

MAKING AND UNMAKING OF CLASS:  
AN INQUIRY INTO THE WORKING CLASS EXPERIENCES OF GARMENT  
WORKERS IN ISTANBUL UNDER FLEXIBLE AND PRECARIOUS  
CONDITIONS

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## **ABSTRACT**

MAKING AND UNMAKING OF CLASS:  
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CONDITIONS

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This thesis analyzes class experiences of workers under flexible and precarious conditions of global neoliberal capitalism and tries to answer to what extent these conditions erode their capacities to develop antagonistic class consciousness and collective struggles. Specifically, based on a fieldwork consisting of semi-structured in-depth interviews with 24 workers living in slums of Istanbul, it deals with cultural analysis of working and daily-life experiences of workers involved in the global production of garments. Three categories of analysis are used: experiences of shame, time and necessity, which respectively suggest that, under conditions of precarity and flexibility, the workers, 1. perceive their class positions as personal and feel themselves inadequate, leading to questioning of self-worth, injuries in the self and individual - but not collective - emancipation attempts to escape from the injuring effects of class; 2. have lost not only their control over their present time through

extremely long and irregular working hours; but also are ripped of their capacity to plan/organize their future; 3. live under the burden of continuous and persistent concern over necessities, which results in deep-seated sense of deprivation, impoverishment of life experiences, lack of meaning in this life, killing of hopes and consequentially experience of powerlessness. Yet, despite all these alienating experiences, there are also inchoate seeds of revolt and an alternative worldview, which confirms that class struggle exists even – and indeed (!) – in most severe conditions of alienation and will be decisive on the emancipatory dialectics of alienation / nonalienation and making / unmaking of class.

Keywords: Working Class, Class Consciousness, Class Experiences, Precarity, Garment Workers in Turkey

## ÖZ

SINIFIN YAPILIŞI VE BOZULUŞU:  
İSTANBUL'DA ESNEK VE GÜVENCESİZ KOŞULLAR ALTINDA ÇALIŞAN  
KONFEKSİYON İŞÇİLERİNİN İŞÇİ SINIFI DENEYİMLERİ ÜZERİNE BİR  
İNCELEME

Çubukçu, Soner

Yüksek Lisans, Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi Bölümü

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Bu tez; küresel neoliberal kapitalizmin esnek ve güvencesiz çalışma koşulları altında işçilerin sınıf deneyimlerini analiz etmekte ve bu koşulların, onların karşıt sınıf bilinci ve kolektif mücadele geliştirme kapasitelerini ne ölçüde aşındırdığı sorusuna yanıt aramaktadır. Özelleşme, İstanbul'un varoşlarında yaşayan 24 işçiyle yapılmış yarı-yapılardırılmış derinlemesine mülakatları içeren bir saha çalışmasına dayanarak, hazır-giyim ürünlerinin küresel üretiminde yer alan işçilerin çalışma ve gündelik hayat deneyimlerinin kültürel analizi ile ilgilenmektedir. İşçilerin deneyimleri üç ana kategoride toplanarak analiz edilmektedir: utanma, zaman ve gereklilik deneyimleri. Bu üç grup işçilik deneyiminden, sırasıyla, aşağıdaki sonuçlara ulaşılmaktadır: Güvencesiz ve esnek koşullar altında, işçiler, 1. sınıfı konumlarını kişisel olarak algılamakta ve kendilerini yetersiz hissetmektedirler, bu da öz-değerlerini sorgulamalarına, kendiliklerinde yaralar açılmasına ve sınıfın bu yaralayıcı

etkilerinden kaçmak için kolektif değil ama bireysel kurtuluş için çabalamalarına neden olmaktadır; 2. aşırı uzun ve düzensiz çalışma koşulları yüzünden şimdiki zamanları üzerindeki kontrollerini yitirmekle kalmamışlardır; geleceklerini planlama / organize etme kapasitelerinden de yoksun bırakılmışlardır; 3. gereklilikler ile ilgili sürekli ve kalıcı bir kayının yüküyle yaşamaktadırlar, bu da kökleşmiş bir yoksunluk hissine, yaşamsal deneyimlerinin fakirleşmesine, içinde bulundukları hayatın anlamını yitirmesine, umutlarının yokmasına ve sonuç olarak da bir güçsüzlük deneyimine yol açmaktadır. Fakat tüm bu yabancılıştırıcı deneyimlere rağmen, işçilerin deneyimlerinde başkaldırının ve alternatif bir dünya tasavvurunun olgunlaşmamış / olgunlaşmakta olan tohumları da mevcuttur. Bu da sınıf mücadelesinin, egemen olan görüşün aksine, en ağır yabancılışma koşullarında bile – ve aslında tam da bu koşullarda! – var olduğunu ve yabancılışma / yabancılasmama ve sınıfın yapılışı / bozuluşu ikiliklerinin özgürleştirici diyalektiğinde belirleyici olacağı görüşünü desteklemektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İşçi Sınıfı, Sınıf Bilinci, Sınıf Deneyimleri, Prekarite, Türkiye'deki Konfeksiyon İşçileri

To the memory of my father Mustafa Çubukçu...

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BATİS</b>	Independent Union of Textile Workers (Bağımsız Tekstil İşçileri Sendikası)
<b>BSB</b>	Bağımsız Sosyal Bilimciler (Independent Social Scientists)
<b>DİSK</b>	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)
<b>HÜNEE</b>	Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etütleri Enstitüsü (Hacettepe University, Institute for Population Analyses)
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ITKIB</b>	Istanbul Textile and Apparel Exporter Associations (İstanbul Tekstil ve Konfeksiyon İhracatçıları Birliği)
<b>JDP</b>	Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi)
<b>MOE</b>	Ministry of Economics
<b>NIDL</b>	New International Division of Labour
<b>SPO</b>	State Planning Organization (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı)
<b>TEKEL</b>	General Directorate of Tobacco, Tobacco Products, Salt and Alcohol Enterprises, (Tütün, Tütün Mamulleri, Tuz ve Alkol İşletmeleri Genel Müdürlüğü)
<b>TEKSİF</b>	Textile, Knitting and Garment Workers Union of Turkey (Türkiye Tekstil, Örme ve Giyim Sanayii İşçileri Sendikası)
<b>THS</b>	Toplumsal Hareket Sendikacılığı (Social Movements Unionism)
<b>TİSK</b>	Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (Türkiye İşveren Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)
<b>TURKSTAT</b>	Turkish Statistical Institution (Türk İstatistik Kurumu)
<b>TÜRK-İŞ</b>	Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu)
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

## CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

“Experienced overlockers, lockstitchers, final-ironers, controllers (men/women) are sought.”<sup>1</sup> Almost in every slum area in Istanbul, one can easily encounter with an announcement of that kind or a derivative of it. They decorate the rough walls of buildings in the slums of Istanbul. They are the job postings of garment factories/workshops that surround the residential buildings. In fact, they are hanged only once to the walls and then never been unslung. There is almost a continuous circulation of workers hired and fired and a garment worker is always sought after. According to estimates, there are more than 3 million garment workers in the overall Turkey and about 70% of them are settled and working in Istanbul, most of them being unregistered. They work under poor conditions, for long hours most of the time without any overtime pay for a wage around or even below the minimum wage. Despite these inhumane working conditions and severe exploitation, the movement of garment workers is relatively weak considering their size. It is hard to find many sporadic, unorganized and spontaneous labour movements in this sector<sup>2</sup>, let alone a strong organized movement. The age of starting to garment work is considerably low. There is a very chaotic web of subcontracting, on the end nodes of which there exists mostly unregistered small scale garment workshops, which are commonly called as *merdivenaltı* in Turkish. Garment sector in Istanbul mostly employs first or second generation migrant workers coming from allover Turkey, with an increasing number of Kurdish origin workers coming from Eastern and Southeastern Turkey.

The proliferation of the garment industry and mushrooming of garment factories and workshops in Istanbul has been in the last three to four decades with the changing the economy policy from import substitution to export orientation, which also coincided with the restructuring/reorganization of capitalist production on a

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<sup>1</sup> “Deneyimli overlokçu, reçmeci, son ütücü, kontrolcü (bay-bayan) aranıyor.”

<sup>2</sup> In the Bangladeshi garment workers, for example, which have similar working conditions and a similar position in the global production system as of garment workers of Turkey, one is able to find such movements. See for example Khanna (2011).

global scale. This period also witnessed a radical transformation in the organization of capitalist production relations, labour markets and employment status at the level of nation states. As a result of the demise of the compromise between labour and capital, as a distinctive quality of capitalism in the Fordist accumulation era, in the favour of capital and corrosion of rights gained by the accumulation of struggles of the working class at a global level. A new generation of working class, conditions of which are determined by appropriation / re-appropriation, commodification / re-commodification and precarization has emerged. This period, also widely coined as neoliberalism in the social sciences, is characterized by hostility towards any kind of collectivities, as found its most crystallized narrative in Margaret Thatcher's saying that "there is not such a thing of society but only individuals", and specifically towards class-based politics and the weakening of the working class collectives and organized struggle. The working class, which had not ever become a popular object of inquiry in academics in Turkey<sup>3</sup>, lost its appeal in academic studies until recently with the rise of post-modernism and its emphasis on new subjectivities. The changing organization of work under flexible capitalism, resolving of traditional fractions of working class and privatization of public owned industries marked a crisis in the representation of working class in general and trade unionism in specific.<sup>4</sup> The traditional working class trade unions and their ways of organizing the working class proved to be insufficient in organizing the workers under flexible and precarious conditions of neoliberalism. Especially the last two decades of this neoliberalisation process is further marked by the establishment of flexible capitalism, which knew no limits to exploitation and destined to "break off" any kind of so called "rigidities" in the labour market.

A rise of insecurity in general and job insecurity in specific, an increase in the reserve army of labour as a result of "new wave of proletarianisation" and high rates of unemployment as the link between growth and employment rates is broken, denunciation of stable, predictable job careers and jobs-for-life, irregularity and

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<sup>3</sup> See Ercan (Sınıftan Kaçış: Türkiye'de Kapitalizmin Analizinde Sınıftan Kaçış Üzerine, 2003) for a detailed analysis of historical and current tendencies in social sciences in Turkey to avoid class based analysis of Turkish capitalism.

<sup>4</sup> See the book edited by Sazak (Türkiye'de Sendikal Kriz ve Sendikal Arayışlar, 2006) for the analysis of this issue from various perspectives.

uncertainty of wage relation, the demise of the relation between citizenship/citizenship rights and status of employment, diversification and emergence of new employment forms, intensification of labour and extension of working hours accompanied the flexibility of capital. Discourses of precarization, precarity and even precaria are articulated more and more to describe and analyze the new characteristics of working class, which will be touched upon and analyzed critically in the second chapter, and most of them employed these terms to account for impossibility of class struggle rather than suggesting new ways, potentials and possibilities for mobilization and subjectivation of these workers (Özgür, 2006, p. 277).

## **1.1 Objective of the Study**

In such a setting, which is tried only to be sketched above, this study aims to understand the class experiences of the garment workers in Istanbul, as a specific group of workers that can be said to be born into conditions of precarious working, under flexible and precarious conditions. Based on a fieldwork in the slum areas of Istanbul, it tries to answer the question how the precarious working conditions affect the making of working class on the specific case of garment workers to understand mechanisms of alienation-dealienation in the experiences of garment workers. In the end, it is aimed to demonstrate both the possibilities/potentials of and limitations/obstacles to making of class as an antagonistic collectivity against the reign of the capital in a world of precarity.

It focuses on three groups of experiences in order to do so. Firstly, it explores the emotional/psychological/moral dimensions of class and enquires what is going to be called experiences of shame of garment workers. In doing so, questions of self-worth, respect and feeling inadequacy will be dealt with and the questions whether the hidden injuries are felt/lived deeper and how further these experiences can divide/isolate/alienate workers to themselves and their fellow workers in the precarious conditions and under the hegemony of individualist discourse of neoliberalism tried to be replied.

Secondly, the time experiences of workers, to the extent that the new economy may also mean a shortening in the time horizon; a change in the perception, apprehension, and practices of time; an uncertainty and anxiety about future; deterioration of rational anticipation capacity and future's being reduced to present, will be elaborated upon. How the garment workers in specific cope daily with overwhelming experience of present time, which is under the strict and unlimited control of capitalist; with the uncertainties, and with the mismatch of regular payments and irregular wages? Are they able to handle the risk inherent in the contemporary society, or do they yield to the dominance of capital and kill their expectations? Do they have any aspirations, expectations and hopes concerning the future; and if they do what are those aspirations, expectations and hopes about? Is it impossible for them to make a plan for the future given the instability and ambiguity of present? If so, how does this affect their potential to form an antagonistic collectivity and to be mobilized? In short, how do they handle the alienated time of their own and is there any hope of re-claiming their power and control on their own time? These questions lie behind the exploration of experiences of time of garment workers.

And lastly, the study will elaborate on the experiences of necessity. The relation between the concepts need, necessity, alienation and value theory will try to be established to answer the question what kinds of deprivation the textile workers experience and how they handle them. Another question to be answered will be how the handling of these necessities may create moments of alienation and human degradation. The underlying question will be again how to supersede this alienation and whether there are some clues of such supersession.

In sum, the thesis will try to demonstrate the mechanisms in the class experiences through which the class is unmade and remade in conditions of precarity in a flexible capitalist production system.

## **1.2 On the Theoretical Framework**

As it may be already noticed, this thesis has a clumsy structure in terms of its theoretical framework, which I believe however to be sufficiently successful to serve its needs. Rather than discussing, criticizing and analyzing the main theoretical engagements of the study at the beginning and then moving into the direct findings of the fieldwork; all the chapters in the body of the thesis, except the chapter on the macro-context, carries its own theoretical burden and most of the theoretical discussions are made within these chapters in relation to findings of the fieldwork. This structure is preferred because it is believed that such a distinction between theory and practice is a sign of academic schizophrenia, which puts practical life and abstract-mental thinking at two different, irreconcilable epistemological planes. Such an approach also leads to inefficiency as the theoretical discussions are not usually linked with the original findings of the study, which turns most of the studies a garbage dump of unused references. This study does not have a hundred percent confident claim of overcoming such a fictive and inefficient approach, but at least it has a claim of attempting to do so.

However, here, a rather brief discussion will be made on the main theoretical engagements of the thesis, which will form a framework for the rest of the study. This brief part also intended to shed some light on the theoretical points that run the risk of not being totally comprehended from the discussions made in the individual chapters. Another intention of this part is to provide integrity to the individual chapters based on fieldwork, which may escape the attention while the reader is too much engaged in the material of every individual chapter.

To begin with, this thesis is committed to Marxist analysis of social reality and especially its definition and analysis of class. However this single statement does not enough to clarify the stance of this thesis in terms of class analysis. This is because of the fact that, although class is a key term and foundation of revolutionary practice in Marx's works, there is not a formal definition of it in the works of Marx (Öngen, Marx ve Sınıf, 2002, p. 13). Another reason is that, Marx used the concept class in his different works with different emphases to serve particularly the aim of the work. For example, in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, he seeks a political

concern to inspire the people and puts the working class “at the centre of a historical epic” against the ruling class, the bourgeoisie (Dworkin, 2007, p. 26) In *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Marx, 1972a) for example, in a historical account to acknowledge the defeat of proletariat in France after 1848, has a more refined way of dealing with class, in which we find not only proletariat and bourgeoisie but we find a scala ranging from landed aristocracy to small peasants and from industrial capitalists to lumpenproletariat. In *The Capital* (Marx, 1976), working class is analyzed in the process of capital’s valorization in a more abstract level.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the varieties of approaches to class in Marx, it is legitimate to mention some core elements of his class theory. First of all, class and class struggle are considered to be the main constituents of the history to date (Marx & Engels, 1848 [1977]). Concept of class in Marxist sense also differs from other accounts of class in that, class is a social relation, which is determined by the way the surplus is appropriated from the producers by the appropriators. Classes are not just another kind of social inequalities. This relation is exploitative and requires two antagonistic classes at play with each other with conflicting interests, which are engendered by the appropriation of surplus. Unlike other accounts of class that defines class as a simple position located in a social scale, relationality lies at the heart of Marxist class analysis. Rather than being stable social positions, classes are historical formations. Another thing is that, Marx has a distinction in mind between what Boratav (2005) calls “objective existence of class” and their “roles”. Marx formulated this distinction in *Poverty of Philosophy* (1847) as “class in itself” and “class for itself”; but as underlined by Özgürler (2008, p. 32), this distinction has been interpreted too much schematically that simply puts the question of class as a transition from objective class location to a state of subjective consciousness, as if they are externally related, overlooking the relationality and historicity of class relations. However, it still

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<sup>5</sup> The schematization of Marx’s works in terms of its approach to class and social reality by Clegg, Borehom & Dow (1986) may also be helpful in understanding several different approaches Marx have in his works. In their schematization there are three main groups; namely **simple abstract model** (The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts [1844], The Poverty of Philosophy [1847], and The Manifesto of the Communist Party [1848]), **complex descriptive model** (The Class Struggles in France [1850] and The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte [1852]) and **complex abstract model** (*Capital*). However, one should also keep in mind that any kind of schematization run the risk of overlooking the peculiarities of individual works.

indicates that Marx had in his mind several abstraction layers of class. This fact is revealed more clearly in his handling of the situation of the French small peasant class in the defeat of 1848 movements in France, which led to the overtaking of power by Louis Bonaparte in his *Eighteenth Brumaire*. Marx, states that (emphasis added):

“Insofar as millions of families live under conditions of existence that separate their mode of life, their interests, and their culture from those of the other classes, and put them in hostile opposition to the latter, *they form a class*. Insofar as there is merely a local interconnection among these small-holding peasants, and the identity of their interests forms no community, no national bond, and no political organization among them, *they do not constitute a class.*” (Marx, 1972a)

Here again, small peasants’ *forming a class* but *not constituting a class*, indicates a distinction between different abstractions of class Marx had in mind. It is also worthwhile to underline that, Marx put a great emphasis on relationality for constituting class as a form of collective consciousness and there is an implicit emphasis on experience for that constitution to become realized.

Beyond the fragmentary accounts found in various works of Marx, his theory on labour value, which is dealt with in detail in his seminal work Capital, also has many implications for the concept of class. Simply denoted by the formula  $M - C - M'$ , the capitalist production system is defined as a system of commodity production, that chases after exchange value rather than aiming solely at producing use-values to satisfy a particular need in order to create a surplus value. This surplus value is created by the mysterious quality of labour in that, the labour power can produce more than its market value, which is determined by the total value of the commodities needed to reproduce the labour. The labourer, free from the ownership of means of production and free to engage with a capitalist to enter into a labour contract to sell her labour-power, enters in an “objective” wage relation with the capitalist to sell her only means of subsistence, her labour. This is important to understand that, under capitalism, the source of any capital is this surplus labour and only through such an understanding demystification of capital is possible. Value theory lies at the heart of the capitalist social relations as a determining force and to that extent the concept of class, class struggle and class reality should not be

analyzed separately from the “political and comprehensive content of value theory” (Ercan, 2005, p. 28). Understanding the functioning of the capitalism requires understanding of the valorization process in the M-C-M’ circuit. However, in itself, this process of appropriation of surplus value created by the worker in a capitalist production system asserts itself as a natural process. As Marx (1976, p. 899) stated:

“The advance of capitalist production develops a working class which by education, tradition and habit looks upon the requirements of that mode of production as self-evident natural laws. The organization of the capitalist process of production, once it is fully developed, breaks down all resistance.”

The exploitation inherent in this process is not open to direct experience of workers, they feel their being exploited in various ways but arriving at the knowledge of this exploitation requires epistemological jump in the consciousness. This is also an issue of dialectical process of alienation, which we will return discussing after a while. But within the circuits of capital, one can easily lose the track of what happened to human element essentially existing in this process.

