

REVIEW / DERLEME

Benefiting From the Environmental Justice Paradigm as a Conceptual Framework in Turkey

Türkiye’de Kavramsal Çerçeve Olarak Çevresel Adalet Paradigmasından Faydalanmak

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ABSTRACT

The article argues that Turkey has entered a new wave of environmental consciousness and collective action that embraces a new environmental paradigm in which human-environment relations are also questioned. Consequently, today’s environmental awareness and activism in Turkey cannot be read or explained solely within the limits of the mainstream environmentalist framework or capitalist/neoliberal critique framework; there is a need for a more comprehensive and inclusive framework, and this is offered by the Environmental Justice Paradigm. This article presents the context and boundaries of environmental justice concept and paradigm, and also provides a new window to read and explain recent environment-related social distress in Turkey with a different scope.

Key words: Environmental justice; environmental movement.

Starting with hydropower dam building and mining operation oppositions in rural Turkey, and accelerating with Gezi Park protests, Turkey has entered into a new wave of environmental consciousness and collective action that embraces a new environmental paradigm in which human-environment relation is also questioned.

This article intends to point a (new) paradigm for Turkey which may be used for reading and explaining some of environment-related social distress and protests that take place both rural and urban parts of the country. Environmental Justice Paradigm includes not only environmental protection issues but also other subjects—such as labor rights, right to the city—that stem from human-environment relation. By us-

ÖZ

Bu derleme yazısı, son dönem Türkiye’inde gözlemlediğimiz yeni dalga toplumsal hareketlilik ve çevre bilincinin, insan-çevre ilişkisinin de sorgulandığı yeni bir çevre paradigmasını kucakladığını savunmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu dönem içinde, artan çevre bilinci ve toplumsal hareketlerin sadece ana-akım çevreci veya kapitalist/neo-liberal eleştirel yaklaşım çerçevesinde açıklanması da yetersiz kalmaktadır. Söz konusu noktada, daha kapsamlı ve kapsayıcı bir çerçeveye, ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır, ki böyle bir çerçeve de Çevresel Adalet Paradigması tarafından sunulmaktadır. Bu makale, çevresel adalet kavramı ve paradigmasının kapsamı ve sınırlarını betimleyerek, Türkiye’de farklı sosyal sınıflar içinde boy gösteren son dönem çevre-ilintili toplumsal rahatsızlıkların okunması ve açıklanmasına da yardımcı olabilecek yeni bir pencere açmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Çevresel adalet; çevre hareketi.

ing and building on the seminal article of Dorceta E. Taylor, titled as: *The Rise of the Environmental Justice Paradigm: Injustice Framing and the Social Construction of Environmental Discourses* (2000), this article plans to introduce environmental justice paradigm. The expected contribution of the article is to present the context and the boundaries of environmental justice concept and paradigm, in which reading and explaining recent environment-related social distress among different segments of the society in Turkey is possible.

In reaching the above mentioned objective, the article gives definition of environmental justice concept. Then it presents Taylor’s article on environmental justice paradigm by defining three terms that are to be used in the article; briefly intro-



ducing Taylor's explanation on the three waves of environmental movement (in the U.S); and discussing the details of Environmental Justice Paradigm (EJP) depending on Taylor's elucidation. Lastly, it concisely indicates possible linkages between EJP and recent social distress related with the human-environment relation in Turkey.

DEFINITION(S) OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The root of Environmental Justice Paradigm (EJP), Environmental Justice Movement (EJM), was emerged as a civil reaction to unequal distribution of environment-related risks by un-franchised minorities, especially blacks in the U.S in the 1970s. It continuously has attracted attention not only from activists but also from academic-circles as well. In the 1980s, especially with his seminal work, sociologist Richard Bullard (2000) indicated that abundance of data revealed "... blacks, lower-income groups, and working-class persons are subjected to disproportionally large amount of pollution and other environmental stressors in their neighborhood as well as in their workplaces" (p. 1). After a long march, from 1970s until now, the movement has evolved in a substantial way at the global level that Environmental Justice (EJ) has been accepted an inclusive and important framework which helps to keep environmental justice-related activism alive and also provides a new paradigm for theoretical discussions/explanations related with different type injustices that emerge from human-environment relation(s).

