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## **Eight Karats of Justice: Analysis of the Grassroots Resistance Movement Against Goldmining in the Villages of Bergama, Turkey**

Banu Aysu Koçer  
*University of Tennessee - Knoxville*

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Banu Aysu Koçer entitled "Eight Karats of Justice: Analysis of the Grassroots Resistance Movement Against Goldmining in the Villages of Bergama, Turkey." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in Sociology.

Sherry Cable, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

Jon Shefner, Harry F. Dahms, John Nolt

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

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EIGHT KARATS OF JUSTICE:  
ANALYSIS OF THE GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE MOVEMENT AGAINST  
GOLDMINING IN THE VILLAGES OF BERGAMA, TURKEY

A Dissertation  
Presented for the  
Doctor of Philosophy  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Banu Aysu Koçer  
December 2007

To my late father Metin Koçer,  
in whose belated articulation of the lifelong inarticulated  
I found the value of timely expressions.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

As any other dissertation project, this has been an arduous intellectual and emotional journey. There have been moments (admittedly, many of them) when my path appeared foggy, and the weather seemed not the most favorable to travel. Those were the moments when I developed a renewed sense of appreciation for the fetal position. Not a single moment have I been, however, without my intellectual and emotional umbilical cords.

Sherry Cable has not only provided constant academic guidance and helped me get through the foggy patches on my journey but also been able to make me feel on top of the world, even at times when blue seemed to be the only color I was capable of seeing. (I still don't know how you did and continue doing it, Sherry, but I appreciate it). Jon Shefner has been a great source of inspiration and guidance for carrying out field research (Now I have my own slides of field pictures to inspire my prospective students). I enjoyed and benefited from what I called the 'lavish intellectual feasts' organized weekly by Harry F. Dahms (*Vielleicht trage ich die Entfremdungsgruppentradiation weiter in İstanbul*). I am indebted to John Nolt for his time and his interest in my project.

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Behind those two-letter references used throughout this study are real people from Bergama and its villages, as well as from İzmir and İstanbul. I am grateful to each and

every one of them, and apologetic for having to reduce them to abbreviated alphabetical signifiers in the name of confidentiality. My debt of gratitude extends to Ethem Özgüven and Nejat Dinç for generously sharing their work and their experiences with me, and making valuable suggestions at the research stage of my dissertation project; as well as to Okan Düzyol for providing useful reference material.

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To all of you I thank, in every expressive and expressible sense of the word.

## ABSTRACT

This study explores and analyzes the grassroots movement against goldmining in the villages of Bergama, Turkey. The struggle of Bergama villagers started out as a local ecological resistance movement in the early 1990s and gradually transformed into an environmental justice movement with national implications when activists adopted a rights-based discourse by incorporating into their claims the notions of justice, democratic participation, and citizenship rights.

Since goldmining investment in Bergama was a manifestation of significant shifts in the global corporate mining industry starting in the 1980s, and of changes in the world political economy, an account of these shifts is presented as the global political-economic background for the grassroots resistance movement in Bergama. This global perspective is complemented by an account of the domestic socio-economic and political context in which the Bergama villagers' resistance movement unfolded.

The study employs two reference frames for the conceptual and theoretical analysis of the Bergama villagers' movement. The Environmental Justice Movement (EJM) Literature is reviewed for conceptual clues pertaining to the transformation process of the movement under investigation. As the theoretical reference frame, the New Social Movements (NSM) approach to contemporary social movements is employed in an attempt to assess the applicability of this theoretical approach to the resistance movement of Bergama villagers, as well as the EJM in the United States.

NSM theories are inadequate in explaining these movements. Based on the weaknesses of the NSM and the similarities identified between the Bergama villagers' movement and the EJM, I assert that a new approach to theorizing social movements, which takes as its point of departure these similarities, is necessary. I argue that such an approach will guide not only social movement scholars in understanding ecological grassroots movements in the global North and South but also movement activists in their struggle for social change. In contrast, an exclusive focus on the distinctions between the ecological grassroots movements in the global South, on the one hand, and in the North, on the other, based merely on their economic and cultural differences, will be counter-productive in challenging the systemic root causes of ecological problems plaguing the people of the world today.

**PROLOGUE:  
GOLD IN GLOBAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT**

.....They are astonished that gold, which has so few practical uses, is now everywhere valued so highly by human beings that people themselves are thought to be worth much less than gold, though the value of gold derives entirely from the uses to which people put it.

Thomas More – Utopia (1516)

At the crossroads of two continents, Europe and Asia, lies Anatolia<sup>1</sup>, the birthplace of numerous ancient civilizations and the home of prominent thinkers such as Homer, Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Herodotus, Heraclides, and Strabo. From ancient times, each generation in these lands grew up hearing the legends of the vast riches of Anatolian culture. Such is the renowned myth of King Midas of Phrygia, an ancient civilization that lived in what is today the western part of Turkey (Figure 1).

Legend has it that Dionysus, one of Zeus's sons, was on an expedition from Thrace to Phrygia when his companion and tutor, Silenus, went astray in a state of intoxication and fell asleep in the rose gardens of King Midas. The gardeners caught him and led him before the King. Recognizing Silenus, Midas treated him as an honorable guest, entertained him for ten days, and then led him back to Dionysus. When Dionysus offered Midas a wish to be fulfilled in gratitude for his tutor's safe return, Midas asked that everything he touched be turned into gold. The request was granted, but the King's joy was short-lived. Faced with the dark side of his power, when even his food and drink

---

<sup>1</sup> Geographical region that makes up the Asian part of modern Turkey. It is a peninsula, bordered by the Black Sea on the North, the Aegean Sea on the West, and the Mediterranean on the South. The term Anatolia stems from the Greek, meaning the 'rising of the sun' or 'east'. The region is also referred to as *Asia Minor* by its Latin name.

turned to gold, Midas begged Dionysus to rescind his gift. “To be released from your wish,” said Dionysus, “you need to wash yourself in the source of the Pactolus River near Mount Tmolus.” Midas at once did as he was told, and was thus freed from the curse of the golden touch. Since that day, the Pactolus River is believed to carry an abundance of gold in its sand.

The end of power for Midas heralded the beginning of wealth for another Anatolian King. Croesus was the last King of Lydia, an ancient civilization of Western Anatolia. Mount Tmolus (modern Bozdağ) was located in Lydian territories, and Sardis (modern Sart), the capital city of Lydia, lay on the banks of the Pactolus River (modern Sart Çayı). In his *Geographica*, Strabo<sup>2</sup> (1917) traced the geographical link between the myth of Midas and the wealth of Croesus in the following account: “The Pactolus River flows from Mt. Tmolus; in early times a large quantity of gold dust was brought down in it, whence, it is said, arose the fame of the riches of Croesus and his descendants” (p.173).

But Croesus owed his fame only partly to the vast quantity of gold he had at his disposal. The Lydian King gained historical renown for introducing the world’s first coinage of *pure* gold<sup>3</sup> in sixth century BCE (Bernstein 2000, Dinç 2004, Green 1973, Marx 1978, Pamuk 2000, Tcha 2003).

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<sup>2</sup> Greek historian and geographer (b. 64 BCE - d. 24 CE).

<sup>3</sup> It was Gyges, another Lydian king, who is credited with the invention of the world’s first coined money in seventh century BCE, a century before Croesus. Whereas Gyges’ coinage was made of electrum, a naturally occurring alloy of gold and silver, Croesus was able to refine electrum into pure gold and pure silver, and issue the first coin of pure gold.

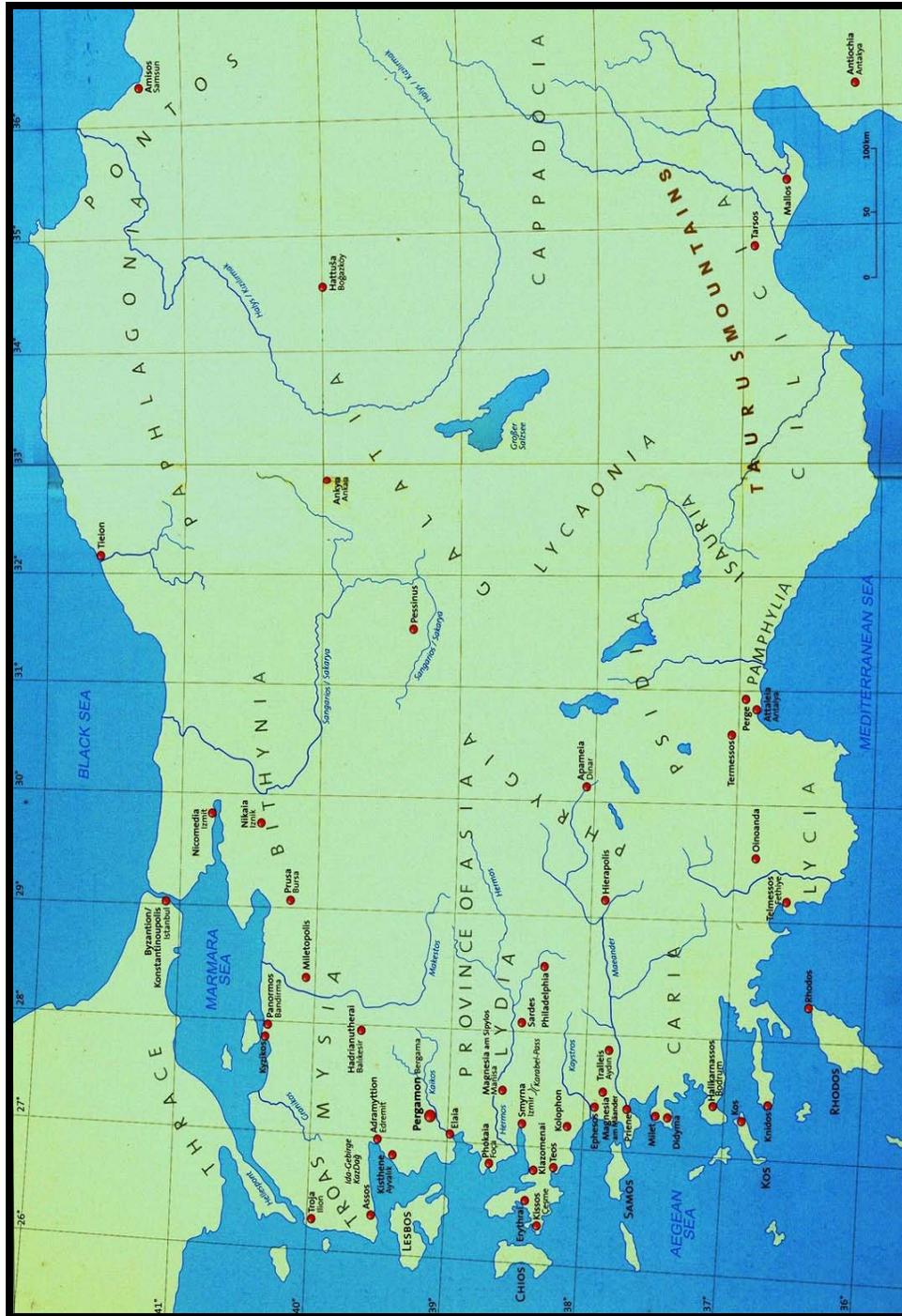


Figure 1: Anatolia in antiquity

Gold held humans in its thrall with a magical allure for thousands of years before the time of Croesus. The first appeal of gold was its ever-radiant yellow color<sup>4</sup>. Due to its glow ancient people regarded gold as a divine substance coming from the sun (Bernstein 2000, Marx 1978). Later, as people looked beyond the mystical gleam of gold they observed the worldly powers of this precious metal. Unlike silver, gold did not tarnish or corrode; it was not dissolved by many acids; and its unrivaled malleability and ductility allowed goldsmiths to craft fine articles of jewelry, and ornaments of wood, pottery and textile. The combination of these characteristics made gold a source of absolute power and an object of adulation for humankind, as expressed by Pindar<sup>5</sup> (1915) in fifth century BCE: “Gold is a child of Zeus; neither moth nor rust devoureth it; but the mind of man is devoured by this supreme possession” (p.611).

Croesus’ innovation added to the timeless lure of gold, ultimately placing this metal at the heart of the international trade and monetary system as the universally accepted medium of exchange and standard of value<sup>6</sup>. The same novelty concurrently opened Pandora’s box, shaping human experience for generations to come. Humanity’s eternal craving and search for this yellow metal subjugated whole nations, killed entire populations, and wiped out civilizations and religions (Marx 1978:2). “Get gold,” King

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<sup>4</sup> This physical characteristic of gold also accounts for its chemical symbol Au, derived from *Aurum* in Latin, meaning “shining dawn”.

<sup>5</sup> Greek poet (b. 522 BCE – d. 443 BCE).

<sup>6</sup> The supremacy of gold in the world commercial and money markets was challenged by another precious metal for a long time (Bernstein 2000, Green 1973). A bimetallic currency system of gold and silver prevailed in most countries until “the increasing supplies of gold, first from Brazil in the eighteenth century, then from Russia, California, Australia and South Africa in the nineteenth century...led to the demonetisation of silver and enabled gold to become the sole standard of value” (Green 1973:17).

Ferdinand of Spain commanded his conquistadors in 1511, as he sent them westward across the ocean in search of gold, “humanely if possible, but at all hazards, get gold!” (quoted in Bernstein 2000:15, Green 1973:11, Marx 1978:17-18). The Incas, the Mayas, the Aztecs, and the Caribs succumbed as a result; high and low cultures were extinguished (Marx 1978:18).

The 1848 discovery of gold in California ushered in the Age of Gold in the New World. Another milestone came in the late nineteenth century when mining companies replaced individual prospectors in the search for gold. Individual goldseekers had collected the visible alluvial gold that lay exposed as nuggets in and along streams; further gold recovery called for concerted effort, better equipment and more efficient mining techniques<sup>7</sup>. By the mid 1850s, gold was no longer mined by “the individual miner with his pan, but a group of men joining together and pooling their capital to build more elaborate crushing equipment and to dig deeper” (Green 1973: 37)

The real breakthrough for investors in gold mining occurred in 1887, when two Scottish physician brothers, Robert and William Forrest, and a chemist, John MacArthur, patented their technique of extracting gold from the ore<sup>8</sup> with cyanide<sup>9</sup>. The so-called MacArthur-Forrest process, also known as cyanidation or cyanide leaching, requires that gold ore be crushed to a fine powder, then circulated through tanks containing a solution

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<sup>7</sup> Mercury-based mining, a method for separating minute particles of gold from surrounding materials by amalgamation with mercury, became the norm for gold extraction in this era.

<sup>8</sup> Body of rock, containing one or more minerals in such concentrations that it is economically feasible to extract them.

<sup>9</sup> Cyanide and its ability to dissolve gold had been discovered in 1783 by Carl Wilhelm Scheele, a Swedish, self-taught chemist (who died at the age of 44 due to long-term exposure to highly toxic substances, among them hydrogen cyanide). However, the compound was not used in gold mining until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

of sodium cyanide that dissolved gold. Solid wastes containing cyanide are separated from the gold-bearing solution and deposited in a waste pond. Gold is then precipitated from the remaining solution using zinc dust (Green 1973:42, Weston 1983:133). The cyanidation technique maximized the rate of gold recovery from the ore, made the investment in gold mining more profitable than ever, and thus, gave rise to the development of the modern corporate mining industry. The cyanide leaching method remains the dominant technique in gold extraction throughout the world.

Two significant innovations in gold recovery came in the 1970s, when the carbon-in-pulp process and the heap leaching cyanidation method were applied for the first time. The carbon-in-pulp process, described as “the most revolutionary gold recovery development since the cyanide process” (Hall and Laxen quoted in Weston 1983:133), involved the recovery of gold “directly from cyanide pulp [skipping the process of separating solid waste from the gold-bearing solution] by adsorption on to a suitable granular activated carbon, which, when loaded, is then eluted to provide a solution” (Weston 1983:134). In the final step, gold is recovered from this solution by electrolysis. The carbon-in-pulp process further reduced capital and operating costs, increased the rate of gold recovery even more, and thus, was swiftly adopted by the corporate mining industry in gold mining operations worldwide.

The other new technique, the heap leaching method, entailed the spraying of a cyanide solution over an open-air, flattened heap of extracted gold ore. As the solution seeps into the heap, it dissolves gold. The gold-bearing solution is then collected from the leach pad at the base of the heap, and gold extracted from this solution (Weston 1983:136). The heap leaching process made it economically feasible to extract gold from

ores with concentrations as low as 0.4 ppm<sup>10</sup>, which were previously considered unprofitable mineral reserves (Dinç 2004, Fields 2001, Weston 1983). As conventional gold collection tools such as sheepskin, hollow reeds, pans, and wooden rockers were thus relegated to oblivion as ancient artifacts, contemporary gold recovery techniques turned the mine sites of the twentieth century into chemical processing facilities.

The more profitable techniques combined in the 1980s with favorable political and economic developments at the global level to produce the golden age of the corporate mining industry. The decade was marked by rapid rises in gold prices; decreases in production costs, leading to increased investments and profit margins of the corporate mining giants; and a geographical shift in exploration and production activities, encompassing new areas with rich, unexploited or under-exploited gold reserves.

The underlying reason for the sharp increase in gold prices from \$ 44-per ounce in 1971 to a record high of \$ 850-per ounce in 1980 was the 1971 collapse of the Bretton Woods international monetary system. Adopted in 1944, the Bretton Woods system was a gold-exchange standard that combined a flexible floating exchange rate system with the nominally stable gold standard (Bordo 2003:32). The standard set the US dollar as the nominal anchor and required the United States to affix currency to gold at \$35 per ounce. Other countries in the system were to peg their currencies to the US dollar. But in late 1960s, the dollar was increasingly pressured by a large deficit in the US balance of payments, generated by the highly expansionary monetary and fiscal policies to finance the Vietnam War. The crisis culminated in the collapse of the Bretton Woods system in

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<sup>10</sup> The concentration of metals or minerals in the ore, a.k.a. ore grade, is measured in ppm, i.e. parts per million. A gold concentration of 0.4 ppm is equivalent to 0.4 gram (0.015 ounce) of gold per ton of ore (0.4g/ton).

1971 when the United States relinquished gold convertibility, cutting the dollar-gold link and allowing the US dollar to float (Tcha 2003). No longer required to control private gold holdings to maintain the fixed dollar-gold standard, the US government in 1975 lifted the ban on purchasing gold. An immediate upsurge in the demand for gold dramatically increased gold prices. For the corporate mining giants, high gold prices meant high returns on their investments.

The collapse of the Bretton Woods system and the changes it triggered in US monetary policies reverberated across the globe in the 1980s. Following suit, many countries “adopted some form of floating exchange rate system and liberalized...their foreign exchange and capital markets” (Allen et.al. 2003:81). Further reforms instituted within the framework of neo-liberal restructuring increasingly integrated these countries into the global economy and opened up their markets to global capital. Included in their financial and economic liberalization measures was the liberalization of the gold trade, creating a global market for this precious metal.

The corporate giants of the global mining industry benefited from these developments, not only by exploiting increased investment opportunities and geographically diversifying their operations, but also by increasing their profit margins due to low capital and production costs of mining in the countries they invested in. In an attempt to attract foreign direct investment these countries provided incentives for global mining companies, which reduced the cost of mining in these newly emerging neo-liberal economies.

For much of the twentieth century, South Africa was by far the largest gold producer, supplying up to 70 per cent of the world’s total gold output, followed by the

USSR, Canada, the United States, and Australia, respectively. This stable pattern started to change in the 1980s (Figure A-2 in the Appendix). As South Africa's share declined, partly due to high costs of production, Brazil, Colombia, Papua New Guinea, China, and the Philippines emerged as promising producers. Geographical diversification in gold production continued into the 1990s, with the addition of other developing countries to the global gold market as significant suppliers: Indonesia, Peru, Chile, Guyana, Ghana, Mali, and Uzbekistan. During the 1990s, the finance sources of global mining projects shifted from shareholders and state enterprises to multilateral development agencies and regional banks, such as the private sector agencies of the World Bank Group-the International Finance Corporation and the Multilateral Guarantee Agency-, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Gedicks 2001, Szablowski 2007).

Global gold production rose precipitously due to new mining techniques, rising gold prices, increased investment opportunities, global funding, and decreased production costs. The total supply of gold increased from 1,200 tons in 1980 to 2,500 tons in 2006 (USGS, Minerals Yearbook).

But the upward trend in gold production "is now levelling off, due not least to a considerable slowdown in exploration spending in the late 1990s" (World Gold Council 2006). Underlying this slowdown are disputes starting in the early 1990s that pitted global mining corporations and, often, host governments against the residents of mining communities concerned with the environmental and public health risks of mining operations. Along with the expansion of mining investments in terms of geography and scope came negative impacts of mining operations. As local communities increasingly voiced their reaction mining conflicts became a highly contested issue on the agenda of

global politics. The wide spectrum of stakeholders in these conflicts included mining corporations, commercial lenders, governments of the host and home countries, international financial institutions, insurers, industry associations, consultants, grassroots groups, NGOs, and affected communities (Szablowski 2007:3).

In spite of the technological developments in gold production, a technology for eliminating the risks associated with cyanide use and with the mobilization of heavy metals in the processing of huge quantities of ore<sup>11</sup> is yet to be found. As stated in an article in *The Economist*, “[w]hen it comes to despoiling the planet and polluting the environment, the mining industry is a world beater” (07/14/2001, 360(8230):75).

Acid mine drainage is by far the most serious environmental hazard associated with gold mining because it exposes populations to heavy metals and other toxic materials (Fields 2001, Pearce 2000, Vick 1983). The waste material left after the desired mineral is extracted from ore is referred to as ‘tailings’ and consists of ground-up rock containing uneconomic metals, minerals, organics, and process water. The tailings are either discharged as slurry to a waste pond; stored on the ground in open pits or underground in mined-out voids; or disposed of in the ocean. Acid mine drainage refers to the chemical reaction of the tailings with water and air by which heavy metals in the ore are mobilized. Most mine tailings contain sulphide minerals, such as pyrites, which oxidize in air, producing sulphuric acid. Sulphuric acid dissolves dormant, highly toxic heavy metals in the tailings, such as arsenic, lead, cadmium, antimony, mercury, zinc, copper, aluminum, manganese, and chromium. These heavy metals drain off-site, contaminating groundwater and/or entire watersheds (Fields 2001, Pearce 2000). The

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<sup>11</sup> 30 tons of earth is dug up to extract 1 ounce of gold.

dangers associated with acid mine drainage are greatest in regions at risk from flood and earthquakes (Pearce 2000:47).

The biota, habitats, and communities around the mine sites worldwide are afflicted with cyanide and heavy metal spills into rivers and seepage into groundwater; cyanide poisoning due to inhalation; landscape pollution; and transportation accidents. In 1984, heavy rains in Papua New Guinea generated a landslide that spilled toxic waste from a gold and copper mine into the Fly River system. Damage to a heap leach pad in the Summitville, Colorado goldmine in 1992 caused cyanide to spill into the Alamosa River. In Kyrgyzstan, a truck carrying two tons of sodium cyanide to the Kumtor goldmine crashed in 1995 and contaminated the Barskoon River. The 1995 failure of a tailings dam at Guyana's Omai goldmine contaminated the Omai River with cyanide, and a similar failure in Baia Mare, Romania, spilled cyanide into the Danube River in 2000. In the same year, a freight helicopter transporting cyanide to the Tolukuma gold- and silvermine in Papua New Guinea dropped a one-ton box of sodium cyanide in the jungle (Mineral Policy Center 2004). A 2003 cyanide spill at a Nicaraguan goldmine contaminated the Bambana River, and seven children who drank from the river died. Over 100 people were hospitalized in 2003 after being poisoned by cyanide spilled from an overturned truck in Taiwan. In 2004, the State Council of China reported that three people were killed and another 15 hospitalized because of a hydrogen cyanide gas leak at a goldmine in Beijing's suburban district of Huairou (Habal and Roldan 2006, World Rainforest Movement 2003).

The most recent incident occurred in the Kışladağ Goldmine in Eşme, an Aegean town in the Province of Uşak in Turkey. In June 2006, gold extraction in Eşme was carried out on the basis of trial production, using the heap leaching cyanidation method. Over 1,000 residents experienced a set of symptoms associated with cyanide poisoning: severe headache, nausea, diarrhea, difficulties in breathing, and numbness in the extremities. A group of concerned physicians from the Aegean University in İzmir went to the region and collected blood samples to test for cyanide levels. They were unable to conduct tests because the vials were confiscated by the sub-provincial governor's office. But nine of the ill Eşme residents had gone to İzmir for treatment; tests performed on their blood samples revealed high levels of cyanide (Elele Hareketi Basın Duyurusu, July 19, 2006). Despite assertions by physicians, city administrators officially described residents' illnesses as intestinal infection caused by bacteria in the drinking water. Two weeks later, the mine switched from trial to full production capacity with the authorization of the government. The Ministers of Environment and Forests, and of Energy and Natural Resources delivered speeches at the opening ceremony for the mine, declaring that Turkey's gold potential would be exploited to the last nugget because of this mineral's significant contribution to the Turkish economy.

Gold returned to its land of birth as the venerated medium of economy twenty-six centuries after the first gold coin of Croesus. The first gold mine in the history of the Republic of Turkey was established in the early 1990s in an Aegean village in the agricultural town of Bergama, lying about fifty miles northwest of Sardis, the capital city of Croesus's Lydia. In its accelerated quest for gold, the global mining industry chose Bergama in 1989 as one of 560 exploration sites in Turkey. Like everyone else in Turkey,

the villagers of Bergama valued gold as an article of adornment, a store of wealth and thus, a means of financial security. But, also like everyone else, they were neither familiar with gold mining nor with the many risks it involved. As they learned about the process of gold extraction, the potential destruction it might wreak, and the experiences of other communities around the world afflicted by mining, the Bergama villagers resisted gold mining on their prime agricultural lands. Their resistance started out as a local ecological movement, and transformed, over the course of nearly two decades, into an environmental justice movement with national implications when the villagers adopted a rights-based discourse by incorporating into their claims the notions of justice, democratic participation, and citizenship rights. Despite the many cases the villagers won in the domestic and international courts establishing the absence of public interest in operating the risky mining facility, and reaffirming the constitutionally sanctioned right of citizens to live in a healthy environment, goldmining continues in Bergama today. So does the resistance of Bergama villagers.

Analyzing the history of humanity's relationship to gold, Bernstein (2000) suggests that "gold reflects the universal quest for eternal life – the ultimate certainty and escape from risk" (p.5). If we take Bernstein's observation at face value, the irony is arresting: In its aggressive pursuit of gold, the corporate mining industry imposes serious risks on the lives and life-sustaining resources of the communities around mine sites worldwide. Another remark on the history of gold may shed light on the puzzle. As Marx (1978) states, "...for millennia gold has had an aura of magic which defies the rational" (p.4). The irrationality of humankind's obsession with gold particularly stands out when the magnitude of the environmental and social risks of gold mining is weighed against the

dispensability of most end uses of gold. To illustrate, in 1999, of all the extracted gold that is not stored by central banks as reserve holdings, 83 per cent was used for jewelry; the combined gold use in dentistry, electronics, telecommunications, aeronautics and aerospace industries amounted to a mere 7 percent (Tcha 2003:2). The share of gold held as reserve asset by central banks and supranational organizations, such as the International Monetary Fund and the European Central Bank, accounted for roughly 20 percent. Perhaps the clearest statement of the irrationality of human deeds a propos of gold is that by Yale University economist Robert Triffin: “Nobody could ever have conceived of a more absurd waste of human resources than to dig gold in distant corners of the earth for the sole purpose of transporting it and re-burying it immediately afterwards in other deep holes, especially excavated to receive it and heavily guarded to protect it” (Triffin 1961:89).

In the face of its defiance of rationality, the time-hallowed appeal of gold did not wane; neither did the unyielding quest for this yellow metal. No unit of measure exists to gauge the social and environmental suffering inflicted upon the communities worldwide, which still seem to be haunted by the infamous legacy of King Ferdinand. But there are ways to measure the different attributes of gold. *Karat*, for one, quantifies the purity of gold in terms of the percentage of parts in 24 that are gold. Thus, 24 *karats* of gold denotes one hundred percent gold. And 8 *karats* is the lowest possible standard.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADR	Associations for the Defense of Rights
AKP	Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (Justice and Development Party)
BEEC	Bergama Environmental Executive Committee
CMDP	Council of Ministers' Decision of Principle
DLP	Democratic Left Party
DP	Democrat Party
ECAA	Environment, Culture and Arts Association
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
EEC	European Economic Community
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EJM	Environmental Justice Movement
EP	European Parliament
ESA	Environmental State Assessment
GBGE	Guards of the Beautiful Gulf of Edremit
JP	Justice Party
MP	Motherland Party
MÜSİAD	Müstakil Sanayiciler ve İşadamları Derneği (Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen)
NAP	Nationalist Action Party
NLP	Nationalist Labor Party
NSC	National Security Council
NSM	New Social Movements
PKK	Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (Kurdish Workers' Party)
RDF	Rapid Deployment Force
RM	Resource Mobilization
RPP	Republican People's Party
SAC	Supreme Administrative Court
SDPP	Social Democratic Populist Party
SSC	State Security Courts
TAF	Turkish Armed Forces
TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
TPP	True Path Party
TÜBİTAK	Türkiye Bilimsel ve Teknolojik Araştırma Kurumu (Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey)
TÜSİAD	Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği
TWP	Turkish Workers Party
VAT	Value Added Tax
WP	Welfare Party

**CHAPTER I**  
**AUTONOMOUS GRASSROOTS MOVEMENTS:**  
**THE CONVERGENCE OF THE PEOPLE OF GLOBAL NORTH AND SOUTH**  
**AT DIRECT DEMOCRACY**

In the societies of the global North and South alike collective action and popular protest shifted both in nature and form starting from the 1970s, as manifested in the emergence of a variety of autonomous<sup>12</sup> movements and community struggles for social change. Powerfully challenging the logics and practices of capitalism, militarism, formal democracy, eco-colonialism, dominion of technology, and wholesale commodification of human experience, these grassroots movements called for the empowerment of the people, direct democracy, human development, and decolonization of everyday life (Katsiaficas 2006, Wignaraja 1993, Yuen 2004). As diverse as their cultures and traditions are, the activists of these movements share an understanding that their grievances are tied to the existing system, which creates and sustains the illusion of popular participation in decision-making processes as governments and corporations cooperate to impose their neoliberal agenda on, and in this process impoverish, marginalize and alienate, millions of people worldwide. Movement activists counter the false universality of this system of control, epitomized by the Thatcher/Reagan ideology of TINA (There Is No Alternative), with their slogan of “Another World Is Possible” (Yuen 2004: xxiv, xxix).

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<sup>12</sup> In Katsiaficas’ conceptualization of the term, autonomy applies to collective relationships rather than individual subjectivity. Thus conceived, autonomous movements refer to those social movements that are independent from political parties and other formal, hierarchically organized institutes of the establishment. Instead of the false autonomy that the capitalist world system offers individuals in choices among various consumer products, politicians, and individual careers, these movements seek real autonomy in which collectivities can plan their future as part of humanity’s creative powers (Katsiaficas 2006: 266).

As Kothari (1993) enunciates, there is nothing new in the conflict between the forces of status quo and those of social change; however, what is new about autonomous grassroots politics is that for it the telos of political struggle is not the conquest of state power but the creation of direct democracy. Thus, autonomous grassroots movements struggle against systemic injustices that are bound to occur no matter which party or coalition of parties is in power, experimenting with new modes of politics by “building political communities and representing themselves as local citizens of a networked global polity”, and “keeping intellectual ferment alive so that state-based politics do not become an orthodoxy” (Kothari 1993: 73-74, Yuen 2004:viii-ix). In this conception of politics, as stated by Kothari (1993):

...it is not enough to provide participation in the system, even if this could be made less formal and more substantial. The aim is also to create a just society. Participation is necessary but not sufficient for this to happen. For that what is needed is self-government, a decentralized order through which the masses are empowered, not decentralization in the sense of some territorial scheme of devolution of functions and resources to lower levels but decentralization in which the people are the center (P.74).

### **Accumulation and Legitimation Crises in the Global North and South: A Historical Synopsis**

The tendency towards periodically recurring crises is an inherent characteristic of capitalism that stems from the contradiction between the goal of capitalist accumulation and the means by which this goal is pursued (Arrighi 1978, Minibaş 2005). Historically, each crisis period saw the destruction of existing economic, social and political equilibria, creating new balances to reinforce the capitalist system (Minibaş

2005: 20). Again, historically, the solution adopted by capital and the state to respond to a crisis gave rise to problems during subsequent crises (O'Connor 1984).

Intervening in the system the state takes into account the needs and the discontent of the dominated classes to maintain the system in the long run. But, as Poulantzas (1978) states:

...within this framework, it adopts essential measures in favor of expanded reproduction of capital, elaborating them in a political manner such that, through certain concessions to the dominated classes [like free and universal public education, social security, unemployment benefits]..., they may guarantee the reproduction of the class hegemony and domination exercised by the bourgeoisie as a whole over the popular masses (P.185).

Once the dominated classes are appeased with the concessions granted, however, the state strips these socio-economic gains of their initial content and character in a covert fashion (Piven and Cloward 1971, 1982, Poulantzas 1978).

In an attempt to rescue capital from its crisis in the aftermath of the Great Depression the liberal democratic state in the U.S. increasingly intervened in the economy in the 1930s. Along with promoting the private economy the state in this era also assumed an unprecedented role in protecting the working class against the socio-economic costs of the processes of economic growth and capital accumulation. This compromise, which the post World War II social welfare states of the global North were built on, “enabled the state to maintain its claim to be democratic, neutral, and protective of the public good, while legitimizing its participation in the private economy” (Krauss 1989: 230). However, the welfare state compromise contradicted with the logic of capitalism. In its claim to legitimacy the state assumed a distributive and social role, raising democratic expectations. But in meeting these expectations the state was

constrained by the economic imperatives of the capitalist system. Put differently, the welfare state made an impossible promise for “democracy, equality, liberty, and personal fulfillment for all, within the context of capitalism” (Gintis 1980: 225). To secure its legitimacy despite this contradiction and ensure continued mass loyalty the state offered its citizens a system of *formal democracy*, as opposed to *substantive democracy* (Habermas [1973] 1975).

The distinction between formal and substantive (or direct) democracy that Habermas refers to is based on two different understandings of democracy, as conceptualized in the classical theory of democracy, on the one hand, and the theory of democratic elitism, on the other. Classical theory of democracy “is based on the supposition that man’s dignity, and indeed his growth and development as a functioning and responsive individual in a free society, is dependent upon an opportunity to participate *actively* in decisions that significantly affect him” (Bachrach 1967: 98, emphasis added). In contrast, democratic elitism theorists interpret the interests of the people narrowly in terms of the electoral privileges granted to them by political elites, and reduce democracy to a mere political method. In this conception then, “the standard for judging democracy is not the degree of centralization or devolution in the decision-making process but rather the degree to which the system conforms to the basic principles of the democratic method: political equality (universal suffrage), freedom of discussion, majority rule, free periodic elections, and the like” (Bachrach 1967: 94). Thus, the argument goes, as long as these principles are adhered to, the system holds political elites accountable to non-elites, and thereby serves the interests of the latter.

Corresponding to the democratic elitist line of reasoning the welfare states of the advanced industrial countries adopted formal democracy as a means of reconciling capitalism and democracy. This was necessary from the point of view of the social welfare state because substantive or direct democracy would reveal the contradiction between the state's role in capitalist accumulation and its claim to legitimacy. Using formal democratic institutions and procedures as the vehicle for its legitimation process - the process that Habermas ([1973] 1975) refers to as the *formally democratic procurement of legitimation* - the welfare state was able to guarantee mass loyalty, but keep the public from active participation in decision-making<sup>13</sup>. In the resulting "structurally depoliticized public realm" citizens centered their lives around career, leisure, and consumption, and expected rewards conforming to the system such as money, leisure time, and security (Habermas [1973] 1975: 37).

However, the shift in the boundary between the political system and the cultural system at the expense of the latter due to the expansion to the cultural realm of the state's administrative planning and control gave rise to a deficit in the legitimation process. The systems of meaning, which individuals and groups drew on for identity formation and socialization, were damaged and their continuity disrupted with the state's exploitation of cultural elements for administrative or market purposes in the late capitalist era. The legitimation deficit turned into legitimation crisis with increasing resistance to the

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<sup>13</sup> Robinson (1996) extends this conceptualization to the working of global politics under neoliberal dictates, arguing that for the policymakers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global society, democratization is not a means of "meeting the authentic aspirations of repressed and marginalized majorities for political participation and for greater socioeconomic justice" but a tool for the maintenance of social control through incorporating masses into the global social order and thus, legitimizing that order (Robinson 1996: 71-72).

objectification and strategic employment of the cultural system for the needs of the administrative system (Habermas [1973] 1975).

As Wolfe (1977) noted:

The inability of government to achieve its professed ends despite its seeming power, the separation of decision makers from the public, the eclipse of rationality and its replacement by a world of illusions and falsehoods, the bankruptcy of traditional political thought, the replacement of genuine politics by an alienated opposite, the schizophrenic nature of citizenship, the breakdown of mediating mechanisms, and the utopianization of ruling classes – all these processes operating together have contributed to a serious paralysis of the late capitalist state (P.323).

The development experience of the global South has been, and is, closely tied to the political economy of the global North, not only through historical relations of colonialism but also in terms of the ongoing political, economic, and ecological impositions of the capitalist world economy on the former.

Following their liberation from colonial rule and emergence as politically independent nation states in the post-World War II era, countries of the global South adopted a development model based on central planning and control of the economy by the state and/or the private capital, with the main goals of industrialization, modernization and urbanization. The model was to be carried out in a top-down fashion. The benefits would either trickle-down automatically or be handed down by the central state apparatus. Economic growth and development were expected to solve all the ills of the society, whether of material or social nature. In the course of this development process, internal capital accumulation was to “be assisted by free and massive inflows of foreign capital and technology” from the industrialized global North, either the free market economies of the West or the centrally planned economies of the East (Wignaraja 1993:

8). Underlying this path of development was the idea that the global South would “overcome ‘underdevelopment’ in ‘interdependence’ with the rest of the world economy” (Amin 1993: 77).

However, this development model failed on several grounds. At the national level, essentially replicating private capitalism or state capitalism, the economic policies adopted within the framework of the development model ignored the socio-economic specificities of the countries of the South. To illustrate, existing approaches to economic development in the global North looked at the private and the public sector as dichotomies, ignoring the informal people’s sector, which constituted 30-40 percent of the economies of the global South (Wignaraja 1993:14). Politically, the hierarchical and highly centralized bureaucratic-technocratic processes excluded people from participation in decision-making at every level of government. Resistance to this exclusion did not bring about social change because opposition to the system was violently repressed by militarized state structures (Wignaraja 1993). Along with its role as the facilitator of domestic capital accumulation to maintain internal class domination the state became “the instrument of the ‘adjustment’ of the local society to the demands of worldwide accumulation” (Amin 1993: 81). Thus, at the international level, the massive transfer of resources from the global South to the global North widened the gap between the two poles, and illustrated that a technology-capital centered development model was irrelevant to the experiences and needs of the people in the South. In the words of Wignaraja (1993):

Apart from the model's narrow orientation and its lack of relevance to Southern countries, the realities of the quantity and quality of foreign aid, of transfers of technology, and of the weak internal mobilization efforts ensured that the prevailing assumptions regarding the possibilities for rapid growth were of little operational value...[N]either the quantity of aid nor its quality nor the kinds of technology transferred were sufficient or appropriate to transform these societies, let alone to lift them out of the poverty trap into modernization and industrialization...They have created impoverished rural areas in the South and increased the dependence of Southern countries within an inequitable global order (P. 8).

The failure of the economic development model in the global South, and the concomitant acute problems such as economic polarization, youth alienation and environmental degradation “weakened the legitimacy of the nation state, its claims to sovereignty and its ability to be a protector and mediator” (Wignaraja 1993: 19).

### **Neoliberalism and the Grassroots Backlash**

The 1970s were marked by the stagnation crisis of the capitalist world economy. To solve the problem of falling rates of profit the global capital started an offensive against the South and the working classes in the North, targeting the gains made during the period of global economic expansion between 1945 and 1970 (Wallerstein 2004). This offensive, which came to be called neoliberalism, manifested itself in the political realm with the distinct turn to the right of national and international politics. The resulting conservative policies “constituted a pushback on all three sources of rising cost for [global capital]: wages, the internalization of costs to reduce ecological damage, and state taxation to finance the welfare state” (Wallerstein 2004: 123).

Through the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and institutions such as the World Economic Forum, the Trilateral Commission and the G7, the core

countries of the world economy along with the business elite devised the specifics of the neoliberal economic policy. The resulting Washington Consensus:

proclaimed that the world was in the era of “globalization”. Globalization was said to be the triumph of the free market, the radical reduction of the economic role of the state, and above all, the elimination of all barriers to transborder movements of goods and capital. The Washington Consensus ordained that the prime role of governments, especially those in the South, was.... to accept the unrestricted opening of their frontiers....[A]ny government that did not conform would be punished, first of all by the world market and second of all by interstate institutions (Wallerstein 2004: 123).

The states of the South had to borrow from outside lenders to cope with the negative effects on their economies of the stagnation of the world economy and the debt crisis. Thus, the impositions of the IMF and the World Bank, the two powerful enforcers of the Washington Consensus, were incorporated into the national economic policies of the global South. In return for their loans to the South the IMF and the World Bank stipulated that the economies of the former be restructured in line with neoliberal policy prescriptions, that is, social services be reduced, trade be liberalized, and priority be given to the repayment of external debt over any other policy measure. The global neoliberal agenda was further bolstered with the establishment in 1995 of the World Trade Organization, which functions as a forum for trade liberalization, coordination of multilateral trade negotiations, and settlement of trade disputes.

These top-down policy impositions were counteracted by powerful social movements from below. People worldwide stood up and acted against the imperatives of the capitalist world-economy that increasingly benefited the few at the expense of the many, whose socio-economic needs were disregarded by the system, and who were excluded from decision-making processes at local, national and global levels of

government. Examples of these movements include the democratization struggles in the Philippines, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Latin American countries; ecological grassroots movements against commercial and industrial projects destructive of the lives and livelihoods of communities, such as the Chipko movement and the Narmada Bachao Andolan in India, and the Environmental Justice Movement in the United States; ecological resistance movements mobilized by indigenous people and other inhabitants of rural communities against the risks and damages of corporate mining operations in West Papua in Indonesia, Bougainville Island in Papua New Guinea, Niger Delta in Nigeria, Intag in Ecuador, Bergama, Eşme, Havran, and others in Turkey, Cajamarca in Peru, Imataca in Venezuela, and Rosia Montana in Romania; and the ‘movement of movements’, also known as ‘alterglobalization’, ‘counterglobalization’, ‘global justice movement’ or ‘antisystemic movement’ (Yuen 2004: viii), which brings together diverse groups from the global North and South against the economic and socio-cultural ravages of the Washington Consensus such as increasing unemployment, alienation, destruction of food autonomy, and ecological damage (Wallerstein 2004).

### **Ecological Grassroots Movements: At the Crossroads of System and Lifeworld**

Ecological destruction and environmental inequities are closely linked to the political economy of capitalist production processes and relations (Faber 1998, Foster 1998, O’Connor 1998). To sustain the process of capital accumulation and profit increase the global economy relies on ecologically and socially destructive forms of production. In this process, governments practically serve as agents of global capital. By pitting economic growth against environmental protection, and taking decisions that privilege

the former over the latter, political elites accommodate the needs of economic elites. It is at this rift between economics and politics on the one hand, and the social and natural environment on the other, that ecological grassroots struggles find their meaning. In Habermas' ([1981] 1989) words, "the new conflicts arise along the seams between system and lifeworld" (p.395). Thus, ecological grassroots movements in the global North and South struggle both to protect their means of life against "further destruction resulting from capital's inherent recklessness and excesses" and to democratize the state through structural change (O'Connor 1998:12).

Starting from the late 1970s and early 1980s, residents in communities across the U.S. have frequently mobilized in grassroots social movement organizations to oppose a local environmental threat. Love Canal in upstate New York was the first of hundreds of communities organized to fight against toxic contamination in their neighborhood. When residents discovered in 1978 that their community was contaminated with hazardous waste disposed of by a chemical company they organized a local protest and fought a successful battle against the company, forcing it to be accountable for its actions (Di Chiro 1998). Their path of resistance and protest was followed by many communities throughout the country facing similar problems. Other communities organized to oppose a proposed facility construction in their neighborhoods due to high environmental risks involved. The literature shows that some of these community groups transformed into justice, equity, and rights-based movement organizations when they realized over the course of their struggle the compounded nature of inequalities they face on political, economic, social, and environmental grounds (Bullard 1994, 1996, Bullard and Wright

1992, Taylor 1993). However, the conditions under which such transformation occurs is not examined by social movement scholars.

This research project is an attempt to address this gap in the literature through an exploratory case study examining a grassroots movement in the villages of Bergama, Turkey that transformed from an environmental to a rights-based movement. The villagers' long-lasting struggle against gold mining started out as a local ecological resistance movement in the early 1990s, and gradually transformed into an environmental justice movement with national implications when activists adopted a rights-based discourse by incorporating into their claims the notions of justice, democratic participation, and citizenship rights. This transformation occurred against the background of significant economic and political changes in Turkey. On the economic level, Turkey saw a radical shift in policy from an inward-oriented development strategy and planned economy based on import substitution, heavy protectionism, and export pessimism in the 1960s and 1970s, to neoliberal economy based on export expansion and progressive liberalization of the trade regime and the capital account, starting in the early 1980s. On the political level, Turkey's long, ambitious journey to become a full member of the European Union (EU) gained momentum with the entry into force of the Customs Union Agreement in 1996, and with the endorsement of the candidate status of Turkey by the EU Helsinki Council in 1999. The political significance of these developments was manifest in the sweeping reforms undertaken by the Turkish Parliament in 2001 and 2002 to meet the democracy and human rights criteria for EU membership.

This study contributes to the field of environmental justice studies by addressing the gap in the literature that leaves environmental injustices outside the U.S. less

examined. The research also provides an in-depth account of the transformation process of the Bergama movement, and an understanding of the formation and transformation of this community's collective identity. As such, it adds to other studies in the literature, which point to movement transformation but fail to address the specific questions of 'why' and 'how'. An essential analytical departure of the current study from previous research on the Bergama case is that the former not only examines the movement transformation from the perspective of internal movement dynamics but also ties it to the political-economic context by looking at the interrelations between the transformation of the movement and the changes in the political-economic setting at the national, as well as the global level. Finally, the study presents an opportunity for further research to compare the Bergama movement with other cases around the world, which in turn, is likely to contribute to an adequate understanding of the shift in the meaning of justice within the context of contemporary social movements.

**CHAPTER II**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE MOVEMENT:**  
**A “NEW SOCIAL MOVEMENT”?**

The emergence and upsurge of new forms of collective action in the industrially advanced Western societies in the late 1960s and early 1970s challenged the classical theories of social movements on both sides of the Atlantic and led to the emergence of a new strand of theories in the social movement literature. Among these, the European-originated New Social Movements (NSM) theories viewed the social movements of the post-1960 era as manifestations of and responses to the structural conditions of advanced industrial societies. According to the NSM theorists, the contemporary social movements were brought about by new conflicts. Underlying these conflicts was the contradiction between the systemic acknowledgment and reinforcement of the autonomy of individual action, on the one hand, and the encroachment of state power into the private sphere, on the other (Della Porta et.al. 2006, Habermas [1981] 1989, Melucci 1989, Offe 1985). For NSM theorists, a defining characteristic of the new conflicts was their socio-cultural nature, which significantly differed from the old, class-based conflicts over economic distribution (Della Porta et.al. 2006, Habermas 1970, [1973] 1975, [1981] 1989, Melucci 1980, 1989, 1996, Offe 1985, Touraine [1978] 1981).