At this point, E. P. Thompson (1995) criticizes the work done in Capital as being one-sided and closed to human experiences; contrary to Marx’s claim to construct a theory of “anti Political Economy”, Thompson argues, he ended up being “partly sprung” within the circuits of capital (pp. 219,220). Within this context, Thompson further states that experience is a missing term in Capital, and once returned to the term experience “we enter into the real silences of Marx” (1995, p. 222). Based on the same premise, Lebowitz (2003) tries to reconstruct the supposedly missing book on “the wage labour” and tries to reinterpret and put together the basic Marxist concepts for a political economy of the working class. Capital is, for Lebowitz (2003) , highly occupied with deciphering the circuits of capital and therefore neglects the question of human element – i.e. the working class –, although his emphasize on the morality and human degradation under capitalism is clear in all his works.<sup>6</sup> In an interesting manner, Bourdieu (2000, p. 202) has also pointed to the same fact in Marx’s works as follows:

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<sup>6</sup> Bonefeld (2006) rightfully argues that the main preoccupation of Marx in Capital is showing that the main concepts of political economy are just perverted forms of social human relations; and accusing Marx in the simplest sense of neglecting the wage labour and human element does not give Marx his due. Referring to Marx, he concludes that, “[t]he critical question, then, is not to accept *Capital* as a

“Like the gift, labour can be understood in its objectively twofold truth only if one performs the second reversal needed in order to break with the scholastic error of failing to include in the theory the ‘subjective’ truth with which it was necessary to break, in a first para-doxal reversal, in order to construct the object of analysis. The objectification that was necessary to constitute wage labour in its objective truth has masked the fact which, as Marx himself indicates, only becomes the objective truth in certain exceptional labour situations: the investment in labour, and therefore miscognition of the objective truth of labour as exploitation, which leads people to find an extrinsic profit in labour, irreducible to simple monetary income, is part of the real conditions of the performance of labour, and of exploitation.”

The paragraph is hard to grasp at first read because of the fact that Bourdieu employs a terminology specific to himself. Burawoy (2012a) has done a good job in translating it to a more understandable language as follows:

“In constituting the object of knowledge, that is the notion of wage labour, Marx breaks with the subjective (lived) experience of workers that they are paid for a full day’s work, for eight hours in an eight-hour day. In reality, workers are exploited and only receive wages that are equivalent to a portion of the working day, say five hours, leaving three hours as surplus labour, which is the basis of profit. So far this is straightforward Marx. But, says Bourdieu, it is not enough to make this first break – first reversal – with lived experience to produce the objective truth of exploitation; it is further necessary for theory to make a second break, a second reversal, this time against the ‘objective truth’ to reincorporate the ‘subjective truth’, the lived experience of workers. It is one thing to discover the objective truth of labour, i.e. exploitation, it is another to show how exploitation is sustained by workers themselves.” (Burawoy, 2012a, p. 188)

In fact, an emphasis on *practice* is very strong in the Marxist theory, which found its best expression in Marx’s theses on Feuerbach stating that (Marx, 2000, p. 173): “All social life is essentially practical. All mysteries which lead theory to mysticism find their rational solution in human practice and in the comprehension of this practice.” However, this emphasis can be overlooked when dealing with the highly complex conceptualizations of Marx’s theory of value, although which is itself derived from the very analyses of the human practice under capitalist production system. To make the emphasis on practice clearer, as the above mentioned scholars also pointed, this study will try to make this “second break”, to speak with Bourdieu’s terminology, to

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study of the ‘logic of capital’ that needs to be balanced by a theory of class struggle, but to ask: ‘why does this content [human social relations] take that form [the form of capital]’ (Bonefeld, 2006, p. 90). However, if we consider the structuralist accounts that downplay the subjectivity of the working class within the Marxist tradition stemming from the emphasis on the capital, we can understand why Lebowitz tries to reassert what he calls “the political economy of working class”.

account for the subjective experiences of the garment workers in a specific setting; however without losing the sight enabled by the first break, i.e. with the value theory of Marx. In doing this, the approach to class as a historical process and relation and the critical concept of experience in making of the class as developed by Edward Palmer Thompson in his seminal work *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) will be employed.

What Thompson tries to do in *The Making of the English Working Class* is such a bottom up history of workers in 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. He tries to give an account of *making* of English working class. He defines his specific class concept in the preface<sup>7</sup> to his work as follows (Thompson, 1963, pp. 9-14): It is *making*, because it is an investigation of an active process, which is indebted to the conditions as well as it is to the agent (pp. 9). It is an investigation of class; which is historical phenomenon that combines the consciousness and experience. Class is not static, it is dynamic, is in flux; requiring a historical-relational notion (pp. 9). This relation, should be concretized in real people and real context. It is when, certain people feel and expresses the identity in their interest with respect to another people –which are usually their opponents- as a result of common experience, the class becomes made. “Class experience” is determined by the production relations, into which people bore or unwillingly enter. “Class consciousness” is handling of these experiences, which are concretized as tradition, value systems, thoughts and institutions, on cultural terms. Experience is determined but consciousness is never (pp 10). When the class is accepted as an object, then deriving of class consciousness from its existence becomes possible. However, treating class as a relation and not an object prevents such a failure in thought. Class is something defined by the people while at the same time they are living their own history, and such a definition is the ultimate one (pp 11) Class is, a cultural formation as well as an economic.

In sum, Thompson emphasized the multifaceted relationship between class relations and consciousness and stressed the centrality of struggle in the historical

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<sup>7</sup> This preface is especially important because Thompson later stated that he “did not start out from the conclusions in the Preface” but rather “the Preface expressed [his] conclusions” (Thompson, 1978, p. 147).

process. Classes were the result, as Wood underlined (1995), rather than the cause of class struggles<sup>8</sup>. In a later writing he has put it as follows:

“[...] classes do not exist as separate entities, look around, find an enemy class, and then start to struggle. On the contrary, people find themselves in a society structured in determined ways (crucially, but not exclusively, in productive relations), they experience exploitation (or the need to maintain power over those whom they exploit), they identify points of antagonistic interest, they commence to struggle around these issues and in the process of struggling they discover themselves as classes, they come to know this discovery as class-consciousness. Class and class-consciousness are always the last, not the first, stage in the real historical process.” (Thompson, 1978, p. 149)

He also “argued that the working class should be understood in relationship to a historical and cultural process founded on evolving experience and consciousness” (Dworkin, 2007, p. 53). In trying to make sense of the “making” of the working class, Thompson applies often to culture of the people concerned at that time, their morality and normative values. However, this should not mean to categorize Thompson simply as a culturalist that does not pay any attention to objective determinations of class. In fact, this is an accusation Thompson himself objected to and he clearly stated that class cannot be determined “independent of objective determinations” and be simply defined as a “cultural formation”, and on the contrary objective determinations should be examined “scrupulously” (Thompson, 1978, p. 149). However, these examinations of objective determinations should never lead to equating the objective definition of class simply to class consciousness, class is a rather living thing:

“Class eventuates as men and women *live* their productive relations, and as they *experience* their determinate situations, within ‘the *ensemble* of the social relations’, with their inherited culture and expectations, and as they handle these experiences in cultural ways. So that, in the end, no model can give us what ought to be the ‘true’ class formation for a certain ‘stage’ of process. No actual class formation in history is any truer or more real than any other, and class defines itself as, in fact, it eventuates.” (Thompson, 1978, p. 150)

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<sup>8</sup> Thompson further argued in a later writing that “class-struggle is the prior, as well as the more universal, concept” than the class itself (Thompson, 1978, p. 149).

In an influential analysis of the Thompson's work with regards to class and class consciousness, Wood summarizes concisely the theoretical quest of Thompson as following:

"[t]he basic theoretical and methodological principle of Thompson's whole historical project is that objective determinations – the transformation of production relations and working conditions – never impose themselves on 'some nondescript undifferentiated raw material of humanity' but on historical beings, the bearers of historical legacies, traditions and values" (Wood, 1995, p. 92)

On such a schema, object and subject are not two externally related separated entities, but historical beings, human beings act both as subject and object at once. Treating class as process and relationship enables the experience as a mediator that translates relations of production into class relations, and this medium – experience – brings historical and cultural particularities into the scene. As Scott pointed, the term "experience" helps bringing together "the ideas of external influence and subjective feeling, the structural and the psychological" and provides us with "a mediating influence between social structure and social consciousness" (Scott, 1991, p. 784). However, one should be careful about the employment of experience, as the term, without a careful attention and analysis of it, itself can become a self-evident, unmediated and given category ready to be used in the analysis of class; which would contradict the Thompson's own quest for historicizing the analysis of class by de-historicizing the term "experience" itself, as warned by Ireland (2002, pp. 98,99).<sup>9</sup> The wide-spread use of the term "experience", with or without reference to Thompson, in sociological studies such as "women's" or "black" or "lesbian" or "homosexual" experiences by simply substituting the "working class", as indicated by Scott (1991, p. 786), may indicate such a hollowing out of the concept that demises the usefulness of the term.

Against such dangers of employing the concept "experience" in understanding the class as a relation and a process and in order to keep the analytical

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<sup>9</sup> See Sewell (1986) and Scott (1991) for similar criticism of the concept experience. Sewell also provides some qualifications for a better employment of the "experience" as a tool understanding the relation between the structure and historicity, however his classification of Thompson as a mere culturalist against the structuralists who underplays the significance of objective determinations is problematic.

edge of the term in the study, this thesis will try to not to lose sight with the engagement of the class experience with the historical materialist perspective. To be able to do this, a persistent emphasis on the value theory will be made, without forgetting the importance of hegemonic values, existing culture and normative values abiding in today's Turkey. These values and hegemonic culture, and as well as the abiding political atmosphere, may play a facilitating / debilitating role in class experiences' "transmuting the structure into consciousness".

Despite the usefulness of the term "class experience" in making sense of the class formation in a specific historical process, Thompson provides us with not many clues about how to approach for accounting for the working class experiences analyzed in an ethnographic account in the presence, since his material as a historian mostly consists of historical documents. Thompsonian approach points us a general comprehension to approach to the class experiences while taking into account the existing dominant normative values and hegemonic culture; but does not specifically provide a toolbox to dive into these experiences and to plot a cultural map of the working class especially at a time when, as a result of the neoliberal transformation the new hegemonic strategy dismissed the "class-based politics" as a legitimate "political basis for collective identification and action" (Yalman, 2009), the class contradictions are not translated into direct confrontations but rather articulated in more mediated ways through the obscure structures and experiences of domination. The question how we can account for the current daily life experiences of the workers as actions taken in class ways does not find a determinate answer in Thompson's works. At such a point, works of Bourdieu and especially his influential concepts of "cultural capital" "symbolic domination" and "habitus" come to the forefront of recent cultural analyses of class.

Here, a comprehensive definition and discussion of the term habitus will not be given. Yet, just to give an idea of the term, Habitus can be defined as mostly unconscious systems of dispositions engendered by a structure, let's say a class structure , as "structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures" (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). In defining the term Habitus, Bourdieu tries to provide a mediator between the structure and agency to account for the not contemplated, daily life actions / behaviours / feelings / evaluations with their relations to structural

locations of the agencies. In the end, Bourdieu aims to find out regularities and patterns in the human practice which is determined by and which also reproduces these class positions. This aim is clearer in his work *Distinction* (1984). The following definition of Habitus by Bourdieu serves understanding this aim better:

“The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produce practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus.” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 78)

In this thesis, habitus, as a class concept, will be employed to help framing the life experiences of the garment workers on a socio-ontological plane. In doing this, the author of this thesis is aware of the irreconcilable nature of the Bourdieu’s work with that of Marxists. Yet, some parallels between the understandings of class of Bourdieu and Marx can be drawn. For example, in *Distinction*, Bourdieu confirms the determinant quality of *production relations*, although claiming consumption an equal status in definition of class, by stating that “class is defined as much by its *being-perceived* as by its *being*, by its consumption – which need not be conspicuous in order to be symbolic – as much as by its position in the relations of production (even if it is true that the latter governs the former)” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 483). How close can Bourdieu’s approach to class may become to a Marxist account, it essentially differs from the Marxist perspective in understanding class that it perceives of class primarily as a theoretical construct in the end (Bourdieu, 1987), whereas Marxists see it as a concrete historical formation.<sup>10</sup> Yet, as recently marked by Öğütle & Çegin (2010, pp. 135,136), the “conceptual toolbox of Bourdieu may provide important insights in analyzing the cultural aspects of class domination”. This study makes an extensive use of Bourdieusian toolbox within this framework.

Similarly, inspired by such a Bourdieusian framework, some recent cultural class analysts made use of Bourdieusian conceptualization in understanding the

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<sup>10</sup> For a more detailed comparison of Bourdieu’s work with Marxist legacy, with parallels and points of contradiction, see Burawoy (2012b).

experiences of workers.<sup>11</sup> The interesting thing is that, although most of them – implicitly or explicitly – employ the term “experience” quite extensively, they do not make direct references to Thompson’s works. These studies are, in their own account, successful at demonstrating the practices and workers’ accounts of these practices in relation to class identities. Especially the work of Sayer (2005b) is successful at sketching the main normative and cultural values that show the continuing significance of class with respect to the “soft forms of domination” in a class society where the legitimacy of class based social research and politics is eroded in the neoliberal era. Its emphasis on valuation, morality and emotions, which will be dealt with in more detail later, are especially important in framing the discussions that will be made in chapter 3, concerning the garment workers’ worlds of meaning and emotions. Skeggs (1997) explores the meaning of respect and positions of identification/dis-identification with respect to class and gender making use of a fieldwork done with urban working class women. The most influential one on this thesis, among these studies is the work of Charlesworth (2004). His study is especially important as he deals with the precarious segments of working class in United Kingdom and vividly demonstrates and analyzes the phenomenology of their experiences in a flexible economy. He powerfully describes the daily life experiences of urban working class of Rotherham, dealing well with the psychological and emotional aspects of these experiences. Many parallels will be drawn between his findings and findings of this study and his specific discussions will be dealt with in the related parts of the thesis as well.

Although the above mentioned studies are quite successful at giving an idea about and understanding the subjective experiences of the workers at concern, they do not point to any implications on the questions of class based organization, class struggle and class politics. Sayer (2005b), for example, explicitly states that his study is on what he calls as “the micro-politics of class” or “soft forms of cultural domination” rather than being on “macro politics of class”, which is about the rights of the workers. This tendency is in line with the relative inactivity of the working

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<sup>11</sup> A non-comprehensive list can be provided as follows: (Charlesworth, 2004), (Charlesworth, 2005), (Reay, 1998), (Reay, 2000), (Reay, 2005), (Sayer, 2001), (Sayer, 2005a) (Sayer, 2005b), (Skeggs, 1997), (Savage, 2000).

class and fall of organized working class movements within the few decades in the neoliberal era. These studies do not directly acknowledge an objective of explaining the relative inactivity and silence of the working class, but they all seem to be preoccupied with this as a given fact. They are good at presenting the multi-faceted aspects of cultural domination and the reproduction of it in and through the working class experiences in the neoliberal hegemony, but they abstain from pointing to possible counter hegemonic moments against the neoliberal hegemonic strategy. They talk long about the pessimism, disidentification, helplessness, hopelessness, sense of nothingness, questions of respect and self-worth, ambivalence/unease about class; but their accounts on the emancipation of these people – if there exists any – remain too shallow. The most radical suggestion in these studies is that of Sayer (2005b), which does not go beyond a humanitarian call for a kind of social democracy. Especially in the work of Charlesworth (2004), one ends up in a universal pessimism reading through the pages. This is partly because of their theoretical engagement with Bourdieusian approach and its influential concept of Habitus. By coining the term Habitus, Bourdieu seeks to find regularities in the human practice that reproduce the cultural domination. His defining of the term does not leave much space for transformation or change. As the habitus, the internalized dispositions or “the structuring structure”, is defined as essentially unconscious and unreflected and is about what is taken for granted, the emphasis is on the tendency of adaptation and accommodation to material conditions – although these may or may not mean a perfect adaptation or accommodation. In such a scheme, there is only a marginal capacity for the voice of the human will.<sup>12</sup> This is not to argue that, the so called Habitus is a rigid class structure that strictly determines the human practice. Rather, in itself it encompasses an unlimited number of possibilities; however these possibilities have a mostly determined distribution. Crehan (2011, p. 280), in her work where she compares and contrasts the concept of Habitus with Gramsci’s concept of “common sense”, describes this limited flexibility as follows: “We can

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<sup>12</sup> To be just, it should be noted here that, Sayer (2005b, pp. 23-51) tries to qualify the concept of Habitus to allow some space to the human will and agency. Although his qualifications are significant and sound, the habitus still stays as a term explaining the relative persistence of culture rather than explaining the dynamic of change and transformation.

see habitus as something like a particular language which, while it allows its speakers to come up with an infinite number of different utterances, maintains an essentially unchanging grammatical structure.” Then, we can conclude that, although Habitus, as an embodied and taken-for-granted structuring and structured structure, is a powerful class-term in understanding the existing cultural domination and daily practices that is produced by and reproduced this cultural domination; however it is not primarily aimed to and also sufficient to understand social transformation or possibilities of a social transformation.

Yet, since Marx clearly stated his foundational divergence from the existing philosophies in his famous eleventh thesis on Feuerbach that interpreting and understanding the world is not enough, and the point is “to change it”, this thesis cannot satisfy with what Bourdieu’s concept of habitus offers as it tries to follow a mainly Marxist way of understanding class. As it is mentioned before, contrary to the main quest of Bourdieu’s approach to class and his employment of the concept of Habitus as a class term, class is a key term and foundation of revolutionary practice and therefore change and possibilities of change should be at the centre of any Marxist work on class.

This thesis will try to employ mainly two Marxist categories in understanding the working class experiences of the garment workers to overcome the above discussed deficiency of the term Habitus and the cultural class analyses that make use of this term: alienation and common sense.

Here, a fully developed discussion on these terms will not be provided. Here, the aim is to only demonstrate main line of thinking in this thesis. However, brief descriptions will be given here to clarify the approach of this thesis. Detailed discussions are made in the body of the thesis where necessary.

Alienation, a theory which is closely intertwined with Marx’s theory of labour as within the very process of capitalist production the worker produces something that is alien to him and in general the alienation he faces in every facet of his life under capitalism, is, with this regards, following Bertell Ollman (1976), understood as the “Marx’s conception of man in capitalist society”:

“The theory of alienation is the intellectual construct in which Marx displays the devastating effect of capitalist production on human beings, on their physical and mental states and on the

social processes of which they are a part. Centered on the acting individual, it is Marx's way of seeing his contemporaries and their conditions (a set of forms for comprehending their interaction) as well as what he sees there (the content poured into these forms). Brought under the same rubric are the links between one man, his activity and products, his fellows, inanimate nature and the species." (Ollman, 1976, p. 131)

Yet, the understanding of alienation in this thesis diverges from that of Ollman in that it does not understand the alienation as a completed phenomenon and unalienation as a future alternative. Rather, the dialectics of alienation/unalienation is understood as "living struggles" (Holloway, 2005, p. 64) and as an ongoing process (Holloway, 1997, p. 148). Fetishisation and fetishism are also considered as the continuation of the theme of alienation. Fetishism, to the extent that it covers up the main antagonism and the possibility to change the world as the social relations are seen as partial relations between things under capitalism, provides the foundation to answer the question why the people accept the misery, violence and exploitation of capitalism (Holloway, 2005, p. 62). Yet, fetishism, as alienation, has a conflictual and contradictional nature and carries in itself its opposite, and therefore obedience and revolt are in a conflictual unity. So, the seemingly submissive experiences of the garment workers working under precarious conditions are analyzed through the dialectics of alienation-unalienation, which will become clearer in analyzing the fieldwork.

Another Marxist category that will be utilised in making sense of the experiences of garment workers will be the concept of "common sense" as developed by Antonio Gramsci. Gramsci used the term "common sense" to refer to some set of dominant cultural, normative values, ideas, structures of feeling and worlds of meaning in a given society in a given time, which are inherently heterogeneous, fragmentary and contradictory in nature. Gramsci defines common sense as "folklore of philosophy" and lists its common characteristics as follows (Gramsci, 2000, p. 343):

"Its most fundamental characteristic is that it is a conception which, even in the brain of one individual, is fragmentary, incoherent and inconsequential, in conformity with the social and cultural position of those masses whose philosophy it is."

