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MEDIA AND CERATTEPE IN TURKEY: ALTHUSSER'S COMMUNICATIONS IDEOLOGICAL STATE APPARATUS [ISA] – ORIENTED ASSESSMENT

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Abstract

According to Althusser (2000), ideology is just an apparatus which state uses it to control the masses through pressure and authority. He claimed that there is a reality which separate state pressure apparatus and ideology. He used "Ideological State Apparatus" [ISA] for this reality. He told that the ISAs process using ideology and reproduce the current system. In this context neoliberal policies, which have been applied for the last 35 years, have become irresistible with ISAs. Because of reckless approach of these policies to the nature/environment, reactions and resistances have emerged against them. The media [~press] which takes part in Althusser's communications ISA plays a significant role within this context, because the media has qualification as significative and leader characteristics in relation to notably political choices, cultures, perceptions, life-styles and economical behaviors. In this sense, the state through the media takes on the might of its power and also reproduces the current system. In this study, language of the media in Turkey will be discussed case of Cerattepe-oriented in the context of Althusser's communications ISA. In addition to this proposal also focuses on how environmental movements in Cerattepe were exposed in pro-government daily news and/or media in Turkey. Finally, it will be deliberated that the ditto media organs introduce the civil initiatives in Cerattepe as a handy apparatus in the name of neoliberal policies and government's power.

Keywords: Althusser, the Communications ISA, Nature, Media, Cerattepe, Turkey

1. Introduction

The evolution of capitalism starting at the end of the 1970s has been the onset of the neo-liberal era. With the influence of many factors such as the fall of Eastern Bloc, the transition to the free market economy in many countries, the improvement of international economic relations and the advancements in the information and communication technologies, the last 35-40 years has resulted in the domination of the neo-liberal policies. In the meantime, we have started to experience "globalization" which slowly obscures international borders, especially regarding economics.

Globalization enabled neo-liberal policies to reach each and every corner of the world, destroying the social right which was gained upon uphill struggles in the 20th century. Post-capitalism or modern capitalism terms have frequently been used to define the evolution of capitalism during this period. Many theories such as "The Theory of the End of History" have been put forward to conceptualize the entire process, and neo-liberal policies and capitalism have been shown to be the only remedy.

The domination of neo-liberal policies revealed the usage of these policies as an ideological apparatus. States are trying to revive the ideology by means of implementing these neo-liberal policies. "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses" by Althusser published in 1970 is really crucial in this respect. Althusser classified the Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA) in eight categories and noted that these apparatuses lead to the reproduction of the ideology, and the state applies the ideology via these apparatuses. In this regard, ISA plays a crucial role in imposing these neo-liberal policies to the society and forcing the society to accept neo-liberalism as "the only remedy."

In the scope of this study, we will discuss the effect of neo-liberal policies on the media by evaluating the "Communication ISA" by Althusser in the framework of media. In the first chapter, we will discuss the relationship between the development of neo-liberal policies and media; the ideology in general terms and Althusser's Ideology concept; Ideological State Apparatuses and especially the Communication ISA. In the second chapter, we will evaluate the reflection of Artvin-Cerattepe incident in Turkey, in 2016 in the framework of Communication ISA; and the impact of the state and its neo-liberal policies.

2. Media in the Midst of Neo-Liberal Policies

Neo-liberal policies emerged in the last quarter of the 20th century and immensely spread throughout the world to become an economic reality in the 21st century and form the most important keystones of the system we live in. With no doubt, we cannot ignore the effect of the oil crisis in 1973 and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Thus, we cannot evaluate the appearance of the neo-liberal policies independently from the development of capitalism. The fall of the Eastern Bloc beginning in the midst of the 1980's lead the absolute success of the capitalism. Thus, capitalism, as the only system survived, started to take a crucial role in shaping the economic policies of the state. Upon that point, we have started to experience a new era in which the domination of neo-liberal policies weakened the campaigns of the labor, gradually swept public services away, the state lost its domination on the economic fields and media expanded as an "uphill" sector in every aspect (Adakli, 2010, p.68).