Contrary to the arguments of the NSM theorists, however, class-based conflicts continued into the post-industrial era in developed and developing countries alike. In the case of environmental movements, these conflicts effected the emergence of ecological resistance movements against the assault of extractive and polluting industries on the life-sustaining resources of socio-economically marginalized communities worldwide and

against the disproportionate distribution of the costs and benefits of capital accumulation. The Environmental Justice Movement in the USA constitutes an example of these movements.

This chapter provides a review of the NSM approach to contemporary social movements and of the Environmental Justice Movement (EJM) in an attempt to assess the usefulness of the NSM theories in explaining the latter.

### **The Emergence of New Social Movements (NSM) Theories**

For the greater part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, European and North American social movement scholars have focused on structural strain and ideology to explain collective action. Within the American tradition of analysis, strain theorists argued that rapid social change introduced pervasive strains into society and social movements emerged as mechanisms to cope with the emotional stress of those strains. On the other side of the Atlantic, sociologists emphasized the socio-economic class base of the movements and centered their analyses upon ideologies that movement actors drew on to articulate their sense of injustice, which provided the basis for mobilization (Johnston et.al. 1994).

The emergence in the 1960s of movements, mobilized around different grievances and demands, and expressed by different constituencies than in previous cases of collective action, prompted social movement scholars to devise new theories to explain contemporary movements.

In the US, resource mobilization (RM) theories developed in the 1970s as a response to strain theories. RM theorists argued that structural strain alone did not sufficiently explain movement emergence because strain always existed in society. As

their point of departure to analyze contemporary movements RM theorists focused on the resources and opportunity structures available for the mobilization and organization of movements, and on the rational orientation of movement actors.

New social movements (NSM) theories emerged in the late 1980s and early 1990s in continental Europe as another attempt to explain the post-1960 movements. NSM theorists offered a corrective to RM theories and the dominant European theories of collective action. According to NSM theorists, RM scholars restricted their analyses to the micro-level, and failed to link the emergence and nature of contemporary social movements to the pervasive structural changes of the late modern era. On the other hand, the dominant European theories of collective action were built on the economic reductionism of classical Marxism, and thus, proved inadequate for grasping contemporary social movements (Buechler 2000). Marxist social movement scholars had argued that the fundamental economic logic of capitalist production shaped all politically motivated collective action, and that the class standing of movement activists defined their collective identity. Reasoning that socio-economic stratification categories no longer applied to contemporary social movement actors NSM theorists looked to ascriptive identity codes, like ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and age, as the determinants of collective identity, and to socio-cultural factors as the source of movement emergence.

### **NSM Theorists**

Although NSM theories share common themes that distinguish them as a consistent theoretical framework from other theoretical approaches to social movements

they vary in the emphases they assign to political, structural, social and cultural aspects of contemporary social movements.

In an attempt to lay out the variances within the NSM theoretical framework, this section introduces the basic ideas of four major NSM theorists: Jürgen Habermas of Germany, Alain Touraine of France, Alberto Melucci of Italy, and Manuel Castells of Spain.

### ***Jürgen Habermas***

Habermas constructs a two-level concept of society that integrates lifeworld and system. Lifeworld incorporates the processes of reaching understanding in social interaction. The lifeworld of the members of a community comprises of undisputed background convictions, which are culturally transmitted, linguistically organized, and continuously renewed in interaction. These background convictions serve as interpretive patterns of communication, which communicative actors draw on for common definitions of situations.

System, on the other hand, incorporates the processes of material reproduction of the lifeworld, through which a society secures its physical existence in relation to nature and ensures its functional integration.

In late capitalist societies, the twin processes of rationalization of the lifeworld and the increasing complexity of the system brought about the uncoupling of system and lifeworld. Rationalization of the lifeworld occurs when the institutionally produced knowledge penetrates to the level of everyday communication and replaces the interaction-guiding functions of the unchallenged traditional knowledge that is immune from any criticism (Habermas [1981] 1984: 340). With the rationalization of the

lifeworld, the communicatively-structured and socially-integrated spheres of action, i.e. the private and public spheres, are differentiated from the formally-organized and systemically-integrated domains of action, i.e. the economy and the state (Habermas [1981] 1989: 318). In this process, societal integration is overtaken by the language-independent steering media of money and power, which set their own imperatives against the marginalized lifeworld. Thus, the mediatization of the lifeworld turned into the colonization of the lifeworld.

Habermas states that the new social movements are directed against “the profit-dependent instrumentalization of work in one’s vocation, the market-dependent mobilization of labor power, against the extension of pressures of competition and performance all the way down into elementary school. [They also take] aim at the monetarization of services, relationships, and time, at the consumerist redefinition of private spheres of life and personal life-styles” (Habermas [1981] 1989: 395). In short, the new social movements are mobilized against the colonization of the lifeworld.

### ***Alain Touraine***

According to Touraine, industrial society is gradually replaced by a *programmed society*. The characteristic feature of programmed society is “that the central investments are now made at the level of production management and not at that of work organization, as is the case in industrial society” (Touraine [1978]1981: 6). Consequently, class domination in programmed society consists less in organizing work than in managing the production and the data-processing apparatus. Touraine designates the dominant class of programmed society as the *technocracy*. Since the domination by technocracy transcends the realm of work and extends to the organization of social life

the resistance to this domination is not limited to a particular sphere and a particular class. Thus, the struggle is no longer between capital and labor in the factory but between the different kinds of apparatus and their users, i.e. consumers or the public, at large. The latter is defined by their resistance to domination rather than by their specific attributes, like economic class. As opposed to the economy- and labor-centered social struggles in industrial society collective resistance in programmed society is carried out in the socio-cultural realm for the control of *historicity*.

*Historicity* is a central concept in Touraine's theory of social movements. It refers to the capacity of social actors to construct a system of knowledge and the cultural, cognitive, economic, and ethical models that allow them to produce society. A social movement, according to Touraine, is "the organized collective behavior of a class actor struggling against his class adversary for the social control of historicity in a concrete community" (Touraine [1978]1981: 77). The contemporary social movements over the control of historicity involve a struggle between the public and the technocrats over who will program the programmed society.

### ***Alberto Melucci***

Melucci conceives of postindustrial societies as complex systems driven by advanced information technologies. Thus, production in these societies revolves not only around economic resources but also around social relationships, symbols, identities and individual needs (Melucci 1996: 99). Similarly, the market is transformed from a setting where material goods are circulated to a virtual sphere in which symbols are exchanged. Due to the ever-rising complexity of the system, the management of postindustrial

societies requires increasing intervention in the relational processes and symbolic systems on the social/cultural domain.

The distant and impersonal apparatuses of control in postindustrial society follow an instrumental rationality and subject individuals to its dictates, which permeate daily life and existential choices by intervening in and manipulating identity formation processes, communicative resources, relations with nature, and the biological and affective deep structure of individual behavior. Resisting this domination, the new social movements focus on personal, spiritual and expressive aspects of life.

Melucci identifies five characteristics shared by all new social movements (Melucci 1996: 102-103). One common characteristic is the low negotiability of the goals. Due to their socio-cultural nature only a small portion of the demands of new social movements can be mediated and institutionalized through political representation and decision-making. Secondly, unlike previous forms of collective action, the new social movements are not interested in seizing political power and gaining control over the state apparatus. Rather, they demand immediate control over the conditions of existence, and freedom from the domination by the system. Thirdly, new social movements challenge the separation between the public and the private. This challenge manifests itself in the attempt of the movement actors to politicize everyday life, aiming at its democratization. Fourthly, new social movements express solidarity as an objective in their search for a communal identity. They often center on identity codes such as gender, age, ethnicity, and locality to achieve solidarity. Finally, new social movements reject representation and appeal to spontaneity, anti-authoritarianism, anti-hierarchy, and direct action tactics as their modes of action.

### *Manuel Castells*

Castells argues that the techno-economic transformation of society, brought about by the information technology revolution and the neo-liberal restructuring of capitalism, induced a new form of society, which he calls the *network society*. The network society is characterized by the globalization of economic activities; the networking form of organization; the flexibility and instability of work; a pervasive, interconnected, and diversified media system; and the transformation of the material foundations of life. In Castells' (2004: 2) words: "This new form of social organization, in its pervasive globality, is diffusing throughout the world,...shaking institutions, transforming cultures, creating wealth and inducing poverty, spurring greed, innovation, and hope, while simultaneously imposing hardship and instilling despair".

Castells conceptualizes the network society as being shaped by the opposite trends of globalization and identity. Since 1970s collective actors worldwide have been powerfully challenging the one-dimensional logic and the globalizing dynamics of the network society, and claiming control over their lives and environment. These collective expressions include proactive movements such as feminism and environmentalism, aiming at transforming human relationships; and reactive movements, resisting the assault of techno-economic forces on fundamental categories of social existence, like religion, nation, ethnicity, family, and locality.

A common characteristic of these new social movements is their adoption of a decentralized form of organization based on networking, which mirrors and counteracts the mode of domination of the network society. These networks of collective action not only share information and organize activity but also produce and distribute cultural

codes. Due to their diffuse and subtle character it is difficult to assess the potential of these networks for creating social change. However, Castells (2004) argues, it is this same characteristic of collective action networks that promises to create a new society:

Because our historical vision has become so used to orderly battalions, colorful banners, and scripted proclamations of social change, we are at a loss when confronted with the subtle pervasiveness of incremental changes of symbols processed through multiform networks, away from the halls of power. It is in these back alleys of society, whether in alternative electronic networks or in grassrooted networks of communal resistance, that I have sensed the embryos of a new society, labored in the fields of history by the power of identity (P.428).

### **Premises of NSM Theories**

NSM scholars focused on the conditions and processes of transformation in postindustrial societies that gave rise to new social movements. On the macro-level, they studied the structural roots of new conflicts associated with modernity, capitalism, bureaucracy, and welfare state, and the new ideologies raised on those conflicts (Dalton and Kuechler 1990, Eder 1985, Habermas [1981]1989, Kriesi et.al. 1995, Offe 1985). According to NSM scholars, new social movements no longer accepted the premises of a society based on industrialization and economic growth, and reacted to the infusion of the welfare state into private spheres of life and to its creation of new needs, which could no longer be satisfied. On the micro-level, NSM theorists specified changing values, aspirations, grievances and collective identity as determinants of movement mobilization (Cohen 1985, Inglehart 1977, Melucci 1989, Pizzorno 1978, Touraine [1978] 1981).

As the point of departure for their analyses NSM theorists looked into the structural, political-economic context in which contemporary social movements unfolded (Buechler 2000, Kriesi et.al. 1995). In an attempt to theorize the link between the social,

cultural and political transformation of postindustrial societies, on the one hand, and the emergence of new social movements, on the other, NSM scholars contrasted the old and new political paradigms. The old political paradigm of the liberal welfare state relied on a growth-security framework (Offe 1985). The underlying assumption of this framework was that dominant values of progress, growth, prosperity, social mobility, and instrumental rationality would foster the dynamic force of the politico-economic system, which was based on unabated industrial production and productivity increase through advanced technology. Furthermore, as the family-, work-, and consumption-centered private sphere would absorb the energies and aspirations of individuals or groups of individuals, the latter would show little or no interest in participating in the sphere of public policy as long as the state apparatus ensured the security needed for the uninterrupted flow of this dynamic process. Thus, the welfare state provided its citizens economic security through the social security system, military security through the national defense apparatus, and legal security through the judicial and correctional system.

The unproblematic functioning of this political paradigm during the two decades following World War II was not so much due to the absence of social and political conflict in this era but rather to the widely agreed-on and undisputed modes of conflict resolution (Offe 1985). Conflicts revolved around socio-economic concerns such as the distribution of the benefits of economic growth and the protection of social status. As the dominant establishments representing collective actors, specialized interest organizations and political parties resorted to collective bargaining and party competition as the exclusive mechanisms of conflict resolution (Habermas [1981]1989, Offe 1985).

To accommodate collective actors within the growth-security framework, the welfare state also provided individuals with resources to develop their potential for autonomy and self-realization. However, to ensure the internal integration of the increasingly complex system, the state simultaneously needed to expand its control beyond the public sphere, subjecting individuals to the systemic dictates of the economy and the state apparatus, and thus invading the private sphere (Della Porta et.al. 2006, Habermas [1981] 1989, Melucci 1989, Offe 1985). On the one hand, individuals were asked “to participate in the shaping of their own identity, in the constitution of their capacity for action; on the other hand, their identity [was] denied and their capacity for action circumscribed through the ramified intervention of the apparatuses of control and regulation, which [defined] the conditions, forms, and goals of individual and collective action” (Melucci 1996:109). This contradiction led to what Habermas ([1981] 1989) termed the “colonization of the lifeworld”, and gave rise to new conflicts, which:

...deviate in various ways from the welfare state pattern of institutionalized conflict over distribution. They no longer flare up in domains of material reproduction; they are no longer channeled through parties and associations....Rather, these new conflicts arise in domains of cultural reproduction, social integration, and socialization; they are carried out in sub-institutional – or at least extraparliamentary – forms of protest...The issue is not primarily one of compensations that the welfare state can provide, but of defending and restoring endangered ways of life. In short, the new conflicts are not ignited by distribution problems but by questions having to do with the grammar of forms of life. (P.392).

Another contradictory characteristic of advanced industrial societies was their structural incapacity to deal with the global threats and risks they created (Eder 1985, Habermas [1981]1989, Offe 1985). Omnipotent as they were in controlling, exploiting, and dominating their social and physical environments, the state and the economy in

advanced industrial societies were unable to cope with the self-destructive effects of the use of their power.

The new conflicts that stemmed from the contradictions of advanced industrial societies transcended the old, class-based conflicts over distribution and brought about a shift in the focus of social movements from socio-economic goals to socio-cultural ones (Habermas [1981] 1989, Melucci 1996, Offe 1985, Touraine 1981). Born out of these new conflicts, the new political paradigm adopted by contemporary social movements sought to politicize everyday life, the institutions of work and family, the relations with nature, and the standards of rationality and progress, beyond the dominant channels of representative-bureaucratic political institutions, and thus, emancipate civil society from state regulation and control (Offe 1985:820). Defying the welfare state's binary classification of 'public sphere' and 'private sphere', this politicization established for itself an intermediate, non-institutional niche between the private and public spheres. In this space of social action, new social movements resisted the intervention of the state and the market in daily life, claiming the right for individuals to decide on their own private and affective lives against the all-pervasive manipulation by the system (Della Porta et al. 2006:19). Emphasizing decentralization, freedom from control and regulation, and articulating their need for belonging, esteem, autonomy, and self-realization, the new social movement actors centered their demands around issues such as sexual identity, cultural-ethnic-linguistic identity, physical environment and quality of life (Habermas [1981]1989, Inglehart 1977, Melucci 1996, Offe 1985).

According to NSM theorists, the ideological characteristics of the new social movements also set them apart from the old forms of collective action. To illustrate, the

workers' movement of the past used ideology, in line with the Marxist conception of the term, as a unifying source of mobilization (Johnston et.al. 1994). In terms of the ideologies they espoused, earlier social movements in general were classifiable as conservative, liberal, right, left, capitalist or socialist. In contrast, the new social movements did not lend themselves to simplistic ideological categorizations. Rather, they exhibited numerous ideas and values in their search for institutional reform to expand civil versus political dimensions of society and to democratize everyday life (Johnston et.al. 1994, Offe 1985).

The driving force of the new social movements was collective identity, and what Inglehart (1977) referred to as postmaterialist values. In contrast to materialist values that involved economic well-being and physical security, post-materialist values gave priority to the quality of life. Rejecting the instrumental rationality, social control and co-optation systems of advanced industrial societies, postmaterialist values emphasized personal and political freedom, political and economic democracy, environmental protection, openness to new ideas, and a caring society (Buechler 2000, Kriesi et.al. 1995). According to Kriesi et.al. (1995), postmaterialist values were similar to the values traditionally defended by the left in Western Europe and included social-democratic, libertarian, and emancipatory components. Similarly, Della Porta and Rucht identified the new social movements as "left-libertarian movements" (Kriesi et.al. 1995:xx). This conceptualization drew on Kitschelt's (1990) analogy between the new left parties and the new social movements:

Although Left-libertarian parties and new social movements operate in different institutional domains, they both seek to disrupt established relations between state and civil society from the perspective of similar visions and objectives. They are “Left” because they share with traditional socialism a mistrust of the marketplace, of private investment, and of achievement ethic, and a commitment to egalitarian redistribution. They are “libertarian” because they reject the authority of the private or public bureaucracies to regulate individual and collective conduct. They instead favor participatory democracy and the autonomy of groups and individuals to define their economic, political and cultural institutions unencumbered by market or bureaucratic dictates (P.179-180).

A defining characteristic of the new social movements that stood in contrast to the social movements of the past was their unconforming organizational structure and modes of action. Rejecting proxy and control, movement actors relied on legal but unconventional direct action tactics of disruption and resistance to mobilize public attention (Offe 1985:830). In terms of organization, the new social movements adopted a decentralized, participatory, non-hierarchical, informal model with a poorly defined distinction between the roles of rank and file members and formal leaders.

Habermas ([1981]1989) and Offe (1985) identified the social base of the new social movements as the middle class. Accordingly, the new social movements were carried out by the new middle class; elements of the old middle class; and a peripheral segment of the population (Habermas [1981]1989:392, Offe 1985:832-34). The first group mostly comprised of those employed in the human services sector, and enjoyed high educational status and relative economic security. The second group was made up of self-employed individuals, such as farmers, shop owners, and craftsmen. The last group consisted of those located either outside the labor market or peripheral to it, such as middle class housewives, students, retired people, and unemployed or marginally employed youths.

Despite the fact that the social base of the new social movements could be marked by class, in their self-identification the movement actors relied neither on socio-economic codes nor on political orientation but on categories pertaining to the particular goals they pursued, such as gender, ethnicity, lifestyle, locality, or in the case of environmental and pacifist movements, the entire human race (Habermas [1981]1989, Melucci 1996, Offe 1985, Touraine 1981). Offe (1985:833) explained this seeming paradox by noting that the new politics of the new social movements was “a politics *of* a class but not *on behalf of* a class”. To be concrete, movement actors, identifiable by particular socio-economic status, formed an ad-hoc social alliance and acted as a collectivity, bound by their critique of growth and their supra-class demands of either universal (e.g. in the case of the environmental movement) or particularistic nature (e.g. in the case of students’ movement).

**Environment and Justice Redefined:  
The Emergence of the Environmental Justice Movement (EJM)**

Shifts in the nature and scope of social movements also occurred in the United States. One of these shifts was observed in the environmental movement. The mainstream trend in the contemporary U.S. environmental movement, represented by the professional, hierarchical, and bureaucratic organizations, was challenged in the late 1970s and early 1980s with the emergence of a culturally diverse grassroots movement for environmental justice that redefined “the scope of the environmental movement to include social conditions that people experience in everyday life” (Hofrichter 2002:1).

Environmental justice framework came into being as an expression of resistance by low income and minority communities to their unequal exposure to industrial toxins, dirty air and drinking water, the disproportionate siting of polluting industries, municipal landfills, incinerators, and hazardous waste treatment, storage and disposal facilities in their neighborhoods, and to the adverse effects of these discriminatory land-use decisions on their well-being and quality of life (Bryant and Mohai 1992, Bullard 1983, 1993, 1994, 2002, 2005, Cole and Foster 2001, Ferris and Hahn-Baker 1995, Hamilton 2002, Lavelle and Coyle 1992, Miller 2002, United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice 1987). Making a connection between the use of their neighborhoods as the “dumping grounds” (Bullard 1983, 1990a, 1992, 1993, 2000, Bullard and Wright 1992) for locally unwanted land uses on the one hand, and their socio-economic and demographic characteristics on the other, these groups couched their struggle for environmental equity in a civil rights and social justice context, paying particular attention to “questions of distributive justice, community empowerment, democratic accountability” (Taylor 1993:57). They challenged industrial policies that pit economic growth against the environment, housing policies that forced minority and low-income families to choose between the Scylla of health risks and the Charybdis of homelessness, and demanded a shared role in the decision-making processes that affected their communities (Bullard 2000).

According to the proponents of the EJM, “environmental degradation, economics, power, politics, and racism are intricately interwoven and cannot be separated” (Bryant and Mohai 1992:6). This core claim of the movement was supported by studies reporting that risk burdens - the by-products of polluting industries and their production processes -

were localized in low income and minority communities while benefits were disproportionately distributed to whites and people at the upper end of the education and income scales (Bullard 1983, 1992, 1994, 1996, 2000, 2002, Cole and Foster 2001, Guinnessi et.al. 1979, Hamilton 2002). EJM activists and scholars argued that these disparities were not coincidental. Rather, they reflected larger social inequalities, which had been “created, tolerated, and institutionalized by local, state, and federal action” (Bullard 1994: xv) over the years. The EJM asserted that the differences in environmental quality between people of color and white communities were manifestations of an institutionalized form of racism. This distinctive form of racism was termed as *environmental racism* by Rev. Dr. Benjamin Chavis, Jr., a longtime civil rights activist and a key leader in the EJM from the early 1980s through the early 1990s (Brulle 2000, Cole and Foster 2001, Di Chiro 1998, Lee 1992, Mohai and Bryant 1992a), to refer to “racial discrimination in environmental policymaking, the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate<sup>14</sup> targeting of communities of color for toxic waste disposal and siting of polluting industries, the official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in communities of color, and the history of excluding people of color from the mainstream environmental groups, decision-making boards, commissions, and regulatory bodies” (Chavis 1993:3). Environmental racism provided benefits for whites while shifting costs to people of color by influencing “local land use, enforcement of environmental regulations, industrial facility siting, and where people of color live,

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<sup>14</sup> Bullard extends Chavis’ conceptualization to include ‘unintended’ discrimination in the definition of environmental racism. According to Bullard (2000:98), environmental racism refers to “any policy, practice, or directive that differentially affects or disadvantages (whether intended or unintended) individuals, groups, or communities based on race or color”.

work, and play” (Bullard 2000: 98). Like racism in the housing industry, educational institutions, job market, and judicial system, environmental racism was incorporated in public policy decisions and private industry practices, and reinforced by government, legal, economic, political, and military institutions (Bullard 1993, 2000, 2005).<sup>15</sup>

As justified and well-articulated as these conceptions and problem definitions were, however, low-income and minority communities didn’t have an avenue to address their claims within the ideological and organizational framework of the existing professional environmental movement organizations. It was essentially due to this reason that they eventually organized to build a movement of their own. An analysis of the differences between the EJM and the professional wing of the contemporary U.S. environmental movement is therefore necessary to present a complete picture of the EJM.

### **The Locus of the EJM in the Contemporary U.S. Environmental Movement**

The late-1960s’ youth-centered, reactionary environmental movement in the U.S. gave way to a mainstream reformist movement in the 1970s when the old conservation groups and the newly established organizations professionalized, taking on primary concern with issues of conservation and pollution regulation, relying on compromise and

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<sup>15</sup> ‘Environmental racism’ was gradually adopted as a key concept by EJM scholars. Although the term was coined in 1987 it was not incorporated into EJM discourse right away. For example, the first edition of Bullard’s seminal work *Dumping in Dixie* (1990), the first book published on environmental justice, does not include the concept ‘environmental racism’, while the second and third editions (1994 and 2000, respectively) employ the term extensively throughout the book. Another example for the evolution of concept formation in the EJM literature is the shift from the term “Black Environmentalism” (in ‘Dumping in Dixie’, 1990) to “People of Color Environmentalism” (in ‘Dumping in Dixie’, 1994 and 2000), as the movement increasingly embraced and was embraced by Native American, Latino, and Asian Pacific communities.

concession strategies, and engaging in tactics of legislative lobbying, electoral campaigns, awareness raising, and occasional litigation (Cable et.al. 2002, 2005, Faber and O'Connor 2002). The hierarchically structured organizations of the professional environmental movement, most of them headquartered in Washington D.C., predominantly consisted of white, male, upper- and middle-class, paid employees. Their constituencies reflected a similar demographic pattern of white, highly educated, upper- and middle class members. This elitist membership profile and organizational structure of the professional environmental organizations, along with their neglect, if not ignorance, of the social justice and public health implications of environmental problems, contributed to an ever-growing rift between the low-income and minority communities and the mainstream environmental movement.

The move away from this mainstream trend in contemporary environmentalism came in the late 1970s with the emergence of an innovative grassroots formation in the environmental movement when the locals of Love Canal in upstate New York discovered that their community was contaminated with hazardous waste disposed of by a chemical company (Cable et.al. 2005, Cole and Foster 2001, Di Chiro 1998). Community residents organized a local protest and fought a successful battle against the company, forcing the latter to take responsibility for its actions (Di Chiro 1998). Their path of resistance and protest was followed by other communities throughout the country facing similar problems and threats of toxic contamination caused by what Erikson (1994) called “a new species of trouble”, with reference to postwar industrial technologies, production processes, and their by-products of high environmental- and health risks. The community-based organizations comprising the grassroots wing of the environmental

movement had a membership profile that was markedly different from that of the professional environmental organizations. Members of grassroots groups were middle-or working-class whites, with many women holding leadership positions (Bullard 1993, 2000, Cable et.al. 2005, Cole and Foster 2001, Faber and O'Connor 2002, Freudenberg and Steinsapir 1992, Kraus 2002, Taylor 1993).

The EJM is considered to be part of this grassroots wing of the contemporary environmental movement and an outgrowth of the civil rights movement (Cable et. al. 2002, Cole and Foster 2001, Di Chiro 1998, Martinez-Alier 2003). According to Cole and Foster (2001), the EJM added to the economic analysis of environmental problems the civil rights movement's racial and structural critique of the political economy. Faber and McCarthy (2003:45-46) argued that, in addition, the EJM drew on a diversity of political paths, including the occupational health and safety movement, the indigenous land rights movement, and the solidarity movement for promoting human rights. The constituency of the EJM comprised of low-income and minority groups who were aggrieved by the disproportionate distribution of various environmental risks in their communities and the discriminatory waste facility siting decisions targeting their neighborhoods. The immediate goal of movement advocates was the equitable distribution of environmental hazards and privileges through all segments of society. In the long run, they envisioned a world where the burdens of pollutants and hazardous waste would be reduced and eventually eliminated (Taylor 1993:54). The EJM activists directed their protests against corporations and decision-making bodies at local, state, and federal level that they held responsible for the discriminatory facility siting and enforcement decisions. They also criticized "the corporate state structure that supports the

externalization of the environmental costs of production, disproportionately allocates environmental risks to people of color and the poor, and creates racial and class inequalities in communities” (Cable et.al. 2005:60). It is essential to note the significance of environmental justice scholars for the development of the EJM (Cole and Foster 2001, Field 1998, Taylor 1993). Academics played a crucial role in supporting the local struggles for environmental justice through their studies demonstrating the disproportionate impact of environmental risks on people of color and low-income communities; in shaping or reaffirming movement leaders’ consciousness about the structural nature of environmental oppression (Cole and Foster 2001:25), and thus helping to redefine and reconceptualize environmental problems.

As Bullard (1992:89, 2000:12) stated, since their residents were affiliated with civic clubs, neighborhood associations, community improvement groups, and anti-poverty and anti-discrimination organizations, African American communities had already in place a protest infrastructure that facilitated the emergence of an environmental justice movement. Also, due to the long history of racism in the U.S., low-income people of color had never been fully convinced that the government was on their side. The EJM activists were therefore, in Taylor’s (1993:54) words, “more experientially equipped to perceive the injustice in the distribution of environmental hazards”. For working class white communities, however, it was a major disappointment to realize that the government did not protect them adequately (Cable et.al. 2002, Čapek 1992, Di Chiro 1998). In her book depicting the story of the community-based environmental struggle in Love Canal, Gibbs (1998:3) best exemplified this experience when she wrote, “if you were to ask any of the protesters if they could have pictured themselves carrying a sign

before the issue surfaced, they would have answered, ‘Absolutely not.’ Law-abiding, tax-paying citizens were forced to move from the anonymity of their homes out into the streets, a difficult step for anyone, and a big leap for most”.

Despite these differences, however, the African-American working class communities and their white counterparts are similar in a number of ways in terms of the ecological grassroots struggles they wage, which set them apart from the professional environmental movement.

The grassroots wing of the U.S. environmental movement has a community-based organizational structure. The regional and national environmental justice networks incorporating hundreds of grassroots organizations reflect a decentralized, geographically scattered, web-like organizational formation, as opposed to the centralized, pyramid-like, top-down structure of the professional environmental organizations (Cole and Foster 2001:151).

A strength of the EJM organizations is that their leaders and activists come from communities directly affected by environmental and economic injustices they fight against (Bullard 1993, 2000, Moore and Head 2002, Taylor 1993), as opposed to the many members of the professional environmental organizations whose sensitivity to environmental problems stems mostly from published or broadcast sources rather than personal experience. EJM organizations rely on tactics of public protest, demonstrations, public meetings, fact-finding and hearings to educate local residents, petitions, lobbying, and occasional litigation (Been 1992-1993, Bullard 1993, Cable et.al. 2002, 2005, Faber 1998, Moore and Head 2002, Szasz and Meuser 1997).

The constituencies of the EJM organizations mistrust government agencies (Brulle 2000, Bullard 1993, 2004, Cable et.al 2002, 2005, Cole and Foster 2001, Harper 2000, Moore and Head 2002, Walsh 1981, 1988). Realizing that they were the targets of environmental risks that more affluent communities could avoid, and that the government sided more with the economically and politically powerful stakeholders than the disenfranchised groups who were left to bear the brunt of the environment- and health-related side effects of economic growth, low-income and minority communities organized to achieve environmental and social justice. In Bullard's (2004:3) words, "today, a healthy paranoia pervades many communities beset by environmental racism, guarding them from falling victim to a false sense of safety and government protection".

EJM activists criticize the implicit paternalism in the professional environmental organizations' approach to dealing with the issues of environmental justice (Di Chiro 1998:113). They consider self-representation and self-definition an essential characteristic of their movements distinguishing them from the mainstream environmental movement. This insistence on independence is best exemplified in their powerful slogan of "We speak for ourselves!" (Alston 1990).

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of the EJM is the way movement actors (re)define the environment. The professional environmental organizations conceive of the environment and nature as "a threatened wilderness separate from polluted, overpopulated cities; ....the wild animal species and the non-human world in general" (Di Chiro 1998:130-n.2). Rejecting this human/nature dichotomy, the EJM groups incorporate people and the places they "live, work, play, worship, and go to school" (Bullard 2004, Novotny 2000) in their definition of the environment. This

redefinition provides a context for the grassroots groups of the EJM to address issues that are central to the everyday survival of low-income and minority communities. Thus, old houses with lead-based paint; homes, schools and playgrounds built on abandoned toxic waste sites; congested freeways crossing poor and minority neighborhoods; polluting industries and waste facilities in disenfranchised communities; factories and farmlands exposing their workers to health risks, are all considered environmental problems from the vantage point of the EJM.

### **Milestones in the Struggle for Environmental Justice**

According to EJM scholars, protests by African Americans against a toxic dump in Warren County, North Carolina in 1982, marked the beginning of the EJM as a large-scale, organized struggle against environmental racism (Bullard 1990a, 1992, 1994, 2000, 2004, Bullard and Wright 1992, Cable et.al. 2002, 2005, Cable and Shriver 1995, Chavis 1993, Cole and Foster 2001, Di Chiro 1998, Faber 1998, Faber and McCarthy 2003, Field 1998, Lee 1992, 1993, Martinez-Alier 2003, Sandweiss 1998, Szasz and Meuser 1997, Taylor 1993). Demonstrations were instigated upon the selection of Afton, a poor and predominantly (84 percent) African American rural community in Warren County, as the site for a new, 142-acre hazardous waste landfill that would receive more than 32,000 cubic yards soil contaminated with highly toxic polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The disputed siting decision came after the clean-up of a 210 mile stretch of roadside shoulders in North Carolina where PCB-laced oil had been illegally dumped in 1978. Aggrieved by the choice of their community as the site for the proposed landfill, which they considered to be a political decision based on racial discrimination, residents

organized and formed a grassroots organization, the Warren County Citizens Concerned About PCBs. With the support and active participation of religious leaders, political officials, and representatives of a number of civil rights advocacy groups, such as the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice (CRJ), the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), county residents marched in protest against the construction of the landfill in their community (Bullard 1994, 2000, 2004, Cable et.al.2002). The demonstrations culminated in the mass arrest of more than 400 protesters. Moreover, the landfill was constructed and the contaminated soil disposed of in Afton, as planned. What could be viewed as the dramatic ending of a local struggle, however, turned out to constitute the onset of a national movement in the case of the Warren County incident.<sup>16</sup>

The national media attention paid to the demonstrations of non-violent civil disobedience in Warren County helped environmental justice activists to carry from local to the national milieu their conviction that violations of civil rights and environmental rights converged to create environmental inequalities. Warren County protests also gave

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<sup>16</sup> Corresponding to its prominence in the struggle for environmental justice, the Warren County resistance continued well after the landfill was constructed and its operation started. Two decades of protests and pressure by the community leaders for the decontamination of the site culminated in the detoxification of the contaminated soil in the landfill by the state and federal authorities between 2001 and 2003. Even after the detoxification, however, some residents are still concerned that the clean-up might not be complete. Considering the high toxicity of the soil dumped in the landfill, residents express concern that contamination might have migrated beyond the landfill site into the buffer zone that surrounds the site and the nearby creek and outlet basin. Environmental justice activists and scholars are also cautious in evaluating the outcome of the Warren County struggle. As stated by Bullard (2004:4), for example, detoxification of the Warren County landfill is "a major victory for local residents and the EJM. .... (However) Justice will not be complete until the 20,000 residents receive a public apology and some form of financial reparations from the perpetrators of environmental racism against the local citizens".

impetus to a number of groundbreaking studies that lent support to activists' claim of institutionalized discrimination disadvantaging low income and minority communities (Bullard 1983, Bullard and Wright 1986-87, 1989, United States General Accounting Office 1983, United Church of Christ Commission for Racial Justice 1987).

With the impetus provided by the findings of these studies, the growing publicity concerning polluted communities, and the concomitant increase of public interest in and awareness of environmental inequities, local struggles for environmental justice steadily developed into a nationwide movement throughout the 1980s. This momentum gained further strength when a number of community-based organizations built coalitions, and national and regional communication networks to act in solidarity. By 1990 a variety of coalitions of people of color environmental justice organizations had emerged (Di Chiro 1998: 110), including Citizens' Clearinghouse for Hazardous Waste - now known as Center for Health, Environment and Justice – (1981), Southwest Organizing Project (1981), Gulf Coast Tenants' Organization (1983), Indigenous Environmental Network (1990), and Southwest Network for Economic and Environmental Justice (1990).

A watershed event for the EJM came in October 1991 when more than 300 delegates and 400 observers and supporters convened in Washington D.C. for the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (Brulle 2000, Bullard 1994, 2000, Cable et.al. 2002, Cole and Foster 2001, Di Chiro 1998, Ferris and Hahn-Baker 1995, Hofrichter 2002, Martinez-Alier 2003, Miller 2002, Moore and Head 2002). Initiated by Rev. Ben Chavis, Executive Director of the CRJ, and organized by Charles Lee, Director of the Environmental Justice Program of the CRJ, academics like Robert Bullard, Bunyan Bryant, and activists, such as Dana Alston, Richard Moore, and Donna

Chavis, the Summit brought together environmental justice activists and advocates from across the country, Canada, Central and South America, and the Marshall Islands “to develop a statement of principles and a call for national and worldwide action” (Ferris and Hahn-Baker 1995:69). According to Rev. Ben Chavis, the summit was “a significant and pivotal step in the crucial process whereby people of color are organizing themselves and their communities for self-determination and self-empowerment around the central issues of environmental justice.” (quoted in Miller 2002:129). Along the same lines, Di Chiro (1998) and Cole and Foster (2001) call attention to the emphasis placed by the conference participants on the autonomy of the EJM, rendering the movement’s motto of ‘we speak for ourselves’ ever stronger. Providing a collective forum for EJM activists and advocates to manifest their firm rejection of “a partnership based on paternalism with the professional environmental organizations” (Di Chiro 1998:113), the summit was essentially EJM’s “declaration of independence from the traditional environmental movement” (Cole and Foster 2001:31). Among the many other achievements of the summit, such as formation of alliances between participant grassroots groups, establishment of conceptual linkages between various grassroots struggles, development of renewed understanding of the need for environmental justice and new strategies to fight for it, probably the most significant was the formulation of the Principles of Environmental Justice (Cole and Foster 2001). The seventeen principles collectively adopted by the delegates at the end of the summit shaped the ideological contours of a multiracial grassroots movement and informed a concomitant political project to achieve environmental justice (Di Chiro 1998).

The EJM literature saw a remarkable upsurge in studies throughout the 1990s, testing the hypotheses of unequal distribution of environmental risks and unequal protection from those risks according to race or income, and in cases where evidence for unequal distribution was established, testing whether race or income was a better predictor for disproportionate exposure to environmental hazards (Adeola 1994, Anderton et.al. 1994, 1997, Been and Gupta 1997, Boer, et.al. 1997, Bowen et.al. 1995, Burke 1993, Cutter et.al. 1996, Daniels and Friedman 1999, Downey 1998, Goldman and Fitton 1994, Hird 1993, Hird and Reese 1998, Lavelle and Coyle 1992, Mohai and Bryant 1992a, 1992b, Perlin et.al. 1995, Pollock and Vittas 1995, Ringquist 1997, Stretesky and Hogan 1998, Szasz and Meuser 2000, Yandle and Burton 1996, Zimmerman 1993).

Whereas studies by Adeola (1994), Boer, et.al. (1997), Burke (1993), Daniels and Friedman (1999), Downey (1998), Foster (1998), Gelobter (1992), Goldman and Fitton (1994), Hird and Reese (1998), Lavelle and Coyle (1992), Mohai and Bryant (1992a, 1992b), Perlin et.al. (1995), Ringquist (1997), Stretesky and Hogan (1998), Zimmerman (1993) found evidence for unequal distribution of environmental risks according to race and/or income, Anderton et.al. (1994, 1997), Been and Gupta (1997), Cutter et.al. (1996), Yandle and Burton (1996) disputed in their studies any claims for systemic, consistent pattern of environmental racism.

Some scholars also examined the relative strength of race and income in predicting disproportionate exposure to risks and found race to be more strongly related than income to the unequal distribution of environmental hazards (Gelobter 1992,

Goldman 1994, Mohai and Bryant 1992a, 1992b, Ringquist 1997, Stretesky and Hogan 1998).<sup>17</sup>

In addition, EJM scholars carried out theoretical, conceptual, and organizational analyses of the movement. Čapek (1993), Cable and Shriver (1995), and Taylor (2000) analyzed the emergence of the environmental justice frame and the EJM from the theoretical perspectives of social constructionism and resource mobilization. In their theoretical critique of the EJM, Been (1992-1993) and Foster (1993) focused on the movement's failure to tie the concepts of 'environmental justice' and 'fair siting' to a specific theory of justice. Been (1992-1993:1085) warned that, unless grounded in a theoretical framework, EJM's call for fair siting will be nothing but a "vacuous slogan". In a similar vein, Dobson (2003) criticized the EJM scholars for failing, both theoretically and empirically, to support their claim regarding the compatibility between social justice and environmental sustainability objectives.

The current phase of the EJM literature comprises of the appraisals of the movement. Studies by individual scholars (Agyeman 2005, Cable et.al. 2002, Cole and Foster 2001, Novotny 2000) and edited volumes containing collected contributions from prominent movement scholars and activists (Agyeman 2003, Faber 1998, Hofrichter

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<sup>17</sup> It seems paradoxical that movement scholars sought to measure the relative weights of race and income in determining the unequal distribution of environmental risks, when one of the claims of the EJM is that "race interacts with class to create special environmental and health vulnerabilities" (Bullard 1993:21). Downey's (1998:767) apt criticism deserves mention here: "...race and income should not be theorized as competing explanatory variables....such an approach decontextualizes race and income by forcing researchers to abstract them from social, political, and historical processes involved in the formation of environmental hazard distribution. Rather than thinking of race and income as competing with one another, our understanding of environmental discrimination would be better served by conceptualizing race and income as interdependent factors".

2002, Pellow and Brulle 2005, Sandler and Pezzullo 2007) assess the achievements and failures of the EJM, evaluate its challenges, and discuss the future path of the movement.

Regarding the achievements of the EJM on the legislative and institutional front, Brulle (2000:218) pointed to the 1980 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA or Superfund, as commonly known) as the first significant federal institutionalization of environmental justice concerns. The 1986 modification of CERCLA, which created the Community Right to Know Act, required industries to report on the quantity and nature of their emissions, and allowed for public access to this information (Brulle 2000, O'Connor 2002, Freudenberg and Steinsapir 1992). Communities used the Right to Know Act as an effective tool to monitor environmental externalities in their neighborhoods. Bullard (2000:138) called attention to EPA's definition of environmental justice as "the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies", and considered it evidence for the recognition of the concept and EJM's cause at the federal administrative level. The establishment of the EPA's Office of Environmental Justice in 1992 and the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council in 1993, and President Clinton's issue of Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations", in 1994, mandating all federal agencies to take initiatives aimed at reducing environmental inequities, were also cited as achievements of the EJM (Agyeman et.al. 2003, Benford 2005, Brulle 2000, Bryant 1995, Bryant and Hockman 2005, Bullard 1996, Cole and Foster 2001, Faber 1998).

Cole and Foster (2001), Di Chiro (1998), and Martinez-Alier (2003) also pointed out the success of the EJM actors in framing their goal with respect to environmental externalities under the motto of ‘Not In Anyone’s Backyard’, and thus destroying the particularistic, self-interested ‘Not In My Backyard’ image of the anti-toxics movement. According to Martinez-Alier (2003:214), the greatest achievement of the EJM was its emphasis on the “incommensurableness of values”. By framing their grievances in terms of environmental racism, EJM actors simultaneously rejected monetary compensation as the only means of reparation for their disproportionate exposure to environmental externalities, and shifted the debate revolving around ecological distribution conflicts “beyond the obsession of ‘taking nature into account’ in monetary terms” to cope as well with other structural problems underlying environmental injustices.<sup>18</sup>

With respect to internal movement dynamics, the EJM probably achieved its most remarkable success in terms of organizing. Environmental justice centers and information networks facilitated a strong sense of solidarity among grassroots groups (Bullard 2000, Freudenberg and Steinsapir 1992), which in turn empowered community activists because, as Bullard (2000:147) noted, “for grassroots groups, especially underdog groups, knowing that others in similar circumstances have triumphed gives them an added incentive to keep up the struggle”. Along similar lines, Cole and Foster (2001:151) referred to the transformative politics of the EJM as the “most important legacy of the grassroots movement for environmental justice in the United States”. In the process of

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<sup>18</sup> Martinez-Alier’s assessment of the significance of the environmental racism claim can be taken as a justification for empirical studies by movement scholars measuring the relative weight of race as a variable factoring into fair/unfair siting decisions (see footnote 16).

transformative politics, Cole and Foster (2001:14) asserted, “grassroots groups help transform marginal communities from passive victims to significant actors in environmental decision-making processes”.

One of the most significant challenges facing the EJM lies in the juridical realm due to the difficulty of proving environmental racism in court (Bullard 2000, Cole and Foster 2001, Martinez-Alier 2003, Pellow and Brulle 2005). Although legislation against racism, such as Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964, forbids discrimination based on race, it requires proof of intent. For environmental racism cases, this means that it is not sufficient to prove disproportionate environmental impact but it must also be shown that there is an explicit intention to cause harm to the affected group (Martinez-Alier 2003).

Due to its primary emphasis on human well-being at the expense of ecosystem health the EJM was denounced by some scholars for being an anthropocentric discourse (Benford 2005, Brulle 2000, Dobson 1998). EJM was also criticized for the discrepancy between its radical discourse and reformist course of action (Benford 2005, Faber 1998), and its failure to generate structural changes (Cable et.al. 2005). At the global level, Rhodes (2003) and Martinez-Alier (2003) criticized the EJM for neglecting environmental injustices outside the U.S.

### **Application of New Social Movements Theories to the EJM**

The new social movements (NSM) theories fail to explain the EJM on several grounds. In contrast to the observation of the NSM theorists that new conflicts underlying contemporary social movements transcended class distinctions, the EJM is a class-based

movement. The distinction drawn by Offe (1985) between “politics *of* a class” versus “politics *on behalf of* a class”, attributing merely the former to the new social movements, does not apply to the EJM either, because the latter is class-driven not only in its social base but also in the grievances and demands articulated by movement activists. EJM constituents comprise of low-income and minority communities of low levels of formal education. Movement activists identify themselves as a class of oppressed people aggrieved by environmental risk burdens that are localized in their communities while benefits are disproportionately distributed to Whites and people at the upper end of the education and income scales. Thus, underlying the EJM is not a socio-cultural conflict but a distributive and procedural one of socio-economic nature. Locating the source of their problem in the structure of political economy and the institutionalized discrimination it fosters, movement actors call for equitable distribution of environmental inequalities *on behalf of* the socio-economic class they represent.

The EJM actors asserted that the disproportionate distribution of environmental externalities in the communities of people of color was a manifestation of an institutionalized form of racism. This form of racism, which they termed *environmental racism*, referred to “racial discrimination in environmental policymaking, the enforcement of regulations and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste disposal and siting of polluting industries, the official sanctioning of the life-threatening presence of poisons and pollutants in communities of color, and the history of excluding people of color from the mainstream environmental groups, decision-making boards, commissions, and regulatory bodies” (Chavis 1993:3). The Euro-centric analyses of the NSM scholars miss the way in and extent to which race factors into structural

inequalities in U.S. society. Consequently, the NSM approach fails to explain the role of race in the collective identity formation and grievance articulation of the EJM.

In terms of internal and external modes of action, however, the EJM displays similarities to the new social movements, as conceptualized by NSM theorists. Thus, EJM activists reject proxy and control, and consider self-representation and self-identification an essential characteristic of their movement, as expressed in their prominent slogan of “We speak for ourselves!”. Also consistent with the assertions of NSM theorists is the EJM’s organizational structure and unconventional direct action tactics. Locating themselves outside the boundaries of institutional politics, not affiliated with any party or political organization, EJM groups work through national and transnational networks of decentralized, informal, non-hierarchical organization model, and rely on tactics of public protest, demonstrations, public meetings, dissemination of information, petitions, and lobbying to influence public opinion and affect a change in policy.

### **Analysis of the EJM Literature**

The EJM scholars aptly identified the root causes of environmental problems in the structure of power relations by demonstrating the nationwide pattern of unequal distribution and disparate impact of environmental externalities on low-income communities of color, raised public awareness about institutional discrimination, and helped low income and minority communities mobilize against environmental inequities. Thus, the EJM has successfully passed the stages of framing, verifying their claims, and winning several struggles against local environmental injustices. But, in view of EJM’s

aspiration for structural change, I argue that to rely predominantly on community-based, local tactics as the ultimate means to bring about qualitative social change is to underestimate the complexity of the problem at hand, ignoring the interconnectedness of political, economic, social, and environmental injustices. This ignorance, however, is a mistake that the EJM cannot and should not afford, considering that this very interconnectedness is the underlying claim of the movement with respect to the root causes of environmental inequalities. For EJM scholars, the most challenging task at this stage is to produce strategies for further action, in line with the movement's structural critique of political economy. A step to take to this end could be to tie the EJM to similar environmental injustices faced by disenfranchised communities worldwide, and to the global political-economic context.

The EJM literature also showed that some of the community groups, initially organized against local environmental threats affecting their neighborhoods, transformed over time extending their environment-based struggles to a justice, equity, and rights-based movement when they realized the compounded nature of inequalities they faced on political, economic, social, and environmental grounds. The literature, however, failed to study the structural conditions under which such transformation occurred.

This study aims to address the gaps identified in the EJM literature, by analyzing the grassroots struggle against goldmining in Bergama, Turkey; by couching the Bergama villagers' movement in the context of political, economic, and social changes in Turkey; and by exploring the dynamics of the transformation of the movement from a local struggle based on ecological concerns to a widespread movement for democratic and civil rights.

