



# The Spatial Production of Environmentalism: Ecotourism Sites, Protected Areas and Conservation Project Fields

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## Abstract

*This paper aims to reveal the spatial production of liberal environmentalism and calls it with a new term, Space of Environmentalism. First, the critique of liberal environmentalism is integrated with production of urban space in late capitalism by Henri Lefebvre as a theoretical framework. Space of Environmentalism is analysed with three different examples as ecotourism site, protected area and conservation project field. Local people of ecotourism sites become a shop owner or a tour guide, while a natural ecosystem becomes a touristic commodity in order to satisfy needs and concerns of consumer society. In protected areas, liberal environmentalist elites impose their abstract plan that 'real' wild nature can sustain in a protected area remote from urbanization and industrialization in order to hide the consumption, destruction and the collapse of remaining ecosystems of the earth. Local people and other agents in conservation project field are homogenized and defined as stakeholders while nature is defined and bordered by scientific experts provide legitimization to win-win solutions to environmental threats.*

*These examples show that the abstraction of liberal environmentalism produces spaces that homogenize and dominate nature and society like cities. State, capital, media and environmental NGOs act together to impose these spaces where nature is presented as wild, beautiful, and threatened to satisfy liberal environmentalist concerns and needs of a consumer society. Nature becomes homogenized as touristic, protected or conserved spaces where local people are changed into sellers, consumers, visitors and stakeholders.*

**Keywords:** Environmentalism, Space, Ecotourism, Social ecology, Urbanization of nature



## Çevrecilik Mekânı'nın Üretimi: Ekoturizm, Doğa Koruma ve Proje Alanları

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### Öz

*Bu çalışmanın amacı, liberal çevreciliğin mekânsal üretimini ortaya koymak ve Çevrecilik Mekânı olarak tanımlamaktır. Öncelikle, liberal çevreciliğe yöneltilen eleştirilere Henri Lefebvre'in geç kapitalizmdeki kent mekanının üretimi yaklaşımı entegre edilerek kuramsal bir çerçeve oluşturulmuştur. Buna göre Çevrecilik Mekânı üç farklı örnek üzerinden incelenmiştir; ekoturizm, doğa koruma ve proje alanları. Ekoturizm Alanlarında yaşayan yerel halk hediyelik eşya dükkânı satıcısı veya günlük tur rehberine dönüşürken doğal ekosistemler tüketim toplumunun ihtiyaç ve kaygılarını tatmin eden turistik metalara dönüşmektedir. Liberal çevreci seçkinlerin soyut planlarına göre tasarlanan Doğa Koruma Alanlarında, 'gerçek doğal yaşam' şehirleşmeden ve endüstrileşmeden uzakta var olabilmektedir. Böylece dünyanın geri kalanındaki tüm ekosistemlerin yıkımı ve çöküşü gizlenebilmektedir. Doğa Koruma Projesi yürütülen alanlarda ise yerel halk ve diğer aktörler ilgi gruplarına indirgenmekte ve aynılaştırılmaktadır. Çevresel sorunlara karşılık kazan-kazan çözümleri sunan ve proje alanı soyutlamasına meşruiyet sağlayan bilimsel uzmanlar, doğayı yeneden tanımlamakta ve çeşitli kullanım bölgelerine ayırmaktadır.*

*Örnekler göstermektedir ki, liberal çevreciliğin soyutlaması kenttekine benzer biçimde doğayı ve toplumu aynılaştıran tahakkümcü bir mekân üretmektedir. Devlet, sermaye, medya ve çevreci sivil toplum kuruluşlarının birlikte hareket ettiği bu tahakküm sürecinde doğa vahşi, tehdit altında, güzel ve bölgelere ayrılmış biçimde tasarlanmaktadır. Turistik, koruma veya proje amaçlı olarak çevrecilik mekânlarına dönüştürülen doğal alanlarda yaşayan yerel halk ise satıcılara, tüketicilere, ziyaretçilere ve paydaşlara indirgenmektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Çevrecilik, Mekân, Ekoturizm, Toplumsal ekoloji, Doğanın şehirleşmesi

## **Introduction**

In the second half of last century, due to the serious threats like water, air pollution and pesticides in food chain, environmentalism is widely legitimized in mostly urbanized West and international community. Celebration of Earth Day 1970 is a keystone in modern environmental movement (Hannigan, 2006, p.1). Following Stockholm Summit in 1972, environmental laws, legislations, ministries, and relevant bureaucracies have been established in many countries to sustain and to develop natural resources. Environmental NGOs took leading position representing civil society, not only to give voice to people but also to control state and capital in order to avoid environmental destruction. After decades of environmental actions of governments, corporate sector and civil society; average citizen possesses environmental values to concern about biodiversity and natural resources.