For Gramsci, common sense cannot be regarded as revolutionary or progressive in itself, and rather it may carry in itself the most conservative ideas. In fact, "common

sense is a chaotic aggregate of disparate conceptions, and one can find there anything that one likes" (Gramsci, 2000, p. 345). However, common sense should also be the beginning point for "the philosophy of praxis" as it may also contain inchoate ideas and an implicit oppositional world view against the official or hegemonic world view. As Crehan (2011, p. 281) underlines, common sense "both helps reproduce and maintain existing power regimes, but can also carry within it the seeds of transformation". It is primarily these "seeds of transformation" that Gramsci, who called these "the good sense", gave much importance to in order to achieve a social change. After comparing the Bourdieu's term Habitus and Gramsci's common sense, Crehan (2011) concludes that common sense may also help the social researcher, like the concept of Habitus, in understanding the "taken-for-granted" attitudes, understandings and valuations of the dominated classes and could explain the relative persistence of the cultures and givenness of everyday practices engendered by it; but may well also show them the contradictory, flexible and changing character of all these as well. And in that respect, it is a more powerful concept than Habitus. This study also takes into account of this idea and make use of common sense in understanding the experiences of garment workers. Whether specific references are made or not in the following chapters, a Gramscian understanding of common sense as a flexible, contradictory and incoherent world view of the people, which includes both submissive elements and seeds of revolt in itself, will underlie all discussions made in this thesis.

Having spoken about two Marxist categories as alternatives or complementary alternatives to Bourdieu's habitus in making sense of working class experiences, we have explored most of the main theoretical engagements of this study. Beyond these theoretical engagements, the careful reader will easily notice that there is a large deal of discussions that make direct references to works of cultural sociologist Richard Sennett, namely the *Hidden Injuries of Class* (1972) which is co-authorised by Jonathan Cobb, *Respect* (2003), *The Corrosion of Character* (1998), and *The Culture of the New Capitalism* (2006). Although it is hard to categorize his work within a certain strand in social sciences, his works are important with respect to this thesis to the extent that he has been providing a fulfilling explanation of work related experiences, emotions and valuations of the

different segments of workers in contemporary capitalism. The insights his works provide will be used in making sense of some specific class experiences of garment workers in today's world. The link between the above discussed theoretical framework and his works may now seem incomprehensible, but hopefully it will be better understood as the text unfolds.

Last words on the theoretical framework will be on the choice of "making and unmaking" as the title of the thesis. It should have already been clear what is meant by "making of class". But why is it called "making and *unmaking*"? Such a choice serves several purposes. First, one has to keep in mind that, as Hobsbawm (1984, p. 194) already pointed, class formation is not a "once-for-all process"; i.e. the classes "keep on changing", they are made, unmade and remade in a continuous manner. "Making" dialectically includes in itself the moments of unmaking of class at a certain historical process. But, secondly, this thesis tries to emphasize that we all live in an era where the traditional working class collectives and their conventional representation channels are demised under neoliberalism and a new generation of workers working under precarious conditions with a shortening of the time horizon is becoming the dominant labour force at the same time with the fall of class politics in specific and any collectivities in general. These new conditions of labour indicate a tendency towards the unmaking of class and this tendency is tried to be underlined. Although the conventional forms of class organization are eroded, the gains of the labourers acquired in the Fordist accumulation period through the global accumulation of class struggles are taken away by the capitalists one by one and workers are living a life that more and more puts their self-worth and self-respect at stake, disempowers them and condemns them more to a life of unfulfilled necessities and deprivation and puts a hold on their present and future for continuous but uneven and utopically unlimited exploitation; the potential for the workers to reclaim for their rights, their power on their life and their control on their own time make itself felt more and more. Because, what at stake is their dignity. As a result of this fact, thirdly, as Marx (1847) did not see in misery only misery but mainly a revolutionary potential to "overthrow the old society", this thesis will also point to new possibilities and potentials for the working class in the direction of making itself. Making and unmaking is not a mechanical movement of a pendulum, but rather a

dialectical process determined by the hidden and open forms of struggle; and looking through the concrete class experiences of the concrete garment workers, this thesis will try to uncover the conditions and potentials for that struggle.

Having summarized the basic theoretical line this thesis will follow, now it will be tried to locate this study among the literature concerning class in Turkey.

### **1.3 Some Notes on the Literature on Class in Turkey and Where This Study Stands among this Literature**

Having defined the theoretical framework this study will be based upon, it is necessary to point its place in the literature on class in Turkey. This part will sketch out the literature on class in Turkey in order to clarify the place of this study within this literature. However, it dose not have any claims of comprehensiveness in doing so. In trying to do this, these works tried to be evaluated on the centrality of class experience as this thesis identified it as the main analytical tool in understanding class as a relation and also on their relevance with the cultural analysis of class.

The literature on the working class in Turkey is voluminous. However, when investigated closer, it is seen that these works are concentrated in similar areas and there is a severe and serious lacuna in the cultural analysis of class and class experiences, which is tried to be filled by some recent brilliant works.

A first cluster of works deals with the history of working class movements.<sup>13</sup> Here, a distinction between working class movements and working class formation in general should be made to “avoid reducing the class movement to its formal organizations and ignoring the cultural basis on which the movement moves” (Camfield, 2005, p. 425). The most of the works seem to be ignorant of this distinction. Even if they consider also the importance of unorganized sections of working class, it is hard to find even bits and pieces of working class experiences.

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<sup>13</sup> A selective list is as follows: (Sülker, Türkiye Sendikacılık Tarihi, 2004), (Sencer (Baydar), 1969), (Yaraşır, 2006), (Güzel, 2007), (Koç Y. , Türkiye İşçi Sınıfı Tarihi; Osmanlı'dan 2010'a, 2010a). Works of Yıldırım Koç are to be given priority in this cluster as they outperform the other studies in terms of their meticulousness.

What they deal mostly with is the macro context and working class unionism in late Ottoman and Turkey. Most of the works done in this area are written in an inelaborate and imprecise manner that, there are recurrent mistakes concerning the working class movement history, as documented by Yıldırım Koç (2010b). Koç further states that, most of the working class histories are not analytical and some of them even do not have such an intention or aim (Koç Y. , 2010b, p. 22). Another general deficiency about these studies is that, most of them do not have any theoretical discussion concerning their approaches to class.<sup>14</sup> In sum, the first cluster of works, although very rich in number and volume of the work, is very poor in making sense of the cultural issues and silent about the working class experiences; let alone their own deficiencies in their own accounts.

Some groups of works, which can also be considered under this first cluster are concentrated on the some very important strikes/events in the working class history of Turkey. In these works, one can find testimonies of the workers involved in these great events, the published material on the papers of the time, some photos showing the events and slogans that were used in those events and even some poems written by the workers. All these provide some information about the experiences of working class and give an idea about the issues of culture, yet they also lack an analytical framework and remain at a factual based level in exchanging the course of events with the reader and remain within the borders of journalism in this respect rather than being academic. The study of Sülker (1980) on the events of 15-16 June 1970, and several more recent books on the Kavel Strike of 1963 (Aydın, 2010), on the Paşabahçe Strike of 1966 (Çelik & Aydin, 2006) and on the Occupation of the Berec Factory of 1964 (Yici, 2010) and several others are examples of this strand.

A second cluster of works also lies within the boundaries of labour historiography, which began to gain power in the recent years, deals with the historical-archival material and tries to build a bottom up history of the late Ottoman

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<sup>14</sup> The recent work of Aziz Çelik on the unionism between the years 1946-1967 and two biggest union confederations in Turkey TÜRK-İŞ and DİSK differs from the works described above in its content and devotion to analytical and theoretical approach (Çelik, 2010). It makes use of the archival documents, interviews done with the witnesses of the period at concern and, although his findings are open to discussion, combines them with a consistent theoretical outlook.

and early Republican years.<sup>15</sup> The relatively untouched and uncontemplated archival materials and official documents still offer a large space to be explored by the historians. Yet, it is still a little bit problematic and hard job to construct the voices of the subaltern especially through the official documents. Here, a discussion on the possibility of hearing the voices of the subaltern in the documents primarily produced by the dominating classes of the time will not be made. Yet, even if that was possible, that would not say much about the making sense of the cultural practices and class experiences of a living class in today's world. Still, these works carry a vocal importance in the working class studies of Turkey.

A third cluster of studies is not directly related with the working class and their experiences, but they analyze different segments of capitalist commodity production while trying to locate these segments of production within the global production system. Small scale production, informality and subcontracting relations and underdeveloped and dependant form of capitalism in Turkey are among the hot topics of this strand. Although their primary concern is not the experiences of workers working in these specific sectors, but the organization of capitalist production in Turkey, they may say something concerning the experiences of these workers. However, their main methods, which are mainly, survey and observation, does not allow them to dive into depths of the working class experience and their accounts of these experiences remain rather shallow. For example, Güler Müftüoğlu (2005), in her book on shoe-making small scale workshops in Istanbul, asks the workers working in this sector about their future-oriented expectations and she reports that 45.7% of the workers answered that they are living day to day and have no expectations. Yet, expectations and dreams about the future are so complex, multi-dimensional, relational and subjective that, the survey question misses much of the information on the workers' experiences of future when compared to what it captures. This way of approaching the workers run the risk of reducing the living experiences of workers to static statistical figures. Yet the study of Ayhan Aktar on small scale weaving industry in Bursa (Aktar, 1990), above mentioned study of

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<sup>15</sup> Some works within this cluster may be listed as follows: (Quataert, Miners and the state in the Ottoman Empire : the Zonguldak coalfield, 1822-1920 , 2005), (Quataert & Zürcher, 1998), (Quataert, 1993), (Aytekin, 2007), (Cemgil, et al., 2012).

Berna Güler-Müftüoğlu (Güler Müftüoğlu, 2005) and Nevra Akdemir's work on the informalization and subcontracting practices in the ship building industry in Tuzla, which come to the fore with deathly work accidents until recently, (Akdemir, 2008) are significant contributions to the social sciences in Turkey and cannot be accused of not rightfully taking into account the working class experiences because they are not primarily intended and aimed to do so. Some of their findings will be used in comparison with the findings of this thesis, of course keeping in mind their limits as a result of choice of their approach and method.

We can also identify another cluster of works dealing with class and working class in specific. These are mainly theoretical accounts on the class. Yet, in Turkey, one cannot find a theoretical account that can be considered as an original contribution to class theory. They usually discusses some of the current prevalent approaches to class in the world, some try to bring together some of these approaches to arrive at a synthesis to better understand the social reality. These works were especially important in introducing the people concerned in these areas the existing and new currents in the class theory, when the foreign literature were not available much to everyone and Turkish translations were inadequate. However, they always ran the risk of transferring essentially a specific understanding of a scholar as if it was the only possible understanding of her, let alone transferring some misunderstandings. Yet, as the number of people that can read the foreign literature in its original language has increased in recent years and also the number of translations of influential works on class theory is in an increase, the need for that kind of work is on a decrease. Still, it has to be admitted that the writers of this kind of studies had valuable efforts in putting together the theories and keeping the concern over the concept of class alive and being an introductory guideway for the people showing interest in these issues. The works of Öngen (1996), Belek (2007) and Öğütle & Çegin (2010) among several others can be named here.

Beyond all these clusters of works, cultural analysis of class has been a much more recent trend in the working class literature in Turkey. Özgürler (2008) had written a pioneer work, which was based on his doctoral research, *Anadolu'da Kiresel Fabrikanın Doğuşu* and give voice to concerns over the cultural analysis of class and working class experiences and also did it by putting these relations on a

broader picture of global production. Rather than picturing the workers as the passive receivers of the global capitalist production system, employing a historical materialist approach to class with an emphasis on the cultural practices, he tried to demonstrate the “open-hidden forms of resistance” as well. Although not explicitly locating their work within the class literature, what Erdoğan and his friends (2007) has done in exploring the urban poverty question in Turkey has shed much light on how to do culturally sensitive social research on experiences of people and also has been probably the first to deal with the emotional/evaluative/hidden aspects of the class society that put the people’s honour, dignity, self-worth and self-respect at stake. A more recent work on the white collar unemployment (Bora, Bora, Erdoğan, & Üstün, 2011) extends these questions of worth and self-respect to include the white collar workers that experience unemployment, with also an emphasis on questions of precarity. Necmi Erdoğan continues to raise questions on the injuring, conflictual and contradictional characteristics of class society in different cultural constellations in his newspaper serial on *class confrontations*.<sup>16</sup> Arif Geniş also provided a detailed account on the class experiences of the workers working in small scale production in Ankara (Geniş, 2006). Although his primary emphasis is not on the cultural analysis of class, he provides an understanding of working class experiences in a small scale and rather informal setting, which will have some implications for the garment work in the following chapters. A last study to mention about is the influential work of a young social scientist, Yasin Durak, on the employer-employee relations in again small scale industry in a conservative and notoriously religious city Konya, with an emphasis on the religion, as a cultural dominant norm, and its effects on the experiences of the small scale workers and its obscuring the exploitation through cultural hegemony (Durak, 2012).

Although all these works mentioned under this cluster have different emphases, their common characteristic is their success in bringing the issue of culture into the fore and accounting for the daily and work-life experiences of workers. Yet, there still exists a deficiency in the Turkish working class literature

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<sup>16</sup> See for example, (Erdoğan, Sınıf Karşılaşmaları: Kapıcının kızı, 2010), (Erdoğan, SINIF KARŞILAŞMALARI (4): 'Beyaz adamlar' ve 'Apaçiler', 2012) and (Erdoğan, SINIF KARŞILAŞMALARI (6): "ABDESTLİ KAPİTALİSTLER" VE EMEKÇİLER, 2012).

concerning the cultural analysis of working class in different segments. And also, possible forthcoming cultural analyses of class should also account for the changing characteristics of capitalism under neoliberalism. They should also raise questions about the transformation of the common sense of the workers in line with the neoliberal strategy of hegemony and answer how this changes the experiences of workers and the capacity and possibility to form an antagonistic collective against the domination of capital. In making a cultural analysis, they should somehow keep the conflictual balance between the agency and cultural aspects that plays a role in this agency, and the role objective determinations and relations of production. This thesis, making use of the theoretical structure provided in the previous part, will also try to make a moderate contribution to the above mentioned latest cluster of works by examining the class experiences of the garment workers under precarious conditions of work and living; and in doing this will try to take into account the above mentioned warnings in making a cultural analysis of class. In order to do this, what kind of a field research it has undertaken is the topic of next part.

## **1.4 On the Field Research**

The field research, on which this study is primarily based upon, consists of semi-structured interviews done with 24 workers from various slum areas of Istanbul, where there is a large amount of garment production; participative observations made during the time spent in these neighbourhoods; and also an interview with Asalettin Arslanoğlu, a trade union manager in charge of organization in TEKSİF (Textile, Knitting and Garment Workers Union of Turkey), which is the biggest trade union in the sector in terms of number of members (Arslanoğlu, 2011).

The interviews were made between December 2010 and July 2011. At that time, main agenda of Turkey was 2011 general elections and it was a time when the effects of crisis 2008-2009 were relatively ameliorated. In reaching the interviewees, purposive sampling method is used. The garment workers work in different stages of garment production; they are machine operators, ironers, packagers, quality

controllers, atelier keepers. Most of them also were footboy/footgirls, helping the other workers in the factory/workshop, when they first entered the sector at early ages. It is also noteworthy to mention that, especially in the smaller workshops, the garment workers can change positions in case of need. The number of females and males and of people from different age segments tried to be kept balanced. The workers' having at least several years of working experience are preferred. Although some of them were engaged in trade union activism in their former workplaces, currently none of them are a member of a trade union. Diversity in terms of their city of origin, religious stance and world views tried to be maintained. It was planned to make interviews both with garment workers working in registered larger scale garment factories and with garment workers working in small scale unregistered *merdivenaltı*<sup>17</sup> garment workshops. During the fieldwork, it became apparent that such a division is not much meaningful as most of the workers have working experience in both scales of production. In order to establish first contacts, the neighbour based units of some leftist parties and organizations were visited. The interviews are tried to be made individually and outside the workplace to the extent it is possible. However, some interviews had to be made with more than one people, but in these cases attention paid to that two person interviewed had a close familial or friendship tie, so that intimate exposures are not hindered. And when it came out that interviewing cannot be done outside the workplace, greater attention is paid to be alone with the interviewee in a separate division.

In interviews, it is taken into account that, the interviewer himself unintendedly may exert symbolic dominance to the interviewees as the interviews have been a confrontation of difference in educational and cultural capital at least in the eyes of the garment workers. Keeping in the mind that interview is, beyond other things "a social relation"; a "non-violent form of communication" tried to be established through "an active and methodological listening" in order to reduce

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<sup>17</sup> "Merdivenaltı", which literally means "under the stairs", used in Turkish to refer to illicit/unregistered production. Beyond being unregistered, *merdivenaltı* also implies that, the production place is just under the stairs of residential buildings in the slum areas, it is easily reachable on the one hand and it is hidden from sight on the other. It also points to a concrete reality that for reaching most of the unregistered garment workshops you have to go down stairs of a building, opening to the backstreets of slum areas.

symbolic violence as described and analyzed by Bourdieu (1996). In doing this, Bourdieu's suggestions and as well the interviews published in Erdoğan's and his friends' work (Erdoğan, et al., 2007) have been illuminating in formulating the questions of such a "non-violent form of communication".

Following parts provide some descriptive information about the interviews, interviewees and the setting –the specific neighbourhoods- the interview took place.

#### **1.4.1 Thematic questions for the in-depth interviews**

Before starting interviews, some set of themes have been determined based on prior readings and observations. There were never a definite set of questions, as the questions are formulated in the flow of conversation as a part of living experience. Interviewing, in that respect, has been also a learning process. How to approach the workers in specific settings, and how to differentiate the way of asking according to gender, age, ethnic origin, how to respond to answers to workers, which facial expressions and gestures to use to reassure them the utmost attention is paid to what they say, how to make them come to the point without imposing them what to say, etc were learned through practice as the number of interviews increased. However, there is not much thing to say about these issues as the interview is a totally subjective and intimate experiences and it should be learnt directly through hands on exercise.

The thematic questions have also been evolved through the interviews, and with certain workers some certain themes come to the forefront. The interview developed not only through the interviewer's concerns but also through those of respondents. However, at the end of the interviews it came out to be that some of the themes were common.<sup>18</sup> It is not possible to give a comprehensive list of common themes the questions were centred upon, but some examples are such as the following.

The first theme is centred on the workers' and their families' biographies. The most significant aspect of this biography is migration to Istanbul. All of the workers

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<sup>18</sup> Sample of interviews also provided in the Appendix B for the further interested reader.

interviewed are from first or second generation migrant families. When they came to Istanbul, what initiated the family to move to Istanbul, what did their family do in their home cities, do they still have material ties with their home cities?

Another theme is about their own biographical history. The level of their education, the age that they started to work, their relations with teachers and friends in their childhood, the reason behind their quitting the school are among the questions of this theme. How much do they relate their privation to their lack of education and their lack of education to their families' privation, what would be different if they had chance to continue their education? How far do they experience the lack of education as a source of injury to themselves?

What are the factual data that reveal their being precarious? What is the frequency of changing firms, for example? How long are the periods they spent as unemployed? Are their wages paid regularly; if not how much are they delayed? Do they have social security, are the social security premiums are paid regularly by their employer?<sup>19</sup>

What about the atomizing effect of precarious work? Is the home a space in which they socialize with family and friends, or a shell in which they retreat into in which even the familial ties are under a great stress caused by scarcity of time and the where the lacking and injuries in their self are kept hidden? Are they able to share their injuries in and out of home? Who are the people, if there are any; they choose to share their injuries? Do they share their hardships with their friends at work? What is the feeling created by working precarious, or in simpler terms how does it feel to live without knowing what is coming next? What are the feelings created by unemployment, the Janus face of precarious work?

What are their future dreams, expectations and plans? To what extent are these affected by their precarious condition of being?

What is their relation to religious views? To what extent precarious conditions of being lead the garment workers to religious views? Do these views facilitate normalizing the class inequalities?

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<sup>19</sup> Some of the findings obtained from these questions and other data concerning the garment workers are summarized in the table in Appendix A.

How do they conceive of class differences? From which class they see themselves a part of? Is there a moral outrage created by the class society? What are the channels these outrages are discharged? How does this outrage affect their relationship with “others” they work and live with?

How are the relations within the family? Can the couples, for example, plan for the future together? Can we also talk about isolation/alienation within the family? What is the tendency of families in terms of their children’s education? What kind of a future they do dream of their children? What about the mechanisms of sacrifice in the family, especially about the future of children, under precarious conditions?

