



Environmental Movements in Turkey from the Perspective of Commons

RESEARCH ARTICLE

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ABSTRACT

Enclosure movements on the commons continue without slowing down especially in the developing countries; as well as the grassroots movements against them. Enclosure movements frequently contain several foreign investments and appropriations to other uses on natural resources and/or assets such as pastures, forests, rivers, agricultural lands and seashores, which are crucial income sources for rural households. Among other factors, the shortcomings in the common management processes, cooperatives and self-organization capacity of the stakeholders ease the enclosure process. The study investigates the environmental movements as commoning practices in Turkey in the last decade through media analysis and surveys. The study aims to constitute a scientific basis to enhance the EIA processes in order to encourage proactive responses to environmental crises, prevent enclosure movements on the commons and maintain the local sustainable development. Hence, firstly the environmental movements in Turkey are spatialized by GIS analyst tools to constitute an environmental inventory including time, types, frequency and location of the movements; secondly, an online survey is conducted with the environmental NGOs; thirdly, two possible scenarios are suggested through a triple-scale scoring system; and finally, several recommendations are proposed in order to sustain the commons.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, several small-scale and mostly local resistances have emerged in urban and rural areas of Turkey against the enclosure movements, harmful appropriations and future destruction possibilities on the natural resources and/or assets, which are our ecological commons. These resistances can be local, national and/or international and usually organized by several leading environmental Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) including TEMA, Greenpeace Turkey, WWF Turkey, Northern Forests Defense, Doga Association, Alakir River Fellowship, Anti-Nuclear Platform and Kulturpark Platform. Along with these movements, several lawsuits continue especially on the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) reports preparation processes, which are usually shaped by capital-promoted intervenient political decisions (e.g., new legislations, nonfunction of the EIA reports). The destruction threats on the valuable natural assets are both in the environment and common fields of inquiry.

The debates on the commons are wide-ranging and can be categorized in three conceptual sets: (1) commons as *resources*, (2) commons as *spaces*, and (3) commons as *systems*. First approach takes commons as resources that should be maintained. Hardin's tragedy of the commons and Ostrom's common-pool resources (CPRs) and collective action model are the pioneers of this approach, which attempt to solve the problem of independent action in an interdependent situation in order to sustain natural resource systems (Hardin, 1968; Ostrom, 1990). Second approach takes commons as both tangible and intangible common spaces, identified by commoning practices, common property and *use value* (Santos Junior, 2014; Stavrides, 2016). Third approach takes commons as systems and a political rationality, including politics of the commons, common relations, intangible commons, commons as a resistance through grassroots movements (commoning practices) and *share value* (Federici, 2010; Kocagoz, 2015; De Angelis, 2017; Akcay and Kocagoz, 2018; Bayraktar, 2020).

The commons can be defined as “*everything we have and do together*” in a broader sense (Walljasper, 2014). The commons are the *commonwealth* that we share; however, they are not limited to solely physical entities that should be collectively managed. They also refer to social relations based on common production, reciprocity and cooperation, which are woven around the commonwealth. The widespread uses of the commons often include contradictory definitions. Sometimes they refer to the resources to be exploited, sometimes a group of people (a community) who are united for their interests and/or sometimes a solidarity-based life outside of capitalism.

They do not only provide certain social services and buffers against the destructive effects of capitalism. They are the means to build egalitarian and cooperative societies and tools to build a non-capitalist world (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014; Adaman et.al., 2017).

The commons and commoning practices cannot be considered independent from the enclosure movements. Enclosure pressure and destruction threats on the commons are based on the *primitive accumulation* in rural England in the 17th century, which was defined as the “*attack of capital on the rural commons*” (Marx, 1867); through the accumulation by dispossession processes (Harvey, 2012). Following this and perhaps as a result, *environmental movements* (EMs) emerged globally in the 19th and 20th centuries, started with the local people whose commons were enclosed by mining, tourism and commercial capital (Garner, 1996). However, enclosure is a process that extends to the present day through ongoing privatization and transformation pressure on the commons. Especially since the 1980s, *a new enclosure operation* has been carried out by neoliberal urbanization, privatization of agricultural lands, forests, pastures, coasts and public lands with the forefront of construction, tourism, mining and energy sectors (Midnight Notes Collective, 1990; Harvey, 2003; De Angelis, 2004; Penpecioglu, 2013; Walljasper, 2014; Benlisoy, 2014; Christophers, 2018, Ozden Firat, 2018).

Eventually, local and/or national resistances have emerged against the neoliberal enclosure processes on the urban and rural commons in Turkey (Ozden Firat, 2020). It is predicted that as long as the enclosure movements continue, EMs and relevant lawsuit processes will continue as well. The commons and the commoning practices as establishing forms of sharing through space and human bodies are the forms of gesturing that shape the city and the society (Stavrides, 2020). In this respect, environmental movements can be specified as *commoning efforts and/or practices* because the nature and environment are the subjects of the commons and the movements usually emerge as an attempt to defense the commons. Global EMs such as the *School Strike for Climate* and the *Extinction Rebellion* are also in line with the sustainability principle of the *solidarity economy* network, which is also a commons network (Kawano, 2018; Kone, 2020). Commons and solidarity economy are both the collective practices of grassroots organizations aiming to protect livelihoods from neoliberal enclosure movements (Esteves, 2018).

The defense and/or re-establishment of commons rhetoric is often pronounced within the grassroots movements. Both resistances refer to the commons as, *defending* the commons, *retrieving* the commons, and *constituting* the commons. The most familiar example is Gezi Park protests in Turkey; which was a deposition of the

urban and rural struggles that had actually been continuing for some time within for the *right to the city* (Lefebvre, 1968). However, it is seen that the commons discourse has gained an increasing attention in environmentalist discourse (Adaman et.al., 2017). Commons are also a developing branch of feminist (and ecofeminist) discourse, especially within the context of environmentalism (Caffentzis and Federici, 2014).

The study focuses on the local, national and/or international environmental movements as commoning practices against the enclosure process in Turkey. It is observed that the rural producers take a lead of the local resistances, while the national and/or international resistances are usually led by the environmental NGOs. Occasionally, new local initiatives emerge and expand to the national and/or international levels during these processes.

In this context, the study investigates the environmental movements of Turkey in the last decade by media analysis and surveys with the environmental NGOs in order to debate the EMs within the perspective of the commons. The study aims to reveal the EMs as commoning practices to constitute a scientific basis to enhance the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) processes in order to encourage proactive responses to environmental crises, prevent enclosure process and sustain the local sustainable development. Hence, firstly, the EMs in Turkey are categorized by media analysis and spatialized by GIS analyst tools to constitute an environmental inventory including time, types, frequency and location of the movements; secondly, an online survey is conducted with the environmental NGOs; and finally, two possible scenarios; (1) *commoning practices* and (2) *enclosure movements* are compared through a triple-scale scoring system and several recommendations are proposed.

2. COMMONS AND COMMON-POOL RESOURCES (CPRS)

The concept of commons has frequently been used in the academic debates in Turkey, especially since Gezi Park protests in 2013. However, this academic popularity contains a risk to ambiguate its definition. The debates on the commons are wide-ranging and sometimes conflicting, which can be categorized in three approaches:

1. *Commons as resources* - First approach takes commons as natural resources and/or assets that should be maintained (e.g., pastures, water commons). Hardin's tragedy of the commons and Ostrom's common-pool resources (CPRs) and collective action model are the pioneers of this approach, which attempt to solve the

problem of independent action in an interdependent situation in order to sustain natural resource systems. Water wars in Bolivia and protests against the hydroelectric powerplants in Turkey can be given as examples to commons as resources (Hardin, 1968; Ostrom, 1990; Ostrom, 2002).

2. *Commons as spaces* - Second approach takes commons as both tangible and intangible common spaces, identified by commoning practices, common property and *use value*. The common space is *taken* and *shaped* by people according to their collective desires and needs; while the public space is a space *given* to people under certain conditions. The common space *occurs*, and its rules are not written by an authority (state) as it is re-written by common users. Commoning practices in urban and rural areas within the context of *right to the city*, e.g., Occupy movement, Gezi Park protests and guerrilla gardening can be given as examples to commons as spaces (Santos Junior, 2014; Stavrides, 2016).
3. *Commons as systems* - Third approach takes commons as systems and political rationality, including politics of the commons, common relations, intangible commons, commons as resistance through grassroots movements (commoning practices) and *share value*. The debates on the politics of the commons and grassroots movements (e.g., EMs) as commoning practices can be given as example (Federici, 2010; Kocagoz, 2015; De Angelis, 2017; Akcay and Kocagoz, 2018; Bayraktar, 2020).

Commons can be *ecological* including air, water, forestry and seed; and *artificial (urban)* including public goods (e.g., public parks, public transport); as well as *intangible* like tradition, language and big data (Ostrom, 1990; Adaman et. al., 2017). The commons include the common-pool resources (CPRs), which are defined as "*natural or man-made resource systems that are sufficiently large as to make them costly to exclude potential beneficiaries from obtaining benefits from their use*" (Ostrom, 1990). CPRs are constituted by *appropriators* (providers and/or producers), *resource systems* (e.g., fishery, pasture) and *resource units* (e.g., tons of fish, tons of fodder) and differ from public goods. For CPRs, an optimum appropriation and use of a subtractable resource unit is necessary in order to prevent the overuse problems; thus, open-access resources need not to be public goods. Ostrom (1990) categorizes the commons into rural/urban commons, natural/ecological commons, artificial/man-made commons and tangible/intangible commons (*Table 1*).

The commons are immanent to a community that shares and governs the resources, relations and reproduction

COMMONS	RURAL COMMONS		URBAN COMMONS	
	TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE	TANGIBLE	INTANGIBLE
Natural/ Ecological	Seed, pasture, forest, river, sea, ocean, natural assets	-	Waterfront, river, urban park, market gardens, natural assets	-
Artificial/ Man-made	Village square, village fountain, agricultural land, cemetery	Tradition, apparel, dance, folk music, tales	Street, square, public transport, cemetery, public library, public goods	Etiquette, fashion, technology, big data, open-access resources

Table 1 Types of the Commons (adapted from Ostrom, 2010; Hazar and Velibeyoglu, 2019).

processes through horizontal *commoning* (De Angelis, 2017). The commons can also be defined as “*tangible and intangible spaces of the public use and collective ownership that belong to society with a free access*” (Santos Junior, 2014); and “*everything that belongs to all of us, that is commonly produced and shared*” (Ozden Firat, 2020). Caffentzis and Federici (2014) defined six distinctive features of the commons; (1) Commons are not given, they are *produced*; (2) Commons must contain a *commonwealth* in the form of natural and/or social assets; (3) Struggle for the *public interest* should be combined with the struggle for *commoning*; (4) Commons require a *community* to assume the obligations; (5) Commons require *regulations* on how to protect and use the commonwealth; and (6) Commons require *equal access* by means of reproduction and decision-making processes (e.g., gender equality).