Capitalism started to leak in the health, education, security and media sectors only after the neo-liberal policies for the first time. Before that, the media was neither seen as a sector nor as a profitable investment area. However, with the extensive domination of neo-liberal policies in every area, the deregulation and re-regulation practices caused this area to be designed again (Aldogan, 2016). For this purpose, media channels (newspapers, television, radio, etc.) were left to the domination of the capitalism; just appropriately regarding the neo-liberal policies. Following the evolution of the public services caused by the neo-liberal policies, public services, and public interest concept started to bleed out in many areas; especially in the media sector. Media capital tends to become monopolize and internationalized, and thus, alternative media possibilities got weakened (Sen and Avsar, 2012, p.43). Public services and public interest based regulatory rules almost diminished in many areas notably in publishing (Adakli, 2010, p.68). We can state that non-media capital entering in this sector and the commercializations of publishing were the most important aspects. Especially after the 1980s, the change of ownership structure had a crucial impact on this evolution. The media became an apparatus for the interests of the bosses in today's conditions (Ozkan, 2015).

Richard Keeble (2001, pp.110-115) listed the six elements shaping the media in his book in which he evaluates the evolution of media surrounded by the neo-liberal policies and ethics:

- 1) Murder: The possibility of getting murdered due to the news the journalist makes.
- 2) Legal Constraints: The legal barriers built against the freedom of the press.
- 3) Advertisers: The balance between the news the journalist makes and the advertising companies.
- 4) Pressure from Proprietors: The pressure of the media bosses put on the journalists.
- 5) Police: The pressures of the police on the journalists.
- 6) The Secret State: The pressures of the rulers.

Except the first two elements, these show us how the dominated ideology uses media as an apparatus to control large masses thanks to the neo-liberal policies. In this context, media gradually becoming internationalized and monopolized has been a huge apparatus in the process of reproducing and applying the neo-liberal ideology. With the ideological approaches spread by the media, neo-liberal policies were served to be undisputed myths and the "consent and legitimacy" needed for the continuity of the dominated ideology was achieved. In this framework, who controls the media controls the masses. And it is not a coincidence that recently media is accepted as the "fourth power" following the legislation, enforcement, and jurisdiction.

We encounter with the concept of "rulers" while analyzing the structure and ideology of the media. How the media changes by the relationships of the rulers and how much it can affect the class and social relationships-contradictions have been discussed in all the ideological environments. The dependency of the media companies have on the rulers is crucial for *pro-ruler* propagandas. In other words, the media has the power to create an artificial truth by fictionalizing it. The rulers and capital owners attempt to use this aspect of the media (Celik, 2015, p.736). Neo-liberal policies paved the way for these attempts and decreased the radius of action of the media and left the media vulnerable to all kinds of interference from the dominant rulers.

As Marx and Engels (1992, pp.64-66) highlighted in the Feuerbach (1992), the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas, i.e. the class which is the ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force. The class which has the means of material production at its disposal has control at the same time over the means of mental production, so that thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it. Louis Althusser conceptualized a similar idea as "Ideological State Apparatuses". Among these, especially "The Communication ISA" has a crucial role in evaluating the influence of media in today's conditions and in understanding the relationship between the media and Artvin-Cerattepe incident which will be discussed in later chapters.

3. Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (ISA)

Ideology can be defined as a set of ideas that provide a basis for organized political action (Heywood, 2012, p.41). Mannheim (2012, p.249) suggested that ideology represented biased forms of thought conditioned, at every step, by the material concerns of different social groups (sects, generations, parties, social classes). This concept is widely used by many thinkers in *littérateur*. However, Marxist thought and Marxist thinkers have a very different approach to ideology. Many thinkers, especially Gramsci, Lukacs, the representatives of Frankfurt School and Althusser, placed particular importance on the concept of ideology. As a pioneer of structuralist Marxism, Althusser carefully examined this ideology concept and put elaborate analysis. Thus, examining the definition of ideology in Marxism is essential to understand Althusser's definition of ideology.

According to Marx, ideology is a form of evaluation and interpretation evolved around the infrastructure. Ideology is a dependent variable of infrastructure. The determinate factors can be defined as the infrastructure, production relationships and material environment of the society (Kazanci, 2006, p.71). Ideology is a formation that is both dependent on and interactive with the infrastructure (Marx and Engels, 2013, p.40).