## **CHAPTER III**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

This section elaborates on the methodological framework employed in this study, and spells out the techniques used for gathering, processing, and analyzing my data.

My selection of a methodological approach is informed by a combination of considerations, such as the nature of my research problem, my research questions and goals, the availability of resources and accessibility of data, as well as personal preferences. This is a case study investigating the complex dynamics of the Bergama villagers' movement and its transformation from an environmental to a rights-based movement. Direct observation, qualitative in depth interviewing, and secondary data analysis are the specific techniques used in the study.

Field research is conducted in compliance with the University of Tennessee requirements for research involving human subjects.

#### **Case Study As A Methodological Tool**

According to Yin ([1984] 2003), “case studies are the preferred strategy when “how” or “why” questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context” (p.1). Since there are no conclusive criteria for what may constitute a ‘case’ the term is used broadly by researchers. Thus, case studies focus on, inter alia, specific social programs or policies (e.g. an educational initiative), entities (e.g. an industry or firms in an industry), individuals (e.g. leaders of a gang), or groups of individuals (e.g. social movement activists).

The case study approach strives towards a holistic perception of the interrelated activities engaged in by the actors in a social situation (Tellis 1997). As such, case studies provide researchers with an in-depth understanding of why the case under investigation took the course it did, which, in turn, may lead to new questions to investigate in future research. Although case study is a particular method of qualitative research this approach also lends itself to quantitative data gathering and analysis techniques. Data collection techniques in case studies can include surveys, interviews, archival records, observation, and the collection of physical artifacts (Soy 1997, Tellis 1997).

Critics of the case study approach claim that this method is weak in establishing external validity or generalizability of findings due to its dependence on a single case. Another point of criticism is that the researchers' intense exposure to the case they investigate may bias their findings.

Proponents of the case study contest the external validity criticism by distinguishing between analytic generalization and statistical generalization. Thus, Yin ([1984] 2003) states that case studies employ analytic generalization, using previously developed theory as a measure of comparison for the findings of the study. In other words, generalization of case study results is made to theory, as opposed to populations. To address the latter criticism, case study researchers can minimize bias in their analyses and increase the reliability of their findings by using multiple techniques to gather data, for example unobtrusive methods, such as archival records, along with direct observation.

Due to the nature of social scientific investigation, researchers are faced with a choice among different methodological approaches. This choice is based on a tradeoff between the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Keeping in mind the caveats, I

believe case study is the most appropriate method for my research for several reasons. First, I'm seeking a holistic and in-depth understanding of why and how the Bergama movement took the course it did without identifying in advance clearly defined variables to focus on exclusively. Second, the case study approach allows me to cover both the processes and the outcomes regarding my case by going beyond quantitative data and investigating the case from the perspective of the actors. Finally, due to the flexibility of this approach I will be able to modify my interview questions or add new ones as my research progresses.

### **Research Conduct**

In-depth interviews and direct observation constituted the primary sources of data for this case study. These qualitative techniques provided me with an understanding of the movement's dynamics as perceived and experienced by local activists as well as the defining elements of the collective identity assumed by movement participants. Data thus collected are supplemented by the use of archival records. This data collection and analysis method helped me explore the transformation of the movement over the course of its history of nearly two decades.

Fieldwork is conducted in six villages located within one-mile radius of the gold mine in Bergama for a period of eight weeks starting on May 22, 2006. Although I did not have prior contact with any of the movement participants I had two contact persons that were willing to facilitate my access to the field. One is a farmer and resident of the town of Bergama, active in local politics. Another is the producer and director of a documentary on the Bergama movement who, at the same time, has been following the

developments of the movement in his capacity as a journalist over the course of more than ten years.

I entered the field as a participant observer making my goals explicit. As the first step I informed my contact persons about my research project, inquired about movement activists I could initially contact in the field, and asked my contact persons to introduce me. After making my initial contact with a movement activist I told her/him about my research project and asked her/him to participate in the study. Interviews were mostly held in the village coffeehouses. I asked my first respondent to suggest other people that I could interview. Thus, I used the snowball sampling technique to figure out whom to meet and interview next. Beside villagers I interviewed other movement actors such as the former mayor of Bergama who played a key role in mobilizing the movement; several lawyers of the villagers in Bergama and in İzmir; professors in İzmir and İstanbul that played a role in informing the villagers of the risks associated with the mine; the Public Relations Director of the company currently owning and operating the goldmine; former mine workers; and the sub-provincial governor of Bergama. A total of 30 in-depth interviews are carried out for the study (Table 1).

Table 1: Respondent Characteristics (N=30)

<b>Abbreviated Names Used in the Study</b>	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Stance on Mining</b>	<b>Activist Y/N</b>
A.H.	F	Professor	Against	Y
A.Z.	M	Engineer	Against	Y
B.Y.	M	Olive grower	Against	Y
C.U.	M	Lawyer	Against	Y
D.A.	F	Farmer	Against	Y
D.T.	M	Businessman	Against	Y
E.S.	M	Lawyer	Against	Y
F.R.	M	Professor	Against	Y
G.P.	M	Lawyer	Against	Y
H.N.	M	Farmer	Against	Y
I.A.	M	Farmer	Against	Y
K.H.	M	Businessman	Neutral	N
K.M.	M	Farmer	Against	Y
L.H.	M	Former Mine Worker	Pro	N
M.D.	M	Professor	Against	Y
M.K.	F	Farmer	Against	Y
N.L.	F	Professor	Against	Y
O.G.	M	Former Mine Worker	Against	N
P.A.	M	Farmer	Against	Y
P.T.	M	Engineer	Against	Y
R.B.	F	Businesswoman	Against	Y
R.C.	M	Businessman	Against	N
S.C.	M	Lawyer	Against	Y
T.D.	F	Farmer	Against	Y
U.G.	F	Mine Employee	Pro	N
V.T.	M	Municipality Official	Neutral	N
H.E.	M	Sub-Provincial Governor of Bergama	Neutral	N
Y.B.	<b>M</b>	Professor	Against	Y
Z.M.	M	Mine PR Manager	Pro	N
Z.T.	M	Farmer	Against	Y

Since I conducted qualitative in-depth interviews my role in the interview process was to establish a general direction for the conversation, keep track of this direction, and to pursue specific topics, in line with my research focus, raised by respondents. I employed the funnel pattern of question sequence in my interviews, starting with a broad question such as “How would you describe the movement to someone who hasn’t heard about it before?”, and narrowing the scope down to more specific questions as the interview progressed. For example, in an attempt to explore the movement’s transformation pattern as perceived by its participants, I would direct respondents’ attention to a specific instance, and ask: “What do you think of the 1997 Supreme Administrative Court decision? Was it significant for the movement in any way?”

Within the framework of the field research I also observed a social gathering for solidarity against the mine, organized in a village by Bergama villagers on the World Environment Day; an anti-mining demonstration in İzmir; and a panel discussion on the risks of goldmining in Eşme, Uşak. Newspaper articles and editorials; published interviews with movement leaders, activists, supporters; press releases; judicial records concerning court decisions; official correspondence between government authorities and the lawyers of the villagers constituted the secondary data sources for the study.

## **CHAPTER IV SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES IN TURKEY: THE BUMPY ROAD TO THE WEST**

The resistance of the Bergama villagers against gold mining in their region started out as a local ecological movement, and transformed, over the course of nearly two decades, into an environmental justice movement with national implications when the villagers adopted a rights-based discourse by incorporating into their claims the notions of justice, democratic participation, and citizenship rights. As such, it is a unique grassroots struggle in the history of social movements in Turkey that behooves sociological investigation. However, any analysis with the exclusive focus on the internal dynamics of the movement will miss the connection of this specific case to the contextual backdrop against which it was carried out. With this understanding in mind, the current chapter provides an account of the history of Turkey, and lays out the socio-economic and political context in which the Bergama villagers' resistance movement unfolded.

### **The War of Independence and the Establishment of the Republic of Turkey (1919-1923)**

Built on the Turkish remnants of the Ottoman Empire, present day Turkey was established in 1923 as a republican parliamentary democracy. The founders of the Republic instituted radical and swift reforms to restructure the society along the lines of Western civilization, and carve out a nation state, rising on this new foundation.

The defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War signified the onset of the Empire's dismantling by the Allied forces. In the immediate aftermath of the war, between 1918 and 1919, British, French, Italian, and Greek forces occupied several

provinces throughout Anatolia. The domestic political reaction to the Allied occupation of the Empire's territories crystallized in two opposing camps. The Sultan and his followers in İstanbul favored cooperating with the Allies in an attempt to save the monarchy. The other camp comprised of army officers who established patriotic resistance organizations, known as the *Müdafaa-i Hukuk Cemiyetleri* (Associations for the Defense of Rights - ADR), in several provinces in Thrace and Anatolia to defy Allied occupation, preserve the territorial integrity of the country, and ultimately achieve national independence. The resistance front was led by Mustafa Kemal<sup>19</sup>, an undefeated general in the Ottoman army, especially prominent as the hero of the Dardanelles campaign during the First World War, defending Gallipoli against the British navy (Keyder 1987, Ahmad 1993).

The appointment of Mustafa Kemal by the Palace as the Inspector General to oversee the demobilization process of the Ottoman army in eastern Anatolia gave him the perfect cover for organizing resistance. In his capacity as the Inspector General, Mustafa Kemal landed at Samsun, a coastal province on the Black Sea in the North, on May 19, 1919. This date marked the beginning of the Turkish War of Independence against Allied occupation. Soon after his arrival in Samsun, Mustafa Kemal met with the local leaders of the ADR to coordinate resistance. Being informed of and alarmed by Mustafa Kemal's activities, the Sultan sent for him to return to İstanbul. The clash between the Sultan and his followers, on the one hand, and the nationalist resistance front, on the other, irrevocably surfaced when Mustafa Kemal rejected the Sultan's order,

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<sup>19</sup> Later given the surname *Atatürk*, meaning the "father of the Turks".

subsequently resigned from the army on July 8, 1919, and continued organizing resistance in Anatolia.

### ***Legitimacy Crisis and the War of Independence***

The contours of the War of Independence took shape at two consecutive conventions held in the Anatolian provinces of Erzurum and Sivas in July and September 1919, respectively. The principles set forth in these conventions, which came to be known as the *Misak-ı Milli* (National Pact), emphasized the goals of territorial integrity and national sovereignty. Accordingly, the National Pact rejected any policy of accepting foreign mandates or granting special privileges to Christian minorities. In a contradictory development in İstanbul, the Sultan signed a secret agreement with the British, accepting their mandate over the country (Karpat 1959, Kongar 2006).

Meanwhile, the elections for the House of Deputies in İstanbul, held in December 1919, shifted the balance between the two camps in favor of the nationalist resistance front. As the political leverage of the nationalists in Anatolia extended to the capital, the Sultan's clout decreased. On February 17, 1920, the House of Deputies, now controlled by the nationalists, adopted the National Pact, further undermining the authority of the Sultan's collaborationist government.

Alarmed by the ever increasing influence of the nationalists throughout the country, including the capital, the Allied troops formally occupied İstanbul on March 16, 1920, arrested prominent nationalist deputies, journalists, intellectuals, and exiled them to the Mediterranean island of Malta (Karpat 1959, Ahmad 1993). On March 18, 1920, the Sultan abolished the House of Deputies. The nationalists in Anatolia responded to this development by convening a parliament of their own in the central Anatolian city of

Ankara on April 23, 1920. The new parliament, called the Grand National Assembly, consisted of bureaucrats and nationalist deputies of the abolished House of Deputies in İstanbul, and of Anatolian provincial notables (Keyder 1987: 73). For the members of the Grand National Assembly, this parliament was the depository of national sovereignty and the only legitimate body representing Turkey and the Turkish people. Thus, they declared null and void all the treaties, agreements and conventions concluded by the İstanbul government after March 16, 1920 (Karpat 1959:37).

The resulting political picture displayed two disparate sources of power, vying for legitimacy in ruling the country: On the one side, there was the Grand National Assembly, defying the Allied forces and aiming at national independence. On the other side, there was the Sultan-Caliph<sup>20</sup>, a virtual prisoner of the Allies, who strived for saving the monarchy, even at the expense of alienating himself from the larger public by cooperating with the Allies and condemning the nationalists (Karpat 1959:36).

The legitimacy crisis reached a peak in August 1920. On August 10, 1920 the Sultan's government signed the Treaty of Sèvres, a peace agreement with the Allied powers, dividing Anatolia into Greek, Italian, French, Armenian, and Kurdish zones, and reducing Turkish territories to the city of İstanbul and parts of Anatolia. Two weeks later, the nationalist government in Ankara reached an understanding of collaboration with the Bolshevik government in Russia, which was formalized in the Russian-Turkish Treaty of Friendship the following year. This agreement was significant for the nationalists both

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<sup>20</sup> Caliph is the Arabic word for successor. It is the title given to those who ruled the Islamic community following the death of Prophet Muhammad in 632 A.D. After being carried by several dynasties the title was assumed by the Ottoman Sultan Selim I in 1517. Successive Ottoman Sultans kept the title until Mustafa Kemal abolished the institution of Caliphate in 1924.

because it provided them with much needed supply of arms for the resistance against Allied occupation, and because it marked the first recognition of the Ankara government's legitimacy at the international level.

It was not diplomatic relations but military successes, however, that eventually defined the victorious side in the legitimacy struggle between the İstanbul and Ankara governments. In parallel to the increasing influence of the nationalist government in Ankara among the Turkish populace who resented the Sultan and his government for collaborating with the Allies, Anatolia gained strategic significance as the heartland of the country, and the principal territory to wage the war of independence. Thus, the nationalist front mobilized all available material and human resources to halt the advance of the Greek army from the Aegean coast towards the interior of Anatolia. The first battle with the Greek forces, fought between January 6-10, 1921 in İnönü, a district of the city of Eskişehir, 155 miles west of Ankara, culminated in the victory of the Turkish army. Realizing the extent of the impotence of the Sultan's government, as well as the military and political leverage of the nationalists in the aftermath of the İnönü Battle, the Allies for the first time invited the Ankara government to a conference in London as a legitimate interlocutor. The London Conference, held between February 21 and March 12, 1921, aimed at forcing the Ankara government to reconcile with the İstanbul government and endorse the Treaty of Sèvres. However, due to severe disagreements among themselves the Allies proved to be in no position of imposing the terms of the Treaty of Sèvres on the Ankara government.

Upon the failure of the London Conference, the Greek troops launched a renewed offensive and resumed their advance into Anatolia in June 1921. Due to the general mood

of war-weariness and the concomitant lack of public support at home for a new war none of the Allied powers was willing at that time to support the Greek army in its Anatolian campaign (Keyder 1987:73). Thus, breaking the Allied solidarity, the Italian and French governments concluded separate ceasefire agreements with the Ankara government, and Britain abandoned the Greek forces to their own resources (Keyder 1987:73, Ahmad 1993:50). Between August 23 and September 13, 1921, at the Battle of Sakarya, fought by the Sakarya River near the town of Polatlı, about 50 miles west of Ankara, the Turkish army defeated the Greek forces. After the Battle of Sakarya the Greek army was forced to retreat further west and abandon the territories under its control. Early in 1922, Britain, France and Italy realized that the military victory of the nationalists in Anatolia rendered the Treaty of Sèvres meaningless and that a new peace agreement was necessary. Thus, in March 1922, the Allies proposed a ceasefire and negotiations for a peace treaty. Mustafa Kemal refused to take the offer unless the Greek army withdrew from Anatolia. The subsequent Battle of Dumlupınar near Afyon, a city about 155 miles southwest of Ankara, culminated in the defeat of the Greek army on August 30, 1922. By September 1922, when the Turkish army recaptured the Aegean coastal province of İzmir, the Greek forces were forced to evacuate Turkey. Thus, the Turkish War of Independence ended with the victory of the nationalists, which was formally sealed on October 11, 1922 with the Armistice of Mudanya.

### ***The Founding of the Republic***

On October 28, 1922 the Allies invited both the Ankara and İstanbul governments to attend a conference in Lausanne, Switzerland to negotiate the terms of a new peace agreement. Encouraged by the military victory and the high prestige of the nationalists,

Mustafa Kemal considered the time ripe to end the legitimacy crisis between the Ankara and İstanbul governments once and for all, and abolished the Sultanate on November 1, 1922, before the peace negotiations started. Thus, at the Lausanne Conference, convened on November 22, 1922, Turkey was represented solely by a nationalist delegation headed by İsmet Pasha (a general, later to be given the family name of İnönü due to his success against the Greek army as the Commander in Chief at the İnönü Battle).

As the nationalist representatives were conducting negotiations with the Allies in Lausanne to ensure the territorial integrity of the country the government in Ankara was working on a development strategy to lift up an economy in ruins and set the country on a path of industrialization and economic growth. By the end of 1922, Turkey was an extremely underdeveloped country, overburdened by fiscal deficit and huge amounts of debt inherited from the Ottoman Empire, stricken with structural problems, and devastated by the materially and demographically destructive effects of ten years of war. Industry accounted for only 10% of the GNP. Agriculture, though the backbone of the economy, was backward and had low productivity (Hale 1981). The banking system, the mining sector, and the railroads were mostly controlled by foreign capital.

Probably the most important barrier to economic growth at the time was the lack of an entrepreneurial base in the country. In the ethnically diverse structure of the Ottoman Empire, top positions in the bureaucracy and the military were held by the Turkish elite whereas manufacturing industry, business and commerce mostly constituted the dominion of Armenian, Greek, and Jewish minorities. Due to forced deportations during the First World War and the mass emigrations effected by the War of

Independence there had been a drastic drop in the minority population. Thus, the state had to step in the economic sphere as a major entrepreneur.

However, the necessary role of entrepreneurship for the industrialization of the country was not exclusively assumed by the state. The idea underlying the development strategy of the Ankara government was for the state to play a leadership role in the economy at the beginning stages but gradually move to the background as private capital accumulated over time. In the republic's first Economic Congress held in the province of İzmir on February 17, 1923 with the participation of more than thousand delegates, representing farmers, industrialists, traders, and workers, Mahmut Esat, the Minister of Economy, identified the role of the state in the economy as follows: "We are not attached to laissez-faire, socialist, communist, étatist or protectionist schools of thought. We have a new school of thought... I call it the New Turkish Economic School... The new Turkey should follow a mixed economic system. Economic enterprises should be undertaken partly by the state and partly by private individuals." (quoted in Hale 1981: 39-40). The government also adopted a liberal approach to trade and foreign investment, which was spelled out in the addresses of Mustafa Kemal and Mahmut Esat to the Economic Congress, stating that the government was always ready to give the necessary assurances to foreign capital, provided it conformed to the country's laws and regulations, and was not granted any more privileges than Turkish entrepreneurs (Hale 1981:40).

Challenges faced by the nationalist government in this era were not limited to the domain of the economy and international diplomacy but extended to internal politics. The biggest challenge with respect to the latter was to preserve the political unity within the Grand National Assembly - now called the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA).

In a state tradition of over six centuries that entrusted the Sultan-Caliph with both temporal and spiritual powers, blurring the distinction between the two, the abolition of the Sultanate led to confusion as to the position of the Caliph, who was now stripped of his concurrent role as the Sultan. With the newly adopted *Teşkilât-ı Esasiye Kanunu* (Constitution) stating that sovereignty unconditionally belonged to the nation and that all powers were concentrated in the TGNA as the only representative body of the nation, the role and authority of the Caliph became even more questionable. The debate over this issue led to a rift between modernists and conservatives in the parliament.

Modernists advocated separating the religious and the temporal powers, and placing the Caliph in charge of the former and the government in charge of the latter. Conservatives objected to this position, arguing that the institutions of government and Caliphate were indivisible, and that separating them was against the very nature of the Caliphate (Karpas 1959:41). Following the deadlock over this issue as well as the realization on the part of the modernists that it was virtually impossible for them to pass any reform measures in the parliament in its existing composition, the Turkish Grand National Assembly dissolved itself on April 1, 1923 to hold new elections. Modernist deputies in agreement with Mustafa Kemal won the majority of the votes in the elections.

The concurrent diplomatic success at the international level helped increase the prestige of Mustafa Kemal at home. Peace negotiations with the Allies culminated in the Treaty of Lausanne, signed on July 24, 1923. The Treaty established the frontiers of

Turkey, virtually in its current boundaries<sup>21</sup>, and agreed to the withdrawal of foreign troops from Turkish soil; the abolition of capitulations; the assumption of part of the Ottoman debt by Turkey; the exchange of population between Turkey and Greece; and the demilitarization of the Turkish Straits<sup>22</sup>.

## **The Era of Radical Reforms (1923-1938)**

### ***Socio-Cultural Transformation and Resistance to Change***

Having successfully fought off military occupation and secured the independence of the country, Mustafa Kemal and his followers established the *Halk Fırkası* (People's Party)<sup>23</sup>, and took to instituting radical reforms to transform Turkey into a secular, modern, industrial nation, taking the West as its role model. As the first step to that end, the TGNA adopted a regime change on October 29, 1923, declaring Turkey a Republic,

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<sup>21</sup> According to the Treaty of Lausanne, the frontier between Turkey and Iraq was to be laid down in friendly arrangement to be concluded between Turkey and Great Britain within nine months. Unable to reach a settlement over the province of Mosul, the two parties took the dispute to the League of Nations, as stipulated in the Treaty of Lausanne. The issue was resolved in July 1926 when Ankara signed a treaty, leaving Mosul to Iraq (Pipes 1995).

<sup>22</sup> Bosphorus and Dardanelles Straits between the Black Sea and the Aegean Sea. Due to their strategic importance as the only waterways connecting the Black Sea to the Mediterranean Sea, the Turkish straits are considered international waterways. Thus, Turkey is obligated to allow free passage to any ship in peacetime. The debate during Lausanne negotiations, however, was not over the terms of passage in peacetime but over military control of the Straits and control of passage of combatant vessels in wartime. Upon Turkey's request of refortifying the Straits, an international conference was convened at Montreux, Switzerland in 1936, and Turkey was given complete sovereignty over the Straits, including military control.

<sup>23</sup> At its convention on November 10, 1924, the name of the party was changed to *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi* (Republican People's Party - RPP). RPP still occupies a prominent position in Turkish politics, referred to as Atatürk's party. In the current parliament RPP is the main opposition party, holding 112 seats out of a total of 550.

in line with Mustafa Kemal's proposal for an amendment to the 1921 Constitution. According to the amendment, the TGNA was to elect the President who, in turn, would appoint the Prime Minister from within the Assembly. The TGNA would then approve the Prime Minister and his government. Thus, the republican era in Turkish history began, with Mustafa Kemal elected as its first President, and İsmet Pasha its first Prime Minister.

The next politically and ideologically crucial, radical reform was the abolition of the Caliphate and the expulsion of the Caliph from Turkey on March 3, 1924. The same day, the TGNA also approved the replacement of the *Şer'iyye ve Evkaf Vekâleti* (Ministry of Religious Law and Pious Foundations) by the *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (Directorate of Religious Affairs) under Prime Minister's office, and the unification of all educational institutions under the secular administration of the Ministry of Education (Karpaz 1959:44). Secular reforms, aiming at removing religion from politics and delegating it exclusively to individuals' conscience, continued with the abolition of religious courts on April 8, 1924.

Discontent with the deracination of the religious tenets of the state and the concomitant orientation toward secularism manifested itself in fierce criticism directed at the RPP in the TGNA. Dissidents within the RPP resigned from the party and established the *Terakkiperver Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Progressive Republican Party) on November 17, 1924. Expressing concern over the authoritarian proclivity of an omnipotent National Assembly, unbridled by any opposition, the Progressive Republican Party declared its purpose as to preserve individual freedom by "opposing the despotic tendencies of a few

people and their oligarchic aims” (quoted in Karpaz 1959:46 from the declaration preceding the party program).

Before the Progressive Republican Party got the chance to establish itself as an effective opposition, challenging RPP’s domination in the TGNA, a Kurdish revolt broke out in the East. The revolt was a full-scale insurrection with religious and separatist motives, led by Sheikh Sait, aiming at establishing an independent Kurdistan and restoring the Caliphate (Karpaz 1959:46, Keyder 1987: 83, Ahmad 1993:58). On March 4, 1925 the TGNA passed the *Takriri Sükûn Kanunu* (Law for the Maintenance of Order), which gave the government extraordinary powers to crush the rebellion. In the short run, the Law for the Maintenance of Order enabled the government to suppress the revolt. At least as significant as its short-term effect, however, were the consequences of the law for the RPP government in the long run. Staying in effect for four years, the Law for the Maintenance of Order “provided the government with an institutional framework for authoritarian rule” (Keyder 1987:83). Independence Tribunals, revolutionary courts of supreme authority that were established in 1920 to try cases of treason and all activity against the regime, were reactivated (Karpaz 1959:47). The Progressive Republican Party was abolished on June 5, 1925, alleged of being connected with the rebellion. The press was also strictly censored. Thus, RPP was able to suppress all existing and potential channels of opposition, clearing the way for prospective reforms envisaged.

After securing full control of the TGNA and extending its authority throughout the country, the RPP gave impetus to reform measures. Radical changes, aspiring to transform Turkey from an agrarian, traditional society based on faith to an industrial,

modern society based on reason, were instituted in economic, juridical, social, and cultural realms.

The initial step for economic recovery was taken on March 19, 1924 with the adoption of the Budget Law and the reorganization of the Ziraat Bankası (Agricultural Bank), a domestically owned credit institution established in 1888 by the Ottoman government. This was followed by the establishment of Türkiye İş Bankası (Turkish Business Bank), the first national bank of Turkey, on August 26, 1924 and of Türkiye Sanayi ve Maadin Bankası (Turkish Bank for Industry and Mining) on April 19, 1925 to address the country's pressing need for long-term industrial capital. Alongside these two banks, Emlak Bankası (Bank for Housing) was established on June 3, 1926 to finance housing investments and lend housing credits.

On juridical, social, and cultural fronts, the Headgear and Outfit Law on November 25, 1925 replaced the fez with the hat and introduced European attire; dervish lodges and shrines were closed on November 30, 1925; international solar calendar replaced the Islamic lunar calendar on January 1, 1926; the article denoting Islam the official religion of Turkey was removed from the Constitution, and the state was declared secular on April 10, 1928; the Turkish Civil Code, based on the Swiss Civil Code, was adopted on February 17, 1926, replacing the Islamic Legal Code, and introducing civil marriage, thus prohibiting polygamy, and divorce by renunciation; Arabic letters were replaced by the Latin alphabet on November 1, 1928<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>24</sup> The literacy drive that followed the adoption of the Latin alphabet led to a dramatic increase in the level of literacy from 8 percent in 1928 to over 20 percent in 1935, and 30 percent in 1945 (Ahmad 1993:82).

As progressive as the Kemalist reforms were, however, they were not the product of consensus among different segments of society but imposed and implemented in a top-down approach by an authoritarian- revolutionary regime under the hegemony of a single-party, comprising of a military-bureaucratic elite that ruled the country for twenty-seven years.

### ***Economic and Political Crisis***

In the late 1920s and early 1930s Turkey faced a severe economic crisis triggered by domestic and international factors. A major structural shortcoming of the economy was its heavy reliance on the agricultural sector. This shortcoming became manifest when agricultural productivity dropped drastically due to the drought of 1927-1928 and agricultural prices fell down due to the Great Depression. The effect of these developments on the balance of payments was devastating. With close to 90% of its exports consisting of agricultural products, the trade deficit of Turkey almost doubled between 1928 and 1929. This prompted the policymakers of the era to focus on industrialization in an attempt to reduce the economy's dependence on the agricultural sector. Since the industry's share in GNP only slightly increased over the 1920s despite the incentives provided to private entrepreneurs, it was argued that the government should take a bigger role in the economy to step up the process of industrialization. To cope with the balance of payments deficits the state was to invest in domestic production to substitute imported goods. The resulting strategy was an étatist course of economic development in which the state acted as the primary investor and entrepreneur.

Concomitant with the economic crisis the RPP government faced a political challenge in this era, which led to another attempt of transition to the multi-party political

system. The effects of economic decline facilitated the resurgence of dissent within the RPP. Those who had been loyal followers of Mustafa Kemal but favored a more liberal policy took issue with the economic and political stranglehold of the RPP over the TGNA and the whole country. For many of them, RPP's draconian measures until then might have been a necessity in a transition period when major reforms were introduced. Once these reforms were carried out, however, there was no plausible justification for not instituting a democratic government, checked by opposition (Karpaz 1959:64). To avoid the risk of a full-blown mass protest Mustafa Kemal encouraged the formation of an opposition party. The resultant *Serbest Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Free Republican Party), established on August 12, 1930 by deputies who resigned from the RPP, was loyal to Mustafa Kemal but critical of the RPP. Focusing mainly on the failure of the RPP government in the economic field the Free Republican Party enjoyed wide popular support from its inception. Alarmed by the opposition's growing popularity, the RPP government claimed that the Free Republican Party received most of its support from religious reactionaries who used the party for their own purposes. Thus, RPP reasoned, the regime was in danger. Based on these allegations, Mustafa Kemal, who had initially remained neutral vis-à-vis the two parties, eventually changed his position to support the RPP (Karpaz 1959:67). To avoid having to oppose Mustafa Kemal, the Free Republican Party dissolved itself on November 17, 1930. The two minor opposition parties, *Ahali Cumhuriyet Fırkası* (Populist Republican Party) and *Türk Cumhuriyet Amele ve Çiftçi Partisi* (Turkish Republican Workers and Peasants Party), established during the same time period, were abolished by the government (Karpaz 1959:67).

Analogous to the outcome of the first failed attempt at multi-party democracy in 1925, the aftermath of the failure of the second attempt in 1930 was characterized by the augmented hegemony of the RPP and intensified efforts at instituting reforms in every aspect of society. The third convention of the RPP held in 1931 was significant in that it spelled out the ideology of the regime. Six fundamental principles adopted at the convention and incorporated in the party program were republicanism, secularism, nationalism, étatism, populism and reformism<sup>25</sup>. In line with these principles the RPP government adopted further reform measures throughout the 1930s. Thus, women were allowed to vote in municipal elections in 1930; the Surname Law adopted on June 21, 1934 replaced the Arabic nomenclature with Turkish surnames (following the passage of this law Mustafa Kemal was given the surname *Atatürk* by the TGNA); women were granted full political rights on December 5, 1934 (in 1935 fifteen women were elected to the TGNA).

### ***The Étatist Course of Economic Development***

After the elimination of opposition in the TGNA the RPP saw a significant shift of power within the party from a group led by Prime Minister İnönü that placed priority on the state's political duties, to another led by Celal Bayar that saw the state's primary responsibility in the economic realm. Due to his increased prestige in the party Bayar became the Minister of Economy in 1932. This intra-party shift of power played an important role in moving the country toward an étatist course of development.

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<sup>25</sup> The official emblem of the RPP consists of six arrows, representing these six principles.

Although étatism became an officially accepted principle of the RPP in the early 1930s it remained subject to controversy throughout the decade due to the striking contrast between its various definitions and interpretations by different groups. Two of these interpretations are especially worth noting for the ascendancy of one over the other eventually shaped the path of Turkey's economic and political development in the era.

Following RPP's official recognition of the regime's ideology and its six principles, a group of Kemalist intellectuals established *Kadro* (Cadre), a monthly socio-political journal, in 1932, to explicate and publicize these principles. Although *Kadro* theorists borrowed from Marxist theory and socialist state planning in their attempt to equip the Kemalist regime with a solid theoretical framework they were opposed to socialism on the grounds that it rejected nationalism. They were equally opposed to capitalist exploitation of labor and colonialism. *Kadro* argued that a strong and impartial state envisaged by étatism would both accumulate capital through public ownership of the means of production and avoid class conflict, protecting the interests of all social classes brought together under national solidarity. Thus, for *Kadro* theorists, étatism was a third way, providing a preferable alternative to both capitalism and socialism (Karpas 1959, Hale 1981, Ahmad 1993).

In contrast to this interpretation, Bayar and his supporters viewed étatism as “the nursemaid rather than replacement for capitalist development, whose purpose was to encourage the accumulation of capital and industrial experience” (Hale 1981: 56).

The views expressed in the *Kadro* were harshly criticized both by liberal and conservative groups in the RPP. Liberals accused *Kadro* theorists for being fascist, whereas conservatives vilified the journal as a medium for communist propaganda. Due

to mounting criticism, *Kadro* was closed in 1934, and the interpretation of étatism by the Bayar front shaped the economic policies of the era. Thus, along with state-led industrialization through State Economic Enterprises, the étatist era saw a gradual process of private capital accumulation.

As put in practice in the case of Turkey's development experience during the 1930s, in line with Bayar's interpretation of the term, étatism translated into the hegemony of a bureaucratic elite and nascent bourgeoisie that collaborated to create a national economic sphere for themselves, in which capital accumulation was achieved by heavy oppression of the working class and exploitation of the agricultural sector (Keyder 1987). In the political sphere, this hegemony was established through "an ideology of national solidarity, more or less xenophobic, which denied the existence of conflicting class interests in favor of a corporatist model of the society" (Keyder 1987:107)<sup>26</sup>.

The first manifestation of the new economic development strategy was the introduction of the first five-year industrialization plan, drawn up in 1933 and set in motion in 1934. In line with the industrialization plan, the government established several industrial plants to reduce the country's need for imports. To finance the nascent state industrial sector two development banks, *Sümerbank* and *Etibank*, were set up in 1933 and 1935, respectively.

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<sup>26</sup> In his analysis of the way in which nationalism was practiced in Turkey, Karpas (1959) notes that "[t]he birth of modern Turkey resembles that of national states in Western Europe after the fall of the Roman Empire. The birth of national states in Europe was preceded and then accompanied by a centuries-long cultural and economic evolution, which eventually gave nationalism in Europe ...a liberal form. In Turkey, however, nationalism was identified with and represented in the form of a political state almost from its inception, and this identification gave to it both exclusiveness and cultural-political absolutism in all fields of human activity" (p.252).

*Sümerbank* came into being as a continuation of the Turkish Bank for Industry and Mining (TBIM) that was established in 1925. The TBIM was first reorganized in 1932 into two separate agencies, the State Industrial Office (SIO) and the Turkish Industrial Credit Bank (TICB). In 1933, these two organizations were brought together under *Sümerbank*, which took over their operations.

*Etibank* was put in charge of the mining industry. *Etibank*'s major activities consisted of mining coal, iron ore, copper, and chromite. Another state institution in the mining sector, the *Maden Tetkik ve Arama Genel Müdürlüğü* (Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration) was established in 1935 to assist *Etibank* in its mining operations by exploring the mineral potential of the country.

The shift in the internal terms of trade in favor of industry, brought about by the étatist industrialization policies, was not reflected in benefits for the workers (Ahmad 1993:99). As a medium of social control over dissatisfied workers the government passed a Labor Law in 1936. The law banned trade unions and strikes, and required labor disputes to be settled by compulsory arbitration (Hale 1981:65). The ideological motivation behind the law was populism, which suggested that Turkey was not a class-based society and that the workers' interests, like the interests of any other occupational group, were protected by the impartial state. The Association Law of 1938, prohibiting the establishment of associations based on common interests, and the Press Union, established the same year to muzzle the press, served as other means of social control by the government in this era.

Meanwhile, the political scene saw some changes toward the end of the decade. Due to his growing influence within the party circles Bayar replaced İnönü as the Prime

Minister in 1937. The same year, the six principles of the RPP were incorporated in the Constitution. Upon Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's death in November 1938, the TGNA elected İnönü as the second President of the Republic. With his strengthened political clout as the Head of State İnönü removed Bayar and some other members of the cabinet from office in January 1939.

### **Turkey During World War II (1939-1945)**

#### ***The Politics and Economics of the War***

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 shifted the government's focus from industrialization to preservation of the country's neutrality in light of the risk of invasion by Germany or Russia, and the pressure of being surrounded by countries that were either at war or occupied by belligerents (Hale 1981:54).

Although Turkey was able to remain neutral throughout the war the mobilization of the armed forces due to persistent threat of invasion increased the government's defense spending dramatically. The rising demand of the army for consumption goods in the market increased the prices of virtually every item, which, in turn, led to black marketeering and hoarding. Exploiting the food shortage, especially bread, the staple of Turkish diet, landlords growing wheat made big profits by saving a portion of their production from procurement by the state, which bought their crop at much lower prices than its free market value in order to keep the bread prices down (Karpat 1959:90).

As a radical and highly controversial measure to cope with the pressing need for production increases in the face of shortage of labor, the government introduced the *Milli Koruma Kanunu* (Law for National Defense) in 1940. The Law for National Defense

empowered the government to fix prices, confiscate property or impose compulsory labor obligations on citizens, mostly peasants living near the coalfields, to work in the mines for a given period every year (Karpas 1959:91, Hale 1981: 59). This compulsory labor provision of the law led to widespread discontent among the peasants.

However, the RPP was politically secure in its monopoly of power under the conditions of war. This sense of safety enabled the government to finance a significant portion of its overburdened war budget by raising taxes. Thus, between 1941 and 1946 the existing property and consumption taxes were increased; a supplementary transactions tax was levied on all manufactured goods; a payment-in-kind tax was applied on agricultural produce; and exports were subjected to tax (Hale 1981:70, Ahmad 1993:70).

Among the new taxes *Varlık Vergisi* (Capital Tax), introduced in 1942, was the most notorious in its material, social and political consequences. The tax was a one-time levy to be applied to wealthy landholders, businessmen, property owners and corporations. As justified by the government, it was an attempt to absorb the windfall gains of wartime profiteers. The rate of taxation was “to be determined by local commissions empowered to assess each individual taxpayer’s responsibility” (Keyder 1987: 113). This arbitrary criterion of assessing who would be charged how much led to an extremely unjust and discriminatory practice to the detriment of non-Muslim taxpayers, especially the Greek and Jewish bourgeoisie of İstanbul. Seventy five percent of the tax collected was levied on taxpayers in İstanbul. Sixty five percent of the total tax was collected from non-Muslims, and foreigners residing in Turkey. Also, non-Muslims were levied ten times higher rates than Muslims. The tax was imposed even on the non-

Muslim artisans and low-paid workers whereas their Muslim counterparts escaped the tax. Those who failed to pay the tax were either shipped off to a labor camp in eastern Anatolia or forced to sell their businesses and property to Muslim profiteers (Hale 1981:71, Keyder 1987:113). The Capital Tax was abolished in 1944. During the two years it was in effect, however, it not only afflicted those who were levied the tax but also did serious damage to the republic's reputation for fair treatment of the minorities (Hale 1981:71).

### *From Neutrality to Integration into World Politics*

In the international sphere, Turkey came under increasing pressure from the Allies after 1943 to join the war and open a second front against Germany in southeast Europe. In August 1944, concurrent with the Allied conference in Washington D.C. to discuss the plans for establishing the United Nations (UN), Turkey cut economic relations with Germany, and in February 1945, two months before the San Francisco meeting commenced to draft the UN Charter, declared war on Germany and Japan to ensure her status as a founding member of the UN.

During the same time, Turkey faced Soviet claims on Kars and Artvin, the two farthest northeastern provinces of Turkey, bordering on the Soviet Union. Stalin also demanded a renegotiation of the Montreux Convention, regarding the regime of Turkish Straits, in favor of the Soviet Union. This diplomatic Soviet offensive played into the hands of the majority of government bureaucrats aspiring to the West, and factored into the decision of Turkey to side with the Allies in the Cold-War.

### **Experimentation with Democracy (1945-1957)**

On the home front, the policies of the wartime had not only left the workers, farmers, landlords, and the bourgeoisie alienated from the state but also severed the strong bond between the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie that had shaped the étatist era. These social conditions profoundly affected the post-war transition to multi-party democracy in Turkey. Furthermore, the need to justify the country's claim to U.S. economic and military assistance prompted İnönü to democratize the political system.

In his speech at the TGNA in November 1945 İnönü encouraged the formation of an opposition party. Two months later, in January 1946, four prominent members of the RPP, highly critical of the government, established the Democrat Party (DP). Among them were Bayar, and Adnan Menderes who came to be the opposition party's most popular leader. Focusing mainly on economic and religious freedom the DP defended market liberalism as opposed to state intervention and local traditions as opposed to the political oppression and ideological onslaught of the center (Keyder 1987:117).

The immediate effects of post-war political liberalization were also felt in the change in government policies. To illustrate, state control over the sale and pricing of goods was eased and retailers were given broader opportunity to sell the products of state enterprises; the compulsory labor obligation was abolished; the Law of Associations that prohibited the establishment of associations on class basis was amended; the Press Union that was established to control the press was disbanded and journalists were allowed to join professional associations; the universities were given autonomy in their administration and internal affairs (Karpat 1959:157-9).

The general elections of July 1946 were held against this backdrop. Although the DP had little time to organize before the elections it received enough votes to win 64 out of a total of 465 seats in the TGNA (Karpas 1959: 164).

The shift to the multi-party system drastically changed political discourse in Turkey. Underlying the popular support enjoyed by the DP from its inception was the assertion that it voiced the will of the people as opposed to an elite group. Hence, 'going to the people' became a powerful motto in the new political configuration, frequently used by the opposition and the government alike. For DP, it was a constant reminder to the constituents of the way in which the opposition differed from the governing party. For RPP, it was a means to offset the opposition's claim to power.

RPP perceived the surprisingly swift success of DP as a serious threat to its power. However, instead of suppressing the opposition, as it had done in the past, the government this time chose to address the points of criticism raised by its opponents. Thus, in the aftermath of the 1946 elections the RPP government instituted policies based on the accommodation and appeasement of its critics, including the abandonment of militant secularism in favor of a more liberal interpretation that manifested itself as concessions in the realm of religion (Karpas 1959, Keyder 1987), which, in turn, led to the politicization of religion.

To counteract the opposition's attacks on its economic policies and to respond to increasing demands of the fledgling capitalist class for a market economy free of state intervention RPP took steps in the direction of economic liberalization. The gradual transformation of the country's economic development strategy from étatism to liberal economy was also greatly effected by the post-war shifts in global power relations,

marked by the emergence of the United States (U.S.) as the hegemonic economic and political power, and RPP government's choice of alliance with the U.S. Thus, "American experts were allowed to draw the post-war economic program" (Keyder 1987: 115) of the country. At the heart of this program lay investment in agricultural development, agriculture-based industry and infrastructure.

The U.S. military and economic aid that Turkey received under the Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan fortified her position in the political-economic constellation of the post-war era. Also in this era, Turkey became a founding member of the Organization for European Economic Cooperation (later to become the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-OECD) in 1948.

The general elections of 1950 brought DP to power. In a landslide victory the opposition party won 396 out of a total of 487 seats in the TGNA (Karpat 1959:241, Hale 1981:55). Thus, a new era began in the history of the Republic, with Bayar as the President and Menderes as the Prime Minister. In the new TGNA, RPP was relegated to the position of the opposition party, with İnönü as its leader.

The primary focus of the new government's economic policies was on agricultural development and infrastructure, in accordance with the economic program prescribed for Turkey by the U.S. The mechanization and commercialization of agriculture was financed by World Bank loans that stipulated Turkey's integration into the world division of labor as an agricultural exporter. Whereas the previous governments had concentrated their efforts on extending the railways network the DP government heavily invested in road building to facilitate the marketization of agricultural products. As imported agricultural machinery enabled the farmers to open up new land and

increase production, ground transportation made their produce, even the perishable crops, speedily accessible to the national market. The liberal economic policies of the DP government also included trade liberalization, inflows of foreign capital, and a shift in the economic function of the state from the lead role of primary entrepreneurship to that of supporting actor, providing infrastructure services and subsidies to the private sector. By the end of the first four years of DP rule, agricultural production had boomed, increasing the overall level of economic activity; foreign exchange was freely available for the import of industrial inputs; and the rate of inflation was kept at a relatively low level (Hale 1981: 90-91).

On the international diplomacy front, DP took steps to foster the country's commitment to the West. In 1950, Turkish troops were sent to the Korean War in support of Western allies, which paved the way for Turkey's acceptance as a member at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952. The DP government also applied for membership to the then European Economic Community, the current European Union, in 1959.

To appeal to its devout constituents, DP lifted the ban on the Arabic reading of the call to prayer at the mosques, and allowed religious programs to be broadcast over the radio. Moreover, accelerated politicization of religion under the DP rule facilitated the emergence of an anti-secularist discourse in the party circles. A resolution introduced at a convention of the DP in 1951, for example, demanded to abolish the hat and reintroduce the fez; restore the veil and the Arab letters; destroy the existing statues; reestablish polygamy; and reinstate the Islamic legal code. In addition, requests were voiced for Islam to become the state religion (Karpat 1959:287 n.53).

In terms of democratization, DP not only fell short of its election campaign promises but also took actions to violate democratic rights. To illustrate, the government confiscated RPP's assets and took over *Ulus*, the official newspaper of the RPP; passed a new Press Law that sanctioned "heavy punishments for those publishing inaccurate information deemed harmful to the political and financial prestige of the state" (Hale 1981:86-87); and took measures to curb the autonomy of the universities. All of these actions alienated the liberal intelligentsia that had supported the DP from the beginning due to its promises of promoting democracy and freedom (Ahmad 1993:112).

Nevertheless, DP increased its votes by three percent in the general elections in 1954. Now more secure in its electoral support than ever before, DP continued its policies rigorously, threatened neither by the opposition of the RPP, which came out of this election weaker than before, nor about the dissident factions within its own party.

However, the economy hit a bottleneck after 1954. Agricultural production declined, inflation rose to high levels, and the industry was hit by a chronic shortage of foreign exchange, on which it depended for the import of some raw materials and new equipment. To avoid a slowdown in economic growth and maintain the appearance of increasing prosperity the government was forced to abandon its commitment to private industry, and increased its investment in the state sector, aiming at filling the gap caused by the shortfall in private investment. This strategy failed, however, due to the inefficient management and the resultant low returns of the state industrial plants (Hale 1981:91).

## **Decennial Cycles of Economic Crisis and Coups D'état (1957-1980)**

### ***The 1960 Coup: From Liberalism Back to Étatism in Economic Development***

The result of the general elections in 1957 was a major setback for the governing party. DP's votes declined ten percent as compared to the previous elections whereas RPP increased its votes by six percent. However, DP still kept its position as the leading party, receiving the majority of the votes.

The economy continued to decline and Turkey experienced her first major macroeconomic crisis in 1958, prompted by uncontrolled expansionism (Öniş 1996). This crisis eventually led to a shift from liberal economy back to the étatism development strategy after 1960.

To restore its authority DP resorted to populist policies and heightened its denunciation of the RPP, which increased the tension between the government and the opposition. The government also continued its oppressive measures to curb democratic rights. In April 1960, the DP majority in the TGNA approved to set up a commission to investigate the opposition's activities deemed subversive by the government. The commission was equipped with arbitrary powers to search and arrest. This measure led to student demonstrations in İstanbul and Ankara. The government responded by declaring martial law in the two cities.

These developments led up to the military's first direct involvement in politics. Until then the Turkish military had not stepped onto the political scene, strictly following Atatürk's maxim for the army to stay out of politics. However, this rule was irrevocably broken on May 27, 1960 when the military, under the leadership of General Cemal Gürsel, staged a coup to put an end to the escalating social unrest and the rapid

polarization of the country into two opposing camps: pro- and anti-Menderes (Hale 1981:87). Menderes was removed from power, arrested along with all other DP deputies in the TGNA, as well as the leading members of the party, including Bayar, and put on trial. Among others, Bayar, Menderes, his Minister of Finance Hasan Polatkan, and Minister of Foreign Affairs Fatin Rüştü Zorlu, were sentenced to death, charged with violation of the constitution and of corruption. The death sentences of Bayar and twelve other DP members were later converted to lifetime imprisonment, whereas Menderes, Polatkan and Zorlu were executed in 1961.

The military intervention of 1960 came to signify the onset of a notorious tradition of coups in the history of the Republic, making the military a powerful authority for future politicians to reckon with.