The resource-pessimist literature on the commons is based to Malthus’ *An Essay on the Principle of Population* (1789), which focused on the contradictions between the arithmetic food production and exponential population growth to predict a possible future of environmental destruction, resource degradation, hunger, famine and violence. In the 1970s and 1990s, alarmist neo-Malthusian literature was dominant in the environmental discourse, which was criticized about being deterministic, underspecified and non-testable (Castree and Braun, 2001; Matthew, 2002). Hardin (1968), a neo-Malthusian ecologist, attempted to oversimplify the overpopulation phenomenon by natural law, rather than the political economy. Hardin brought forward the idea of *Tragedy of Commons*, which claims that a finite, optimum population within a limited access of commons and proposed two solutions: (1) *private enterprise* and (2) *government control*. Hardin’s idea was accused of providing a basis for the capital enclosure on the commons and triggering the attempts of privatization (Harvey, 2012).

Ostrom (1990), revealed that the privatization or government control cannot guarantee the sustainable use of resources and the model established by Hardin was an open-access model, rather than the limited-access CPRs model; in which the common users are the members of a well-defined group or organization that have adequate

communication and information transition and have a right to prevent the *outsiders* of that specific CPRs. Ostrom (1990) proposed an alternative solution by *collective action*, which gained a “Nobel Prize for Economics” in 2009 (Hardin, 1968; Angus, 2008; De Angelis and Harvie, 2014). However, Ostrom’s promising option was also criticized because of its suspended definition of *users* and *community*. First criticism was about the possible inequalities during the administration process of the commons as there cannot be an ideal homogeneous community, where everyone is *equal*. Second criticism was about the *political economy* context, which comes short of the collective action theory. Enclosure movements are the internal dynamics of capitalism and without the considerations of the systemic problem, commons and/or commoning process cannot be critical to the neoliberal policies (Akbulut, 2014; Adaman et. al., 2017).

Although the new institutionalist strategy of Ostrom (1990) should be improved, it is still convenient among other strategies for common management of the CPRs such as pastures, communal forests and/or fisheries (e.g., ingenious fishery systems in Alanya, Turkey) to avoid disasters such as overgrazing. There are several common management examples, such as forests, water and other livelihoods, urban gardens, vacant parcel reclamations, open sources, internet-based production efforts, and alternative currencies such as *bitcoin* (Bollier and Helfrich, 2015). However, it is necessary to conduct more extensive research on the commons; emphasize the importance of ecological commons for biodiversity; represent the commons through the right tools in participatory planning and decision-making processes; and re-define commons both in the political economy and the *political ecology* contexts. The political ecology approach leads to environmentalist discussions, public responses to the ecological crises, and main political trends proposed by the environmental movements (Heynen et. al., 2006). There are various perspectives within the political ecologists; yet, political ecologists have a common idea to create a community with ecological awareness (Dobson, 1995; Roussopoulos, 2015).

Political ecologists focus on the pressure created by neoliberal environmental management, while *feminist*

political ecologists (FPEs) focus on the gender roles in the community, *intersectionality* and the power relations in the common debates. How gender-based power relations are shaped by everyday life practices; and how everyday living spaces affect social relationships, access to resources, identities and knowledge are their main issues. FPEs also distinguish the commons into *biophysical*, *knowledge*, *cultural* and *social* commons within the transformative practices (Rocheleau, 2008; Ahlers and Zwartveen, 2009; Harris, 2009; Clement et al., 2019). *Marxist feminists* also argue that commons should not be reduced into commodifiable and unmanaged natural resources as they are the products of the community's actions and awareness of responsibility. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about commons without talking about a *community* (Sato and Alarcon, 2019). Nightingale (2019) describes the commoning practices as *socio-natural processes*, which can be defined as the anti-anthropocentric *socio-ecological processes* as the term *socio-natural* does not classify communities as separate entities to the ecology (Castree and Braun, 1998). Moreover, the *intersectional relations* such as gender, race, ethnicity, caste, age and disability are not exceptional from the power-related conflicts, which include the socio-natural *inclusions* and *exclusions*. Besides, commons are fragmentary and temporal states, which constantly depend on the commoning practices as the *acts of power*, including human and other living beings. In this context, grassroots movements of the subjective socio-natural communities against the enclosure process, frequently become a part of these conflicts rather than the solutions (Nightingale, 2019).

In addition, there are two fundamental risks about the occurrence of the commons, which need to be eliminated:

1. *Co-optation of the commons by capitalism* - The international capitalist order promotes a softer privatization model to reform the neoliberal enterprise by appealing the commons principle, which creates a risk of deepening social divisions for those who have the privilege of using the commons. This is the repulse of the logic of the market, which make a loss when excludes cooperation. World Bank and United Nations can be given as examples of this situation while declaring themselves as the guardians of the *global commons* and restricting access to the commons through privatization in line with Hardin's suggestion (Isla, 2009; Caffentzis and Federici, 2014).
2. *Homogeneous communities that polarize and/or exclude others* - Commons that can be built on the basis of the homogeneity of the members, communities and/or initiatives, which cannot transcend social and cultural boundaries; and eventually, turn into estranged *islets*

and/or *micro-worlds*. These commoning practices can easily be reduced to a singular lifestyle defense and create new form of enclosures that provide safety and protection from the external world (Turner, 2006; Caffentzis and Federici, 2014; Esteves, 2018; Firat, 2020).

Commoning practices may take the urban space as a tool to re-shape the environment by commoning institutions (Stavrides, 2016). Common institutionalizations should be common organization mechanisms that organize the commoning practices, which requires a commoning policy in order to constrain the limitations of the common distribution practices against capitalist institutionalization. The city is an important tool for the re-shaping participant practices of the commoning institutions, which can be a piece of art, a common world that recreates itself (Walljasper, 2014). Stavrides (2020), underlines the importance of commoning practices as establishing forms of sharing through space and human bodies (e.g., mutual assistance in earthquake, housing movements, occupy movements). These practices are the forms of gesturing that shape the city and the society, which can be the new tools for the *right to the city* (Lefebvre, 1968; Stavrides, 2020; Ozden Firat, 2020).

Grassroots movements are directly linked to the defense of the commons. Occupy Wall Street, Arabian Spring and Gezi Park protests are the examples of these movements, which have been using as organizational tools of struggles and may create conditions of resilience and self-organization, through *commoning*. Every time the grassroots movements is repeated, it creates a (share) value for the commons (De Angelis, 2012; 2017). The concept of commons creates a discourse together with the concepts of solidarity, autonomy, horizontality and collectivism. With the appropriation of the capital, commons gain visibility and new areas of resistance as commoning practices emerge (Firat, 2020).

In this respect, environmental movements are *commoning practices*; because the nature and environment are the subjects of the commons and the resistances emerge as an attempt to defense and/or constitute the commons.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS AS COMMONING PRACTICES

Environmental movements (EMs) in history date back to the 19th and 20th centuries, to the local resistances against the global enclosure processes of mining, tourism, commercial and recently energy sectors (Garner, 1996).

Chipko Movement in India (1970, Url-1) and Green Belt Movement in Kenya (1977, Url-2) are remarkable examples of the EMs against the enclosure process, which are also the milestones of *ecofeminism* (Shiva, 1992). Since then, hugging trees and dibbling have become the most common types of EMs. The environmental paradigms that effect EMs are summarized in [Table 2](#).

Since the last two decades, it is seen that global warming, climate change, loss of biodiversity and sustainable development are among the primary issues discussed in the environmental debates. The main environmental issues addressed in the Johannesburg Summit (2002) included water, energy, health, agricultural productivity, biodiversity conservation and ecosystem management. The concepts of triple bottom line of sustainability and resilience

have also been increasingly discussed in recent years. Particularly, the actions of young activists (e.g., climate activist Greta Thunberg) have increased through the active use of the communication technologies and social media in the context of the organization and dissemination of the movements. In addition, hazards originating from climate change and ongoing COVID-19 pandemic revealed the global vulnerability of urban and rural spaces and the need for more resilient and healthy cities.

In the context of EMs in Turkey, it is observed that the motivations of the environmental activists vary in rural and urban areas. While people living in urban areas try to protect their lifestyles against the environmental destruction, people living in rural areas usually struggle for their daily livelihoods. As in many other societies in the world, there is

YEARS	PERIOD	EVENTS
1950–1960	Effects of War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DDT poison and pesticides after the WW2 – Test of nuclear weapons and nuclear power plants – Environmental united peace activists in USA, western Europe and Japan
1960–1970	Birth of Environmentalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 1962 Rachel Carson’s book: <i>Silent Spring</i>, DDT pesticides – 1968 Paul Ehrlich’s book: <i>The Population Boom</i>, negative effects of the population on ecology – Environmentalist groups against industry in Japan – Green Parties in Europe
1970–1980	1973 Oil Crisis, (OPEC), Energy Supply, Grassroots Movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – End of Vietnam War, student and environmental movements in Europe – Green Parties in Europe and Australia – 1970 Chipko Movement in India – 1971 Greenpeace establishment – 1972 Stockholm Conference: United Nations Environmental Program – 1972 Roma Club: <i>Limits to Growth</i>, resource pessimists – 1973 Schumacher’s book: <i>Small is Beautiful</i>, shrinking in economy by clever use of nature – 1977 Green Belt Movement in Kenya – 1978 Bill Mollison & David Holmgren’s book: <i>Permaculture One</i> – 1979 Anti-nuclear movements
1980–1990	Ozone Hole, Health Issues, Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 1982 IUCN world nature restriction document – 1985 Ozone hole – 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster (Ukraine) – 1987 Brundtland Commission, <i>Our Common Future Report</i>: Sustainable development concept – Anti-racism movements in USA
1990–2000	Sustainability, Sustainable Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 1991 Ecovillages movement – 1992 Rio De Janeiro, World Summit: climate change, biodiversity, rain forests, Agenda 21 – 1996 UNCHS Habitat II Conference in Istanbul: sustainability concept, livability, survival, equity – 1997 Kyoto Protocol on climate change – Anti-racism movements, NIMBY policies to the rural people, industrial workers, Indians and blacks in the 3rd world
2000–2010	Climate Change, Loss of Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – 2002 Johannesburg Summit – Global environmental issues: water, energy, health, agricultural productivity, biodiversity protection and ecosystem management
2010–2020	Information Technologies, Climate Change, COVID-19, Resilience, Commons	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Triple bottom line of sustainability – Climate strike – Food safety (e.g., GMO) – Vegan movement – Resilient cities, healthy cities, post-pandemic urbanism, commons

Table 2 Timeline of Environmental Paradigms (developed from Hazar, 2020).

a close relationship between nature and rural producers in Turkey and their reactions against the enclosure attempts on their livelihoods and/or commons (Seçkin, 2016).