As a structuralist Marxist, Althusser examines the theories of Marx on production conditions in "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". According to him, the conditions of production are also those of reproduction. Althusser forms his theory based on Marx's suggestions: "Every child knows that a society which did not reproduce the conditions of production at the same time as it produced would not last a year" (Althusser, 2000, pp.74-76). Thus, in the most general sense, ideology for Althusser can be defined as a persuasion process to reproduce social unity and provide a basic function, used by the political and economic ruling class to reproduce the system. With this definition, Althusser would like to explain ideology by comparing infrastructure and superstructure metaphors (Gurcinar, 2015, p.450). In other words, for Althusser, ideology is a practice that creates subjects and enables them to act within the social structures. Ideology is a constitutive element of truth, and this is shaped based on the ideological order and individuals see the world within the framework of the ideology. Althusser put three basic theories on ideology and lists those as: First, ideology has no history. Second, ideology represents the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence. Last but not least, ideology interrelates individuals as subjects (Kazanci, 2006, p.72).

The biggest contribution of Althusser on the Marxist theory of ideology is the conceptual framework of Ideological State Apparatuses. He states that ISA must not be confused with the (Repressive) State Apparatus (the police, the army, the courts, the prisons, etc.). He suggests that: The Repressive State Apparatus functions 'by violence,' whereas the Ideological State Apparatuses function 'by ideology' (Althusser, 2000, pp.31-35). (Repressive) State Apparatus belongs entirely to the public domain, much the larger part of the Ideological State Apparatuses (in their apparent dispersion) are a part, on the contrary, of the private domain (Churches, Parties, Trade Unions, families, some schools, most newspapers, cultural ventures, etc.). However, it does not matter if the organizations that form ISA are private or public. The important thing is their "functioning". In this context, Althusser (2000, pp.33-34) has classified eight different ISA and listed as:

- 1) *Religious ISA*: The system of the different churches. Althusser explained Religious ISA by noting that the state uses it as an apparatus in the process of reproduction of the social life via the churches. With no doubt, Religious ISA is not limited to the churches. It is formed as an extensive apparatus to include different belief systems.
- 2) *Educational ISA*: The system of the different public and private 'schools' is highlighted. Althusser quoted school and argued that education is not limited to schools, and the state uses educational ISA as an apparatus to practice its ideology.
- 3) *Family ISA*: The state influences in every aspect via Family ISA. The family, being an ISA, also has another important function. It contributes to the reproduction of labor. Based on the production types, it is a production and/or consumption unit.
- 4) *Legal ISA*: Law shapes the society by following the ideological path of the state. The law is not just among the ISA system. It is also among the Repressive State Apparatus.
- 5) *Political ISA*: It is the political system, including the different parties, that forms the ideology.
- 6) *Trade-union ISA*: Trade unions are organizations that work as an ISA to force labors to accept the existing system of exploitation.
- 7) *Cultural ISA*: The main purpose of this is to reprocess the ideology using literature, fine arts, sports, etc.
- 8) *Communication ISA*: The ISA that is used to manipulate the masses using mass media (newspapers, radio, television, Internet, etc.). By the scope and purpose of this study, we will closely examine Communication ISA.

3.1. Communication ISA

Media is a common definition that includes radio, television, Internet, newspapers, etc. which provide communication with masses. We will use "media" concept for the communication mechanisms (instead of Althusser's "communication") and try to provide a wider point of view. And we will examine the formation of media by the essence of ISA. Althusser explained communication ISA is emphasizing that the media can be a great power in the control of the

state. As ISA impose the ideas by using the ideology, it is possible to define Communication ISA as a system that the state uses to impose the ideology by the media. With the huge integration of the media in daily life upon the advancements in the information and communication technologies (especially with Internet and mobile technological devices), it has been getting easier and easier to impose the ideology and reach masses. Thus, the media functioning as an ISA leaves masses vulnerable to the manipulation of the state in the reproduction process of daily life. For example; any intervention of the state, direct or indirect, to a news or event that is published on the daily papers, columns, magazines, etc. can change and/or manipulate the conception of the society regarding the news or event.

