

Participation and Nature Conservation within the Context of Political Modernisation in Turkey

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Abstract

To identify, understand and contribute to the dynamics of environmental governance in an era of globalization, the process of transition endorses space for possibilities of research. The study is an attempt to analyse how globalization and EU candidacy effect the change in Turkey's environmental policy-making and environmental governance. Within this context, the rapid transition in Turkish environmental governance brings new challenges. These involve the changes in the nature conservation and civil society legislations, integrated and participatory management of natural resources and decentralized management. After a brief general evaluation of the new environmental governance, the study will focus on natural resource management in Turkey. In this respect, the position of network of various civil society actors on the forms of governance in natural resource management is crucial in the analysis. To what extent and in what way are civil society actors represented in environmental governance at different stages? In addition, how the local people perceive the existing natural resource management and the change in policy-making? How do they perceive conservation? How do they perceive and live through the participatory processes? Is the relation of the local people with the state changing? How much can the target community actually take part in the definition of the problem and in identifying solutions? What are the factors that influence level of participation?

The field study will serve to support the argument from empirical evidence. The study is conducted within the scope of a project funded by the Global Environmental Facility, namely GEF-II Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management which is ongoing since 2000. The field study is carried out in Artvin- Camili in Turkey which consists of six villages on the

Georgian border and it is realized between August-November 2003 and August – September 2005.

1. Introduction

Many environmental policy scholars and activists advocate forms of participatory decision-making in nature conservation. This study focuses on the interrelation between participation and policy making in nature conservation in Turkey within a context of political modernisation. The concept of political modernisation refers to processes of transformation within the political domain of the society. More specifically, I look at the impact of recent social effects of policy changes within the domain of nature conservation upon both the debates and the practices of political participation. The central argument in this paper is that participation is substantially linked to nature conservation and can be considered both as an indicator and a motor for social change. The study will depict the social and structural conditions under which participatory mechanisms are applied in nature conservation.

2. Environmental Governance in Turkey

Turkey is undergoing a rapid social, political and economic change which has accelerated in last decade. The style of political governance in Turkey has been transformed over the past decade as a result of various influences; namely, the impact of the democratisation process, developments in the relationship with the European Union (EU); and the decrease in the content and frequency of conflicts caused by several groups; the sporadic occurrences of major natural disasters such as earthquakes and economic fluctuations (Ministry of Environment and UNDP, 2002: 103). The political responses of voters, the NGOs and the media to the aforementioned events have also acted as pressure groups on the government to change their style. Further to this, the reformation of state bodies started to increase with a rapid phase with the implementation of the EU candidacy devised in accordance with the decision taken at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999 and the Turkish National Programme prepared accordingly.

Turkish public administration structure is based on a rather authoritarian, centralized and hierarchical structure. However, there have been recent attempts to decentralize the governing system with the law enacted in 2004 called Local Administrations Reform. With this new law, the environmental governance is structured on a municipality basis and this is problematic

when nature conservation is concerned. Before this law, national parks and nature conservation sites were ruled on a regional basis. Increased decentralization will lose the holistic; ecosystem based approach to nature conservation and will increase bureaucratisation.

2.1. Integrated and participatory management of natural resources and decentralized management

In Turkey, the forests are owned by the State and they are governed by the General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks. This structure is also underlined in the Forestry Law and National Park Law. One of the aims of the GEF-II Biodiversity and Natural Resources Management Project is to localize the governance of the natural resources with the participation of the local people. In this sense, it is intended by the project to make a change in the laws mentioned above. According to this governing and ownership structure, any income obtained from a National Park, nature park or a nature protection area is collected at the Ministry of Forestry, General Directorate of Nature Conservation and National Parks and income earned in the protected area goes directly to the central environmental administration, so with the change in the law and with the project the locals will be able to benefit from the income obtained in the region.

Environmental politics in Turkey need further improvements, particularly in two directions, to face the challenge and to foster environmental progress.