Although environmentalism is expected to be "*a critique and alternative to capitalism, liberalism*" (Levy and Wissenburg, 2004, p.194), today it becomes a part of capitalist system where state, capital, media, environmental NGOs and other agents promote environmental actions and values like sustainable development without questioning the role of economy and politics in environmental problems. Moreover, all sorts of environmental friendly goods are produced and consumed like toys, fridges, cars and so many others. Green consumers are willing to pay more for goods like biodegradable plastic bags, reformulated gasoline having high environmental qualities (Lyon and Maxwell, 2004, p.18). In fact, green business is assumed as "*both socially useful and profitable*" (Hannigan, 2006, p.72). Beside environmental friendly goods, liberal environmentalism produces green spaces to promote environmental values and to support sustainable development. Green offices, buildings and even cities, city parks, ecotourism sites and protected areas are examples of environmental spaces looking for urban people to provide experience of environmentalism. These spatial commodities show the successful integration of environmentalism into capitalism that inevitably produces space to sustain in its growth in 20<sup>th</sup> century. This paper aims to reveal spatial production of environmentalism. Hence, following Critical Social Science approach (Neuman, 2006, p.95), I attempt to explore this spatial production that dominates both nature and society under the ideology of liberal environmentalism and its abstract space.

In the remaining part of paper, first the critique of liberal environmentalism by social ecology is detailed. Then the production of space notion of Lefebvre is integrated to develop a new term as "*Space of Environmentalism*".

Thereafter, the production of *Space of Environmentalism* is analysed through three different examples as ecotourism site, protected area and conservation project. Finally, the potential and challenges of new term is discussed.

### **The Critique of Liberal Environmentalism**

During second half of the 20th century, the environment was degraded seriously that threaten urban centers of developed countries in West. Hence a new environmentalism, different from old school of moralistic preservationists and utilitarian conservationists, emerged (Roussopoulos, 2015, p.237) and was recognized as an international policy. Environmental problems are legitimized by science, and identified by liberal political and academic elites, most of whom live in urban industrial areas in the west and north. The actors of new environmentalism, namely, state, NGOs, academia, media, private sector, citizens of nations and local communities, have become part of different forms of environmentalist activities, ranging from global media campaigns, anti-nuclear protests, international grant programs, conservation projects with huge budgets, declaration of protected areas, planting tree events, and many others. Bernstein (2000) states that 1992 Earth Summit institutionalizes the adaptation of liberal economic and political order with environmentalism by harmonising environmental protection and economic growth in international level. Hence, "*economic instruments and market-based solutions*" are preferred to achieve this adaptation (Bernstein, 2002, p.73). However, among many attempts to reconcile capitalist market with environmental concerns, market economics is left intact but environmental paradigm "*is required to do the adjusting*" (Hay, 2002, p.201). In fact, liberals assume nature as a resource for human needs and rarely question domination of nature (Heywood, 2011, p.276) while Bookchin defines this as liberal environmentalism that does not challenge current status quo but covers real ecological crisis. In fact, it is "*narrow, pragmatic and often socially neutral*" and wants "*to adapt the natural world to the needs of existing society*" by "*reforms that minimizes harm to human health and well-being*" (Bookchin, 1991, p.xiii-xiv). Moreover, it is an environmental engineering that does not question the domination of nature but develops techniques decreasing damage of system to facilitate domination (Bookchin, 1996, p.62, 78). According to liberal environmentalism, economic development should be maintained and current economic-politic structure is hardly questioned under the notion of sustainable development. Nature is defined as an environmental resource sustaining economic growth. Human degrades envi-

ronment, however new scientific and technological developments are expected to be able to provide the necessary solutions supported by ecological modernization as a “*synonym for sustainable development*” (Buttel, 2000, p.63) that has become the key term in the environmental discourse focusing on development and finds approval in the international and national arena. It implies the sustainable use of nature as environmental resource for the sake of capitalist “*grow-or-die*” economies. It mostly deals with lobby activities about barter and compromises, reforms to adopt nature for capitalist dominative society. Liberal environmentalism aims minimum damage to clear peoples’ conscience with bartering small wood for a big forest, an improved wildlife area for a large wetland. However, the rules of these barter and compromises are defined by current system but not by reason and ethics (Bookchin, 1999, p.27-28).