Soon after the takeover of power the military regime convened a group of academics to draw up a new constitution. The resulting constitution, liberal in many aspects, was put to a referendum and adopted in 1961. The 1961 Constitution recognized the right to strike, collective bargaining, universal social security, medical care, and included “explicit guarantees of freedom of thought, expression, association and publication, as well as other civil liberties” (Ahmad 1993:129). The constitution also introduced the Constitutional Court whose function was to review the constitutionality of legislation passed by the TGNA. As another novelty, the constitution recognized and institutionalized the role of the military in politics. The National Security Council, established to “advise the Council of Ministers in making decisions on matters of national security and in their coordination” (Official Gazette 20/07/1961, No.10859, Law No. 334,

Article 111 § 3), consisted of the Prime Minister, the Chief of the General Staff, the Ministers, and the chief commanders of the armed forces.

Following the coup, the country went back to the étatist trajectory of economic development. It had been widely accepted that the lack of an economic development plan under the DP rule was a major factor leading to the economic crisis of the late 1950s. Thus, the new constitution required the establishment of a State Planning Organization to draw up and publish long-term plans for economic development. The return to planned economy increased the role of the state in the economy. The subsequent development model entailed an import substituting industrialization strategy with heavy protectionism, export pessimism, and restrictions on foreign direct investments. This model stayed in effect for the next two decades.

1960s also marked the beginning of an era of political instability in Turkey, characterized by successive short-lived coalition governments. Following the coup the military junta had closed the DP. In 1961, when political activity was restored, *Adalet Partisi* (Justice Party - JP) was established as the successor of the DP, claiming the center-right of the political spectrum. The first general elections after the coup were held in October, 1961 with the participation of the JP, the RPP, and a number of newly established, smaller parties. RPP received 36.7 percent of the votes, preceding the JP by a margin of two percent. Since none of the parties won the majority of the votes, a coalition government had to be established. As the party with the largest electoral support the RPP set out to do so. Between 1961 and 1965, the RPP formed three tenuous coalition governments, first with the JP, then with the smaller parties, and finally with the independents. By 1965, RPP was weakened by the instability of the successive coalition

governments established under its leadership. Before the general elections of 1965, RPP leader İnönü announced his party's political orientation as 'left of center', in an attempt to boost the fading image of the party and justify its name of 'people's party' (Hale 1981:118). The general elections in 1965 brought the JP to power, allowing its leader Süleyman Demirel to establish a single party government with 53 percent of the votes.

Despite the political instability that characterized the first half of the 1960s the economy grew almost seven percent between 1963 and 1967 (Hale 1981:147, Ahmad 1993:133). This performance was effected to a large extent by favorable developments on the international milieu. In 1963 Turkey became an associate member of the European Economic Community (EEC). The associate membership entailed economic cooperation, in the short run, and the establishment of a customs union between the parties, in the long run, as a means of preparing Turkey for a prospective full membership. Thus, economically "Turkey gradually entered the European sphere of influence during the 1960s, as reflected in trade patterns and in the dominance of Swiss and German investments over American" (Keyder 1987:184). This influence was limited, however, for two reasons. First, it made more economic sense for European entrepreneurs to invest in the member countries whose economies were linked by customs union, allowing free trade. Second, although it was more lucrative to invest outside the EEC due to cheap labor, Turkey was not favorable in that respect due to her relatively high wages (Keyder 1987). There was one development in this era, however, that facilitated Turkey's integration into the European economy and boosted her economic growth beyond expectations. The economic boom in Europe, particularly in Germany, created a rising demand for labor, which Turkish workers exploited in growing numbers, starting in the

early 1960s. From 13,000 in 1962, the number of Turkish workers in Europe increased to 480,000 in 1970 (Keyder 1987:184). The remittances these workers sent back home made a significant contribution to the economy as a source of foreign exchange, which, in turn, fostered industrialization.

Remittances provided by migrant workers also had an indirect effect on politics. Partly due to the ensuing economic prosperity the governing JP increased its electoral support in the general elections of 1969, receiving 57 percent of the votes. However, the concurrent process of deepening ideological polarization in the society turned the tide against the JP government.

The political and social landscape of Turkey in the 1960s was remarkably different from that in any other period before. The new freedoms provided by the constitution fostered a social transformation in Turkey by facilitating a process of unprecedented mass politicization. As a part of this process, the penetration of class-consciousness into the social fabric found its expression in the establishment of ideologically motivated, highly politicized organizations. To exemplify, a group of workers split from the non-political, pro-government *Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu-Türk-İş* (Confederation of Workers' Unions of Turkey), and formed the *Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu-DİSK* (Confederation of Revolutionary Workers' Unions of Turkey) in 1967 (Ahmad 1993:134). To counteract the growing politicization of the working class and advance its own interests, the bourgeoisie established the *Türk Sanayicileri ve İşadamları Derneği – TÜSİAD* (Turkish Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association) in 1971.

The same era also witnessed the formation and increasingly fierce confrontation of the left wing and right wing youth groups. Leftist college students established political associations, some of which were affiliated with the *Türkiye İşçi Partisi* (Turkish Workers Party – TWP) that was formed in the immediate aftermath of the coup in 1961. Translations of leftist political literature that became readily available in this era assisted students in cultivating their worldview. At the other end of the political spectrum, the right wing began to mobilize its own forces in what was described as the struggle against communism (Ahmad 1993:139). *Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi* (Nationalist Action Party - NAP), a neo-fascist party under the leadership of Alparslan Türkeş, an ex-member of the military junta of 1960, and *Bozkurtlar* (Grey Wolves), the youth organization of the NAP, assumed the lead role in the mobilization of the right.

The disproportionate rise in the share of the population of age 30 and under indirectly factored into the ideological polarization of the youth. To meet the needs of a growing student body universities and colleges doubled their enrollment in the 1960s, making these institutions “recruiting grounds for fringe political groups of the left and right” (Ahmad 1993:145). Thus, in the late 1960s and early 1970s, antagonism between the hard-line right and the revolutionary left grew to the point of boiling over to the streets, manifested in acts of terror carried out by extremist urban guerilla groups.

In the hotbed of ideological politics of the decade political Islam also found itself a niche. Although Islamists had been active in politics under the roof of center-right parties since 1950s, first within the DP, then within the JP, it was in 1970 that they entered the political stage as an independent actor with the establishment of the *Milli Nizam Partisi* (National Order Party) under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan.

### *The 1971 'Coup by Memorandum'*

Early 1970s saw a downturn in the economy. Industrial expansion and high growth rate of the previous decade created ever-rising expectations, which the economy could not meet. Consumption was restricted to an affluent minority due to high inflation, and unemployment was rising (Ahmad 1993:144).

Economic decline, coupled with ideological polarization, political tension, and social unrest took an explosive dimension in the early 1970s. In Ahmad's (1993) account of the prevailing conditions in Turkey at the time:

By January 1971, Turkey seemed to be in a state of chaos. The universities has ceased to function. Students emulating Latin American urban guerillas robbed banks and kidnapped US servicemen, and attacked American targets. The homes of university professors critical of the government were bombed by neo-fascist militants. Factories were on strike..... The Islamist movement had become more aggressive and its party, the National Order Party, openly rejected Atatürk and Kemalism, infuriating the armed forces (P.147).

This chaotic state of affairs culminated in a military intervention on March 12, 1971 when the Chief of the General Staff and the chief commanders of the armed forces issued a memorandum, calling for the establishment of a strong and credible government capable of putting an end to the existing anarchic situation and undertaking reforms envisaged in the constitution (Hale 1981:119, Ahmad 1993:147). The generals also threatened to assume power if the government refused to resign. The subsequent resignation of Demirel launched another period of unstable coalition governments for the following two and a half years. Under the shadow of the military, the governments during this period instituted anti-democratic measures curbing the rights guaranteed by the 1961 Constitution.

In 1972, Islamists formed *Milli Selamet Partisi* (National Salvation Party-NSP) as the successor of the National Order Party, which had been dissolved by the military junta. Meanwhile, in the RPP Bülent Ecevit, the architect of the shift in the party's political orientation to 'left of center' became the leader of the RPP, replacing İnönü.

The first general elections after the so-called 'coup by memorandum' were held in October 1973. RPP came out as the first party with 41 percent of the votes, followed by Demirel's JP with 33 percent. Since no party received the majority of the votes another series of successive, short-lived coalition governments ensued.

The first coalition between the RPP and the National Salvation Party faltered due to profound disagreements between the constituent parties. Hoping to form a new coalition, this time with the JP, Prime Minister Ecevit of the RPP resigned in 1974. Contrary to Ecevit's expectations, an unlikely coalition was established between the right-wing parties in the parliament, which had been hostile to each other until then because of their competition over the votes of the same constituency. The main motivation behind the coalition of the center-right JP, the centrist Republican Reliance Party, the neo-fascist Nationalist Action Party, and the Islamist National Salvation Party, was to establish a united front against what they saw as the communist threat to the regime posed by the left-wing parties. Under the government of the right-wing coalition, between 1975 and 1977, the country came to the brink of a civil war between the radical left and radical right youth groups. The ideological schism turned into political violence and terror, which was aggravated at an unprecedented scale during the right-wing coalition due to the encouragement and direct support of the fascist youth groups by the

government. By the end of the 1970s violent acts of terror claimed about 20 to 30 victims each day (Ahmad 1993, Birand 1987, Kongar 2006).

In 1977, Ecevit's RPP came out of the general elections as the first party again but it still did not have the majority of the votes to establish a single party government. With the support of the independent members of parliament, Ecevit was able to form a government. To straighten up the economy Ecevit was forced to "swallow the bitter pill offered by the IMF as the price of its economic bailout" (Ahmad 1993:177). However, this decision placed the Prime Minister in a double-bind: According to the IMF and the Turkish business community, the economic measures Ecevit agreed to take were not sufficient for recovery. His working class constituency, on the other hand, resented Ecevit for compromising too much at their expense. Upon the defeat of his party in the mid-term elections held in October 1979, Ecevit resigned.

In the late 1970s Turkish economy experienced its worst crisis since the establishment of the republic. A significant determinant of the crisis was the economy's dependence on the remittances sent home by Turkish workers in Europe. This source of foreign exchange was unpredictable due to its reliance on the economic boom in Europe. In fact, remittances began to decline after 1974 when Germany began to introduce schemes to send home foreign workers in an attempt to address the country's growing unemployment problem (Keyder 1987:185, Ahmad 1993:134). Thus, as noted by Keyder (2004), "Despite a respectable growth performance, the economy could not generate the foreign exchange earnings that were needed for essential imports, such as oil and new technology" (p.66). The government's response to the crisis, based on short-term

measures, such as continuing protectionist policies at home by borrowing abroad, came under heavy attack.

By the end of the decade Turkey had once again become a setting of economic, social, and political chaos. The rate of inflation mounted to over 80 percent in 1979. 20% of the working population was unemployed, and the trade deficit was on the rise (Hale 1981). The economic crisis, exacerbated by political instability, virtually paralyzed the regime.

The resulting picture was grim. Turkey was on a dangerous downward spiral, falling apart at a swift pace but there seemed to be no way out of this vicious circle within the existing political system. Following Ecevit's resignation, Demirel formed a minority government in November 1979. In the meantime, alarmed by the extent of the political and socio-economic crisis facing the country, the generals presented a letter of warning to the President on December 27, 1979, stating that "the armed forces strenuously request that in view of the life-and-death question facing our country, political parties should immediately put national interest to the fore and cooperate.....to take all the measures required to oppose attempts to demolish the state by means of anarchy, terror and separatism" (quote from Birand 1987: 101).

### ***The 1980 Coup, IMF and the Shift to Neoliberal Economy***

The political and economic stability of the country during this period was a primary concern not only to Turks within the context of peace and prosperity at home but also to the West within the context of Cold War. Developments at the international level and the subsequent shift in U.S. foreign policy in the late 1970s had a direct and profound effect on the course of Turkish politics in this era.

1979 marked one of the most crisis-laden years of the Cold War. The U.S. lost its major ally and its crucial military bases in the Persian Gulf with the fall of the Shah and the consequent establishment of a theocratic regime in Iran through the Islamic Revolution in 1979. In a concurrent development the same year, a group of Iranian militant university students took sixty-six U.S. citizens hostage in the American Embassy in Tehran. During the ongoing hostage crisis the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in December 1979. This incident came as a sharp blow to the fragile balance between the two superpowers. The U.S. Administration was convinced that the underlying motive of this aggressive Soviet military move was to control the rich oil fields in the Gulf. In his State of the Union Address on January 23, 1980, which came to be known as the Carter Doctrine, President Carter proclaimed that “[a]n attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force”. In the same speech, Carter also announced that Washington would strengthen political and military ties with the nations in the region. Within this framework, a rapid deployment force (RDF), a flexible military force capable to reach any trouble spot in the Middle East at short notice, was to be established. At this juncture, as a long time U.S. ally and NATO member with already existing military technological infrastructure necessary for the establishment of RDF bases, and with its geographical location, bordering on Syria and Iraq in the South and Iran in the East, Turkey proved to be a valuable strategic asset for the U.S. However, the viability of such a critical military and political investment in a country required the economic and political stability of that country.

Meanwhile, with the possibility of a military intervention hanging over its head like the sword of Damocles the new government of Demirel passed the so-called *January 24 Decisions* in 1980. Along the same lines of the economic stability program adopted by the previous government in 1979, this package of IMF-sanctioned austerity measures was based on transforming the economy by encouraging exports and curbing public spending. However, there was a marked difference between the two programs in terms of the scope of the measures endorsed. The January 24 Decisions of the Demirel government went as far as to fully satisfy both the IMF and the Turkish business community. Devoted to both short-term stabilization and long-term structural adjustment, the program included measures such as opening the Turkish economy to international markets, reducing the state's role in the economy, adopting realistic exchange rate and monetary policies, reducing subsidies and price controls, and encouraging exports and foreign direct investment (Öniş 2003a: 6). This move was not the first attempt of Turkish policymakers to liberalize the economy but, ironically, it was for the first time in this turbulent era, marked by critical national and international developments, that the country's radical transition to a liberal economy could be carried out. The adoption of the neo-liberal reform package by Turkey "received immediate recognition and support from international organizations like the World Bank and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)" (Şenses 1988:9).

*January 24 Decisions* were devised by Turgut Özal, the principal economic advisor of and undersecretary to Demirel, who had worked for the World Bank in the early 1970s, and was a fervent proponent of the IMF- patented panacea for economic recovery in Turkey. However, as an experienced technocrat, Özal was aware of the

difficulty in implementing this stability package within the limitations of ordinary party politics due to the potential cataclysmic social consequences of the required severe measures.

At this critical stage two powerful forces came to the rescue of Özal: the Western Allies and the Turkish military. Efforts of the West to adapt to the unexpected turn of events within the context of the Cold War crystallized in a rescue mission comprising of economic aid to help Turkey restore economic stability. Under the auspices of Germany, an immediate aid package was provided by the OECD for the economic recovery of Turkey. Securing the necessary political stability for the full implementation of the IMF program was the next step, which the Turkish army took with the coup on September 12, 1980<sup>27</sup>. Beside its immediate outcome of putting an end to political violence and terror, the 1980 coup had the effect of providing “the period of tranquility Özal was seeking, marked by an absence of politics and dissent in all forms” (Ahmad 1993:179).

### **Neoliberalism Under the Shadow of the Military (1980-?)**

Until 1983, the country was ruled directly by the military junta through the omnipotent National Security Council (NSC), comprising of the Chief of the General Staff and the chiefs of the armed forces. A shadow government led by a retired admiral was delegated executive authority by the NSC. The NSC restored stability in a totalitarian

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<sup>27</sup> With respect to U.S. involvement in the coup, Mehmet Ali Birand (1987), a prominent Turkish journalist, recounts: “The United States National Security Council adviser and head of the Turkish desk Paul Henze had just returned home when his telephone rang. It was the ‘Situation Room’ in the White House.....The duty officer in the ‘Situation Room’ announced: ‘Paul, your boys have finally done it!’ Paul Henze was taken aback: ‘What are you talking about? What do you mean? The voice went on: ‘Your generals, Paul, they’ve pulled *a coup*’ ” (p.185).

fashion by proscribing anything political in the society. Thus, “the trade union movement was smashed, the universities were purged and centralized, the press was muzzled, the parties were dissolved and many former politicians banned from politics” (Ahmad 1993:13). This process of depoliticization was institutionalized in the 1982 Constitution, which replaced the liberal 1961 Constitution. Under the new constitution, the powers of the NSC were expanded “to form what amounted to a parallel government, while the State Security Courts [established by the junta] became a parallel legal system with jurisdiction over ‘crimes against the state’” (Keyder 2004:66).

When the ban on politics was lifted in April 1983, new parties led by new figures entered the political stage. This was not due to innovation and diversity in politics in the post-coup era but because of necessity, since all previous parties had been abolished and their leaders detained by the military junta. One of the new parties, the center right *Anavatan Partisi* (Motherland Party - MP) of Özal, the architect of the *January 24 Decisions*, won the general elections in November 1983.

Although the MP was not the continuation of any one of the dissolved parties it incorporated all three tendencies of the right. It was conservative like Demirel’s Justice Party, Islamist like Erbakan’s National Salvation Party, and nationalist like Türkeş’ Nationalist Action Party (Ahmad 1993:192). As a means of holding together the representatives of these tendencies within the party Özal skillfully exploited patronage, buying off the leaders of factions with office and allowing them to further their personal interests (Ahmad 1993:194). Özal’s policies reflected the overwhelmingly conservative character of his party. With little concern for democratic values and democratization Özal

left the NSC to maintain law and order as he primarily focused on economic policy (Ahmad 1993, Keyder 2004).

One of the problem areas entrusted to the military was the ethnic separatism claim by the Kurds living in eastern and southeastern Turkey<sup>28</sup>. According to the dominant ideology of the Turkish state, there is only one people in Turkey, comprising the totality of the country's citizens who enjoy the same rights and obligations (Kramer 2000:40). The indivisibility of this totality is one of the sacrosanct principles of the Republic. Thus, Kurdish claims for ethnic difference were rejected by the state, and forcefully suppressed by the military after the 1980 coup under martial law in Kurdish provinces, which lasted for over twenty years. Cultural and political suppression, combined with economic underdevelopment, culminated in an armed Kurdish insurgency against the state. Under the leadership of Abdullah Öcalan, Kurdistan Workers' Party, known as PKK after its Kurdish name Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan<sup>29</sup>, started guerilla attacks on Turkish security forces in 1984. The state responded by intensifying its repression, and an armed conflict ensued to last for the next fifteen years.

Although the ban on politics for the pre-coup party leaders and their parties was still in effect by 1986, major parties in the political setting were surrogates of the principal parties of the past, with proxy leaders on the foreground guided by the doyens

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<sup>28</sup> Kurds comprise the largest ethnic group in Turkey, estimated to represent between 10 to 20 percent of the total population (Keyder 2004:73). Since their ethnicity is not accepted as an identity code the state does not acknowledge Kurds as a minority group. As sanctioned in the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, the only minority groups officially recognized by Turkey are the Armenian, Greek, and Jewish minorities.

<sup>29</sup> A Marxist separatist organization, established in 1978, with the aim of creating an independent Kurdish state in southeastern and eastern Turkey, and parts of the neighboring Iran, Iraq, and Syria, inhabited by Kurds.

of the old parties. Thus, the center right *Doğru Yol Partisi* (True Path Party - TPP) was associated with Demirel; the Islamist *Refah Partisi* (Welfare Party - WP) with Erbakan; and the neo-fascist *Milliyetçi Çalışma Partisi* (Nationalist Labor Party - NLP) with Türkeş. On the left, the legacy of the RPP was carried on by two parties: the *Demokratik Sol Parti* (Democratic Left Party - DLP), guided in the background by RPP's pre-coup leader Ecevit; and the *Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti* (Social Democratic Populist Party - SDPP), led by Erdal İnönü, the son of İsmet İnönü, RPP's long time leader before Ecevit.

In September 1987, political rights of the old party leaders were restored. Thus, the new parties participated in the elections of November 1987 under the official leadership of the previous leaders. Özal's MP came out as the first party, winning 65 percent of the seats in the TGNA with only 36 percent of the votes. This disproportionate representation was due to the amendments in the electoral law in favor of the ruling party<sup>30</sup>. The amendments increased the ruling party's representation vis-à-vis the small parties, which failed to pass the 10 percent threshold imposed by the NSC, and thus won no representation in the TGNA (Ahmad 1993:196).

Under the protection of the NSC, Özal radically restructured the economy. Manufacturing employment in the public sector decreased due to privatization and downsizing. Agricultural subsidies were reduced. There was a marked change in the pattern of income distribution in favor of the upper class as the share of wages and salaries in the GNP plummeted from 36 percent in 1977 to 18 percent in 1987 (Ahmad

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<sup>30</sup> Between 1983 and 1987, the Özal government amended the electoral law four times. Thanks to these amendments, the ruling party was able to increase its seats in the TGNA in 1987 even though its votes had declined with reference to 1983. MP held 211 seats in 1983 with 45 percent of the votes but 292 seats in 1987 with only 36 percent of the votes.

1993:205). With the increase in the number of small enterprises, the growth of the service sector, and the spread of subcontracting, unionized labor force declined (Gülalp 2001, Keyder 2004). On the positive side, the adoption of export-oriented growth strategy resulted in an unprecedented upsurge in exports from \$3 billion in 1980 to \$13 billion in 1990 (Keyder 2004:68), which, to a large extent, owed to the increase in manufactured exports, especially textiles. This structural shift in the exports from agricultural to manufactured goods was made possible by market liberalization and a subsequent development, which was significant not only in its economic consequences but also in its political ramifications.

Market liberalization gave rise to a new entrepreneurial class investing in small and medium-scale export-oriented businesses in the manufacturing sector. These small entrepreneurs predominantly invested in “a number of smaller Anatolian cities with craft traditions and non-unionized workforces, where households could be incorporated in subcontracting deals” (Keyder 2004:68). These cities, referred to as ‘Anatolian Tigers’, gradually grew into regional industrial centers. Being born into a free market economy at home, and having to compete in a cutthroat global market on their own, the new breed of entrepreneurs was considerably different from the bourgeoisie of İstanbul whose large holding companies thrived under the protection of the state in a closed economy. The rapport of the İstanbul bourgeoisie with the policymakers in Ankara had allowed the former to accumulate wealth but at the same time rendered it dependent on the state. In contrast, the new entrepreneurs were less directly dependent on Ankara because their business decisions were based more on the dictates of the market rather than the bureaucratic measures. Still, the small entrepreneurs resented the state for treating them

as its step-children while favoring the large businesses (Gülalp 2001:439). Another notable difference between the two groups was that the new businessmen “did not share the westernized style and militant secularism of their more entrenched counterparts in İstanbul” (Keyder 2004:68), and tended to support an Islamic party. Aggrieved by the state’s neglect, and unable to find any representation in the existing business associations to match their growing economic power, small entrepreneurs organized and established their own association of *Müstakil Sanayiciler ve İşadamları Derneği - MÜSİAD* (abbreviation for the Association of Independent Industrialists and Businessmen)<sup>31</sup> in 1990 as a counterweight to the *TÜSİAD* of the İstanbul bourgeoisie.

After a decade of rapid economic growth, the economy began to worsen in the late 1980s. This decline was largely due to the failure of the government to contain severe distributional pressures, which had been highly repressed under the military regime. Economic growth was restored with the liberalization of the capital account and the establishment of full convertibility of the Turkish Lira in 1989. These neo-liberal policy measures resulted in a dramatic increase in inflows of short-term international capital. However, premature financial and account liberalization prior to the establishment of a stable macroeconomic environment and a strong regulatory framework for the banking sector resulted in “a pattern of a highly fragile debt-led growth which was heavily

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<sup>31</sup> The skillfully chosen name for the association denotes the group’s emphasis on its differences from the big business: One difference is noted in the signifier of ‘Independent’, referring to ‘Independence from Ankara’ versus ‘Dependence on Ankara’. The other is alluded to in the first three letters of the abbreviated name of MÜSİAD. Although with reference to its official name in Turkish “MÜS” stands for “MÜSTAKİL”, i.e. “INDEPENDENT”, it also constitutes an allusion to the first three letters of another Turkish word: ‘MÜSLÜMAN’, i.e. MUSLIM.

dependent on domestic borrowing to finance the large fiscal deficit and inflows of short-term capital”<sup>32</sup> (Öniş 2003a:25).

Economic decline further eroded the electoral support of Özal’s Motherland Party (MP), as manifested in the local elections in 1989 when the party’s votes dropped to 22 percent. An equally significant reason for the declining popularity of Özal was the pervasive corruption associated with him and his party. Through his connections with the World Bank and the U.S. Özal recruited young liberals, referred to as the ‘Princes of Özal’, who “brought with them ideas and schemes from Reagan’s America on how to make quick and easy money” (Ahmad 1993:193). The popular idiom of ‘Özal Dynasty’ is revealing in that respect. It refers to the loyal supporters of Özal who “had acquired great wealth, which they displayed with unbridled ostentation” (Ahmad 1993:198).

In 1989 TGNA elected Özal as the country’s next President. In the absence of a leader capable of unifying the different groups within the party, the MP witnessed an internal power struggle between the factions. Taking advantage of the resultant political instability and the economic decline Kurdish guerillas escalated their attacks to which the state responded with more stringent military and legislative measures. As the army’s presence in the Southeast was strengthened, the government passed the Anti-Terrorism Law in 1990, allowing the authorities to exercise extraordinary powers in the name of national security (Ahmad 1993, Keyder 2004).

In the general elections in 1991 True Path Party (TPP), Demirel’s center-right, post-coup party, came out as the first party with 27 percent of the votes, followed by the

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<sup>32</sup> This unstable pattern of growth instigated the economic crises in 1994, 2000 and 2001.

Motherland Party (MP) with 24 percent, and Erdal İnönü's center-left Social Democratic Populist Party (SDPP) with 20.8 percent of the votes. Once again, the election results called for a coalition government.

The ensuing left-right coalition was formed between TPP and SDPP. Meanwhile, in 1992, a group of SDPP members left the party and reestablished the Republican People's Party (RPP) under the leadership of Deniz Baykal. With the ascension of the coalition leader Demirel to Presidency following the death of Özal in 1993, Tansu Çiller replaced the former as the leader of TPP and the Prime Minister, thus becoming Turkey's first female premier.

Under Çiller's premiership in December 1995, Turkey took a step forward in its integration with Europe with the establishment of a Customs Union in industrial and processed agricultural goods, thus, completing the long transition period between its associate membership in 1963 and the last stage for its aspired full membership, i.e. the official candidate status and the onset of negotiations for membership.

The following general elections in 1995 shook up politics in Turkey when, for the first time in the Republican history, an Islamic party took the lead. Erbakan's Welfare Party received 21 percent of the votes, leaving behind the Motherland Party with 19.5 percent, the True Path Party with 19.18 percent, and the Democratic Left Party with 14.64 percent.

The steady increase in the electoral votes of the Welfare Party (WP) from 8 percent in 1987 to 21 percent in 1995 was not so much due the increase in the number of its fundamentalist supporters who wanted to see the modern state replaced by an Islamic state but due to the movement of what Göle (1996) refers to as Cultural Islam, which

gave rise to counter-communities with new value systems. Exploiting an opening that the system acknowledged<sup>33</sup>, these communities used the Islamic value system as a marker of difference and social distinction against the official construction of identity. Thus, along with the urban poor, the new class of small entrepreneurs under MÜSİAD found an outlet in Cultural Islam for their grievances and a representation in the Welfare Party for their interests.

Following WP's election victory, the center right agreed to join forces in an attempt to prevent the establishment of a coalition, led by an Islamic party. Thus, a coalition government was formed between the Motherland Party (MP) and the True Path Party (TPP). The MP-TPP government lasted only for three months however, due to profound disagreements between the coalition partners. Upon the ensuing crisis President Demirel was forced to give Erbakan the mandate to establish a new government. The resulting Erbakan-Çiller (WP-TPP) government was another short-lived coalition, interrupted this time by the so-called 'post-modern coup' on February 28, 1997, when the National Security Council warned Erbakan against his provocative Islamist rhetoric and increasing threat to the regime. As a result, Erbakan was forced to resign, and his party was closed down by the Constitutional Court in 1998. This led to the reorganization of Political Islam under a new party, the *Fazilet Partisi* (Virtue Party).

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<sup>33</sup> Keyder (2004) points out the way in which the state fostered cultural Islam as follows: "[a]fter the coup in 1980, the military junta subscribed uncritically to the American policy of encouraging Islamism as a buffer against the socialist movement. With the education system undermined by IMF fiscal austerity measures enrollment in government-backed religious lycées grew faster than that in general secondary schools during the 1980s, and religion was made a compulsory element of the curriculum. During these years, party leaders competed for good relations with various moderate and modernist Islamic factions, Özal winning their support in 1983" (p.70).

As political instability continued with short-lived coalition governments under accusations of corruption and cronyism, the economy suffered two consecutive crises in the 1990s due to debt-led growth. The economy shrank by 6 percent in the crises of 1994 and 1999 (Keyder 2004:75).

Along with the political and economic crises, two specific developments left their mark on the 1990s. In February 1999, PKK's leader Abdullah Öcalan was captured in Nairobi, Kenya by a commando team of Turkish security forces, with the help of Israeli and American intelligence agencies. Öcalan was brought back to Turkey, put on trial at the State Security Court, found guilty of separatist treason, and sentenced to death<sup>34</sup>. The same year in August, Öcalan called on the PKK to lay down its arms (Kramer 2000, Keyder 2004). Consequently, PKK guerillas withdrew from Turkish soil to Northern Iraq, and its leadership renounced armed struggle<sup>35</sup>. The second politically crucial development of the decade was the decision by the EU heads of state at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999 to accept Turkey as an official candidate for membership at the EU.

Upon the closure of the Virtue Party in 2001 there has been a split in the Islamic ranks between older hardliners and younger reformers, which culminated in the establishment of *Saadet Partisi* (Felicity Party), representing the hardliners around Erbakan, and *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi* – abbreviated as *AKP* or *AK Parti* (Justice and

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<sup>34</sup> Öcalan's sentence was converted to life imprisonment in 2002 when Turkey abolished the death penalty as part of her reform measures to join the EU.

<sup>35</sup> PKK took up arms again in 2005. Following Öcalan's sentence in 1999, his lawyers had disputed the legality of his trial and brought the case to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). ECHR decided in 2005 that Öcalan's trial was unfair. Although not legally binding, the ECHR ruling puts political pressure on Turkey to grant Öcalan a new trial.

Development Party) by Abdullah Gül and Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the current Prime Minister, representing the moderate wing.

Meanwhile, due to another crisis the economy shrank by 9 percent in 2001. Investments fell, bankruptcies and unemployment exploded, and state indebtedness reached the alarming level of 150 percent of GNP (Keyder 2004:75).

In November 2002 elections, AKP became the first party, winning 34% of the votes, followed by the Republican People's Party (RPP) that received 19 percent of the votes<sup>36</sup>. The 10 percent threshold that had been instituted by the military junta in 1980 to keep the fringe parties away from the TGNA ironically disqualified all the other major parties but the RPP from being represented in the Assembly, leaving AKP with 60 percent of the seats. Thus, AKP became the first party in fifteen years to establish a single party government.

AKP's victory, like that of the Welfare Party in 1995, was partly shaped by the reaction of the electorate to the political turmoil in the second half of the 1990s owing to corruption allegations directed at the then governing parties. The political importance of this factor is notable in the strategic name choice of AKP. In its campaigns for election, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi promised Turkish voters not only Justice (Adalet) and Development (Kalkınma), but also, as the abbreviated name AK ("white" or "clean") suggests, a government free of corruption (Koçer 2005). Also, like the Welfare Party, the social base of AKP extends to the new entrepreneur class and the urban poor. In this respect as well, the reference to 'Justice' and 'Development' is eloquent, since it responds to the grievances of small entrepreneurs by promising to remedy their 'unfair

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<sup>36</sup> The Erbakan-supported Felicity Party received only 2.5 percent of the votes.

treatment by the state' with 'justice'; and to the grievances of the urban poor by promising to remedy 'poverty' with 'development'.

During their period of government of over four years Prime Minister Erdoğan and his cabinet focused primarily on Turkey's further integration into the global economy by enacting laws to facilitate the inflow of foreign direct investment, among them the Mining Law of 2004, and on Turkey's relations with the EU by instituting sweeping political reforms in an attempt to meet EU's criteria for Turkey's accession. The reward came in October 2004 when the European Commission issued its Progress Report on Turkey, which announced that the country met EU's political criteria as required. The Commission also recommended to the European Council to start membership negotiations with Turkey. At the following Summit of the European Council in December 1994 the heads of state of the EU declared that official negotiations with Turkey for full membership would be opened on October 3, 2005. Negotiations started on the specified date and are currently ongoing.

### ***The Balance Sheet of Turkey's Neoliberal Development Experience***

According to Öniş (2003 a, 2003 b, 2003c) and Şenses (1988), the major achievement of the Turkish neo-liberal development program lay in the dramatic increase in exports and the sharp structural shift in export composition toward manufactured goods. The success on the export front also included "market expansion to include Middle Eastern and North African countries" (Şenses 1988:11). Rapid economic growth of four to five percent per annum, at least in the first decade of the liberalization process, was another consequence on the plus side of neo-liberal policies.

However, the transition to neo-liberal development model was also accompanied by high socio-economic costs. A sharp fall in real wages and salaries, rise in inequalities in income distribution, removal of subsidies in agricultural production together with a sharp increase in the prices of agricultural inputs, dissolution of class ideologies and traditional values, and depolitization of the masses, are among the costs of the liberalization program.

Neo-liberal policies had negative impacts on both workers in the agricultural sector and on the industrial labor force in urban areas. In the agricultural sector, structural adjustment measures taken in line with IMF guidelines, together with World Bank policies, largely factored into the economic hardship facing small farmers and the decline in their living standards. Agricultural credits, provided to a wide spectrum of farmers by the World Bank from 1950s onward, led to a significant increase in agricultural production due to the use of improved technology and chemicals, the development of infrastructure, and the increased use of agricultural machinery. However, this credit policy, along with the government's agricultural support encouraged by the World Bank, resulted in a remarkable transformation in the countryside, "characterized by the integration of small, family-based agricultural units into market relations and their subordination to capital" (Aydın 1993:119). After the commercialization of agriculture and the integration of a large number of farmers into the capitalist system, interest rates on agricultural credits have gradually increased and subsidies have been gradually withdrawn from agricultural inputs. In the absence of a corresponding rise in the prices of agricultural commodities, small farmers "are left with the dilemma of either defaulting on their debts or facing the confiscation of their means of production" (Aydın 1993:121).

Even though the Reform Program of 1980 did not include any explicit statement about labor policies, restraint on the real wages of industrial workers was compatible with certain aims of the program. According to Şenses (1993), “the creation of an exportable surplus beyond domestic requirements, as well as controlling inflation, required domestic demand restraint, especially restraints on wages” (p.99). Wage restraint was also instrumental in achieving international competitiveness under an export-oriented growth strategy because wages were considered significant cost elements in the manufacturing sector. Real wage reduction was easily achieved in the restrictive labor environment of the military regime between 1980 and 1983. Under the circumstances of highly restricted trade union activity, wage settlements were carried out by the Supreme Arbitration Board. Once the Board set wages on the basis of government’s target rate of inflation, there was no room for readjustment when the actual rate often proved to be much higher than the target rate. Even after the return to free collective bargaining in the aftermath of the military regime, “a highly bureaucratized process of collective bargaining and strike procedure strongly discouraged workers’ demands for higher wages” (Şenses 1993: 104).

Another economic cost of Turkey’s neo-liberal development path has been the emergence of financial crises due to rapid capital account liberalization before attaining sufficient macroeconomic stability and developing the appropriate regulatory institutions Öniş (2003a, 2003b).

The shift to neo-liberal development model in Turkey was not carried out on the basis of a broad social consensus but in a top-down fashion (Öniş 2003a), under the shadow of the military regime of 1980. This process involved the redefinition of economic power relations by the state in favor of the bourgeoisie, which was achieved

through strict control of economic class struggles and distributive pressures by means of legal and institutional restrictions, as well as military measures. Consequently, a political-legal super-structure of military- corporate character was established, in which the economic bargaining power and political leverage of the working class was minimized (Öngen 2003).

The working class was not only de-politicized but also manipulated to surrender to the neo-liberal ideology through the propaganda that presented major elements of the neo-liberal reform agenda, such as increase in consumption and competition, and privatization of state economic enterprises, as the *sine qua non* of economic growth and development. In the long run, the depolitization of the masses resulted in their alienation from their class identities and their search for other identity codes, such as nationalism and political Islam (Öngen 2003:175).

Beside their measurable socio-economic costs, the neo-liberal policies in Turkey also raise concern about the non-quantifiable costs of this development model. The following questions posed by Şenses (2003) point out such costs:

What is the cost of the state of hopelessness among large sections of the population, blaming the whole social, political, and economic system for their problems and losing confidence in the system's ability to provide them with a secure social and economic life? ...How do we measure the socio-economic cost of increased desire for emigration, especially among the younger population including recent graduates, as a result of declining employment opportunities and real wages and salaries? (P.108)

## **Present-Day Turkey: A Regime in Crisis?**

As of May 2007, political tension is at its highest in Turkey due to the crisis revolving around the Presidential election. The present crisis is the latest manifestation of the struggle between Islamism and secularism; democracy and repression; the modern and the traditional, that has characterized the history of politics in Turkey since the late Ottoman era.

Ahmet Necdet Sezer, the current President whose term officially ended in May, is an unyielding Kemalist, determined to protect the founding principles of the Republic, especially secularism. With his power to veto any legislation that he views as likely to crack the foundation of the Republic he is seen by the majority of the population as a counterweight to the AKP government. The currently ongoing crisis emerged in mid-April as the deadline for Presidential nominations approached. Since the President is elected by the TGNA where AKP currently holds the majority of the seats there is widespread concern that if someone from the ranks of AKP is elected President AKP will run the country with all the powers available to it to change the constitution and the Republican regime.

The political tension escalated with the press conference held by Yaşar Büyükanıt, the Chief of the General Staff, on April 12, before Presidential nominations were announced by the TGNA, stating that Presidential elections closely concerned the Turkish Armed Forces (TAF) because the President was at the same time the Commander in Chief of the TAF. Büyükanıt also told the press that both as a citizen and a member of the TAF he hoped to see a President who “embraces the fundamental principles of the Republic, not only in words but also in essence” (Radikal Daily, April 13,2007). Two

days later, a mass demonstration was held in Ankara with the participation of hundreds of thousands people to express commitment to the Republican regime.

On April 24, Abdullah Gül, one of the founders of AKP and the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, announced his nomination for Presidency. On April 27, the same day of the first round of the Presidential elections, the High Command of the TAF posted on its website a threatening press release, that was dubbed 'e-coup' by the Turkish press. The press release warned the government against mounting attacks on secularism, and stated that, when necessary, the TAF would make its stance clear in action (Turkish General Staff Press Release, No: BA-08/07).

On May 1, the Constitutional Court cancelled the first round of the Presidential election for violation of the voting procedure that required the presence of two-thirds of the TGNA members at the time of the voting. The following day, in an attempt to dampen the mounting political tension due to the deadlock over the Presidential election, the TGNA set July 22 as the date for early general elections.

The second round of the Presidential election in the TGNA was held on May 6. When the Assembly failed for the second time to attain the required two-thirds majority for voting, Gül withdrew his nomination for Presidency. As stipulated by the Constitution, Sezer continues to hold the office of Presidency until the new TGNA elects a new President after the general elections on July 22.

Alarmed by the possibility of another electoral victory by AKP in the upcoming July elections, the political parties on the left and right started negotiations to join their forces and challenge AKP with an expanded electoral base. Thus, as the two center-right parties, Motherland Party and True Path Party, announced their decision to unite in a new

party, to be established under the name of the Democrat Party, the center- left Republican People's Party and Democratic Left Party declared that they would participate in the elections as a united left front.

The reaction to the crisis at the societal level materialized in a series of unprecedented mass demonstrations in support of the regime. Following the first rally in Ankara, millions of people took to the streets in demonstrations held in six provinces throughout the country over April and May. In addition, five thousand Turks rallied in Duisburg, Germany, in an act of solidarity with their fellow regime supporters in Turkey. The significance of these demonstrations lay not only in the number of the participants or in the extent of their commitment to the Republican regime but also in their commitment to democracy, as a common slogan in all the demonstrations suggests: "Neither Islamic law nor military coup; we want democracy for Turkey!"

The commitment to democracy was more radically expressed in two public statements. In a press release issued the day after the General Staff Press Release of April 27 the *Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi* (Freedom and Solidarity Party – FSP), a left-wing political party established in 1996, stated: "We want democracy, not in words but in essence [this particular phrase was a direct reference to the statement of the Chief of the General Staff in his press conference on April 12]. Turkey is rapidly moving toward a new crisis.....The mentality that curbed through coups the left and its democratic forces is once again engaged in social engineering with no consideration of the harm it inflicts on the society and the future of the country. This is unacceptable. It is equally unacceptable that the General Staff acts as a political power center....Let people and civil politics be the subject of 'protecting and defending' democracy and the republic. Let

Turkey overcome her problems through people's discretion and participation. It is a need and hope for the Turkish society to live democracy 'not in words but in essence'" (Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi Press Release, April 28, 2007). Another public statement was issued on May 14, by a group of 500 intellectuals, consisting of academicians, lawyers, authors, journalists, and artists. Referring to the military's press release of April 27 as a 'memorandum' threatening democracy, the signatories stated that the operation of political life under the custody of the military was unacceptable, and that the secular Republic could be maintained only through democracy, not by relying on memoranda. The group declared that, as citizens committed to a free, democratic, and secular Turkey, they were entitled to resist any intervention attempting to destroy democracy (Milliyet Daily-May 14, 2007).

Currently, the heat of the crisis seems to have subsided and the streets calmed down but the country is holding her breath for July 22, 2007, the day of the dreaded but dared trial of democracy for Turkey.

### *Postscript*

To the dismay of the military, the majority of the political parties and the millions who took to the streets during April and May in defense of the secular state the AKP won the July 22 elections in a landslide victory, increasing its votes to 46.47 percent from 34 percent in the 2002 elections. Political tension in the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA) surfaced again on August 13 when AKP renominated Abdullah Gül as its candidate for President.

On August 27, the day before the third and final round of the presidential elections at the TGNA, Yaşar Büyükanıt, the Chief of the General Staff, posted a note on

the website of the High Command of the Turkish Armed Forces. The note was issued to mark the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary on August 30 of the military victory that ended the Turkish War of Independence on the battlefield, and prepared the ground for the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. Warning that the secular system was under attack from “the centers of evil seeking to systematically erode it”, Büyükanıt stated, “nefarious plans to ruin Turkey’s secular and democratic nature emerge in different forms every day...The military will, just as it has so far, keep its determination to guard social, democratic and secular Turkey” (Ant 2007, Culpan 2007, Knickmeyer 2007, Tavernise and Arsu 2007).

On August 28, Gül was elected by the AKP-dominated TGNA as the Republic’s eleventh President. In his inaugural speech at the TGNA Gül announced: “The Turkish Republic is a democratic, secular and social state based on the rule of law.... I will work with determination to protect and strengthen all those tenets...The principle of secularism is both a model that ensures freedom for different lifestyles and a rule of social peace... The principle of secularism also includes freedom of conscience and religion” (Culpan 2007).

**CHAPTER V**  
**A RELENTLESS FIGHT FOR JUSTICE: THE BERGAMA CASE**

[T]he 20th century has been characterized by three developments of great political importance: The growth of democracy, the growth of corporate power, and the growth of corporate propaganda as a means of protecting corporate power against democracy.

Alex Carey -  
Taking the Risk Out of Democracy (1997)

Neither tension-laden trials of democracy nor unrelenting demands and efforts for democratization are unfamiliar phenomena in the political and social history of Turkey. However, an unprecedented social movement was added to the repertoire of collective democratization struggles in the country in the early 1990s when a rural community in the Aegean town of Bergama organized a grassroots movement based on acts of civil disobedience to protect its life-sustaining resources and defend its democratic rights against a pervasive corporate assault, which was supported by the government in the name of economic development.

Bergama is a town in the northwestern part of the Aegean region (ancient Mysia) in Turkey. Located in the basin of Bakırçay River<sup>37</sup> (ancient Caïcus), one of the four biggest rivers in Anatolia entering the Aegean Sea, the town is surrounded by the mountains of Madra (4,400 ft.) in the north, Kozak (4,078 ft.) in the northwest, and Yunt (2,565 ft.) in the south. The Kalarga Hill of the ancient region of Teuthrania constitutes the western border of Bergama. Although Bergama is not a coastal town, it has easy access to the sea, being located 15 miles inland of the Aegean Sea. Administratively, the

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<sup>37</sup> ~ 80 miles long. Originates on Davullu Mountains, 40 miles northeast of Bergama, and flows in east-west direction. Joined by tributaries stemming from the mountains of Ömer in the east, Madra in the north, and Yunt in the south, it enters the Aegean Sea at the Gulf of Çandarlı.

town is a district of the Province of İzmir, the third largest city of Turkey, which is located about 65 miles south of Bergama. Other big cities in close proximity to the town are Manisa in the southeast and Balıkesir in the northeast, each about 65 miles from Bergama; and Çanakkale, located 90 miles northwest of the town.

Shaped by Mediterranean climatic characteristics, summers in Bergama are hot and virtually rain-free, winters are of frequent and heavy rainfall with occasional fall of snow for short periods of time. The vegetation of the surrounding mountains comprises of widespread maquis, pine trees, and isolated oak trees. Due to the favorable environmental and climatic conditions along with the fertile land of the valley, fed by the alluvial deposits of the Bakırçay River, the economy of Bergama and its surroundings has depended on agriculture from ancient days<sup>38</sup>, through the Ottoman Empire, and throughout the history of Turkey as a republic. Despite the steady decline of the share of agriculture in the national economy since the late 1950s in favor of industry and services sectors (Appendix Table A-1), agriculture still comprises the primary source of income for the villages surrounding Bergama. Olives, pine nuts, grapes, figs, grains, cotton, and tobacco are the major income-producing crops cultivated in the region. In addition, various vegetables and fruit are grown for sale in the local/regional/national market and for household consumption. Animal husbandry and honeybee production constitute other major economic activities in the region. In the early 1980s, Bergama's economy saw an

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<sup>38</sup> In his *Geographica*, written in 7 CE, Strabo (1917) refers to the land surrounding Bergama as follows: "The Caicus flows past Pergamum, through the Caicus Plain, as it is called, traversing land that is very fertile and about the best in Mysia" (p.169).

increase in the share of trade, small manufacturing, textile, food processing, and in services, such as tourism, education, and transportation.

Bergama has 114 villages under its administrative jurisdiction. As of the latest census in 2000, the town's total population is 106,000, with 52,000 living in the center, and 54,000 in the villages. 67 percent of Bergama's population is between 15 and 64 years old. With its literacy rate of 87.4 percent, Bergama scores slightly above the national average. The demographic composition of Bergama, like anywhere else in Turkey, changed in parallel to the shift in the population dynamics of Anatolia since the late Ottoman era. The Ottoman losses of territory in the Balkans effected a mass migration of Turks living in those areas to Anatolia. The settlement of the newcomers, first in the coastal regions, and then in the interior parts of Anatolia, changed the demographic composition of these areas in favor of Turks, leading to the decrease in the number of Greek, Jewish, and Armenian minorities. The population exchange agreements signed between the governments of Turkey and Greece in the aftermath of the Turkish War of Independence augmented the demographic homogenization process started by the mass migration from the Balkans. Following this pattern, the minority population of Bergama, which constituted 22 percent of the town's total population in 1879, was completely replaced by the Turkish population after the establishment of the Republic in 1923 (Emekli 2001).

The residents of Bergama are proud of the long history and heritage of their town going back to antiquity. In the case of the villagers of Bergama, this pride, combined with the respect for and attachment to the land as their source of living, served as a factor of motivation to act in solidarity against goldmining in the region. In the interviews

conducted for this study, the villagers, as well as other participants and supporters of the movement, unequivocally traced the beginning of mass protests to the day when the company felled thousands of pine and olive trees. “Those beautiful, centuries-old pine trees....They cut them within minutes!” This expression of resentment by D.A., a 71 year-old village woman and movement activist, is explained by the following observation of N.L., a professor and movement supporter from İstanbul: “The people of Bergama were surely going to defend their land. They were the boss of those lands; they lived there since the time of Zeus.”