- Integrating environmental concerns in all appropriate sectors of economic activity and in all relevant government policies and
- Implementing and enforcing environmental laws and policies effectively including efficient enforcement and related institutional measures.

There is a need for greater cooperation and partnership among ministries and relevant institutions responsible for nature conservation. Further, there is also a need to strengthen the network of specialists, scientists and NGOs dealing with flora, fauna and nature conservation issues in order to gather data, conduct the inventory of species and strengthen collective action.

The recent Nature Conservation Framework Law which is not yet submitted to the Turkish Parliament comprises of a section on Participation and is hoped to bring up solutions to the problems stated above.

2.2. Involvement of international non- governmental agencies

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) and the European Commission's LIFE Third Countries Program are prominent among the organizations providing Turkish NGOs with funding opportunities. For instance, 67 environmental NGOs received grants for 105 projects from the UNDP GEF Small Grants Program since 1993 (<www.undp.org.tr>),¹ and government agencies, universities and environmental NGOs benefited from 13 projects funded by the European Commission LIFE Third Countries Program (Adem, 2005:80).

The impact of the EU is evident through the approximation process with the changes in Civil Code, the Local Administration Reform and the changes in the Law of Associations.

One of the international actors effective on national environmental policy is Global Environmental Facility (GEF). The recent project funded by GEF is "Biodiversity and Natural Resource Management" which is carried out between 2000-2007. The budget of the project is 11.5 million \$. The aim of the project is to develop a sustainable management of the protected areas and natural resources with an efficient, sustainable, multi-sectoral and participatory planning method. The second aim of the project is to form basis to extend similar studies in other protected areas in Turkey. The project areas were selected by the National Biodiversity Committee and they were selected to represent the 4 biogeographical regions of Turkey. The institution in charge of the project is Ministry of Environment and Forestry Directorate of National Parks. It is expected to act in coordination with the other DGs of the Ministry and with the Ministry of Culture.

I argue that although Turkish environmental policy is structured mainly by state agencies and NGOs, it is highly influenced by the policies of international organizations. The environmental politics is determined by a small group of bureaucrats who are mostly from a forest engineering background and it is mainly based on a narrow and technocratic understanding. However, there exist some environmental bureaucrats who favour change in

¹ The GEF Small Grants Programme is a world-wide programme providing grants to NGOs for activities that address global problems related to biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, protection of international waters, as well as combating of land degradation and climate change.

the centralized and narrow structure of environmental policy. I think that, in the process of change, the international organizations such as UNDP, GEF, EU, Regional Environmental Center (REC) and World Bank (WB) do function as sources of pressure of change, decentralization and democratisation in the centralized environmental administration. They also act as strong tools of the national promoters of change in environmental policy.

3.1 Background to the Problem

This research attempts to discover the internal dynamics of participation in nature conservation via management plans. The study tries to evaluate participation in terms of the change from both parts: the part that tries to conserve and the part who lives in the area to be conserved. In doing so, it focuses on the attitude and change in both parties: the State and the local communities. The state itself has been transformed by the growth of the global economic system and other transnational processes. These have brought on conditions that bear on the state's regulatory role and capacity (Sassen, 1998). The importance of participation in environmental issues especially in nature conservation is also underlined in related major international UN conferences mainly in the last decade, namely, Agenda 21 (1992), Rio (1992) and Johannesburg (2002). Principle 10 of The Rio Declaration on Environment and Development² states that

“Environmental issues are best handled with the participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available.”

The outcomes, declarations and plan of implementation of these conferences all mention the participation of women, youth, civil society, mountain communities, stakeholders, indigenous and local communities and rural community in particular. The change in the discourse and the stress on participation of these international conferences results from the changing role of the nation-state. Transnational processes such as economic globalization confront the social sciences with a series of theoretical and methodological challenges. This challenge simultaneously transcends the exclusive territorial authority of the national state.