On the level of macro-politics of class level, do they show signs of having an economic-corporate level, economic social class consciousness; do they have tendencies of an alternative world order? Is it possible to argue that they have internalized and normalized class hierarchies? Do they have any unionization experience? What do they think of trade unions? What are their political preferences? What is their relation with conservative thoughts and politics? What place the conservative values have in their worlds of meaning?

Based on responses to questions centred on these themes, experiences of garment workers are tried to be assessed and conceptualized. The study was not able to make use of all the findings gathered through these questions and the organization of the thesis does not comply perfectly with these thematic questions. It is a result of the method used. Rather than structuring the thesis and then formulating the questions accordingly; the thesis is structured after the critical evaluation of the interviews.

#### **1.4.2 A brief description of the neighbourhoods where the interviews took place**

The interviews took place in neighbourhoods and districts of Istanbul that are largely inhabited by the urban labourers. They are namely Yenibosna-Şirinevler neighbourhoods of Bahçelievler, Çırıplı neighbourhood of Zeytinburnu, Sefaköy district of Küçükçekmece, Altınşehir neighbourhood of Başakşehir, Okmeydanı district of Şişli, Karabayır district of Esenler, which are all on the European side of Istanbul, and Zümrütevler neighbourhood of Maltepe, which is on the Anatolian side.

A common characteristic of all these districts and neighbourhoods is their being widely inhabited by migrants coming from all over the Turkey. The rent and land prices are relatively low in these locations. All of them are also characterised by registered/unregistered garment production. In the above mentioned locations, it is not surprising to encounter a garment workshop on the basement floor of every two building in line. It is possible to find tens of garment workshops together with residential buildings in a simple backstreet of these locations. A distinctive characteristic of all these locations is that, it is not possible to distinguish the workplaces from the living areas as they are closely intertwined. These garment workshops taps into the cheap labour of migrants, children and women. Dedeoğlu (2008, p. 55) argues that the togetherness of ateliers and residential neighbourhood serve the purposes of physical concealment and maintaining a domestic identity. Among these places, only Yenibosna has a mainly commercial-productive outlook, the others are mainly residential areas. Although the population in these locations are very diverse, every location is characterised by the dominance of a particular migrant group.<sup>20</sup> For that reason, rather than focusing on one of those locations in the study, garment workers from various locations are selected. Okmeydani stands out of among other locations in terms of its political atmosphere.

All of the locations are described as “problem locations”, and avoided by other city inhabitants. They are attributed with poverty, fear and crime by Istanbulites and they are seen as a threat to urban culture of Istanbul. Living in one of these locations is a direct signifier of low status for most, and the people living here are stigmatized and excluded from the city life and in that sense being from one of these neighbourhoods may directly mean deprivation from the opportunities offered by Istanbul.

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<sup>20</sup> See for example (Kaya, et al., 2009, pp. 146-147) for a list of neighbourhoods and dominant migrant groups living in these.

## **1.5 Limitations**

As any study in the social sciences, this study is not free from limitations. The first limitation in this study is the size of its sample. Although a claim of representability is never made throughout the study, a larger sample would better reflect the real situation of garment workers. Any generalization made should be understood to be valid only for its sample for the sake of being scientific. The aim of this study was not to draw a general profile of garment workers, but rather test the validity of general tendencies existing in the labour market of Turkey with a specific case of a group of garment workers. However, I still think that, the findings here demonstrated may have caught at least a few tendencies, through verification by further analysis, that can be generalized for the situation of workers in precarious conditions. The seemingly individual experiences and stories of garment workers may have the power to acknowledge the human condition in a flexible and precarious capitalism, if we keep in the mind that what is inherent in “human” is an “ensemble of the social relations”, as Marx (2000, p. 173) pointed out. Yet, another related limitation is that, the literature on the cultural analysis of working class is very limited despite the significance of a few brilliant contributions, meaning that the findings of this study did not have much chance to be verified through comparison and contrast with findings about the working class of Turkey in another studies.

Another limitation is about the composition of interviewees. Although attention is paid to select a diverse group of garment workers, as the first contacts in the sector are made through some institutions and groups, which are leftist in their own rights, the sample may be biased in terms of political consciousness.

In doing the field research, making contacts with female garment workers, which make more than the half of the sector, were found to be harder than contacting males. And even a contact made with a woman garment worker, the female workers may have responded to some questions reluctantly because of gender difference between the interviewee and interviewer. Although 13 female workers out of 24 may seem to be a fair representation in terms of the ratio of number of female workers to total number, their woman-specific experiences and patriarchal relations are not given their due except a few remarks about some experiences the women differ in

experiencing. People that would like to see much on the role of womanhood in Turkish garment sector may find Dedeoğlu's (2008) work useful in complementing this study with experiences of womanhood.

Another very important limitation is the way the interviews are reported here. Even the most loyal transcription of speeches runs the risk of losing the meanings hidden in the gestures, mimics, exclamations and breaks found in the speech of workers, and yet this thesis has an obligation to report them in a language different than the language of the workers' speeches. Translating the spoken language in Turkish to English, without a real knowledge of spoken/slang English created a second level loss in the meaning of the speeches. To overcome this, the original transcriptions in Turkish are provided in the footnotes of the English quotations of workers's speech for the Turkish reader.

Lastly, this study mostly deals with the alienating nature of experiences under precarious conditions. Although it does not understand alienation as a stable, static condition but rather tries to understand it with its dialectical unity of de-alienation; the study does not much account for some specific forms of hidden and open resistance of the garment workers. It is not because there were not any incidences of resistances found and observed in the fieldwork, although most of them were individual resistance stories of a few workers rather than being collective, there was a large deal of them indeed. They were partly left out considering the time limitation to finish this study. I still keep the hope that they will make their way in another study.

## **1.6 An Outline of the Chapters**

Having defined the basic premises this thesis is based upon, briefly acknowledged the fundamental theoretical engagements of it, located where this thesis stands among the literature on class and labour in Turkey and briefly sketching the research method and limitations, we can turn to the structure of this study.

This thesis is comprised of six chapters. Just after the Introduction, Chapter 2 tries to establish a macro context upon which the rest of the thesis will be based. It does so by first analyzing the recent changes shaping the labour market in the neoliberal era and then relating these changes to the proliferation of the garment sector in the post-1980 era. In terms of the transformation of the labour market, three main phenomena shaking the lives of millions of workers in Turkey will be critically discussed; namely the so-called flexibilisation of the labour force, a new wave of proletarianisation that has been pulling of hundred thousands of people from their places to put in direct use of capital in the urban areas, and precarisation as the process, in the wake of the recent changes in the economy, that jeopardize the condition of employment under flexible accumulation regime. Then, these transformations taking place in the labour market will be linked with the structure of garment industry in Istanbul.

The following three chapters will deal with the findings of the field work within the perspective of alienation. In Chapter 3, hidden injuries of class, as a form of experiences of shame in a neoliberal world in which the hegemony of an individuality discourse is prevalent will be elaborated on. Before doing this, the importance of emotional dimension of class experience will be underlined. Then, in the fourth Chapter, reasserting the centrality of time in understanding class and sketching the radical changes in perception and apprehension of time under conditions of precarity, time experiences of workers will be mentioned. After that, in Chapter 5, establishing the link between being working class and the concepts of need and necessity, experiences of necessity will be analyzed. A common theme in these three chapters will be the alienating, isolating and dividing character of the precarisation process that plays down the dignity of the workers, and accordingly the fragility of the flexible capitalism as these conditions are contested by the tendency of the workers to reclaim their power and control in their lives back.

In the concluding chapter, some examples of the struggles and potentials of collective organization of the garment workers will be provided briefly to reassert that class struggle exists even –and indeed- in the most severe conditions of alienation and will be decisive on the emancipatory dialectics of alienation – de-alienation.

## **CHAPTER 2 THE MACRO CONTEXT: SOCIO ECONOMIC CHANGE IN THE POST-1980 ERA, GARMENT INDUSTRY IN ISTANBUL AND PRECARITY**

In this chapter, the general context under which the experiences of garment workers are formed will be discussed. Here, rather a brief and not detailed, however necessary account of the transformation taking place in the labour markets in Turkey and the emergence of garment sector after the 1980s will be discussed with their relation to the precarity debate, which entered the scene relatively recently. These issues have been discussed at length and in comprehensive ways in various studies and this chapter has no claim of novelty in analyzing these issues. If the reader already feels that what is meant by “experiences of garment workers *under flexible and precarious conditions*” is clear and this meaning makes sense to her/him, s/he could proceed to the following chapters without having a loss in the flow or meaning of the thesis.

The transformation within the last three decades is much of the time described as a radical restructuring of the capitalist state. Jessop, following the regulation school which claimed that every regime of accumulation is accompanied by the regulations facilitating this accumulation regime, conceptualizes this restructuring as a transition from what can be called a Keynesian Welfare National State to so called Schumpeterian Competitive Welfare Regime (Jessop, 2002). This change, in fact, cannot be confined to the a change only in the structure of the capitalist state or just dismantling of the welfare functions of the state, but it should be understood as a deeper restructuring of the whole societal relations. It refers to the restructuring of any and every area of social domain that comes to the minds through the logic of market. This change is also commonly referred as “neo-liberal transformation”. Capital-labour relations are in the very centre of such a change. Labour, as a natural extension of human existence, had been tried to be “de-commodified” in the era of welfare capitalism as a result of a somewhat a social

compromise between contemporary classes; and it is now in the very process of “re-commodification” due to this change<sup>21</sup>. It has been notoriously called as breaking the rigidities existing in the labour market, which adversely affected the true functioning of the free market.

This era can also be characterized by the reorganization of the capitalist production on a global scale. Within this reorganization, while a relative de-industrialization is experienced in the core capitalist countries in terms of mass industrial production, low skilled, low wage and labour intensive industries are relocated in the peripheral capitalist countries, which left their developmentalist orientation and import substituting policies and moved towards what come to be termed as export oriented growth. Competitiveness and integrating with the global economy have been the buzzwords in this era, which meant for the periphery countries mostly competing on the low cost of labour, as they lacked the necessary level of capital accumulation and knowledge to compete on skills and technology.

The emergence and establishment of garment sector as a locomotive of Turkish exports coincides with such a general framework. In this chapter, a rather brief macro context will be provided to understand what is meant by the “the flexible and precarious conditions” under which the garment workers experience their class positions and why garment work is considered to be a flexible and precarious industry. In order to do so, the first part of this chapter will basically deal with the transformation in the labour markets in Turkey and the second will analyze the place of garment industry within this general transformation.

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<sup>21</sup> This language of commodification/de-commodification is ascribed to Polanyi and widely used by scholars mainly coming from “institutionalist” schools. I think, Polanyi understood the commodification of the labour as a capitalism specific phenomenon. For him, labour was never a real commodity but just an imaginary commodity. This being so was the distinctive characteristic of the capitalist production relations. However, the situation of the labour in the welfare state era is so widely referred as “de-commodification” that, I preferred to use that term too. It was an obligation to put this cautionary note at this point somehow.

## **2.1 Transformation of the Labour Markets: Flexibilisation, New Wave of Proleterianisation and Precarisation**

There are many ways to analyse the neoliberal transformation of the labour markets. Here, we will suffice ourselves with examining its three dominant strategies/tendencies that can be seen in today's Turkey, which are flexibilization, new wave of proleterianization and precarisation.

### **2.1.1 Flexibilizing the Labour-force**

After it was understood that the welfare state and Keynesian policies cannot be maintained furthermore, there began to emerge some policies and a new hegemonic project, though not a deliberative one but one that found the right way by some kind of fumbling and trial and error (Jessop, 2002). Budgetary tightening, anti-inflationary supply-side monetary policies replaced the demand side economic policies of the welfare state. A new accumulation and production regime, which is called Post-Fordist, began to prevail. The economies became more open and more internationalized as a result of the new accumulation regime. Competitiveness emerged as an imperative imposing itself to the national markets. And a new discourse preaching that welfare policies and rights were the factors that downplayed the competitiveness of a nation began to prevail all over the world. This discourse found itself supporters from the countries, these people were already discontent about the inefficiencies and rising costs of the welfare policies and rising inflation. It is no coincidence that these people were rather skilled middle class that would become the core of the new "knowledge based" economy. They gave intellectual support to neo-liberal hegemony and competitiveness discourse. It will not be wrong to state that neo-liberalism, at the dawn of its emergence, created "neo-liberal" elite that would translate the imperatives of the newly emerging economy to their own nations. It is a concern to be analyzed furthermore that how these neo-liberal discourses found an echo from the general public and became a common sense;

however it would be prudent enough to state that these neo-liberal elites have played some role in it.

Jessop (2002) called the structurally coupled and co-evolved state form to Post-Fordism Schumpeterian Workfare Post-National Regime. It was Schumpeterian to the extent that it had an emphasis on permanent innovation, flexibility, supply side interventions to enhance knowledge based economy and competitiveness in an open economy. As a counter-hegemonic project to welfare state, this era witnessed the erosion and to some extent dismantling of the welfare state. Instead of welfare policies and rights, emphasis was on *labour market flexibility* (break down the “rigidities” of labour market!), *employability* and *economic competition*. It can be well argued that social policy is now subordinated to economic policies. Jessop (2002) calls it a transition from welfare to “workfare”. As a mere objective, competitiveness is seen as a simply economic goal, which has nothing to do with social well being.

The leading concern in the welfare era was “how to make the economy adjust to a steady expansion of social right”, and in the new economy “it became almost a matter of course how to adapt working conditions and workers to the evolving needs of capitalist enterprise” (Streeck, 2008, p. 11). And to this extent it became a workfare regime rather than a welfare one. State’s role has changed accordingly from providing some sets of policies and social/economic rights to enable welfare to provide a suitable condition freed from welfare provisions for a competitive environment. Another tendency that affects the industrial relations is the maintaining “employability” of the workforce; rather than paying unemployment benefits, through some set of training, re-skilling and employment assistance the labour is made dependent upon the labour market but not on the welfare provision. “Instead of collectively achieved and politically guaranteed social rights, workers are urged to rely on and invest continuously in their “human capital,” i.e., “their individual productive capacity as valued by current demand in the labour market (Streeck, 2008, p. 11)”. The employee has to advance his/her capabilities to keep up with the volatile market demand, and state’s role is only helping the employee in this pursuit through active labour market policies - rather than passive ones -. And the new role of the state never decreased the dependence of the employee to the market and

provided some relief against market's destructive effects; on the contrary it enhanced the dependent relationship between employee and the market.

The rise of "flexibility of the labour market" overlaps with the rise of a new capital accumulation regime, which is post-Fordist and change in the form of the state; or simply with the neo-liberal transformation. This overlapping is no coincidence at all. Jessop points to that concurrence as follows:

"The post-Fordist labour process also requires an appropriately flexible workforce that often combines multi-skilled and unskilled workers in flexible ways in contrast to the dominant role of relatively inflexible semi-skilled labour in Fordist mass production." (Jessop, 2002, p. 98)

"Combination of multi-skilled and unskilled workers", as coined by Jessop above, has also a global/international scale in this new era. Since from the beginning of this era, the companies in core countries relocated their production in low-skill, low-wage, low cost labour countries in the peripheries of global capitalism. Fröbel and his colleagues (Fröbel, Heinrichs, & Kreye, 1980, p. 45) coined this tendency in the capitalist world as the "new international division of labour (NIDL)" and stated that it:

"(a) undermines the traditional bi-section of the world into a few industrialised countries on the one hand, and a great majority of developing countries integrated into the world economy solely as raw materials producers on the other, and (b) compels the increasing subdivision of manufacturing processes into a number of partial operations at different industrial sites throughout the world."

They further stated that, this relocation needed a bulk of cheap labour in the underdeveloped countries; technical developments in transportation & communication that will allow some parts of the production process to be carried out to geographically distant and independent locations without hampering the production process from raw material to finished goods and target groups; and divisibility of the labour process into sets of operations that are manageable through low levels of skill (Fröbel, Heinrichs, & Kreye, 1980). But they also added that, the critical point in this global organization of production was the reaching of capital to the cheapest available labour force in the world (1980, p. 41).

In line with these developments, Turkey left the export substitution policies and adopted export oriented growth strategies. However, this transition was not a

smooth one without contradictions or conflicts. As a result of the intensified class conflict in Turkey as elsewhere and decreasing power of profitability for the bourgeoisie the Turkish capitalism, based on the import substitution industrialization, was in a severe crisis of accumulation mainly due to the particular industrialization strategy that could not resolve the problems of peripheral position of the country in the world economy. With the so called January 24 decisions, the first comprehensive neoliberal policy objectives began to be implemented. The main strategy was a transformation from import substitution industrialization to the export oriented industrialization, which meant the liberalization of the commodity markets. However, such a grand neoliberal project was impossible to implement in the wake of ever-increasing power of working class. In that respect, the September 12 military coup provided most convenient environment for such a neoliberal project by suppressing the labour movements in a very violent and cruel way. The years following the January 24<sup>th</sup> decisions and the military coup, till the end of the eighties marked an era where the real wages of the working classes decreased sharply. This period is defined by Boratav (Boratav, 2006) as the “revenge of the capital”. The uprising of the labour in the end of eighties and beginning of nineties could not reverse the paradigm shift, despite achieving some material gains and increase in the real wages for the labour side. Yet, the crises and following stability programs and liberalization of the money market throughout the nineties and in the early 2000s consolidated this shift in the development strategy and the place of Turkey in the global division of labour. That meant for the large masses of labourers that their incomes are under severe threat as the most important competitive advantage of the Turkish economy had to be the low cost labour.

Increasingly, the welfare policies applied to the capital labour relations were seen as “rigidities” in the new era, that hampered the competitiveness and that are to be “broken” to comply with the new standards of rising international competition. The breaking down of the rigidities is also discursively argued to help combat the unemployment.<sup>22</sup> The call of capital for flexibilization has gained weight at the turn

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<sup>22</sup> Despite this discourse of breaking down the “rigidities”, before the new Labour Law was enacted that brought the flexibility to the regulation of labour relations in Turkey, Onaran (2003) argued that, “there is not a considerable “rigidity” in the Turkish labour market, and especially in the level of

of the century. In a report, dated 1999 November, the “Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations” (TİSK) declared that Turkey should adopt “flexibility” in order to remain competitive in an increasingly globalizing world economy, which would also foster employment and protect the business – and so the workers working for that business – in times of economic crises; and the rigidities of the labour legislation should be eliminated (TİSK, 1999). They also raised the concern for a legislative framework which would allow “outsourcing” and “subcontracting” in order to increase the quality and efficiency of production (TİSK, 1999). The crisis of 2001 had paved the way for breaking the last efforts of resistance to change in the direction of flexibility. TİSK again issued a press release warning the government that, the law proposal debated at that time that intends to strengthen the job security should be withdrawn and stated that what is at stake was the security of the “business”, not the security of the “workers”; what should be done was to “modernize” the labour regulation through flexibilising it and to restructure severance and notice pay in order to survive through the crises (TİSK, 2001). More than five years after the above mentioned report, the Ministry of Labour Relations of that time, (Başesgioğlu, 2003), made a declaration in the magazine of TİSK that give the employers the hint that their wants will be satisfied, stating that “the merciless competition” will play out the Turkey to the class of undeveloped nations if the “flexible working” cannot be realized. In all these documents, noteworthy repository of flexibilization discourses included integration to the world economy, competitiveness as the governing rule in the contemporary economics, maintaining the security of business rather than the workers, rigidities in the labour-force market, inevitability of change towards flexibilization and crises as the legitimising argument behind it, and etc. At last, the capital celebrated its victory as the new labour law no. 4857 was passed on 22<sup>nd</sup> of May, 2003<sup>23</sup>.

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wages, that prevents a strong increase in the employment”. Recent studies also suggest that, despite the given flexibility in the Turkish labourforce market, the Turkish economy under Justice and development Party (JDP) rule is characterised by a structural unemployment which seems to be fixed around 10% and the relation between national growth and rise in employment seems to be broken (Mütevellioglu & Işık, 2009, pp. 174-179); (BSB, 2011).