Environmentalism has different types than dominant liberal one. In fact, each politic economy has its own environmentalism. For example, the environmental procedures and institutions of Chile are exclusionary and elitist due to its democracy and developing following dictatorship era (Carruthers, 2001, p.343). Hence, there are conservative and socialist types of environmentalisms beside liberal one as Pepper (1993) detailed. The definition of environmental problems and solutions in terms of activities, policies and economy differs for each type. Pepper proposes five different sets of political ideas and approach to environment; as traditional conservatives, market liberals, welfare liberals, democratic socialists, and revolutionary socialists. Today, majority of environmentalists fit either the category of welfare liberals or market liberals. While the former implies the control of state and the solution of environmental problems through pluralism, and parliamentary democracy, the latter depends on the free will of market and consumers. Both accept and do not question the domination of nature that is actually the root cause of ecological crisis for social ecology. Hence, both accept reformist solutions like sustainable development, environmental legislations and ecological modernization. Despite his detailed and unique classification, Pepper does not comprise social ecology of Murray Bookchin and his critique of liberal environmentalism.

### **The Spatial Production of *Environmentalism***

Bookchin often implies the main characteristic of capitalism as *grow or die* in order to survive Capitalism has to deepen and enlarge into new fields. Otherwise, it inevitably damps and collapses. For Lefebvre, modern capitalism

sustains growth by the production of space in 20<sup>th</sup> century. As a loyal Marxist, he does not deny the importance of the production of goods, but he develops the notion of the production of space taking different forms, according to the mode of production. Space can be a force of production like factory, a commodity like touristic place, a political tool like building controlled cities, a support for stratification like different city bands for rich, poor, white, black, a superstructure supporting capitalist development like highway systems but also a dialectical possibility to challenge dominations (Ritzer, 2011, p.313). Moreover, space has a dominative aspect as a “*hierarchical and a framework of power*” (Gottdiener, 1993, p.133).

Lefebvre defined many types of space to develop his critique of spatial phase of capitalist growth. Ancient pastoral and agricultural societies did not dominate space and live closely with nature. However, absolute space is appeared by religious and political aims. Greek temples and Christian churches are examples of constructed spaces that dominate nature and insist order. Then, historical space is developed as secular in early Modern Europe. *Abstract space* is produced in “*modern, industrial and capitalist society.*” State and capitalists dominate society and nature through *abstract space* for maximum profit to sustain capitalist growth (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2014, p.318). Moreover, *abstract space* wants not only to dominate but also to destroy nature (Lefebvre, 1991, p.307). This produced, homogenized and segregated *abstract space* is a capitalist form of domination by power groups and elites to construct and maintain dominance among oppressed groups. The *abstract space* is “*dominated, occupied, controlled, authoritarian (even involving brutality and violence), repressive*”. This controlling and homogenizing *abstract space* can only be challenged by the differential space of freedom and differences. Differential space includes the lived experience of people and gets close to natural space. As a revolutionary space, it provides new uses of space to resist abstract space (Ritzer and Stepnisky, 2014, p.319).

Horst Siebert introduces the concept of “Environmental Space” in 1982 that expresses the space for the use of people in terms of sustainable development principles of like ecological limits, equity, quality of life, precautionary, proximity, subsidiarity, and use of non-renewable resources in closed cycle (Bührs, 2009, p.112). The concept is currently used by European Environment Agency as a key criterion to provide sustainable development (“The Environmental Space Concept,” 2016). In this paper, based on the critique of liberal environmentalism of social ecology and production of urban space of Lefebvre, a new term, *Space of Environmentalism* will be developed. Environmental Space is very different than *Space of Environmentalism* that criticizes

and attempts to reveal sustainable development discourse of liberal environmentalism that is a part of capitalist system imposes spatial abstraction of urban space to nature as urbanization of nature. Under the domination of state and capitalist elites, liberal environmentalism extends the capitalist urbanization to nature and produces *Space of Environmentalism* as ecotourism sites, conservation areas, green cities, wetlands and forests as wild nature and even whole earth. Both people and nature are homogenized and dominated by liberal environmentalist abstraction in spatial practice of *Space of Environmentalism* that may also be a space for a resistance to develop differential alternative. In this paper, the production and consumption of *Space of Environmentalism* is detailed through the examples of ecotourism site, protected area and conservation project.

