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# Mining (Dis)amenity: The Political Ecology of Mining Opposition in the Kaz (Ida) Mountain Region of Western Turkey

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## ABSTRACT

Opposition to mining activities is an increasingly global phenomenon. A key feature of political ecology literature examining this opposition is its focus on the power of multinational corporations to gain access to resources on lands principally claimed by indigenous peoples and peasants in 'Third World' countries. These struggles often play out within the context of tensions between neoliberal natural resource policies and interventions by non-governmental and civil society actors. Meanwhile, political ecology scholars of natural resource conflicts in 'First World' countries are documenting conflicts over environmental management that emerge from complex commodification processes and competing forms of capital investment, such as those associated with amenity migration, that privilege different characteristics of landscapes. These perspectives are rarely combined into a single framework, despite the recognition that common dimensions may intermingle in regional contexts around the world. Using the case of conflict over gold mining in the Kaz (Ida) Mountains of western Turkey, this article explores the intersection of state neoliberalism with competing forms of rural capital, which produce a regional mining conflict. Our case highlights the value of 'locating the First and Third Worlds within' when it comes to studies of social processes that shape environmental conflicts.

'Those who oppose gold exploration in the Ida Mountains are under the power of some foreign-based groups that don't want to allow [us to benefit from] our country's richness with respect to gold.' (Turkish Energy Minister Hilmi Güler, 20 October 2007)

'This region is famous for its olives, its air, its oxygen... They will separate the gold with cyanide... Cyanide will poison our [drinking] water, our soil... The region's income, tourism, and olive industry will all die. Of course we don't want the gold mines...' (Owner of second-home in Ida Mountains, Bursa, July 2008)

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## INTRODUCTION

Over the past decade, there has been sustained interest in the ways that global flows of capital, especially those associated with multinational corporations in the minerals sector, are transforming livelihoods and landscapes (Ballard and Banks, 2003; Bridge, 2002, 2004). Within the field of political ecology, environmental politics associated with these flows as well as state policy have often been studied within the context of a 'Third World' framework (Bryant and Bailey, 1998; Robbins, 2004). A key feature of this research is the conflict between multinational corporations and multiple cultural, ethnic and political groups, including villagers, peasants and indigenous peoples, over the social and environmental consequences associated with mineral extraction. This focus details the unequal power relations embedded in processes of policy formation and negotiations about resource access (see Dietrich, this issue). Meanwhile, the 'First World' political ecology literature highlights the importance of state intervention with particular commodities to create distinctive regional agro-ecologies as well as the role that competing forms of rural capitalism play in struggles to shape environmental management (Brogden and Greenberg, 2003; McCarthy, 2002; Walker and Fortmann, 2003). But what happens when elements of both of these dynamics intersect in the same region?

Using the case of opposition by the region's inhabitants to gold mining in the Ida Mountains of western Turkey, and the Turkish state's response, we explore the ways in which the struggle against multinational mining corporations is shaped both by dynamics that are tied to the neoliberalization of natural resource policy and the changing social-political dimensions of amenity migration. In doing so, we argue for a political ecology of transitional regional landscapes. Our work builds on calls by Walker (2003) and Neumann (2010) who have argued that both First World and Third World frameworks potentially ignore the intersection of important dynamics not immediately associated with their respective frame. Drawing on Schroeder et al. (2006), we suggest that one modest way forward is to begin locating both the First and Third Worlds 'within'. This approach explicitly acknowledges the possibility of observing the intersection of dynamics associated with each framework, which come together in places and regions that are characterized by transitional economic, political and social dynamics, and in ways that potentially lead to unexpected outcomes. We concur with Theriault (this issue) and Dietrich (this issue) about the importance of excavating the complex ways that micropolitical patterns articulate with wider political economic processes.

Turkey provides an interesting case in which to explore the idea of 'locating the First and Third Worlds within', given the emergence of divergent forms of capital investment in the region. On the one hand, Turkey shares common ground with the growing number of countries featured in Third World political ecology whose economies have been shaped by neoliberal policies. At the same time, Turkey's economy is one of the largest in the

world — its prime minister has been present at G20 economic summits since their inception in 2008. A number of the country's coastal regions, many of which are home to a growing olive oil production sector that is associated with distinct cultural groups, have witnessed dramatic capital investment in real estate and tourism development. Reflecting in part the size and strength of the country's economy, this investment is fuelled by a number of factors, but second-home construction and amenity in-migration are key drivers. The result has been a dramatic social-demographic mixing in the area, which has important implications for the contours of environmental politics in the region.

We document the political ecology of transitional regional landscapes in the Kaz (Ida) Mountains, in the Edremit Bay Region. By 'locating the Third World within', we highlight the tensions created by ongoing processes associated with neoliberalism in natural resource policies, the state's efforts to accommodate agriculture and environmental management, and the increasing integration of agricultural livelihoods into global markets. In essence, the state must negotiate a course that protects opportunities for foreign investment, while not foreclosing opportunities for the growth of economic earnings by villagers through olive production. By 'locating the First World within', we highlight the ways that the biophysical landscape and state policies foster the growth of a regional olive industry and the challenge to the state's neoliberal policies that competing rural capitalisms — in the form of mining and residential development associated with amenity migration — create.

This article uses semi-structured, in-depth interviews, participant observation and document analysis. We employed convenience and snowball sampling between 2008 and 2010 to recruit and interview more than forty-five individuals who either live/work in or regularly visit the region. These individuals include representatives from five local grassroots organizations (GROs) that oppose mining, government leaders, business people, and part-time and full-time residents. Our interview questions focused on opinions about mining, perceptions about the conflict's cause, and life history information. Both authors visited villages in the area (twenty in total), as well as attending rallies, protests and forums, village cafes and real estate offices. We visited tourism sites, including the national park as well as culture and history museums. One of the authors (Arı) visited the Kücükdere gold mining field in the Madra Mountains. We analysed interview transcriptions, field notes, news articles, posters, flyers, websites and social networking sites to identify key themes.

