to the Bergama town, where the first ever environmental movement of Turkey against a goldmine had been initiated (Özen and Özen, 2009). Accordingly, like Bergama protesters, the intellectuals in Eşme placed a special emphasis on the use of cyanide technology in gold-mining, arguing that it would contaminate the environment and kill people.

The Efemçukuru case is different from both Artvin and Eşme cases due to the lack of intervention by organic intellectuals. The Efemçukuru protest, emerged in 2002 under the leadership of environmentalist groups and figures from İzmir, the nearest city, who did not have organic ties with the Efemçukuru villagers. These groups, particularly, stressed negative impacts of gold-mining on the water reserves of İzmir, on the vineyards of Efemçukuru as the only means of earning a living for the villagers, and on public health.

As the organic intellectuals intensified their efforts against the goldmines through organizing meetings, panels, and seminars gathering academics and experts, the anti-mining discourse was gradually disseminated and the locals of Artvin, Eşme, and Efemçukuru got to identify with this discourse. Yet, there are important differences among these places in terms of mobilization. In Artvin, most of the locals identified with the anti-mining discourse and mobilized against the mine. In

Efemçukuru, in spite of an initial rapid mobilization against the mine, most villagers later gave up and sold their lands to the company. Compared to these two cases, Eşme had the weakest mobilizations; in fact, only one among the ten villages surrounding the mining site in Eşme mobilized against the mine. In what follows, we first examine how anti-mining discourse mobilized some locals and, later, why it failed to do so concerning some others.

As mentioned before, anti-mining mobilizations emerged as the local people began to identify with the anti-mining discourse constructed under the leadership of local organic intellectuals or environmentalists. The most important factor behind mobilizations was the sense of crisis discursively created with the construction of the mining project as a substantial threat to the living environment, livelihoods, and the health of the locals. Thus, it is not the mining projects *per se*, but rather the meanings attributed to these projects in the anti-mining discourses that created unrest in the local communities, leading them to mobilize against the mines in order to overcome the experienced unrest. Claiming that gold-mining would force local communities to migrate some other places by posing serious threats to local spaces and resources, and public health, the organic intellectuals mostly laid emphasis on the demand for the protection of local spaces and local community, as well as, spatially bounded local identities from the harmful effects of goldmines. In voicing the environmental threats that gold-mining activities would pose, almost all of them put a special emphasis on natural and environmental characteristics, which are influential on spatially-bounded identities of locals, and local resources, which provide the livelihood for most of the locals (interview with Karahan, 2010; interview with İnay villagers, 2010; interview with Cangi 2010).

Besides the characteristics of local spaces and the importance of their protection, themes such as ‘love of nation and homeland’, and ‘loyalty to the country’ were also highlighted in the anti-mining discourse. In line with their political orientation, the organic intellectuals particularly in Eşme- and in Artvin to a lower extent –made use of leftist ideological materials in articulating their opposition to the goldmines. At meetings with the locals, they repeatedly stated that gold-mining would not yield anything other than harm to the country, claiming that it would create major profits for foreigners while, at the same time, causing irreversible damage not only to the local space and people but also to the whole nation. One of the slogans used in Artvin protests was that ‘profits of gold-mining to foreigners; slaughtered nature to us’ (*Green Artvin Society Booklet*, ND: 7). In Eşme, the organic intellectuals also believed that the struggle against the mining multinationals is an anti-imperialist struggle against the exploitation of local resources by imperialist corporations and their domestic collaborators (Sakaryalı, 2011; Akdemir, 2011).