<sup>23</sup> It has to be admitted that, flexibility not necessarily need to be legally regulated to become the prevalent approach in the labour relations. There were always some kind of most severe flexibility in

Beyond these discourses, what did it mean to be flexible? The classical definition of Atkinson defines 4 types of flexibility (Atkinson, 1984): (i) *External numerical flexibility*, which simply meant easily hiring, firing of workers; (ii) *Internal numerical flexibility*, which simply means that number of hours worked are not fixed and can be adjusted within the firm and includes part-time work, flexi-time work, flexible working hours and overtime; (iii) *Functional flexibility*, which meant the tasks are not strictly defined and existing workers can be employed in different tasks and operations according to the needs, and includes outsourcing some of the operations within the firm to maintain flexibility and efficiency in functions of the firm; (iv) *financial/wage flexibility*, which meant the ability of the firm to free willingly set the level of wages and control the labour costs and making the remuneration based on individuals and their performance rather than being on a collective/group basis. To cut a long story short, one can conclude legitimately that the flexibilization of labour market means the capitals' being almost free of any long-term, specified and determinate commitments to the labour and its being able to lower the costs of labour to even physiological limits.

The discourses of flexible workforce is also accompanied by the glorification of small size production as an alternative way to development and prosperity, which found its way in academic studies beginning from the late sixties to seventies and eighties<sup>24</sup> and gained a wider audience with the introduction of work *Second Industrial Divide* by Piore & Sabel (1984). In this work, Piore & Sabel (1984) examines the Emilia-Romagna district of Italia, in which small size firms dominate the production and, inspired by the dynamic and creative structure of the small-scale industry firms, in a contrast with mass production of Fordism, set it as an ideal for economic development and economic regeneration. Conceptualized by the authors as *flexible specialization*, this region of Italy is characterised by reorganization of the production process on the basis of small scale firms clustered in a certain area, by breaking up the conventional production process into smaller tasks. The production taking place in Emilio-Romagna is also characterised by the subcontracting relations

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informal sectors, for example. Yet, this process of law-making is illustrative in showing how the ideas of flexibility popularized and soon become the hegemonic discourse.

<sup>24</sup> See for example; (Staley & Morse, 1965), (Schumacher, 1973).

based on trust and loyalty between the firms, which also carries informal qualities that provide flexibility to firms involved in these relations.

Beyond these authors' glorification of the system, Murray (1987) draws our attention to the fact that, such kind of a production organization is the result of the strong organized class struggle of Italian workers unionized in large firms, and in an evolutionary way the capital broke down the production process to subcontract to smaller firms in a quest for bypassing the strength of organized labour. Even this unique example has the capacity to reveal the ideological content of the flexibilization and subcontracting as a tool for flexibilising the labour force.

In today's Turkey, and especially in the garment sector, what can be observed are the almost fully completed process of flexibilization and the key role of subcontracting in realization of this process. We will speculate on the specific aspects of garment sector with regards to flexibilization and subcontracting, however here we may list some general tendencies concerning the flexibilization and subcontracting.

First of all, flexibilization of the labour force eroded the gains of a traditional organized labour force. The conventional trade unions, who were once strong in the decision making process on the labour relations are rendered ineffective in organizing the workers under conditions of flexibilization. Secondly, the flexibilization process undermined the regulations that partly protected the workers from the adverse effects of the up-and downs of the market. The workers are more and more subjected to the imperatives of the market, which have put their lives in "endemic insecurity" (Özdemir & Yücesan-Özdemir, 2004). As the protective measures are not tied to their status in employment but they are satisfied through informal relations of trust, workers become more open to paternalist internalization strategies. Thirdly, flexibilization had an increasing tendency over the hours worked. Fourthly, the practices of flexibility had a severe effect on job security and rendered unemployment a moment of, a Janus face of employment. Fifthly, as a result of the quest for global competitiveness, the wages are squeezed. Sixthly, as it diminished the scale of production, it had an effect on establishment and spreading of informal work. And finally, as the production processes are broken down and the scale of production is diminished, diversity, fragmentation and division among the working

class are increased. This also leads to the tendency of workers to be individualized and atomized according to the new hegemonic cultural values, however not without any contestations.

The widening of subcontracting relations, as the most effective tool in the flexibilization process, had also taken its toll on the working class. First of all, to the extent that the small scale firms to whom the specific operations of production are subcontracted are mostly engaged in undifferentiated and unskilled work, they are under the heavy burden of competition with each other and that fact not only drives the wages to its lowest limits for the workers working in these subcontracted firms, but also creates dependency for the smaller firms on the bigger national and multinational companies. Secondly, the complex webs of subcontracting have an effect of obscuring the exploitation as the worker cannot exactly assess how much of his surplus-labour is appropriated exactly where in the complex web of subcontracting. Thirdly, as the bigger firms transfer all the risks and responsibilities of production to the smaller firms, who are by their very nature and limited level of capital accumulation unable to take even the simplest precautions against the hazards of the work and have to push down the costs as low as possible, the workers in the subcontracted firms are under serious threat of job related accidents and even deaths.<sup>25</sup> Fourthly, as the subcontracting also means the internalization of workers within the informal webs of relation that are based on trust, ethnic religious communities and countryman fellowship, it acts as a control mechanism for the worker as it is the most efficient way of minimizing the cost of labour under flexible capitalism. And lastly, as the subcontracting consists inherently in itself a divide between relatively skilled jobs to be done by the bigger firm and relatively unskilled jobs to be subcontracted, there is a tendency to employ more marginal and vulnerable segments of workforce, for example the women<sup>26</sup>, children and ethnic minorities, in the lower levels of the subcontracting chain.

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<sup>25</sup> For this point, see (Akdemir, 2008) on the deathly accidents in Tuzla facilitated by the flexibilisation and subcontracting practices.

<sup>26</sup> See Standing (1989) for example, for his theses on feminization of flexible labour.

Having briefly analysed the flexibilization of the labour, one of the major components of transformation of the labour market, we can move on to the other aspects of this transformation.

### **2.1.2 The New Wave of Proleterianization**

Last three decades is not only characterised with a specific flexibilization of the labour force and a new international division of labour. It is also characterised by, in a close relation with these tendencies, increasing number of people that are displaced from their traditional working areas and to be available to work in the services sector mostly in the core countries and in the services and production sector in the periphery. Özgürler, analysing the data provided by ILO on the “economically active population”, especially with the beginning of 1970s, asserts that there has been a “new wave of proleterianization” worldwide that has been experienced especially in the peripheral countries, which left import substitution policies and adopted export oriented production and took part on the low skill, low wage, labour intensive side of the NIDL (Özgürler, 2008, pp. 102-108).

The real dimensions of the new wave of proleterianization in Turkey have not yet been fully explored. Yet, we may infer its great size by only taking into account the liquidation in the agricultural sector and taking into account only two examples: the number of tobacco growers fall from 622 thousands in 1998 to 80.8 thousands in 2009, and number of sugar beet producers fell from 492.2 thousands in 2002 to 209.1 thousands in 2008 (Koç Y. , 2010a, p. 435). If we consider the similar trend in other agricultural crops and also take into account the liquidation in the animal husbandry, we can think of millions of people pulled out of the rural areas, a big portion of which can well be considered to move to urban areas to serve as a reserve army of labour.

Migration to urban areas can be considered as a natural outcome of this new wave of proleterianization. Beyond the liquidation in the agricultural sector, we should also take into consideration the proletarianization of the Kurdish origin people and their migration to western cities during the last thirty years as a result of the ethnic conflict in the Eastern parts of Turkey. As Ferda Koç states, this

proleterianization of the Kurdish people is realized under the “direct and indirect effects of national oppression policies” (2012, p. 148). Especially in Istanbul, where the fieldwork of this thesis was held, there is a considerable amount of Kurdish migrants working in poor and precarious conditions in rather flexible, informal sectors that usually lie at the lower ends of the subcontracting chains. Especially the garment industry is one of the industries that the Kurdish migrants, especially the ones that are younger, uneducated and woman, are massively employed following their migration to Istanbul (Kaya, et al., 2009).

There are no official figures concerning the size of the Kurdish migration to Istanbul. According to Saracoglu's (2011, pp. 101-103) estimates, the Kurdish migrants comprised of the 8.3% of the total urban zone population in Istanbul, totalling up to 1,041,253. With this figure, Istanbul “harbours the largest migrant Kurdish community” in Turkey (Saraçoğlu, 2011, p. 103). This huge movement of people from the Eastern of Turkey to western cities, where industrialization and therefore need for cheap labour are high, and especially to Istanbul have considerable effects. As for the flexible capitalist production system, these large masses of people, who are piled up in the slums of Istanbul, form a large share of the reserve army of labour available any time, only for considerably low costs within a hand reach of the capital. Another study on the migration and relocation of population in Turkey (HÜNEE, 2006, p. 91) concluded that, 44.3% of the people migrated to urban areas from Eastern Turkey for security reasons are not employed currently, and 49.3% of the these employed migrants are working informal without a social security, which confirms their situation as reserve army of labour and as low cost, flexible and precarious labour in the urban areas of Western Turkey. They are not only reserves of low cost labour, but also have a suppressing effect on the wages of the established workers and also within this respect acts as a disciplining force for them.

This huge forced migration to western cities of Turkey can be legitimately coined as “ethnic enclosure movement” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Turkey, not in the sense of its aims and methods but when the consequences of it are considered and compared with that of enclosure movement in England at the dawn of capitalism. One can easily find the Kurdish migrated labour under the dynamism, global competitiveness and profitability of many industries in Turkey; textiles and garment, construction and

ship-building can be listed instantly to name only a few of them. Yörük (2009) further asserts that, “the forced migration of the Kurds had enabled both the construction and success of neoliberalism in Turkey” and “Kurds became proletarianized and the working class ‘Kurdicized’” in this process. Also it is dubitable to go that far and state that “working class is Kurdicized”, what Yoruk says is important in terms of drawing the attention to the class characteristic of Kurdish question and emphasizing the Kurdish labour rather than sticking with the Kurdish identity only. Some consequences of this new wave of proletarianization and question of Kurdish labour will be discussed in the following chapters. But we can conclude for this part, quoting from the brochure of the initiative for Social Movement Unionism (THS – Toplumsal Hareket Sendikacılığı) that “the new wave of proletarianization puts on the scene of history a new mass of workers, a multilayered – both with the employed and unemployed –, fragmented and heterogeneous mass” (THS, 2004).

### **2.1.3 Precarisation**

Having set the general framework of transformations in the labour market in the neoliberal form of capitalism, we can now move on to a more specific term, precarity, which is more and more used to describe and analyse the working conditions under flexible accumulation of neoliberalism and also tried to be used as a concept for mobilizing the people working under flexible conditions of capitalism as well.

Bourdieu (1998) was perhaps among the first ones to employ the term precarisation and precarity<sup>27</sup> to describe a specific kind of human condition related to status in employment in contemporary flexible capitalism. He attributed his using precarity to a “generalized and permanent state of insecurity”, which resembles much to the condition of workers in the early capitalism, experienced by workers who forced to submit to the reign of what is termed as *flexploitation* (Bourdieu, 1998, s.

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<sup>27</sup> In English translation, precarity, precarious, and precarization are translated as job insecurity, insecure, and casualization; which may well indicate that the terms precarity and precarious were not that popular in the English spoken world at that time.

85). His approach to definition of precarity dates back to his ethnographic research in Algeria, and his conceptualization of precarity is rather pessimistic as he is inclined to think that being insecure about the present and uncertain about the future render people to be submissive to the existing form of domination as their capacity to rationally anticipate the future and project themselves into it are hampered.

Popularization of the concepts precarious and precariat in the Europe dates back to early 2000s, which is circulated through activist networks in the Europe to inspire a new political agency, especially to the youth, and reached the peak of activism in the EuroMayDay organizations to bring the issue of precarization into public discussion. Although there were really valuable contributions from this activist circle and they were quite successful in waking a public concern in the issue, they were many confusions and contradictions about the content and aims of this activism. Some tended to challenge capitalism directly, some tended to find a way between within capitalism by defending “basic income” or “flexicurity” policies<sup>28</sup>. Yet, this activism faded away as soon as in 2006, leaving much questions and confusions and very important insights as well, behind.

Having been mainly a result of empirical activism, the discussions on the precarity and precarization of employment centred on two main groups of workers: people working on the knowledge-based sector or so called “creative labour” or *cybertariat*<sup>29</sup> and people mainly working in the low-skill service sector with low levels of income, such as the people working in global chains or in the supermarkets. This emphasis on these two groups of workers as working under precarious conditions indicates the Euro-centric outlook of the literature concerning the precarity. However, as Seymour (2012) clearly argued, “[t]he situation of precarity is, moreover, significantly concentrated outside of the main centres of capital accumulation”, and we can find people precariously working people in the industrial sectors as well, which are relocated in the peripheral countries as a result of NIDL.

The debates on precarisation of labour even extend to claiming that “precariat” is the new class in the making (Standing, 2011), or they are a fraction of

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<sup>28</sup> Neilson and Rossiter (2005) criticizes these tendencies in the precarity movement.

<sup>29</sup> See for example Ross (2008), (Gill, 2007), (Berardi, 2009) among several others.

class, which is in formation (Candeias, Double precarisation of labour and reproduction - Perspectives of expanded (re)appropriation, 2008), (Candeias, 2007). Theses of Standing (2011) is based on shaky assumptions, and with his premises given in his study it should not be possible to call precariat a class, neither in a Marxist understanding of class, nor in a Weberian sense of class.<sup>30</sup> Candeias, although engaged in Marxist literature and trying to look from a Marxist perspective, also makes a vital error in stating that “[t]he precariat in its double meaning” is a “universal social figure for the new mode of production” and “a class fraction in formation” (Candeias, 2008, p. 7). In trying to assert the Precariat as a new possible subject and as a class fraction, Candeias claims that there *exists* a new mode of production! It is true that, capitalism has undergone a radical restructuring in the last few decades, but one cannot claim that this restructuring and transformations have led to a new mode of production if he is to remain within the boundaries of historical materialist theory. A *new mode of production*, even if such a thing was possible, requires new social relations of production and novel ways of appropriating the surplus; which would yield new antagonistic classes but neither a “*universal social figure*” nor a “*fraction of class in the formation*”.

In understanding the debates on precarity, one could refer to Marx and his classification of relative surplus population (Marx, 1976, pp. 795-802). In this classification, Marx defines the third category of the relative surplus population as follows:

“The third category of the relative surplus population is the stagnant population. This forms a part of the active labour army, but with extremely irregular employment. Hence it offers capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour-power. Its conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working class, and it is precisely this which makes it a broad foundation for special branches of capitalist exploitation. It is characterized by a maximum of working time and a minimum of wages. We have already become familiar with its chief form under the rubric of ‘domestic industry’. It is constantly recruited from workers in large-scale industry and agriculture who have become redundant, and especially from those decaying branches of industry where handicraft is giving way to manufacture, and manufacture to machinery. Its extent grows in proportion as, with the growth in the extent and energy of

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<sup>30</sup> Seymour (2012) has done a good job in revealing the theoretical weaknesses of this work, so a detailed criticism of it will not be provided here.

accumulation, the creation of a surplus population also advances. But it forms at the same time a self-reproducing and self-perpetuating element of the working class, taking a proportionally greater part in the general increase of that class than the other elements.” (Marx, 1976, p. 796) Here, Marx not only defines a segment of working class, whose employment is “extremely irregular” and vividly describes its working conditions (i.e. “maximum of working time” and “minimum of wages”), but also foresees that the portion of this category will increase as the surplus population will increase with the growth of accumulation. Of course, here Marx arrives at such a categorization through observing the society at his time and makes an abstraction through this observation employing the historical materialist approach. Today’s world and its “precariat”, the stagnant population of our time in Marx’s terms, have its own specificities and should also be thought on a more global scale keeping in mind the progress capitalism achieved until our time. We can think of precariat, if we are to construct such a distinct category, in terms of the rising number of stagnant population and taking into account the specificities of capitalism of our time. That would also allow us to develop a conception of precariat not derived from negations but on a concrete theoretical categorization of proletariat and to abstain from the mistake of “attributing a false homogeneity to atypical employment”, which can be very different in their own nature, as Seymour (2012) suggests.

As Oğuz (2012, p. 246) concluded, “It is misleading to see concept of precariat as a ground for defining a new class, although it may serve the purpose of facilitating a political movement against precarization”. In the Turkish literature, recent works on precarization make emphasize on its being a possibility for being a line of mobilization in the working class movements, as precarization process brings together workers from different segments in their conditions of work as a common life experience, rather than underlining its divisive and fragmentary effects on the working class.<sup>31</sup>

In this thesis, rather than employing the concept of “precariat” as a distinct subject, the concepts of precarity and precarization will be used to understand the experiences of garment workers; and possibilities and as well as limits it brings to the

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<sup>31</sup> See for example (Özügurlu, 2006), (Özügurlu, 2010), (Çerkezoğlu & Göztepe, 2010), and (Göztepe, 2012).

making of working class will tried to be discussed. To these ends, precarity will be understood as an experience of ‘embodied capitalism’ (Tsianos & Papadopoulos, 2006) in a world where flexibilization of work is prevalent; and precarization will be understood as “a general process to dismantle and polarise the levels of social rights and standards of living, with very contradictory consequences, for most of the labour force” (Candeias, 2008, p. 4). Here, the precarity will also be understood as a multi-dimensional experience of flexible accumulation of neoliberal capitalism. Within that respect, we can talk about five dimensions of precarious employment following Brinkmann, Dörre & Röbenack (2006, p. 18): (i) reproductive – material dimension, which means that the income of the precarious worker is not paid decently to enable her to be above a socially recognized cultural minimum; (ii) social – communicative dimension, which meant that the precarious work does not provide the precarious worker equitable integration in the social networks, which is built on her workplace and job; (iii) legal – institutional or participation dimension, which meant that a precarious job prevents the worker from utilizing fully the rights and participation chances institutionally tied to her employment; (iv) status and recognition dimensions, which is about the sphere of symbolic conflicts and means that precarious work deprives the worker of a recognized social position and is associated with social disrespect; (v) dimension concerning the contents of the job, which means that the precarious job can be characterised by a permanent loss of meaning in the working life or a pathological over-identification with the work done. Besides these dimensions, another dimension can be added in understanding the precarity; which is the temporal dimension. Temporal dimension emphasizes that, precarious work also deteriorates the workers’ relation to time in taking the control of their present time through intensive exploitation through extremely long and irregular working hours and in ripping of their capacity to plan/organize their future. The experiences of workers under precarious conditions also tried to be understood considering these six dimensions.

## **2.2 Garment Industry in Istanbul**

Having talked about the transformation in the labour markets in the neoliberal era with respect to flexibilization, new wave of proletarianization and precarization, we can move to describing briefly the garment industry in Turkey and in Istanbul in specific.

As Dedeoğlu (2008, p. 59) argued, garment industry, along with textiles, “has played a significant role in the industrialisation and the market orientation of the Turkish economy”. The proliferation of the garment industry in Turkey began in the post 1980 era, when import substitution policies were left and export substitution industrialization policies were adopted. This change in industrial orientation finds its repercussion in the development plans of Turkey. It is in the 4<sup>th</sup> 5 Year Development Plan that the garment and textiles industry took their place in a separate report of specialized commission. It is reported in this study that, only 166 firms existed in the garment sector in 1975 (SPO, 1976, p. 564). Specialized commission report of the 9<sup>th</sup> 5 Year Development Plan indicates that this number increased to a number between 35000 – 70000 according to estimates (SPO, 2007) In line with the above discussed major transformations in the labour market and industrial orientation, garment sector become one of the locomotive sectors of the Turkish exports. According to the World Trade Organization, in the year 1980 Turkish garments exports only comprised 0.3% of total world garment exports; and this figure increased to 3,6% in the year 2010 (WTO, 2011), which means that the share of Turkey increased 12 times in the last three decades as a result of the export orientation and NIDL. Currently, Turkey is the 4<sup>th</sup> biggest exporter of garments in the world according to same statistics. The share of garments exports to total merchandise exports of Turkey, although have a decreasing tendency, is still about 15% and garments is the second biggest export industry after automotive industry (MOE, 2012).