Environmental justice is defined with different focuses and emphasizes because of its inclusive character. Mascarenhas (2009) defines environmental inequality (or environmental injustice) as "a situation in which a specific group is disproportionately affected by negative environmental conditions brought on by unequal laws, regulations and policies" (p.129). In their seminal article, Szasz and Meuser (1997) assert that environmental justice movement's use of 'environmental racism' phrase "...drew researchers' attention to the ways environmental risks are unequally distributed in society" (p.99). According to Carruthers (2008) environmental justice (movement) had a transformative impact on environmentalism in the U.S. and opened "...a dialogue about race, class, and the distribution of environmental threats...[which has provided]...a new framework for scholarly analysis, interpretation, and policy (Bryant, 1995; Bullard, 1994; Pellow, 2000)" (p. 556). Mohai, Pellow and Roberts (2009) indicates that "environmental justice studies emerged as an interdisciplinary body of literature, in which researchers were documenting the unequal impacts of environmental pollution on different social classes and racial/ethnic groups" (p.405). They also point out these studies have a general consensus that "...ethnic minorities, indigenous persons, people of color, and low-income communities confront a higher burden of environmental exposure from air, water, and soil pollution from industrialization, militarization, and consumer practices" (p.405).

While expanding the context of EJ concept, Taylor (2000)

claims that "...the environmental justice frame not only recognizes environmental justice as it relates to humans harming nature, but it also recognizes that environmental justice arises from racial, gender, and class discrimination" (p. 524). In order to emphasize EJ's inclusive character, Schlosberg (2013) points that environmental justice discourse has "...the potential of extending the discourse beyond individual human beings, to conceptualization of community-level justice and justice beyond the human" (p. 40).

Along its evolvement, the boundaries of this concept have been widened. According to Schlosberg (2013) "the discourse of environmental justice has been broadening and expanding in scope far beyond its initial application to inequities in the distribution of environmental risk..." (p.37). He, also, points out that environmental justice idea didn't stay within the boundaries of environment notion and expanded its territory to include social justice issues as well. Moreover, Schlosberg claims that "...there has been a spatial expansion of the use of the term, both horizontally into a broader range of issues and vertically into examinations of the truly global nature of environmental injustices (Sze & London, 2008; Walker, 2009)" (p. 37). Besides becoming an expanding discourse, environmental justice frame was indicated as a new paradigm which uses discourses of injustice for environmental movement mobilization by Dorceta Taylor (2000).

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PARADIGM BASED ON TAYLOR'S ELUCIDATION

Terms Used

It is significant to clarify the used definitions of three crucial concepts in this article because they play an important role in understanding and explaining the environmental justice thought and action; namely, environment, paradigm and framing. These definitions are kept short and explanations are given within the bounds of the article, which uses dominantly Taylor's (2000) work.

The first important term is *environment*; the meaning and scope of the term in environmental justice framework. The conception of the term environment is broad in environmental justice theory and activism: environment term indicates the places in which we live, work, learn and play (Novotny, 2000). Environment is defined as "...the ambient and immediate surroundings of everyday life activities and relationships linking people with their immediate environments" which comprises "...nature and society, work environments and open spaces, and urban and rural places" (Mascarenhas, 2009, p. 128). To emphasize the importance of human and nature link the first principle¹ of environmental justice points out

¹ The Principles of Environmental Justice, declared and has been accepted as the founding vision of the environmental justice movement at the First People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit in 1991. In this document delegates to this summit adapted 17 principles of EJ which "...have served a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice" (DelegatesToTheFirstNationalPeopleOfColorEnvironmentalLeadership, 1991).

the “...sacredness of Mother Earth, ecological unity, and the interdependence of all species” (DelegatesToTheFirstNationalPeopleOfColorEnvironmentalLeadership, 1991; Schlosberg, 2013, p. 39).

The second important term is *paradigm*. Since paradigm term is used by Taylor (2000) for indicating the position of the environmental justice movement and concept, only her explanation is used here. In her article Taylor (2000) indicates that ideological foundations of EJM should be looked closely because “...environmental justice thought represent a new paradigm—the environmental justice paradigm (EJP)” (p. 508) which, indeed, has been changing the environmental discourse. Taylor explains the view of paradigm in her article as: “social constructions; that is, they are ideological packages expressing bodies of thought that change over time and according to the actors developing the paradigms” (p. 508).