By pointing out the substantial threats that goldmines pose to local spaces, lives and identities of the residents, the anti-mining discourse managed to construct mine operations as a ‘serious social problem’ on the one hand, and the mining companies and all those who supported them as the source of this problem and, as such, the adversary of the locals on the other. Put differently, the anti-mining discourse was constituted by exteriorizing the mining companies and their supporters as the radical ‘other’, who pose a substantial threat to local space as well as residents. Here, it is worth noting that the protesters also regarded the state, particularly the government, as a strong ally of the mining companies and, therefore, as just another adversary together with them. The new mining law enacted in 2004, and the amendments it made in a number of laws such as Environmental Law, Forests Law

and National Parks Law are among the main factors shaping this perception (interview with Kalın, 2010; interview with Sakaryalı, 2010; interview with Cangı, 2010; interview with Öznal, 2011). As stated by a protester in Artvin:

We founded the Turkish Republic by fighting and dying [for our fatherland]. But the state sold out our native lands upon agreements and did not ask for our opinions at all. It also sold out our rivers. The lands that we used to believe belonged to us were now passed on to the hands of foreigners.....The politicians and authorities who enacted the mining law have the greatest responsibility for this (*Artvin Haber 08 News*, 8 March 2008).

Apart from labeling the mining project as a ‘pressing social problem’ and the mining company and the state as the ‘adversary’, the solution to the problem was also offered in the anti-mining discourse in the form of mobilization against the projects. At meetings and speeches delivered in public, organic intellectuals repeatedly highlighted the fact that it was only through such movements that mining activities could be stopped. They stressed that if local people did otherwise, their living spaces would be destroyed and they, at best, would be displaced from their lands or, at worst, would simply perish (*Green Artvin Society Booklet*, ND: 2; interview with Çağal, 2010; interview with İnay villagers, 2010; interview with Efemçukuru villagers , 2010).

As the local people began identifying with this discourse, they also started regarding mining projects as serious threats to their way of life, living spaces, and spatially bounded identities, opting for mobilization in order to prevent the threat. One of the villagers from Eşme stated:

We, of course, were not familiar with gold-mining. We thought that we should obtain information about it in order to understand its benefits and

harms.....Some academics came here and informed us about it. Then, we realized that the negative [environmental] impacts of gold-mining are scientifically proven and, so, decided to resist it (interview with İnay villagers, 2010).

As explained above, organic intellectuals played critical roles in shaping this oppositional perception. However, this does not mean that they governed the whole process of mobilizations as they wished to. In fact, the anti-mining discourse and its related mobilizations were shaped with the involvement of various local groups. This is particularly true for the Artvin and Eşme cases. In the former, many different local groups, such as the Artvin Bar Association, Çoruh University (particularly the Faculty of Forestry), the Municipality, Governorship Office, Chamber of Commerce, local branches of trade unions and political parties alongside many individuals opposed to the mining project and, instead, supported the *Green Artvin Society* by mobilizing against the mine, thus contributing to the further development of the anti-mining discourse. All different local groups involved in mobilizations participated in the decisions taken by the *Green Artvin Society* to wage the struggle against the goldmine:

....all NGOs, the Bar, the mayor, and provincial chairmen of political parties attended to the meetings. We told them what we had planned to do, and asked for their opinions. We took actions after discussions, and arrived at a consensus (interview with Karahan, 2010).

As such, the anti-mining discourse in the Artvin case did not prioritize the interests or the identities of any specific local groups over others, but rather united the various groups in their opposition against the mining project. For instance, although the organic intellectuals were leftists, leftist themes were not put forward in the anti-

mining discourse because members of nationalist and conservative parties and other right-wing supporters were also involved in mobilizations. As one of the organic intellectuals states:

....we come from the leftist tradition, everybody knows this.....At the beginning, there were some political arguments, but then we decided not to prioritize our political convictions.....We just focused on the problems of Artvin (interview with Karahan, 2010).