Bergama is built upon the ruins of the ancient city of Pergamon. The exact date and story of Pergamon’s establishment is not known but the name of the city, which stems from the language of the Luwi, a people that lived in Western Anatolia around 3000 B.C.E., is taken as evidence to the settlement of Pergamon in the prehistoric era (Kekeç 1993, Radt 1999, Süß 2000, Bergama Belediyesi Stratejik Planı 2006). The Luwi culture left its traces in the entire Eastern Mediterranean region, especially in the place names. In the Luwi language, Pargama meant ‘people of the high place’. Pergamon is the form the name took in the Hellenic language (Umar 1993). The ancient city was built on top of a hill (1165 ft.), enclosed by two tributaries of the Caicus River, Selinus on the west, and Ketios on the east. The remains of the oldest defensive walls around Acropolis, the fortress of Pergamon located at the summit of the mountain, date back to 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E.

From 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. till mid-6<sup>th</sup> century B.C.E. Pergamon was ruled by the Lydians, an indigenous Anatolian civilization that controlled a large part of Western Anatolia. The city went under the control of the Persians in 546 B.C.E. The defeat of the

Persians by the Macedonian King Alexander the Great in 334 B.C.E. ended the Persian rule in Anatolia and ushered in the Hellenistic Age. Despite its central geographical location, and its strong fortress favorable for defense purposes, Pergamon remained a small town during its early history.

It was during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> century B.C.E. that Pergamon became an influential regional power as the capital of a kingdom under the Attalid Dynasty whose territories stretched from Troy in the northwest to Taurus Mountains in the southeast, and from the Aegean Sea in the west to Ankyra (modern Ankara, the capital of Turkey) in central Anatolia (Süß 2000). In parallel to its growing political influence, Pergamon's economy thrived in this period. The Attalid Dynasty benefited largely from the rich natural resources of the region, exploiting precious metals, such as gold, silver, copper, and raw materials, such as wood, charcoal, and resin from the surrounding large forests. Agriculture, mining, bee-keeping, horse-rearing, and pottery production constituted the main economic activities of the Attalids. In its golden age under the Attalid Dynasty, Pergamon became a famous metropolis in Asia, renowned for its arts, architecture, sciences, and literature<sup>39</sup>.

In 133 B.C.E. Pergamon went under the rule of the Roman Empire. Rome incorporated the Western part of the Attalid Kingdom in its territories as the Province of Asia, with Pergamon being the capital of the Province. In late 4<sup>th</sup> century C.E. Pergamon

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<sup>39</sup> With its holding of 200,000 books, the Library of Pergamon became the second largest library of the era, rivaling the famous Library of Alexandria in Egypt. When the Egyptians halted their export of papyrus, and Pergamon was thus deprived of its single source of writing material, Pergamenes invented the parchment paper as a substitute for papyrus. Since they took great pride in their library, the Pergamenes considered it ignominious that the Roman Emperor Antonius gave this valuable treasure to the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra as a present in 40 B.C.E.

entered the Byzantine Period under the rule of the East Roman Empire. The city's significance started to decline in this era.

At the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century Pergamon came under Turkish rule as part of the Karasi Principality. After two decades of Karasi reign the city was conquered by the Ottoman ruler Orhan, and incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. Under the rule of the Ottomans, Pergamon lost its importance as a castle and became a small provincial town, now called Bergama.

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, and during the subsequent Turkish War of Independence, Bergama was occupied by Greece. The resistance against the occupation culminated in the defeat of the Greek army in 1922. With the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, Bergama became a town of Turkey, continuing its existence as such today.

In 1989, Bergama witnessed a local manifestation of the wholesale shift in Turkey's economic development strategy from the import substituting industrialization model of the 1960s and 1970s to neo-liberal economy in 1980. Prompted by the liberalization of capital flows and the concomitant incentives for foreign direct investment provided by the Turkish government within the framework of neo-liberal development, a multinational company introduced the agricultural town of Bergama to an economic territory uncharted in Turkey until then: goldmining.

As the villagers found out about the environmental and public health risks involved in the process of gold extraction they gradually resisted mining in the region. Their initial environmental movement transformed into a struggle for democratic rights over time as the government facilitated the operation of the mining company on the

grounds of the potential economic benefits of the latter despite the contrary decision of the Supreme Administrative Court, ruling that the risks involved outweighed the potential benefits, and thus, there was no public interest in the operation of the mine.

In this chapter, I present the story of Bergama villagers' resistance to gold mining in the region, with a focus on the distinct phases of transformation in the movement over the course of fifteen years.

### **The Awakening: Life With Cyanide=Life With Death**

The most important battle of the Turkish War of Independence was fought in the Aegean region. It was the Aegean that won the war; it was due to the Aegean that Turkey was independent. Hence, the awakening in the Aegean.

N.L., a female professor and movement supporter from İstanbul

For the mining sector, economic liberalization of the post-1980 era crystallized in the Mining Law of 1985 that sanctioned incentives for mining investments (*Official Gazette*, June 15, 1985, No.18785, Law No. 3213, Article 9). Encouraged by this particular opening, and the general liberal approach to foreign capital, several multinational mining corporations, like the Canadian *Inco Ltd.* and *Cominco Ltd.*, the German *Preussag Co.* and *Metallgesellschaft Co.*, the Australian *Normandy Resources LLC.*, and the South-African *Anglo American Corporation*, entered the domestic mining sector in 1986, by establishing subsidiary or associated companies, such as *Eurogold Mining Company*, *Tüprag Metal Mining Industry and Commerce Ltd.Co.*, *Cominco Resources International Ltd.*, *Dardanel Mining Industry and Trade Co.*, and *Anglo-Tur Mining Co.*, in Turkey.

*Eurogold Mining Company*<sup>40</sup> (henceforth referred to as *Eurogold*) was a joint venture of *Normandy Resources LLC*<sup>41</sup> (66.67%) and *Metall Mining Corporation*<sup>42</sup> (33.33%). In 1989, *Eurogold* obtained a permit, by way of transfer<sup>43</sup> from Esan

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<sup>40</sup> To obtain consistent background information on the company, even at the basic level, has been a challenge. This is, first, because *Eurogold Mining Company* no longer exists today due to acquisition. Thus, any information regarding the company is accessible with restrictions, at best, and not accessible, at worst. A more general explanation for the lack of an unequivocal report on the company might be sought in the complex corporate structure of the global mining industry. As it will be noted in the context of the current study, this complexity is manifest, locally, in the five shifts of capital configuration of the Bergama-Ovacık gold mine in sixteen years, and, globally, in the name changes of the big mining companies over the years as they acquire other companies or merge with other giants in the industry. Another intricacy of the corporate mining industry is the tendency of the big corporations to invest in mining operations worldwide by buying controlling interests in smaller companies. This allows the giant conglomerates of the industry, such as the South African *Anglo American Corporation* (AAC), owned by the Oppenheimer Family; the British *Rio Tinto Zinc* (RTZ); the German *Metallgesellschaft AG*, among others, to carry out their operations overseas without revealing their identities.

<sup>41</sup> Australian mining company. In 1991, *Normandy Resources LLC* merged with *Poseidon Gold Ltd.* - which was owned by the South African *Minorco* (considered as the 'overseas flagship' of Oppenheimers' AAC) - the *Australian Mutual Provident* (AMP) *Ltd.*, and *Normandy Mining Ltd.*, to establish *Normandy Poseidon Ltd.* The new company changed hands in 1995, and became *Normandy Mining Limited*. Before being acquired by the US-based *Newmont Mining Corporation* in 2002, *Normandy Mining Limited* was Australia's largest gold producer and had operations in 11 countries throughout the world, producing gold, copper, lead, and zinc.

<sup>42</sup> Canada-based mining company, established in 1986 with *Metallgesellschaft AG* as its major shareholder. In 1995, *Metall Mining Corporation* became *INMET Mining Corporation*. Currently, *INMET* has interests in six mining operations: Çayeli and Cerattepe in Turkey (copper and zinc); Las Cruces in Spain (copper); Pyhäsalmi in Finland (copper and zinc); Troilus in Canada (gold and copper); and Ok Tedi in Papua New Guinea (gold and copper).

<sup>43</sup> According to the Turkish mining legislation, mines are under the state's ownership and jurisdiction but the state delegates its exploration and extraction rights to natural or legal persons, or state enterprises, for a specified time period by granting permits in return for a fixed percentage as royalties (Official Gazette, March 11, 1954, No.8655, Law No. 6309, Articles 4, 13, 115, 117; Official Gazette, June 15, 1985, No.18785, Law No. 3213, Articles 4, 6, 14). As sanctioned in Articles 6 and 39 of the 1954 Mining Law, and Article 5 of the 1985 Mining Law, mining rights can be transferred to third parties.

Eczacıbaşı Industrial Raw Materials Industry and Commerce Co., a company within the Eczacıbaşı Group, a prominent Turkish corporation, to explore for gold in and around the village of Ovacık, 5 miles southwest of Bergama.<sup>44</sup>

All villagers interviewed for this study agreed that the company was initially welcome by the local population, who considered the investment a source of employment and wealth for the region. In retrospect, H.N., a 44 year-old male farmer and movement activist, complained that “they [*Eurogold*] played on our sentiments and our ignorance. All we knew about gold was that it was beautiful, that it meant wealth”. Similarly, I.A., a 55 year-old male farmer and movement activist, conveyed the initial reaction of the villagers as follows:

We didn't know how gold was extracted. We thought it lay there underground in the form of coins, as we know it, waiting to be dug out and make us rich. Until they came here, none of us knew anything about gold mining.

Shortly after the arrival of *Eurogold* in the village of Ovacık, the managers of the company visited Sefa Taşkın, the mayor of Bergama at the time, to convince him of the benefits of the prospective mine for the region and get his support. In that meeting the mayor found out that the company would use cyanide to extract gold. Being alarmed by the mention of this chemical compound that is historically associated with death, he

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<sup>44</sup> In parallel to Bergama, the multinational mining industry also initiated investments in other parts of Turkey. By 1989, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources had granted permits to several multinational mining companies for gold exploration in 560 sites spread over 16 provinces throughout Turkey. One of these sites was in the Küçükdere Village of Havran, a town in Balıkesir, about 65 miles northeast of Bergama. The strong local resistance and victory against gold mining in Küçükdere in 1993 has been instrumental in the mobilization of the villagers of Bergama against *Eurogold*.

wanted to get informed about the cyanide leaching method in gold mining and the risks associated with it:

Once we found out that cyanide would be used we were concerned, and started asking questions. I asked several professional associations of engineers to study this method and inform us. Nobody knew anything about it. It was a first in Turkey. We also contacted universities. Information gathered through them was alarming. The picture was not at all bright like the company portrayed it to be.....I was the mayor of Bergama then. At the same time I'm a Turkish intellectual who likes to read and write. 'What is my responsibility as an intellectual or a civil servant?' I asked myself. To inform people. I also looked at the matter this way: I am the mayor. These people turn on the faucet and drink water. They do so with their trust in me. They are convinced that the water they drink is safe because, they think, the mayor would not let anyone contaminate our water sources, or he'd have them take the necessary precautions to make sure our drinking water is safe. But, what if I don't trust that the water is safe?

Thus, the mayor started to share with the villagers the information he received from the universities and engineering associations. Committees were established in the villages, headed by elected local leaders, to disseminate the information at hand. According to P.A., a 64 year-old male farmer and movement activist, the villagers "read every piece of information put together by the municipality and distributed to the public". Around the same time, the mayor found out that the Greenpeace vessel *Cyrus* came to the İzmir Harbor. Along with a group of villagers he went to İzmir in hopes of finding international support for their case. On this attempt, Taşkın recounted:

We went aboard the vessel, told them about the risk we were facing, and asked them if they could help us out..... Greenpeace exemplifies a different type of environmentalism. We never worked with them. Our way of thinking is different from theirs. They are environmental anarchists. In addition, they focus on exclusive topics, such as nuclear plants and waste. They are not interested in cyanide pollution. But I met two Greenpeace activists aboard *Cyrus*. One was from New Zealand; the other British, from London. The former was familiar with the operations of the corporate mining industry because there are gold mines in New

Zealand. They told me that they couldn't help us but they'd gather information for us. In fact, in 15-20 days they sent us a sack full of documents, laying bare the extent of worldwide destruction caused by the corporate mining industry. We found out that the whole world was crying out loud, from Guyana to Ghana, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, and more.

As they got informed, the inhabitants of 17 villages within 6 miles of the mine became concerned that the operation of *Eurogold* in their region might negatively affect their health as well as the well being of their land, which was the very source of their livelihood. At this point, however, their concern was limited in its effect to mere suspicion rather than any form of collective action. In the words of Taşkın:

They [the villagers] didn't move a bit for three years. They used to say: 'May it [gold mining in the region] proceed if any good will come out of it, may it not if it will do harm.'

On the opposite front, *Eurogold* was undertaking a public campaign to convince the villagers that the mining operation would contribute to the region's socio-economic development and that the cyanide leaching method would not have detrimental effects on their land. Besides the generic public relations methods of distributing leaflets and advertising in the media the company also resorted to culture-specific tactics to impress the villagers. As P.A. recounted: "They gave feasts for the villagers during Ramadan. They distributed food in Bergama, and even sent flour, sugar, and other food items to the homes of the villagers". *Eurogold* also announced that it would construct a wedding hall and a mosque in Ovacık. In this regard, I.A. stated:

They played the religion card to buy us off. One day, they came to the village coffee house and said they were going to construct a mosque in the village. I said, 'We already have a mosque. We don't need another one.'

Some villagers, however, were won over by these cultural gestures; others were convinced that the mine would help their region develop economically. As another way to appeal to the villagers *Eurogold* offered to buy villagers' property at prices much higher than their market value<sup>45</sup>. In the words of O.G., a 42 year-old male villager who worked for the mine for eight years but was laid off two years ago when he got sick with spleen failure:

They came and talked to us at the beginning, painting a wonderful picture of how rich we were going to get and how environmentally safe their technology was. We believed them then. They have a great skill of convincing people. Some of the locals were convinced by money. The company bought their land at very favorable prices. They have the power of money; they get whatever they want, however they want it. Their power is so great that it's hard to fight against them.

As *Eurogold* started its preliminary drilling operations in 1990, a chance occurrence bolstered the individual efforts of the mayor of Bergama in raising awareness about the potential harmful effects of cyanide use. While on vacation in Bergama, a professor in the Department of Public Health at the Aegean University in İzmir, and her husband, a member of the İzmir Bar Association's Environmental Commission, and of

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<sup>45</sup> A more practical reason underlying this move by *Eurogold*, however, was to remove a significant legal obstacle in the way of the company's mining operations. According to Article 7 of the Mining Law of 1985, at sites of up to 60 meters (65 yards) to buildings, and 20 meters (22 yards) to cultivated areas, mine exploration and extraction was subject to the permission of the property owner. The distance between the proposed mine site and the houses in Ovacık was 35 yards.

the Environmental Movement Lawyers<sup>46</sup>, witnessed the activities of the mining company, found out about the proposed method to extract gold, and upon their return, shared their concern with their colleagues in İzmir about its risks. F.R., a professor in the Department of Public Health at the Aegean University in İzmir, stated:

We held a meeting and decided that the first reasonable thing for us to do was to visit the region, see, and evaluate the situation. A group of us - faculty members, assistants, Ph.D. students – got together, and went to see the mayor of Bergama. We sat down and talked to him to figure out what was going on in the region. The same day we went to see the mine site.... We came back and studied gold mining in more detail. In line with our discipline, our focus was on the effects of gold mining on public health and the environment. Soon we realized the necessity for other professional groups to do the same in their respective areas of expertise. Thus, under the auspices of the Environmental Commission of the İzmir Bar and the Environmental Movement Lawyers we established a task group, consisting of several professional organizations, such as engineers', physicians', foresters', geologists' associations. Each organization was to evaluate gold mining from the perspective of its own profession.

They agreed that the assessments of these organizations, addressing the different aspects of gold mining in Bergama and its potential effects, should be published as a collective report and distributed to the related decision makers.

Most of the villagers in Bergama, however, had a guarded approach toward the intellectuals voicing concern over the risks of gold mining. This was mostly because the villagers hoped *Eurogold* would solve the unemployment problem for the village youth.

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<sup>46</sup> An independent civil initiative group established by several lawyers in İzmir. The lawyers constituting this group were initially members of the Environmental Commission of the İzmir Bar Association, working within the institutional framework of the Bar. To avoid the bureaucratic limitations imposed on them by the way in which the Bar functioned they formed the Environmental Movement Lawyers Group, and carried out their work as a voluntary organization, independent of the Bar. The Environmental Commission, however, continued to exist in parallel to the Environmental Movement Lawyers group.

“At first we failed,” said E.S., a member of the Environmental Movement Lawyers group in İzmir, and a long term legal representative and consultant of the villagers:

In two cars full of lawyers from İzmir, we went to the villages of Bergama and talked to the villagers. We told them about the risks of goldmining, and offered them help. We told them that if they would want to file lawsuits against the company we were willing to represent them in court for free. They responded: ‘The mine will employ young people from our villages. We are not happy that other villages send more kids to the mine than we do. We want our kids to work for the mine, too.’ We failed to convince them of the mine’s risks for their environment and health. So, we drove back.

In 1990, *Eurogold* asked a group of Turkish scientists to prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report for the prospective gold mine in view of the environmental legislation in effect at the time. According to Article 10 of Environmental Law No. 2872 of 1983, “[t]he institutions, agencies and establishments that can lead to environmental problems due to their planned activities will prepare an Environmental Impact Assessment Report. In this report all impacts on the environment will be considered, and the methods for eliminating the harmful effects of waste materials that may cause environmental pollution, and the corresponding precautions will be specified” (*Official Gazette*, August 11, 1983. No. 18132)<sup>47</sup>. Prepared by a group of professors at the Environmental Engineering Department of the September Nine University in İzmir, the EIA Report was published in 1991.

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<sup>47</sup> The article did not explicate the specific activities to be subjected to EIA, stating that “[t]he issues concerning the type of projects that this Environmental Impact Assessment Report will be required, its contents and the endorsement authority will be specified in a regulation.” Although the mentioned regulation was not enacted until 1993, Eurogold launched the process for an EIA report in 1990. The movement participants and supporters interviewed for this study interpret this move, in hindsight, as another tactic of the company to appease them. It seemed as if Eurogold was trying to say: ‘We did not have to do this but we did it anyway because we care about you and your environment!’

According to the report, *Eurogold's* plan was to operate the mine for a total of eight years. Three years of this period would be allotted to open-pit mining, which was to be followed by five years of underground mining operations. The production capacity of the mine was estimated to be between 2.2 and 2.8 tons of gold per year for eight years. A total of 2.5 million tons of ore would be processed, which, according to the geological characteristics of the region, would include 2,500 tons of arsenic, 1,500 tons of antimony, mercury, copper, and 600 tons of lead and zinc. To extract gold from the ore a total of about 4,000 tons of cyanide would be used over eight years. The estimated total of 2.6 million cubic-yard of waste over eight years would be deposited in a tailings pond to be built in the close vicinity of the processing facility. Of the total mine site of 111 acres, including the extraction and processing areas, the tailings pond was to cover an area of 37 acres. In terms of the risks involved, the report noted contamination of groundwater due to cyanide and heavy metal seepage from the tailings pond, and acid mine drainage as the most significant potential negative impacts of the mine. Evaporation of cyanide from the tailings pond in the form of poisonous hydrogen cyanide gas; the noise pollution due to the use of explosives for excavating the ore; and the damage to the tailings pond due to a potential earthquake<sup>48</sup>, were among the other risks mentioned in the report<sup>49</sup>. The EIA

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<sup>48</sup> The active Zeytindağ-Bergama Fault Zone constitutes one of the most significant active fault zones of Western Anatolia (Ocakoglu et.al. 2005). Due to its tectonic characteristics the region has numerous geothermal sources. The Kaynarca Thermal Spring, for example, which is the hottest of the eighty hot springs and geothermal outlets in the region with a temperature of 198° F, emerged after an earthquake in 1939 (Özürkan et.al. 2006:188). In the same earthquake, the village of Ovacık, which was then located by the Kalarga Hill on the western border of Bergama, was completely destroyed. Consequently, the village was moved about three miles to the north to its current location where the controversial gold mine is in operation.

Report also stated that the mine site would be rehabilitated within a year following the completion of the mining operations but cautioned that the potential impact of toxic elements on the groundwater might last for 20-50 years longer after the closure of the mine. On the plus side, the report noted that the company would employ 100 people from the region, increase the tourism potential of the town, and create revenue for the state. In conclusion, the report advocated that the establishment would contribute to the economy, and that its risks could be minimized with technical measures. (Ovacık Altın Madeni Çevresel Etki Değerlendirmesi Raporu 1991).

Suspicion about the objectivity of the EIA Report brought about an upsurge in concerned voices among intellectuals. The Environmental Movement Lawyers and several professional associations highly criticized the EIA Report for omitting significant risk factors, such as the impact of the mining operations on agriculture, animal husbandry, flora, fauna, and geothermal resources. Thus, they argued, the potential damage of the mine to the region, its people, as well as to the national economy, was not adequately assessed by the report. Critics also took issue with the EIA Report for downplaying the risks it did mention, and misleading the public and the decision makers by overestimating the potential benefits. To illustrate, based on the figures in the EIA Report, the revenue of the state from the mine was expected to be USD 1.4 million per year. However, critics contended, the report failed to mention that the economic value of

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<sup>49</sup> The report noted that the area was a fault zone, with earthquakes of 9.25 intensity on Modified Mercalli Scale (MMS). MMS indicates the strength of shaking produced by an earthquake, measured by its effect on people, human structures, and the natural environment. The scale values range between 1 and 12, 1 signifying a weak earthquake, and 12, total damage.

Bergama region's annual agricultural production was USD 40 million. This contribution to the economy was going to be at risk now due to the potential negative impacts of goldmining on the region's agricultural productivity.

In a similar vein, M.D., a professor of chemistry who attended a public presentation of the report at the Aegean University in İzmir in 1991, remarked:

As a chemist, I attended this presentation, along with colleagues from other disciplines. At that time, I was the Assistant Director of the Environmental Center at the Aegean University. They [the mining company] distributed a brochure at the meeting, introducing themselves, talking about the gold mine, and the cyanide leaching method. The information they provided in the brochure about cyanide gave one the impression as if it were as harmless as edible like candy. It was a very strange brochure.....When such exaggerated information is presented to the public one gets suspicious of the intention of those providing this information. So we asked for a printed copy of the EIA Report.....When I read the report as a chemist I noticed significant omissions. In sharp contrast to its ideal purpose of informing the society, the report was misinforming, as it was.

Beside its content, M.D. also severely criticized the EIA Report based on the way in which it was prepared:

As we further examined the report, we got contradictory answers to our questions. For example, to assess whether the mining undertaking will harm the environment, during and after its operations, we have to have an accurate analysis of the nature of the mineral, the region's groundwater sources, as well as its surface waters, its soil, and its air. This analysis will be the basis of all the discussions regarding the mine's potential environmental impact. If these data were incorrect we would be talking in vain. I asked the editor of the EIA Report where they did the analysis. He said they did it at the Environmental Engineering Department of the September Nine University. I asked the mentioned department. They said they didn't do it. There I was told that the Soil Sciences Department at the Aegean University did the analysis. When I asked them this time, I got the same response: 'We didn't do it!' Eventually I asked the British General Manager of Eurogold, and he told me that it was the company that prepared the analysis report, which was used as the basis of the EIA Report. Now, this was against the very idea of the EIA in the first place. EIA requires that experts carry out their own analyses independent of the

company involved, and evaluate the potential impacts of the project in question according to those analyses. This is the basis of any EIA report. In the case of the EIA Report for the Ovacık Goldmine this basic principle was violated.

Awareness raising efforts at the local level gained momentum in parallel to the scrutiny of the EIA Report by the scientific community. The mayor of Bergama, along with the Environment, Culture, and Arts Association (ECAA), a local organization established by the youth of Bergama in the late eighties, facilitated meetings that brought together the academia and the villagers, and thus, played a major role in informing the latter about the risks of the mining project. Early mobilization efforts took the form of press releases, movie showings, information meetings, conferences and panels in the village coffee houses, attended by professors from the provinces of İzmir, İstanbul, and Ankara to address the villagers. This first-ever direct meeting of the villagers with the academia was significant in its consequences for the prospective movement. 62 year-old B.Y. from Bergama, who had been active in local politics since the 1970s and later became one of the leading figures in the villagers' movement, especially instrumental in planning and organizing the actions of protest, pointed out the importance of these meetings for the mobilization of the movement:

We met respectable, democratic, highly-educated people who used science to the benefit of the public. We started to communicate with them. They told us the stories of gold. What is gold? How is it extracted and processed? What is the per capita income in the countries where gold is extracted? Did they get richer or poorer? How do their lands look like now? And under which circumstances do people in those countries live after the gold mining? They told us all about these. ....We were startled by what we heard.

Despite mounting criticism directed at the EIA Report and the increasingly voiced concern about the operation of the mine the Ministry of Forests granted a required permit

to *Eurogold* on August 12, 1991. The Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources followed suit by issuing an operation permit to the company on February 12, 1992. The permit, which was valid for ten years, authorized the use of cyanide leaching method in *Eurogold's* operations.

### **A Struggle on Three Pillars: Science- Politics-Law**

Following the granting of permits by the two ministries, local leaders of 15 villages sent a petition to the Parliament and the related ministries on June 23, 1992, stating: “We are aware of the need for foreign capital for the developing economy of our Turkey. We also understand the worry about scaring away foreign investors. However, it is also a primary function of the state to balance the incentives for foreign investments with the efforts to eliminate the risks of those investments for the locals” (İzmir Barosu Çevre Komisyonu 1993, Appendix 17). The village leaders further asked political representatives to address the questions and concerns of the villagers with regard to goldmining in the region. Among the specific questions asked were:

- Bergama is located in a first-degree earthquake zone. In the case of an earthquake, seepage from the tailings pond is likely to occur. In view of this likelihood, could the cyanide-laden waste be detoxified before being deposited into the tailings pond? If such a detoxification measure is possible is it not being taken because it will increase the cost of the company? Is this additional cost factor more important than the health of the people living in the region?
- As reported by the company the reserves would be fully exploited in eight years. Who would control the tailings pond after this date? Who would monitor whether toxic waste is seeping into groundwater supplies? Who would prevent the overflow of the pond due to heavy rain? In case of such a flooding, who would guarantee that the cyanide-laden waste would not be carried over to our lands?
- After the company finishes its operations, how long will it take for the cyanide in the tailings pond to become completely inactive?

- Is it likely for cyanide to harm the environment and the people by way of evaporation from the tailings pond?
- How much water will be used daily for gold extraction? Is it likely that this amount would drain the already scarce sources of water for the surrounding lands under cultivation?
- Considering that the houses in Ovacık are located 35 yards from the mine site, will the dynamite explosions to excavate the ore harm the buildings? Will the extension of this distance to 65 yards, as stipulated in the Mining Law, be enough to save the houses from harm by the effects of the explosions?
- The excavation of huge amounts of ore will create dust. Is it likely that this dust would accumulate on and harm the surrounding tobacco and cotton crops? If yes, what measures will be taken to prevent the damage?
- What is the approximate revenue expected from the goldmine? Is this amount worth risking the lives of the locals? (İzmir Barosu Çevre Komisyonu 1993, Appendix 17).

Villagers also expressed their concern about the risks of goldmining in the region at a public meeting organized in Bergama with the participation of the authors of the report and concerned scientists. As M.D., a professor of chemistry at the Aegean University, stated:

Public attendance to the meeting was high. Everyone got to express their opinions and concerns freely. The Ministry of Environment must have been troubled by this event because, shortly after it, the EIA General Directorate of the Ministry organized a meeting in Bergama to inform the public.

On October 26, 1992, a group of ministerial bureaucrats, headed by the Undersecretary to the Minister of Environment, held a public information meeting in Bergama as part of the EIA process. In the words of M.D.:

We weren't invited but we heard about it and attended the meeting, sitting among the locals. There were about 10-15 representatives of the Ministry of Environment. They all talked in support of the mine, of course. Upon request by the locals, we brought the potential harmful effects of gold mining to the attention of the speakers.

Meanwhile, the process of empowerment of the villagers through knowledge continued. “As we became aware we were convinced, and as we were convinced our resistance grew stronger” expressed I.A., a 55 year-old male farmer and movement activist. It was also knowledge that united the different village communities in Bergama in pursuit of a common goal. In that respect Taşkın, the then mayor, stated:

This is a socially complex region. It incorporates different ethnic and religious groups with different political orientations. One village is Alevi<sup>50</sup>, another Sunni, one is made up of Bulgarian immigrants, another of Romanian immigrants, yet another of nomads. That is to say, they don't get together on any given day. Each group has its own village, and lives according to its own traditional ways of life. The Alevis are politically left-oriented, all the others vote for right-wing parties....How in the world were these people to get together? They did. They needed a motivation to do so: knowledge, a point of departure, an ideology. There's no movement without an ideology. Our ideology was 'life': People have rights to live!

- What does cyanide do?
  - It kills.
  - Who does it kill?
  - It kills you, your children, your grandchildren, your animals, your environment.
  - Once cyanide enters your bloodstream does it ask whether you're an Alevi or a Sunni?
  - It doesn't.
  - What does it do?
  - It kills.
  - Once cyanide enters your blood stream does it ask whether you vote for a right or left-wing political party?
  - It doesn't.
  - What does it do?
  - It kills.
- They memorized, digested, and internalized this.
- What does cyanide do?
  - It kills.

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<sup>50</sup> An unorthodox Islamic sect in Turkey, influenced by but distinct from Shiism. The Alevis don't have an established doctrine or liturgy. Their belief “has developed in rural Anatolia through hereditary holy figures who transmitted esoteric religious thought through music, poetry and collective rituals” (Shankland 2003). The Alevis are adamant supporters of Atatürk and his secularist ideology. They constitute 15-20 percent of the population in Turkey where the Sunnis comprise the majority of the population.

- Do you want to die?
  - No.
- Hence, our slogan: “NO!” No, no, no!

Taşkın also recounted how the villagers came up with a division of labor in an attempt to use the information at hand in the most efficient way possible:

The amount of information gathered was overwhelming. So the villagers started to specialize. For example, someone specialized on heavy metals, another on cyanide. Ms. T.D. specialized on the Bergen Treaty. ....She knew it by heart. Why? Because it stated that any investment potentially damaging to the environment should take into consideration the opinion of the public. ‘Did they ask my opinion?’ she would ask. No, they didn’t. At a meeting in a village she once forced one of the prime minister’s aides into a corner with her arguments.

T.D. that Taskin referred to in his account above is a 52 year-old farmer. With her intelligence, her skill of articulating the villagers’ grievances, her unyielding oppositional stance and courage, T.D. became a symbol of the Bergama resistance and a spokesperson of the villagers on many occasions. Her formal education is limited to five years of elementary school but, as expressed by A.H., a female movement supporter from İstanbul and an academician who did research on the Bergama villagers’ movement, T.D. exemplified Gramsci’s ideal ‘organic intellectual’<sup>51</sup>. In the interview conducted with her within the framework of this study T.D. recounted her confrontation on national TV with a scientist who was a proponent of the mine:

I attended a discussion program on TV as a speaker on behalf of Bergama villagers. One of the professors on the program said that the risk of cyanide was being exaggerated. She said cyanide exists even in nature, for

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<sup>51</sup> Distinguishing between traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals, Gramsci refers to the latter as “the thinking and organizing element of a particular fundamental social class. These organic intellectuals are distinguished less by their profession, which may be any job characteristic of their class, than by their function in directing the ideas and aspirations of the class to which they organically belong” (Gramsci 1971:3).

example in the seeds of an apple or in almonds. I interjected and said: 'Excuse me Professor, for interrupting you, but if cyanide is also found in nature, let's take trucks full of apple seeds and almonds to the mine, and see if they can extract gold this way'.

Significant developments in 1993 further bolstered the resistance of Bergama villagers against gold mining. During the preliminary drilling operations on the mine site in 1993, a chemical compound, used to protect the drilling equipment from overheating, leaked into local water supplies. Several households in nearby villages complained that their tap water turned milky and oily (Arsel 2005:267). Some locals reported health problems, like upset stomach and headache, which they linked to the consumption of the contaminated water. This incident reinforced the worries of the locals about the risks associated with gold mining.

Meanwhile, the collective project of publicizing the potential impacts of the Ovacık gold mine, undertaken under the auspices of the Environmental Commission of the İzmir Bar and the Environmental Movement Lawyers, culminated in 1993 with the publication of a comprehensive report. Based on contributions from professional associations of engineers, physicians, public health experts, foresters, geologists, and an environmental non-governmental organization, the report called attention to the high risks associated with gold mining in Bergama. To illustrate, according to the Physicians' Association, the intake of high levels of cyanide through the respiratory system damages the brain and the heart, and leads to coma or death. The symptoms of long term exposure to low levels of cyanide include headache, heartache, vomiting, breathing difficulties, numbness in the extremities, and increase in the size of the thyroid gland. Cyanide exposure through the skin leads to irritation and wounds. Acid mine drainage; seepage of

toxic waste into the groundwater, either due to the permeability of the soil or triggered by an earthquake; accumulation of dust; and noise pollution were among the other serious risks addressed in the report. Compiling all information provided, the report concluded: “Taking into consideration the relevant national and international legislation, the risks pointed out in the reports of scientific organizations, and the disproportionately high potential economic costs of the establishment with minimal benefits to the national economy, we believe that the establishment should not be allowed to operate and its current activities be halted” (İzmir Barosu Çevre Komisyonu 1993: 47). Copies of the report were sent to the Offices of the President and the Prime Minister, to the Ministry of Environment, and other relevant institutions.

This collective civil initiative, which started out as a task group under the auspices of the Environmental Movement Lawyers group, gradually transformed into a permanent support structure with the establishment of the Hand in Hand Initiative. With the addition of other concerned organizations and parties over time, the Hand in Hand Initiative grew to incorporate around 50 organizations, meeting on a regular basis, and participating in the lawsuits as a party alongside the villagers.

Also in 1993, the ongoing struggle against goldmining in the village of Küçükdere in Havran, a town in Balıkesir, about 65 miles northeast of Bergama, culminated in victory when the Minister of Environment refused to grant permission to *Tüprag Metal Mining Industry and Commerce Ltd.Co.*'s goldmining project in the region due to the proximity of the proposed mine site to olive groves. In many ways, the Küçükdere case was similar to that of Bergama. Like *Eurogold*, *Tüprag* came to Turkey as a result of the neoliberal opening to global capital, and like *Eurogold*, *Tüprag* initiated

a goldmining investment in an agricultural village in the northwestern Aegean region of Turkey. Küçükdere was one of the 559 other exploration sites for goldmining in Turkey beside Bergama. *Tüprag* was established in 1986 in Ankara as a subsidiary company of the German Preussag Co. Like *Eurogold*, *Tüprag* obtained its exploration permit in 1989. However, there was a notable difference between the two cases: From the very beginning, the villagers of Küçükdere took an oppositional stance toward goldmining in the region. In the early 1990s, when the Bergama villagers turned down the environmental lawyers' offer for legal help the same group of lawyers from İzmir had gone to Küçükdere and been welcome by the villagers there. Within the framework of a campaign against goldmining in the region, a group called the 'Güzel Edremit Körfezi Bekçileri' (Guards of the Beautiful Gulf of Edremit – GBGE), comprising of the villagers of Küçükdere, the mayors of several surrounding towns, local leaders of political parties, lawyers, businessowners, representatives of engineers' and physicians' associations, issued the 'Declaration of NO', also known as the 'Divine Declaration', and engaged in colorful acts of protest. To illustrate, the mayor of the nearby town of Gömeç applied to an insurance company to buy insurance for the 10,095 people in the town against the risk of death due to the prospective mining operations. The company refused the application because of the magnitude of the risk factor. In another symbolic act, the mayor of Burhaniye applied to the German Consulate requesting political asylum for himself and the 45,000 residents of the town, reasoning: "As the German companies are moving toward gold extraction in our region using cyanide we're moving toward death. In Germany cyanide use in mining is banned" (Özay 1995:109).

Also within the framework of the Küçükdere campaign against goldmining, the GBGE attacked the parent company of *Tüprag* and its finance sources on their home front. Thus, when GBGE activists found out that the German Dresdner Bank was one of the main financiers of *Tüprag*, they publicized in Germany that the bank was violating its commitment to the United Nations Environment Program, in which it agreed not to finance any activity abroad that was banned at home. The GBGE established further international contacts to get support abroad. In that regard, an expert advisor for the Greens at the European Parliament (EP) was invited to and visited Küçükdere, prepared a report addressing the risks of the prospective mining project, and submitted it to the President of the EP. International support continued with the visit of the region by the world-renown ecological chemist Friedhelm Korte, Emeritus Professor at the Technical University of Munich in Germany. Korte studied the environmental impact report prepared by *Tüprag* and announced his critical opinion on the report at a press conference held on May 16, 1993. Five days after Korte's press conference, the Minister of Environment issued his decision to halt the goldmining project in the region (Özay 1995:37).

It was only after the Küçükdere victory that the Bergama villagers turned to the environmental lawyers group in İzmir for legal consultation and representation, which opened a new front in the struggle against goldmining in Bergama. In the words of P.A., a 64 year-old villager and movement activist:

Mr. Senih, God bless him, and other environmental lawyers; they came and helped us. We had their support. 24 lawyers! Environmental Lawyers in İzmir. Go on, they said, we're behind you. We'll represent you for free.

Although not within a formal organization, the resistance against goldmining in Bergama gained ground under the auspices of the mayor, the Bergama Environment, Culture, and Arts Association, and the local leaders of the villages. Using tactics similar to that employed by the GBGE in the Küçükdere case, movement participants embarked on an international publicity campaign. As recounted by Mayor Taşkın:

We went to Brussels and to Germany. I gave speeches at both the Green Party and the Socialist Party meetings. I told them that it's hypocritical of them to produce cyanide, ban it in Germany but export it to Turkey. The German Green Party established a desk within the framework of the party organization to discuss our case. There's a strong green movement in Germany. One of the influential figures is Friedhelm Korte, an Emeritus Professor at the Technical University of Munich. He is the professor who wrote the Turkish Environmental Law. He was the senior advisor to the German Prime Minister at that time. He is very old but he came all the way here to support us..... Fischer [Joschka] came here on his bicycle before he was elected. He became the Minister of Foreign Affairs later. Fischer is our friend.... We also found Turks in Australia to support us. A Turkish guy there, doing a program on the radio, stirred up Australia. Every other day I talked as a guest on his morning show in Australia. The stock prices of *Normandy Poseidon* [Australian corporation holding the controlling share in *Eurogold*] dropped to 30 cents from \$ 1,5 as a result.

In light of the Ministry of Environment's decision against *Tüprağ* and the increasing resistance in Bergama, *Eurogold* resorted to tactics of discrediting the Bergama movement, playing on nationalist sentiments. Thus, Ahmet Gürel, one of the Turkish executives of *Eurogold*, claimed that the Bergama resistance was provoked by Greece<sup>52</sup>. Behind this allegation lay the cooperation against goldmining between the people of Bergama and that of Olympiada in Greece where a multinational mining

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<sup>52</sup> There is a striking parallel between this tactic of *Eurogold* and the later allegations of 'provocation of the movement by German foundations', first, promoted by the government, then formulated in a book by a college professor in 2001. Whereas the former accusation regarding Greek provocation was not effective the latter swayed public opinion about the movement and its activists, and considerably harmed the villagers' cause.

company set out to explore for gold. As proof to his claim of Greek provocation, Gürel pointed to the request of the mayor of Lesbos, the Greek island in the Aegean, to visit Bergama as an act of solidarity with the people of the town against goldmining (Taşkın 1998:65). In another attempt to proceed its mining investment in the region, *Eurogold* suggested changes in its operation plan to the effect of increasing its environmental safety measures. For example, according to the original plan, *Eurogold* was to cover the bottom of the tailings pond with a 20-inch layer of clay to prevent seepage of toxic waste into the groundwater. The company proposed to increase this layer to 60 inches. As another step to the same end, *Eurogold* offered to coat this clay layer with a synthetic geomembrane liner. Also within the context of improving the environmental safety measures, the company suggested to install a detoxification unit, which would chemically detoxify the post-processing, cyanide-laden waste before it would be dumped into the tailings pond.

Although *Eurogold* advertised these measures as the ultimate environmental safety precautions in mining the scientific community expressed concern about their effectiveness. In terms of the usefulness of the geomembrane liner, M.D. from the Aegean University stated:

Geomembrane liners are also used in the roofs of buildings. Even in that application they are not leakproof. A roof is probably 200-300 square meters of an area. What we're talking about here in Ovacık is an area of 160 dönüm [160,000 square meters], which is supposed to carry 60 tons of weight. This means that there will be 60 tons of pressure on the geomembrane liner. Also consider that region sits on a fault line. In case of the slightest earthquake I don't think the geomembrane cover would stay intact.

With respect to the process of detoxification, Y.B., a professor of chemical metallurgy at the Technical University of İstanbul, cautioned:

Detoxification with the proposed SO<sub>2</sub> [sulfur dioxide]/air process involves the oxidation of cyanide into cyanate or thiocyanate. Thiocyanates [sulfur-cyanide compounds] are toxic themselves. They are the major components of fungicides and herbicides, such as the Agent Orange.

Similarly, in his evaluation of the other detoxification processes used in mining, such as the Alkaline-Chlorination and the H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub> [hydrogen peroxide] process, Duman (2000) concluded that since they all rely on the oxidation of cyanide they lead to the formation of ammonia, dangerous nitrogen oxides, and additional, undesirable sulfur and chlorine compounds (p.153).

Despite these caveats, however, the Ministry of Environment granted *Eurogold* a permit for operation on October 19, 1994, which led to the first lawsuit in the Bergama case. On November 8, 1994, the Environmental Movement Lawyers group in İzmir filed three separate lawsuits at the İzmir Administrative Court on behalf of 650 villagers and residents of Bergama for the annulment of the company's permit.

In an encouraging development for the movement, the European Parliament (EP) adopted a resolution<sup>53</sup> at its sitting on November 17, 1994, entitled the “Resolution on the environmental disaster which is imminent as a result of the use by companies based in the European Union of chemical substances containing cyanide in goldmining operations near Pergamon and Edremit (Turkey)”. Acknowledging the risks associated with goldmining in Bergama, the resolution called on “the Turkish government to ban the use of substances containing cyanide in mining and to prevent the destruction of valuable regions with centuries old crops and forests”. The EP also called on “the member states,

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<sup>53</sup> Under the legal system of the EU, resolutions are non-binding legal norms, considered part of the secondary legislation. Although they don't have legal force resolutions have political weight.

particularly the Federal Republic of Germany, to ban the use by German companies of cyanide, a toxic substance with negative historical associations, which will cause serious ecological and health damage to an entire region, and to oblige German companies and banks to comply with German and EU standards, even outside the EU” (European Parliament Resolution. 17 November 1994. B4-0410/94).

1995 saw a shift in the initial capital configuration of *Eurogold*. Metall Mining Corporation changed its name to INMET Mining Corporation, keeping its original 33.33 percent of shares. A substantial change occurred in the Australian leg of *Eurogold*'s capital. With the establishment of La Source Compagnie Minière, a joint venture between the Australian Normandy Mining Ltd. and the French BRGM<sup>54</sup>, Normandy decreased its shares in *Eurogold* from 67 percent to 40 percent. According to this new capital arrangement, BRGM assumed 27 percent of *Eurogold*'s shares.

On July 2, 1996, İzmir Administrative Court dismissed the villagers' request to annul *Eurogold*'s operation permit, ruling that the gold mine fulfilled the criteria set out in the EIA Report and that the disputed decision had been adopted in accordance with the authorization procedure for environmentally sensitive projects. The villagers' lawyers appealed the decision to the Supreme Administrative Court.

### **The Villagers: From Reaction to Action**

With the decision of the Supreme Administrative Court still pending, *Eurogold* started constructing the mine early November in 1996, cutting down 3,000 pine trees and

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<sup>54</sup> Bureau de Recherches Géologiques et Minières (Office of Geological and Mining Survey) - French public institution with industrial and commercial interests, founded in 1959.

1,500 olive trees for the open pit operation (Reinart 2003:51). Enraged by this incident, the villagers blocked the İzmir-Çanakkale Highway, a major intercity road that runs in front of the mine, and stopped traffic for six hours on November 15, 1996. This first mass protest signaled the onset of a new phase in the movement, characterized by nationwide publicity through actions of civil disobedience, demonstrations, marches, road blockades, sit-ins, petitions, and organization of solidarity picnics and festivals, alongside the ongoing struggle on the judicial front.

62 year-old B.Y. from Bergama, who became one of the leading figures in this phase, especially instrumental in planning and organizing the actions of protest, gave the following account on the transformation of the movement:

The mayor did a whole lot to raise public awareness about the risks of goldmining. He announced these dangers in the press and on TV. But I told him: 'We're talking about a disaster here. It looks like death is at our door. Organizing press conferences and attending discussion programs on TV is not enough. Something else must be done. People should be more directly involved in this process, not just through the local leaders of the villages and the mayor of the town. The struggle should not look like it's under the monopoly of one individual'.

D.T. is a 44 year-old businessowner from Bergama and one of the founders of the Bergama Environment, Culture, and Arts Association. He was, at the time, the local leader of the newly established, left-wing *Özgürlük ve Dayanışma Partisi* (Freedom and Solidarity Party), and another movement activist who played a lead role in facilitating villagers' direct actions. Like B.Y., D.T. also clearly identified this phase of the movement as distinct from the previous one:

I evaluate the Bergama Resistance in two phases. Why two phases? The role of the mayor in this struggle can certainly not be denied. But there was a difference between his point of view and ours in terms of the organizational structure of the movement...Environmental problems

cannot be solved by individual struggles. As many environmentalists as you may bring here to protest you can't get anywhere unless you reach the villagers, enlighten them, and unless they act on the problem....We always argued for the need for villagers to own their problems, as opposed to an organization model in which someone from the outside would come to lead them...We favored a structure that included everyone involved; a structure in which all decisions were taken and carried out by all participants. In the first phase, which lasted till 1996, a series of actions were taken in a way that the mayor thought was right. A couple of elect village leaders and a group of people from Bergama carried out these actions. Thus, they were not widely embraced but maybe served to clear the path in front of the people. The struggle went on like this until 1996. The mayor would call, summon the village leaders, and they would go to carry out an action. This was not our understanding of a grassroots movement.....The people who lived in the close vicinity of the mine were experiencing the destruction directly under constantly exploding dynamites and the trees being felled. Thus, we thought the surrounding 15-17 villages should be the epicenter of the struggle and the villagers as a collectivity should be the lead actors of this movement.

Taşkın, the then mayor, agreed with B.Y. and D.T. about the way grassroots movements ought to be. He stressed that he never assumed a leadership role in the movement but only acted from the position of a concerned and responsible individual:

Individually, I'm just a figure in this grassroots movement. I'm not the sine qua non of it.... I was neither alone in this struggle nor was I its leader. I just did my job. It was my job as a mayor then....I played the role of a mediator, facilitating the meeting of experts with the villagers. Even if I hadn't acted as a facilitator someone else would have.... Once the villagers reached a certain level of awareness they established their own committees, made their own decisions. When they consulted us, we helped them. This is indeed what ought to be. I don't believe in a movement where people follow their mayor and do as he says; neither do I think it's the right way to go about because once they find the leader they get him, and the movement ends there... Everybody swarms a movement like this to advance their own political goals....My advice to the villagers was this: 'Don't discard anyone. Let them join you but only if they are willing to follow you! Don't let anyone get in front of you!'