And, lastly *framing*: Taylor (2000) defines framing as “...the process by which individuals and groups identify, interpret, and express social and political grievances. In the process of framing individuals and groups identify the problems by including their causes as well; they share a common interpretation frame which “guides the way in which ideological meaning and beliefs are packaged by movement activists and presented to would-be supporters” (p. 511); individuals and groups use these emergent collective action frames in order to “to inspire and legitimate social movement activities and campaigns designed to attract public support” (p. 511). Additionally, crucial to note, Taylor indicates two types of frames: master frames and submerged frames. Master frames are “...crucial ideological frameworks akin to paradigms” and they can “...help activists to make ‘causal attributions’ or develop ‘vocabularies of motive’ ” (Kelley, 1972; Mills, 1940; Snow & Benford, 1992, pp. 138-141; Taylor, 2000, p. 514). On the other hand, Taylor states that submerged frames “...are underlying ideological packages that are not made explicit by movement activists. Submerged frames identify problems in

the society, make diagnostic attributions, and suggest solutions, but these problems are not the major focus of movement...” (p. 516).

In accordance with previous delineations Taylor (2000) designates that “For more than a century, environmental activists have used injustice frames and arguments about environmental rights to make claims about human-environment relations and to advocate environmental policies and action” (p. 521-22). And environmental justice frame has been increasingly used as a master frame after the late 1970s in the U.S. and has become a new paradigm—the *Environmental Justice Paradigm* (EJM) (Taylor, 2000) (Emphasis is mine).

Four Waves of Environmental Mobilization in the U.S.

To explain the difference of EJP from other paradigms Taylor provides explanation and comparison between different phases of environmental movement—and their major paradigms—in the U.S. She classifies waves of mobilization around environmental issues in the U.S. into four sections (Table 1).

- 1. Pre-movement era (1820s-1913):** This era “...was characterized by a preponderance of outdoor recreationists, scientific and technical professionals, and individual enthusiasts who advocated environmental protection (preservationists) or wise use of resources (conservationists)” (p. 525). The major of paradigm of this era was *Exploitative Capitalist Paradigm* (ECP) in which “...resources were seen as plentiful and renewable; therefore, they were extracted and used extensively without much thought about future needs” (Taylor, 2000, p. 529).
- 2. Early Environmental Movement – the post-Hetch Hetchy era² (1914-1959):** The focus was primarily “...on wilderness preservation, wildlife conservation, pollution and degradation of wildlife habitats, ...[all] kinds of outdoor recreation” (Taylor, 2000, p. 527). Alternative to

Table 1. Four Waves of Environmental Mobilization and their Major Paradigms in the U.S. (Taylor, 2000, p. 527)

	Pre-Movement	Early Environmental Movement	Modern Environmental Movement	
Phases of the environmental movement	Pre-movement era (1820-1913)	Post-Hetch Hetchy era (1914-1959)	Post-Carson era (1960-1979)	Post-Three Mile Island/Love Canal (1980-present)
Paradigms	Exploitative capitalist paradigm (ECP)	ECP & the Romantic environmental paradigm (REP)	New environmental paradigm (NEP)	NEP & the environmental justice paradigm (EJP)

² Hetch-Hetchy Movement: “The first great American conservation movement was born during the Progressive Era out of the concern that industrial growth and urban development threatened to extinguish America’s wilderness. The era’s most controversial environmental issue was the five-year struggle over federal approval for the flooding of a remote corner of federally-owned land in California’s Yosemite National Park to build the Hetch Hetchy dam” (<http://historymatters.gmu.edu>, access date: 22.12.2014)

ECP, another paradigm was marked this era: the *Romantic Environmental Paradigm* (REP). REP activists "...urged people to live harmoniously with nature and encouraged the government to protect wildlife and wild lands" (p. 530) by promoting simpler lifestyles and establishing a national park system (Taylor, 2000, p. 530).