Akbulut (2017) points out that the development regime in Turkey within the last 15 years can be regarded as a *primitive accumulation*. Considering the rising social struggles against the contemporary enclosure operations, it is seen that the access to commons and livelihood practices are significantly lost by rural people. As a result, the phenomena such as rural-urban migration, new forms of rural labor such as seasonal workers and contract farmers has been rising. As a consequence, several notable EMs occurred in Turkey such as: anti-hydroelectric powerplant movements, Gerze anti-thermal powerplant movement, Yirca resistance, Gezi Park protests and following urban and/or guerilla gardening examples (e.g., Yedikule, Kuzguncuk and Rome gardens in Istanbul). In addition, several production-consumption cooperatives and alternative food networks emerged as commoning practices (Akbulut, 2017; Karakaya Ayalp, 2020). Today, as a result of the poor environmental policies against the enclosure process, local and national resistances and EMs have been increasing in Turkey.

4. METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

The study focuses on the environmental movements (EMs) in Turkey from the perspective of the commons. Following the literature review on the commons and EMs, a media analysis and an online survey were conducted in order to understand the EMs as commoning practices. It is seen that, many case studies were carried out on the commons in the literature, in order to reveal the indigenous and different common practices and types. However, this study is unique as it is the first comprehensive research that

categorize and spatialize EMs in Turkey as commoning practices. The methodological diagram of the study is summarized in **Figure 1**.

In the first stage of the study, current situation of the EMs in Turkey was revealed by the literature review and data collection on the perspective of the commons, political ecology and historical development of the EMs. In the second stage, the current conflicts and movements on environment in Turkey were analyzed and spatialized through media analysis in the national press (MTM, 2020). In addition, online surveys were conducted with the environmental NGOs that organize and/or attend these movements in order to understand the relationship between EMs and commons. In the third stage, a triple-scale scoring system was implemented on spatial, economical, ecological, social and political dimensions within two scenarios: (1) *commoning practices* and (2) *enclosure movements*. Finally, several recommendations were proposed for enhancing EIA processes, preventing enclosure movements, providing local sustainable development, and *commoning*.

4.1. MEDIA ANALYSIS

In the study, a media analysis was conducted from the national press by searching the keyword “environmental movements” in the last decade (2009–2019) through Media Monitoring Center (MTM, 2020). The findings were evaluated by the content analysis and spatialized by Geographic Information System (GIS) analyst tools.

According to the media analysis, **700** environmental movements (EMs) were determined in Turkey in the last decade, consisting of **15** subjects: climate change, environmental destruction, environmental pollution, hydroelectric powerplant (HPP), nuclear powerplant (NPP), thermal powerplant (TPP), wind powerplant (WPP), geothermal powerplant (GPP), biogas powerplant (BPP),

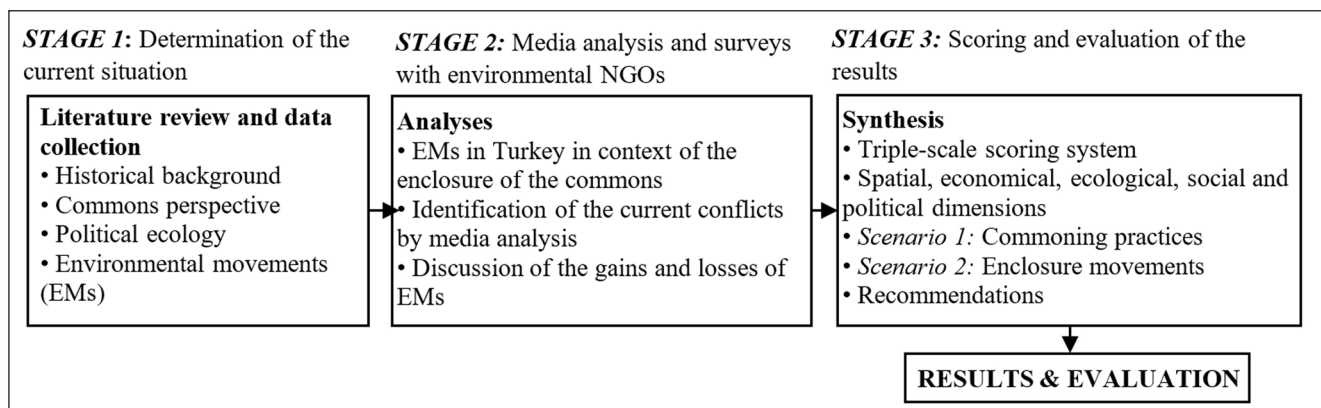


Figure 1 Methodological Diagram.

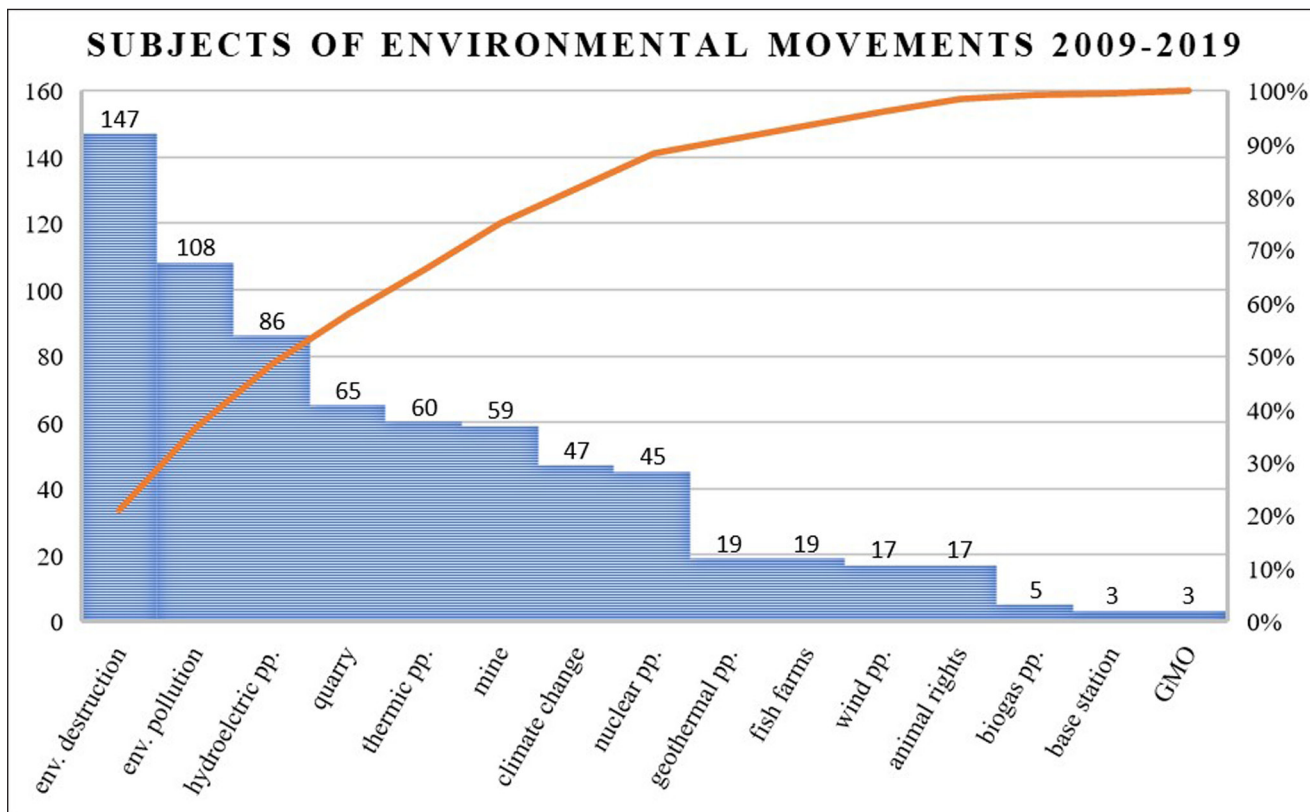


Figure 2 The subjects of environmental movements, 2009–2019.

animal rights, genetically modified organism (GMO), base station, fish farm, mine, and quarry (*Figure 2*).

Some of the peaceful activities that have been practiced during the EMs were walking with banners, dancing, playing music, dibbling, hiking, cycling, sitting, sailing, press release, singing, sleeping, pantomime playing, pots and pans playing, flying with banners, turning off the lights, whistling and so on. It is important to emphasize that women and children have a major role in the EMs. Although many of the movements occur by the resistances of the locals; there are also national and/or international movements organized by environmental NGOs in Turkey.

In the last decade, the top 5 subjects of the EMs were the local struggles and resistances against; (1) environmental destruction, (2) environmental pollution, (3) hydroelectric powerplant, (4) quarry and (5) thermal powerplant; and top 5 cities in which EMs have occurred were Izmir, Istanbul, Mugla, Antalya and Ankara (*Table 3*).

In 2009, resistances against the fish farms in Seferihisar (Izmir) started and continued for years, which eventually resulted in the success of the environmental activists. Most of the resistances were local and reactive to the enclosure attempts on the local commons. Also, global climate strike day and nationwide actions against the GMOs took place. **In 2010**, American activist, linguist and philosopher *Noam Chomsky* attended a climate strike in Istanbul. Climate

strikes are still continuing worldwide on the 25th September Global Climate Strike day. **In 2011**, a movie was released called “*Entelkoy Efekoye Karsi*” directed by *Yuksel Aksu* about the conflicts between villagers and environmental activists about a thermal powerplant project. **In 2012**, the resistance against Gerze thermal powerplant (Sinop) was chosen as one of the most successful resistances of 2012 by *Sierra Club*, a significant environmental institution of USA.

In 2013, *Gezi Park* protests in Istanbul hit the headlines of the EMs all around Turkey. The frequency and diversity of the actions (e.g., garbage pickup, camping, reading books, giving flowers, red woman, standing man) literally changed the perspective of the citizens on the EMs. *Gezi Park* protests were primarily started by environmentalists to protest against a Shopping Mall project on a central urban park and made its history as one of the largest (approx. 10 million) and longest EMs of Turkey, along with *Alakir River Fellowship* against the hydroelectric powerplant projects in Antalya. *De Angelis* (2017), mentions *Gezi Park* protests as an example of the occupation and collective government of a public space through *commoning*.