² <http://www.un.org/documents/ga/conf151/aconf15126-1annex1.htm>

Growing attention to global environmental threats together with the globalisation of the economy cast doubts about the effectiveness of state-centred action (Mol, 2001). Methods of nature conservation have evolved from top-down, centralized, authoritarian structures to participatory, decentralized, bottom-up ways of working that involve local people and other related actors in the field. Within this context, both NGOs and the state started to initiate and develop participatory management plans.

In order to address the above question further questions need to be discussed: To what extent are participatory arrangements in conservation, in a centralized and hierarchical society, really changing the way various actors relate to each other and in which direction? How much can the target community actually take part in the definition of the problem and in identifying solutions? Is the state really keen on implementing participatory mechanisms or this an illusion to satisfy extensively the transnational donors? Are the local people ready to participate? How do they perceive and live through the participatory processes? Is the relation of the local people with the state changing? What is the effect of international organizations on participatory implementation and decision-making processes of the Turkish state?

3.2. Different Approaches – Deliberative Democracy

This section tries to explore key issues in different approaches to democratic decision-making as well as the construction of publicity. It particularly focuses on three approaches that dominate the debate, namely, the Habermas- inspired model of deliberative democracy, the post-structuralist model of radical democracy as articulated in the works of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and the green deliberative democracy.

To create the public space defines a political task that would be accomplished ‘through legally institutionalized procedures of democratic deliberation and decision-making and gain sufficient strength to hold its own against the other two social forces – money and administrative power (Habermas, 1998:249).

Habermas devoted a great deal of attention to the legitimacy of modernity, which he sees highly related to the workings of the public sphere. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas analyzes the key role of the public sphere in the formation of political decisions within a democracy. It is quite clear the point of departure of Habermas is

Kant. Habermas gets from Kant a view of public sphere as the definitive institution of democracy, that without which no theory of constitutional republicanism can exist. Only an actively involved public sphere opens the way for a truly democratic exchange. Thus, Habermas attempts to a critical and historical reconstruction of the development of the public sphere in modern Western democracies. Habermas' starting point was that our late-capitalist or post-industrial mass democracies "can claim to continue the principles of the liberal constitutional state only as long as they seriously try to live up to the mandate of a public sphere that fulfils political functions." (Habermas, 1996:441). Habermas understands communication at a deeper level than Kant, since for Habermas opinions and moral decisions are being shaped through intersubjective dialogue. In this sense, the speaker "is not a freestanding agent but a functioning unit of a community of speakers" which Habermas calls this new approach "universal pragmatics" (Habermas, 1979:55-67). Every speech act, if challenged, requires the speaker to justify it or "redeem it". For Habermas, some form of validity claim is implicit in the very structure of speech, a premise that leads him to conclude that rationality provides the structure as well as the scope of communication. His crucial argument is that every time we communicate with one another, we automatically commit to the possibility of a freely achieved dialogic agreement in which the better argument will win. This is why whenever we are faced with disagreements or at least with the pluralism of different convictions we are always seeking a future resolution. Communicative action is Habermas' name for the residu of rationality built into our everyday action. In the Habermasian model, the values of solidarity, respect, truthfulness, authenticity and autonomy are not metaphysical assumptions or values in their own right. Rather, these norms are the implicit assumptions of the use of everyday speech. Nature is also seen as an object of moral concern for the human community and it is through our deliberations that we would decide how it should be treated.

In communicative action individuals arrive at judgements by conversing with other participants who in turn will be affected by those judgements. This dynamic between participants makes communicative action fundamentally emancipatory because it affirms the need to resolve disagreements through agreement. In addition, communication is emancipatory since it expresses reason's systematic interest in pursuing the material conditions that facilitate its fullest development. Communicative action, Habermas writes expressively, "is renewed with each act of unconstrained understanding, with each moment of living together in solidarity, of successful individuation and of saying