3. Modern Environmental Movement:

- a. *The post-Carson era (1960-1979)*: In this era, issues affecting humans and matters related to urban environment were added in the environmental agenda. Furthermore, involvement of youth and radical environmental activists in the movement was broadened the agenda (Taylor, 2000, p. 527). Previously dominant paradigm, REP, was replaced by a new type of environmentalism which was named as *New Environmental Paradigm* (NEP). NEP adopted "...a new environmental worldview that critiqued the development of high (large, complex, energy-intensive) technology like the nuclear industry; encouraged population control, pollution prevention, risk reduction, and environmental cleanups; and espoused postmaterialist values (Taylor, 2000, p. 531).
- b. *The post-Love Canal/Three Mile Island era (1980-the present)*: this second phase of modern environmentalism began after Three-Mile-Island nuclear accident and the Love Canal disaster, and "these two events refocused the...attention on environmental issues, turned the spotlight on toxic contamination in local communities"(Taylor, 2000, p. 527). Led by people of color, through environmental activism, living and working conditions and recreational opportunities were began to be questioned, and three components, *autonomy or self-determination, land rights, and civil or human rights* (emphasis is mine), constitute the base of environmental racism. Starting by 1980 environmental racism term has begun to be replaced by environmental justice term which puts more emphasis on environmental justice disparities among social classes than race (Taylor, 2000). The ideological foundation of EJM, according to Taylor (2000), was established by 1991 First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit with the introduction of the Principles of Environmental Justice (hereafter *Principles*). The Principles submitted "...six major thematic components that deal with (a) ecological principles; (b) justice and environmental rights; (c) autonomy/self-determination; (d) corporate-community relations; (e) policy, politics and economic processes; and (f) social movement building" in which an "...environmental ideological framework that explicitly links ecological concerns with labor and social justice concerns" has fully developed (Taylor, 2000, pp. 538-539).

The Difference of Environmental Justice Paradigm

As it can be read from the Table 2 (next two pages), the differences between the ECP and NEP/EJP are significant where NEP and EJP exhibit several similarities. Although the contribution of NEP to environmental awareness and environmental activism has substantial and it had presented a broader vision of environmentalism, it was short (even limited) to recognize social justice issues within its environmentalist framework (Taylor, 2000). Because of this reason, according to Taylor, "...though the NEP and the EJP adopt similar positions on some core issues, the paradigms differ significantly on key ideological components to social justice. The EJP has contributed to the environmental discourse by introducing these social justice concepts and providing a framework to discuss these in the environmental context" (2000, pp. 555-556). The major difference of EJP comes with the acceptance that separation of human concerns/problems from environmental/social problems is unattainable. Furthermore, the specifics of this separation has become evident with two tendencies; "NEP supporters tend to separate environment from social issues, often ignoring the social ramifications of the issues, [and],...even when NEP devotees broadened their agendas to reflect a wider array of public concerns, they also had a tendency to examine these issues as they affected wildlife and wilderness and outdoor recreation opportunities" (Taylor, 2000, p. 557).

CONCLUSION

Environmental Justice Paradigm as a New Window for Turkey

Taylor argues that EJP has a major contribution to connect environment and social issues within its ideology by emphasizing that these concepts are inseparable, and "...has accomplished this by linking environment, labor, and social justice into a master frame", especially with the inclusion of previously excluded segments of the society (people of color and progressive whites from working and middle-class backgrounds) in environmental activism (2000, p. 566).

The immature character of environmental awareness and activism in Turkey has got a new momentum especially with the protests towards mining and hydropower dam building in rural Turkey in last ten years, and this momentum has escalated its speed and expanded its scope particularly after May 2013-Gezi Park Protests, extensive and destructive development plans (like Istanbul Canal, third airport and several dam building projects in rural areas, various kinds of urban developments which replace open/green space with buildings), and labor-related accidents (like Soma disaster and other mining accidents; mounting construction worker deaths). Lately, we have been in the position that trying to follow pouring news related with environment and social justice issues, and having hard time to digest and appropriately read/explain them. In my view, in Turkey, environmen-

Table 2. Relationships Between the Characteristics of the Three Paradigms (Taylor, 2000, pp. 543-545)