In 2014, “*Olmezagaç - Yirca Resistance*” documentary was released directed by *Kazim Kizil* about the *Yirca* villagers (Manisa) fighting to save their olive trees against a thermal powerplant project. **In 2015**, most of the EMs

YEAR	TOP 5 SUBJECTS OF ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS	NUM.	TOP 5 CITIES
2009	Climate change, TPP, environmental destruction, HPP, NPP	37	Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Mugla, Erzurum
2010	HPP, environmental pollution, environmental destruction, climate change, NPP	56	Istanbul, Izmir, Mugla, Ankara, Bursa
2011	Environmental destruction, HPP, NPP, environmental pollution, TPP	60	Izmir, Ankara, Istanbul, Mugla, Sinop
2012	Environmental pollution, HPP, TPP, environmental destruction, quarry	41	Istanbul, Izmir, Mugla, Ankara, Kocaeli
2013	Environmental destruction, HPP, environmental pollution, TPP, quarry	91	Istanbul, Antalya, Izmir, Ankara, Mugla
2014	Environmental destruction, HPP, NPP, environmental pollution, quarry	78	Antalya, Mugla, Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara
2015	Environmental destruction, environmental pollution, TPP, quarry, HPP	97	Izmir, Mugla, Istanbul, Kocaeli, Mersin
2016	Mine, environmental destruction, TPP, environmental pollution, quarry	67	Izmir, Mugla, Antalya, Aydin, Artvin
2017	Environmental destruction, quarry, mine, environmental pollution, animal rights	55	Izmir, Mugla, Antalya, Artvin, Istanbul
2018	Environmental pollution, environmental destruction, GPP, mine, HPP	49	Aydin, Izmir, Balikesir, Bursa, Kocaeli
2019	Mine, climate change, environmental destruction, quarry, environmental pollution	69	Canakkale, Izmir, Manisa, Istanbul, Mugla
Total	Environmental destruction, environmental pollution, HPP, quarry, TPP	700	Izmir, Istanbul, Mugla, Antalya, Ankara

Table 3 Environmental movements of Turkey in 2009–2019.

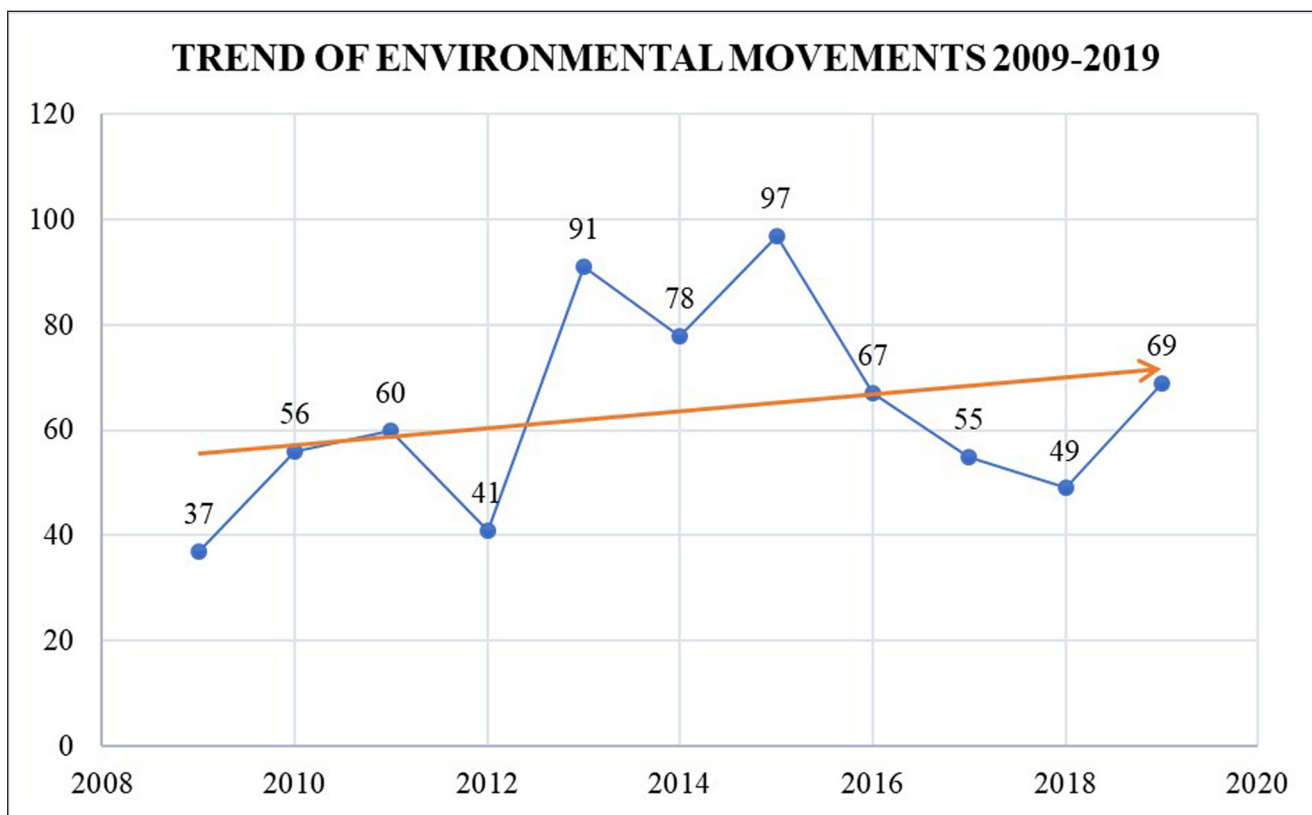


Figure 3 The trend of environmental movements, 2009–2019.

that occur in the top three metropolitan cities, Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. There were also several local resistances at the popular squares and/or in front of the related government institutions for consideration. It is important to underline that Turkey is a country at a high-risk of

earthquakes. Therefore, thermal and nuclear powerplant projects have serious potential risks of hazards; as well as harming the local natural assets. In addition, there was a *guerilla gardening* example called *Roma Garden* in Istanbul, which was commonly designed according to *permaculture*

principles, against the enclosure attempts through partial plan revisions (Durmaz Ekenler, 2020).

In 2016, resistances against a gold mining company in Cerattepe (Artvin) was the national environmental focus especially in Artvin and Rize. However, the resistances were restricted by Artvin Governorship due to the “Emergency State” for months. In 2017, an unfortunate event happened in Finike (Antalya); *Buyuknohutcu* couple, two well-known environmentalists that had been struggling against the quarries were murdered in their house. The resistances blew up nationwide due to the situation. Although, the restrictions continued due to the emergency state and many activists were arrested; the biggest environmental lawsuit against a gold mining company continued in Cerattepe (Artvin). In 2018, EMs against a geothermal powerplant project in Incirliova (Aydin) drew nationwide attention. Also, first actions against a biogas powerplant project occurred in Bursa. In 2019, climate strikes of the young activists increased following the social media challenges and Swedish climate activist *Greta Thunberg* had a “Nobel Peace Prize” nomination. The nationwide environmental focus of the year was *Kazdaglari* (Mount Ida) resistance called “Water and Conscience Watch” with the

participation of thousands of people against a gold mining company. In addition, worldwide known pianist *Fazıl Say* had a concert at *Kazdaglari* to support the resistance. The trend of EMs in Turkey in the last decade can be seen in *Figure 3*.

Accordingly, there is an increase in the number of EMs between 2013 and 2015, which can be related with Gezi Park resistance. The decrease in the number of EMs in 2016 can be related to the restrictions due to the emergency state. It is seen that EMs in Turkey have been increasing since 2018 (*Figures 4–6*).

The EMs of Turkey were spatialized by using the GIS analyst tools in terms of their spatial density analysis (*Figures 7 and 8*), analysis among their subjects (*Figures 9 and 10*), and spatial analysis of the top 5 EMs including (1) environmental destruction, (2) environmental pollution, (3) hydroelectric powerplant, (4) quarry and (5) thermal powerplant (*Figures 11–15*).

According to the density analysis, it is observed that the frequency of the EMs in Turkey primarily concentrates on the metropolitan cities (Izmir, Istanbul and Ankara) and the coastal cities (Mugla, Antalya). These frequencies are possibly relevant to the population, education level,



Figure 4 Environmental movements in Turkey, 2009–2019.



Figure 5 Environmental movements in Turkey, 2009–2019.



Figure 6 Environmental movements in Turkey, 2009–2019.

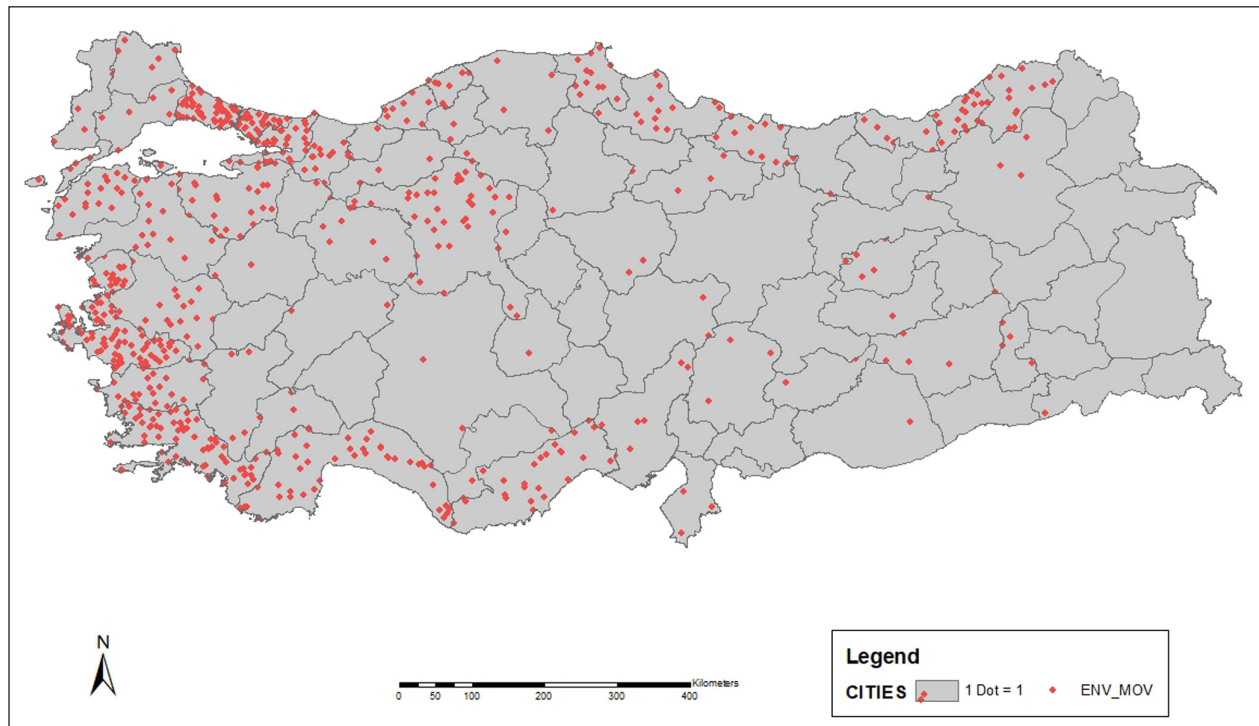


Figure 7 Turkey environmental movements dot density analysis, 2009–2019.

geographical factors and/or enclosure types (e.g., energy, tourism) on the coastal cities and their effects on the rural areas due to their natural assets. The subjects of the EMs can be seen in [Figures 9 and 10](#).

According to the media analysis, the top 5 subjects of the EMs are respectively revealed as; (1) environmental destruction, (2) environmental pollution, (3) hydroelectric powerplant, (4) quarry, and (5) thermal powerplant. The densification of these movements can be seen in [Figures 11–15](#).