In this way, the interests and identities of various local groups were rendered equivalent against their common adversaries that equally threatened all these groups in Artvin. In the construction of equivalential relations among all such groups, the emphasis put on the ‘green Artvin’ signifier is also important. The anti-mining discourse called locals to mobilize against the mine in order to protect the ‘green Artvin’ from the threats posed by the gold-mining project. For instance, the widely and the mostly used slogan against the operation of the mine had been ‘Don’t extract gold! Don’t destroy the green Artvin!’ (interview with Karahan, 2010). This particular signifier served as a “common reference point”, according to Karahan, for all the locals and united them by cancelling out any major differences among these groups (Howarth, 2006: 113). By representing various groups that have possessed many differences in terms of class, status, ethnicity, political identities, and interests, green Artvin gradually dispossessed itself, to some extent, from its original particularistic content and turned into ‘empty signifier’. With the construction of an equivalential relation - which, as explained above, is critical in expanding mobilizations - and with the formation of an empty signifier - which is critical in uniting different groups - the anti-mining discourse succeeded in appealing to almost all people in Artvin, and mobilized them against the mine. The

participation and support of nearly all of the locals rendered the Artvin protest movement highly powerful not only because the entire town opposed to the mine, but also because the resources - such as finance, knowledge, expertise - and the social networks of local groups were used in this struggle. In this way, the movement waged a highly effective struggle against the goldmine, forcing the company to end its operations. Announcing to the public that it could not maintain mining operations without “social and political support”, the company eventually left the town in 2008 (*Artvin Haber 08 News*, 23 November 2008).

In contrast to the Artvin case, the anti-mining discourse in Eşme did not lead to mobilization and unification of the locals. While the activities of the mining company in Eşme, as explained in detail later, is an important factor in this, the absence of leading figures in villages other than İnay is also influential. Here almost all organic intellectuals were from the İnay village, a factor that also partly explains the mobilization of the people of this village, but not those of the other villages. Due to not having any organic links with such figures, the people elsewhere did not confide in these figures to the extent the villagers from İnay village did. Moreover, the leftist themes employed by the intellectuals from the İnay village in expressing their opposition to the mine did not appeal to those elsewhere because, in contrast to İnay, other locals were not as familiar with the leftist ideology. In other words, while the use of leftist themes increased credibility and, therefore, the appeal of the anti-mining discourse for the İnay villagers, it played just the opposite role for the locals elsewhere in that area. Consequently, the mobilizations in Eşme became only limited to those by the İnay villagers.

It should also be emphasized that although it is the mobilization of villagers from İnay that led to the emergence and survival of a protest movement against the

gold-mining project, it also, paradoxically, prevented the expansion of that movement. As the villagers from İnay mobilized against the mine, both the anti-mining discourse and anti-mining mobilizations turned into protest discourse and protest movement by İnay villagers. For instance, while the movement initially emerged under the title of ‘The Eşme Initiative for Preventing Gold-Mining with Cyanide Technology’ (*Evrensel Daily News*, 9 September 2004), it eventually took a heading as the ‘İnay Conscience Movement’. As being the name of a just one village, the word ‘İnay’ failed to represent the people from neighboring villages. Therefore, in contrast to the ‘green Artvin’ signifier, the ‘İnay’ signifier could not turn into an empty signifier. The situation would have been different had Eşme (the name of the entire district) been used instead of İnay in the movement. Since the İnay movement could not mobilize the majority of the locals, it was a relatively weak movement, and failed to prevent mine operations.

The case of Efemçukuru is different both from Artvin and Eşme in that the mine in there was only the focus of those living in Efemçukuru village, mainly about a thousand or so individuals living in a relatively isolated part of İzmir. Most of this population opposed the mine after environmentalists from İzmir contacted them and organized several meetings to inform them of the hazards (interview with Uysal, 2010). Since most of the villagers in Efemçukuru earn their living mainly by viticulture, the emphasis that the environmentalists put on the negative impacts of goldmines on vineyards proved critical in their mobilization against the mine. However, as it will be explained later, the mobilization of the villagers did not last long and the protests largely diminished after the activities of the company as well as state agencies against the protests gained momentum.