The direct intervention can occur as prohibition/restraining, and indirect intervention can occur in many implicit ways such as the modification of the language (attributing positive or negative meaning) and elaborately choosing visual materials. The important aspect of this is that this ideological manipulation via the media becomes systematic and automatic in time. At first, the state has an active role as a subject via the Communication ISA but in time, the media evaluates into an ISA and articulates to the ideological structure of the state. From that point, the media functions as a satellite and undertakes the role of manipulating the facts.

In this chapter of the study, Althusser's Communication ISA will be the main point, and it will be examined if the state in Turkey makes any manipulation as to influence the masses by media. In this context, Artvin-Cerattepe incident that occurred at the beginning of 2016 will be analyzed, and different news from various media channels will be compared regarding this incident.

4. Artvin-Cerattepe: The Mining Struggle of the Land that Touches the Sky

Artvin is a small city with a population of 170 thousand in the northeast end of Turkey. The intensity of the college students and the support for the left ideology dominates the area almost more than in any city in Turkey. Artvin forests located on the east end of Kackar Mountains are among the top 100 places with hundreds of plateaus, its ecosystem, flora, endemic wealth, and migration route. Artvin enables many tourists to experience these natural beauties. However, the state and companies see Artvin as an area with "mines those worth billions of dollars." This perception leads Artvin to become a *resistance base* for decades but the incidents occurred since February 2016 in Cerattepe¹ has been the most striking ones (Sertkaya-Doğan, 2005, p.152; Al-Monitor, 2016).

4.1. Background

A Canada-based mining company started the prospecting activities in the area in 1988 for the first time. The Governorship of Artvin prepared a research on the subject and a Report with negative opinions was published in the Official Gazette on February 1996; General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration made a research emphasizing on the landslide risks in the area -on which the state had permitted to perform mining activities- in 1998; Regional Directorate of Forestry put made similar statements on the subject and then, the Governorship stopped the activities of the Canadian company (Yavuz, 2014). The company had the permission for prospecting activities (for gold, silver, copper and zinc) and transferred its permission to another mining company of which had the headquarters in Canada too. The company that founded Artvin Bakır İşletmeleri (Artvin Copper Enterprises) stated that it would only perform its activities for copper and not for gold upon the "public pressure" (TEMA 2013). In 2005, a claim was filed by the landslide risks and impairment of health, and it was concluded with the decertification in 2008. The verdict was affirmed by the Council of State in 2009 (Yavuz, 2014). With the new Mining Law in 2010, it became legal to give a certificate for

¹ Cerattepe protests are the result of the acts since 21 June 2015 to prevent the mining activities that are planned to be performed in the forests of Cerattepe located in Artvin and the military and police intervention on 16 February 2016 to get the heavy equipment into the mine site.

prospecting activities in Cerattepe and mining license was tendered for a contract in 2012 (TEMA, 2013).

The successful tenderer transferred its license for prospecting activities to a *pro-ruler* company's copper enterprise. After the tender, the ministry approved the positive Environmental Impact Assessment report for copper, but a claim was filed in Rize for the suspension of execution of the positive report and cancellation. The Court decided to suspend the execution in November 2014. Also, the court canceled the positive Environmental Impact Assessment report given by the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. However, the mining company presented the project again in 2015 with modifications and received a positive EIA report. Lastly, the mining company stopped its activities in Cerattepe until the verdict (NTV, 2016; Yeni Hayat, 2016). But recently the state gave "permission" for the armament of private security guards working in the project field and got reactions (Habertürk, 2016).



Figure 1. Physical Map of Artvin-Cerattepe

Source: Kursun (2015)

Many opposing people from Artvin are worried about the possible "environmental impacts" of the mine. If the mining enterprise's plan is implemented, the potential mine disaster in Cerattepe will lead to the destruction of at least 50,300 trees. Another impact will be the transfer of excavated soil by the wind to the forested lands, and it will have a *negative* effect on the fertilization of plants. If the mining activities for gold and copper in starts in the area, it will not only lead to the destruction of the trees. Many people in Artvin are afraid that the cyanuric will mix in the streams and underground waters and eventually reach their homes². A possible landslide in the mine sites is another issue of concern. According to the Report (2014) of The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (UCTEA), both new and old mass movements have been observed in and around the project field. In return, after Cerattepe became the main topic with the protests against mining activities again in February 2016, it was stated that copper would be extracted from the ground by using the underground processing method and transferred by aerial airway with no harm to the environment (Milliyet, 2016).