[Figure 11](#) reveals that the movements against the environmental destruction are primarily densified in Istanbul and Mugla; following, Izmir, Ankara and

Antalya. [Figure 12](#) reveals that movements against the environmental pollution are primarily densified in Istanbul; following, Izmir and Mugla.

[Figure 13](#) reveals that movements against HPPs are primarily densified in Antalya and Rize; following, Mugla. [Figure 14](#) reveals that the movements against quarries are primarily densified in Izmir; following, Antalya and Kocaeli. [Figure 15](#) reveals that the movements against TPPs are primarily densified in Izmir; following, Mugla, Ankara, Sinop and Zonguldak.

The EMs in Turkey include reactive local resistances and proactive movements organized by environmental NGOs. In order to understand the relations of the EMs

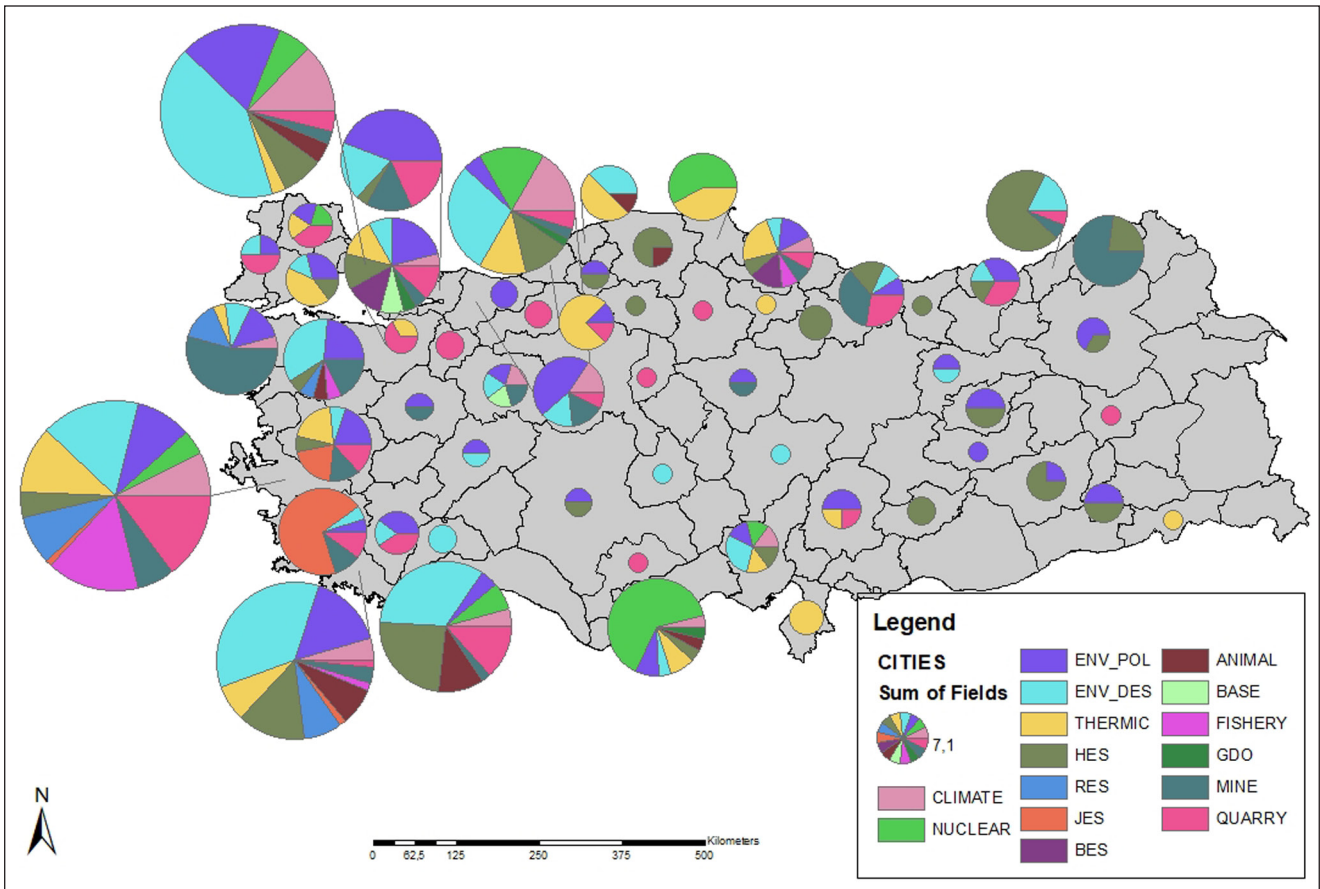


Figure 10 The subjects of environmental movements chart analysis, 2009–2019.

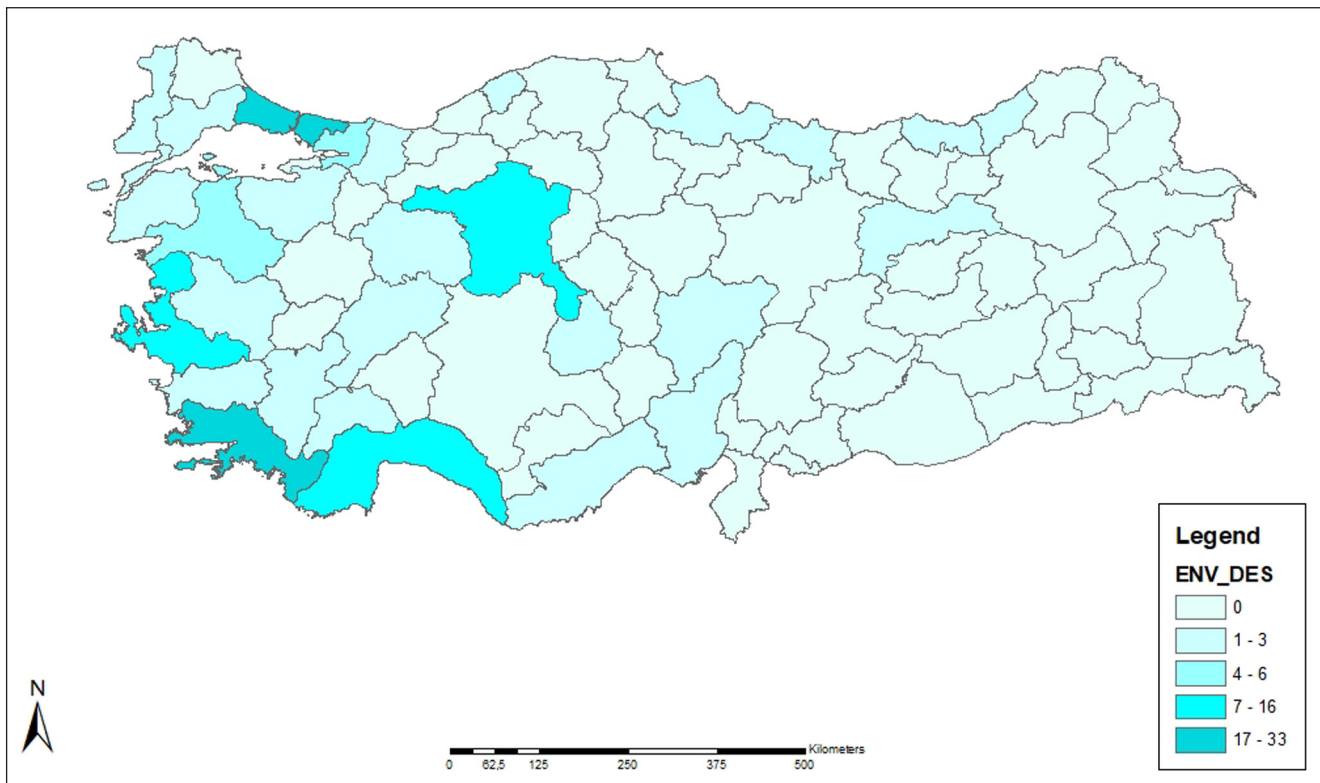


Figure 11 Environmental destruction density analysis, 2009–2019.

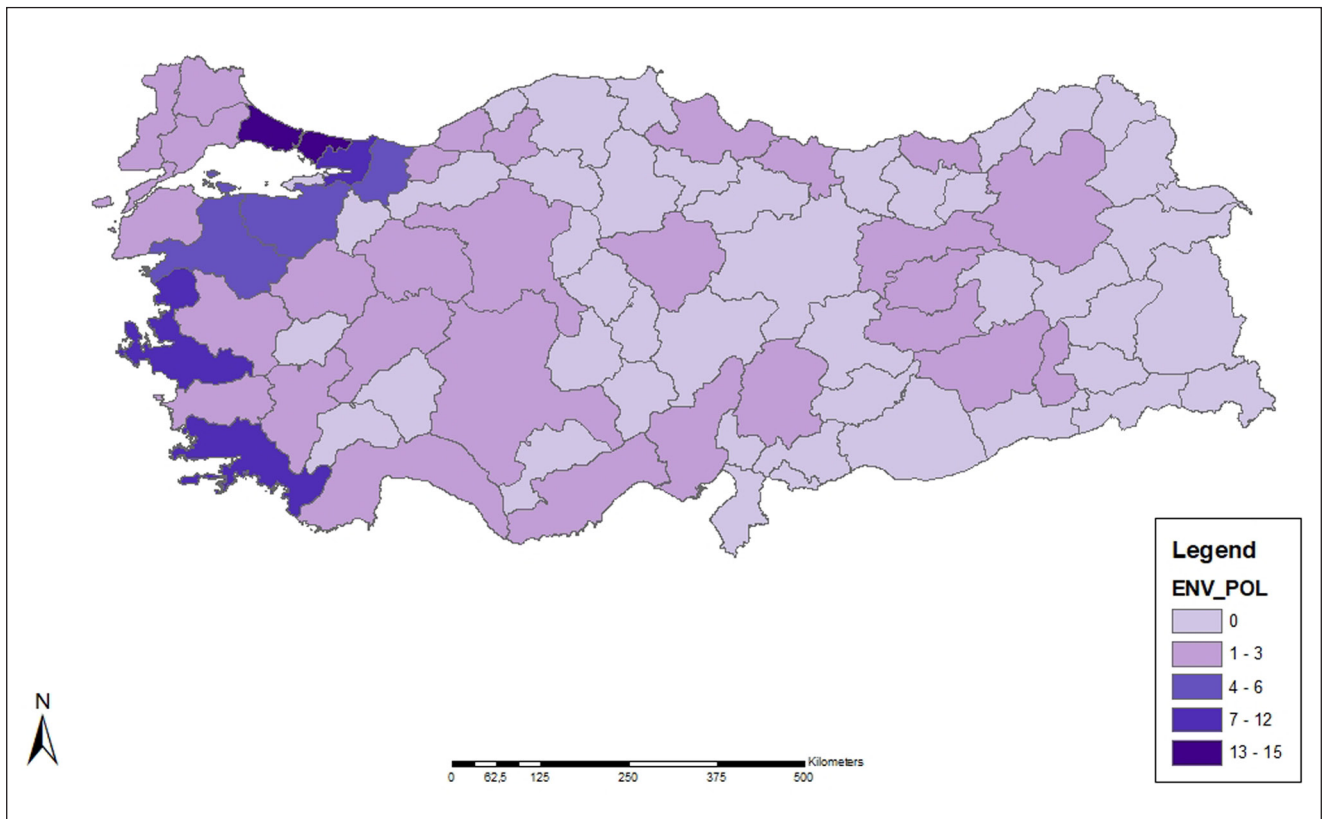


Figure 12 Environmental pollution density analysis, 2009–2019.