emancipation...Communicative reason operates in history as avenging force” (Habermas, 1983:221, 227). For Habermas the possibility of rationally justified consensus is absolutely crucial from a political perspective, since without it, the philosophy loses its critical edge and the definition of solidarity could be defined either in terms of pre-political values or in terms of the volatility of subjective feelings of compassion. According to Habermas, solidarity and the social bond are structural function of communication that can be strengthened once we become aware of the validity claims embedded in any of our statements. As soon as we enter into meaningful discussions with one another our commitment to redeem such claims will systematically push us to seek rational solutions that will be evident to everyone who is not under the effect of manipulation or distortion. These kinds of solutions will allow for the formation of lasting and rationally validated consensus rather than shifting alliances of convenience or utilitarian arrangements. In the Habermasian line of thought, without an interest in others and a sense of involvement with the well-being of collectivity there is no public sphere.

For Mouffe, conflict, with its ability to grasp and confront unequal power relations, constitutes an essential basis for democratic relations. Without it, Mouffe argues, consensus is doomed in liberal –democratic societies to be the “expression of hegemony and the crystallization of power relations” (2000:49). In Mouffe’s criticism consensus, which plays a central role in the Habermasian model, must itself be viewed as a form of hegemony, or as a result of the power relations inherent in public communication.

Shalin suggests that we evaluate Habermas’ model through the perspective of dissent. He argues that Habermas’s notion of rational-critical debate leaves little room for “the constructive properties of the “dissent” within the public sphere. In Habermasian model, dissent, exists primarily as a counterproductive force and is theorized as an empirical obstacle to consensus. In the Habermasian model, rational-critical debate, lacking a social space for dissent, occurs largely within the framework of a social environment “handed down” from above.

The core of Green Critique of Critical Theory is that Critical Theory cannot adequately integrate concern for non-human nature, since it only considers the development of norms between mutual participants in a discourse. Thus, for them, Critical Theory is an anthropocentric belief system that separates and privileges human emancipation over the

emancipation of non-human beings and cannot serve as a basis for informing a cultural practice that would fully protect biodiversity.

One of the most influential critiques has been the work of Robyn Eckersley who has developed a critique of the use of Critical Theory in defining environmental ethics. For Eckersley Critical Theory is adequate for human affairs and also notes that public participation enhances deliberations for the preservation of the natural environment. She also agrees that community decisions should be reached via democratic deliberations among representatives of the various groups of the society (Eckersley, 1999: 33).

On the other hand, Eckersley thinks that limits exist to the utilisation of Critical Theory. She particularly argues that Critical Theory does not attempt to restructure the ground rules of decision-making to provide any explicit protection or recognition of non-human interests' (Eckersley, 1995:179). Critical theory is not adequate for the full preservation of nature because it is based only on human concerns and as such fails to justify the preservation of species that do not have a utilitarian value for humans. To reliably protect nature, Eckersley discusses that we need to develop a concept of nature as an end-in-itself not as just one more criterion in the good life. Therefore, we need 'reliable grounds for the protection on non-human nature (Eckersley, 1998:165). This calls for the development of an expanded ethics that can include the non-human community in our decision-making process. To provide for this ethics, she argues that there is a need to develop a scientifically informed moral line of argument (Eckersley, 1998:178). Eckersley argues that science may be solicited to inform and support arguments concerning the desirability of either existing or potential human orientations toward the rest of the nature. She seeks to inscribe ecocentric norms into the procedures of discursive dialogue in an impartial way- as a matter of morality and justice rather than ethics in Habermasian terms (1999:25). For Eckersley, Critical Theory is based on respect for the relative autonomy of the human subject and according to her the treatment of the other as moral subjects should be extended to nature, regardless of its level of communicative competence.