Characteristics	Exploitative Capitalist Paradigm	New Environmental Paradigm	Environmental Justice Paradigm
1. Valuation of nature	No	Yes	Yes
A. Nature exists to produce resources for humans	Yes	No	No
B. Human domination of nature	Yes	No	No
C. Humans harmonious with nature	No	Yes	Yes
D. Nature has intrinsic value	No	Yes	Yes
E. Environmental protection over economic growth	No	Yes	Yes
2. Generalized compassion	No	Yes	Yes
A. Other species	No	Yes	Yes
B. Other people	No	Yes	Yes
C. Other generations	No	Yes	Yes
3. Environmental planning and risk avoidance	No	Yes	Yes
A. Science and technology is not always good	No	Yes	Yes
B. Cease the development of nuclear power	No	Yes	Yes
C. Develop and use soft/appropriate technology	No	Yes	Yes
D. Support government regulations to protect humans/nature	No	Yes	Yes
E. Emphasize the development of safe technology	No	Yes	Yes
F. Believe technology can solve all problems	Yes	No	No
G. Emphasize foresight and planning	No	Yes	Yes
4. Limits to growth	No	Yes	Yes
A. Limited resources	No	Yes	Yes
B. Population explosion-slow population growth	No	Yes	Limited
C. Conserve resources	No	Yes	Yes
D. Limited consumption	No	Yes	Yes
5. Completely new society	No	Yes	Yes
A. Humans seriously damaging nature and themselves	No	Limited	Limited
B. Emphasis on hierarchy	Yes	Limited	Limited
C. Emphasize on bureaucratic, centralized authority	Yes	Limited	Limited
D. Emphasis on efficiency	Yes	Yes	Yes
E. Openness and participation	No	Yes	Yes
F. Emphasis on public goods	No	No	No
G. Emphasis on market	Yes	Yes	Yes
H. Cooperation	No	Yes	Yes
I. Post-materialist values	No	Yes	Yes
J. Simple lifestyles	No	Yes	Yes
K. Emphasize job satisfaction	No	Yes	Yes
L. Society organized as bioregions, small communities	No	Limited	Limited
6. New Politics	No	Yes	Yes
A. Consultation and citizen participation	No	Yes	Yes
B. Discussions about human relationship with nature	No	Yes	Yes
C. Discussions about the management of the economy	No	Yes	Yes
D. Willingness to use direct action	No	Limited	Yes
7. Spirituality	No	No	Yes
A. Religion, religious institutions incorporated	No	No	Yes
B. Goddess worship	No	No	No

Table 2. Relationships Between the Characteristics of the Three Paradigms (Taylor, 2000, pp. 543-545) (Cont)

Characteristics	Exploitative Capitalist Paradigm	New Environmental Paradigm	Environmental Justice Paradigm
8. Biocentrism	No	Yes	Yes
A. Emphasize animal rights, animal liberation	No	Limited	Limited
B. Emphasis on vegetarianism/veganism	No	Limited	Limited
9. Environmental justice	No	No	Yes
A. Intergenerational equity (future generations)	No	Yes	Yes
B. Intragenerational equity (environmental impacts)	No	Limited	Yes
C. Emphasis on elimination discrimination, racism	No	No	Yes
D. Emphasis on eliminating sexism	No	No	Yes
E. Emphasis on eliminating classism	No	No	Yes
F. Emphasis on eliminating patriarchy	No	No	Limited
10. Environmental rights	No	No	Yes
A. Right to clean air, land, water, food	No	No	Yes
B. Right to safe, healthy work environment	No	Limited	Yes
C. Right to be free from ecological destruction	No	No	Yes
11. Autonomy, self-determination	No	No	Yes
A. Recognize native people's treaties, compacts	No	Limited	Yes
B. Affirm all people's right to self-determination	No	No	Yes
12. Cultural diversity	No	Limited	Yes
A. Respect and celebrate other's culture and language	No	Limited	Yes
B. Honor the cultural integrity of all communities	No	Limited	Yes
C. Respect other's belief system in the natural world	No	Limited	Yes
13. Corporate-community relations	No	Yes	Yes
A. Producers of toxins held liable/accountable	No	Yes	Yes
B. Compensate those harmed by toxins/hazards	No	Limited	Yes
C. Consumer protection	No	Yes	Yes
D. Emphasis on waste reduction, waste elimination	No	Yes	Yes
14. Worker rights, health, and safety	No	Limited	Yes
A. Emphasis on workers' health safety in their jobs	No	Limited	Yes
B. Forced choice between unsafe jobs or unemployment	Yes	Limited	No
C. Develop environmentally safe livelihoods	No	Limited	Yes
15. Militarization	Yes	No position	No
A. Oppose military occupation and repression	No	No position	Yes
B. Oppose military exploitation of land	No	No position	Yes
16. Experimentation, human subjects	Yes	No position	No
A. Strict enforcement of informed consent	No	No position	Yes
B. Halt wanton testing of experimental reproductive and medical procedures on humans	No	No position	Yes

tal awareness and activism has entered a new phase which cannot be read or explain only within the capitalist/neoliberal critique framework; there is a need for more comprehensive and inclusive framework which is offered by Environmental Justice Paradigm. Indeed, through the collective actions in practice, EJP has already in use as a *master frame*

in Turkey by embracing different kinds of issues stemmed from human-environment relation and their connection to justice. However, theoretical conceptions are short to make sense of these collective actions. Therefore, for us, it is time to learn more about EJP, and use it when it is appropriate.

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