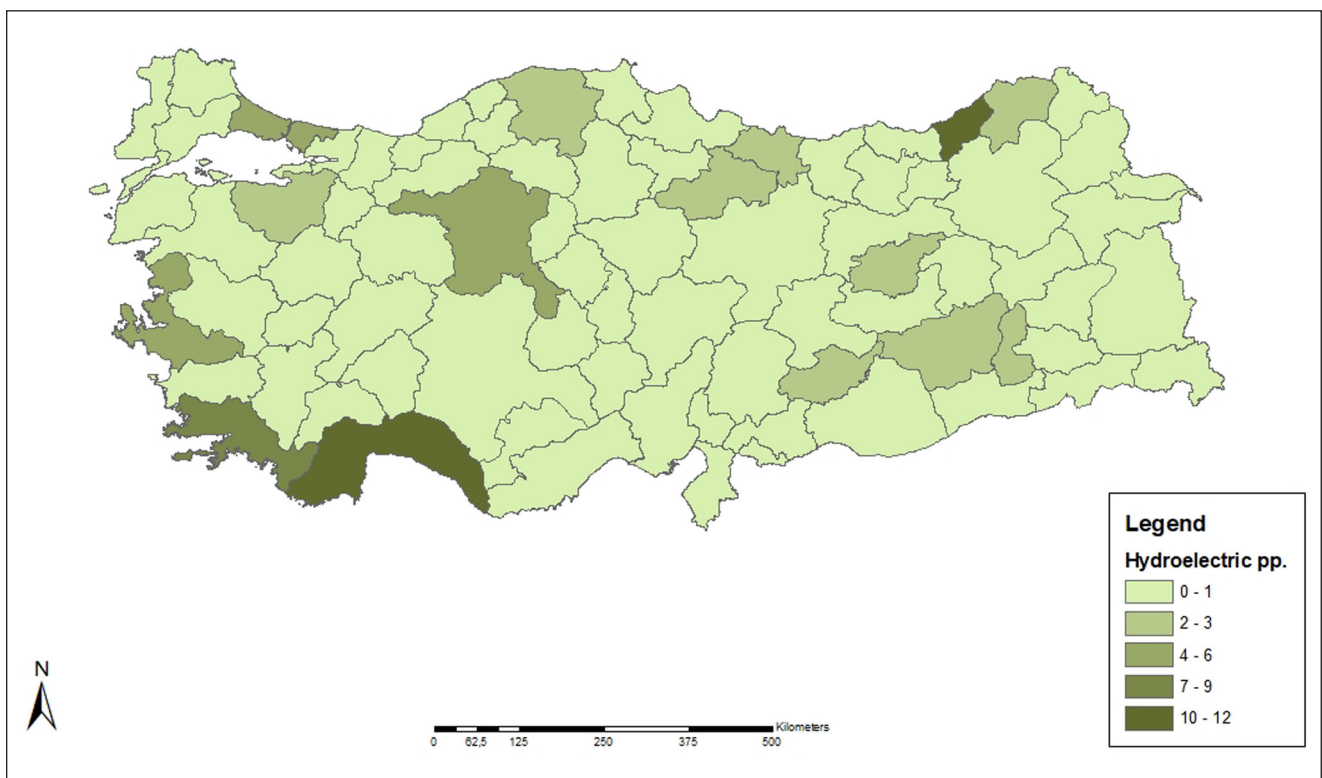


Figure 13 Hydroelectric powerplant density analysis, 2009–2019.

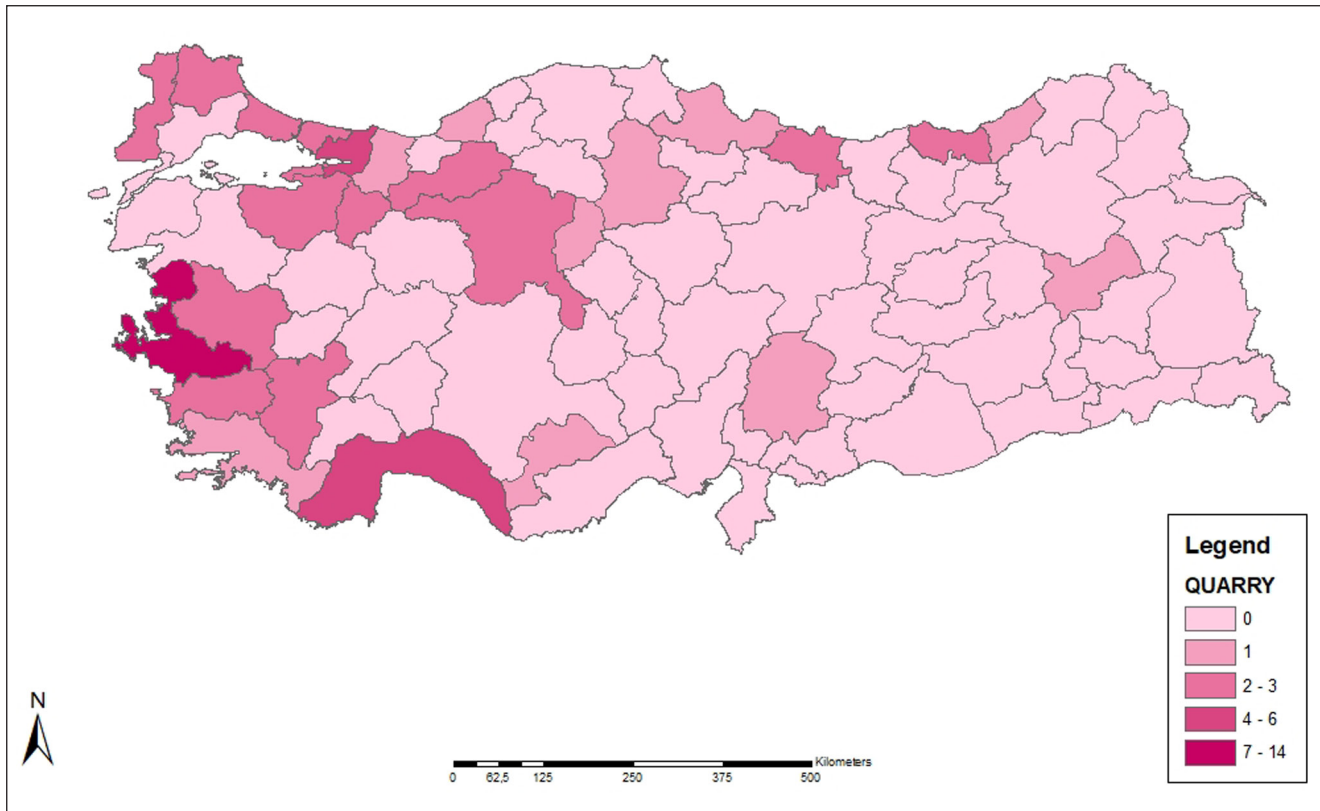


Figure 14 Quarry density analysis, 2009–2019.

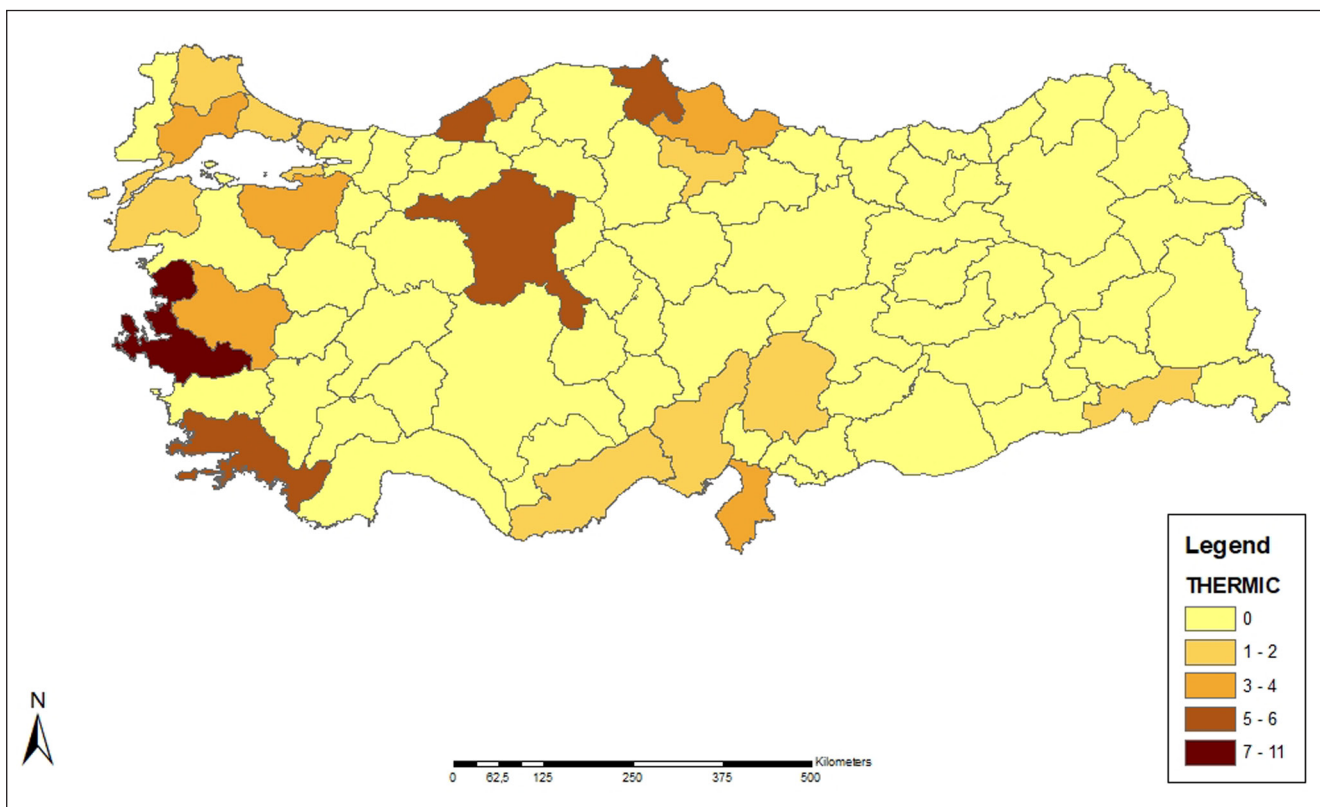


Figure 15 Thermal powerplant density analysis, 2009–2019.

with the commons, an online survey is conducted with the environmental NGOs that organize and/or attend the movements.