#### **LOCATING THE FIRST AND THIRD WORLDS WITHIN**

In examining opposition to gold mining in western Turkey, we draw on political ecology, given its longstanding interest in 'understand[ing] the complex

relations' between humans and their environmental interactions 'through a careful analysis of . . . the forms of access and control over resources and their implications for environmental health and sustainable livelihoods' (Watts, 2000, cited in Robbins, 2004: 6–7). While early work in the field focused on environmental and development politics in the Third World, including emphasis on the economic and ecological context of local production, more recent studies have specifically focused on consequences of neoliberalism for these same locations. At the same time, political ecologists in the so-called First World have examined meso-scale arenas of power and social change (Walker and Fortmann, 2003) as well as the intersection of changing economies, ecologies and communities that can lead to new and uneven environmental management regimes (Reed, 2007).

There are also well-recognized limitations to the First World/Third World binaries in the literature. Arguments for an alternative framework have largely focused on constructing a 'regional political ecology' (Neumann, 2010; Walker, 2003), which includes paying attention to the 'importance of local-scale social dynamics while situating these dynamics within broader scales of regional (and global) processes' (Walker, 2003: 7) that do not fall into neat capitalist/protocapitalist categories. Likewise, Neumann (2010) suggests that focusing on regions as constructed through historically contingent processes allows us to characterize the simultaneous transformation of society and nature. Within this context, we draw particular attention to the suggestion of Schroeder et al. (2006: 163) that scholars 'discover the Third World *within*', by which they mean that scholars should be more attentive to dynamics within the First World that are more similar to, or results that more closely mirror, Third World situations. In doing so, they point to three distinct examples: 1) links between globalized production and consumption; 2) the ways that 'the partial coincidence of deindustrialization' and agricultural policy restructuring has led to 'Third World conditions' in North American and European heartlands; and 3) the fact that migration streams are bringing sizeable Third World populations from 'Latin America, Africa, and many parts of Asia' 'into the spatial heart of capitalism'. We suggest, however, that this theoretical move begs a key question. Thus, our research asks: what are the key dimensions of First World ecologies that are found within contexts that are not traditionally viewed as belonging to the First World? And what elements of Third World political ecology remain important to understanding natural resource conflicts?

To begin answering our research questions, we first turn our attention to key theoretical dimensions in the political ecology literature, drawing on both Third World and First World research streams. We focus particularly on elements of the First World literature that we see as critical to understanding new conflicts in transitional economies and countries. Next, we turn our attention to the case of gold mining and the resultant conflict in the Edremit Bay Region. Here we focus particularly on the tension between the political economy of natural resource extraction in the country and the local ecology

valued by amenity in-migrants. We conclude the article by discussing the implications our case has for the intersection of First and Third World political ecologies.

### **Livelihood Threats, Neoliberalism and Mining in the Third World**

From the perspective of Third World political ecology, mining opposition is largely the result of diverse actors, often indigenous peoples, who are forced to respond to changing governance dynamics and economic conditions that open up new opportunities for mining by multinational corporations. In particular, neoliberalism has resulted in increased mining both in countries that contain a small set of commodities aggressively sought by investors (such as gold, lithium) and those that have revised their laws to make mining easier (Bridge, 2004). This has had social and environmental consequences, including: surface and groundwater quality degraded by mercury or cyanide spills and leaching (Hilson, 2002; Kitula, 2006); associated lethal consequences for people, species and ecosystems (Hilson, 2002); land-use conflicts between mining companies and other miners, herders/ranchers, and those involved in forestry, agriculture and conservation (Ballard and Banks, 2003; Evans et al., 2001; Hilson, 2002; Kitula, 2006); forced relocations to accommodate mining operations (Ballard and Banks, 2003; Kitula 2006); and community socio-demographic changes resulting from in-/out-migration (Hilson, 2002; Kitula, 2006). These demographic changes create social problems, ranging from unemployment to social tensions over banditry and prostitution (Hilson, 2002; Kitula, 2006). Nevertheless, new mining activities may not be entirely negative, with some communities benefiting from new jobs and spending by miners on local produce and goods (Kitula, 2006).

Against this backdrop of economic restructuring, struggles between the state and community often emerge over the legitimacy of mining operations and how these should benefit the people in the environs of the projects. In response, a state's claims to mineral resources have been greeted 'with skepticism and in some instances outright denial' (Ballard and Banks, 2003: 296). In some cases, such as in Papua New Guinea, local communities have even sought to bypass the state and negotiate directly with mine developers, thereby directly challenging national sovereignty (Ballard and Banks, 2003). In other instances, mining has been linked to the outbreak of armed conflicts, particularly in countries where resources are abundant and economic development is considered resource-dependent (LeBillon, 2001).

Echoing the wider research on natural resource management in the Third World (Robbins, 2004), research on mining resistance demonstrates that the composition of local communities in the vicinity of mining projects is not stable or predictable and instead emerges through processes of contestation (Ballard and Banks, 2003). These communities may be tied to particular mining practices themselves, such as in Ghana where the practices of

small-scale miners are marginalized and criminalized, even though their mining is often in alluvial deposits that generally are not of interest to large mining corporations (Tschakert and Sinha, 2007). In Peru, communities opposed to mining have relied on discursive strategies that explicitly seek to jump scales, in which the threats represented by the mine are portrayed in terms that indicate their national and global significance (Haarstad and Fløysand, 2007). Such efforts effectively construct the concerns of particular individuals or groups at the local level over detrimental impacts in ways that make them attractive to national and global NGOs of different types, which help to empower these communities.