### ***Ecotourism Site as Space of Environmentalism***

In the second half of the last century, capitalism transformed the perimeter of the Mediterranean into leisure space for industrialized northern Europe. Mediterranean becomes a touristic non-work space of “*sun, sea, festival, waste, expense*” for tour-operators, bankers and entrepreneurs (Lefebvre, 1991, p.58-59). With 1990s, capitalist development expands production of leisure space by liberal environmentalism from cities to nature that both local people and economy benefit from nature. A good example can be an ecotourism area and a recreation site where green consumers from cities pay for to feel the experience of environment in this planned *Space of Environmentalism*. The nature is shaped as a consumer space with theme of wilderness and natural life style. The urban tourists experience abstract space through activities like trekking, climbing, safari, gathering and cooking organic foods, housing in cottages, besides wearing organic clothes that are produced locally.

Within ecotourism program, each part of environment friendly life is to be bought; the more you buy you live and feel nature more. The day/week is planned through set of activities of to enjoy nature similar to local people. However, the relation between tourists and nature is very different from local people with nature. Tourists consume nature as a leisure activity while local people have to live within nature as a livelihood. Moreover, the liberal environmentalist abstraction distorts the historical relations between local people and nature in ecosystem that is planned and converted into an ecotourism space. Homogenization of environmentalist abstraction is imposed on local people to change from old living practices like fishing, farming, and forestry to professional tourism industry. Likewise, the ecocommunity of ecosystem

according to social ecology is changed into sellers of ecotourism space as once their living space. Their relation with nature is distorted by abstraction of ecotourism; the long-time interrelations with nature become seller-commodity relations as a real alienation from ecosystem.

The International Ecotourism Society (TISE) defines ecotourism as “*responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the well-being of the local people and involves interpretation and education*” (“TIES Announces Ecotourism Principles Revision”, 2015). However, the cases cited below display a different picture. Cheng and Wang (2010) criticized Chinese strategy that rapid growth of ecotourism investments cause loss of environment and social welfare. Schellhorn (2010) states that ecotourism activities do not improve social justice as it is expected under development agenda. His four years of research project of a village at Lombok Island in Indonesia shows that 30 years of ecotourism activity causes a new village of migrants dealing with business of tourism, while native people do not gain profits due to cultural, educational, ethnic, socio-economic barriers. The abstraction of development program imposes ecotourism space that does not fit the socio-economic structure of native village. The development discourse failed and yielded a migrant village developed with ecotourism business distorting structure of local people.

In their research at four ecotourism sites in Costa Rica Koens, Dieperink and Miranda (2009) state environmental, economic and social impacts of ecotourism activities. Environmental benefits are environmental education and protection of areas; moreover new economic value of ecotourism protects the area against deforestation. In fact, environmentalist abstraction of capitalist elites makes ecotourism space more valuable than deforestation activity. However, this does not protect nature from land clearance, erosion, disturbance and biodiversity losses due to ecotourism activities. Economic advantages are foreign exchange and diversification of jobs, whereas disadvantages are economic leakage and loss of resource bases causing dependency. Ecotourism space distorts local economy to integrate into global capitalism through consuming local resources. Social benefits are promotion of local culture, improved education and facilities, empowerment of deprived groups and community organization. However, drawbacks are severe; loss of community coherence and access to facilities for local people, degradation of local culture and growing crime rates, prostitution, drug and alcohol abuse. Social impacts clearly show that social structure is damaged; local culture and community ties are degraded under environmentalist abstraction. Hence, four ecotourism areas as *Space of Environmentalism* in Costa Rica cause social,



environmental and economic damage to both people and nature and their balance as a result of homogenization. However, Koens and his friends (2009) believe ecotourism as a “*promising development strategy for Costa Rica*” with comparing other land uses having more drawbacks. This comparison shows that ecotourism area, as a produced *Space of Environmentalism* is a part of capitalist economy much more than conservation of nature and local communities.