4.2. SURVEY RESULTS

The online survey conducted with environmental NGOs includes questions about; (1) subjects, (2) types, (3) number, (4) time interval, (5) related court processes, (6) relation with commons, (7) success/failures and (8) projections of the EMs.

The survey was sent to **36** environmental NGOs in Turkey; and responded by a few including Alakir River Fellowship, Doga Association, Kulturpark Platform, SUYADER (Sustainable Life Association), Izmir Habitat Areas, DOCEV (Foundation for Nature and Environment) and Kazdaglari Fellowship.

According to the survey, main subjects of the EMs were specified as the environmental destruction (90%), environmental pollution (57,1%), climate change (57,1%), mine (57,1%), nuclear powerplant (42,9%), thermal powerplant (42,9%), quarry (42,9%), hydroelectric powerplant (42,9%), wind powerplant (42,9%), animal rights (42,9%), geothermal powerplant (28,6%), biogas powerplant (14,3%), GMO (14,3%) and fish farm (14,3%) (**Figure 16**).

Accordingly, the main types of the environmental actions were specified as the press releases (100%), walk with banner (71,4%), environmental cleaning (57,1%), theatre/pantomime/dance shows (57,1%), concerts

(57,1%), dibbling (42,9%) and sitting (42,9%). Following by, passage interceptions (28,6%), petitions (14,3%), festival/picnic (14,3%) and tenting (14,3%) (**Figure 17**).

The environmental NGOs that attended the survey stated that they have organized 3–100 movements by 60–5000 attenders. The majority of the answers is 50 movements (28,6%) by 100 attenders (28,6%). Although the timeline of the movements varies among the NGOs, most of them stated that they have been active since 2007. One of the movements (tenting) continued for 425 days. Almost all NGOs continue their lawsuit processes along with their resistances (85,7%). Especially EIA lawsuits last long and sometimes legal intervention of the NGOs is rejected.

All environmental NGOs participating in the survey stated that they are familiar with the concept of the commons and acknowledged their resistances as *a defense of the commons*. They explained their reasons as; (1) “It is a defense of the commons within a rights-based approach as these are the actions against the destruction of the commons (natural assets)”; (2) “Defending the rights of nature and life of all living and non-living beings is a defense of the commons”; (3) “Kulturpark is a common space”; (4) “Nature is the common for all living-beings”; (5) “We define most of our habitats as commons so our resistance can be defined as a defense of the commons”; (6) “Nature and environment are the subjects of the commons”; (7) “The spaces that we struggle to conserve are the common spaces”.

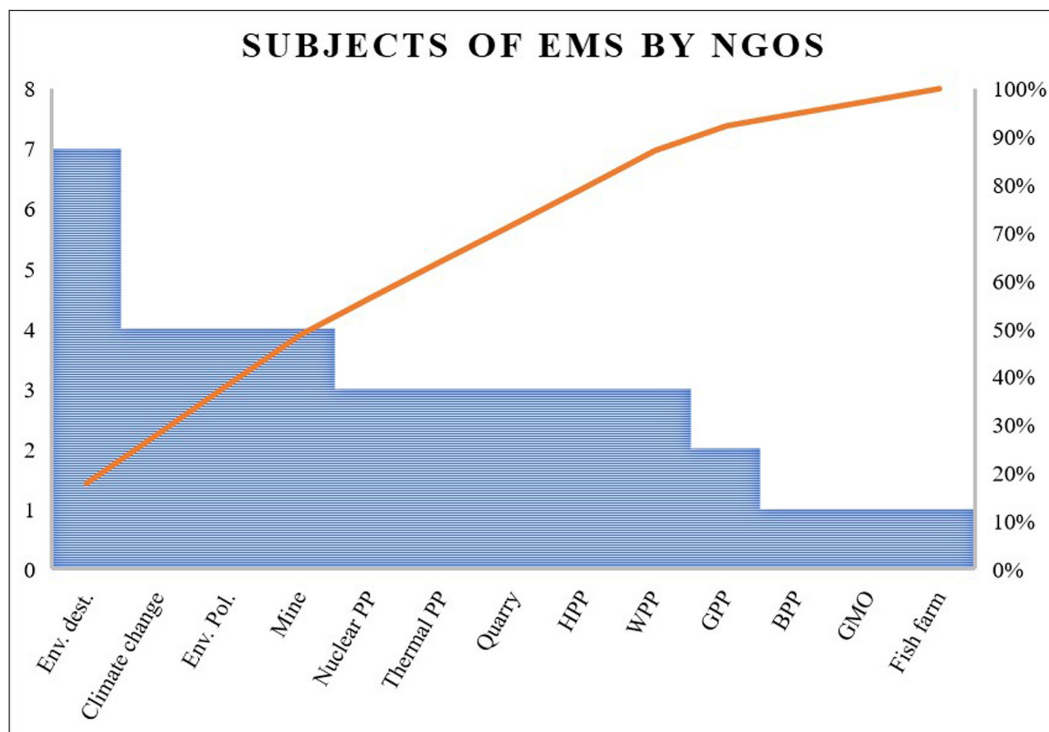


Figure 16 The subjects of environmental movements by NGOs, 2009–2019.

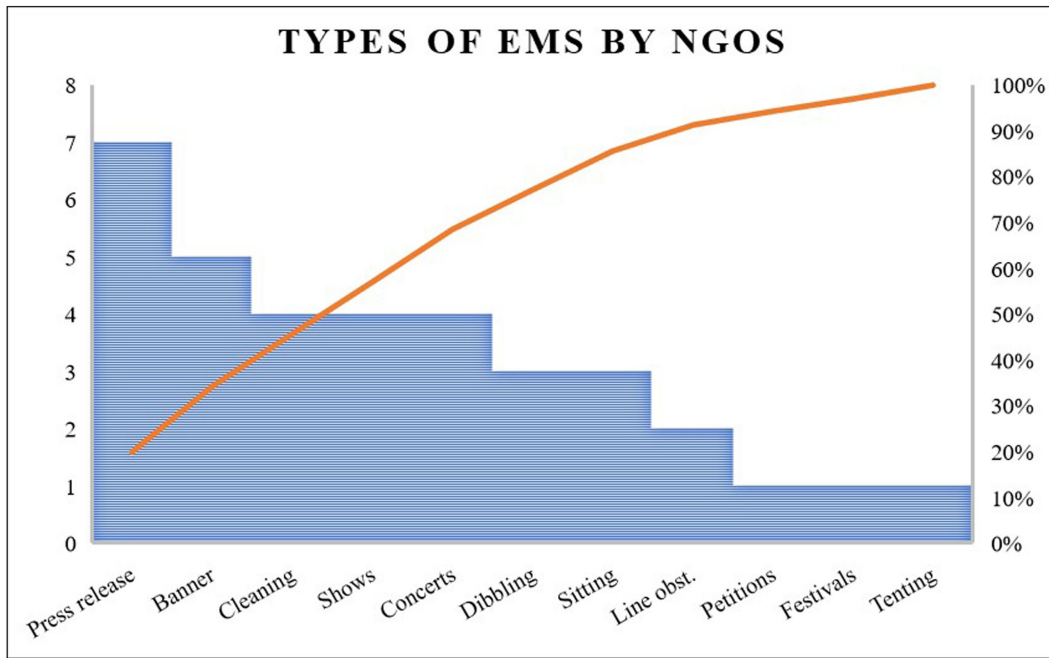


Figure 17 The types of environmental movements by NGOs, 2009–2019.

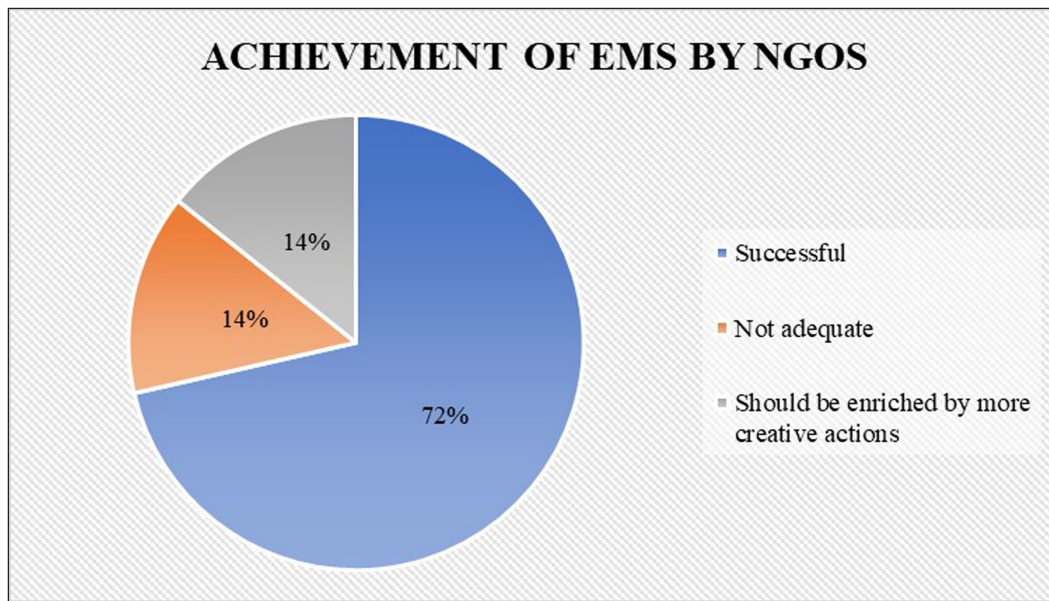


Figure 18 The achievement of the environmental movements.

Most of the environmental NGOs participating in the survey acknowledged their movements as successful (71,4%) in terms of increasing public awareness. However, they expressed the necessity of more creative and diverse resistances and civil disobedience. They stated that especially the petitions on environment were succeeded. In addition, increasing public awareness, solidarity and long-term planning of the EMS were important issues. In this process, the necessity of peaceful, legal, scientific and creative EMS was emphasized. It is seen that the EMS were

considered (subjectively) successful independent from the success or failure of the commoning practices, as long as they were legal and peaceful (Figure 18).

The positive self-evaluation of the environmental NGOs are not merely based on the enclosure trends of the commons or their successes or failures on the commoning practices. They continuously gain and lose several cases. Particular cases are substantially crucial for the local resisters; however, their opinions are beyond the scope of the study due to time and resource limitations. When

we look at the environmental NGOs, it is understood that *increasing public opinion* generated from their peaceful and legal resistances is what really matters for them to feel achieved because the *public pressure* (which is eventually increasing) would ease the defense of the commons.