### **Commodity Regions and Competing Rural Capitalisms in the First World**

While there are diverse insights that might be drawn from the literature on the so-called First World political ecology, we seek to highlight below two key threads for our purposes. First, the First World is not immune to the ways that commodity production of raw materials shapes distinctive industrial geographies. Hollander (2008) and Prudham (2005), for instance, highlight conflicts between the myriad ways that capitalism, together with national politics, transforms nature into commodities and the social processes that shape perceptions of nature and its protection. Second, much First World political ecology documents cases in areas or regions whose environmental politics are influenced by amenity migration. Gosnell and Abrams (2011) define amenity migration as a distinct pattern of human migration characterized by the seasonal or permanent movement of largely affluent urban or suburban populations to scenic/nature-rich and/or culturally-rich rural areas. This work highlights the potential for new groups of people inhabiting landscapes, or their ideologies, to influence the ways that these landscapes and their environments are commodified and new forms of management result.

It is worth remembering that the First World, including particular regions, has been shaped by distinctive industrial commodity ecologies (Hollander, 2008; Prudham, 2005). A number of key points stand out, but two are worth mentioning here. First, the state has often sought to grow and protect key agricultural commodities both for global markets and against competitors, sometimes through dramatic interventions, which today are seen by environmentalists as irrational (Hollander, 2008). Second, converting raw materials into commodities involves wrestling with key 'institutional issues (e.g., property rights, taxes), environmental politics, technological change, and proximity to markets' as well as biophysical limits, ranging from genetics to landscapes (Prudham, 2005: 57). In Prudham's case study of 'Douglas fir country' in western North America, this intersection creates a drama between capitalist nature — the process through which raw materials are created — and social natures, or the ways in which understandings of forests within civil society may or may not prioritize their economic value.



Beyond commodity struggles, amenity migrants are increasingly being recognized as key players in reshaping rural politics and landscapes (Cadieux and Hurley, 2011; Woods, 2007, 2011). In New Zealand, high levels of international amenity in-migration, together with associated overseas investment in property, commerce and construction projects, and increasing international tourism, influence processes of engagement, negotiation and contestation in localized political struggles over rural space (Woods, 2011). In Canada's 'cottage country', amenity migration produces communities within communities that include both newcomers and long-timers, but are based on class differences (Halseth, 1998). In most cases, migration is associated with the aesthetic qualities of spectacular landscapes and environments relatively free of sprawl. Indeed, Taylor (2011: 334) argues that there is a tight link between amenity migration and particular 'cultural preferences for natural landscapes', which lead to new 'power relations [becoming] manifest in landscapes'. Cadieux (2011) points to the importance of practices and representations of nature for understanding the construction and maintenance of these amenity landscapes. Beyond the First World political ecology literature, there is growing recognition that amenity migration is an important global phenomenon (Cadieux and Hurley, 2011; McCarthy, 2008; Woods, 2011), ranging from places as diverse as New Zealand (Woods, 2007, 2011), France (Buller and Hoggart, 1994) and Spain (Elizburu, 2007) to developing and transitional countries, such as the Czech Republic (Bartoš et al., 2009), Estonia (Tammaru et al., 2004), Nepal (Nepal, 2007), Zimbabwe (Tonderayi, 2000), Costa Rica, Argentina, the Philippines and South Africa (Moss, 2006), and Chile (Keepeis and Laris, 2008).

Amenity migration in North America is increasingly recognized as a central influence in shaping land management. Walker and Fortmann (2003) make explicit the role that landscape qualities play in changing resource management schemes in California's Sierra Nevada Mountains, demonstrating how the emergence of real estate markets within these transitional rural areas commodify landscapes in new and potentially unexpected ways. This commodification results from competing rural capitalisms, or forms of capital investment that derive from particular ways of seeing and valuing nature. In this case, real estate industries are in competition with extraction-based industries for economic earnings from the landscape. Research from the American Southwest documents the resultant process of reterritorialization, in which land markets and land management agency decision making reassign resource rights from one group of users to another (Brogden and Greenberg, 2003). In their Arizona case, ranchers lose access to resources through declines in private grazing lands resulting from rising real estate prices that lead to ranch conversion. They also lose grazing leases on public lands when public land managers heed the desires of amenity migrants who have the power and money to challenge their management decisions. At the same time, reterritorialization may actually result in management that creates opportunities for livelihood uses (Hurley and Halfacre, 2011; Reed, 2007).

In the process of challenging environmental management regimes, amenity migrants with economic interests in landscape qualities have used legal challenges (Gilbert et al., 2009; Walker and Fortmann, 2003), direct involvement with local government (Hurley and Walker, 2004), and outright land purchases (Brogden and Greenberg, 2003; Logan and Wekerle, 2008). Importantly, these actions turn on discourses that are explicitly grounded in the ecological sciences (Hurley and Walker, 2004). Gilbert et al. (2009) make a similar point in their examination of protection efforts for the Oak Ridges Moraine, noting the role of divergent ecological discourses, including some specifically science-based that commodify landscape features (Logan and Wekerle, 2008). These discursive alliances, in the form of national NGOs and regional environmental GROs, may silence other constituencies — including both long-time residents and newcomers — that have intimate ties to a region's resources (Robbins, 2006).