Contrary to Eckersley, Habermas does not derive his ethics as a means to uphold individual dignity and autonomy. The values of solidarity, respect, truthfulness, authenticity and autonomy are not metaphysical assumptions of the use of everyday speech. There are other critics to Eckersley in terms of society level decision-making processes as well. For Dryzek,

values alone are not enough to reform our social order. Instead, what is required is also structural change in our political and economic structures. This leads to consider institutional structures and the role they play in either promoting or hindering an ethical consideration of nature (2000:142). Furthermore, the split between human and non-human nature systematically devalues the urban environment as something outside of nature. This creates a geographic dualism between human-impacted areas and wilderness (Light, 2001:17-18). Moreover, this argument by asserting its basis in science, serves to deligitimate other sources for the ethical treatment of nature. Even Eckersley's line of thought is accepted, it is not at all clear that an 'ecocentric' perspective would result in an ecologically sustainable society. What is needed is the provision of anthropological or sociological evidence of the real impact of an ecocentric perspective on a society's practices toward the natural environment.

There is no necessary conflict between ecocentric norms and Critical Theory. Rather, the relationship is one of mutual reliance. It is clear from ecological sciences that humanity and nature are interdependent. In an undistorted communication situation, this relationship would have to be recognised and taken into account in human deliberations (Torgensen, 1999:120). Additionally, the dependence of nature on our actions would also be made clear. Thus our responsibility for and treatment of nature would become an ethical concern of the human community in an undistorted communication situation (Habermas, 1993: 111).

Increased citizen participation, in the form of bottom-up, collaborative decision-making, is needed because it is a fundamental principal of eco-system based approaches (Light, 2001:10).

This study adopts deliberative democracy approach and the combination of environmental ethics with deliberative democracy. The approach is not in line with Eckersley's critique of deliberative democracy.

It is well known that participatory approaches are being widely used throughout the world and some of the implementations are really successful. In Turkey, we are fully aware that some of the projects implemented by various state agencies or non-governmental organizations are results of successful participatory processes.

The state needs to move towards more decentralized, participatory and preventive decision-making. This is also true in environmental policy-making. In recent years ‘participatory’ approaches have spread to a remarkable pace in environment and science-related policy-making (Pellizzoni, 2003, Bulkeley, Harriet, Mol, Arthur, P.J., 2003, Mol, 2001, Paehlke, 1989, Doherty and de Geus, 1996, Paehlke and Torgenson, 1990). Political participation becomes a public question whenever the social bases of division of labour and of the distribution of resources – the right to hold some positions and to manage some questions – are called into question. The current growing call for participation thus indicates a crisis of the structure of social solidarity, a decline in the sense of belonging and in the collective assumption of responsibility for the decisions taken by those entrusted to act on behalf of their fellow citizens. This distrust is tangled with distrust to expert knowledge which results in uncertainty. This is also true for Turkey where trust relations are built on interpersonal trust and patronage relations. In this context, the implementation of participatory mechanisms where the actors should be equal in negotiations and the relationships must be built on mutual trust becomes almost impossible. In addition, the previous top-down approach of the state or the elites in the society contributes to this mistrust and negative impression.

Imbalances in the social, economic and political structure such as inequalities in formal education, income and occupation feeds into and in return is nourished by patronage networks (Kalaycioglu, 2001:62). Interpersonal trust is a crucial factor in sustaining cooperation, collaboration and teamwork, which in turn seems to be correlated with democracy, on the one hand and economic development, on the other. Turkish society is replete with high level of interpersonal distrust. Among 44 countries included in the World Values Survey of 1989-90, Turkey ranks the lowest with less than 10% of its population believing that most fellow human beings are trustworthy (Esmer, 1999:33). Therefore, it is not surprising that collaborative work and participatory mechanisms are hard to establish in Turkey. When both lack of interpersonal trust influence socio-economic and political behaviour, the outcome is a number of civil initiatives and a corporate structure that comprises of mainly family-owned enterprises. On the other hand, it must be noted that traditional solidarity patterns still prevail in Turkey as a survival strategy of the rural people and of the internal migrants. In this context, it can be concluded that blood ties, lineage relations, regional bonds and other primordial or premodern affiliations play a major role in the establishment and maintenance of political, economic and social organizations. Family firms, religious, regional and other associations tend to enjoy higher chances of survival among other organizations in the

society. All political institutions are effectively penetrated by patronage, including nepotism, favoritism, regional- communal bonds and religious solidarity (Kalaycioglu, 2001:63). Those parties that can establish effective patronage networks to address the needs of the rural and the urban poor benefit the most. Within this existing structure, it is hard to implement participatory mechanisms especially with the rural people in Turkey.