Up until now, the paper has focused on the constitution of the anti-mining discourse and on the emergence of protests. In fact, the perceptions and attitudes of the locals were shaped not only by this approach, but also by the pro-mining approach of companies and state agencies. In other words, it was not only the appeal of the anti-mining discourse but also the hegemonic practices of the mining companies, as well as the activities of state agencies, that became influential on the decisions taken by the locals. With the support of various state agencies, the mining companies became highly active in convincing the locals to the operation of the mines, and they have been influential to some extent. The alliance of these two actors did not only prevent the mobilization of some locals but also succeeded in demobilizing some others who had in fact either tended to identify or identified with the anti-mining discourse. In the next section, we turn to examine how these two actors competed with the hegemonic practices of the anti-mining movements.

Pro-mining discourse: The state and the MNCs

Overall, while the mining company in the Artvin case was largely reactive to the protesters, those companies in the other two cases were rather pro-active because Artvin, apart from Bergama, was one of the very first places where a multinational company attempted to operate a goldmine. Assumably, the company did not anticipate any mobilizations and, therefore, was caught unprepared, as the case was in Bergama (Özen and Özen 2009). However, the mining companies in elsewhere watched closely the developments in Artvin and in the other places concerning the protests and took away lessons from such struggles (see, Özen and Özen, 2011).

The initial response of the mining company to the protests in Artvin was with disregard. Company officials tried to defend gold-mining by stating that the claims of the protestors concerning the mine were untrue and, therefore, they could not bother to pay attention to these claims. However, as the protests intensified, leading to a halt of activities in 2005 with a court order, the company began developing counter-strategies against the protest campaign (*Hürriyet Daily* 9 December 2007). First of all, it opened a public relations office in Artvin and hired a local expert. Also, in an attempt to increase its legitimacy in the eyes of the people, the company changed its name from *Inmet* to a Turkish one: *Artvin Bakır ve Maden İşletmeleri* (the *Artvin Copper and Mining Corporation*). By using the signifier ‘Artvin’, the company tried to tell the locals that it was not an ‘outsider’ as it was meant in the anti-mining discourse, even attempting to weaken the anti-mining discourse in which, as mentioned earlier, the ‘green Artvin’ had been the main signifier. Furthermore, the company tried to debase the anti-mining discourse by making changes in the project in order to reduce the environmental risks. Moreover, in an attempt to increase the appeal of the pro-mining discourse, which mostly articulated the theme of ‘economic benefits’, the company engaged in some philanthropic activities under the CSR strategies that included donation of medical devices to hospitals and sponsoring local sports clubs (interview with the former PR director of Inmet, 2010). Visiting locals and speaking to them one-to-one, the public relations officer of the company also made several promises, which would have been realized if the locals had consented to the operation of the mine, including building a mosque, donating computers to public schools, and employing locals to the mining company (interview with the former PR director of Inmet, 2010). Despite all these efforts, the company realized that it cannot convince the local people of the safe operation of the mine and decided to give up

even before the litigation process that the protesters started against the mine was finalized.

In the other two cases, the mining companies had been more successful in winning the consent of the locals. The one in Eşme tried to prevent the expansion of the protests from İnay to other villages, and the one in Efemçukuru tried to overcome oppositions already in place.

Like the company in Artvin, the company in Eşme and Efemçukuru, Eldorado, had initiated its CSR activities long before commencing its mining operations. In Eşme, it built water supply networks for nine villages, sewage utilities for another four villages, elementary schools, medical facilities, a facility for wedding ceremonies, and electricity utilities in other villages, and sponsored many additional projects for regional development. In Efemçukuru, the company sponsored education and training activities, donated educational equipment, constructed a bridge and some infrastructure, and repaired roads and mosques (Akdemir, 2011; Sorumluluklarımız, 2011). Eldorado also offered high prices for the lands in Efemçukuru. Moreover, it also hired a number of locals, and outsourced some operations to the companies.