### ***Protected Area as Space of Environmentalism***

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) defines seven types of protected areas of different environmentalist abstraction as “*area management*.” These are Strict Nature Reserve, Wilderness Area, National Park, Natural Monument or Feature, Habitat/Species Management Area, Protected Landscape/Seascape, Protected Area with Sustainable Use of Natural Resources (“*Protected Areas Categories*”, 2016). *Space of Environmentalism* can be a protected area or a national park that abstract space imposes idealized image of untouched nature. The endemic, threatened and vulnerable species, the unique biodiversity of area, and the absence of human presence provide striking contrast with noisy, polluted and unnatural urban life. Hence, nature is produced as a protected area of wilderness that only human presence is allowed as field guards and conservation experts. This abstracted space satisfies the environmental concerns of urban residents while liberal environmentalism reduces nature into conservation area and ecological crisis into protection of species. The abstraction of protected area is a compromise with capitalism according to social ecology that the environmental concerns and attempts are satisfied but the remaining “*non-protected*” nature is legitimized as a natural resource for capitalist development.

Planned protected area is composed of common, threatened or flag species, defined walking paths, birdwatching towers, forbidden and buffer zones, experts, visitors, visitor centre and other abstractions of liberal environmentalism that dominates, defines and homogenizes both nature and local people. The visitors pay for souvenirs and entrance fee to consume wild nature that cannot be a natural area as claimed but an abstraction of environmental protection. The species are classified according to their rareness; the fewer their presence is, the more they become significant. Hence, environmentalist abstraction defines them as unique and most important species of a protected area whereas they are just organic part of ecosystem according to social ecology. Biology experts in various specializations of birds, mammals,

forests, and wetlands mostly construct their liberal environmentalist discourse that only their expertise with scientific legitimacy can grasp nature and species. The scientific abstraction makes environment as convoluted, far, detached for people those who can only be visitors. The prohibition of people from protected area as an ideal nature covers and legitimizes overuse and consumption of remaining unprotected nature. This environmentalist abstraction is possible by environmental laws, legislations and management of protected areas. The lack of management in a protected area yields paper park (Blom, Yamindou and Prins, 2004, p.485), where environmentalist abstraction cannot be imposed on free nature space and local people.

Sundberg (2003) makes a research about Maya Biosphere Reserve in Guatemala that has different zones for different human activities that the boundaries of zones were “*drawn at a desk*”. Local people of the protected area are forced to displace “*from their homes at the behest of higher social good*” like “*environment, biodiversity, wilderness and indigeneity*” (Schmidt-Soltau and Brockington, 2007, p.2183-2185). Moreover, local people adjacent to protected areas are imposed environmentalism abstraction like Newmark, Leonard, Sariko and Gamassa (1993) demonstrate how their life is shaped and assessed by nearby protected areas in relation with conservation, poaching, relations with area employees. The liberal environmentalist elites conceive local people as an obstacle and provide very little participation in decision-making. In fact, conservation reflects social hierarchies of current society through the abstraction of *Space of Environmentalism* that not only separates people from nature but also becomes the abstract nature hiding dynamic and interrelated relations of ecosystem. Fortunately, the social space of protected area emerges with contradictions despite the domination of abstraction. The species spread among different zones; the visitors may walk beyond the walking paths, *gather plants and feed animals*.

### ***Conservation Project Field as Space of Environmentalism***

Liberal environmentalism is led by international environmental non-governmental organizations (NGO) like World Wide Fund for Nature, Birdlife International that are funded mostly by state, international organizations and capital. The activities of environmental NGOs are not limited to voluntary work that they adapt to professional business of environmentalism sector within Market-Liberal Environmentalism as they work like companies and their business activities can be evaluated according to their profitability. Cost