If we are to move towards a more sustainable and equitable future, social, political and economic institutions will need to adapt to new ways of doing things. However, contemporary institutions at all levels (global to local) lack legitimacy in that they are implicated in the growing disparity of wealth within and between societies, increased environmental degradation and the inability to act within the confines of the global capitalist system (Dryzek, 1987,1992). Their understanding and implementation of sustainability seems to favour the interests of particular politically-influential groups within society and are relatively unconcerned with the needs of the disenfranchised. Further, the motives of the state and other institutions are distrusted, leading to feelings of political alienation, cynicism, and general apathy toward political institutions (Offe and Preuss, 1991: 164-5). It comes out to be that the crisis contemporary green politics faces and must respond to can be understood as a crisis of representation. Knowledge of and ethical commitments to, non-human nature are often misrepresented in technical, economic and political decision-making processes by 'experts' and by our political representatives.

On the other hand, the core idea behind deliberative theories is that decisions should only be regarded as legitimate if they derive from a process of argument and deliberation in which all citizens have an equal right to be heard, in which arguments are won and decisions are made only through the force of better argument and in which other forms of power and political influence derived from wealth or patronage have no place. Hence, deliberative institutional designs are participatory in that the values and needs of all groups in society form the basis of political deliberation and the legitimacy of actions and institutions is rooted in reasoned argument (Connelly and Smith, 2003: 73). Only when through participatory arrangements, citizens are able to see that their political and ethical commitments to environmental issues are taken into account; they will begin to regain trust and interest in political debate and action.

3. Case Study

The field study is conducted in the Camili region in Turkey between August-November 2003 and on August -September 2005. The region is situated in the Black Sea region, in the north of Turkey, in Artvin, Borcka. The nearest district, Borcka, is 45 km. away and the region is on the Georgian border. The altitude of the region varies between 400-3500 m. and the total size of the area is 25274.58 ha. Since it is on the Georgian border, it is First Degree Military Zone where consequently, apart from the local people, the entrance to the region was possible solely with a military permission. It changed with a Council of Ministers decision on December 2003. The area consists of six villages, namely, Duzenli, Camili, Efeler, Kayalar, Ugur, Maral. The region is special with its old growth forests and high Alpine pastures and is designated a biosphere reserve on June 2005 and it is the first biosphere reserve in Turkey.

The research method consists of group and in-depth interviews with the policy-makers and local people working in natural resource management. Moreover, participant observation is another method used during the field. Further group to be interviewed includes local, national and international stakeholders, namely the consultants of GEF, GEF project coordinator in Turkey, GEF staff at the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme National Coordinator, representatives of local NGO and national NGO that are active in the field and also local administrators, as well.

3.1. Major Conflicts -How is The Project Perceived?

This section of the paper aims to tell the story of how a conservation project has turned out to be perceived as a barrier to the modernization efforts of the local people. “You are Working For the Bears” is a crucial sentence chosen to symbolise how the project is perceived.

Development for them meant the construction of new roads, improved education and health services. Construction of new roads so that they would go to their pastures to feed the livestock better not on foot but by motor vehicles. They all believed that they were living in an open-air prison because of geographical constraints since the three sides of the region were bounded by the Karchal Mountains and the the other side is the Georgian-Turkey border.