In addition to the economic advantages offered by the mines, the companies also reiterated that such operations are environmentally safe. In Efemçukuru, where the protests had already started, and in Eşme where the protests emerged after the activities of the mining company in there gained momentum, these firms also attempted to convince the locals of the safety matters. To this end, they tried to assure them that goldmines do not harm the environment when necessary preventive measures are taken. Although very complicated and hard to understand for those unfamiliar with the subject, all technical issues as well as the technology used to protect the environment and the locals were detailed for everyone.

By emphasizing that goldmines would bring economic prosperity without causing any harm to the surroundings and individuals, the pro-mining discourse simultaneously constructed the protesters as those who block the economic well-being of locals and the development of the country as a whole by trying to prevent environmentally safe gold-mining. In other words, with the symbolic construction of goldmines as economically beneficial and environmentally safe, the mining companies antagonized the protesters. They also adopted a very effective rhetorical strategy to undermine the credibility of the anti-mining discourse. By portraying the organic intellectuals as those who manipulate the locals for some dubious motives and incentives, they attempted to raise doubts about them. More specifically, it was repeatedly claimed by the mining companies that it was not legitimate environmental concerns, but rather the hidden agendas of these few individuals blocking the operations (interview with the Eldorado manager, 2010; interview with the former PR director of Inmet, 2010). Concerning the hidden agenda, they believed that the protesters, in fact, endeavored to prevent foreign investments and, in doing so, took advantage of environmental concerns as a cover-up.

At this point, it is important to note that the companies were not the only actors voicing such claims about the leading figures of the protests in Efemçukuru and Eşme. In reality, some state officials were also involved in such efforts, going even further to criminalize and stigmatize the protest leaders. They tried to convince the locals that those who started the protests were not environmentalists, but either terrorists or terrorist-sympathizers. For instance, after the local opposition to the mining operations had become apparent in Eşme, the then-governor of Uşak province began, on the one hand, to actively promote the mines and, on the other, to criminalize the opposition figures by labeling them “terrorists” and, therefore,

“enemies of the nation” (interview with Sakaryalı, 2010). The governor voiced these claims by visiting the villages surrounding the mining area and talking with the residents. Moreover, upon the order of the Governor, the environmentalist groups, who had attempted to inform the locals about the environmental risks of gold-mining, were taken into custody by the gendarmerie and interrogated about their affiliations. Eventually, even the gendarmerie voiced the similar claims concerning the leaders of the Eşme movement (Akdemir, 2011).

In criminalizing the leading protesters, the pro-mining groups also claimed that the protesters had close relations with the pro-Kurdish parties and organizations. For instance, in Efemçukuru village where the protests, as mentioned before, were waged under the leadership of environmentalists from İzmir, the mining corporation labeled the leading figure of that movement as a collaborator with the “terrorist” Kurdish groups. The company officials went on to release an image of Cangı, an environmentalist from İzmir and one of the leading figures of Efemçukuru protests, taken at a meeting also attended by some Kurdish groups (interview with Uysal, 2010; interview with Cangı, 2010). Although the Kurdish groups in the picture were from a legal pro-Kurdish party, the company used the image as evidence of collaboration with ‘terrorists’. Though entirely unfounded, such claims still raised questions concerning the reliability of the leading figures as well as the credibility of their opposition to the goldmine. Other than the case of İnay village, this was particularly true for Efemçukuru village and villages in Eşme; since the leaders had no organic ties with the people, such claims easily diminished their reliability in the eyes of the residents. As a result, the involvement of Efemçukuru in protests was highly compromised, though it did not fade away entirely. In Eşme, too, these claims played a significant role in inhibiting the mobilization of many villagers.