However, Taşkın had a different interpretation of the changing nature of the movement from 1996 on. For him, the movement followed a natural course of

development. The direct actions of the villagers did not signify a change in course but they were a manifestation of the natural progression of the movement:

There is a chain of developments in social movements. First, people observe to figure out what's going on. Then they learn. Then they decide. And once they decide, they act. This chain is experienced in the Bergama villagers' movement.

The difference in opinion between the mayor and B.Y., in particular, was manifest in the differing factors they considered necessary for movement success. The mayor's emphasis on 'diplomatic, ideological, and scientific confrontation' in the struggle against goldmining contrasted B.Y.'s identification of 'confrontation via direct action' as the prominent means of struggle. In the former mayor Taşkın's words:

In your fight against them you have to win the ideological struggle. You have to be right. You can win no social movement if you're not right from the sociological point of view. It is possible for you to lose even when you're right but there's no chance of winning if you're not right. You simply have to be right. We had to be right and convict them and their arguments ideologically and scientifically.

In contrast, B.Y. stressed:

We told the mayor that he could continue being the means of scientific justification for the struggle, telling Turkey and the world about the risks of goldmining, and telling them our people don't want it. But we needed to feed the fire that he ignited. The struggle needed to foster collectivity, to incorporate and be identified with the people. We needed to carry out non-violent but resistant, organized and loud actions.

The post-1996 era saw the formation of the Bergama Environmental Executive Committee (BEEC), comprising of B.Y., D.T., the local organizations of the Freedom and Solidarity Party as well as the Workers Party, and the village leaders. Leadership of the committee was to be assumed alternately by the members for a term of one year.

Along with the BEEC, several committees were established in the villages. As recounted by B.Y.:

There is a saying I like. It reads: ‘Those who struggle can’t always win but those who win are always the ones who struggled’. We started a collective struggle. We set out to carry Gandhi’s ideology to 2000s, engaging in non-violent, non-destructive acts of civil disobedience. We circulated books on Gandhi, established committees in the villages, organized meetings in the homes of the villagers, and learned civil disobedience.

Beside the BEEC and the village committees, the Bergama Environment, Culture, and Arts Association, the Environmental Movement Lawyers in İzmir, as well as individual lawyers from Bergama have been instrumental in carrying the struggle to the villages. C.U., a 40 year-old lawyer from Bergama and one of the legal representatives of the villagers stated:

Taking to the streets is risky. You might run into other people there; your opponents, radicals, etc.... So, it was a necessity for the villagers to be informed on the legal aspects of protest.... At that point we did our part and taught them what they needed to know to protest within the framework of the rules of law.

The instruction villagers received from the lawyers with respect to legitimate protest was one of the most essential factors in the success of the acts of demonstration and protest carried out by the villagers in this and the subsequent phase. Regarding this learning process B.Y. recounted:

I wrote letters to the bar associations, to the Presidents of Turkey’s bar associations. I told them: ‘The mining company proceeds with its operations. Our voices apparently can’t be heard enough. We’re going to protest. Will you teach us how? Come to our villages, ... come and tell us who the police, the gendarmerie, the National Intelligence Agency are; what we need to do when we see them; tell us when we need to disperse and when not; what we need to do in front of the judge; and what we should do when arrested by the gendarmerie’. They taught us all of these in six months. We worked hard, did our homework, and even tested each other on what we learned. Everyone knew what grade anyone else got.

One villager would say: ‘I got 2....Next time I will get 3. You’ll see, I’ll even increase my grade to 5 [highest possible grade].’ He would eventually get 5, indeed.

This process contributed to the growth of solidarity among the villagers against goldmining in the region. As expressed by I.A., a 55 year-old villager and adamant movement activist:

At first, people were divided. When the company first came here some started working for the mine. But in five or six years we became a single entity, as solid as a rock, everyone being on our side against the mine.

44 year-old K.M., another villager and longtime movement activist recounted:

There were a couple of people from the villages working for the mine. We held a meeting and decided to ask them either to leave the mine or the village. Most of them left the village and moved to Bergama. Few remained. We separated our coffee houses.

On November 24, 1996, a week after the road blockage demonstration, the so-called ‘Enough Is Enough Demonstration’, also known as the ‘Coffin Demonstration’, was held in Bergama. Carrying coffins, thousands of villagers marched in protest on the streets of Bergama, accompanied by the municipality band playing Chopin’s funeral march. Among the slogans shouted were: “Don’t dig our graves!” and “Bergama’s gold is its cotton and tobacco!”

In another direct action on December 23, 1996, the villagers distributed leaflets in the streets of Bergama, men having stripped themselves down to their underwear. Nakedness is a social taboo in Turkish culture, especially in rural regions. The naked body is something to be ashamed of and hidden from public purview. Thus, it was an extremely difficult and radical move for the village men, who live and die for their honor, to strip themselves off their clothes. The rationale behind this protest was that it would be

the most manifest demonstration of the villagers' determination to stop gold mining in the region if they'd go to such great lengths for their cause as to take the most difficult action in their lives. B.Y. gave the following account on this demonstration:

Six or seven thousand of us came to Bergama to distribute leaflets reading 'We don't want the goldmine!' In the town where they sell their tomatoes and peppers the villagers were to distribute leaflets. We gathered in an auditorium. The women were waiting outside. I stood up on a desk and started to take off my clothes. I undressed down to a pair of shorts. The villagers were stunned. "Undress!" I said. They looked at me with a puzzled expression on their faces. "Friends, undress!" I repeated. Nobody dared to take off a piece of clothing. They broke into a cold sweat. One of them said: "Even in our wives' presence we turn off the light when we undress. It embarrasses us." The idea was this: What is the most difficult thing to do in the life of a villager? To undress. He was asked to undress, walk on the streets of Bergama in underwear.... This was more difficult for him than to die but if he could do this he would be willing and able to do anything for the cause he was fighting for. Eventually, some five or six took off their clothes but others did not. The curious crowd was waiting outside, not knowing what was going on inside. I decided to proceed, got down from the desk, and asked the undressed ones to walk in front and the others to follow them. Among the undressed was Uncle Bayram, a big, 130 kg. [~287 pounds] guy. He took his clothes and walked outside. His wife saw him. "What the hell are you doing? Are you out of your mind?" she shouted. Everybody was in shock. "I'm not alone," Uncle Bayram responded. I was following him. The villagers respect and trust me. I asked the women: "Tell your husbands to undress." "Undress!" they commanded. Thus, one after the other took off their clothes.

On January 12, 1997, a referendum was held in eight villages to vote in favor or against the gold mine. Under the surveillance of the gendarmerie, 89% of eligible voters (2866 people) cast their votes (Reinart 2003:66). All voted against the mine.

The villagers expressed their opposition to *Eurogold* also through culturally symbolic actions. For example, on February 22, 1997, they staged *ortaoyunu*. *Ortaoyunu* is a popular form of Turkish performance art, originated in the Ottoman era. It is an improvised play with minimal scenery, performed in an open-air space, surrounded by

the audience. Hence, the name *ortaoyunu*, which literally translates as the ‘middle play’. *Ortaoyunu* often carries a political message conveyed by way of dramatization and/or satire.

In another culturally-inspired demonstration the next day, the villagers planted fig saplings in front of the mine. Underlying this symbolic action was the Turkish idiom of “to plant a fig tree by one’s house”, implying “to destroy it”. Fig trees are known to grow everywhere due to their extremely vigorous roots that are capable of destroying everything on their path, even rocks, walls, and foundations of buildings, to hold on to the soil. In the case of the villagers’ action, planting fig saplings symbolized their desire to get rid of the mine. The villagers also cooked *lokma*, fried dough, and distributed it to the public, which is an Anatolian tradition carried out after someone’s death.

The movement activists and movement supporters interviewed for this study were unequivocal in their response as to the source of their tactics and slogans: the creativity of the locals, or ‘the ingenious mind of the locals’, as the then mayor put it. I.A., a 55 year-old villager and adamant movement activist stated:

Well, it [the struggle] is like a baby. You feed it to grow; you put effort in it. It wasn’t born overnight...There were three to five thousand of us. Some were skilled in poetry. They would say something that others liked and it became a slogan. The same is true for the actions we took. They were born as a result of the locals’ creativity.

Similarly, S.C., a 44 year-old lawyer from İzmir, long-time movement supporter and one of the legal representatives of the villagers, asserted:

Urban intellectuals voiced their views and opinions, of course. But tactics and slogans were mostly the product of the villagers’ creativity. I believe it also has a whole lot to do with their conviction. They believed in this cause, and the more they were convinced the more creative they got.

Upon the invitation by the mayor of Lefke, a town in the Northwest of Cyprus, a group of villagers, along with several journalists, went to Lefke on February 27, 1997, to visit and observe the environmental destruction caused by the now abandoned copper and gold mine site in the town. On the impact of this trip on the villagers, B.Y. said:

There was a copper mine in Cyprus where cyanide was used to extract the metal. The mine finished its operations 30 years ago. We went there and saw that, even today, death was on duty there. That was an eye opening experience for everyone on the trip.

Taşkın's account of the Cyprus trip was similar:

It was only in Lefke that Cumhuriyet [a prominent, politically left-oriented daily] was convinced of the risks associated with mining. Until then it only covered the Bergama case for the news value of the demonstrations. In the aftermath of the Cyprus trip they took sides with us. Like everyone else on the trip they were also struck by the extent of the destruction they saw. They said: 'You were right'.

Upon *Eurogold's* commencement of explosions at the mine to excavate the ore, the walls of the houses in the nearby villages started to crack. On March 7, 1997, a group of village women went to Bergama on tractors to complain to the *kaymakam*, the sub-provincial governor, about the company's operations. The police didn't let the protesters enter the building. Tractors carrying another group of village women were stopped by the police before they entered the town. Eventually, ten women, along with one of the movement leaders, were allowed to talk to the *kaymakam* in his office. Upon his promise that he'd notify the governor of the province of İzmir about the villagers' complaints, and do whatever is necessary, the protesters went back to their villages.

A week later, representatives of several NGOs from İzmir came to Bergama and met with the villagers at the town square before the commencement of a marathon from Bergama to İzmir as a protest against the goldmine. Following a demonstration of

solidarity the marathon started with participants carrying torches in their hands. The police let the demonstrators proceed, provided they did not block the traffic.

In the subsequent direct action on April 22, 1997, over 4,000 villagers picketed the mine site for 12 hours, starting at midnight. The governor of İzmir, the *kaymakam* of Bergama, the Chief of Police, and the Commander of the Gendarmerie came to the mine site to convince the protesters to end their demonstration. The villagers left the mine upon the promise by the governor that the mine would be closed for a month. Upon the order of the governor of İzmir on April 25, 1997, the mine's operations were suspended for one month.

Following this event, 1500 soldiers were sent to the region. They established a large base on the mine site. In the words of D.T.:

They did their daily morning exercises, jogging in the villages as an attempt to intimidate the villagers. They asked the villagers in tractors on their way to the fields for their driver's licenses, and scraped off the stickers on the villagers' cars that read: "No to Cyanide-Treated Gold!"

Shortly after the picketing demonstration by the villagers, a letter was sent to the Turkish General Manager of *Eurogold* from the Office of the Presidency, dated May 2, 1997. According to the letter, the State Minister Teoman Rıza Güneri, who had been consulted by the Office of the Presidency regarding recent events in Bergama, assured that the state would stand by its promise to the company's representatives, and that the mine would definitely operate, but Güneri suggested to wait for about a week until peace was restored in the region (*Milliyet Daily*, February 14, 1998).

The villagers also took their protest to the capital. On May 8, 1997, 25 buses full of villagers went to Ankara to submit to the parliament a petition of 50,000 signatures

against the mine. They also visited the offices of major political parties, and talked to their representatives.

Despite the government's support of the company, a development on the judicial front signified victory for the Bergama villagers. In its groundbreaking decision on May 13, 1997, the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) overturned the lower court's judgment of July 2, 1996, and ruled that the ministerial permission granted to *Eurogold* did not serve public interest, and was in violation of Articles 17 and 56 of the Constitution. According to Article 17, "everyone has the right to life and the right to maintain and develop their material and spiritual entity", and according to Article 56 "everybody is entitled to live in a healthy and balanced environment. It is the duty of the state and the citizens to improve the environment, to protect environmental health, and to prevent environmental pollution" (*Official Gazette*, November 9, 1982, No.17863, Law No. 2709). Considering the effects of the proposed mining activity with cyanide treatment on human life, the atmosphere, groundwater, flora, fauna, and land use, as addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment and various expert reports, the SAC (Supreme Administrative Court File No: 1996/5477, Decision No: 1997/2312, dated 05/13/1997) decreed:

It is essential that human life is sustained in a healthy, balanced, pristine environment....Since the risks associated with the operation method of the disputed goldmine directly or indirectly concern human life the statutory audit of the administrative decision in question [The Ministry of Environment's decision to issue an operation permit to *Eurogold*]...requires, before all else, the consideration of public interest and the priorities that this concept entails. If the economic value to be gained from the activity in question....is weighed against the destruction that will be wrought on the environment and, directly or indirectly, on human life, in case the risk factor materializes, it is natural to assess public interest primarily in favor of human life. In the case of goldmining with

the cyanide leaching method, it is impossible to talk about the reduction in risk factors based on the trust in the mining establishment and in the supervision of the facility to be carried out. In light of the technical and judicial ascertainments above, and considering the right of humans to life, as well as the state's obligations to protect environmental health, to prevent environmental pollution, and to ensure that everyone leads a life in physical and mental health, there is no public interest in the disputed decision with regard to the granting of permission to the operation of the goldmine with the cyanide leaching method that involves the probable risk factors addressed in the Environmental Impact Assessment and expert reports, which, if materialized, will certainly affect human life, either directly or indirectly through environmental deterioration.

### **Against the Executive Circumvention of Judicial Decrees**

As the former mayor put it, from this point on the actions of the involved parties took a chess-like course, with the villagers and their supporters, on the one hand, and the company and the government, on the other, counteracting each other's moves.

On May 18, 1997 thousands of villagers, accompanied by hundreds of college students from İzmir and Ankara as supporters, and media representatives, gathered in a village adjacent to the mine, and held the so-called 'Cyanide-Free Picnic' with the motto of: 'Before the water gets contaminated with cyanide!'. The picnic culminated with the opening of an inscribed stone block put up in the village square. The inscription, signed by 17 villages in close vicinity to the mine, read:

These lands you're standing on belong to the villagers of Pınarköy, Alacalar, Aşağıkırıklar, Kurfalı, Bozköy, Sarıdere, Eğrigöl, Ovacık, Narlıca, Çamköy, Çaltıbahçe, Süleymanlı, Küçükkaya, Yenikent, Tekedere, Tepeköy, Yalnızev, and Sağancı. These lands are bountiful. On its plains lies cotton like snow, wheat like gold, tobacco like amber; on its mountains stand tall pine and oak trees; over its streams extend the cool shadows of plane trees. Olive trees at the foot of its mountains are as old as history. You can't get enough of the pomegranates and grapes of these lands; don't leave without tasting them. Stamp the ground and water will erupt. This water is therapeutic; it promotes mental and physical health....The mud of this area contributed to the beauty of Cleopatra. The

parchment paper is from here. It circulated in the hands of the kings, treaties were sealed on it, and it carried words of love...The collection of this town's library was read by Alexandrians for centuries....People of these lands regard as one the living beings on and under their lands, and protect them. For these people, everything on and under the earth is as essential as air. They are aware that in the absence of one the other would die. You, visitors of these lands, take some time to listen to them carefully, thus learn from them and teach others. People of these lands are upset, worried, and very angry nowadays. They already knew what gold was but they recently found out about cyanide; and once they did so, they discarded their long-cherished golden belongings. Their gold is their wheat, sunflower, tobacco, cotton, and olives. They don't want to leave these lands and perish, neither do they want to stay and die....If you came here as a friend, meet them, listen to them and talk to them. If not, leave right away. These people love life and the nature, which is their life. These people know that the dead don't wear gold.

Several other demonstrations were carried out throughout June of 1997. Villagers held a demonstration at the Konak Square in downtown İzmir. They started keeping vigil in front of the mine, gathering outside the fence around the mine site, holding flashlights in their hands and shouting slogans. A group of villagers intruded the press conference concerning the Ovacık Goldmine, held by the Australian Ambassador at a hotel in İzmir (Reinart 2003). In support of the villagers' movement, the Faculty of Mining at the Technical University of İstanbul organized a conference, titled "Scientific Aspects of Gold Extraction Using Cyanide". Conference participants concluded that "based on current evidence, including the technologies involved and knowledge of the natural and cultural environment, the planned extraction of gold in the Bergama region is not acceptable" (Bergama Belediyesi Kültür Yayınları 1997: 24).

Subsequent to the SAC decision there was a marked boost in the judicial leg of the villagers' struggle. According to Article 52 §4 of the Law on Administrative Proceedings, the overruling of a decision entailed *ipso facto* the stay of execution of that

decision (Official Gazette, January 20, 1982, No.17580, Law No. 2577). Furthermore, as stipulated by the same law: “The Administration is obliged to act in accordance with the requirements of the Supreme Administrative Court’s and other administrative courts’ decisions of stay of execution without delay. Under no condition can the timeframe for enforcement exceed thirty days starting on the day the Administration is notified of the decision [the law requires that the involved parties be notified of the decision within seven days of its announcement].... In the case of deliberate non-enforcement of the court decisions by the public officials within thirty days the party concerned is entitled to file a lawsuit against the administration, and to bring an action for damages against the public officials responsible for the non-enforcement of the decision” (*Official Gazette*, January 20, 1982, No.17580, Law No. 2577, Article 28 §1 and 4). Applied to the Bergama case, the law required that the Ministry of Environment’s decision to issue an operation permit to *Eurogold* be annulled and the operations at the Ovacık Goldmine be halted by June 20, 1997 at latest, based on the SAC’s opposing judgment of May 13, 1997.

Upon non-enforcement of the SAC’s ruling within the stipulated time period, the İzmir Bar Association sent a letter to the İzmir Provincial Governor’s Office on June 26, 1997, urging that the Ovacık Goldmine be closed down. In its reply to the letter, the governor’s office claimed that the final judgment on the case had not been made yet<sup>55</sup>,

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<sup>55</sup> According to Article 49 of the Law on Administrative Proceedings, if the appealed decision of the lower court is overruled by the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC), the case is sent back to the lower court for reconsideration, with Article 52 §4 of the law, i.e. ‘the overruling of a decision entails *ipso facto* the stay of execution of that decision’, still holding true. The lower court can insist on its original decision, disregarding the SAC’s overruling. If the lower court’s decision of insistence on its

and stated that the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources had expressed its support for the resumption of the mine's operations (European Court of Human Rights Judgment, 10 November 2004, 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: I-C.31).

On August 2, 1997 a group of villagers went to Çeşme, a town 50 miles west of İzmir, where the Association of the Aegean Industrialists and Businessmen was holding its summit meeting. The villagers talked to two state ministers who were attending the summit, and asked them to enforce the SAC decision and close the mine. The ministers responded that they were waiting for the legal procedure to be finalized and assured the villagers that once the SAC decision became final it would be enforced (*Gazete Ege Daily*, August 3, 1997).

In their biggest demonstration in terms of attracting nationwide attention, the villagers went to İstanbul on August 26, 1997, tied themselves to the railings of the Bosphorus Bridge, and blocked traffic for two hours. Spanning the Bosphorus Strait (İstanbul Strait), and thus connecting the European side of the city to the Asian side, the Bosphorus Bridge is one of the most outstanding symbols of İstanbul, the country's biggest metropolis, and cultural and financial center. Hence, the villagers' demonstration on the bridge made headlines both in the newspapers and on TV nationwide.

E.S., a member of the Environmental Movement Lawyers group in İzmir, and a long term legal representative and consultant of the villagers, interpreted the success of

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original judgment is appealed by the party involved the case is viewed by the SAC General Assembly of Administrative Proceedings. If the SAC General Assembly of Administrative Proceedings upholds the SAC's judgment, the decision of the lower court is overruled; otherwise it is affirmed. Judgments of the SAC General Assembly of Administrative Proceedings are final and binding for all (Official Gazette, January 20, 1982, No.17580, Law No. 2577, Article 49 § 3 and 4).

the villagers' direct actions, in general, and their Bosphorus Bridge demonstration, in particular, in his following account:

Everybody is entitled to express their opinion. This is a constitutional right. They [Bergama villagers] used this right. They were taught that they can do whatever they want in protest: lie on the ground, chain themselves to the Bosphorus Bridge, strip themselves off their clothes, paint themselves in color, or whatever else they might choose to do as long as they dispersed by the third warning of the police through the megaphone, as stipulated by the Law of Rallies and Demonstration Marches. They were successful in their demonstrations because they learned this rule.

How well the villagers learned the legal requirements of protest was attested in an episode during the questioning of the villagers at the İstanbul Police Station's Counter Terrorism Unit where they were taken to in the aftermath of the Bosphorus Bridge demonstration. B.Y. from Bergama, a movement activist instrumental in facilitating villagers' direct actions recounted:

They called in Uncle Bayram, the 82 year-old villager, to question. The interrogation started out in a forceful tone. Prosecutors use this psychological intimidation tactic toward the villagers, playing on the latter's fear of authority.

- 'Bayram!' the prosecutor commanded.
- 'Yes, Mr. Prosecutor.'
- 'Are you against the state? What do you want?'
- 'I'm defending my land.'

.....The prosecutor was not convinced. He went on in an angrier tone of voice:

- 'Look, you committed a crime. Do you see these police officers, these gendarmes? They brought you in because you committed a crime. Do you realize that your actions constitute crime?'
- 'Crime has not been established!' Bayram replied.

Now, this is a judicial phrase. Only lawyers use this term. The prosecutor was taken aback. He put down his pen, and asked, this time respectfully:

- 'You're neither a judge nor a lawyer. How do you know that crime was not established?'
- 'We do our homework. We read. It says in the book

that the police are to stand on an elevated ground where we can see them, and through the megaphone they are to warn us three times, calling 'You're committing a crime, disperse!' If we don't disperse by the end of the third warning, that's when the crime is established. But in our demonstration the police didn't have a megaphone in their hands!

This time the prosecutor asked the police officers:

- 'Is it true? Did you not have a megaphone?'
- 'We did not.'

So, they let us go.

Both the villagers and those who support them expressed that the struggle of Bergama villagers had been a mutual learning experience for all the parties involved. As the villagers learned the art of non-violent protest and perfected it in their actions, the state and the mining company learned new ways to cope with them. Following the Bosphorus Bridge demonstration the police used the megaphone in every protest meeting of the villagers. In return, the villagers developed a new tactic. In the words of B.Y.:

We learned what to do on the streets, how to face the gendarmes, the police. And the police started to learn from us..... They would warn us through the megaphone. We'd disperse to make sure no crime is established. But in a couple of minutes we'd come back to the same place, and start over our protest. The police would take us to the prosecutor, and complain: 'Sir, we warn them through the megaphone, and ask them to disperse. They disperse, indeed, but come back in a little while.' The prosecutor would tell them: 'Change the laws. What they do doesn't constitute crime unless the existing laws are changed to prove otherwise.'

On September 9, 1997, 420 villagers, along with the mayor and B.Y., went to Balya, a town of Balıkesir, 65 miles northeast of Bergama, to visit the abandoned lead and silver mine in the town<sup>56</sup>. A group of special forces, riot police, and gendarmes

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<sup>56</sup> When foreign companies were granted mining concessions in the country during the dissolution years of the Ottoman Empire, a French company received the right to mine silver, lead and zinc in Balya in 1878. The company extracted a total of 400,000 tons of lead over 62 years it was in operation. In 1940 when the mine was closed Balya was left with 4 million tons of toxic waste, consisting of heavy metals, such as cadmium,

blocked the road five miles to Balya. The commander of the gendarmerie announced that on the direct order of the Minister of Interior Affairs the villagers would not be allowed to enter the town. As the mayor and B.Y. went to negotiate with the authorities the villagers were kept in the buses. After hours of negotiations the sub-provincial governor of Balya allowed the villagers to get off the buses. The villagers carried out a sit-in demonstration and shouted slogans. When the protesters insisted on entering the town the commander of the gendarmerie asked them to get in the buses and go back to Bergama. Upon their resistance the villagers were beaten, forced into the buses, and sent back to Bergama under the escort of police cars (Reinart 2003:100).

The events on the action front were accompanied by developments on the judicial front. Following its ruling of May 1997 the SAC had sent the case back to the lower administrative court for reconsideration. The İzmir Administrative Court complied with the SAC's judgment and annulled the Ministry of Environment's decision on October 15, 1997 (İzmir First Administrative Court, File No. 1997/636, Decision No. 1997/877, dated 10/15/1997).

On October 23, 1997, the Ministry of Environment invited the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, the Ministry of Health, and the provincial governor of İzmir to reconsider the conditions attached to the disputed operation permits in view of the SAC's decision (European Court of Human Rights Judgment, 10 November 2004, 46117/99 [2004])

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arsenic, lead, and zinc (Minibaş 2005:461). The town's population decreased from about 36,000 in the 1930s to 2,000 today.

ECHR 621: I-C.32). Although the statutory time limit of enforcement had passed the mine was still not closed by the end of November 1997.

In the census held on November 30, 1997, 10,000 people from eight villages refused to be counted by the census officials, reasoning: “If we don’t count we don’t want to be counted” (*Yeni Asır Daily*, November 25, 1997). On December 24, 1997, the legal representatives of the villagers sent notices to the İzmir provincial governor, and to the Ministers of the Environment, the Energy and Natural Resources, and the Forests, calling for the enforcement of the SAC’s judgment.

The account by H.N., a 45 year-old villager and movement activist, illustrated the frustration of the villagers with the administration’s failure to secure their rights that are guaranteed by law and affirmed by judiciary decisions:

We won our case at the High Court. There was a big celebration in our villages the day when the court announced its decision. We said: ‘This is it. We did it. We won!’ But they didn’t close the mine.

C.U., a 40 year-old lawyer from Bergama and one of the lawyers of the villagers made the following comment on the deferral of the SAC judgment by the administration:

Imagine that a citizen is convicted of intentional murder and sentenced to 24 years of imprisonment. Once the judgment becomes final, i.e. there is no other course of appeal in the judicial system, its enforcement is obligated by law. But instead of sending the convict to jail the executive power decides, in a totally arbitrary manner, not to execute the convict’s sentence. It says: ‘High Court, I realize you sentenced this person to 24 years imprisonment but I will not send him to jail!’ Is this possible under the rule of law? But this is exactly what we experienced in this country in the Bergama case. The High Court says, the mining operation should stop, there’s no public interest in carrying on with it; but the country’s administrators, the Council of Ministers, Ministers of Energy and of Environment all say: ‘I’m not enforcing it!’ What would you do in response? These people were neglecting their duty by not enforcing the court’s decision. So, we filed lawsuits against them.

On January 6, 1998, the lawyers of the villagers brought an action for damages at the Ankara District Court against the Prime Minister, the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Public Works, and the provincial governor of İzmir, for not enforcing the SAC's decision.

In his interpretation of the developments following the SAC ruling, 44 year-old S.C. from İzmir, a longtime movement supporter and one of the lawyers of the villagers, stated:

In the aftermath of the '97 decision the concern for securing the rule of law gained primacy in the struggle....The protection of environmental rights is essential but if court rules are not enforced in a country there would be no guarantee for the exercise of any rights. The institution to resort to for the settlement of a dispute between two parties is the court. If the court's rule is not going to be enforced how will people claim their rights? Is everyone going to act on their own sense of justice? This would lead to disorder and chaos. You can't even talk about a state under these conditions, let alone a state based on the rule of law. You would destroy the atmosphere of peace in the society. If no one trusts that the court decisions will be enforced nobody will take the courts seriously; nobody will resort to courts to resolve their disputes....In this case, securing environmental rights becomes part of the bigger problem of the enforcement of judiciary decisions.

On February 27, 1998, the Office of the Provincial Governor of İzmir ordered the mine to be closed. Four days later, the public prosecutor at the Bergama police court brought criminal proceedings against the senior managers of *Eurogold*, with the charge of cyanide use at the Ovacık Goldmine without prior authorization. Contrary to the government's claim that no mining activity had been carried out at the mine, a court-ordered inspection on the mine site on March 27, 1998 revealed that the company already extracted gold, using three tons of cyanide, and that there was eighteen tons of cyanide in

stock at the site (European Court of Human Rights Judgment, 10 November 2004, 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: I-C.36&37).

Two subsequent developments in August and September 1998 moved the Bergama case to international milieu in terms of publicity and legal measures. Between July 31 and August 9 over 2,000 young people from 22 countries and from throughout Turkey gathered in Bergama within the framework of the biggest international youth festival held in the country. The festival was organized by environmental non-governmental organizations, labor unions, and college students in support of the Bergama villagers' struggle, and logistically supported by the Bergama Municipality. Staying in a camping area allotted to them by the municipality, festival participants held panel discussions, displayed performing and plastic arts, staging improvised plays, creating sculptures, and painting murals on the buildings in the villages and the town. Professional popular and classical music groups, theater companies, and dance ensembles also attended the festival to show their support for the Bergama villagers' resistance against goldmining. Affirming their solidarity with the villagers, festival participants frequently shouted one of the powerful slogans of the movement: "Everywhere is Bergama, all of us are from Bergama!" Underlying this slogan was the mentality expressed by D.T., one of the leading movement actors from Bergama:

Living in the same geography is not the necessary condition for participating in this movement. I could be living in Kars [the Eastern most province of Turkey] or in İstanbul, and this would still be my problem.

The festival was covered in both the national and the international media (*Turkish Daily News* August 23, 1998, Öncü and Koçan 2001: 36, Reinart 2003:113).

On the judicial front, the Bergama case was carried to international milieu on September 25, 1998, when nine villagers and the mayor of Bergama applied to the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)<sup>57</sup> in Strasbourg, France against the Turkish government for violating the applicants' rights protected under Articles 2, 6, 8, and 13 of the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, i.e. right to life, right to a fair trial, right to respect for private and family life, and right to an effective remedy, respectively. 54 year-old G.P. from İzmir, a longtime movement supporter and one of the lawyers of the villagers, commented on the application to ECHR as follows:

The Strasbourg Court does not consider eligible for trial every single case brought to it. Since the Court has an extensive caseload with thousands of applications only those that are deemed significant make it to a hearing before the judges. Our case was considered for trial. This created a new source of hope for the villagers.

1999 saw significant developments affecting the prospects of goldmining in Bergama and the future course of the villagers' movement. In early 1999 *Eurogold* applied to related ministries to obtain a new permit, claiming that it had taken additional

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<sup>57</sup> ECHR is an institution of the Council of Europe (COE). COE is an international organization established in May 1949 by ten European countries to protect and promote human rights, pluralist democracy and the rule of law. Currently, COE has 47 member states. In 1950, COE adopted the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (Convention), an international legal instrument safeguarding human rights. ECHR was set up in 1959 by the Convention as a mechanism to ensure the contracting states' observance of their obligations under the Convention. Complaints against contracting states can be brought to the ECHR either by other contracting states or by individual applicants, i.e. individuals, groups of individuals or non-governmental organizations, subject to the jurisdiction of a member state. Until Protocol No.11 to the Convention, adopted in 1998, made it mandatory the acceptance of the right of individual petition was left up to the discretion of the member states. Thus, until 1998 individual application to the ECHR was admitted only against those member states that accepted it. Turkey, a member of the Council of Europe since August 1949, accepted individual application in 1989.

measures to minimize the risks associated with goldmining. Upon this request, the Prime Minister asked *TÜBİTAK*, the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey<sup>58</sup>, on March 8, 1999 to reevaluate, in light of the new security measures taken by the company, whether or not the risks associated with the investment are acceptable (Prime Minister's Office Circular. 1999. B.02.O.MÜS.0.13.00.00-585).

In another development, significant in its consequences for the Bergama villagers' movement, Taşkın, the then mayor, lost the local elections of April 1999. In Taşkın's words:

I served for two terms as the mayor of Bergama, between 1989 and 1999. They defeated us in the '99 elections....Akif Ersezgin comes from a respectable family favoring the Republican People's Party (RPP). As a contractor he did USD 100 million worth of construction work for the mine....I was the mayor from the RPP and had not decided whether or not to run again for the next elections. He came forward and said that he was going to nominate his candidacy from the RPP for the elections. How could this be? I had already served for ten years and was considering leaving my seat to a young successor. But how could I leave my seat to the contractor of the mine? I talked to the RPP headquarters. I told them that we had been following a certain line as the party. RPP adopted decisions in its general party meetings giving primacy to environmental issues. They suggested that I nominate my candidacy against his. But I couldn't possibly win because I didn't prepare accordingly. In my second term of service I gave priority to the struggle against goldmining. If I had considered nominating for the next elections I would have prepared accordingly. Thus, I lost the elections. After that the policy of the municipality vis-à-vis the mine changed drastically. The new mayor did not care about the struggle at all.

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<sup>58</sup> TÜBİTAK is a governmental agency founded in 1963 with the aim of promoting, developing, organizing and coordinating research and development in the fields of science and technology in Turkey in line with the national targets of economic development and technical progress. TÜBİTAK reports directly to the Prime Minister and acts as an advisory agency to the Turkish Government on science and research issues (<http://www.tubitak.gov.tr>).

Concurrently, the strife between leading movement actors, Taşkın and B.Y. reached the point of a break, with each accusing the other for weakening the villagers' movement. According to Taşkın, B.Y. supported the construction work that the new mayor did for the mine. Taşkın further claimed that B.Y. detracted from the resistance of Bergama villagers by mobilizing them to protest against environmental problems faced by communities in other towns and cities (Reinart 2003:113-14). B.Y. was also accused by D.T., another leading movement actor from Bergama, for placing himself in the center of the movement for personal gain. In the words of D.T.:

[B.Y.] joined the movement for political gain in the first place. He and Taşkın were political rivals in the same party. [B.Y.] became active in the villagers' movement when he saw that Taşkın's influence in the party was on the rise in the second half of the 1990s....[B.Y.] wanted to be seen in the media. When some movement leaders from the villages came to the foreground on several occasions addressing the press he almost chained himself to the microphone to dominate the scene.

B.Y., in turn, accused Taşkın of eschewing direct actions. For B.Y., the former mayor was seeking media's attention even though he wasn't contributing to the actions carried out by the villagers (Reinart 2003:113-14). Despite their split, however, Taşkın and B.Y. continued to play active roles in the movement, the former promoting the villagers' cause through efforts within the framework of the Bergama Environment, Culture, and Arts Association, and the latter assisting the villagers on the action front of the movement.

Meanwhile, in its third shift of capital configuration in April 1999, *Eurogold* changed hands when the Australian partner *Normandy Mining Limited* acquired the shares of INMET, thus becoming the only owner of the mine.

Around the same time, “Turkish governmental bodies (including the President) and representatives of business began highlighting the necessity for the inclusion of the principle of international arbitration for investments into national legislation for further liberalization, deregulation and restructuring of the economy, and thereby for foreign investment flows” (Çoban 2002:218). Governmental efforts of legislating international arbitration faced strong opposition by labor unions, professional associations, and environmental organizations before and during the parliamentary proceedings over the issue (Çoban 2002). Among the opponents were the Bergama villagers. Amidst protests the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed three constitutional amendments in August 1999 to prepare the national legislative ground for the prospective adoption of an international arbitration law. With the amendments to the Articles 47, 125, and 155 of the Constitution, the Assembly accepted international arbitration for the settlement of disputes arising from concession conditions and contracts regarding public services; allowed for recourse to civil law in drawing up contracts concerning public investments and services; limited the scope of administrative law, and as a corollary, bypassed the sanction of the Supreme Administrative Court regarding concession contracts (Official Gazette, November 9, 1982, No.17863, Law No. 2709, Çoban 2002).

In October 1999, *TÜBİTAK* published its assessment report on the risks associated with the mine. The report was prepared by a group of eleven scientists in the fields of environmental engineering, ecological chemistry, environmental law, hydrogeology, geological and geotechnical engineering, geophysics and seismology. Interpreting the 1997 SAC judgment as a decision questioning the cyanide-leaching method to be practiced in the specific case under investigation, rather than a ruling absolutely banning

the use of this method, the *TÜBİTAK* Report stated that, since the onset of the judicial procedure on the case, the establishment in question was improved with additional environmental safety measures to eliminate the risks identified in the SAC decision. The report further held that the production process of the Ovacık Goldmine exemplified the currently available state of the art technology; that, as was true for similar goldmines in operation in developed countries, cyanide use in Ovacık Goldmine did not pose a threat to the environment; that there was not a single incident or environmental problem recorded in recent years as having resulted from cyanide use; and that independent of the good will of the entrepreneur or the supervision to be carried out, the reliability of the establishment was due to the processes employed and the measures taken. Concluding that the risks identified in the SAC decision as posing a threat to human life and the environment were either completely eliminated or reduced to levels much lower than acceptable, the *TÜBİTAK* Report suggested that the operation of the establishment in question, and of similar other establishments under the same circumstances, would benefit the country within the framework of sustainable development (*TÜBİTAK-YDABÇAG Değerlendirme Raporu 1999*).

The *TÜBİTAK* Report was severely criticized by professional associations of engineers, environmental non-governmental organizations, and academicians for being biased, and misleading due to false information and omissions. 16 professors from the Environmental Engineering Department at the September Nine University in İzmir asserted that, in its conclusion, the *TÜBİTAK* Report disregarded the negative effects mentioned in its annex; ignored the mining-related accidents in the world; based some of its assessments on the assumption of the existence of facilities at the mine site that were

not in place; and relied on the information provided by *Eurogold* (TMMOB 2001:20). In addition, a professor at the Public Health Department of the same university denounced the report for stating, without consulting a public health expert, that health risks associated with mining were eliminated (*Cumhuriyet Daily*, August 16, 2000). Another point of criticism came from Y.B., a professor of chemical metallurgy at the Technical University of İstanbul, with respect to the report's assertion that 'the Ovacık Goldmine exemplified the currently available state of the art technology'. According to Y.B.:

The biggest deception in gold mining is that technology is not utilized to its fullest extent. There is no establishment in this industry that employs state of the art technology....Technologies are available that would not harm the environment or keep the damage to a minimum, even with the use of cyanide. But these technologies are not utilized. Why? Due to economic reasons. They spare the best technology because this would cost them more than the current technology they're using.

Thus, for critics, the *TÜBİTAK* Report was prepared in support of the company's views and interests. As such, it was a custom-made, political document, rather than a scientific assessment report.

In a separate development on November 25, 1999 the Ankara District Court dismissed the villagers' action for damages that was brought to court in January 1998. The lawyers of the villagers appealed the decision of dismissal to the Court of Cassation.

The accelerated lobbying efforts of *Eurogold*, starting in the early 1999, did not remain limited to contacts with the government to obtain new permits but also extended to the villages. In a renewed public relations campaign the company gave boost to its attempts of convincing the locals of its goodwill, the effectiveness of the environmental safety measures taken, and the potential benefits of the prospective mining undertaking. To illustrate, during Ramadan in December 1999 *Eurogold* gave a feast in Bergama. This

was followed by the company's invitation of the village leaders on a trip to Spain to observe a goldmine in operation. All but one village leader turned down this offer. The villagers put pressure on the village leader who was sympathetic to the offer not to accept the invitation. They reminded him that he was elected by the villagers and threatened to overthrow him from leadership if he went on the trip with the company. Thus, the village leader was convinced not to go (Reinart 2003:121-22). In another move, the company, officially referred to as *Normandy* since early 2000, distributed calendars in Bergama. Printed on the calendars were pictures of Atatürk, the revered founder of the Republic, along with his statement on the importance for the country of exploiting natural resources (*Milliyet Daily*, January 10, 2000).

In its efforts to obtain new operation permits *Normandy* was also assisted by the diplomatic interference of Australian government representatives. In this context, the Australian Minister of Industry, Science and Natural Resources, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and Minister of Environment sent letters to their Turkish counterparts on January 21, February 17, and February 21, 2000, respectively, asking for their assistance in granting an operation permit to *Normandy* (TMMOB 2001:18-19, Reinart 2003:131-132).

Meanwhile, on February 16, 2000 the villagers, along with their animals, marched in protest from the mine site to Bergama to call attention to the recent mining-related environmental disaster in Romania (*Milliyet Daily*, February 17, 2000). In what was called the worst disaster since Chernobyl, the tailings dam of the goldmine in Baia Mare, Romania broke to spill cyanide into the Tizsa River, a tributary of the Danube River,

killing fish and other wildlife, and contaminating drinking water sources (Argeseanu 2004).

In parallel to *Normandy's* attempts to obtain a new permit and to the diplomatic interference of the Australian government authorities on behalf of the company the Turkish government focused on clearing the obstacles at the administrative level. The Prime Minister's Office asked the Ministry of Environment for its view on the operation of the Ovacık Goldmine. Based on the conclusions of the controversial *TÜBİTAK* Report the Ministry expressed its favorable opinion on January 31, 2000. On April 5, 2000, the Prime Minister's Office issued a circular, emphasizing that the mining undertaking in Bergama was foreign investment, and in case it was blocked, Turkey would have to pay compensation to the entrepreneur according to the requirements of International Arbitration, which, in turn, would have a discouraging effect on prospective inflows of foreign capital (*Evrensel Daily*, June 14, 2000). The circular then asked the Ministries of Interior, of Health, of Public Works, of Energy and Natural Resources, of Forests, and of Environment to reconsider their decisions pertaining to the operation of the Ovacık Goldmine in Bergama, having regard to the conclusions of the *TÜBİTAK* Report, which stated that the risk factors mentioned in the SAC decision were eliminated; to the Ministry of Environment's favorable opinion; and to the opinion of the President's Administration, which pointed out the economic importance of the investment in question (Prime Minister's Office Circular. 2000. B.02.O.MÜS.0.13.00.00-263).

G.P., a longtime movement supporter and one of the lawyers of the villagers, commented on the administration's course of action as follows:

Through protests and demonstrations of the villagers and the struggle on the legal front we had the company cornered. They came to the point where they couldn't move a bit. It was then when the fraudulent moves of our public administration started. We call this circumvention. The Prime Minister's Office issued a circular in 2000... We realized that it was a part of the scenario: The Prime Minister asks *TÜBİTAK* for a report; *TÜBİTAK* sends some experts here; they do some observation on the mine site for two days, and prepare a report favorable for the operation of the mine; based on that report the company asks the government to restart the EIA process and grant a permit. But the Prime Minister's Office realizes that the whole EIA process would take time so they skip it and issue a circular addressed to the relevant ministries, instead. Based on that circular the permits of the company were renewed.... There was one thing for us to do in this case: bring the circular to court. That's what we did.

Reasoning that the Prime Minister's circular had no legal basis, eighteen residents of Bergama applied to court for the annulment of the circular.

Upon the request of the sub-provincial governor of Bergama, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Bergama initiated an investigation on 80 villagers in September 2000 for establishing illegal commissions and village committees under the pretext of environmentalism, and for carrying out protest demonstrations. The file was sent to the Office of the Attorney General at the State Security Court<sup>59</sup> in İzmir, which returned the file back to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Bergama on the grounds of lack of evidence, and asked for the testimonies of the villagers under investigation (*Cumhuriyet Daily*, September 6, 2000). E.S., one of the legal representatives of the villagers since the beginning of the movement, applied to the Public Prosecutor's Office in Bergama and the Office of the Attorney General at the State Security Court in İzmir, to request his inclusion in the investigation along with the villagers. Stating that he attended countless

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<sup>59</sup> State Security Courts (SSC) were established by the 1980 junta, and instituted in the 1982 Constitution, as courts with jurisdiction over 'crimes against the state'. SSC were formally abolished in June 2004, as part of the political reforms passed in an attempt to meet the European Union's criteria for Turkey's accession.

meetings and panels at home and abroad as a speaker in support of the villagers, went to the villages to give his clients legal advice, and attended colloquia on civil disobedience to better serve the villagers, E.S. reported himself as guilty of the same crime as the villagers, and requested that an investigation be initiated on him, as well. Similarly, representatives of the Union of Turkish Engineers' and Architects' Chambers visited the villages to express their support to the villagers in their struggle against goldmining, and announced that they all were members of the same 'illegal organization' as the villagers were alleged to belong to (*Evrensel Daily*, September 17, 2000).

The villagers continued their protests and demonstrations despite allegations of establishing illegal organizations. In November 2000, 62 villagers, along with B.Y. who organized the event, walked from Bergama to the province of Çanakkale. The symbolic value of this action stemmed from the significance of Çanakkale as the front where the Battle of Çanakkale was fought and won against the Allies during the First World War. The Battle of Çanakkale laid the grounds for the Turkish War of Independence against allied occupation in the aftermath of the world war. Covering 20-30 miles a day the villagers walked for eight straight days. Along the way the marchers were encouraged and logistically supported by farmers who provided them produce from their fields, and by restaurant- and storeowners who offered them food and drinks. At the entrance of Çanakkale a large crowd greeted the villagers with cheers and flowers. With copies of court decisions hanging down on their neck the villagers visited the War Memorial, and paid tribute to the fallen soldiers, as well as to Atatürk, the commander of the Battle of Çanakkale and the founder of the Republic (Reinart 2003:132-133).

In the early 2001 *Normandy* increased its activities on the mine site and started taking job applications. Around three thousand people from surrounding villages walked to the mine site one night in March with torches in their hands, and marched around the mine in protest (Reinart 2003:138).

The mine officially started its operations on April 13, 2001 for a one-year period of trial production, on the basis of new permits granted to the company in the aftermath of the circular issued by the Prime Minister's Office in April 2000.

Shortly after the official commencement of the mining operations, on June 1, 2001, the İzmir Administrative Court gave its judgment on the request by movement activists for the judicial review of the 2000 circular. The Court annulled the circular, ruling that “the transaction subject to this case [the 2000 circular], changed in practice the final judgment of the court [the 1997 SAC decision]. This situation is clearly against the principle of the rule of law” (İzmir First Administrative Court, File No. 2000/896, Decision No. 2001/485, dated 06/01/2001). The Prime Minister's Office appealed the decision to the Supreme Administrative Court for judicial review.

Following the Administrative Court's decision, Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit and his Democratic Left Party engaged in a campaign of promoting goldmining as the solution to the country's economic problems. In a report released to the media, Ecevit stated that goldmining would help Turkey overcome her existing economic crisis<sup>60</sup> and provide the country with a steady and lasting source of income (*Milliyet Daily*, June 30, 2001). The Prime Minister announced that Turkey had 400 billion dollars worth of gold

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<sup>60</sup> The Turkish economy saw an economic crisis in 2001. The economy shrank by nine percent, investments fell, bankruptcies and unemployment exploded, and state indebtedness reached the alarming level of 150 percent of GNP (Keyder 2004:75).

reserves and could generate 15 billion dollars of annual export revenue if those reserves were to be exploited (*Milliyet Daily*, June 30, 2001). Ecevit also stated that the 1997 SAC decision negatively affected the inflow of foreign capital and the prestige of Turkey (TMMOB 2001:20). Beside its emphasis on the economic potential of gold extraction, the Prime Minister's report included a claim discrediting the Bergama villagers' movement against goldmining as being provoked by Germany, through German non-profit organizations supporting the movement, to uphold her own economic interests. According to Erol Al and Hasan Özgöbek, members of parliament from the Democratic Left Party, the resistance against goldmining in Bergama, carried out under the banner of public health and environmental protection, was backed by the German FoodFirst Information and Action Network (FIAN). Al and Özgöbek argued that German foundations supported the campaigns against goldmining in Turkey because, as the world's second largest manufacturer of golden jewelry, Turkey imported 800 million dollars worth of gold from Germany each year (*Milliyet Daily*, June 30, 2001).

Meanwhile, as part of the political maneuver to facilitate the inflow of foreign capital, the Turkish Grand National Assembly passed the International Arbitration Law on June 21, 2001, based on the constitutional amendments enacted in 1999. International Arbitration Law extended the scope of arbitration beyond disputes arising from public service concession contracts and conditions to apply to any dispute regarding foreign investments (Çoban 2002:219). Among other conditions for an investment to qualify as having a foreign element, the new law stated, "if at least one of the partners of the company....has brought in foreign capital in line with the legislation for the encouragement of foreign capital" that party would be entitled to international arbitration

as the means of dispute settlement (*Official Gazette*. July 05, 2001. No. 24453, Law No. 4686, Article 2 §3). Thus, the International Arbitration Law qualified *Normandy* as a party to international arbitration.