### **OLIVE TREES AND MINING IN THE IDA MOUNTAINS**

'Turkey is rapidly transforming itself into a viable and powerful mining nation where investors can find a multitude of companies, both local and foreign, operating to international standards . . . the mining sector is proving that it could one day be the economy's backbone.'  
Excerpt from *Global Business Reports* (2008: 64)

The fight to stop mining in the Ida Mountains, in the Edremit Bay Region, is not the first of its kind in western Turkey. In the early 1990s, conflict erupted over plans by multinational mining corporation Eurogold (a subsidiary of Australian Normandy Mining Limited) to mine for gold in the small village of Ovacık, near the city of Bergama. Located approximately 100 km south of the Ida Mountains, Bergama is home to the ancient Pergamon ruins and Turkey's fifth most visited tourist area (Arsel, 2003). Despite the fact that the mine proposal included plans to use cyanide-leaching in the processing of ore, a gold mine was greeted enthusiastically by local villagers. Early enthusiasm, however, quickly wore off when the village's water supply was contaminated during initial site drilling (Arsel, 2003; Çoban, 2004). Opponents responded with public rallies and lawyers from Izmir launched a series of legal challenges, which resulted in a number of injunctions. Meanwhile, activists travelled to Istanbul to block traffic on the Bosphorus Bridge, villagers and others attempted to raise awareness within Germany — home to Eurogold — by applying for environmental asylum, Bergama-born Turks living in Germany protested in Berlin, and the Bergama mayor conducted outreach to a number of international NGOs, including London-based Minewatch, US-based Mineral Policy Center, and Germany-based Foodfirst Information and Action Network. In the end, despite several court injunctions within Turkey and by the European Court of Human Rights, the Turkish government allowed production to continue (Orhan,



2006). Besides revealing the constitutional power differential in practice between the executive and the judiciary, the decision demonstrated the state's commitment to neoliberalism by honouring the multilateral conventions and agreements that govern foreign direct investment (Öncü and Koçan, 2001; Orhan, 2006).

Research on the mining opposition in Ovacık has characterized the conflict as arising from one of two general courses. In one analysis, the opposition resulted when the 'village–environment symbiosis', seeking to defend villagers' livelihoods, challenged a 'state–corporate' symbiosis, or the explicit relationship between the Turkish state and the mining company (Çoban, 2004). As Arsel (2003: 29) further points out, the case highlights the fact that the state is 'loath to alienate either the much needed foreign investor or the increasingly valiant civil society'. Yet this perspective potentially ignores the extent to which the state must negotiate multiple processes of capital investment and business formation, including the ways villages are being transformed by competing dynamics to mine very different economic resources from the mountains. In the second analysis, the conflict is seen as developing between opposing discourse coalitions — those of environmentalists and miners — that 'formed around different storylines based on diverse perceptions of risk' (Orhan, 2006: 691). But who creates these discourses and how do they tie to particular ways of benefiting from the landscape and its biophysical qualities? The actions of opponents in the Ovacık case raise interesting questions about the role that local villagers, the Bergama mayor and numerous professional and environmental groups from surrounding towns played in creating the networks and actions that disseminated information and countered claims by the mining company and the state.

To fully understand the mining conflict in the Ida Mountains region, as the Ovacık case suggests, it is important to place the conflict within the context of the ongoing changes to the Turkish mining sector. Indeed, mining conflict in Turkey takes place within a context in which reserves of non-industrial minerals are rather extensive and the government is keen to foster investment by multinational corporations to capitalize on these opportunities. An estimated 65 per cent of the country's land surface is believed to be suitable for gold exploration (*Global Business Reports*, 2008). Until recently, the mining sector remained largely closed to foreign investment, leading one industry report to describe the sector as 'in its infancy' (*ibid.*: 62). Gold production before 2001 was mainly a byproduct of other mining activities (Mobbs, 2003), but since then exploratory studies have found definitive gold reserves in nine areas throughout Turkey and twelve possible reserves in other places (Oygür, 1996). Today, foreign firms encounter an investor-friendly environment that has been made possible by ongoing neoliberal reforms that began in the 1980s (Avcı et al., 2010). In the intervening decades, foreign investment in numerous sectors, including mining, has grown substantially, with gold activity principally tied to foreign firms (Taşkın, 1998). By 2002, eighty-eight

foreign companies from various countries had registered to mine in Turkey, with nine specifically dedicated to exploring gold opportunities, and as of December 2009, gold production was in operation in four of those places: the Ovacık mine, Kışladağ mine in Uşak, Küçükdere mine near Havran, Balıkesir, and Mastra mine in Gumuşhane.

Since Ovacık, the state has continued to revise its mining laws to make it quicker and easier for foreign companies to get permits for exploration, further reflecting a deepening of neoliberal policy, and infuriating many Turks. For example, in 2004 Law 5177 reduced the time it takes to receive a licence for exploration, lowered the corporate tax from 30 to 20 per cent, and reduced licensing fees for landholdings, changes which opponents have seized upon to stir local anger against mining (see also Avcı et al., 2010). Further, in 2010, the Turkish parliament revisited elements of the mining law, taking into consideration a number of new proposals that were intended to further liberalize the mining sector. Revenue taxes were reduced to just 4 per cent of earnings from any site; other measures included changes to protections for special areas, such as national parks, national monuments, and olive areas, that received additional administrative review. Significantly, in the end, parliament rejected a proposal to exempt mining activities from provisions that establish a 3 km protective buffer around areas of olive production, but it did ease protections for forest reserves, gene protection areas, rare ecosystems and preservation forests.

### **Squeezing Olives: Global Economic Linkages**

While there is excitement among foreign investors at the potential for gold extraction, olive oil exports have also become increasingly significant. Exports grew from 10,000 metric tons in 1990 to 48,000 metric tons in 2009 (International Olive Oil Council, 2009). Under favourable economic conditions and state policies, Turkey had become the fifth largest producer of olive oil by 2006, with 5 per cent of the world's production, trailing behind Tunisia, Greece, Italy and Spain (UNCTAD, 2010). In 2006, olive oil exports were valued at US\$ 185 million (Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, 2010) and production is expected to continue growing into the near future (Rodríguez, 2009). In 2008, agriculture was responsible for 28 per cent of employment within the country. To date, concerns which have arisen over the environmental consequences of intensified production elsewhere, such as in Spain, where landholdings are increasing and plantations are expanding into less favourable areas that require irrigation (Marquer, 2003), have not emerged in Turkey. Turkish production is likely to share the characteristics of small-scale production within EU countries such as Greece. To some extent, olive trees offer an alternative income source for the state, one which supports relatively small-scale agricultural production throughout the western part of the country.