In both cases, the support that the state gave to the mining companies was also influential in prevention of the mobilizations. In this regard, the expropriation of the lands is highly important. Within the framework of opportunities offered by the new Mining Law, the government made urgent decisions to do so in both villages with respect to those who did not wish to sell their lands (*Evrensel Daily News*, 4 January 2008). Moreover, the government did not comply with court decisions made against the existing gold-mining activities upon the filing by protesters. For example, despite the sealing of the mine in Eşme in 17 August 2007 in accordance with the Council of State's decision for the stay of execution, related to the Environmental Impact Assessment license of the mine, the Ministry of the Environment and Forests allowed the re-opening of the mine on 6 March 2008 by issuing an order (*Radikal Daily News*, 27 July 2009; Cangı, 2008). The insistence of the government on the operation of the goldmines, disregarding both the opposition of the protesters and the court verdicts on the issue, led many residents to give consent - willingly or unwillingly - to the operations. In this respect, what Cangı states is revealing:

In giving up the protests, they [Efemçukuru peasants], stated this: 'Mr. Cangı, we cannot save our lands; we cannot resist. The state firmly backs the company. How can *we* resist this?' (interview with Cangı, 2010)

Discussion and Conclusion

Comparatively examining the three struggles on the issue of gold-mining in a range of local settings in Turkey, we attempt to develop a conceptual framework that explains why different cases within the same national context result in different levels of conflict and outcomes. Our conceptual framework suggests that interactions between environmental movements and corporations and the state shape environmental

conflicts and influence the consequences of these conflicts. Our analysis indicate that structural conditions such as socio-economic development and educational levels, population, identification with the space, and political raw materials have a role in the emergence of struggles between local communities and MNCs. However, we argue that they indeed influence the struggle process to the extent that they are attributed certain meanings or used to construct meanings in the anti-mining discourse.

We also demonstrated that local people mobilized against the goldmines to the extent they identified with the anti-mining discourse, which constructed gold-mining as a substantial threat to local space, livelihoods, and spatially bounded identities of individuals. Examining not only the anti-mining discourse but also that of pro-mining, we further argued that protests became either weak or non-existent in those places where the appeal of the pro-mining discourse was high.

It is evident that among the factors that led to the constitution of an anti-mining discourse, the leadership of organic intellectuals played the most critical role. In Artvin and the İnay village of Eşme, where the organic intellectuals became highly successful in translating the dislocatory experiences of local people to an oppositional discourse, most of the local people turned against the goldmines by identifying with the anti-mining discourse. In contrast, in Efemçukuru, where no 'organic' intellectuals took the lead, the protests were weak. While the leadership of environmentalists from İzmir initially led to the emergence of some protests in Efemçukuru, the ability of these figures to maintain the leadership did not last long mainly due to the lack of organic ties with local communities.

Equally crucial in the formation of the anti-mining discourse was the availability of ideological raw materials. In Artvin and İnay, the organic intellectuals

viewed the operations of the transnational mining corporations through the lenses provided by the leftist ideology. As such, they rapidly framed these operations as exploitation of the natural environment and the locals by international capital. In İnay, these operations were even seen as a new form of colonialism. Yet, it should also be noted that these organic intellectuals articulated leftist themes in a new way together with environmental concerns.

The success of anti-mining discourse in establishing its hegemony in local contexts depended, on the one hand, on its own popular appeal and, on the other, that of the rival pro-mining discourse. As to the popular appeal of the anti-mining discourse, the formation of a chain of equivalence among local groups with different identities and interests, and the representation of equivalential chain by a central and emptied signifier are critical. In the Artvin case, the anti-mining discourse effectively emphasized the equivalence of different social groups in their opposition to the operation of the goldmine. The ‘green Artvin’ signifier proved crucial in the mobilization of almost all local people in Artvin against the mine. Without prioritizing any interests, identities or aspirations pertaining to certain social segments, the ‘green Artvin’ signifier represented and, as such, unified various social groups with different interests, positions, and aspirations against the operation of the mine. Due to the identification of many local people with this anti-mining discourse, this became hegemonic in the Artvin context concerning the issue of the operation of the goldmine. In the Eşme case, on the contrary, the anti-mining discourse prioritized a single group, İnay locals, over the people in other villages by emphasizing the identity of those residents. As such, the movement could mobilize only the İnay locals against the mine. As a result of its failure to embrace the people in other villages, the

movement in Eşme, unlike the one in Artvin, could not prevent the operation of the goldmine.