Behind this story of export “success”, lays an industry in which harsh exploitative, informal and precarious conditions dominate. Although there is not a reliable official figure concerning the number of garment workers as there is a high rate of informalization, estimates suggest that there are about 3,000,000 garment workers in overall Turkey (Arslanoğlu, 2011). This figure means that, one of every

employed 10 people works in the garment sector. Arslanoğlu also reported that, there is a relatively balanced workforce in terms of gender, women somehow comprises about 60% of the total workforce in the industry. Ministry of Labour and Social Security assessed in the year 2003 that, there are 765,000 registered workers in the garment and textiles industry (SPO, 2007), which means that there is a high level of informal work in the garment sector. The informalization rate in the overall Turkey is estimated to be 40%, whereas in the textiles and garment sector this rate totals up to 62% (SPO, 2007). If we consider that, the scale of firms in textiles industry is relatively bigger when compared to garments industry and there is relatively low informality, it can be expected that the informalization rate is much higher than 62% in the garment sector alone. This high rate of informalization is closely related with the structure of the garment industry, which is characterised by intensive and complex webs of subcontracting and dominance of small-size firms, in line with the imperatives of global competition and flexible capitalism as discussed above. It is estimated that the industry is 90% comprised of small scale firms, which is defined as firms that employ less than 10 people (SPO, 2007). According to a study done by Eraydin (2000, p. 100), only 7.9% of the garment firms in Istanbul garment sector have an independent production, the rest have subcontracting relations with other firms. This fact shows the importance of subcontracting relations in the sector.

Istanbul has a special place in this industry. According to the figures provided by ITKIB (Istanbul Textile and Apparel Exporter Associations), 77.2% of all garment exports are realized by the firms in Istanbul. We can also infer from this fact that, since the garment industry in Turkey is primarily export oriented, Istanbul also has the largest share, probably a share that is similar to 77.2%, in the garment production in Turkey. Arslanoğlu (2011) reported that although there is tendency among some firms to relocate their production in smaller cities in Anatolia, Istanbul still keeps its attractiveness for the garment firms as it has abundance of low cost migrant labour, which have migrated from all over Turkey and especially from the Eastern regions, in the slums of Istanbul and also its easier to make contacts with the developed subcontract webs widespread all over Istanbul in cases of excess demand that is to be met.

In terms of working conditions of the workers, one can note that there is high level of flexibility in the sector, in all its four dimensions as explained above, and that characteristic can be attributed to the relatively small scale of the industry on the one hand and prevalence of subcontracting and informalization on the other. This flexibility is translated into the lives of workers as a permanent threat of unemployment, very low levels of wage, which are also usually paid irregularly and untimely, uncertainty of job definitions at the workplace, unbearably long and uncertain working hours, unhealthy working conditions as the firms try to cut from the costs in every possible way, informal and unregistered work, lack of unions and hostility to unions; and also lack of social recognition and low levels of self-respect, dignity and raising questions about the self-worth.

### **2.3 Concluding Remarks**

In this chapter, the general transformation of the labour market and Turkish economy tried to be assessed with a specific emphasis on the flexibilization, new wave of proletarianisation and precarization; and the relation and perfect fit of all these changes to the emergence of the garment sector as the locomotive of the Turkish exports beginning from 1980s is tried to be established. In the end, it is aimed that the reader makes sense of what is meant by “*class experiences under conditions of flexibility and precarity*”. Having briefly sketched the macro context, it is now time to dive into the real life stories and living class experiences of the garment workers working under flexible and precarious conditions in Istanbul.

## **CHAPTER 3 MOMENTS OF ALIENATION (I): SHAME, SELF RESPECT AND HIDDEN INJURIES**

Interviewing is a demanding and interactive relationship, in which emotions play a significant role. Still, the author of this thesis had not expected the intimate responses of the interviewees after the end of the interviews, stating that the interview had been “a real relief” and they had “let steam off” (Fethi, 41)<sup>32</sup>, that they “felt themselves as being valued for the first time in recent years” (Hayriye, 33), that they “have been discharged/have poured out his feelings” (Aslan, 35). These statements are also reinforced by the turn of the atmosphere of doubt and mistrust, clearly signalling the suspicion about the intent of the interviewer in the beginning of the conversation, to an atmosphere of mutual trust and intimacy at the end of the interview. The interviews turned out to be some kind of a therapeutic talk for most of the cases, although certainly not intended to be so. One can argue that, an interview with a stranger, no matter it is done with working class people or with people from the dominating class, would also carry the same tension in the beginning of the interview, and a following relaxation is something simply predictable. The phenomenon we are talking about is quite different somehow. A person from the dominating class, would not be wanting to yield that much about their selves and their intimate injuries at the first hand, and would not also lose the control of the dialogue to an extent that a mere conversation with a stranger becoming a therapeutic talk. These statements from the interviews cited above emphasize the very fact that, the class society *injures* the *self-identities* of the people suppressed in these societies. In that respect, class is also experienced as a source of an inner/emotional/psychological distress that is waiting/longing for *being relieved* through therapeutic talks. These particular examples given above should lead us to reconsider the *emotional/psychological* dimension the class is experienced.

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<sup>32</sup> The names of the workers and their ages are provided in brackets where necessary. For a full list of workers interviewed see Appendix A.

### **3.1 Emotional and Psychic Economy of Class?**

Class is a *sensitive* subject, not only in the sense that it is a delicate concept that should be handled with care, but also in the sense that it is deeply rooted in the *senses* of the working class and it affects the emotional and evaluative *beings* of the masses arbitrarily situated in a class society. As Sayer (Sayer, 2005b, p. 211) argues, class, as a “morally problematic” concept, is a “highly sensitive subject”, as it has an “arbitrary relationship to worth, virtues and status”. This arbitrariness is justified by the neutrality discourse of the mechanisms of freely operating markets. Yet, the *neutral* functioning of the freely operating market under capitalism leaves the subordinated masses and the working class with a group of emotions such as shame, loss of self-respect, envy, resentment and etc., and they can do little about handling with these confusing emotions. In the experiences of the class in a “society of free competition”, these emotions and feelings created by the class positions of the individuals play a significant, yet less visible, role. They act most of the time, to the extent that the appearance of *neutrality* of the market is unchallenged, as factors of social control and alienation; through which reproduction and expansion of capitalist social relations are rendered possible.

Despite its significance, to a large extent the concept of *emotions* has been absent in the analyses of class, because of the fact that most of the scholars working on class thought that class and emotion are from different ontological and epistemological domains (Barbalet, 1992, p. 150).<sup>33</sup> However, there are also newly emerging concerns about emotions with respect to class among the scholars working on class, defending that emotions play a significant role in shaping the working class experiences and should be taken into consideration.<sup>34</sup> Some of these works –some

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<sup>33</sup> Barbalet (1992, p. 150) further emphasize that, “emotions are psychophysiological phenomena of micro-sociological or social psychological concern, whereas classes are socioeconomic phenomena of macro-sociological or political economic concern”.

<sup>34</sup> It is impossible to give a comprehensive list, but some studies can be named here: An emphasis on the evaluative and emotional aspects of class can be found in Sayer (2001), (2005a) and (2005b); Reay (2005) tries to bring forward “psychic and emotional responses to class and class equality” to the agendas of social scientists and examines these responses in educational setting; themes of class as a social suffering can be found partly in Bourdieu & et. al. (1999), and in Charlesworth (2004) and (2005), Tereskinas (2009); an emphasis on specific emotions related to class can be found in Barbalet (1992) –on resentment-, Scheff (2000) and (2002) –on shame-; some parts of Skeggs (1997), which

implicitly and some quite in a hostile way-, puts a blame on Marxism as they see its so-called economic determinism and concept of “false-consciousness”, as an explanation to “under-performance” of working class given a defined set of economic conditions, as barriers to dealing with psychological and socio-psychological aspects of class experiences, given the domination of Marxist discourses on class (see for example Barbalet 1992, p. 151). Such a view may have a grain of truth in itself, especially concerning certain strands within Marxism, which is usually classified as structuralists. Yet, as a focus of investigation of this thesis, concept of alienation developed by Marx proves to be a useful tool in understanding the psychological, emotional and intellectual aspects of work under capitalism; however, as previously discussed, it has been long ignored in making sense of the class experiences. Besides, works of Marx and Engels also “implicated emotions in class tensions and in the solidarity of rebellious classes” (Scheff, 2000, p. 84). However, the possibilities of diving into the affectual experiences of class employing a Marxist tool-box, alienation and fetishism being as key tools, have not yet been explored. The term “experience” as introduced by E.P. Thompson has played a key role in taking into account the feelings, as he understood from “experience” not only ideas but also “feelings” and “moral and affective consciousness”:

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carries a pioneer character within recent English cultural analysts of class, deals with shame and self-respect within the context of working class women in England and their identification/di-identification with class. However, it is perhaps Sennett & Cobb (1972) who dealt with most of the conceptualizations and discussions taking place in recent studies of class such as working class self-respect, self-worth, shame, dignity and etc. some decades ago. For this and other several reasons, their work will be dealt in more detail in upcoming parts. In the Turkish context, there are only a few studies to be named that problematizes the emotional aspect in considering the class relations. Although it has an implicit emphasis on questions of class; the book on urban poor, edited by Erdogan (Erdogan, et al., 2007), is a pioneering study in Turkey within that respect and can be considered as the Turkish version of the Bourdieu and his friends’ work *The Weight of the World*. The articles included in this book -and especially the articles (Erdogan, 2007a), (Erdogan, 2007b), which, especially the first one extensively make use of Sennett & Cobb’s conceptualizations; and (Bora A. , Kadınlar ve Hane: "Olmayanın Nesini İdare Edeceksin?", 2007), which focuses on the experiences of the female urban poor. Questions of respect, dignity, emotional economy are not too often employed since then; but several works have been done following Erdogan et. al. such as (Koptekin, 2010), which deals with the confusing emotions of food retail workers in supermarkets aroused when they encounter with the customers from different classes. Questions of moral worth and self-respect are also partly raised by Özügurlu (2010) within the context of TEKEL Resistance and TEKEL workers, with an emphasize on precarization process. A recent book (Bora, Bora, Erdogan, & Üstün, 2011) on white collar unemployment also discusses the significance of the emotions in experiencing unemployment and precarity.

“[...] we find that, with 'experience' and 'culture' we are at a junctionpoint of another kind. For people do not only experience their own experience as ideas, within thought and its procedures, or (as some theoretical practitioners suppose) as proletarian instinct, etc. They also experience their own experience as feeling, and they handle their feelings within their culture, as norms, familial and kinship obligations and reciprocities, as values or (through more elaborated forms) within art or religious beliefs. This half of culture (and it is a full one-half) may be described as affective and moral consciousness.” (Thompson, 1995, pp. 230,231)

Pierre Bourdieu and his works have been a strong influence, rather than Marxist and Marxian literature, in dealing with such subjective experiences of class. However, Pierre Bourdieu, whose works have been a source of inspiration for the scholars analysing the experiences of the working class, can also be said to have ignored emotions, as they are “more conscious aspect of subjectivity” and his emphasis is more on the partly subconscious set of class dispositions called habitus (Sayer, 2005b, pp. 35,36); although in *The Weight of the World* (1999), a study done by Bourdieu and his colleagues, affective/sentimental characteristics of social class are closely entwined within the text (Reay, 2005, p. 913). As we have discussed before, plentiful of humanly activities are mostly not reflexive, emotions being one of them, and find their repercussion in what is called by Gramsci as “practical consciousness”, which is especially a significant concept in understanding the everyday life and common sense of the subordinated. It is again Gramsci (2000, p. 418), who emphasizes the fact that “the popular element ‘feels’ but does not always know or understand; the intellectual element ‘knows’ but does not always understand and in particular does not always feel”. It is through an “organic”<sup>35</sup> relationship, the intellectuals should come to feel as the popular element feel and understand them, in order to “transform the incoherent and fragmentary ‘feelings’ of those who live a particular class position into a coherent and reasoned account of the world” (Crehan, 2002, p. 130). In this respect, as Sayer (2005b, p. 22) argues without any engagement with the Gramscian view, “to understand the subjective experience of class we need to reconsider the emotional and evaluative<sup>36</sup> aspects of the relations of

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35 For a discussion on the Gramsci’s use of the concept of “organic”, see Crehan (2002, pp. 22-24).

36 It is here important to remember that, evaluations are based on values, which are emotionally charged beliefs, to understand the relation between emotion and valuation.

self to self and self to other". In line with Sayer's call to understand the subjective experience of class, Reay (2005), emphasizing the lack of studies making sense of the relation between emotions and class, tries to give an account of affective aspects of class and emotional life of class, which she calls "the psychic landscape of class", making use of case studies from educational life. Even if the details of Reay's work will not be discussed here, her emphasize on the psychic landscape of the class and on the emotional experience of class is important to indicate that, some set of emotions constitutes an arena in which the experiences of class are materialized – often in a painful way - in the daily life of the working class in a society of free competition. In the following parts, based on the in-depth interviews with the garment workers, it will be tried to be demonstrated that, some sets of emotions – shame and its cognates and variants, for example - are not only so significant in experiencing the class, but also they provide a base for the production and reproduction of the cultural hegemony of the capitalist ideology and thus play a role in the unmaking of the class and reinforce the alienation indeed.

### **3.2 Shame, Self-Respect and Dignity of Class**

Take Abdurrahman (32) for example. Abdurrahman is a 32 years old Kurdish origin garment worker and has two children. He has been in this sector now for about twenty years. He was as young as 12 years old when he began to work in a garment atelier, which was two streets down to his own home, soon after he and his family immigrated to Istanbul. Since then, he worked both for the bigger garment firms that employ hundreds of workers and for the smaller, informal and/or quasi-formal garment ateliers that employ only a handful of workers. He is a machine operator and proud of his ability in machine operating. Currently he works informally and has no social security, and gets an extra of 300-400 liras monthly to compensate for this. With this extra cash, his monthly income totals around to an amount of 1000 liras<sup>37</sup>, despite his being skilful and experienced. He works also on Saturdays and even in

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<sup>37</sup> That made about 620 US Dollars at the time interview took place.

Sundays when the work his atelier took from bigger companies are due soon. Working overtime is a daily routine, as it is for the other garment workers, and workday may stretch to 11 o'clock in the evening. However, he has very little or no overtime pay for the hours he worked extra. His work is a hard one, so the world he lives in. He declares that he strives for asserting himself in this life, for his own way of living.<sup>38</sup> He describes himself as repressing his feelings inside. He attributes his having had a partial paralysis, traces of which can be noticed in his stammering and difficulty in speaking, to this characteristic of him and the stressful working life. He has also problems with his family, and especially with one of his brothers. Catching one's interest in his stammering speaking is his aversion to establish a direct eye contact with the person he speaks to. He drops his eyes and even his head during the speech, and typically blushes; indicating his feeling shame. That shame is not something to do with speaking to a stranger for the first time. Rather, the manners that indicate shame seem to be a part of his comportment. He shows a precious attention to display moderate behaviour and manners, as if he does not want to grab any attention from outside. In the course of the speech, he also expresses himself as being timid when speaking to someone and attributes this timidity to his being fallen into contempt, to be excluded by *others* because he could not "wear things as *they* did, have pocket money in the school as *they* had, live in the way *they* did"<sup>39</sup>. The tension created by the contradiction between his discomfort in communicating and expressing himself and his desire to pour out his feelings to someone that pay attention to his ideas and feelings –which is considered to be a rare occasion by most of the garment workers- continued till the end of the conversation. However this tension did not prevent recording of a speech that took more than two hours. Yet, some questions arose out of this tension: what was the logic behind making a 32 year old "man", a working class parent of two children, working for about twenty years and being proud of his quality of working, be ashamed of himself in front of a young researcher who is only aim to lend an ear to the concerns about the life of this man?

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<sup>38</sup> In his original words: "...İşte onun mücadelemasını veriyoz; kendimin, kendi yaşıntı tarzımın mücadelemini veriyorum."

<sup>39</sup> In his original words: "...onlar gibi giyinemediğimiz için, onlar gibi harçlığımız olmadığı için, onlar gibi yaşayamadığımız için hep hor gördük, hep dışlandık, dışlandığımız için de bunu hep içimize attık, birisiyle konuşmaya, diyalog kurmaya çalıştığımızda hep çekingen olduk."

Why was his self-respect that vulnerable? What made him feel so inadequate, although he implicitly expressed to find a dignity in the work he does?

These questions and concerns drawn from the conversation with Abdurrahman (32) are not typical to him, but with only a few exceptions<sup>40</sup>, can be generalized to all the workers interviewed. The tension between pouring out their feelings and social sufferings and discomfort in communicating these have all been prevalent in the conversations took place in the course of interviews. The time spent in the slums of Istanbul, in which garment workers live and work, sometimes waiting for a worker after work in a nearby patisserie, sometimes travelling in packed busses and minibuses to go to the meeting point, sometimes sharing a glass of tea in their break-times, gave the chance for observing the workers outside the interview setting. These observations confirmed that, the garment workers experienced a particular sense of inadequacy and shame, a feeling of inferiority especially when they encounter with a person from a different social background. But what made them feel so?

According to Sayer (2005b, p. 3), “people experience class in relation to others partly via moral and immoral sentiments or emotions such as benevolence, respect, compassion, pride and envy, contempt and shame.” Among the emotions listed by Sayer, shame has been a central emotion felt in the air during the speeches with the workers.<sup>41</sup> The centrality of experiences of shame in the speeches, leads us to the questioning of the nature of shame and its relevance with class positions.

However, discussing shame on its psychological or philosophical grounds is far from being within the scope of this study. Experiences of shame concern us to the extent that it can be attributed to the symbolic domination experienced by the working class in a society of free competition. For the purposes of this study,

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<sup>40</sup> These exceptions include the few workers that have engagement with active politics –or let us use for the sake of simplicity “the politically conscious ones” to describe them, with holding some reservations for the time being- and that find a way of expressing and asserting themselves in a meaningful way in this life. Seyran (31) and Adil (30) are two examples of this exception, however they also gave accounts of experiences of shame, to which they look upon as a matter of past and something to be self-mocked upon. However, being politically conscious or active does not necessarily and automatically means being free of shame and shame experiences.

<sup>41</sup> The centrality of shame experience in class experience is also confirmed in Skeggs (1997) and Sayer (2005a).

following Scheff (2000, p. 96, emphasis added), shame will be defined as, “a large family of relations that includes many cognates and variants, most notably embarrassment, humiliation, and related feelings such as shyness that involve *reactions to rejection or feelings of failure or inadequacy*.” This family of relations arise from “seeing one's self negatively *in the eyes of the other*<sup>42</sup>” (Scheff, 2002).

Discussing shame as a class feeling can be regarded as clumsy, or maybe even as baseless; as class is a social relation whereas shame is an emotion felt in depths of the individual. It is so individual that, it is even hard to be recognized from outside, instead of instances of *blushing*, which is the visual manifestation of shame, despite its man-shaking power felt inside the individual. Shame is an inner-directed emotion<sup>43</sup>, as clearly explicated in some languages through its expression in reflexive verbs<sup>44</sup>, such as in German: “*Ich schäme mich.*”<sup>45</sup> Though, despite its inner-directedness and self-reflexivity, Scheff (2000, p. 97), without making any explicit comment of the possible class character of the term, argues that among the basic emotions, shame is the “most social”; the validity of which will be confirmed at least to some extent with respect to field studies of this thesis. What this study will also

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<sup>42</sup> In this respect, to the extent that social relations are increasingly becoming relations of *gaze* and even acquired an ocularcentric characteristic and the symbolic violence of social inequalities are experienced visually (Erdoğan, 2007a, p. 52), shame can also be considered as the internalization of gaze relation. This fact is best manifested in the manner and behaviour of the person experiencing shame, as described by Tomkins (1995, p. 134) as follows: “By dropping his eyes, his eyelids, his head, and sometimes the whole upper part of his body, the individual calls a halt to looking at another person, particularly the other person's face, and to the other person's looking at him, particularly at his face.” That means, immediate-visible effect of shame in a person is his aversion from the eye contact with the judging authority, which also points to the importance of gaze relation in shame experience.

<sup>43</sup> Tomkins confirms this assertion and defines shame as the most reflexive affect so that there is no “phenomenological distinction” between subject and object of it (1995, p. 136).

<sup>44</sup> In reflexive verbs, the initiator of the act and the object (person) acted upon are the same.