4.2. Cerattepe in the Media

Cerattepe incidents have been summarized above. In this chapter, we will evaluate these incidents in the framework of Althusser's Communication ISA and show how these have been reflected in the media and what type of a communication language has been used in the media. Castells (2008, pp.236-237) argued that the environmentalist local people object to the *disappearance* of the correlation between the functions and interests with the representation of

² There are plenty of water resources around the mine site, and these are also used as the source of potable water of Artvin; which set the grounds for these concerns.

national, technical rationalism driven by the uncontrollable interests of the companies and unaccountable technocracies. The incidents in Cerattepe has a common thread to all this. In fact; the inhabitants in Cerattepe emphasized on the environmental destruction and criticized the enormous amount of consumption and suggested that the important thing was the value of life rather than the exchange value of the money. Castells (2008, pp.237-241) argues that this results in "social movements." In this context, it is possible to interpret the incidents in Cerattepe just as a *social movements laboratory*³.

Cerattepe resistance in especially February 2016 was reflected differently on the media. This shows the role of media in the production of capitalist exploitation system when analyzed in the framework of Althusser's Communication ISA explained above. Althusser argues that the main function of communication ISA, which includes the press, radio and televisions, is to *produce and maintain the dominant ideology*. Even though these ISA are government apparatuses, they are mostly controlled by the private entities (Vergin, 2013, pp.94-95). These entities are known with their pro-ruler policies.

As it has been known for long that since the midst of 1980s many companies, particularly Canadian companies performed prospecting and mining activities in Cerattepe. Today, there have been many news reporting that the company that was granted the license for prospecting activities was known for its pro-ruler policies and financing the mainstreaming media and won tenders in return (Yilmaz, 2015). Below are the different examples of head linings for the incidents in Cerattepe:

- *BirGün* Newspaper, (2016a) captioned on April, 14, 2016 that "Cerattepe is Impassable!" and stated that *this is an attack on the right of life and environmental massacre*.
- The same newspaper (2016b) reported on May 30, 2016 that Yeşil Artvin Derneği (Green Artvin Union) struggling to protect the environment and "opposing to the environmental massacre and restraints in Cerattepe" was rewarded.
- *Evrensel* Newspaper, (2016) captioned on February 28, 2016 that: "This is the last fortress in Black Sea Region, and we will not surrender as the nature defenders".
- *Hurriyet* Newspaper (2016a) reported on February 22, 2016 that as the resistance against the mine goes on, a group of women wanted to see the last situation by going Cerattepe with police vehicles, but this request was rejected, and the police dispelled the protester with pepper spray.
- *Hurriyet* Newspaper (2016b) reported on March 14, 2016 that approximately 3 thousand people, standing at each other along the way of 1.5 kilometers with scarves "Say No to Mine" gathered to meet the panel of judges in Cerattepe.
- *Yeni Safak* Newspaper (2016a) reported on February 22, 2016 that the local people protesting in Cerattepe were *provocateurs*. "The people provoked by the mine site activities in Cerattepe wanted to walk to the mine site. Police put the protesters back."
- *Yeni Safak* Newspaper (2016b) reported on February 23, 2016 that Cerattepe resistance was planned by the "parallel state" and: "It has been revealed that parallel police provoked the protests about the mine site in Cerattepe."
- *Star* Newspaper (2016a) captioned on February 18, 2016 that "2nd Gezi Attempt in Cerattepe". It is reported that PKK-HDP-CHP formed an alliance for this resistance to turning this reaction to a new Gezi attempt and spread around Turkey.

³ It should be entitled to be the subject of another study.