The popular appeal of the rival pro-mining discourse depended on its capacity to antagonize the protesters on the one hand, and to convince the locals of the benefits of the goldmines on the other. While the former included the efforts of criminalizing the leading protesters as terrorists, the latter involved mainly some philanthropic activities under the strategy of ‘corporate social responsibility’. The pro-mining discourse managed to antagonize the leading figures of the protesters, particularly in those places where organic ties between these figures and local communities are weak or absent, such as Eşme and Efemçukuru. As to CSR strategies, it should be noted that they became successful not in those places where the local people mostly identified with the anti-mining discourse (Artvin), but in those places where the popular appeal of the anti-mining discourse was weak (Eşme). Regarding the strategies of the MNCs, we should finally note that the strategy followed by Eldorado in Eşme and Efemçukuru was “proactive” in the sense that they acted earlier than the protesters, and depended heavily on philanthropic activities. Therefore, their proactive strategy was not so much in the sense that Sharma and Vredenburg (1998) defined, which involves developing and using technologies and products less risky and hazardous to the environment by considering the demands of all stakeholders. Rather, their CSR strategy was geared toward pacifying, co-opting or, at worst, manipulating (Oliver, 1991) the locals through extensive philanthropic activities. Thus, the state of less, or absence of, conflict due to proactive strategy may not represent a permanent consensus in which all parties’ short and long-term interests are truly satisfied, but a temporary or fragile one that would be wrecked easily by any event hazardous to the environment.

Another factor that should also be taken into account in understanding the hegemonic battle between local protest movements and corporations is the attitude of the state. The support that states usually give to corporations may seriously strengthen them in their struggle against the local movements. As we have demonstrated in this study, even if the state can not lead local communities to identify with the pro-mining discourse, it can force them to remain silent, as in the case of Efemçukuru.

All in all, the outcomes of the struggle between local people and mining companies depend on the effectiveness of the strategies and tactics that each party followed, as seen in Table 2. Thus, in those cases where one party is highly effective while the other is not, particularly Cerattepe and Efemçukuru cases, the conflict is at the lowest level. While the protest movement was the dominant party in the Cerattepe case, the mining company has been the dominant actor in the Efemçukuru case. In Eşme, both protest movement and the company are effective to some extent. Therefore, the conflict in this case is relatively more intense.

Table 2. The interactions between MNCs and protests and their outcomes

Cases	Effectiveness of protest movements	Effectiveness of corporate responses	Level of conflict	Outcomes
Cerattepe	High	Low	Low	The company shut down the mine
Eşme	Moderate	High	High	The mine is operating
Efemçukuru	Low	High	Low	The mine is operating

The study proposes conceptual suggestions and models concerning how and to what extent the characteristics of the space/place in which gold-mining activities are

maintained, and the characteristics of the local people influence the emergence of protest campaigns; how collective actions of protest campaigns and strategic responses of organizations interact; how the process of conflict forms a taxonomy and the factors that affect this taxonomy; how the process of conflict is influenced by national and international economical, political, and cultural contexts; in what ways the state influences both the process and outcomes of struggle; and how the process of struggle influences the consequences and outcomes of the struggle, and how all these exert influences on changes at the organizational level. These conceptual models are expected to contribute both to the new institutional theory and social movement theory. It is also expected that the study will contribute to those efforts that attempt to integrate new institutional and social movement theory (Davis, vd. 2005; Fligstein ve McAdam 2011). In addition to these theoretical contributions, the study is also expected to contribute to the solution of the conflicts between protest campaigns and companies by offering these actors socially and environmentally sensitive strategies to manage the conflict process, by offering state authorities socially and environmentally sensitive efficient intervention strategies to these conflicts, and by offering suggestions concerning the policies in the gold-mining field.

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