Our study area, which includes significant olive orchards, is dominated by the Ida Mountains. The area is also home to a National Park, state-administered forest reserves and rare plant reserves adjacent to the park, and increasing urbanization associated with retirement and second-home ownership. These landscapes have a rich cultural history that dates back at least as far as the Greek empire. Under the Ottomans, two cultural groups settled the area: the Yörüks (Sunni Muslims) and the Turkomen (Alevi Muslims). While the Turkomen were historically a nomadic people, forced by the Ottomans to settle in permanent villages, Yörüks began settling the area after 1336 CE (Yılmaz, 1995). Several villages in the region retain strong cultural identities, while larger settlements are increasingly characterized by mixed populations.

Yörük and Turkoman livelihoods were relatively stable over the past century, but recently this situation has begun to change. Prior to the 1980s, both groups relied differentially on the agricultural potential of the landscape and its resources (Arı and Soykan, 2006). The Yörük traditionally practised a form of transhumant small-livestock herding, especially raising goats, while Turkoman livelihoods were founded primarily on forestry, associated woodworking, and use of non-timber forest products for subsistence purposes. During the twentieth century, the Turkomen also aggressively took up olive-based agriculture, while both groups produce fruit and food for sale in local markets. With the arrival of modern conservation practices in 1993, areas of the mountains previously managed for forestry and grazing were designated as a national park (*ibid.*) and new rules in 2001 effectively prohibited entry by livestock herders and non-timber forest products harvesters. In the early years of these restrictions, olive groves represented one of the few alternative economic activities for villagers. Since 2001, however, villagers have also trained as guides and organized ecotourism jeep safaris, and are gradually benefiting directly from park-based tourism spending.

In the 1980s, new capital investment led to a proliferation of low-rise condominiums, semi-detached houses, hotels, tourist bungalows and campgrounds. This boom has had diverse consequences for area inhabitants, livelihoods and landscapes. Besides selling olives to Turkish export companies and in nearby city markets, olive producers sell directly to amenity migrants, second-home owners and tourists in seasonal farmers' markets. Most fruits and vegetables are also sold in these markets. Thus, growers have seen an increase in market access as a result of urbanization. Meanwhile, that same process of urbanization has resulted in conversion of former olive groves to residential spaces, including the building footprints and yards of housing units, while agriculture on lower-elevation land in the region has expanded, with some of this devoted to fruit orchards and vegetable fields. Olive growers have expanded olive production up the slopes of the mountains into grazing lands and formerly 'wild' oak and pine forests that increasingly impinge on national park borders (*ibid.*).

### **Mining (Dis)Amenity: The Emergence of Competing Rural Capitalisms in the Ida Mountain Region**

As the seasonal population has grown, capital investment has continued to flow into residential and commercial real estate, including the new ‘Olive City’ shopping mall and higher-end grocery stores, which both compete with farmers’ markets. New tourism sites include small-scale amusement parks and culture-related museums. Since 1992 Tahtakuşlar village has featured a Turkoman ethnography museum, and a Yörük group opened a similar museum in 2004. Recently, in-migrants from Istanbul opened the Adatepe olive oil museum. Each charges admission and sells locally produced cultural items. Other ventures draw on biophysical features to earn income. In addition to national park recreational areas, some landowners charge admission to swimming holes fed by mountain streams, with picnicking areas and cafes. Hotel operators now offer jeep safaris into the National Park.

Despite the fact that development in the area, including road expansion and rapid housing construction, has led to dramatic environmental changes (ibid.), it is the threat from gold mining that appears to have united many actors living in the region. Amenity migrants as well as some olive producers have found common ground around the decision by the government in 2007 to allow KOZA, a Turkish conglomerate with international investors, to explore for gold in both the Ida and Madra mountains. Numerous political protests, both within the larger towns in the area and in nearby cities, and stories in the local and national news media (including national TV), have taken up the challenge to prevent mining. The extent of civil society actions opposed to mining — and the relative absence of counter-demonstrations — suggest a broad alliance of actors who are committed to fighting this state intervention. But how representative is this alliance and how far is it based in the notion of competing rural capitalism tied to amenity migration?

First, as the quote at the beginning of this article suggests, the Turkish energy minister sees resistance to gold mining in the Ida Mountains region as a threat from ‘outside’ forces. Given the extent to which resistance in the Ovacık case was entangled with support from non-Turkish NGOs, such as Mine Watch, this position is understandable. It is also in keeping with research on Third World conflict that portrays NGO interventions as representing non-local actors. However, in the Ida Mountain conflict, newspaper articles and editorials have suggested that intellectuals, members of civil society and peasants have united to create human shields in defence of the mountain ecosystems and against looting by ‘international gold monopolies’. Here, the emphasis is on the role of outsiders in *spoiling* the environment. Both positions highlight the central importance of who is local, and whose voice represents an authentic constituency in struggles to construct mining as a legitimate — or an illegitimate — land use (Horowitz, 2009).