- *Star* Newspaper (2016b) reported on February 26, 2016 that Germany having the biggest share of world's gold reserve appointed its "so-called 'environmentalist' stooges" in Cerattepe. It has been stated that there is a huge amount of gold reserve in the area.
- *Sabah* Newspaper (2016a) captioned the unknown facts about Cerattepe on February 24, 2016. It was reported that the evil lobby which had attempted to create chaos in Turkey via Gezi Park was on the stage again and tried to provoke for another Gezi incident in Turkey on the grounds of the mine site in Cerattepe.
- The same newspaper (2016b) reported on the other day that Turkey was left with new *anti-government* protests, just like in Gezi Parkı, on the grounds of the allegation that the copper mining company would cause an environmental massacre in Cerattepe.
- A Haber [Turkish TV Channel] (2016) reported online on February 27, 2016 that President Recep Tayyip Erdogan slammed recent protests against plans to build a gold mine in the forested Cerattepe region in northern Turkey stating that "Now you see the Cerattepe incident in Artvin. These are the same as Gezi⁴ protesters. Know this; they are the junior pro-Gezi!". Also, Erdoğan stated "*Whoever threatens our national security will have to face us. I want to make this clear.*"
- News portal named *Diken* (2016) brought up the reactions of a citizen in Artvin against the language the mainstream newspaper used for the incidents in Cerattepe.
- On February 25, 2016 news portal named *Bianet* (2016) brought up a news item "Via Campesina supports the resistance of the people of Artvin against the mining project in Cerattepe". It was reported that as the international peasant movement La Via Campesina, with over 200 million workers and 164 member organizations from 73 countries, is in solidarity with the resistance of the people of Artvin against the mining project in Cerattepe.

Providing even more examples is possible. However, the situation is very clear. Despite the truth of the incidents in Cerattepe, the media reflected the situation with great opposition. To evaluate this in the framework of Althusser's Communication ISA, media paves the way for the postmodern era in which the "neutered" public opinion replaced the "public conscience". Now, it is all about the show (Kose, 2011). Just at this point, media has a huge impact on the masses. This is because the state apparatuses reproduce its dominant ideology over the masses via media. For this, it emphasizes the permanence of its power and transfers to the masses via media. It is also really clear that this structure reinforces the ground of neo-liberal policies. As we can see in the above example of Turkey, to create new sources of wealth, to destruct the environment and to commodify everything show parallelism with neo-liberal policies. Oddly enough, the state apparatus shows incredible good faith in the private entities for maximizing its financial benefits just to strengthen its power.

5. Conclusion

The main object of this study is to evaluate the environmental massacre and the struggle in Cerattepe in the framework of Althusser's Communication ISA. In the light of this purpose, the enormous impact of the media on the masses has been the first to analyze. Then, the ideology and ideological state apparatuses were examined. Following a detailed examination of

⁴ Gezi Parkı Protests: For the The Timeline and What People on the Street Want see: Eren (2013).

Althusser's Communication ISA, we tried to evaluate the featured news regarding the struggle in Artvin-Cerattepe within this framework.

During the globalization of the world's economy, to increase the profit share of international companies, it was aimed to remove all the obstacles to capital movement. These have been in favor of developed countries that were in control thanks to their know-how, capital sources, economic and political strengths. The neo-liberal policies practiced in Turkey since the 1980s have caused great destruction in health, education, social security, environment, mines, urban and rural areas.

Public services, which were basically Turkey's equities, have been sold for a song to foreign companies, global investment groups, and their local partners most of whose objects and sources are unknown. In this context, one cannot expect *any kinds of economic activity not approved by the local people to be accepted*. The local people should be involved in the decision-making processes regarding the mining sector, and they should also approve those decisions.

However, the incidents in Cerattepe and similar other places are not truly transferred to the masses by the state apparatus and the state-controlled (mainstream) media. It should be evaluated as the will of the state apparatus to maintain the existing system's ideological hegemony and as the effort to guarantee its future. This is evidence that Althusser put accurate analysis regarding the Communication ISA approach. At the last analysis Adakli (2010, p.84) emphasized on a very important point regarding the media in Turkey: unless peer production is performed with the possible engagement based on a democratic ethos and intellectually profound discussion, it would not be wise to expect much from the content and its audiences'/users' ability to act.

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