<sup>45</sup> In Turkish, the reflexive meaning is either provided by using the reflexive pronoun “*kendi*”, similar to the usage of self in English; or by adding suffix *-(I)n / -(U)n* to the verbs' root, which makes a reflexive verb (as in the example “*yıkamak*” – to wash in English or *waschen* in Deutsch – to “*yıkanmak*” – “to wash oneself” in English or “*sich waschen*” in Deutsch. The Turkish verb *utanmak*, the correspondence for the English usage “be ashamed of oneself” or German usage “*sich schämen*”, is also a reflexive verb. However, in some cases, reflexive suffix *-n-* is firmly coalesced with the verb roots ending with a vowel, that it becomes an inseparable part of the verb itself, still carrying its reflexive function. In these cases, the verb roots without any suffixes are not in use anymore, they do not have any meaning without the reflexive suffix *-n-* (Korkmaz, 2009, pp. 130, 550). Some examples are *arin-*, *aşın-*, *avun-*, *dadan-*, *inan-*, *kazan-*, *kivan-*, *öğren-*, *tüken-*; *utan-* being one of them. Therefore, the verb form of “shame” only exists in reflexive form in Turkish, and does not have any non-reflexive usage.

reveal is that, among other feelings aroused by the functioning of class society, shame is a primary class emotion in a society of free competition, in the bourgeois society.<sup>46</sup>

Before moving into the relation between shame and class positions, it would be useful to focus on some basic characteristics of it. Perhaps it is Helen Merrell Lynd, who has given the concept of shame its due and discussed the concept not only in its individual-psychological or psychoanalytical aspects, but also in a social context in her work *On Shame and the Search for Identity* (Lynd, 1965). Her work will be used as a guide to understand experiences of shame in our study.<sup>47</sup>

Before inquiring the basic characteristics of shame experiences, Lynd (1965) tries to distinguish shame, a rather unexplored and underestimated aspect of human identity, from guilt, a frequent subject of inquiry in studies of psychology. In so doing, she does not put these two concepts necessarily at two opposite poles. However, there are some crucial distinctions that make handling these two terms as complementary or interchangeable, which is a common practice in behavioural sciences, infeasible. A distinction between the guilt and shame is that, shame is a “more external experience than guilt”, because of the fact that guilt is a manifestation of the internalization of the social values in the self, while shame exists because of the existence of audience –concrete or concrete in thought- that has the power to approve or disapprove (p. 21). Shame experiences include in themselves “wounding

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<sup>46</sup> However, this does not necessarily mean that all variations and cognates of the shame experience are directly related with class positions. There may well be accounts of shame experiences not directly related or not related at all with questions of class. Here, it is neither argued that shame is an emotion peculiar to capitalism. Such an assertion would be a denial of the role played by shame in the history of human development, which is most notably explicated in the narratives of Adam and Eve. Perhaps shame is as old as the first human society and a primary component of the human identity since ages. What it will be tried to do here is to locate the shame in our contemporary society, which is characterised by the expansion of the capitalist social relations in almost every aspect of human sociality, through demonstrating particular manifestations the experiences of shame took under capitalism.

<sup>47</sup> There are several reasons for choosing Lynd’s work as our guide in making sense of the shame experiences of the class. First of all, she conceptualizes the shame in search for a social philosophy (1965, p. 20), rather than analysing it within the strict confines of individualist psychology. Another reason is that, she is well aware of the historical aspect, that means she is not dealing with shame as a purely abstract concept stripped of any historical determinations (1965, pp. 107-114), but discusses the experiences of shame with respect to society of her time. A last reason is her implicit emphasis on the effects of alienation and her again implicit and somehow loose engagement with Marxism (see for example pp. 69, 108, 159, and 237), which makes our employment of her categories in this study more feasible.

of one's own self-ideal" and "disgrace in the eyes of the others" (p. 26), which are actually in interplay with each other. Partly stemming from this fact, guilt can be more associated with a feeling of wrong-doing, whereas shame is associated with a *feeling of inferiority* in front of an outer judgment by the audience (p. 22). Another important distinction is that, guilt is a feeling concerned more with some sort of specific acts, although shame is a questioning, a doubt about the self, about trust and about being (p. 207). Guilt is easier to get rid of, however shame sticks to the identity and haunts the self until it finds channels of open communication to be shared. As a result of these facts, Lynd (1965, p. 207) argues that shame goes deeper than guilt, stating that "it is worse to be inferior and isolated than to be wrong, to be outcast in one's own eyes than to be condemned by society". Silvan Tomkins, another scholar that made a great contribution to the understanding of the nature of the shame, describes how depth experiences of shame can cut across the selves of the individuals as follows, making the point far more clear (Tomkins, 1995, p. 133):

"If distress is the affect of suffering, shame is the affect of indignity, of defeat, of transgression, and of alienation. Though terror speaks to life and death and distress makes of the world a vale of tears, yet shame strikes deepest into the heart of man. While terror and distress hurt, they are wounds inflicted from outside which penetrate the smooth surface of the ego; but shame is felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul. It does not matter whether the humiliated one has been shamed by derisive laughter or whether he mocks himself. In either event he feels himself naked, defeated, alienated, lacking in dignity or worth."

As implied by the last sentence of the above quotation, another aspect of shame with respect to guilt, which is also important for this study, is that shame is frequently associated with loss of honour and self-respect, which also implies the close interaction of shame with the self (p. 26).

When it comes to the nature of the shame experiences, Lynd talks about several aspects. For her, shame is first of all an experience of "exposure of peculiarly sensitive, intimate, vulnerable aspects of the self" (p. 27), which can be exposure of an even trivial thing; the effect of this trivial exposure may be intolerably painful however. This characteristic is typically exemplified by the account of the garment worker Adil (30), who is one of the workers that gave a comprehensive account of

his shame experiences<sup>48</sup>, talking about his shame when he realized that one of his socks has a hole on it while praying for God in a mosque. It is also again Adil who compares the feeling of shame to death. This exposure has, somehow, a twofold character: it is not only exposure to others but also exposure to “one’s own eyes” (pp. 27-28), indicating that presence of a concrete other is not necessary at all to feel shame and that shame never leaves the ashamed alone. What is more, discussing the central characteristics of shame, Lynd (1965, pp. 34-43) emphasizes that shame experiences arise in situations of incongruity and inappropriateness within the immediate society; however that does not necessarily mean that standards of this society is accepted. This incongruity or inappropriateness may be about the situation the self is in, or about the image of the self, someone had of himself; which can be triggered by the changing social situation, lived in experiences of migration or class mobilization, for example.

Another distinguishing character of the shame experiences among other emotions is that, it severely threatens or abolishes the trust (Lynd, 1965, pp. 43-49). This trust may well be the trust to one’s self or trust to the world she is in. In an experience of shame, trust to oneself and to the outer environment is converted into doubt, which also has a demolishing effect on the self-identity. Having expectations and having expectations met are important factors in formation of the self, in formation of a coherent self-identity; and shame experiences, to the extent that they can be defined as “sudden experience of a violation of expectation, of incongruity between expectation and outcome”, have a ruining effect on self-trust and one’s trust in her skills and in the world one lives in (Lynd, 1965, pp. 45-46). Therefore shame, as a trust shattering experience that leads to doubt instead, is also deeper than guilt from that respect. Another important characteristic of shame is that, it has an effect on the whole self; even the most trivial experience of shame raises ontological questions about self, about the significance of a person’s (and of the inner circle he is in) humble being on the world (pp. 54-56). Thus, again, shame is not easy to get rid of when compared to guilt, which is concerned with specific acts rather than with one’s being in this world.

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<sup>48</sup> A broader account of his experiences of shame is provided in the next part.

Additionally, people not only be ashamed of their selves, but also feel shame for the people they feel close to, most clear example is the shame felt for parents and children but it is not only limited to them, this inner circle may be enlarged to include close friends and to people with similar social positioning. The parents embracing the shame of their children's failure in school life, or the unease working class children feel when they are asked about their parents' occupation, which does not certainly point to a valued way of living as being an engineer, a teacher, a doctor does; in every first days of the school may be examples that can be encountered daily. Such an "import of shame" leads to the questioning of the meaning of world or life in general; in such a case "experience of shame may call into question, not only one's own adequacy and the validity of the codes of one's immediate society, but the meaning of the universe itself" (pp. 56-57). Such a loss of faith in the meaning of the universe, as a result of the isolating and alienating effects of shame, may be the result of what it will be called a "sense of nothingness" in Chapter 5. What can we lastly say about the nature of the shame is, according to Lynd (1965), it is being "almost impossible to communicate" as a result of the characteristics we have been discussing so far. As a result of this difficulty in sharing the shame experiences, individuals go under a process of "impersonalization" and "dehumanization", which reinforce and enhance the alienated nature of the modern society (pp. 69-70).

Having discussed the characteristics and nature of shame experiences, we are in a more confident position to ask ourselves the question: what do "shame" and "shame experiences" have to do with class and class experiences? As it was argued before, shame experience is central to working class experiences. Shame, for the garment workers involved in our research, is a feeling, which can be described following Sayer (2005b, p. 156) as follows, that "derives not from a single episode but from the habitus as a result of years of subtle or unsubtle forms of disrespectful treatment by others". Sayer (2005a, pp. 954-955) proposes that, "shame is likely to be endemic to the experience of class", and grounds this assertion on the fact that the possibilities for a valued living and the ways to acquire social respect are unequally distributed in a class society and adds to this assertion in another text that these inequalities "generate shame among the most disadvantaged" (2005b, p. 212). Shame's being "endemic to the experience" (Sayer, 2005a) of the working class also

stems from the fact that, as Skeggs (1997, p. 90) argue, “[t]he working class are never free from the judgements of imaginary and real others that position them, not just as different, but as inferior, as inadequate”.

Sayer (2005a, p. 955) also draws attention to the fact that, the concept of symbolic domination, developed by Bourdieu, is not possible without a “capacity for shame” in the dominated, although this fact is not clearly put by Bourdieu himself. But for Bourdieu capacity for shame is not sufficient for the symbolic domination, as he emphasized in several places in *Distinction* (1984), the dominated should also internalize the dominant values of the dominant class; in his terms, “the dominated class” should “see itself only through the eyes of the dominant class” (1984, p. 384). Having accepted the hegemonic values of the dominant class, the dominated have only two options; one is to be loyal to the self and to the group they belong, which is “always liable to relapse into shame” or “the individual effort to assimilate the dominant ideal” (1984, p. 384). Shame is in that respect, a manifestation of the symbolic domination inherent in the class society, and capacity for shame, in return, a necessary condition for the reproduction of this symbolic domination. It is also possible to note that, in the passages where Bourdieu touches a bit on the experiences of shame, he insistently points to the “internalized ocular-centric character of shame”, which is discussed earlier, as can be understood from his language that uses the idiom “to be judged *in the eyes of* their judges” (1984, p. 511) or “seeing oneself through the eyes of the dominant class” (p. 384).

This internalization of values, standards and morals of dominant class, however, does not necessarily mean that the dominated find them all legitimate. Here, it may be noteworthy to pay attention to Lynd's (1965, p. 37) distinction between “feeling shame for things that one believes one should feel ashamed of” and “*feeling shame that one is ashamed of feeling* because one does not actually accept the standards on which it is based”. Shame resulting from inequalities of class can be classified more after the second type of shame, as most of the garment workers interviewed expressed –although in quite subtle ways that would go unnoticed without the concern of the researcher on the subject - their experiences of shame but

only a few of them were without doubts about their shame.<sup>49</sup> However, the second type of shame is not an easier experience, but through its two-way character in terms of shame torments the souls of the workers in the most painful way.

How painful these experiences of shame may be, they are most of the time gone unnoticed. Shame is, at least within the context of garment workers, mostly manifested in their silence and aversion from speaking or direct eye contact until a minimum level of trust is established between the interviewer and interviewee, as exemplified by Abdurrahman 's (30) smoking three cigarettes and waiting for half an hour before he burst in speaking about his painful life for about two hours, despite his difficulty in speaking as a result of partial facial paralysis he had had as a result of his stressful life. Difficulty in sharing experiences of shame, besides the reasons discussed with reference to Lynd (1965) above, can also be ascribed to the fact that, revealing the shame experience itself may become something to be ashamed of. Although not shared through open communication, shame sticks to every behaviour, manner and attitude of the garment workers, painfully and most of the time unconsciously, to such an extent that, it can be argued to become a part of their habitus.

As it is stated above, shame experiences are also in a close interplay with self-respect and one's dignity. Shame can also be defined as a wound in one's self-respect. Sayer (2005b, p. 155) also underlines the fact that, shame experiences are also experiences of inadequacy, feeling worthless, and lacking dignity. Shame is a state of shrinking of oneself to himself. In the class society, to the extent that success and valuable ways of living are attributed to a myth of meritocracy, existing inequalities give ways to a continuous questioning of self-identity, self-worth, self-respect and dignity and to shame as a result in the dominated classes. They find themselves in a position to always see themselves in the eyes of the dominant class and therefore preoccupied with how their worth are judged in the eyes of other. It is

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<sup>49</sup> Sayer (2005b, p. 158) makes a similar classification of shame feeling and categorizes shame feelings in three titles; namely "warranted shame" (in which one admittedly accepts the defectiveness of her behaviour), "misplaced shame" (in which one "mistakenly accepts unwarranted judgements by others") and "unwarranted but overriding shame" (in which one disagrees with the judgement coming from outside but still feels shame). He further asserts that among the subaltern "misplaced shame" and "unwarranted but overriding shame" are the most common.

perhaps why Engels, as noted by Skeggs (1997, p. 3), considers the ideal of respectability as the “most repulsive thing” and “a false consciousness bred into the bones of workers”. Here, however, these phenomena are more attributed to the alienated character of society rather than being simply a form of false consciousness.

The relation between the symbolic domination and experiences of shame in the dominated can be now more obvious. However, the discussion below about the “hidden injuries” of class, as formulated by Sennett & Cobb (1972), will be more illuminating in understanding the specific mechanisms of shame experiences work under modern capitalist society. As underlined by Scheff (2000, pp. 85, 87), although they do not directly develop a concept of shame, it is a “central thread” in their book. Considering the etymological roots of shame that Lynd (1965, p. 23) demonstrates in her book, which says that “root meaning of shame is to cover up, to envelop” and “in some languages, as in much literary association, it also carries the meaning of wound”, the euphemism “hidden injury” may be really –intentionally or unintentionally- used to conceptualize a family of emotions which can be classified under shame and its variants.

### **3.3 “Hidden Injuries” of Class as a Conceptualization of Experiences of Shame**

It is not simply the material deprivation, or lack of access to some crucial resources, which make the lives of the individuals a decent life. But it is also a matter of pride, self-respect and dignity. As also suggested by Marx (1847), the need of the proletariat is to “its courage, its self-confidence, its pride and its sense of independence even more than its bread”.<sup>50</sup> As Sennett and Cobb (1972) argues, to the extent that the modern capitalist system and its hegemonic discourse made people show consent to the idea that the rewards and punishments are a result of the

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<sup>50</sup> Likewise, Thompson (1963, p. 236) indicates that social and moral criteria – such as “subsistence, self-respect, pride in certain standards of workmanship, customary rewards for different grades of skill” - were as important as “strictly economic arguments” in early trade union debates in United Kingdom.

individual abilities and suitableness to the needs of a value free-neutral functioning of the market, the social relations are experienced in a language translated into the personal/individual worth<sup>51</sup>. And in that respect, class positions of the people are taken so personally (Sennett & Cobb, 1972, p. 29) that this *injures* the dignity/self-respect/pride of the people involved. Aslan (35), describing his feeling “unworthy” in his encounter with the “other world”, in which the “riches” live their life and in which there is no place for the ordinary people as himself,

“S: Why do you feel yourself unworthy, I mean, how is it related to your worth?

A: Err... the economy determines its worth; economic reasons, the conditions you are in determine this. Now err... the citizen lives, what do they call it? They call it studio flat. The man lives there ah, what a pleasure... He is planning, “what shall I do today, where shall I go out” or “where shall I hang on?”. He programs that, you are sitting at home and programming what to eat tomorrow; here you are, the difference between them, the worth between them...”<sup>52</sup>

These injuries, caused by “taking the class position so personally”, are called as *hidden injuries of class* by Sennett and Cobb and they provide us a specific toolbox to dive into the class experiences and provides us with accounts of “immobilizing aspects of culturally hegemonized class experience” (Rebel, 1989, s. 130). In the course of the whole book, they (1972) give us an idea about the *emotional/internal experiences* of objective class positions or what Reay (2005) calls *psychic landscape of class* as discussed above; through examining how concepts such as dignity, self-respect and respectability find a place in emotional experience of class and that kind of internal conflicts they create (pp. 51-189), how all these create self-defence mechanisms (pp. 191-219) and how are they reflected in the dreams of working class (pp. 220-242). Moving from such a theoretical perspective and making use of

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51 From a historical materialist perspective, this can be formulated as follows: it is the bourgeoisie and capitalist production system that “resolved personal worth into exchange value”, (Marx & Engels, 1848 [1977]) and to the extent that the personal worth is resolved into exchange value, which is a capitalist social relation, the social relations under capitalism, through the camera obscura (Marx & Engels, 1974, p. 47) of the fetishizing ideology of capitalism, translated into personal worth, dialectically.

52 S: Peki niye kendini degersiz hissediyorsun, yani senin degerinle ilgili olan sey ne orada?

A: Ya tabi hep bunun degerini ekonomi belirliyor; ekonomik nedenler, bulunduğu koşullar belirliyor. Şimdi eee.. işte vatandaş oturuyor, ne diyorlar ona? Stüdyo daire diyorlar, bilmem ne diyorlar. Adam oturuyor efendim orada ohhh keyif... Şeyin programını yapıyor, “efendim bu gün ne yapsam da şöyle gezsem tozsam” veya da “nereye takilsam?”. Onun programını yapıyor, sen oturuyorsun evinde yarına ne yiycen onun programını yapıyor; al sana aradaki fark, al sana aradaki değer...”

conceptualizations developed in Sennett & Cobb (1972), here it will be tried out to give an account of some of the experiences of workers interviewed.<sup>53</sup>

### **3.3.1 Translation of social inequalities into self-worth and “badges of ability”**

Seyran (31), when asked to give her account of “who a textile worker is”, and if she could describe a “typical” textile worker, the description she provided was illuminating with regards to the hidden injuries. Her account was as follows:

“S: While defining the textile worker, he is humane, he looks like kind of oppressed. Kind of poor... You encounter sometimes, you know, you say ‘he is educated but not a decent person’. Textile worker can’t say ‘I’m a textile worker’, when he meets an educated person. That brings him shame. You know, if he says that he is a textile worker, in front of an educated man...”<sup>54</sup>

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53 However, some reservations are needed here. First and foremost, it should be indicated that, Sennett & Cobb did their study in a totally different universe. Their interviews date back to 1969 and 1970, just before the beginning of the crisis of Fordist accumulation regime and Keynesian regulation. The workers interviewed were relatively well off and current preoccupations of today’s workers, such as precariousness and flexibility of workforce, were not of much concern to them at that time. Another thing is that, the experiences reported in the book take place in a very different place with a specific culture, in Boston, United States, where families migrated formed ethnic working class colonies in the ghettos. Another thing is that, the book is focused primarily on the experiences of the male workers, because they believe that the cultural valuation placed on the work of men causes male workers to be effected by the social order differently (Sennett & Cobb, 1972, p. 44). In fact, Sennett (1998, p. 71) later argued that taking the class positions personally, which lies on the basis of “hidden injuries”, was a “peculiarly American disposition” and it still persisted to be so in the late 90s. In fact, themes of self-respect and self-worth and dignity, with their relation to social inequality and class structures and the different forms they have taken under the conditions of new economy, have also been in the focus of interest in his later works such as (Sennett, The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequenes of Work in the New Capitalism, 1998) and (Sennett, Respect in a World of Inequality, 2003). However, it will be asserted here that such a disposition can also be encountered in the garment workers of contemporary Turkey. This study is done within the years 2010-2011, in a world of volatilities and casualties in the workforce, and our interviewees are relatively balanced with respect to gender, not to mention the difference between cultural social forms of Turkey and those of United States. However, as it will be seen in the forthcoming paragraphs, the hidden injuries are still significant, and have even become much deeper and more painful; as the hegemonic neoliberal discourse more strongly established the individualistic culture and discourses of personal failure/success while smashing the collectivities through which class conflicts are mediated and found an expression. And it will be also seen that, the women we have interviewed also experience the hidden injuries, in their own “womanized” ways.