The project is perceived as a barrier to the modernization efforts of the local people. The region has a pre- modern social structure which is mainly due to the geographic reasons. The

road to the nearest province, namely Borcka, is closed during winter between 4 to 6 months due to severe weather conditions. This has harsh effects on the population especially regarding emergent health problems. This situation leads them to act in cooperation and solidarity. The economic structure can be defined as a self-sufficient closed economy. The ability to market the goods produced in the region is limited due to the geographical structure, weather conditions, the high transportation cost and transportation problems, respectively. The only products that are marketed are hazelnuts and honey. Agriculture and livestock are the main sources of living. Few people work as seasonal workers at tea factories in nearby provinces. A significant change in the income distribution pattern of the villagers can be observed in the region. Before 1998, a relatively equal income distribution can be observed between the residents. After 1998, the time when a national NGO started to initiate a bee keeping and queen bee production training program for the locals, some households began to produce queen bees which resulted in higher incomes. Consequently, the economic situation started to differentiate transforming the economic structure of the population. The social structure and social relations present the features of a premodern society as well. The relations of the locals with the forest was mainly based on using wood as an energy source which was self-sufficient and which did not involve any attempt of trade of woods or excess cutting so it can be concluded that the forest was well preserved by the locals.

The desire to “reach” modernity is so high and modernity for the locals can be symbolized as improved transportation, communication, educational and health care facilities. Among those, the ambition of the local people on road construction from the nearest province Borcka to the villages and road construction between the villages and the pastures is crucial and it became one of the significant points of conflict. As far as communication is concerned, to be able to use a cellular phone was an important desire for them and the project team and the locals lived through a dispute on the construction of a base station to be able to talk on the mobile phone. At the moment, base station is constructed in 2004 and it became possible to talk on the mobile phone. Modernization of the region is not one of the aims of the project but in the end and in time, it is projected that it will serve for that purpose as well.

The bear in this sense acts as a metaphor to symbolise the major conflict between the civil servants and the locals. The bear issue can be analyzed in this modernization – premodernization axis. On the axis between developmentalist approach and the conservationist approach, the project is perceived at the far right end of the axis, the ultimate,

absolute preservation that restricts modernization efforts whereas, the project functions just in the middle of the axis in between development and preservation which is an integrated, and holistic approach. “You are Working for the Bears” in this sense is a crucial sentence. Most of the staff of the project team consists of biologists and forest engineers. Research has been carried out mainly on the flora and fauna of the region and it is the first time a sociologist is employed. Some of the biologists work in isolation from the villagers without presenting their findings leading to suspicions among the locals and strengthening their misunderstanding or assumption that “We were Working for the Bears” or “The Bears are More Significant than Men”. Also the locals were trying to find solutions to the problems caused by bears especially on hazelnut crops which are the main sources of income and they ask for a compensation for the damages from the government. At a meeting one of the locals said “Okey, we will protect the nature, the forest, but not the wildlife”.³ A holistic approach has not been achieved yet.

The project is also perceived as a threat to the existence, pertinence of the lives of the local people. They are dubious that the region will be declared a National Park and they will not be able to benefit from forestry products or secondary products and they will not be able to use the pastures for grazing the livestock. This was the usual case beforehand for the National Parks in Turkey. The National Parks were declared with a top-down, centralized and authoritarian approach from Ankara so most of the time great disputes, tensions and conflicts exist between the local people and the National Park staff who are civil servants. It is necessary to mention that the project area is designated as a biosphere reserve, which is a UNESCO category in 2005. In addition to this, the two nature conservation sites in the region were declared in 1998 with the old structure of administration, top-down, from Ankara, the Ministry of Forestry. Hence, the villagers woke up one morning learning that they had two new conservation sites. They were not even informed about their own site; participation was totally out of concern. This manner of declaring nature conservation sites in the region decreases the belief in the participatory approach of the project relying on the past experiences and previous relations with governmental bodies and officials. One of the locals insisted in his belief that nothing will change, this participation is just role playing. “The decisions taken by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry at the top level will be implemented anyway, either consulting us or without any consultation.” Some locals even

³ From the panel discussion held in Borcka on 27 Ekim 2003

think that the Ministry of Environment and Forestry will kick that out of the region and find them a place to migrate so that the forest and the wildlife will be conserved.