Second, new survey research by Avcı et al. (2010) on mining opposition in the Ida region highlights the fact that most people are against mining in

the region, but that there is support for extraction. Their research reveals that supporters of mining tend to live in rural areas, do not engage in irrigated farming, are less politically active in local matters, less concerned about environmental risks and national environmental problems, more trusting of state institutions, and consider themselves more knowledgeable about gold mining. In contrast, opponents more frequently live in cities — suggesting strong ties to the region's landscapes among urbanites (read second-home owners and seasonal visitors) — or are agricultural producers engaged in irrigated agriculture, including olive growers. Although this research provides key insights into who supports or opposes mining in the region, it is largely silent on the ways amenity migration has contributed to the creation of the conflict and how alternative forms of development may represent divergent ways of commodifying the landscape. Thus, it is to these struggles that we now turn and, in particular, the ways that the strategies of local grassroots organizations (GROs) and the content of this opposition are influenced by amenity migrants.

### **Mobilizing Amenity Defenders**

'This law is intended to turn these places into a playground for multinational mining companies.' (T. Öngür, June 9, 2010)

Amenity in-migrants, including retirees and second-home owners, now comprise a distinctive third group of residents in the region. Some amenity migrants come from cities in Turkey, such as Istanbul, Bursa and Balıkesir. Others are ethnic Turks from EU countries (e.g., Germany, Finland). Ethnic Germans and other EU ethnic nationals are less prevalent, but are still present. Many migrants live in condominiums, but mirroring processes of rural gentrification described for the American West (Ghose, 2004) and the British countryside (Phillips, 1993), some landowners have purchased and refurbished old farms or village houses. These changes point to the potential for amenity migrants and locals to mobilize in defence of a rural capitalism that draws on pastoral landscapes, remnant native forests at higher elevations in forest reserves and the national park, and environmental amenities of clean water and air.

In the months following national newspaper reports about gold exploration, area amenity migrants became active in local GRO activities (known as 'platforms'), even founding new ones. While the Ida–Madra Platform was founded by several mayors in the region — mostly associated with the Republican People's Party (CHP) — and unofficial 'representatives' from two universities, the Environmental Platform of Çanakkale (Çanakkale-Cevre Platform) was formed principally by civil society actors in the city of Çanakkale. A third, Ida Mountains Preservation Initiative Group, was formed by amenity migrants, but claims to work collaboratively with

village leaders. A fourth, the Guards of Beautiful Edremit Bay (Güzel Edremit Körfezinin Bekçileri), was formed by amenity migrants who settled in the Ida foothills.<sup>1</sup> These groups joined with a fifth group, the Southern Marmara Environmental Foundation (Güney Marmara Çevre ve Koruma Derneği or GÜMÇED). GÜMÇED has been actively addressing environmental concerns since the early 1990s, but has shifted gear in order to oppose mining. Founded principally by in-migrants, GÜMÇED's activities have addressed typical concerns over the environmental impacts associated with rapid growth, including sprawl rooted in poorly planned growth, the impact on environmental quality, and the creation of potential development alternatives (such as ecotourism).<sup>2</sup> Like their First World counterparts, their actions seek to protect the landscape from problems that essentially began with their own migrations to the area. These interventions may or may not address the disruption of local livelihoods (Brogden and Greenberg, 2003; Hurley and Halfacre, 2011).

Beginning in 2007, and continuing through to the fall of 2009, public protests became a regular feature on village streets. During this period, five forums were organized, including three that were hosted by Balıkesir University, one by Çanakkale University, and another by the Çanakkale Municipality in cooperation with Çanakkale Çevre Platformu. In two of these instances, the Department of Biology at Balıkesir University organized the forums: one for representatives of NGOs opposed to mining and a second for the Turkish mining corporation KOZA. The fifth forum was held in Zeytinli in August 2008 and included representatives from the town, numerous opponents, and academics representing both sides of the debate. Although mining representatives attended the forums on the university campuses, they did not attend the Zeytinli forum, citing security concerns. The only forum that brought together people from the gold mining establishments (the Vice President of the Association of Gold Miners), government representatives, opposition academics and NGO representatives, was held in Çanakkale University. In each of these forums, despite the absence of corporate representatives from some meetings, the possible effects of gold mining were openly discussed, but tensions between the pro- and anti-groups were high. Consistent with Orhan's (2006: 707) observations of the Ovacık case, both sides 'produced their own version of risks and provided equally persuasive but completely diverse arguments about the use of cyanide in extraction'. This observation, however, masks the attachment of participants within the two groups to local processes of reterritorialization.

Examination of local platform leadership suggests particular associations with amenity migration dynamics, which influence the construction of opposition. Of the five platforms, several were headed by in-migrants who sought better quality of life in the region. For example, one couple 'ran away'

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1. Interview Küçükkuşu, 2008.

2. Interview Altınoluk, 2008.



from an overcrowded Istanbul that they ‘barely recognized [anymore]’, and which they described as being ‘occupied by Central Anatolia’, to retire in the region.<sup>3</sup> Another leader indicated that, after working with a manufacturing company, he had retired to the area to manage his own olive grove. Such moves are typical of new in-migrants, who seek work and income from the olive industry or who start new businesses to supplement their incomes. Others in GRO leadership positions moved to the region as the direct result of business or professional opportunities: relocation, however, was based on factors that took into consideration the region’s quality of life and natural amenities. Besides these platforms, owners of some tourism establishments who fear damage to the area’s ‘natural amenities’ have funded GRO activities.

### **‘The Gold Above is More Valuable than the Gold Below’**

While mining has been a key force in the creation of new GROs in the region, opposition to mining has coalesced GRO actions on threats to regional environmental qualities. Interviews with members of the region’s five NGOs suggest that, in at least three cases, their formation and subsequent activities were as much about engendering opposition as they were about devising strategies for any pre-existing anti-mining opposition. In each case, members of area platforms actively organized public protests, organized and attended public mining forums, and engaged in diverse efforts to raise awareness about the situation. These efforts included distributing banners — paid for by business owners who are also amenity migrants — that were hung across the streets in numerous villages, in the front of restaurants and at tourist sites, such as the Adatepe olive oil museum in Küçükkuyu. Opponents of mining have also made use of social networking tools, demonstrating the extent to which people living outside the region are linked to the goings-on within the region, offering support for challenges to the claims of the state. Pictures and posts on these social networking sites also reveal a connection between group members and regional places that are intertwined with tourism, vacationing and second-home ownership.