The environmental NGOs stated that they were planning to continue holding petitions and press releases against the harmful practices on nature; attempting to change the 4915 numbered Land Hunting Law; monitoring the planning process of the common spaces (e.g., Kulturpark Conservation Plan); raising strikes against the climate crisis; and protesting and suing the development projects on the natural assets (e.g., Cesme Project, Izmir) in the near future.

4.3. EVALUATION

In this study, environmental movements were acknowledged as commoning practices and the commons were evaluated with regard to spatial, economical, ecological, social and political dimensions by a triple-scoring system (positive-neutral-negative) for the comparison of

the two possible scenarios: (1) *commoning practices* and (2) *enclosure movements*.

The scores of determined **57** dimensions, which are developable in the future, were given by the author due to the data obtained from the literature review, media analysis, surveys and personal observations through proficiency. The positive (+1) score was given for the current *strengths*, the neutral (0) score was given for the possible *threats* and/or *opportunities* that may vary due to the cases, and the negative (-1) score was given for the current *weaknesses*. Finally, several recommendations were proposed to approach an optimal scenario for the commons (**Table 4**).

The score of *Scenario 1* (commoning practices) was determined as **24**; while the score of *Scenario 2* (enclosure movements) was determined as **-18**. In Turkey, the lasting struggle between two scenarios have usually been end up on behalf of *Scenario 2*. However, parallel to the increasing public opinion and the culture of resistance on the EMs, several achievements completed on behalf of

	SPATIAL	ECONOMICAL	ECOLOGICAL	SOCIAL	POLITICAL	
Scenario 1	S1. Long-term plan (1) S2. Public spaces (1) S3. Common spaces (1) S4. Nature as threshold for development (-1) S5. Common property (1)	E1. Sustainable livelihoods (1) E2. Local sustainable development (1) E3. Agriculture (1) E4. Energy (-1) E5. Tourism (-1) E6. Agrotourism (1) E7. Ecotourism (1) E8. Rural producers (1) E9. Industry (-1) E10. Underground resources (-1) E11. Big data (1)	EC1. Natural resources (1) EC2. Endemic species (1) EC3. Biodiversity (1) EC4. CO ₂ absorption (1) EC5. Climate (1) EC6. Resilience (1) EC7. Food sovereignty (1)	SO1. Collective action (1) SO2. Cooperatives (1) SO3. Diverse stakeholders (1) SO4. Public awareness (1) SO5. Public interest (1) SO6. Indigenous knowledge (1) SO7. Scientific knowledge (0)	P1. Benevolent governments (0) P2. Commoning practices (1) P3. Common management (1) P4. Transparent and bottom-up decision making (1) P5. EIA reporting (0) P6. Lawsuits (0) P7. Coordinated institutions (1) P8. Agricultural policies (1)	
Total	3	3	7	6	5	24
Scenario 2	S2. Public spaces (-1) S6. Short-term planning (-1) S7. Locational choice (-1) S8. Urban sprawl (-1) S9. New development areas (1) S10. Private property (-1) S11. Land occupation (-1)	E3. Agriculture (-1) E4. Energy (1) E5. Tourism (1) E9. Industry (1) E10. Underground resources (1) E12. New employment areas (1) E13. Rural poverty (-1) E14. Foreign investments (1)	EC1. Natural resources (-1) EC2. Endemic species (-1) EC3. Biodiversity (-1) EC4. CO ₂ absorption (-1) EC5. Climate (-1) EC8. Environ. pollution (-1) EC9. Environ. destruction (-1) EC10. Food insecurity (-1)	SO5. Public interest (-1) SO6. Indigenous knowledge (-1) SO7. Scientific knowledge (0) SO8. Resistances (0) SO9. Rural-urban migration (-1) SO10. Rural gentrification (-1) SO11. Urbanized lifestyles (0) SO12. Privileged stakeholders (-1)	P5. EIA reporting processes (0) P6. Lawsuits (0) P7. Coordination among institutions (-1) P8. Agricultural policies (-1) P9. Legislations on behalf of the privileged (-1) P10. Top-down decision-making (-1)	
Total	-5	4	-8	-5	-4	-18

Table 4 Scoring of two scenarios on the commons in Turkey.

Scenario 1, especially in the last decade. The study reveals that commoning practices have serious *strengths* and *opportunities* in terms of spatial, economical, ecological, social and political aspects. Thus, *Scenario 1* is proposed as the *optimal* scenario for the commons in Turkey, which conserves the current commons and constitutes new commons through commoning practices.

5. CONCLUSION

The study acknowledges the environmental movements (EMs) in Turkey as commoning practices because the nature and environment are the subjects of the commons and the movements are usually emerged as an attempt to defense of the commons. These movements usually consist of reactive local resistances and proactive movements organized by the environmental NGOs and emerging local initiatives during the process. When we look at the literature on the commons, it is seen that primarily *ecofeminist* studies elaborate the interrelations between commons and EMs, especially focusing on the enclosure movements in developing countries, *intersectional* negative externalities on rural women and local resistances (Shiva, 1992; Rocheleau, 2008; Ahlers and Zwartveen, 2009; Harris, 2009; Federici, 2010; Caffentzis and Federici, 2014; Clement et al., 2019; Sato and Alarcon, 2019; Nightingale, 2019).

It is seen that recently increasing *ecofeminist* studies in Turkey also continue this trend (Berkay, 2010; Kadirbeyoglu, 2010; Seckin, 2016; Turk, 2018; Hazar, 2020). It is important to emphasize that women and children have a crucial part in the displaying of EMs, which is coherent with the data analysis of the study. The majority of these studies reveal that rural women are the most vulnerable group against the enclosure movements and these women are merely used as *display window*, while they are not adequately represented in the decision-making process due to male-dominated environmental NGOs. Even, alternative constitutions have occurred to strengthen women in EMs such as *KOSKA* (Women of Northern Forest Defense) (Turk, 2018).

Natural assets, more specifically common-pool resources (CPRs) are the fundamental wealth of the rural producers as they are the sources for the resource units that provide food, medicine, clothing, shelter, tools and income. Thus, it can be said that the reflections of the rural producers in the presence of destructive appropriations and/or enclosure movements are inevitably similar in the world and in Turkey. These reflections include local resistances, lawsuits and EMs as commoning practices. In the last decade, **700** EMs were determined in Turkey, consisting of **15** subjects. The

primary subjects were determined as the *environmental destruction*, *environmental pollution*, *hydroelectric powerplants*, *quarries* and *thermal powerplants*. There are various types of EMs containing peaceful activities such as walking with banners, dancing, playing music, hiking, cycling, sitting, sailing, press releasing, singing, dibbling, sleeping, pantomime playing, pots and pans playing, flying with banners, switching off and on the lights.

There are many reasons of the EMs in Turkey. *Firstly*, Turkey is an earthquake region and it is crucial to prevent nuclear and thermal powerplant projects and possible related disasters. *Secondly*, with regard to the other energy projects such as hydroelectric powerplant, wind powerplant, geothermal powerplant, and biogas powerplant, there is a clear conflict between producing the energy that the country needs and/or producing the energy beyond the country needs for economic purposes. In this context, a protection-use balance is required by producing the energy that country needs while protecting the natural assets, and promoting relatively eco-friendly economic sectors such as agriculture, smart-farming, ecotourism and agrotourism. *Thirdly*, environmental activists are incorporated into the international EMs, such as climate strike. *Finally*, there are also EMs against to the *renewables* such as wind powerplants due to excessive number of wind turbines and locational choices. The negative externalities of the wind turbines such as noise, inevitably involve the WPP into locally-unwanted land uses (LULUs) (Kaya and Erol, 2016; Hazar Kalonya and Özçam, 2021). Thus, site selection is a priori issue along with the local participation in the decision-making processes when it comes to the LULUs.

The environmental activists of Turkey have had both gains and losses since the last decade. For example, the construction of Yortanlı dam in Allianoi ancient city, Izmir; and Ilisu dam in Hasankeyf, Batman were unfortunately unpreventable despite the international EMs. Yet, HPP projects on Alakir River and Shopping Mall project on Gezi Park were cancelled due to the EMs. The frequency of the EMs from all parts of the community reveals the fact that neoliberal policies constantly force to enclose the commons in Turkey. Some of the EMs were carried out after the destruction of the environment; yet, some of the EMs were carried out before the environmental destruction occurs. It is crucial to take EMs into consideration as the commoning practices within the EIA and decision-making processes. The EMs can be a guiding for better management of the commons at local and national levels.

At the local level, despite the ongoing ambiguities, 6360 numbered Metropolitan Law (2012) has the potential to ensure the protection of the commons by providing incentives and municipally supported cooperatives in

the rural areas. Unfortunately, there has been a certain loss of credibility of cooperatives and unions from the perspective of the rural producers due to the previous unfair administrations. Thus, there is an urgent need to build new common institutions that would be participating in the proactive commoning practices.

The study reveals the relations between EMs and commons to constitute a scientific basis to enhance the EIA and decision-making processes in order to encourage proactive responses to environmental crises, prevent enclosure movements on the commons and sustain the local sustainable development. The study proposes a *scoring system* of different scenarios, which can be useful in order to improve EIA processes. In this context, two possible scenarios were compared within a triple-scale scoring system. The study proposes that the optimal scenario for the commons in Turkey is *Scenario 1*, which is the conservation of the current commons and constitution of the new commons by commoning.

Moreover, EMs often occur as a reactive response to the impacts that cause ecological crises. For this reason, an enhanced *DPSIR* causal network model of European Environmental Agency (EEA) for the complicated causality of the environmental indicators, can be applied for determination of the *driving force* and *pressure* factors with a proactive approach to eliminate the environmental crises and to have more flexible feedbacks (EEA, 1999; Niemeijer and Groot, 2008; Hazar and Velibeyoglu, 2019).

The study also recommends the supervision of inter-plan hierarchy on the land use decisions; transparent decision-making processes through local participation and public interest; coordination among institutions, NGOs and locals; association of scientific knowledge and indigenous knowledge through case studies, workshops, panels and meetings; data collection and digitalization; common management and collective action against the capital-promoted intervenient political decisions (e.g., new legislations, nonfunction of the EIA reports); public awareness for fair lawsuits; and finally, commoning practices against the enclosure movements for conserving the commons.

According to the trend of the EMs, it is predicted that the commoning practices against the enclosure movements will be continuing in the near future. Thus, there is a need for further critical investigations on the link between the EMs and commons agenda. It is necessary to conduct more studies on the subject, to produce and share interdisciplinary scientific data, to increase public awareness and to support commoning practices at local and national levels. In this context, supporting collective action and commoning practices is crucial in order to bring different and diverse groups together for a common purpose; to reduce the migration of young people from rural to urban; and to

increase the quality of life and belonging in the rural areas. In addition, self-management and self-empowerment practices such as forums, platforms, cooperatives should be improved so that the resistances and practices that focus on the commons do not create restrictions through polarization and exclusion.

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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