and benefit calculations and financial bookkeeping characterize these environmental NGOs that resemble companies in terms of organization, funding, success parameters and recruiting staff. Alonso and Maciel (2010) state that Brazilian environmentalism professionalizes after Rio-92, "*relies on a firm-like organization profile and expert staffing*" and leading environmental NGOs restructure themselves for bureaucratic augmentation of formalization, new divisions with specific experts of specific tasks with transnational funds. Eikenberry and Kluver (2004) show the affect of marketization trend in non-profit sector that organizations "*shift away from goals and mission*", do "*not enter into mission related activities if unprofitable*" in values. For services and advocacy they "*focus on client demands rather than community needs*", "*eliminate unprofitable services*", "*only enter into profitable markets*", and do "*not support change in status quo.*" In terms of social capital, they "*discourage civic participation*", recruit board members for revenues, devalue work of volunteers, and have "*less need for traditional stakeholders and networks.*" Environmental NGOs depend on funding more than public support. Lane and Morrison (2006) state that environmental NGOs are not independent but bound to government due to funding needs. In fact, they rely on and cannot question funders like transnational organizations, private sector as well as state. Doyle and McEachern (2008) give examples of environmental NGOs working closely with governments, funded by them, working as lobby groups in mainstream politics and mostly dominated by career administrative professionals who sometimes have conflict with members to control organization. Each year, more voluntary environmental NGOs transforms into professional bodies as environmental companies to survive in environmentalism sector. This change can be tracked on a survey of 248 environmental NGOs in 59 countries that most of them adopt market-liberal environmentalism as they lose their opposition abilities (Dalton, Reccia and Rohrschneider, 2003). Most of the environmental NGOs prefer compromises and lobbying with state for their well-paid staff while minority of them chooses protests depending on their mostly voluntary human resources.

### ***Project as Environmental Business***

Funded projects including series of activities with objectives, budget and time period become the main business form for professionalized environmental organizations that lacks institutional support from state or capital. For most professional environmental NGOs, other resources like membership fees, charity incomes, and renting of estates are not sufficient to guarantee their

core budget to execute activities and to hire professional staff. Hence, they focus on projects as their main task to get funding. “Means become ends” as environmental actions are transformed into financial projects. Rationally framed structure of projects is different from Welfare-Liberal environmental NGOs that voluntarily act unlike a company structure and implement projects not for funding. As an example of rational and professional approach, WWF (World Wide Fund for Nature) develops five steps approach (define, design, implement, analyse/adapt and share) of a conservation project, called as “WWF Programme Standards” with special software called *Miradi* (“WWF Programme Standards”, 2015). Pasqualoni and Scott (2006) state that protests of NGOs are mostly organized in form of projects as modern capitalist enterprise. Project structure provides calculating and combining resources, reaching target audiences etc. In order to be capable of developing environmental projects, Project Cycle Management (PCM) becomes an inevitable training guide for environmental NGOs through the professionalization process. These trainings provide environmentalist abstraction to professionals for the transformation of environmental NGOs from welfare into market-liberal environmentalism.

Conservation projects are good examples liberal environmentalism caring for threatened species and ecosystems. Let’s consider a project that aims to stop a serious decrease in population of specific specie of a particular ecosystem with several activities set in logical framework document with related budget. It is funded by donors like international body, government or private sector through a grant programme. Project partners can be partnership of International Bodies, Government Agencies, professional and voluntary NGOs, Local Authorities, Municipalities, universities and Large Corporations realizing corporate social responsibility.

Kick off meeting is realized to disseminate the liberal environmentalist abstraction of conservation project to general public and local stakeholders. The project aim, activities and staff are introduced. Homogenized participants are called as stakeholders who are related to project; including government, private, NGO, media, academy, agriculture, fishery sectors, key members of local people and others. Within abstraction of project space, the nature of ecosystem is separated and presented as ‘field’; the activities are defined as key steps for solution of an environmental problem. The project staff is declared as professional environmentalists executing the activities. The consultants like biologists, botanists, ecologists and ornithologists provide scientific legitimation of abstraction. The contribution of donors is put forward as the crucial and respectful part of project, and so the environmentalist effort is to save

threatened species. Through media coverage, the general public know that there is going to be an environmental; non-profit; civil action that is realized under the leadership of project partners, with the contribution of donors and the participation of stakeholders. Under the abstraction of project space, the nature and its complex interrelations simply become environmental. The ecosystem is presented as the scene of environmental threats. The local people become local stakeholders; as the passive agents of project space.

Following the time plan of the project, consultants from various universities conduct field trips, carry out their researches, and write reports on causes of the decrease and the situation of the population that provide the “*scientific*” base and legitimation for the abstraction as mentioned before. Project team realize regular field trips and meetings to the field to inform stakeholders about the project and to provide information of severity of threatened species. Depending on these studies, damage reducing and win-win solutions within capitalism are developed by experts and implemented with the participation of stakeholders. The solutions have to be simple, efficient, cheap and presentable with solid results. For example, to eliminate the hazards of human activities, some environmental friendly land use techniques are implemented with local stakeholders. Using organic fertilizers saves land and increases production. The liberal environmentalist abstraction presents these solutions as success stories of project space to impress stakeholders, donors, media, and general public. However, the domination of nature is not questioned, in fact not covered by interest-oriented solutions. Organized press trips show the field, local people, problems, solutions and success to the donors and general public by media coverage. Final meeting is realized and the brochures and documentaries visualize the environmentalist abstraction of project space.