Printed materials designed to mobilize opposition underscore what appear to be common concerns of amenity migrants and villagers, but they also illustrate GRO influence in shaping the substance and content of opposition. For example, a poster widely circulated by opponents, which includes ‘official’ sponsorship by GÜMÇED, the city of Mustafakemalpaşa, and ‘all the people of Mustafakemalpaşa and Bursa’, implores readers to ‘Look at what’s on top, not what’s beneath’, claiming that ‘the gold of the Ida Mountains is olives’. The words ‘what’s beneath’ appear in the portion of the picture that shows the subsurface of the land, where a human skeleton abuts a decrepit

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3. Interview B Pinarbaşı, 2008.

treasure chest. The text below the picture asks: ‘Aren’t you aware that we’re in paradise? Then why are we turning it into hell?’. The stylized picture shows three mountain peaks and a verdant evergreen forest. A waterfall sits to the left of the mountains, where a mother duck and her ducklings swim in a pond, while pastoral homes stand to the right. In the middle, a mix of wild and domesticated animals occupy a grassy field. The message is clear: those who pursue treasure in the form of gold threaten the environmental and pastoral paradise that is the Ida Mountain Region. This view was backed up by interview after interview, in which GRO members praised the great beauty of the region’s mountains, with one informant going so far as to suggest: ‘If you have a beauty contest among mountains, we will win. If we come in second, they can mine. But we won’t’.<sup>4</sup> Less clear is whether choices about the future of this beautiful paradise should be made by villagers or by those from nearby cities who come to the Ida Mountains to get away from it all.

GRO leaders subtly describe peasants as too ignorant to fully appreciate the potential consequences of mining, instead positioning themselves — the educated (and financially better off) — as the ones who must ensure that the region is protected. A common activity of GROs were ‘educational’ or ‘outreach’ visits to individual villages to hold public or semi-public meetings where villagers could learn more about the environmental impacts of mining; these meetings were seen as pre-empting the possibility that ‘[villagers] might not do the right thing’,<sup>5</sup> in other words avoiding the risks of villagers accepting ‘social bribes’ from mining companies. When asked about what they said to audience members who might want or need an alternative source of income, our informants indicated that they told their audiences: ‘Whatever you’ve done so far, you can do that. But if you work for the miners, you’ll poison everything for your children. Use your olives, use your pine nuts. If the miners come, there’ll be nothing left’.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, they pointed out that while supporters of the mines claim there will be ‘work for 1,600 people’, this is dwarfed by the ‘thousands of people’ working in agriculture in the area. A recurrent theme in our interviews was the idea that: ‘The gold of this region is olives!’.<sup>7</sup>

Village visits generally consisted of one or two GRO members who presented informational PowerPoint presentations to groups of both men and women, who were ‘hungry for information’.<sup>8</sup> One group travelled to some fifty-eight villages over several months. Their presentations included nearly thirty slides on themes of agriculture and pastoral landscapes, ecosystem and

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4. Interview with amenity migrant, Tahtakuşlar, 2008.

5. Interview B, Pınarbaşı, 2008.

6. Interview B, Pınarbaşı, 2008.

7. Interview B, Pınarbaşı, 2008; Interview, Altınoluk, 2008.

8. Interview B, Pınarbaşı, 2008.

public health, ecological integrity, and nationalist distrust of neoliberalism, thereby illustrating the particular ways in which opponents conceptualize mining damage and providing diverse reasons why villagers should oppose mining. First, the importance of olive trees and olive oil production to local livelihoods was stressed, with reminders that existing rules prohibit mining activities within 3 km of olive production areas. Several slides illustrated dramatic landscape transformations, including ‘before and after’ pictures of Ovacık. Second was the theme of cyanide poisoning and associated health effects, with slides showing blackened feet from toxic exposure, while discussions of waste rock and cyanide touch on ecosystem health. These slides featured text that underscored threats to environmental quality, clean water and air quality. One slide emphasized the importance of air quality to tourists and second-home owners alike, given the tendency for newcomers to cite the region’s ‘high levels of oxygen’ as a positive factor.<sup>9</sup> The third theme drew visual links between widespread exploration sites and the possibility for these to degrade habitat for endemic plants and threatened species in protected areas, further highlighting the possibility that exploration and mining could disrupt fragile ecosystems and undermine efforts (still in their infancy) to protect biodiversity. Further, economic statistics drew on a capital-centric logic that emphasized the long-term economic earnings potential of these other, above-ground ‘golden’ alternatives. Collectively, the presentations reinforced the importance of scientific expertise for interpreting perceptions about risk and the true horrors of cyanide poisoning.