In another development favorable to *Normandy*, on July 26, 2001, the Supreme Administrative Court decided to suspend the execution of the lower court's (İzmir Administrative Court) judgment of June 1, which annulled the Prime Minister's circular of 2000. In its decision, the Supreme Administrative Court reasoned that the transaction subject to the case (the circular) did not constitute an enforceable decision and was not open to appeal before the administrative courts (European Court of Human Rights Judgment, 10 November 2004, 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: D. 49).

In August 2001, Necip Hablemitoğlu, a professor of Turkish History at the Ankara University, published a book, titled "German Foundations and the Bergama Case". Hablemitoğlu's book was based on the same claim as that recently advocated by the government. In his book, Hablemitoğlu argued that behind the Bergama resistance was German foundations working against the interests of Turkey. According to Hablemitoğlu, it was in the best interest of Germany if Turkey did not extract gold because "each year Turkey spends over 2 billion dollars of her scarce resources just to meet her demand for gold. More than half of Turkey's gold imports come from Germany...Germany's income from her sale of gold to Turkey reaches 2 billion dollars [including illegal transactions by gold smugglers]. This is an indispensable figure, even for Germany. The essence of the "Bergama Case" rests upon these monetary facts" (Hablemitoğlu 2001:67). Hablemitoğlu's book was widely distributed for free by

*Normandy*<sup>61</sup>. The book had a serious negative impact on the movement, leading to public skepticism about the underlying motive of Bergama villagers' protests against the mine.

In the words of E.S., a long term legal representative of the villagers:

Hablemitoğlu, a professor at the Ankara University and an influential figure at the intelligence agency, first started doing research on the foundations associated with German political parties, and writing on their activities in Turkey. Then he was introduced to the company, which led him to incorporate the Bergama Case in his book on German Foundations. Allegedly, three other movement participants and I were German spies. According to his claim, Germany had a lot of gold and didn't want any other country to extract their own gold instead of importing from Germany. Since we supposedly worked for Germany we prevented goldmining in Bergama. His book was full of lies...But it left a mark in people's minds: Are they really German spies? Do they really get paid by Germany to protest against goldmining? This struck a blow at the movement. It was a state-sponsored move.

The villagers strongly reacted to the allegations, which were especially hard for them to take as proud Aegeans who played a defining role in the outcome of the Turkish War of Independence. They had successfully fought against the enemy but now they were being accused of acting against Turkish interests alongside the enemy as it was presented in Hablemitoğlu's book. In that respect, Reinart (2003) reported a villager complaining: "They treat us as if we're the enemy. We are not the enemy. We are just defending our rights to life, based on our country's laws. How did it come about that our soldiers got to guard the mine against us?" (p.142). This sense of resentment was shared by I.A., a 55 year-old villager and adamant movement activist:

Our movement was successful because we put our hearts into it. We put effort in it from deep inside. We protested, believing in the cause of our struggle. If you were to hire people, and send them out to protest they

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<sup>61</sup> During the visit of the mine within the framework of this study, a copy of the book was given to me by the Public Relations Department of *Koza*, the company currently operating the mine.

would fail. We walked to Çanakkale for eight days, the soles of our feet bleeding on the way. It didn't stop us. We continued walking. This is a matter of conviction. Would you walk for eight straight days if I paid you? It's not an easy undertaking!

Similarly, T.D., a 52 year-old female villager and leading movement activist stated in an interview she gave to a newspaper:

Unlike some others, the Bergama villagers are not remote-controlled TVs. Instead of looking for new excuses Normandy should stop ignoring court decisions and leave our lands. We had been struggling for eleven years to keep Bergama alive, to keep our lands from dying (*Evrensel Daily*, July 1, 2001).

Interpreting the allegation of 'German provocation' as a despicable attack on the movement, B.Y., a 62 year-old movement activist from Bergama asked:

Our struggle is confirmed by the high courts of the Republic of Turkey. There are final court decisions. Were our honorable judges also paid by Germans to take those decisions? (*BIA Haber Merkezi*, July 2, 2001)

Meanwhile, ongoing operations at the mine and constant explosions produced negative effects in the villages. On her visit to the villages in August 2001, Reinart (2003) reported the villagers' complaints as follows:

An old man in the coffeehouse complained:

- Three or four times a day they explode dynatimes underground. A fine, sticky layer of dust covers the leaves of tobacco and olive. Our tobacco shriveled and died. Olives dried out as they just turned from blossom to fruit. The explosions diverted the groundwater. Our waters first turned turbid, then receded. Our wells dried out.

....Another villager interjected:

- Our cows have miscarriages. A dozen of calves were born either still or defective.

- Did you not experience such incidents before? I asked.

- Professor, replied a thin, tall villager. Our cows are Holstein...These are healthy and valuable animals. They miscarry because of the explosions; they give birth to defective calves.

An old man pulled up his shirt and showed me his breast covered with red spots.

- I'm seventy years old. For the first time in my life am I having such a skin rash.

...Sabahat Gökçeoğlu said:

- We no longer have birds flying around. We find dead bodies of birds here and there. Birds used to chirp in this region at all times.

...Güldeçer Barlas from Ovacık:

- We can't sleep at night...They explode dynamites three times at night. In the middle of the night we wake up to an earthquake. We realize it's not an earthquake but they explode dynamites again...Why do they do it at night? Why are they allowed to do this? We can't sleep. We're scared. Where can we go? We're very upset.

...[In another coffeehouse] 'How are you?' I asked. Silence. Then:

- How can we be? said a 75 year-old man, we're left alone with the Angel of Death...How could the state leave us all alone like this? (Pp.141-44).

Concurrently, *Normandy* placed job advertisements in the newspapers. Due to the negative effects of the economic crisis and the concomitant upsurge in unemployment some villagers applied to work for the mine. H.N., a 45 year-old villager, who continues to this day struggling against the mine, interpreted the employment choice of some of the former activists as follows:

They work for the mine because of economic necessity. If economic conditions were favorable the mine wouldn't be operating now. It passed into the hands of the company that farmers no longer were able to make enough money off the land.

The account by K.M., 44 year-old villager and long-time movement activist, was along the same lines:

What can they do? They bowed to economic pressure. I'm not judging them. They participated in the struggle against the mine along with me but economic conditions forced them to work for the mine. If court decisions had been enforced none of these would have happened.

I.A., a 55 year-old villager and adamant movement activist, commented:

Since five years, agriculture doesn't provide enough income to make a decent living. This had a great impact on people's decision to work for the mine.... There have always been some among us who we didn't trust. We thought of them as likely to switch sides any time. It was not them who disappointed us. Some of those who we trusted a great deal left us over time for money. Either by way of employment or by selling their land to

the company. We lost very dependable people for money..... It was money that spoiled and divided us.

A positive development for the villagers came on September 25, 2001 when the Court of Cassation overturned the 1999 dismissal of the Ankara District Court in the action for damages against the Prime Minister, the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, the Minister of Health, the Minister of Public Works, and the provincial governor of İzmir for not enforcing a final court judgment. The case had been brought to the Ankara District Court in 1998. When this court had dismissed the case in 1999, the lawyers of the villagers had appealed the decision to the Court of Cassation. In its judgment, the Court of Cassation stated: “It is established that the court’s judgment [October 15, 1997 İzmir First Administrative Court’s decision of annulling the Ministry of Environment’s operation permit] was sent by the Ministry of Environment to the Prime Minister’s Office, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, the Ministry of Health, the Office of the Provincial Governor of İzmir, and the İzmir Regional Directorate of the Ministry of Public Works and Settlement, on October 23, 1997, and that these authorities were asked to act in line with the said court judgment. Although the involved parties were duly notified of the judgment the defendants, except for the Minister of Environment İmren Aykut, failed to act within the statutory time limit in a manner as to prevent gold extraction with cyanide leaching method. Thus, it is found, they did not enforce the court’s judgment....It is hereby acknowledged that, through their unjust action [non-enforcement of the court rule], the defendants, with the exception of İmren Aykut, violated the individual rights of the applicants” (Court of Cassation Fourth Chamber, File No. 2001/3884, Decision No. 2001/8478, dated September 25, 2001). The

Court of Cassation remitted the case to the Ankara District Court, which followed the judgment of the former and sentenced the defendants to pay compensation to the applicants (Ankara Fifth District Court, Decision No. 2002/353-711, dated 10/16/2002).

Judicial successes of the villagers continued into 2002. On January 10, 2002, the İzmir Third Administrative Court suspended the execution of the permit that had been granted to *Normandy* by the Ministry of Health on December 22, 2000, following the publication of the *TÜBİTAK* Report and the issuance of the circular by the Prime Minister's Office. This judgment was followed by the decision of the İzmir First Administrative Court on January 23, 2002 to suspend the execution of the permit issued to *Normandy* by the Directorate General of Forests on October 6, 2000. In their judgments, both courts ruled: "the transaction subject to this case changed in practice the final judicial decision [the 1997 SAC decision]. This situation is clearly against the principle of the rule of law" (İzmir Third Administrative Court, File No. 2001/401, dated 01/10/2002; İzmir First Administrative Court, File No. 2001/239, dated 01/23/2002). The defendants' request for judicial review of both decisions was rejected at the İzmir Regional Administrative Court on the grounds that the permits in question were clearly against the law and that in case of enforcement they would cause irreparable damage (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 10 November 2004. 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621:D.55-56).

Meanwhile, in the fourth change of capital configuration since 1989, the mine changed hands in February 2002 when the US-based Newmont Mining Corporation (*Newmont*) acquired *Normandy*. Along with *Normandy*, *Newmont* acquired the Canadian

Franco-Nevada Mining Corporation Ltd., thus becoming the world's largest gold producer.

For the villagers and other movement actors, all of these capital-related changes in the company operating the mine were part of a game played by the corporate mining industry all around the world. Thus, P.A. a 64 year-old villager and movement activist stated:

As much as they seem to operate as different companies under different names they constitute in fact one and the same big industry. They agree among each other. Not only do they exploit the natural resources of less-developed countries but also mess their environment, and then disappear, leaving them with irreparable damage.

In the words of Taşkın, the former mayor:

The trick of this industry is that the constituent companies repeatedly shed their skin so you can't find the perpetrator. The environment is left polluted and damaged but no one is there to take any responsibility. Such is the game.

H.N., a 45 year-old villager and long time movement activist, made the same comment, backing it with a personal experience:

I was a member of the Village Governing Committee then. After a name change they came to the village to meet us. The managing director of the company said that they don't harm the environment with their operations. I told him that we live very close to the mine, and that their regular dynamite explosions crack the walls of our houses.

- The problem doesn't stem from our operations, he said.
- The office of the village leader and the wedding hall are adjacent buildings. The wall combining the two buildings has a big crack now. How did it happen? Did I do it? I asked.
- We didn't do it; Eurogold did, he responded.
- Well, who are you?
- We're Newmont.

The new company will take over where the previous company leaves off, and if a problem arises in the future the previous company will be blamed for it. Since nobody will own the problem it will be left unsolved. Even if

people die as a result, no one will take responsibility. What I experienced was indicative of this game.

Following the latest judgments of the İzmir Administrative Court suspending the permits of the company, the villagers were once again hopeful that the mine would be closed. However, by March 2002, the mine was still continuing its operations although the statutory limit to enforce the said judicial decisions had passed. I.A., a 55 year-old villager and adamant movement activist, complained:

We brought to court the permit issued by the Ministry of Health. We won the case in 2002. They gave us a piece of paper, stating that we won. What in the world am I supposed to do with this piece of paper? If we won then do as the judgment says. We win on paper but we don't see anything in practice.

On March 1, 2002 a group of villagers went to Ankara, the capital, to protest the Ministry of Health for not enforcing the judgment of the İzmir Third Administrative Court. When they were not let into the building to talk to the Undersecretary of the Minister the villagers carried out a sit-in demonstration in front of the building, shouting slogans, like "Either close down the goldmine or the courts!" and "We are the people, we are right, we are going to win!". A group of protestors were eventually let in as representatives of the villagers. However, the representative group did not get to talk to the Undersecretary because, they were told, the Undersecretary was at a meeting. Hanging a copy of the court judgment and a padlock at the door of the Undersecretary's Office the villagers declared their determination to see the mine closed (*Evrensel Daily*, March 2, 2002).

In another demonstration on March 7, 2002, over two hundred villagers from four villages surrounding the mine gathered at a village square, and walked to the mine to

notify the company of the judgment of the İzmir First Administrative Court, which suspended the permit issued by the General Directorate of Forests. The demonstrators were halted at the gate of the mine by the gendarmerie for “not having the permit to go in”. Pointing at the mine, the villagers responded: “Neither do they!” (*Eyvensel Daily*, March 8, 2002).

As a countermove against the villagers’ actions, *Newmont* organized a pro-mining demonstration in Bergama on March, 26 2002. With their helmets on their heads and bread in their hands the miners, their spouses and children walked to the town square, carrying placards that read: ‘Don’t Touch Our Job, Our Bread!’, ‘If There Is No Bread There Is No Peace!’, “Don’t Close The Mine!”. In his speech addressing the crowd at the town square, a management representative of *Türkiye Maden İşçileri Sendikası – Maden-İş* (Mineworkers’ Union of Turkey), which the workers of the goldmine in Bergama belonged to, stated that the Bergama Ovacık Goldmine employed environmentally sensitive technology, provided jobs and bread to 700 people, and contributed to the national economy at large. The union representative called for the continuation of the mine’s operations to serve the interests of the union workers as well as the interests of the nation as a whole (*Kuzey Ege Daily*, March 26, 2002).

Interpreting *Newmont*’s strategy as an attempt to weaken the villagers’ movement by pitting mineworkers against movement activists<sup>62</sup>, I.A. a 55 year-old villager and adamant movement activist, stated:

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<sup>62</sup> The divide between mineworkers and movement activists took a deadly turn in August 2002 when members of the same family got into an argument over their differing views on the mine, which led a family member working for the mine shoot dead another who was active in the resistance against the mine.

They have no decency. All they have is money. They go to great length to divide people. Divide and conquer, like the American political strategy.

The same day as the mineworkers' demonstration in Bergama, a group of villagers held a protest in İstanbul, blocking traffic on the Bosphorus Bridge and calling for the enforcement of court decisions (Reinart 2003:145).

The Ministry of Health sent a letter to the Office of the Provincial Governor of İzmir on March 28, 2002, asking the latter to relay the decision of the İzmir Third Administrative Court to the authorities at the Ovacık Goldmine by April 3, 2002 at latest.

On March 29, 2002, *Newmont* was officially notified of the İzmir Third Administrative Court's decision to suspend the mine's permit, and expected to cease its operations as sanctioned by law. The same day, the Council of Ministers adopted a "decision of principle", asserting that the Ovacık Goldmine in Bergama should continue its activities. The decision was not made public (European Court of Human Rights Judgment, 10 November 2004, 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: D.75).

In another development on the same day, a Research Commission on Mining, established by the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TGNA), visited the goldmine. Finding out about the visit of the commission, 1500 villagers from ten villages in the close vicinity of the mine gathered in a nearby village and proceeded toward the mine in an attempt to talk to the members of the TGNA Commission. When they were stopped by the gendarmerie the villagers held a sit-in demonstration, shouting slogans against the mine and calling for the enforcement of judicial decisions (*Evrensel Daily*, March 30, 2002).

## **Back and Forth Between Hope and Despair**

They wait for months to close the mine. It takes them an hour to reopen it.  
They shut it down only to open it again in an hour.

H.N., 45 year-old villager and movement activist

The mine was officially closed on April 2, 2002, on the basis of the decisions of the İzmir Third and First Administrative Courts to suspend its permits. The next day, the mine was opened on the grounds of the “decision of principle” of the Council of Ministers.

On April 9, 2002, the İzmir Bar took the Council of Ministers’ Decision of Principle (CMDP) to court for violating the Constitution and the principle of the rule of law. In a separate case, the Bar filed a lawsuit against the members of the Council of Ministers for obstructing the enforcement of judicial decisions.

In the case for the annulment of the CMDP the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) dismissed the Bar’s application on the grounds that “the decision subject to the case is not included in the application file and it is not clear what the case is about...” (Supreme Administrative Court, File No. 2002/1477, Decision No. 2002/2738, dated May 13, 2002).

Following the SAC’s decision of dismissal the İzmir Bar asked the Office of the Prime Minister for a copy of the CMDP. When the Bar was told that the decision in question could be obtained from the Office of the Sub-provincial Governor of Bergama the Bar wrote to the latter. In its reply letter, the Office of the Sub-provincial Governor of Bergama stated that their office did not have the requested decision but it might be available at the Office of the Provincial Governor of İzmir or yet higher offices.

In the face of all attempts the İzmir Bar failed to get hold of a copy of the CMDP. The Bar still took the case to court, however, based on the information at hand. In its decision on July 30, 2002 the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) once again dismissed the case, repeating its reasoning in the previous dismissal judgment. On October 6, 2002, the İzmir Bar appealed the SAC's second dismissal decision.

C.U., a lawyer from Bergama and one of the legal representatives of the villagers, recounted the judicial battle revolving around the CMDP as follows:

They made up a Council of Ministers' Decision that had no legal basis whatsoever. They called it the Council of Ministers' Decision of Principle. Law comprises of norms. It is clearly stated in the Constitution and the statutes how these norms are to be carried out and how they will duly take effect. For a Council of Ministers' Decision to have legal basis it has got to be signed by all ministers and the President, and published in the Official Gazette. Only when all of these conditions are met can we talk about a Council of Ministers' Decision. Otherwise it's legally nonexistent.

We ask the Governor:

- Will you show us this decision?
- It's a decision of principle. It's confidential. I can't show it to you.
- What's the number and the date of the Official Gazette it was published in?
- I don't know.

We write to Ankara.

- Will you give us a copy of the decision?

Silence.

We failed to find it but still took the case to court.

- Honorable Court! They're talking about a decision. We want it to be cancelled but they won't give it to us. Will you find it for us?

We had to deal with such trickeries of the administration. Eventually we got hold of the decision. Months later the Office of the Prime Minister sent us a copy.

It was only when the European Court of Human Rights asked for a copy of the document to be examined as part of the Bergama case proceedings that the villagers'

lawyers were able to obtain the Council of Ministers' decision. In their "decision of principle" the Council of Ministers stated:

...[I]t has been established that [the Bergama Ovacık Goldmine] is a mining concern...,which provides employment for 362 persons and is worth 1,200 million US dollars in added value to our country, including 280 million US dollars of direct revenue.....[T]he decision to be taken in respect of this investment is of some importance, in that it will pave the way for six other goldmines....[According to the *TÜBİTAK* Report of October 1999] 'the suspected risks to human health and the environment have been completely removed or reduced to levels considerably lower than the acceptable limits'....[C]yanide leaching process....can be applied without damage to human health provided that the necessary precautions are taken...[T]he cyanide leaching process described in the 1991 environmental impact report ...has been discontinued. Advanced technology is now in place....For the above reasons, and bearing in mind their contribution to the country's economy, it is considered advisable that the gold and silver mining concerns in the vicinity of Ovacık and Çamköy, in the district of Bergama (İzmir), ....should continue their activities (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 10 November 2004. 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: D.75).

Amidst this political-legal imbroglio, *Newmont* focused its lobbying efforts on the Turkish government for the adoption of a new Mining Law that would enable the company to continue its mining operations without any judicial obstructions in the future.

The villagers' movement took another blow in October 2002 when the Chief Prosecutor of the State Security Court, the court dealing with crimes against the state, brought formal charges against fifteen people, among them four leading figures of the Bergama resistance movement, for forming a secret alliance with German foundations against the interests of Turkey, and engaging in espionage activities. The prosecutor took the allegations in Hablemitoğlu's book as evidence for this case. For B.Y., a 62 year-old movement actor from Bergama, who was one of the indicted, everything was plain and simple:

They take the money and disappear, leaving us with death. And those of us who oppose this arrangement get conveniently labelled as traitors.

On March 4, 2003, the defendants were acquitted on all charges but the public's image of the villagers' resistance remained tainted by the allegations.

On February 12, 2004 the Ministry of Environment and Forests<sup>63</sup> extended the permit concerning the mine's chemical processing unit and waste pond for a period of three years (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 10 November 2004. 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: D.68).

Meanwhile, an analysis of water samples from the region, carried out in April 2004, revealed high levels of arsenic. A group of scientists in the Department of Chemistry at the Aegean University in İzmir took samples from two drinking water sources, and three artesian wells in the affected area. The analysis, carried out in the lab of the Faculty of Sciences at the Aegean University, revealed that the two drinking water samples contained high levels of arsenic – one 25 times, the other 23 times higher than the highest permitted level. For the three artesian well samples, the arsenic levels proved to be 13, 12, 9 times higher than permitted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and adopted as the water standard in Turkey. F.R., one of the scientists in the group that performed the analysis pointed out that they were only able to check the arsenic levels in their samples, and suggested “ it would be best if water samples were checked for levels of all heavy metals because if they contain arsenic, they definitely contain other metals, too, going through the same process”.

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<sup>63</sup> In May 2003, the Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Forests were combined to form the Ministry of Environment and Forests.

The villagers interviewed for this study expressed that since the mine started its operations in 2001 many in the surrounding villages stopped drinking tap water. 45 year-old H.N., a villager and unyielding movement activist, stated:

I don't drink water from the faucet. Even by the taste of it you can tell it's not clean. I buy bottled water. Before I leave the house to go off to the field I drink 2-3 glasses of bottled water so I won't get thirsty soon. Later, when I get thirsty I go to the store and buy water.

In the same vein, K.M., a 44 year-old villager and movement activist, conveyed:

We have a fountain here, right next to the coffeehouse but we don't drink of it. We buy bottled water instead.

O.G. is a 42 year-old villager who worked for the mine for eight years but was laid off two years ago when he got sick with spleen failure. He is among the villagers who don't trust the quality of the water:

I don't drink tap water. I don't believe it is safe. The quality of the water changed visibly. You wash your hands and face in the water and it leaves a sticky residue. How can you drink such water? ...In the mine they don't use tap water. Everybody drinks bottled water. Tap water is not used for cooking, either. Only dishes are done under water from the faucet.

I.A., a 55 year-old villager and movement activist, expressed the grievances of the villagers as follows:

At least 30 percent of the people in our village drink bottled water. But not everyone's budget allows them to buy water. We live in the village. You may have to do this in İstanbul but drinking bottled water is a luxury for someone living in the village. There are ten artesian wells in this plateau. In the past, you could drink from any one of your choice but this is no longer the case. We can't drink water from those wells anymore. I work in the field. If you consume two liters of water a day I consume five. But we can't drink water on the field. Water contamination affected us greatly. We're very troubled in this regard.

Calling attention to the contradictory results of different analyses, H.N. stated:

The university came and said: ‘There’s arsenic in your waters’. Then came the authorities from the Health Directorate of the town and analyzed the water. Their reports said that our water is cleaner than bottled water.

I.A. explained the contradiction as follows:

Well, there is biological analysis and chemical analysis. Chemical analysis can’t be carried out here in Bergama. It can only be done at certain universities. What the government does is biological analysis. They only check the water for bacteria. They can’t tell whether there is arsenic in the water because they can’t do chemical analysis. It costs some 2,5 billion [Turkish Lira], they say. We don’t have that kind of money. The university carried out that analysis on its own resources. Of course we will believe the university. We have to, because those professors who wrote the report firmly defended their results. I went to the Office of the Sub-provincial Governor in Bergama with the professors. The sub-provincial governor told them that their analysis is incorrect. The professors stood behind their signatures, and challenged the sub-provincial governor to sue them. He couldn’t do it. If you claim that these guys incite the people to protest against the mine by issuing incorrect reports, then sue them! But he didn’t do so. Who would you believe in this case? I was there to witness this conversation...[A former high ranking official at the Health Directorate of the town] told me: ‘The mine carries out its own analysis. We only stamp it. There’s pressure from above. The state approves of the mine’. He said they never did any analysis themselves. Then, of course, the company shows the stamped document and says: ‘Look, I have the approval of the state!’

The problem I.A. pointed out concerning the state’s reliance on and blind acceptance of water quality data as the company measures and presents them is corroborated when two sets of measures are juxtaposed with regard to cyanide in the wastewater discharged to the tailings pond. The following table (Table 2) reveals the arresting disparity between the figures reported to the state and those actually measured by the company.

Table 2: Measures of Cyanide in Tailings Effluent After Chemical Detoxification

<b>DATE</b>	<b>MEASURED (ppm)</b>	<b>REPORTED (ppm)</b>
July 15, 2002	12.6	0.31
August 2, 2002	1.94	0.68
August 4, 2002	1.2	0.44
August 5, 2002	1	0.36
August 6, 2002	2	0.12
August 7, 2002	1.88	0.55

Source : Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects Chamber of Geological Engineers  
[http://www.jmo.org.tr/resimler/ekler/e7757b1e12abcb7\\_ek.pdf](http://www.jmo.org.tr/resimler/ekler/e7757b1e12abcb7_ek.pdf)

The lobbying efforts of *Newmont* for unobstructed continuation of its mining operations bore fruit with the enactment of the Mining Law on May 26, 2004, followed by the passage of the amendment to the Value Added Tax (VAT) Law on July 16, 2004. The new Mining Law rescinded the Mining Fund fees applied to mining activities on forest lease lands; laid the ground for the expropriation of private property if it is deemed critical by the investor to carry out its mining activities; and reduced the royalties to be paid to the state. The law not only adopted direct incentives to encourage mining investments but also paved the way for mining in previously protected areas, including forests, national parks, agricultural lands, pastures, and watersheds, by curbing the restrictions imposed on mining activities in these areas by other laws, such as the Environmental Law, the National Parks Law, the Law for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Assets, the National Forestation and Erosion Control Mobilization Law, and the

Forest Law<sup>64</sup> (*Official Gazette*, May 5, 2004, No. 25483, Law No. 5177). The amendment to the VAT Law provided further privilege to the mining industry by exempting “the deliveries and services to the explorers and producers of gold and silver” from VAT (*Official Gazette*, July 31, 2004, No. 25539, Law No. 5228, Article 14(c)).

These legislative concessions were not only applauded by *Newmont* but also by other foreign companies with mining interests in Turkey who viewed Bergama as the gateway for their prospective operations in the country. The Canadian *Eldorado Gold Corporation* was one of these companies<sup>65</sup>. Two newsletters posted on the web-site of *Eldorado*, informing its shareholders of the state of the company’s operations, provided the most outright confirmation of the influence of multinational corporations on the Turkish government to pass legislation in favor of the global mining industry. In his letter dated March 30, 2004 (Eldorado News Release. 2004a) Earl W. Price, the Chief Financial Officer of the company, wrote:

Turkish VAT law imposes VAT on goods and services sold in Turkey, the most common rate being 18%. Recently the VAT regulations (the "regulations") have been modified such that the exemptions allowable on the export of gold doré ("doré") have been removed....The removal of the rebate of VAT on exports of doré and the removal of the VAT rebate on importation of equipment, if applied in their present form, will trigger an increase in the construction and operating costs of the Kışladağ Project. ....We are working with the Turkish government in an effort to further amend the VAT regulations....

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<sup>64</sup> Due to the changes that the new Mining Law instituted in other laws it was adopted under the title of *The Law Concerning Changes in the Mining Law and Some Other Laws*. Ironically, the new law took effect on May 5<sup>th</sup>, celebrated globally as the World Environment Day. With the initiative of the environmental lawyers from İzmir the Mining Law was taken to the Constitutional Court for review of its constitutionality.

<sup>65</sup> *Eldorado Gold Corporation* is the owner of *Tüprağ Metal Mining Industry and Commerce Ltd.Co.* that operates the controversial Kışladağ Goldmine in the Aegean town of Eşme, Uşak where over 1,000 people got sick with typical symptoms of cyanide poisoning on June 27, 2006 (see the Prologue for the details of the incident).

Three and a half months later, on July 15, 2004, Paul N. Wright, the President and Chief Executive Officer of *Eldorado*, addressed the company's shareholders as follows (Eldorado News Release. 2004b):

Eldorado Gold Corporation...is pleased to announce that the government of Turkey has passed into law two major pieces of legislation positively impacting the mining industry. Legislation exempting the production of gold in Turkey from Value Added Tax ("VAT") and amendments to the Mining Law have been passed by the Turkish Parliament....At a time when many jurisdictions are increasing the tax burden for gold mining companies, we are extremely appreciative of the continued enlightened attitude of the Turkish Government. The elimination of VAT and the significant amendments to the Mining Law exemplify the continued active support of the Government in promoting a positive environment enabling the industry to flourish in Turkey.

The decision of the İzmir Third Administrative Court on May 27, 2004 to annul the permit issued by the Ministry of Health on December 22, 2000, came as a boost for the villagers. The Court ruled that the risks associated with cyanide leaching method in goldmining could not be eliminated by supplementary measures since the latter would still be based on the same cyanidation process in extracting gold. The court also held that the issuing of the disputed permit was incompatible with the principle of the rule of law because the former amended in effect a judicial decision that had become final (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 10 November 2004. 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: D.69).

This favorable judgment for the movement was followed by the decision of a common commission of the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Divisions of the Supreme Administrative Court on June 23, 2004 to suspend the execution of the Council of Ministers' Decision of Principle (*Cumhuriyet Daily*, July 16, 2004), on the grounds that the said decision was unlawful,

“given that the decision to issue a permit, based on the environmental impact report, had been overturned by the courts and that no other decision had been adopted pursuant to the Environmental Act and the related regulations”, which the Council of Ministers might have taken as the basis for its decision of principle authorizing the operation of the goldmine in question (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 10 November 2004. 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: D.78).

In an attempt to overcome the deadlock resulting from the latest court decision *Newmont* turned to the Ministry of Environment and Forests for advice on how to proceed. In his response, the Ministry noted that the Provisional Article No. 3 of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Regulation of December 16, 2003 applied to the mining operation at the Ovacık Goldmine. The article referred to by the Ministry stated that those projects that were approved before the EIA Regulation of February 7, 1993, and that started their operations before this date were exempt from the requirements of the 2003 EIA Regulation (*Official Gazette*, December 16, 2003, No. 25318). However, the Ministry asked *Newmont* to prepare an Environmental State Assessment Report in line with the Provisional Article No. 6 of the EIA Regulation. According to the said article of the regulation, those establishments in operation that were subject to the requirements of the 1993, 1997, and 2002 EIA Regulations before the current regulation (2003) went into effect, but did not complete their obligations, present an *Environmental State Assessment Report* to be evaluated by the Ministry of Environment and Forests to ensure that the establishments in question meet the requirements of existing regulations (*Official Gazette*, December 16, 2003, No. 25318). *Environmental State Assessment Report (ESA Report)* is incorporated into the

environmental legislation in Turkey by the 2003 EIA Regulation. As defined in the regulation, albeit extremely vaguely, the *ESA Report* is separate from and less comprehensive than the EIA Report. According to Article 4 of the EIA Regulation, “Environmental Impact Assessment refers to the work to be carried out to identify the potential positive or negative environmental impacts of the planned projects, to determine the measures to be taken to prevent the negative impacts or to reduce them to a minimum, to assess alternatives to the technologies and sites chosen, and to devise a plan for the observation and supervision of the implementation of the projects in question” (*Official Gazette*, December 16, 2003, No. 25318). Environmental State Assessment Report, on the other hand, refers to “the technical report prepared to ensure that the necessary environmental measures would be taken by those establishments that commenced their operations without complying with the relevant requirements of the EIA Regulation” (*Official Gazette*, December 16, 2003, No. 25318).

Commenting on the developments concerning the mine in the aftermath of the Supreme Administrative Court Decision of June 23, 2004, a *Newmont* executive told the press: “...we were surprised by the court judgment. The Turkish government in support of the mine advised us to present a new Environmental Impact Assessment Report [sic] and start a new process for permission. We are following the suggested procedure” (quoted in Cangı 2005). *Newmont* submitted the required Environmental State Assessment Report to the Ministry on August 16, 2004. As the Ministry of Environment and Forests was counseling *Newmont* how to proceed with its operations in the face of the adverse court judgment the Ministry of Internal Affairs sent a letter to the Provincial Governor of İzmir on August 18, 2004, asking the latter to act compliant with the

Supreme Administrative Court's decision. Accordingly, the Provincial Governor of İzmir ordered the Sub-provincial Governor of Bergama to halt the operations of the mine (*Cumhuriyet Daily*, August 20, 2004). Thus, the mine was officially closed on August 19, 2004.

In a political twist on August 27, 2004, however, the Ministry of Environment and Forests adopted a decision stating “provided that the conditions specified in the Final Environmental State Assessment Report and its addenda are complied with, there is no objection to the mine's operation” (quoted in Cangi 2005).

As had been the case with the Council of Ministers' Decision of Principle before, the Ministry of Environment and Forests' decision was not made public. Despite several formal requests submitted to the Ministry the lawyers of the villagers could not get hold of the decision in question through the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The lawyers eventually obtained a copy of the decision on September 16, 2004 through the Ministry of the Energy and Natural Resources' General Directorate of Mining Affairs (Cangi 2005). Two separate lawsuits were filed against the decision of the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The first was brought to the İzmir First Administrative Court by three lawyers of the villagers requesting the cancellation of the decision. The second case was filed at the Supreme Administrative Court by 1342 villagers, their lawyers, several professional associations of engineers, and a labor union, for the annulment of the Ministry of Environment and Forests' decision, as well as of the relevant articles (Provisional Articles No. 3 and 6) of the EIA Regulation (Cangi 2005).

To ensure the continuation of *Newmont's* operations in Bergama following the Ministry of Environment and Forests' authorization of the Environmental State

Assessment Report, Eric S. Edelman, the U.S. Ambassador to Turkey at the time, intervened directly by writing to the Minister of Public Works and Settlement on September 17, 2004, and asking the latter to advise the Office of the İzmir Provincial Governor to approve the mine's zoning plans, which had been revoked before. On September 29, 2004, *Newmont* presented its zoning plans to the Office of the İzmir Provincial Governor for approval. In its decision on October 27, 2004 the Provincial Administration approved the mine's zoning plans

In an encouraging development for the movement, on November 10, 2004 the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in favor of the plaintiffs in the case brought against Turkey by nine villagers and the mayor of Bergama in 1998. The ECHR held that “the respondent State did not fulfill its obligation to secure the applicants’ right to respect for their private and family life, in breach of Article 8 of the Convention” (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 10 November 2004. 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621: 126). The Court also noted that “the national authorities failed to comply in practice and within a reasonable time” with the court decisions that had become final, thus violating Article 6 §1 of the Convention concerning the right to effective judicial protection. Thus, the ECHR (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 10 November 2004. 46117/99 [2004] ECHR 621:144) concluded that:

....the violation of the Convention has undoubtedly caused the applicants a considerable degree of damage. The judicial decision canceling the award of a permit was not enforced, in violation of the fundamental principles of a State governed by the rule of law. The applicants were thus obliged to tolerate adverse living conditions and to bring several actions against decisions taken by the central authorities in order to ensure that the authorities would comply with that decision. Damage of this sort cannot be precisely calculated. Making its assessment on an equitable basis, the Court awards the applicants EUR 3,000 each.

In early February 2005, the lawyers of the villagers applied to the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources within the framework of the Right to Information Act to obtain information on the activities of the mining company. Among the specific questions asked were: Did the company pay the required state royalties? Were the balance sheets of the company audited by the Ministry of Finance? Did the company pay taxes? Does the left-over rock from unprocessed ore pose an environmental threat? Is any action being taken to collect from the illegally-operating company the court-approved compensation to the villagers that will otherwise be paid from the state treasury? Is any action being taken to collect the compensation in question from the responsible public officials? The Ministries refused to answer the lawyers' questions, arguing that the answers constituted trade secrets, and thus confidential information. Noyan Özkan, one of the lawyers of the villagers, complained (*BIA Haber Merkezi*, March 15, 2005):

One could write a lengthy book on all the secrets, mysteries, and withheld information we had to deal with in the course of the judicial struggle in the Bergama case for over 15 years. All the information we currently have at hand we have reached by recourse to courts. But applying to courts should be a matter of last resort.

E.S., another lawyer of the villagers, recounted:

The Right to Information Act established a Supreme Council to assess the release of information in cases of dispute between the parties involved. The Supreme Council answers to the Office of the Prime Minister. When we got the response of 'Confidential Information' from the Minister of Finance we applied to the Supreme Council. They said: 'Why should it be confidential information? Give them the answers'. But the Minister of Finance did not conform to the Supreme Council's suggestion and did not answer our questions. So we filed a case at the Administrative Court. It is still pending.

2005 saw another change in the ownership profile of the Ovacık Goldmine. In March 2005, the Turkish family company *Koza Group* acquired the Ovacık Goldmine from *Newmont*, and established *Koza Gold Operations Co.(Koza)*, which currently runs the mine<sup>66</sup>. As frequently pointed out by Hikmet Çetinkaya in his column in the daily *Cumhuriyet*, the executives of *Koza* have close ties to the high-ranking officials of the currently governing Justice and Development Party through their common affiliation with the Gülen movement<sup>67</sup>. In November 2005, *Koza* bought *Bugün*, a daily newspaper, to complement its public relations activities (the paper is distributed in Bergama for free), and bolster its economic and political leverage.

In the face of persistent emphasis of *Koza* on its ‘100 percent Turkishness’ as part of its public relations campaign, attempting to turn the tide against opposition to goldmining, there is a strong conviction among the villagers and other movement actors

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<sup>66</sup> Among the mines *Koza* acquired along with the Ovacık Goldmine was the goldmine in the Küçükdere village of Havran. The victory in 1993 of the local resistance against the operation of the Küçükdere mine had been instrumental in mobilizing the Bergama villagers against *Eurogold*, the then owner of the Ovacık Goldmine. Currently, *Koza* holds licences for over forty mine sites in fifteen provinces in Turkey, and an exploration permit for a mine site in Ghana.

<sup>67</sup> Islamic movement led by Fethullah Gülen, a retired, state-appointed preacher. It has its roots in the Nurcu Movement, which was established during the dissolution years of the Ottoman Empire by Said Nursi (1873-1960) with the aim of reinforcing the Islamic faith against the threat of Western culture and spreading modern scientific knowledge among the Islamic population (Ayata 1993). The Gülen Movement, considered a neo-Nurcu Movement, emerged in the 1970s and flourished in the neo-liberal era of 1980s and 1990s, utilizing media, market, and education as its mobilization tools. Fethullah Gülen and his followers seek to transform society and its institutions in line with a Turkish-Islamic synthesis. A significant characteristic of the Gülen Movement is its non-confrontational and conciliatory strategy (Ayata 1993, Yavuz 2003a, 2003b), advocating “to work from within the existing secular institutions of the state in order to counter and reduce the power of the state” (Ayata 1993:55-56). To this end, the followers of Gülen successfully employed the tactic of infiltration of strategic state institutions, assuming positions of power at the Ministry of Education, the police force, and the State Planning Organization (Ayata 1993:56).

that *Koza* is an integral part of the global corporate mining industry. In the words of B.Y., a 62 year-old movement activist from Bergama:

The capital is the same capital, the power is the same power, nothing has changed. They replaced one tire for another but the car is the same.

Similarly, D.T., a 44 year-old movement activist from Bergama, expressed:

The new company is known to have ties to Fethullah Gülen and the currently governing Justice and Development Party. It is the product of an arrangement planned outside of the country. *Koza* is presented to the public as Turkish but it is not the owner of the mine. Behind the scenes there are still the familiar powers at play.

In the same vein, G.P., a 54 year-old movement participant as one of the villagers' lawyers from İzmir, commented:

I don't think *Koza* is alone in this. I believe that it still has ties to Newmont, Normandy or to the international gold lobby. They do this through clandestine agreements among each other. This is a very smart move on *Koza*'s part because, you know, the Justice and Development Party government has Fethullahian members at high ranks; so does *Koza*. Thus, the company has the backing of the government.

44 year-old villager and longtime movement activist K.M. concurred:

*Koza* is a shadow company; this is what I think. And it's not just me, this is the conviction of everyone. Whoever owned the mine at the very beginning still owns it now. Nothing has changed.

I.A., 55 year-old villager and adamant movement activist, got the same point across, using a colorful analogy:

As a saying goes, you can groom an old donkey - change its saddle, its bridle, its appearance - and sell it as a brand-new one, but the donkey is still the same old donkey. These companies go around the world, constantly changing their names, and presenting themselves as different companies, but they are one and the same.

R.C. is a 35 year-old business owner in Bergama who worked for the mine for five years. Like the villagers, R.C. opposes the mine but unlike that of the villagers,

R.C.'s opposition rests on nationalist sentiments rather than environmental and health concerns. R.C. claims that the mine is not operated efficiently by foreign undertakers, which "leaves our country at high economic loss". Still, upon the question of how the last shift of ownership of the mine affected his views, R.C. responded:

No one can convince me that *Koza* is a Turkish undertaking. No foreign company would be willing to sell that mine for just 44 million dollars and leave. I can imagine the U.S. leg of the company. They take care of things through 'tolerance and dialogue'.<sup>68</sup>

Notwithstanding the movement participants' perception of *Koza* as a shadow company with ties to global mining interests, and their concomitant view that "nothing has changed", S.C., one of the lawyers of the villagers, pointed out a change that accompanied the shift of the mine's ownership from foreign to domestic capital. Although *Koza* was not considered a genuinely Turkish company by movement actors it was viewed as such by the Turkish business community, which, for the first time in the long history of the Bergama struggle against goldmining, actively sided with the mining company. Added to the governmental backing of the goldmining investments all along, this newfound support element increased the political leverage of *Koza*. As S.C. noted:

In the previous cases we filed at the administrative courts against the Ministries involved or the Governor's Office, the company, as well as the Yurt Madenciliğini Geliştirme Vakfı-YMGV (Foundation for the Development of National Mining) sided with the defendants. We knew that YMGV was established by the mining companies, whether foreign or Turkish, doesn't matter. That's why it didn't surprise us that this

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<sup>68</sup> This is a reference to Fethullah Gülen whose followers and sympathizers identify him as the pioneer of building bridges between different religions through 'tolerance and dialogue'. Since 2000, when he was indicted by the Chief Prosecutor of the State Security Court for promoting a hidden agenda of destroying the secular foundation of the state, Fethullah Gülen lives in the U.S.A. The U.S. Administration supports Gülen's seemingly moderate approach to Islam as a political leverage against Islamic fundamentalism.

organization sided with the mining companies. But now we observe new names emerge on the side of *Koza* against us. For example, Ankara Ticaret Odası-ATO (Ankara Chamber of Commerce) participated in a case along with *Koza*... This is because *Koza* is a member of ATO. It sided with *Koza* to support its member.

The legal battle in the Bergama case continued with *Koza*'s initiation of a new process for obtaining permits. On March 14, 2005 the İzmir First Administrative Court decided to suspend the execution of the Ministry of Environment and Forests' decision of August 27, 2004 concerning the Ministry's favorable opinion on the mine's continued operation based on the Environmental State Assessment Report. Reviewing the decision upon the Ministry's request, the İzmir Regional Administrative Court overturned İzmir First Administrative Court's judgment on April 14, 2005 (*Radikal Daily*, April 28, 2005).

Following İzmir Regional Administrative Court's favorable judgment *Koza* applied to the Office of the İzmir Provincial Governor for an operation permit. According to Article 7(g) of the Provincial Administration Law permits for polluting establishments were to be granted by the Provincial Administration whose decision organ was the Provincial General Assembly (*Official Gazette*, March 4, 2005, No. 25745. Law No. 5302). Bypassing the Provincial General Assembly, the Governor granted *Koza* a permit. Thus, the Ovacık Goldmine was opened and *Koza* started its mining operations on May 20, 2005 (*Cumhuriyet Daily*, May 21, 2005, *Radikal Daily*, May 22, 2005).

On June 1, 2005, the villagers held a demonstration in front of the Provincial Governor's Office in İzmir to protest the reopening of the mine. This action was followed by a festival in the village next to the mine organized by the villagers to celebrate the World Environment Day on June 5<sup>th</sup> with the participation of movement activists and supporters from the surrounding villages, from Bergama, İzmir, and other cities. The

event took a violent turn when mine workers blocked the road to the village to prevent the participants from attending the festival, and attacked the latter by throwing rocks and eggs at them (*BIA Haber Merkezi*, June 08, 2005 and June 09, 2005).

Meanwhile, health problems were being observed among the mineworkers. O.G. is a 42 year-old villager who worked for the mine between 1997 and 2005. He was laid off when he got sick with spleen failure:

I worked at the security first; for 3-4 months. That was when the mine was at the trial production stage. Then it was closed. When it reopened I worked at different sections. My last position was in the kitchen. I worked there for a year. The distance between the kitchen and the cyanide tanks is not even 10 meters [~11 yards]. The fumes emitted from the tanks affected me. They affected my bone marrow. My red blood cells count proved abnormal, which then affected my spleen. I underwent cortisone treatment for two years at the SSK [short for Sosyal Sigortalar Kurumu (Social Insurance Agency)] in İzmir. Then I underwent surgery. They removed my spleen. Now I'm struggling to stay alive.

O.G. has also been struggling to get a doctor's note establishing the link between his illness and exposure to cyanide. In their study of the distribution of cyanide in blood and tissues of 26 victims of fatal cyanide poisoning, Sunshine and Finkle (1964) found that the spleen had the highest cyanide content. In search of an explanation for the disproportionately high cyanide concentration in this organ, Sunshine and Finkle studied the in vitro distribution of cyanide in the blood by adding sodium cyanide to cyanide-free blood. The researchers found that the added cyanide was completely bound by the red cells. This finding led Sunshine and Finkel (1964:559) to conclude: "Since the spleen is very rich in red cells, a probable explanation for the high cyanide concentration in this organ is thus provided". However, for the physician at the state-run SSK hospital in İzmir who treated O.G., a clear-cut connection between cyanide exposure, cyanide-binding red

cells and spleen failure was not easy to make due to the intricate politics revolving around cyanide. O.G. recounted:

The doctor said that this illness is seen in people dealing with chemicals, such as workers at battery factories [O.G. never worked for a chemical facility before he was employed at the mine]. I tried hard to get a note from him stating this but I failed. At first, he told me he'd write it but then he changed his mind, probably because of the pressure put on him. He referred me to the High Commission in Ankara. I wrote to the High Commission. It's been a year. I'm still waiting for an answer. It's been two years since I had surgery. I live without a spleen now. The High Commission is to write a note stating whether or not this illness is caused by cyanide. But, as I said, I haven't received any such note yet. They have very long arms, reaching everywhere.

Those workers at the mine who did jobs that were considered less risky, like O.G.'s job in the kitchen, were covered by public insurance through the SSK (Social Insurance Agency) whereas the actual processing and extraction jobs were covered by private health insurance provided by the company. For O.G., this arrangement helped the company cover up the health problems of the mine workers:

They offer private health insurance and send the sick workers to private hospitals for treatment. There are so many who work at cyanide tanks and in underground pits. They all are covered by private insurance. Well, of course, the company can't send them to SSK hospitals....One of the workers died of cancer. There is one whose lungs are bad.... A colleague who worked with me in the kitchen has leukemia now. Her son works at the mine. That's why she keeps silent, she doesn't talk...Then there is another one. He lives in İzmir now. He is sick, too. The doctor told him the same thing: You are affected by some chemicals.