Within project space, the serious problems of natural ecosystems are hidden under conservation abstraction. The collapse of ecosystem and complex relations with human society are reduced into the “*threatened species*” as conceived abstract space where some human activities are dangerous. The stakeholders are given positions according to threatened species; the social context of the problem is ignored according to welfare and market liberal models of Pepper and environmentalism critiques of Bookchin. The capitalist domination of nature is not questioned but the threat is reduced into dangerous activities of local people and their activities. The social and dominative characteristic of ecological crisis of nature becomes a solely and resolvable environmental problem of specific species in a bordered area lacking depth, interrelations and holism of an ecosystem. The holistic integrity and profundity of

nature are transformed into fragmented and shallow liberal Space of Environmentalism that is abstractly “project’ed” by conservationist professionals.

## Conclusion

This paper aims to integrate the critique of liberal environmentalism with the notion of production of space. Capitalism enriched its inevitable growth with space as Lefebvre shown and ecological crisis and liberal environmentalism emerged as Bookchin implied. However, liberal environmentalism not only hides socio-economic roots of ecological crisis but also becomes a business sector in growing capitalism. Hence, the spatial production of *Environmentalism* is an inevitable outcome of liberal environmentalism that urbanizes nature. In this study, the integration liberal environmentalism of Bookchin with the production of space of Lefebvre yields a new concept as *Space of Environmentalism*. The liberal environmentalist elites homogenize, dominate and urbanize nature and people with their capitalist abstraction.

The production and consumption of *Space of Environmentalism* is explained through three different examples as ecotourism site, protected area and conservation project. Remote natural lands with their local people are urbanized and transformed into *Space of Environmentalism* of ecotourism sites where the experience of being natural and local is more expensive than mass tourism and is purchased by affluent urban consumers. Local people become a shop owner or a tour guide, while a natural ecosystem becomes a touristic commodity in order to satisfy liberal environmentalist needs and concerns of consumer society. Another example of *Space of Environmentalism* is a protected area declared by state where scientific experts’ zone nature, and activities of local people are restricted. Liberal environmentalist elites impose their abstract plan that ‘real’ wild nature can sustain in a protected area remote from urbanization and industrialization in order to hide the consumption, destruction and the collapse of remaining ecosystems of the earth. People cannot live in but only visit protected area that is homogenized, threatened, fragile and rare natural value.

Third example of *Space of Environmentalism* is a project field of professional environmental NGOs. As capitalism grows and develops, welfare-liberal environmentalism transforms into market-liberal type of Pepper. Environmental civil actions are transformed into business of environmentalist sector while the actions become projects and movement becomes sector. NGOs become companies while volunteers become professionals and environmentalists become careerists. Hence, ecosystems become *the Spaces of Environmentalism*; as

the nature becomes environment of cities and ecology becomes environmentalism. As leading actors in this new environmentalism business rational, hierarchical and professional environmental NGOs benefit grant programs of international and national bodies like state and capital that both aim to impose their liberal environmentalist abstraction to nature and people. Projects funded within grant programs are survival for most professional environmental NGOs. The project defines a bordered field where the local people and other agents are homogenized and defined as stakeholders; the nature is defined and bordered where scientific experts provide legitimization to win-win solutions to environmental threats. The project field becomes a scene of the success story of the resolved environmental problem. By press trips, reports, brochures and documentaries, media disseminates the success story that environmental problems can be solved by the cooperation of civil society, capital and state to feed environmental concerns of public and to hide domination of nature causing ecological crisis.

The production and consumption of *Space of Environmentalism* is not limited to above examples, in fact the spatial abstraction of liberal environmentalism can be revealed in green offices/buildings/cities, city parks and many others in global capitalism.

Liberal environmentalist abstraction homogenizes all differences to dominate *Space of Environmentalism*. This paper aims to reveal *Space of Environmentalism* by showing the contradictions of abstraction that may give way to differential space as Lefebvre offered. Collective urban movements like Gezi Protests may provide an alternative space to overcome liberal environmentalism surviving within capitalist domination.

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