It would be wrong, however, to paint opposition to gold mining as based on environmental risk or landscape quality alone. Within the broader political context of the region, long-term residents have traditionally voted for the centre-left Republican People’s Party (CHP), the dominant minority party in national politics. For example, the Turkomen living in the region are especially known for their strong support for the CHP and are seen as an easily mobilized force. Thus, conventional wisdom suggested it would be easy to organize the local electorate against policies associated with the ruling AKP. Not surprisingly, then, slideshows reminded viewers of the country’s founder Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (who established the CHP in 1923) and ‘Turkish’ notions of land and resource control. One presentation prominently featured a silhouetted Atatürk, intoning ‘the soil of the homeland is sacred’, followed by a slide announcing that ‘the Ida and Madra mountains are in danger’. If the political overtones of these words were not clear enough,

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9. The region has low pollution levels as a result of the absence of manufacturing or urban centres nearby, but the presentation highlighted popular understandings about the relationship of the proximity of the mountains, the sea, and local climatic and topographic factors in which cool weather from the upper parts of the region are channelled through the north–south valleys towards the settlements, which are especially welcoming in hot Mediterranean summers.

one local GRO leader went so far as to suggest that ‘all around the world those who use cyanide, even in the most primitive African countries, are being thrown out. With us, it’s the exact opposite, we surrender all our value. It’s really going to be a shame for the mountains’.<sup>10</sup> The word ‘imperialism’ was often used to describe international companies that want to produce gold from the region’s mountains, reinforcing the idea of a betrayal of Turkish control over natural resources.

The views of amenity migrants do not necessarily lie outside the widely held views within many villages and communities, but opposition to mining is not unanimous. As Avcı et al.’s (2010) research suggests, others in the region feel differently about the conflict. In our interviews with people in Küçükdere, where the mining company KOZA extracts gold deposits and locals transport them by truck to Ovacık, people expressed different opinions. Some argued that mining had no negative effect in the region, since the company never used cyanide to leach the mine. One worker challenged the validity of GRO claims on the use of cyanide. Workers described GROs as political entities, seeking not to protect the environment, but rather to impose their ideology on villagers, a sentiment captured by the notion of amenity migrants as ‘foreigners’ expressed in one interview: ‘The foreigners [amenity in-migrants] are coming here and taking over’.<sup>11</sup> The Edremit branch leader of GÜMÇED, who had commented that Küçükdere villagers who welcomed the mine must have accepted ‘social bribes’, was later run out of the village. In reflecting on these observations, we note that, while gold mining created fierce conflict in Ovacık and in the Ida Mountains, no real organized opposition emerged to confront mines in other areas of the country, such as in Mastra and Gumushane. In these areas, local villagers seem more favourably disposed towards mining, given a marked absence of tourism and other economic opportunities, and the politically different demographics and political tendencies of the areas.

## **DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS**

We have sought to locate the First and Third Worlds ‘within’, by showing that the intersection of changing political ecological dimensions has created the necessary conditions for the Ida Mountain gold mining conflict to develop. On the one hand, a Third World framework reveals that neoliberal policy reforms within the mining sector have been a key dimension, creating an attractive investment climate for foreign companies and thereby helping to set the stage for the conflict over what are the ‘local livelihoods’ and ‘environments’ near distinctive cultural groups. The significant mineral

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10. Platform talking point for public forum, June 2008.

11. Interview with Villager, Pınarbaşı, 2008.

potential in this region, together with a favourable policy climate for investment, is leading to gold exploration activities and some mining. However, it would appear that these two conditions are in and of themselves insufficient to explain the full dimensions of the conflict, including how communities in the region have responded to the prospect of gold mining and emergent opposition discourses.

On the other hand, the First World framework suggests that amenity migration has led to the development of competing rural capitalisms, which play an important role in GRO efforts to engender and shape the opposition to mining in the region. Here, key differences between the Ovacik and Ida cases are instructive. While politicians, professionals and residents in the Bergama area were able to use networks to build protests and strategies that attracted international NGOs, the Ida Mountain conflict has thus far been dominated by the actions of GROs and limited to western Turkey. Although GROs are comprised of amenity migrants, to date their networking outside the region appears limited. Further, businesses that benefit from alternative forms of development, such as tourism, have actively supported the opposition. While other researchers suggest that discourses of mining opposition reflect a tension between 'environmentalists' and miners, emphasizing discourses around risk, we draw attention to the extent to which these 'environmentalist' discourses are shaped by 'ecological science' and particular notions about landscape and environmental quality that map onto the very natural amenities valued by in-migrants seeking a better quality of life.

If amenity migration appears to be shaping the region's politics, it thus far has resulted in uneven reterritorialization. Although the state has implemented conservation practices in the past that have reassigned resources to groups associated with the tourism and ecotourism sectors, and amenity migrants appear to have growing clout in shaping the environmental agendas of GROs in the region, it would appear at first glance that they have less ability to influence the broader environmental agenda of the state, and its application to the region. But this interpretation potentially overlooks the fact that the state has refused to overhaul the country's mining rules in ways that would have allowed widespread mining in the region. In particular, attempts to exempt mining activities from the measures that protect olive producing regions were rejected. By rejecting these proposed exemptions, the state is accommodating both its need for foreign investment in limited areas and the needs of villager livelihoods in the wider landscape of olive orchards, all while potentially appeasing the cultural landscape preferences of amenity migrants who move to the Ida Mountain region to enjoy a better quality of life. In the process, the state leaves itself sufficient room within other areas of the region, namely in forest reserves and in unprotected, non olive-producing areas, to realize mineral extraction and expanded foreign investment earnings.

Mining conflict in the Ida Mountains region of western Turkey is the product of these newly emerging — albeit uneven — power dynamics between the state, which retains an interest in neoliberal policy and fostering foreign investment while also improving the livelihoods of local villagers in the agricultural sector, and the emergent rural capitalisms associated with amenity migration and environmental landscape protection. These dynamics reflect the influence of local-scale social dynamics within the broader realms of regional and global processes (Walker, 2003), but also clearly demonstrate the power asymmetries created by distinctive and contingent political, ecological, economic and social conditions (Neumann, 2010). These findings, however, only emerge within a framework that seeks to locate both the First and Third world dynamics ‘within’. They point to transitional regional landscapes characterized by changing economies, ecologies and communities at the intersection of local and state politics, the shifting global economy, emerging commodity geographies and ecologies (Prudham, 2005), and uneven environmental management regimes (Reed, 2007).

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