3.3. Who will Govern and How? Various Attempts

Various attempts have been made to govern the region with the villagers and for this to form a local organization was necessary. In the first phases of the project, the villagers were informed about the project and its aims. Later, at each village, 5 village representatives were elected to exchange the ideas with the other villagers about the project, to discuss the developments and to act as a bridge between the villagers and the project team. With these representatives it was decided to establish a formal organization and research was undertaken about the suitable structure of the organization. Followingly, it was agreed that the existing structures should be utilized for this purpose and the Macahel Foundation, which was located in Istanbul was chosen. To establish a branch of this foundation at the village was found inappropriate in terms of representation, equality and democratic management so it was decided to form a Village Union as a tool of governance. This decision was also shared with the villagers at various meetings held and a sample form of regulations to form a Village Union was examined. In the later stages of the establishment of a Village Union, the project team chose not to participate at the Village Union meetings and the villagers themselves try to form the Union so in the long term it will be a possible mechanism for the governance of the region. However, the village union became an unsuccessful attempt since it turned out to be a “vain” institution with unrealistic ideas about the region and misrepresentation of the region.

To increase the level of participation, meetings with women were held and at some villages women representatives were elected. At these meetings, problems specific to women and their living conditions and solutions to these problems were determined. The expectation of women from the project was discussed and the possibilities for women to benefit from the project, such as encouragement of production and marketing of handcrafts were mentioned.

How participation is perceived in the project area

- You know what is going to be applied here, what is the most suitable for the region because you are educated people. You won't ask it to us of course, we are uneducated. The hegemony of better information and education results from a huge educational gap between the project team and the local people.

- When talking about the women's meeting I was asked kindly "what will I lecture to the women?" So instead of developing horizontal and equitable relations, they were used to being lectured; a top-down, hierarchical relation with the public officials.

Negotiations on the management plan, especially on conservation targets were held. These were actually based on very fruitful discussions with the local people trying to reach to a consensus between local needs and economic development and conservation. In addition, I think that these negotiations served as training programs for all sides. One villager even said "We are learning to exercise democracy here."

Although the local people are willing to rule the area, there exists problems of organization and representation in the region and it seems that this will continue for some years. There should be training programs on capacity building, negotiation skills and communication not only for the public officials but also for the local people as well. Suspicions also continue about the structure of governance as well. After the designation of the area as a biosphere reserve, the first in Turkey, some of the local people have come up with dubious projections on the governance structure of the region. These include such thoughts as "This area will not be ruled by the laws of Turkish Republic. Instead the administration passed on to the laws of UNESCO." Some even believe that "foreigners (people who are not locals) cannot produce projects for Camili. What they produce is only mechanisms to exploit Camili and then cause it to diminish. The forests of Camili belong to us."

4. Conclusion

The main focus of this research is the role of participation in nature conservation in Turkey within the context of political modernization. Is participation possible? Mainly, there are two sides of the coin: Public officials (civil servants) and local people. The public officials and the bureaucrats are used to the top-down, centralized way of working. They will have to share their power with the local people which is difficult and takes longer than they had experienced beforehand. The local people see conservation as a threat to their livelihood and an obstacle to economic development. Participatory decision making in this regard helps to overcome prejudices, disagreements, misunderstandings. Turkey is undergoing a change in the administrative and political level from an

authoritarian; centralized and hierarchical structure to a more decentralized, participatory and democratic one. In this process of transition, international dynamics and organizations play a significant role. Within this context of political modernisation I tried to discuss the the role of participation in nature conservation via a case study. The conditions for participation in nature conservation can be depicted as a result of this field study. It is significant to develop a mechanism for the participation of different groups such as women and young people. Although this is a learning process, a general framework should be developed to underline the structure of participation. Through participatory decision making; a lasting and rational consensus would be reached that is for the benefit of both nature and local people.

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