2006 saw positive developments for the villagers on the judicial front. In its second decision on the Bergama case, the European Court of Human Rights came to the same conclusion on March 28, 2006 as in its previous judgment of November 2004, that the applicants' right to respect for private and family life, and right to a fair trial was violated. The Court awarded EUR 3,000 to each of the 315 applicants as compensation

for non-pecuniary damage (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 28 March 2006. 46771/99 [2006] ECHR 175). Another favorable judgment came from the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) on April 19, 2006, which annulled the Council of Ministers' Decision of Principle of March 2002. As hope-arousing as these judgments were, however, the villagers were reserved in celebrating, weary of seeing previous favorable judicial decisions ignored by the mining company and circumvented by the administration. İrfan Keskin is a villager and longtime movement activist who earns his living as a cab driver in Bergama. Keskin is also a columnist in the local newspaper of Ege Haber. Two days after the latest SAC judgment, Keskin (*Ege Haber Daily*, April 21, 2006) expressed his resentment in his column:

They always find an excuse not to conform to court decisions....They did it again. They announced that the Supreme Administrative Court's April 19, 2006 decision, annulling, albeit belatedly, the Council of Ministers' Decision of Principle, did not concern them because it referred to a period before them. Thus, they will proceed on their way. Yesterday ...in Bergama they distributed for free thousands of copies of the newspaper that advocated their view. They go on, pretending as if nothing happened, no court judgment was given. However many decisions courts, judges and the law may take they go on. One can't help but wonder: Why do we even have the justice and the legal system? Court decisions are not enforced. Aren't those members of the judiciary who take these decisions a part of the whole state mechanism of the Turkish Republic? If yes, why are they regarded by some as non-existent?

The day Keskin's column was published, İzmir 4<sup>th</sup> Administrative Court decided to annul *Koza's* zoning plans, which gave rise to new hopes among the villagers. The decision was significant in that it was the first court ruling that directly applied to the new company, thus voiding the claim of *Koza* executives that the existing court decisions did not bind their company because they all referred to a period before *Koza* bought the mine. In its decision, the court held that "the granting of a development and construction permit

to an activity like goldmining, which might have multi-dimensional effects extending over a large area, calls for a macro-scale plan that considers the region's agricultural and historical significance. Construction permits given in the absence of such a macro-plan on the basis of the single lot the facility sits on, are against the law" (*BIA Haber Merkezi*, May 12, 2006). *Koza* appealed the decision to the Supreme Administrative Court.

In an attempt to make heard their demands for the enforcement of the latest administrative court decision and to see the mine closed on the basis of that decision, the villagers organized a festival in the village next to the mine, on May 4, 2006. To prevent any confrontation between mineworkers and festival participants, as at the Environment Day Festival of the previous year, the gendarmerie took tight security measures around the mine and the festival venue. Hundreds of movement activists, their supporters from İzmir and other provinces, and media representatives attended the festival.

In another festival held in August 2006 in the neighboring town of Dikili, 17 miles north of Bergama, a group of *Koza* workers, led by the Public Relations Director of the company, carried out a violent attack against the opponents of the mine. Within the framework of the annual "Peace, Democracy and Labor Festival", organized by the Dikili Municipality, a panel discussion was held on August 19, under the title of "Cyanide, Gold and Environment". A group of 20 *Koza* workers, carrying Turkish flags on poles, intruded on the panel to prevent the discussion from taking place and attacked the panelists (*BIA Haber Merkezi*, August 21, 2006).

Meanwhile, *Koza* took steps in expanding its mining activities beyond Ovacık Goldmine in Bergama. One of the minesites *Koza* had acquired in 2005 along with the Ovacık Goldmine was in the village of Küçükdere in Havran, a town in the province of

Balıkesir, about 65 miles northeast of Bergama. When the company's operation permit for the Küçükdere mine was repealed due to the proximity of the minesite to olive groves, *Koza* set out to transport the ore excavated from the Küçükdere site to Bergama to be processed in the already running facilities of the Ovacık Goldmine<sup>69</sup>. In line with the request of the lawyers of Bergama villagers, the Bursa 3<sup>rd</sup> Administrative Court suspended the execution of this transaction on December 14, 2006 (*Cumhuriyet Daily*, February 12, 2007). In a counter move, *Koza* applied to the Office of the Balıkesir Provincial Governor to get the opinion of the latter concerning the company's mining activities in Küçükdere. The Küçükdere mine was opened on February 16, 2007, based on the favorable opinion of the Balıkesir Governorship stating that no Environmental Impact Assessment Report was necessary for the mining operation in question because the minesite was smaller than 25 hectares and no chemical facility would be built on the site.

On June 5, 2007, the European Court of Human Rights announced its third favorable decision for the villagers, coming to the same conclusion as in its previous two judgments pertaining to the Bergama case, and awarding EUR 3,000 to the applicant, a movement activist from Balıkesir, as compensation for non-pecuniary damage (European Court of Human Rights Judgment. 5 June 2007. 17381/02 [2007] ECHR 381).

In their latest activity, between June 9-10, 2007 movement activists convened a panel in the village of Narlıca in Bergama, attended by several professors, locals, and

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<sup>69</sup> Similarly, ores excavated from the company's Mastra minesite in Gümüşhane, a province in the Northeastern Black Sea Region, were transported to the Ovacık Goldmine for the cyanide-leaching extraction process.

movement supporters to discuss mine site rehabilitation measures that need to be taken in the Ovacık Goldmine to minimize the environmental and health damages.

Against the backdrop of increasing cancer cases, especially instances of breast cancer among village women, decreasing productivity of the land, water contamination, and the ongoing, state-supported corporate mining operations, Bergama villagers continue their struggle on judicial front today, still standing their ground in the hope of saving their life-sustaining resources and thus, their very lives.

## **CHAPTER VI ANALYSIS AND CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The concluding chapter of the current study is organized under four sections. The first section provides a synopsis of the distinct phases of the Bergama villagers' movement, followed by a theoretically-informed review of the case with a focus on three data codes selected for analysis: collective identity, movement transformation, and movement outcome. Guided by this analysis and by the review of the U.S. Environmental Justice Movement (EJM) literature, the second section elaborates on the commonalities of the EJM and the Bergama villagers' movement. The findings in this section lend support to my argument that it is misleading to conceive of ecological grassroots movements in the global South and North as instances of collective action utterly distinct from each other in form and content, based merely on the differences in economic development levels and cultural geography. In the third section, the applicability of the New Social Movements (NSM) theories to the Bergama case is assessed. In light of the failure of the NSM theorists on several grounds to account for the case studied, as well as for the EJM, I argue that a new approach to theorizing social movements, which would take as its point of departure the commonalities in the grassroots movements worldwide, would guide not only social movement scholars in understanding ecological grassroots movements in the North and South but also movement activists in their struggle for social change. I will conclude the chapter by wrapping up my argument that an exclusive focus on the distinctions between the ecological grassroots movements in the global South, on the one hand, and in the North, on the other, is counter-productive in challenging the systemic root causes of ecological problems plaguing the people of the world today.

## **Analytical Summary of the Bergama Case**

The view that regards the Bergama villagers' movement as having followed a natural course of development, as expressed by the former mayor of Bergama, ignores the dynamic process by which the villagers actively participated in defining and redefining their situation based on the changes in their field of action, and on the emerging opportunities and constraints. Taking issue with this essentialist view I analyze the Bergama villagers' movement in four distinct phases of development. This approach, I argue, is useful on at least two grounds. First, it identifies the processes of formation and transformation of the movement; and second, it reveals a pattern of adjustment in the means and ends of the struggle over time, which in turn squarely grounds the movement in the larger political economic context both in the national and the international milieu.

At this juncture, however, a caveat is in order. By examining the movement in distinct phases I do not claim a discontinuity between the identified phases. Neither do I intend to reify the collective identity of the movement actors treating it as a specific, absolute entity existing in particular moments in time. My approach should rather be considered as an analytical tool to understand the socially constructed nature of the movement under investigation.

With the neo-liberal shift in the economy in 1980s one of the priorities for Turkish policymakers came to be the provision of incentives to attract foreign direct investment. Simultaneously, the political-economic developments at the world-systemic level expanded the global market for gold and presented the global corporate mining industry with opportunities for new, profitable investments worldwide. The investment in the villages of Bergama by a multinational goldmining company in 1989 came as a direct

result of these developments. The villagers' reaction to goldmining in the region gradually shifted from welcoming the investment, to suspicion, concern, and later opposition, as they became aware of the risks associated with mining.

In broad strokes, the first phase of the Bergama movement between 1989-1992 was characterized by a learning process on the part of Bergama villagers. Under the auspices of the mayor of Bergama and with the support from the professional associations of engineers, the Public Health Department of the Aegean University in İzmir, the Environmental Movement Lawyers, and Greenpeace, information was gathered displaying the multidimensional risks associated with goldmining. Through the local committees established by elected village leaders the collected information was disseminated to the villagers. The mayor and the local Environment, Culture and Arts Association were instrumental in bringing together the villagers and the academia for the very first time. Early mobilization efforts in this phase took the form of press releases, movie showings, information meetings, conferences and panels in the village coffeehouses, attended by professors from İzmir, İstanbul and Ankara to address the villagers. As these efforts were proceeding the Environmental Impact Assessment Report for the goldmine was published in 1991. This was followed by the operation permits granted to the company by the Ministry of Forests the same year and the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources in 1992. Simultaneously, the mining company engaged in a public campaign to win over the villagers with the promise of employment for the village youth and wealth for the whole region. As concerned as the villagers were about the environmental and health risks of the goldmine, their concern in this phase was limited in effect to mere suspicion rather than any form of collective action.

The second phase from 1992 to 1996 marked the consolidation of the mobilization efforts, the budding of the movement, and the initiation of the legal and political struggle against goldmining. Along with growing information and the concomitant awareness with respect to the magnitude of the risks involved, opposition to the mine gained ground among increasing numbers of villagers. The establishment in 1993 of the *Hand in Hand Initiative*, incorporating close to fifty non-governmental organizations, including several professional associations of engineers, physicians' associations, environmental organizations, human rights groups, as well as individual lawyers and academicians, provided the Bergama villagers with a permanent support structure in their struggle against goldmining. On the political front, movement actors embarked on an international publicity campaign to affect a shift in public opinion against the multinational mining company and its finance sources in their respective home countries. The existing network of relations of urban intellectuals with environmental activists and interest groups in Europe comprised the most prominent source relied on in this political process. A defining event in terms of its positive impact on the mobilization of the villagers of Bergama in this phase was the culmination in victory of the strong local resistance against the proposed gold mine in the Küçükdere village of Havran, a town 65 miles northeast of Bergama, when the Ministry of Environment refused in 1993 to grant permission to the goldmining project in the region due to the proximity of the mine site to olive groves. Encouraged by the Küçükdere victory, the Bergama villagers turned to the Environmental Movement Lawyers group in İzmir for legal consultation and representation, which opened a new front in the struggle against goldmining in Bergama. In 1994, when the Ministry of Environment issued a

permit for goldmining in Bergama, the villagers' lawyers filed lawsuits at the administrative court on behalf of 650 villagers and residents of Bergama for the annulment of the Ministry's permit. Upon the dismissal of the villagers' request by the administrative court in 1996 the lawyers appealed the decision to the Supreme Administrative Court.

The third phase of the movement between late 1996 and mid 1997 signified a considerable shift in the struggle with the villagers' recourse to direct action tactics. Nationwide publicity efforts through actions of civil disobedience, demonstrations, marches, blockades, sit-ins, petitions, solidarity picnics and festivals were added to the movement repertoire in this phase alongside the struggle on the legal and political fronts. The third phase culminated in victory when the Supreme Administrative Court (SAC) overturned the lower administrative court's 1996 decision in a groundbreaking judgment on May 13, 1997, ruling that the Ministry of Environment's operation permit did not serve public interest, and was in violation of the Articles 17 and 56 of the Constitution, which secured the right to life and the right to live in a healthy environment.

The fourth and currently ongoing phase that started in the aftermath of the 1997 SAC judgment was marked by the efforts of the villagers and their urban intellectual supporters to have the government authorities enforce the high court's, and later other courts', judgments. As the former mayor put it, following the SAC decision the actions of the involved parties took a chess-like course, with the villagers and their supporters, on the one hand, and the company and the state, on the other, counteracting each other's moves. Along with a marked boost in the judicial leg of the struggle the villagers continued their protests and demonstrations to see the mine closed. The state deferred the

enforcement of the SAC ruling. With the de facto backing of the state, the company increased its pace of constructing the mine. In light of these developments, the villagers accelerated their protest actions and their struggle on the judicial front. The maneuvers of the state in this phase to circumvent the SAC decision and numerous other judgments by national and international courts ruling in favor of the villagers prompted the incorporation of the notions of justice, democratic participation and citizenship rights into the claims of movement actors, thus adding a new dimension to the struggle of the Bergama villagers. As the direct action front of the movement weakened over time the judicial front gained primacy in the struggle. Underlying the decline in direct actions was the frustration of the villagers with the state's outright support of the mining company and persistent non-enforcement of court judgments, as well as the hardship due to economic crises and the structural decline of the agricultural sector in the national economy, which deprived the villagers of the time and finances necessary to carry out direct actions<sup>70</sup>. The frustration and the concomitant resentment of the villagers toward the administration are manifest in M.K.'s statement. M.K. is a 51 year-old village woman who had been active in the movement. Under economic hardship her 25 year-old son had to leave the village to find a job somewhere else so he would not have to work for the mine. She expressed:

We are all against the mine. Today I would still travel around, go everywhere in protest. But they just won't close the mine!

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<sup>70</sup> Shefner's (2006) research reveals that a similar reason underlay the move away from mass mobilization and confrontational tactics in a democratization movement in Jalisco, Mexico. Shefner (2006: 258, 260) reports a movement activist stating that economic hardship forced people to work for survival, which, in turn, decreased the time available for political organizing.

### *Collective Identity*

Collective identity constitutes one of the key concepts in the analyses of new social movements scholars (Castells 2004, Cohen 1985, Melucci 1989, Pizzorno 1978, Touraine [1978] 1981). According to Melucci (1995), neither structural preconditions nor values and beliefs alone produce collective action. Rather, individuals collectively construct their action through a framing process that involves constant interaction, communication, negotiation, and cognitive definition of the means, ends and the field of action. This interactive and shared definition is what Melucci (1995) conceives of as collective identity. In the process of constructing collective identity actors develop a sense of a “we”, which enables them to feel as part of a common unity with shared interests and goals (Castells 2004, Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995, Gamson 1992, Johnston et.al. 1994, Melucci 1995, Polkinghorn 2000, Snow 2001, Taylor and Whittier 1992, Woehrle and Coy 2000). This sense of “we” is not static, however. To ensure its continuity collective actors need to renegotiate and redefine it depending on the changes in their field of action, and the emerging opportunities and constraints. Thus, the process of collective identity is also “the ability to produce new definitions by integrating the past and the emerging elements of the present into the unity and continuity of a collective actor” (Melucci 1995: 49).

Corresponding to this social constructionist and processual approach, Taylor and Whittier (1992) identify *boundaries*, *consciousness*, and *negotiation* as the analytical tools to understand the construction of collective identity in social movements. Boundaries specify “the social territories of group relations by highlighting the differences between activists and the web of others in the contested social world...Boundary markers

are...central to the formation of collective identity because they promote a heightened awareness of a group's commonalities and frame interaction between members of the in-group and the out-group" (Taylor and Whittier 1992: 111). Once the boundaries are marked and the "we-they" distinction is formulated collective actors frame the group's interests in opposition to the dominant order through a conscious, reflective process. This process of what McAdam (1982) refers to as 'cognitive liberation' facilitates the collective actors' transformation from passive victims of injustices to active challengers of the status quo. Negotiations enable collective actors to politicize their daily lives and articulate ways to bring about the desired change (Hunt et.al. 1994, Taylor and Whittier 1992).

Bergama villagers' movement followed a course of development consistent with this constructionist analysis. Movement actors achieved the unity and continuity of their collective action by a process of collective identity formation, which involved the cognitive definition and redefinition of the situation, as well as the assessment, reassessment and adjustment of the means and ends of action in light of internal and external shifts in the movement's field of action.

I.A., a villager and long-time movement activist, said:

At first, people were divided. When the company first came here some people started working for the mine. But in 5 or 6 years we became a single entity, as solid as a rock, everyone being on our side.

This period of five to six years correspond to what I identified as the first two phases of the Bergama villagers' movement. During this time the villagers' reaction to goldmining in the region gradually shifted from welcoming the investment, to suspicion, concern, and later opposition, as they became aware of the risks associated with mining.

This awareness was the outcome of a learning process, which the former mayor summed up as follows:

Professors talked to the villagers directly. The villagers listened very carefully and learned. Then we helped each other, discussing among ourselves what we learned, and repeating it over and over again.

Along similar lines, B.Y., a movement activist from Bergama, stated:

We met respectable, democratic, highly-educated people from around the world...We started to communicate with them. They told us the stories of gold. What is gold? How is it extracted and processed? What is the per capita income in the countries where gold is extracted? How rich or poor did they get? How do their lands look like now? And under which circumstances do people live in those countries after the gold mining? They told us all about these. ....We were startled by what we heard.

Knowledge thus obtained empowered the villagers and enabled them to cognitively define the situation, and frame their interests and goals through an interactive process. P.A., a villager and movement activist, noted that protecting their land was the main drive for the villagers to mobilize:

We found out that cyanide is a very dangerous poison, and that our environment was at risk. We were concerned that our olive trees might be harmed, and that we wouldn't be able to sell the crops we grew or the milk our cows produced. So we organized and started a movement.

This cognitive definition and frame served as a foundation on which the villagers built a strong sense of "we". In the words of the former mayor:

...this is a socially complex region. It incorporates different ethnic and religious groups. One village is Alevi, another Sunni, one is made up of Bulgarian immigrants, another of Romanian immigrants, yet another of nomads. That is to say, they don't get together on any given day. Each group has its own village, and lives according to its own traditional ways of life.... They are also socio-economically diverse. Some of the villagers are more well-to-do than others... How in the world were these people to get together? They did. They needed a motivation to do so: knowledge, a point of departure... An incredible grassroots movement emerged here as a result.

In the process of the construction of “we” the villagers also formed a conception of “they” as the antagonist group to wage a struggle against. During the first two phases of the movement “they” predominantly referred to the corporate mining industry, in general, and the mining company, in particular. The following accounts by several movement actors exemplify the characteristics attributed to “they”:

The trick of this industry is that the constituent companies repeatedly shed their skin so you can't find the perpetrator. The environment is left polluted and damaged but no one is there to take any responsibility. Such is the game.

- Former mayor of Bergama.

The new company will take over where the previous company leaves off, and if a problem arises in the future the previous company will be blamed for it. Since nobody will own the problem it will be left unsolved. Even if people die as a result, no one will take responsibility.

- H.N., a villager and movement activist.

As much as they seem to operate as different companies under different names they constitute in fact one and the same big industry. They agree among each other. Not only do they exploit the natural resources of less-developed countries but also mess their environment, and then disappear, leaving them with irreparable damage.

- P.A., a villager and movement activist.

They engage in corporate marriages, custom-made for whichever country they go to. They can be named Eurogold, TÜPRAG, or something else. These marriages end when the mine closes. They use the same method everywhere in the world.

- D.T., businessowner and movement activist from Bergama.

The corporate mining industry does not consider public interest. Capital is interested in one thing alone, to fill their pockets. This is the nature of capital..... They need to maximize their profits. To do so they need to minimize their expenditures. In their investment in technology, in the wages they pay to their workers, or in the environmental precautions they take they are driven by these principles. If you add these all up you can't expect them to consider public interest. That would be unrealistic.

- F.R., a professor and movement supporter from İzmir.

They have no decency. All they have is money. They go to great length to divide people.

- I.A., a villager and movement activist.

The processes of learning, collectively defining the situation, framing common interests and goals, and demarcating and articulating the “we-they” boundaries effected the cognitive liberation of the villagers. This transformation of consciousness was discernible in the villagers’ big leap to activism from their initial stance of “May it [goldmining in the region] proceed if any good will come out of it, may it not if any harm will come out of it”. As suggested in this statement, reported by the former mayor, the villagers had passively expressed their willingness to accept whatever the outcome might come to be. They transformed from acquiescent bystanders, ready to leave the turn of events that would affect their lives up to the grace of an abstract force, to active participants of Turkey’s longest-lasting grassroots movement, collectively taking action for their right to live in a healthy environment.

The dynamic nature of the movement that was evident in the redefinition and reassessment of the means and ends to respond to emerging opportunities and challenges in the movement actors’ field of action also rendered the learning process of the villagers continuous and expanding in scope. For example, with the shift to direct action tactics in the third phase the villagers learned civil disobedience and the judicial aspects of protest. C.U., a lawyer from Bergama and one of the legal representatives of the villagers, noted:

Going out to the streets in protest is risky. You might run into other people there; your opponents, radicals, etc.... So, it was a necessity for the villagers to be informed on the legal aspects of protest.... At that point we did our part and taught them what they needed to know to protest within the framework of the rules of law.

Another manifestation of the dynamic, socially-constructed nature of the movement was the actors' incorporation of the state in their conception of "they" alongside the company and the corporate mining industry in the third and fourth phases of the movement. This shift in the demarcation of "they" occurred against the backdrop of the state's insistent ignorance of the demands and protests of the villagers<sup>71</sup> by issuing permits to the company; its outright support of the mining company by deferring and circumventing through legislative and administrative means the 1997 SAC judgment and other similar court decisions that acknowledged the risks of goldmining in the region. Movement actors articulated their conception and resentment of the state as a party on the side of the mining company, as follows:

If the Minister publicly announces: 'We're going to extract gold to the last nugget!', the company does not need to do much. It seems the decision has long been made, and the scaffold set.

– H.N. a villager and movement activist.

[T]hey [the mining company] have one big advantage: the backing of the governments. Especially since 1998, there were governments giving them the message: 'O.K. Extract the gold, we're behind you!' or 'We'll look the other way!' The most evident manifestation of governmental support is the continuing operation of the mine despite all the court rules in favor of the villagers. – N.L., a professor and movement supporter from İstanbul.

The company is omnipotent. It has the advantage of having the government on its side. The government functions as if it is the secretariat of the company, with the ministers issuing orders to do what's necessary to help the company. - G.P., one of the lawyers of the villagers from İzmir.

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<sup>71</sup> This ignorance ranged from not taking the movement seriously to the extreme of denial, as exemplified by the reaction of the sub-provincial governor of Bergama when I justly referred to the villagers' movement as a social movement during my interview with him for this study: "What social movement? Would you call the walking of two or three women and children on the streets a social movement?"

### *Movement Transformation*

In social movement analyses transformation is predominantly studied as a movement *outcome* at the individual or the community level, such as changes in the activists' attitudes, political behavior, occupational and marital statuses (Cable et.al. 1988, Fendrich and Lovoy 1988, McAdam 1989), or shifts in the level of community integration after mobilization (Edelstein 1988, Fowlkes and Miller 1987). With the exception of a few studies (Bullard 1994, 1996, Bullard and Wright 1992, Cable and Degutis 1991, Cable and Shriver 1995, Krauss 1989, Shefner 2006) transformation is not analyzed at the movement level as a dynamic *process* through which movement activists collectively experience a transformation of consciousness, redefine their grievances (Shefner 1999), contest the legitimacy of the entire political-economic system, and demand direct democracy.

Bergama villagers' movement underwent a transformation from a local ecological movement to an environmental justice movement with national implications incorporating into the movement discourse the claims for the rule of law, justice, democratic participation and citizenship rights. This transformation, I argue, is best explained by a process-based, social-constructionist approach. As discussed in the previous sub-section on collective identity, the construction of collective identity is a continuous process that requires movement actors to constantly reflect on and redefine the situation, assess and adjust to the emerging opportunities and challenges in their field of action. The movement transformation in the Bergama case occurred through such a process of redefinition and reassessment against the background of shifts in the movement's internal and external field of action.

The state championed the mining investment in Bergama from its inception in 1989. As the villagers learned about and were convinced of the environmental and health risks involved they gradually mobilized against goldmining in the region. In the first two phases of the movement between 1989 and 1996, however, the villagers and their urban intellectual supporters did not directly contest the state as an antagonist. Rather, the main target of their struggle was the mining company. This was manifest in the movement activists' strategies and tactics in the first two phases. To publicize their case movement activists organized press conferences and panels at local and regional levels to reveal the notorious environmental safety and social responsibility records of the mining company, in particular, and the global corporate mining industry, in general. Later they undertook an international publicity campaign to affect a shift in the public opinion against the multinational mining company and its finance sources in their home countries.

The shift in the struggle in the third phase, when the villagers adopted direct action tactics, brought about the first direct confrontation between the villagers and the state with the intervention of the gendarmerie and the police in the protest demonstrations. For the villagers, this intervention made more evident than before the state's outright protection of the interests of the mining company against theirs. The process of transformation of collective consciousness thus started led to the movement actors' redefinition of the situation and reassessment of the "we-they" demarcation. As the stance of the state in support of the mining company grew stronger in the fourth phase with the addition of administrative and legislative means to the social control measures to ensure the operation of the mine despite court decisions favoring the villagers, the

movement transformed into a democratization struggle. S.C., one of the lawyers of the villagers from İzmir interpreted this transformation as follows:

In the aftermath of the '97 decision the concern for securing the rule of law gained primacy in the struggle....The protection of environmental rights is essential but if court rules are not enforced in a country there would be no guarantee for the exercise of any rights. The institution to resort to for the settlement of a dispute between two parties is the court. If the court's rule is not going to be enforced how will people claim their rights? Is everyone going to act on their own sense of justice? This would lead to disorder and chaos. You can't even talk about a state under these conditions, let alone a state based on the rule of law. You would destroy the atmosphere of peace in the society. If no one trusts that the court decisions will be enforced nobody will take the courts seriously; nobody will resort to courts to resolve their disputes....In this case, securing environmental rights becomes part of the bigger problem of the enforcement of judiciary decisions.

Along the same lines, E.S., another lawyer from İzmir representing the villagers, commented:

Of course, this is an environmental and public health problem but in the aftermath of the 1997 Supreme Administrative Court Decision the movement turned into a struggle for the enforcement of the court's judgment. The main questions became: "Is this a state governed by the rule of law or not?" "Does the state comply with the court judgments or not?"

### ***Movement Outcome***

For Gamson (1975), movement success is a set of outcomes that are measured in terms of the consequences of mobilization for the movement organization, on the one hand, and the movement's beneficiaries, on the other. Consequences for the former concern the "fate of the challenging group as an organization"; for the latter, they involve "the distribution of new advantages to the group's beneficiary" (Gamson 1975:28). Although Gamson's conceptualization has more explanatory power than those analyses that operationalize and measure movement outcome monolithically in terms of whether

or not the stated goals are achieved (Hollander 1992, Mitchell 1981), it has a major shortcoming that makes it problematic to apply to the social movements from below like the Bergama villagers' movement and the environmental justice movement in the US. Gamson (1975:30) treats outcomes as the ultimate endpoints of a challenge. For equity movements, however, outcomes, such as social and personal transformations, can't be frozen at particular moments in time. Rather, they are ongoing processes in a collective struggle for breaking the existing power relations and challenging the logic of the system.

Elaborating on the meaning of success for social movements from below, Nilsen and Cox (2005) aptly state:

Winning... is about human development in many dimensions: in changing social relations on a micro-scale, in creating new ways of working, living in places, of gender relations, in constructing broader global connections – and in constructing movements which can carry this change forward against determined, even “last-ditch” opposition armed with tanks (P.4).

Judging Bergama villagers' resistance by this multi-dimensional and processual understanding of success, I argue that the movement has been successful on several grounds. On the local level, the empowerment of the villagers has been the most substantial achievement of the movement. The long-lasting struggle facilitated social change when residents with little or no prior experience of political activism became fervent social justice activists constructing a collective identity to define and redefine their grievances, and challenge the impositions of corporate capital and the state. On the national level, the villagers have been successful in getting across their message to the larger society that it is their constitutional right to live in a healthy environment and their democratic right to participate in the decisions affecting their lives and livelihoods. They did so by engaging in acts of civil disobedience, effectively fighting for their rights

within the framework of the national legal system, and making use of judicial means accessible to them beyond the national realm. As such, Bergama villagers' resistance movement provided an example for other communities facing similar challenges nationwide.

“Bergama Movement taught a whole lot to everyone”. This statement by S.C. one of the lawyers of the villagers, is shared by many other movement participants interviewed for this study. According to B.Y., a movement activist from Bergama:

A sense of self-confidence developed in the villagers. They got to know the police, the gendarmerie, they learned the law. They also learned some level of science, enough to understand what cyanide, antimony, and mercury are, and the way in which they contaminate the groundwater. But most importantly, they became aware of their rights as citizens. They learned to become citizens.

In a similar vein, K.M., a villager and movement activist, stated:

We were elementary school graduates back then when we started, we became college graduates now.

In the words of H.N., another villager and movement activist:

We do not fear soldiers or police officers anymore. Before this movement, we were so intimidated by them that we would blush even as we saw them on the street.....Now we know how to defend our rights whichever authority figure may approach us.

B.Y. pointed out another significant achievement of the movement as follows:

Behind the success of our lawyers lay the 15 year-long resistance movement carried out by thousands of people...Movement participants accelerated the judicial process. This is the success of the people.

## **Commonalities Between the Bergama Villagers' Movement and the U.S. Environmental Justice Movement**

One of the criticisms directed at the Environmental Justice Movement (EJM) is its disregard of environmental injustices outside the U.S. (Martinez-Alier 2003, Rhodes 2003). Martinez-Alier (2003) substantiates this criticism as follows:

President Clinton's Executive Order 12898 of 1994 on Environmental Justice was a triumph for this movement. It directed all federal agencies (though not corporations or private citizens) to act in such a way that disproportionate burdens of pollution do not fall on low-income and minority populations in all territories and possessions of the U.S. Thus, both poverty and race were taken into account, but nothing was said about impacts outside the U.S. Happy is the country where 'low-income' people are regarded as a *minority*...! (P.213, emphasis added).

As justified as Martinez-Alier is in criticizing this neglect, in his line of reasoning he misses a point that is significant for all social movements from below worldwide. By conceiving 'minority' in a purely quantitative sense, Martinez-Alier disregards the concept's situatedness in power relations, and the fact that for communities in the global South and North alike those very power relations constitute the major source of grievances. Taking minority group membership in this latter sense of the concept informs a convergence between grassroots movements for environmental justice in the global South and North, regardless of their respective differences in economic development levels and cultural landscape.

EJM scholars increasingly emphasize this point. Bullard (quoted in Martinez-Alier 2003) writes:

Grass-roots groups, after decades of struggle, have grown to become the core of the multi-issue, multi-racial, and multi-regional environmental justice movement. Diverse community-based groups have begun to organize and link their struggles to issues of civil and human rights, land rights and sovereignty, cultural survival, racial and social justice and sustainable development...Whether in urban ghettos and barrios, rural “poverty pockets”, Native American reservations or communities in the developing world, grassroots groups are demanding an end to unjust and non-sustainable environmental and development policies (P.214).

Similarly, Robinson (quoted in Martinez-Alier 2003) stated:

As mining, logging, oil drilling and waste disposal projects push into further corners of the planet, people all over the world are seeing their basic rights compromised, losing their livelihoods, cultures and even their lives. Environmental devastation globally and what we call ‘environmental racism’ in the US, are violations of human rights and they occur for similar reasons (P.220).

The globality of the compounded nature of injustices on political, economic, social, and environmental grounds is realized not only by movement scholars but also by activists. In her analysis of an ecological grassroots struggle in the Yellow Creek Valley of southeastern Kentucky in central Appalachia, Cable (1993) reported:

[A]t Yellow Creek, the Appalachian stereotype held by outsiders [submissive and apathetic] is forcefully countered by a new Appalachian identity, an identity characterized by a self-conscious awareness of the injustices perpetrated by elites and of Appalachia’s similarities to the oppressed parts of the world. This is apparent in an activist’s reference to the political position of the region: “Appalachia has more in common with some of those countries in Africa than we do with the rest of the United States.” (P.81).

The similarities of disenfranchised communities in the U.S. with those in the Southern hemisphere are not only discernible in the structural nature of the environmental injustices they face but also in the ways in which they respond to these injustices. The Bergama villagers’ movement is a relevant case to prove this point.

Like the low-income and minority communities comprising the EJM in the U.S., movement activists in the Bergama case (re)define environment to incorporate in it people, as well as their homes and workplaces. This broad definition allows them to address within the context of their struggle those issues that are central to their everyday survival. The former mayor of Bergama comments:

90 percent of the environmental movements around the world are intellectual movements, based on sophisticated knowledge. Few of the activists in these movements, if any, become environmentalists because their own lives are directly threatened. The environmental movement in Bergama is no such movement. It is a pure grassroots movement. Why did they set out to protect their environment? Because they were directly faced with the potential destruction of their environment, and along with it, their ways of living, their very lives. Their main motivation was neither to see their surroundings green for recreational purposes nor to let the birds fly freely. In the case of the movement of Bergama villagers, the environmental movement found its true meaning.

Another similarity between the EJM and the Bergama villagers' movement is the emphasis on self-representation. In the words of B.Y., a movement activist from Bergama:

Many political parties and unions that wanted to be included in our movement were disappointed. What made this movement interesting was that we didn't let ourselves be incorporated in any organization. If we had done so, we would have been identified with that particular organization, which would have compromised our position as a grassroots movement. Our movement was taken seriously because it comprised of the villagers themselves, not by other parties that defended the villagers' interests on their behalf.

As a corollary of this common characteristic of self-representation, both movements placed themselves outside institutional politics, relied on advocacy networks and direct action tactics, such as protests, demonstrations, public meetings, fact-finding and hearings to educate local residents, petitions, referenda, and litigation. Moreover, in

both cases, the community organizations established by movement activists were loosely structured and non-hierarchical.

The significant role of urban intellectuals in both movements constitutes another similarity. Urban intellectuals have been instrumental in pointing out the compounded nature of environmental injustices, and thus facilitating the process of cognitive liberation in the respective communities through which the latter realized that they were victims not only of corporate environmental crimes but also of a corporate state structure that denies democratic claims (Cable and Shriver 1995:430). This transformation of consciousness prompted community members to become not only environmental activists fighting against the toxic facilities in their neighborhoods and villages but also social justice advocates and activists, attacking the government's preference of capital accumulation and economic growth over public interest, and struggling for democratic and civil rights.

The similarity in the way activists in both movements experienced and articulated resentment at their respective governments is arresting, as manifested in the following two excerpts. The first is a statement by the co-founder of the Yellow Creek Concerned Citizens, a grassroots organization established by the citizens of Middlesboro, Kentucky in the U.S. to redress their grievance of water pollution in the community caused by a tanning company. The second statement is by a villager and movement activist in the Bergama resistance.

Bitter resentment keeps us going, I won't quit now till I get full satisfaction. *All we've ever tried to do is have the laws enforced. Why should I have to fight to get what's already in the law?* I'll tell you why: it's more exploitation of Appalachia.

- Co-founder of the Yellow Creek Concerned Citizens,  
quoted in Cable (1993:81, emphasis added).

Not even a single day did these people hit the streets to ask for a raise in the price of their produce. *They just ask for their right to live. They want to live in a healthy country. This is a simple demand that is already secured in the Constitution.* Of course they will ask for it. Did we, as farmers, confront the state, saying ‘You pay this much to purchase our cotton but sell the fuel for that much more!’ No, we didn’t. But shall I also not object when you come here to take my life? Of course, I will... They want us to be like sheep to do as they say, and accept everything they do.

- I.A., a Bergama villager and movement activist.

### **Critical Appraisal of New Social Movements (NSM) Theories With Reference to the Bergama Case**

In terms of their applicability to the Bergama villagers’ movement, the NSM theories have weaknesses similar to those I identified in my assessment of their explanatory power for the Environmental Justice Movement in the U.S. (pp.45-47 of the current study).

For NSM theorists, a defining characteristic of contemporary social movements is their socio-cultural nature, which significantly differs from the old, class-based conflicts over economic distribution (Della Porta et.al. 2006, Habermas 1970, 1975, [1981] 1989, Melucci 1980, 1989, 1996, Offe 1985, Touraine [1978]1981). The underlying assumption is that contemporary society is a post-material society where the arena of social contestation is dominated by clashes over values and identities, not over relations of material production. Contesting this assertion, Martinez-Alier (2003) rightly argues:

We are certainly not in a ‘post-material’ age. Externalities (i.e. cost-shifting) must be seen as part and parcel of the economy, which is necessarily open to the entry of resources and to the exit of residues. The appropriation of resources and the production of waste result in ecological distribution conflicts, which give rise to a worldwide environmental justice movement (P.220).

Bergama villagers mobilized against the ecological threats posed to their lives and livelihoods by an economic investment, which was supported by the state in the name of economic growth. Thus, NSM theories fail to account for the conflict in the Bergama case, which is very much of socio-economic nature. Furthermore, contrary to the NSM conception of contemporary social movements, the Bergama villagers' resistance is a class-based movement. This is manifest in the importance of socio-economic class in the self-identification of movement activists, as attested in the statement of K.M., a villager and movement activist:

To those who refer to our struggle as the Bergama Movement I say, this is not Bergama Movement, this is a villagers' movement, 'The Movement of Bergama Villagers'. I've always defended this position.

K.M.'s statement is in stark contrast with Offe's (1985) claim:

[C]oncerning the *actors* of the new social movements, the most striking aspect is that they do *not* rely for their self-identification on either the established political codes (left/right, liberal/conservative, etc.) nor on the partly corresponding socioeconomic codes (such as working class/middle class, poor/wealthy, rural/urban population, etc.) (P.831, emphasis original).

The significance of socio-economic class in the self-identification of movement activists is also manifest in the villagers' resentment toward the middle-class residents of the town of Bergama. According to P.A., a villager and movement activist:

The people of Bergama never actively participated in the movement, neither did they oppose the mining company. On the contrary, they were happy due to the prospects of wealth for Bergama.

Similarly, C.U., a lawyer from Bergama and one of the legal representatives of the villagers stated:

In the town of Bergama, there was no collective public stance against the mine.....Except for some individuals from Bergama, who voluntarily fought against the mine, the people of Bergama as a collectivity did not contribute a bit to the villagers' movement. They rather viewed the mine as a source of income for themselves.... [T]his is due to the lethargy of the people of Bergama; a combination of their calculation of petty interests, their opportunism, and their lack of social impetus.... Bergama is one of the biggest towns of the Izmir Province, with a population of 50,000-60,000. If it had taken a collective stance against the gold mine; if 10,000 people had gathered in the central square of the town and said 'No!', it wouldn't have been easy for the company to proceed with its operations.

Another aspect of the Bergama case that the NSM theories fail (perhaps most terribly) to explain, is the underlying reason for the villagers' mobilization. For Habermas ([1981]1989), what motivates the actors of the new social movements to mobilize is:

[D]evelopments that noticeably affect the organic foundations of the lifeworld and make us drastically aware of standards of livability, of inflexible limits to the deprivation of sensual-aesthetic background needs...The issue is...of defending and restoring endangered ways of life (P.392, 394).

As is true for the EJM in the U.S. and other environmental justice struggles around the world, what is at stake in the Bergama case is not the *standards* of livability but livability itself, not sensual-aesthetic *background needs* but the very *survival needs*, and the issue is not of defending and restoring endangered *ways* of life but endangered *lives* themselves.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Gamson (1992) criticizes the NSM theories for their exclusion of contemporary movements in societies other than Western Europe and North America. This theoretical framework, according to Gamson (1992):

...privileges one particular, albeit interesting, subset of social movements that happen to be predominantly white, middle class and located in Western Europe and North America. These movements are well worth studying. But when they become a reified category of analysis – *the* new social movements – many of the most important social movements of the past two decades are rendered invisible (P.58, emphasis original).

Taking Gamson's criticism one step further, I argue that the NSM theories do not account for the contemporary social movements in North America, as exemplified in the failure of this theoretical framework to explain the Environmental Justice Movement. I further argue that rendered invisible by this approach are not only other important social movements around the globe but also the similarities in the grievances, means and goals of the grassroots struggles in the global North and South.

Despite being systematically stripped of their 'cratos', the 'demos' in the North, South, East and West firmly hold their ground in their fight against structural injustices, striving for their longed-for ideal of direct democracy. This global convergence of grassroots struggles goes unnoticed by the New Social Movements (NSM) theorists.

A new approach to theorizing social movements that takes as its point of departure these similarities is necessary. Such an approach will guide not only social movement scholars in understanding ecological grassroots movements in the global North and South but also movement activists in their struggle for social change. In contrast, an exclusive focus on the distinctions between the ecological grassroots movements in the global South, on the one hand, and in the North, on the other, will be counter-productive in challenging the systemic root causes of ecological problems plaguing the people of the world today.

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## APPENDIX



Figure A-1: Geographical location of modern Turkey

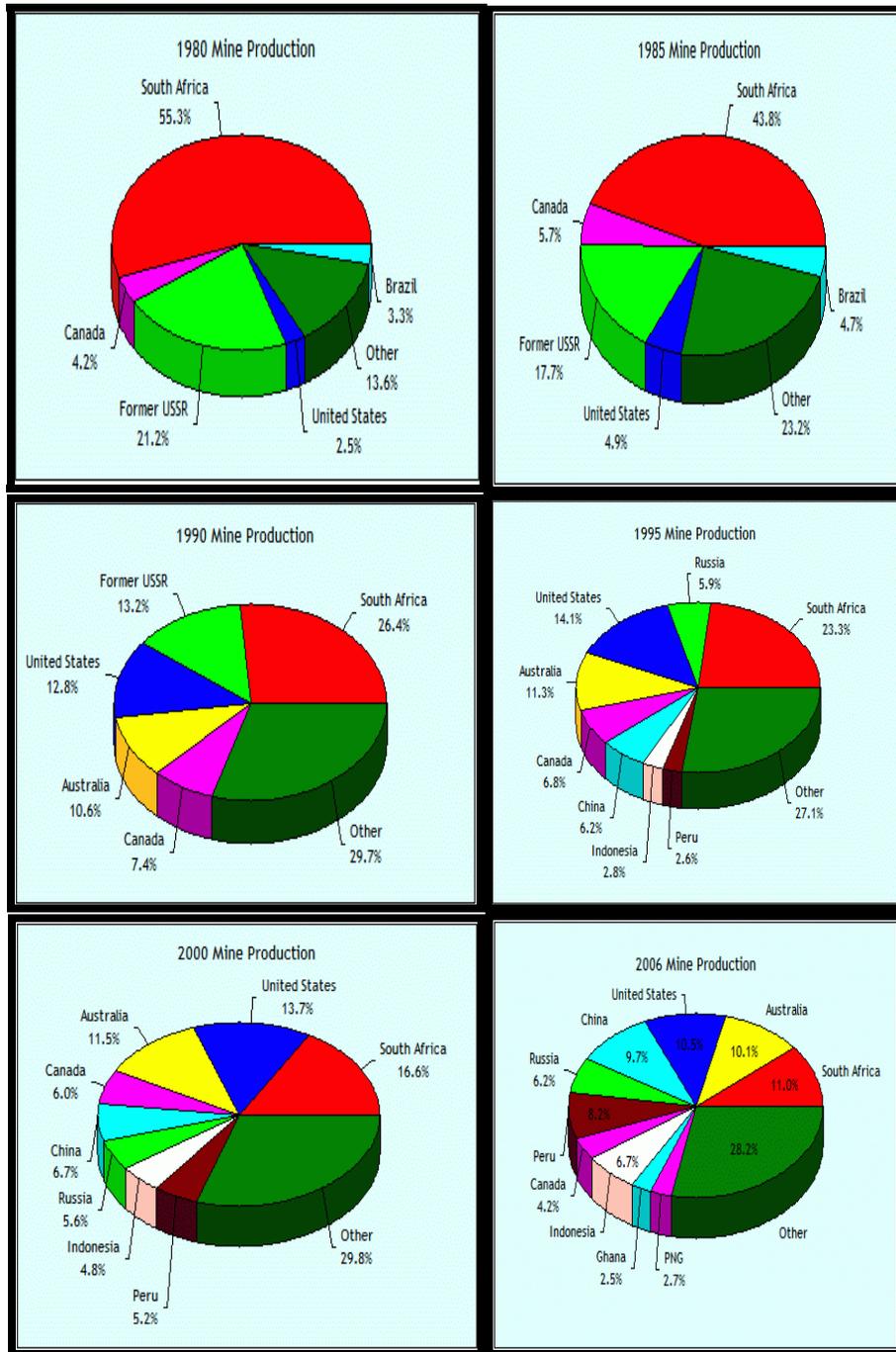


Figure A-2: World Gold Production (1980-2006)

Source: Goldsheet Mining Directory  
 (available at: <http://www.goldsheetlinks.com/production.htm>)

Table A-1: Gross National Product (GNP) by share of sectors in percentage,  
based on GNP at constant (1987) prices (YTL thousand)  
(1923-2004)

	1923	1930	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
<b>Agriculture</b>	43.1	46.8	40.9	37.5	31.2	24.8	16.8	13.4	13.8	13.7	12.6	11.7
<b>Industry</b>	10.6	10	13.1	15.7	18.5	22	26.4	28.3	28.9	29.3	29.9	29.7
<i>Mining and Quarrying</i>	0.63	0.7	1.7	1.85	1.7	2	1.8	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.05
<i>Manufacturing</i>	9.70	9.04	10.9	12.84	15.7	18.3	22.1	23.7	24	24.7	25.3	25.3
<i>Energy</i>	0.25	0.26	0.5	0.98	1.1	1.7	2.4	3.2	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.3
<i>Services<sup>a</sup></i>	43.8	40	41.2	43.3	47	53.7	53.8	54.1	56.2	54.9	54.4	53.6
<b>(-) Imputed Bank Charges</b>					2.4	3.3	2.6	2	1.96	1.65	1.45	1.3
<b>Private Non-Profit Organizations</b>					0.3	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.38	0.36	0.33	0.3
<b>Import Duties</b>	3.5	4.1	4.97	4.27	3.3	1.2	4.1	5.5	4.6	5.3	6.1	7
<b>GDP<sup>b</sup></b>	101	100.7	100.2	100.7	98	98.9	98.8	99.7	101.95	101.95	101.9	101
<b>Net factor income from abroad</b>	-1	-0.7	-0.2	-0.7	2	1.1	1.2	0.3	-1.95	-1.95	-1.9	-1
<b>GNP<sup>b</sup></b>	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note:

a. includes construction, trade, transport and communications, financial services, housing income, business and personal services, and government services.

b. in purchasers' value.

Source: State Planning Organization Statistics at <http://ekutup.dpt.gov.tr>

Table A-2: Employed population by economic activity (1980-2000)

Census year	Total employed	Agriculture		Industry		Construction		Services		Activities not adequately defined	
		Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Total</b>											
1980	18 522 322	11 104 501	60.0	2 140 887	11.6	765 072	4.1	4 335 230	23.4	176 632	1.0
1985	20 556 786	12 118 533	59.0	2 345 719	11.4	750 546	3.7	5 235 067	25.5	106 921	0.5
1990	23 381 893	12 547 796	53.7	2 992 864	12.8	1 184 242	5.1	6 515 508	27.9	141 483	0.6
2000	25 997 141	12 576 827	48.4	3 470 360	13.3	1 196 246	4.6	8 719 693	33.5	34 015	0.1
<b>Female</b>											
1980	6 813 509	5 948 959	87.3	306 684	4.5	4 700	0.1	510 903	7.5	42 263	0.6
1985	7 492 733	6 484 257	86.5	335 140	4.5	6 697	0.1	653 131	8.7	13 508	0.2
1990	8 408 414	6 900 466	82.1	567 632	6.8	10 718	0.1	909 201	10.8	20 397	0.2
2000	9 429 736	7 133 056	75.6	635 260	6.7	19 419	0.2	1 636 263	17.4	5 738	0.1
<b>Male</b>											
1980	11 708 813	5 155 542	44.0	1 834 203	15.7	760 372	6.5	3 824 327	32.7	134 369	1.1
1985	13 064 053	5 634 276	43.1	2 010 579	15.4	743 849	5.7	4 581 936	35.1	93 413	0.7
1990	14 973 479	5 647 330	37.7	2 425 232	16.2	1 173 524	7.8	5 606 307	37.4	121 086	0.8
2000	16 567 405	5 443 771	32.9	2 835 100	17.1	1 176 827	7.1	7 083 430	42.8	28 277	0.2

Source: Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu at [www.tuik.gov.tr](http://www.tuik.gov.tr)

## VITA

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