54 “S: Tekstil işçisini tanımlarken, bi insancıldır, böyle bi ez(il)mışlığı vardır. Böyle bi yoksul... Bazen şeyle karşılaşyosun ya, hani diyosun, “okumuş ama adam olamamış”. Tekstil işçi de okumuş falan biriyle karşılaştığı zaman bazı insanlar var, “tekstil işçisiyim” diyemiyo. Bu ona bi utanç olarak dönüyo. Hani tekstil işçi derse okumuş insanın karşısında...”

Here, what is described as “shame”<sup>55</sup> by Seyran, exactly points us the “hidden injury.” But what exactly is it, that makes a textile worker feel shame of her/his social position, or putting it in other words, what is the source of this *injury*? It can be safely asserted that, Sennett and Cobb (1972) handles the question of working class’ perceiving the class conflict as an injury in itself through taking the class position too personally in parallel with the development of the modern capitalist society. This modern capitalist society achieved to make people believe that the criteria for success are the *individual* and its *abilities* and *intellect*. Being autonomous in individual terms and holding the control of her/himself comprises the biggest dream of the working class in modern capitalist society. Because it is this very state of being individually autonomous and of self-accountability, which is thought as the thing that will give them back their lost dignity and self-respect. According to Sennett & Cobb (1972, p. 58), finding an answer to such questions of self-respect, dignity, autonomy and self-control, “which are about the hidden dimensions of individualism in a corporate society”, will lead us to reveal the “burden of class” in modern capitalist society. This “burden of class” finds its manifestations in “the feeling of not getting anywhere despite one’s efforts, the feeling of vulnerability in contrasting oneself to others at a higher social level, the buried sense of inadequacy that one resents for feeling” (Sennett & Cobb, 1972, p. 58). At this very point, “abilities” work as “badges of being an individual”. And these abilities are directly related with the level of social position of the person concerned. It can be claimed that, the competition in the modern class society is a competition for becoming an “individual” from being what her/himself is. As Lears (1985, p. 577) pointed out, “Hidden Injuries implies that workers have internalized a class struggle in their own minds, punishing themselves for their failure to acquire the culture's badges of ability even as they recognize that those badges are often a sham”. To the extent that, in this competitive society, the social position is translated into terms of personal worth and experienced in that way, the class positions of the

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55 It should be here noted that, “emotions are not trivial”, and “[a]t the extreme, emotions such as shame and hatred may concern matters which people value more highly than their lives.” (Sayer, 2005:39). Though, “[a]s words are often insufficient to describe them, the strongest emotions may be concealed by the thinness of actors’ accounts of them” (Sayer, 2005b, p. 40).

people are perceived as individual and this injures the dignity of the people. The “shame”, we encountered in the account of Seyran of apparel industry workers with a powerful resonance with the discussions of Lynd (1965) discussed above, is a powerful expression of the “feeling of vulnerability in contrasting oneself to others at a higher social level” and “the buried sense of inadequacy that one resents for feeling”. In this context, education acts as a “cover term”, that “it stands for a whole range of experiences and feelings that may in fact have little to do with formal schooling” and which “covers, at the most abstract level, the development of capacities within a human being” (Sennett & Cobb, 1972, p. 24).

Being an apparel worker, as Erdoğan (2007a, p. 67) noted for the urban poor in his work, “is also experienced as a state of lacking educational and cultural capital”; and to that extent “hidden injuries’ are intensified within the position in the cultural hierarchy”. This is more of a simple fact when the relatively low level of education (19 of the 24 workers interviewed has a level of education equal to or less than eight years compulsory education) is considered. In such a context, Erhan (30), who had left school after 4<sup>th</sup> year in primary school, avoids encountering with an old school friend, which had been “successful” in the educational life and had become an interior architecture:

“S: ....Let me ask, is there anyone among your friends from say primary school or neighbourhood, who could manage their way through university education?

E: I have only one friend, who graduated from university. He was an interior architect. I met him after years. And I just dropped in at his office two times. Because he doesn’t get along well with us. You know, everything should match with its equivalent. We sometimes have a small talk, but he thrusts himself forward, as if he gets above himself.”<sup>56</sup>

This time, the apparel worker interviewed not only feels himself inadequate and vulnerable when contrasting himself to his friend who has become internal architecture, but also feels to be betrayed by his friend; betrayal of whom is

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<sup>56</sup> “S: ....Ya da şey sorayım sizin arkadaşlarınızdan falan, işte ilkokul arkadaşlarınızdan olsun, mahalle arkadaşlarınızdan olsun işte okuyup, hani üniversitede kadar gelebilen oldu mu?

E: Üniversite mezunu tek bir arkadaş. O da iç mimardı. O da yani yıllar sonra tanıştım yani. O da 2 sefer odasına uğrak yaptım. Çünkü bize uymuyor. Davul bile dengi dengine vurur diyorlar ya. Yani geliyor sohbet de ediyoruz ama kendini affedersin bir halt zanneder gibi yani her şeyden önde gitmeye çalışıyor.”

evidenced by his manners as described by Erhan (30) as a some kind of snobbery, a claim of knowing everything better than him. Erhan blames his friend of betrayal and tries to ease his injury through ridiculing and criticizing his “educated” friend’s position as a position of betrayal, rather than feeling sorry for not being able to further his own education. However, furthering their education has always been an unsatisfied want for most of the workers.<sup>57</sup>

As it was mentioned before, most of the apparel workers begin working in apparel ateliers/plants at relatively earlier ages, and early quitting from school is often. That means, when it comes to apparel workers, education and being educated or not have a greater symbolic significance. Another thing is that, “feeling of vulnerability in contrasting oneself to others at a higher social level” haunts the apparel workers early in the childhood. Adil’s (30) account of his encounter with the sons of his employer, when he was a child worker in a prominent apparel firm in Turkey, demonstrates how the *injuries* may become too much tragic and depressing for the child workers and how deeper they can penetrate through the personalities of them:

“A: When I was working in K., in my childhood years; err... sons of the boss were coming. He wanted his sons work there [...] instead of becoming ramblers. You feel yourself incredibly oppressed in front of them; because they are at your age, but neatly and gleamingly dressed, whereas you look bedraggled. Your face, you sometimes wake up in the morning and go out without washing your face in order to catch the service bus. Or you go to work with ripped or unzipped trousers. They see that, they [he laughs] mock at you. Think about it, for example, your shoes are ragged, or you go to the mosque to pray, take off your shoes and your socks are ripped! How difficult is that shame for a person... Err... yes, I mean, for that person err... his economic condition, poverty is, for a child of that age,...[he thinks] a matter of life or death. If you can comprehend the meaning of death, accept the existence of death, know how valuable death is... For the children of that age, richness and poorness, beautiful dressing and ugly dressing, nice shoes and bad shoes is death, I mean, it is so hurtful. But we were grown up really

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<sup>57</sup> See Charlesworth (2004, pp. 239-243) for a detailed account of “the silent, unspoken pain, that working class people feel because of their educational failure” in Rotherham, England. His coining the experiences of “educational failure” in terms of “silent, unspoken pain” reminds one of “hidden injuries” we have been talking about so far.

with such a psychology, that's not... That's not playing on your heartstrings, it is even today so.”<sup>58</sup>

Adil’s comparison of shame and the feeling of vulnerability to death is not simply an exaggeration, but an exact description of the powerful emotion caused by the hidden injuries. As Lynd (1965, p. 40) argues, “it is the very triviality of the cause [...] that helps to give shame its unbearable character”. Not having dressed or combed properly, not having washed his face, having a tear in his pant or leaving the zipper of the pants open; all these trivialities are magnified in the depths of the self to the most painful feeling, shame, which is even comparable to death. And as Adil (30) states, this feeling or state of vulnerability is not confined to childhood, rather it haunts the whole life of the apparel worker.

The experience of social relations translated into a language of self-worth makes itself felt also in the accounts of workers about the people, who do not dare to work in apparel industry. According to Handan (42), the cause of these people’s leaving of work is their “lack of patience”, which is a question of personal adequacy but not the heavy working conditions she is well complaining about. She also states that, the cause of fire from work is also is the improper working of the employees, but not the improperly long working hours, for example. In claiming so, in fact, she implicitly points to the superiority of her when compared to these people; that she has abilities of patience and constancy, in a search for self-respectability through emphasizing her inner values. In a similar manner, Ayşenur (37), when asked about anything that has been a stable cause of irritation in her life, she bemoaned of the

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<sup>58</sup> “A: K.’da çalıştığım dönemler o çocuk yıllarda; işte eee... patronun oğulları mesela geliyordu. Hani patron çocukların depoda çalıştırıyordu yani. [...] Hani işte serseri olmasınlar falan filan sokağa çıkışın şey yapmasına diye. Tabii yani inanılmaz derecede ezik hissediyorsun onlara karşı kendini; çünkü aynı yaşıt olarak aynısın onların üstleri tertemiz piril piril, senin saçların yani darmadağın. Yüzün, bazen sabah kalktıyorsun o sersemlikle yani, servisi yakalayacağım diye kalktıyorsun yüzünü yıkamadan çıkıştıyorsun. Veyahut da gidiyorsun yırtık pantolonun var, fermuarını çekmemişsin. Görüyorkar senle [güler] alay ediyorlar. Ya ayakkabıları yırtık mesela, düşünsenize camiye gidiyorsun bazen ayakkabını açıyorsun namaz kılmak için o dönem, çorabın yırtık! O utanç insana ne kadar ağır geliyor yani... Eee... evet yani, o insana şey eee... ekonomik durumu, fakirlikle yoksulluk, o dönemdeki çocuklar için eee...[düşünür] yaşamakla ölmek gibi bir şey yani. Ölümün şeyini kavrayabilse asılnda, ölümün varlığını kabullenebilsen, ölümün ne değerli olduğunu bilebilse... O dönemde o yaştaki çocuklar için zenginlikle fakirlik, güzel elbise ile çırkin elbise, iyi ayakkabı ile kötü ayakkabı yani insanlar için ölümdür yani o kadar ağır şeylerdir yani. Ama işte o psikoloji ile yani gerçekten büyük yani, şeyi de yok yani bu işin... duygusal sömürüsü falan da yok yani; halen de böyledir yani.”

“youth”, blaming them of not “breaking their balls enough” to work<sup>59</sup> and rather entering in some crooked jobs, such as burglary to make easy money, without any reference to any systemic problem, such as insistently high youth unemployment. It is clear that, her emphasis is always on the personal capabilities and individual effort.

Sennett & Cobb (1972, pp. 76-79) also touches the issue of justification of judgment of others based on the power and ability of the people ranking high in a class society hold at their hand. To the extent that class is a matter of power and the badges of ability have a capacity to justify this power, revolt against the injustice and inequality of class society is rendered to be harder. This is not because they find the power to judge dignified, but because they find it legitimate. It is like, as if, there is a judging authority under the badges of ability, which is beyond their ken. It is so much so that, even when they cannot get the payment they are entitled to, after a month’s (or week’s) hard work, they feel “incapable” and “helpless” (Ersan, 25; Selma 23), or they feel themselves “bad” (Esra, 21), or even “as if they had been guilty of something” (Esma, 17); because a legitimate authority, mechanism of which is not open to their understanding, judges on whether they can get their payments or not so it might/should have been their fault or deficiency for not getting their payment. They also express their anger at the employer or at the administrative staff; but it can be well observed that, as Sennett & Cobb (1972, p. 79) states, “they are not

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59 “S: Bu hayatta senin başka asabını bozan bi şeyler olmuyo mu? [S: Isn’t there anything else that makes you nervous?]”

A: Asabımı bozan şeyler şu oluyo: Özellikle gençlere çok kızıyorum. Niye kızıyorum? Mesela ben burada çalışıyorum, 1 ay çalışıyorum, 1 milyar için. Onu götürüyorum eve, ihtiyacımı ona göre ayıriyorum. Şöyle yapıyorum, böyle yapıyorum. 3-5 mi kaldı? Kenara koyuyorum. E ben her gün 24 saat onu bekleyeceğim yok! Evimdir diyorum, kapımı çekip gidiyorum. Bi geliyorum ki eve hırsız girmiştir. Biriktirdığımı almış, örnek yani... E kim aldı? Gençlerin affedersin götü tutmuyo ki çalışın. Hırsızlıkta kendini şey yapıyolar. Hazır para... Ama bu oluyo mu? İnsanların emeğini hakkını çalıp çırpmak...” [A: The things shaking out my nerves are: I get angry with especially young people. Why? For example, I work here for a month for 1 billion [1000 tl]. I take that money to home, reserve some part of it for my needs etc. If I have say 3-5 left, I save it. You know, I can’t stay at home for 24 hours as a watchman of it! In the end, it’s my home, so I lock the door and go out. When I’m back home, I realize that I was robbed. My savings are gone, as an example, I mean... Who did it? The youth is, sorry but, not breaking their balls enough to work. They live off burglary. Easy money... But is this right? Stealing people’s labour, their share...”] It should be here also noted that, Aysenur’s contempt over the youth is not limited to ones engaged with criminal activities. In several points in her speech, she despises “the youth” working with her in the same atelier as not hardworking enough, prioritising love affairs rather than working in the workplace and etc.

rebellious in the ordinary sense of the word; they are both angry and ambivalent about their right to be angry”.

The phenomenon of judging the many by the few, legitimized by the so called “badges of ability” in the modern capitalist society, is also related with the discussions made in previous paragraphs about education. The supposed qualifications and abilities one acquires through schooling are perceived as the legitimizing powers behind the judging authority. Although this judging authority is found legitimate on those grounds, it does not mean that the workers find such an authority to judge respectful or dignified. This conflict between “educated” and “non-educated” also finds a repercussion in the work-setting, in the encounter of the apparel workers with supervisors or stylists who have had the chance for a longer period of formal schooling. Abdurrahman (32), for example, complains about a supervisor, a new graduate of 2 years programme on textiles:

“S: Do those saying that’s wrong know the job better than you?

A: Most of them not.

S: Who gives them the right to say ‘that’s wrong’? As you know better, you can be the person, who says ‘that’s wrong’.

A: Education gives that right. [...] Because we graduated from the primary school, from high primary school, we were grown up from the bottom. We have considerable work experience. We know what is what. The others finished two-year textile faculty. I’m calling them big headed people. Why? Because they don’t know the job from the bottom, they come directly to an upper position. When he says I can oppress you with my education, despite the fact that he knows nothing about the details of the work; I say I oppress you with my work. Because I experienced that exactly. [...] I was working in a firm, there was a woman, who was a graduate of two-year textile university, she became the person in charge. She was patronising us by saying ‘I know everything, I do everything well’. In the end, flared up. I said ‘you design a model and I design one, let’s show the boss and ask him to decide on which one is better. The employer should decide on that, not you.’ [...] She made it in her way, I did in my way. We showed them to the boss. It doesn’t make any difference to me whether the boss throws that product to my face or he swears at me. I regard it so. He threw that woman’s model to her face, saying ‘go away, I don’t want to see you’. I wanted to quit from the workplace 14 times, he didn’t accept it. Finally, I quit myself. Why? I couldn’t stand it anymore. That that person’s

keeping saying ‘I’m educated’ and patronising us had become unbearable. So, I had to quit the job.”<sup>60</sup>

The language Abdurrahman (32) employs has a salient use of contrasting “bottom” and “top” and discourses of “oppression”, which points to hidden injuries materialized and visualized in terms of lowerness and higherness, of which “education” became a measure of this contradiction.<sup>61</sup> However, from this extract from the interview it can be again seen that, legitimacy of judging authority does not ensure the dignity of it.<sup>62</sup> He asserts that, learning the job “from the bottom” is superior to “coming from top to down” through education. As Sennett and Cobb vividly express (1972, p. 78), “[h]e accepts as legitimate what he believes is undignified in itself, and in accepting the power of educated people *he* feels more inadequate, vulnerable, and undignified.” To the extent that he sees the “degree” obtained as a legitimate source of judging authority, lack of schooling becomes an “injury” for Abdurrahman (32):

“S: Where else have you felt that people look down their noses at you, or are you still feeling so?

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<sup>60</sup> “S: Peki bu böyle olamaz diyenler işi senden daha iyi biliyolar mı?

A: Valla çoğu benden daha iyi bilmiyor.

S: Peki onlara kim bu hakkı veriyorum, bu böyle olmaz hakkını. Madem sen daha iyi biliyorsun, bu böyle olmaz diyen sen ol?

A: O hakkı diploma veriyorum. [...] Çünkü biz ilkokul mezunu olduğumuz için, yüksek ilkokul mezunu olduğumuz için, biz tabandan yetiştiğimiz. İşin tozunu yutup buraya geldik. Neyin ne olduğunu biliyoruz. Öbür insanlar iki yıllık teknik üniversitesini bitirdi. Yani ben onlara söyle diyorum, kendini beğenmiş insanlar diyorum. Çünkü niye; işin tabanını bilmediği için, yani yukarıdan tepeden geldiği için, bi işin nasıl yapıldığını bilmediği halde gelip diplomayla ezerim dediği zaman, ben de işimle ezerim diyorum. Çünkü onu birebir de yaşadım. [...] Bi firmada çalıştık iki yıllık teknik üniversitesini bitirmiş bayan vardı, başımıza sorumlu olarak geldi. Her şeyi ben bilirim, her şeyi ben yaparım diyip hep bizi küçük görüyordu. En sonunda dayanamadım. Bi model sen yap, bi model de ben yapayım, patronun karşısına çıkaralım, hangımızinki daha düzgün patron karar versin dedim. İşveren karar versin dedim sen değil dedim. [...] Onlar ölçüleri bulup vurdu. Ben de kendi bildiğim şekilde vurdum. Gördük patrona, patron resmen yani ha o işi suratıma atmış ha bana küfretmiş. Ben öyle kabul ediyorum. Bayanın suratına işini attı, kaybol gözüm görmesin dedi. O iş yerinde ben 14 sefer çıkış verdim. Benim çıkışımı kabul etmedi. Ben kendim çekip gittim. Çünkü niye? Ben artık dayanamıyorum. O insanın ben okudum, ben böyleseyim diyip bizi küçük görmesi artık katlanamaz bir dereceye gelmişti. O yüzden çıkmak zorunda kaldım.”

<sup>61</sup> See also Erdogan (2007a, pp. 54-56) for an analysis of the relation of “lower and higher” to social hierarchy in the case of urban poor in Turkey.

<sup>62</sup> Here, it is also again interesting that, the “boss” is seen as the competent authority that has the power to say the last word about his rivalry with the educated stylist *woman*. It may well hint that, the self-respect of Abdurrahman (30) is also injured partly because a *woman* claims to be superior than him.

A: Yes I am, why; because I feel resentment, since I couldn't further my education. I'll enrol in secondary school this year, God willing. If everything goes well, God willing, I will attend school. I will get rid of that resentment. Because, I'm sending my brother to school, why, because I'm consoling myself a little with that. But that I go to school myself is something different...”<sup>63</sup>

### **3.3.2 Sacrifice as a way of easement of the pain of hidden injuries**

Another field, where the “hidden injuries” are experienced finds its expression in concepts like “sacrifice” and “betrayal”. “Sacrifice”, - for the people who could not come to anywhere using their personal ability and qualifications despite their efforts -, “is the last resource for individualism, the last demonstration of competence” (Sennett & Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class, 1972, p. 140). The apparel workers as parents, which were not able to further their education and came out to be “simple” apparel workers, want their children to grow fully and have a good education and give tremendous efforts for that reason, as a form of sacrifice. It was common among the workers interviewed to express that, they did work hard for their children to become people having a good place in the society. This fact is in line with the assertion of Lynd (1965) about the importability of shame feeling among the family members or members of a social group, which we have discussed earlier. Güleren (33) and Zehra (45) began working in apparel industry after their husbands divorced them, to look after their children to provide them a secure future. As Aslan (35) expressed, they want their children to be “not like they are”, but “better off than”, as “any father would want their children to be”:

“A: What do you consider as a father? Everyone wants their children to live a better life, be better educated, well, take a better place in life. I want that, too, of course. But doing this requires materials. That, in turn, requires, you know, some conditions. I’m trying hard to

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<sup>63</sup> “S: Başka nerelerde küçük görüldüğünü hissettin, ya da hissediyor musun hala?

A: Ya hissediyorum çünkü niye; benim içimde bi burukluk var okuyamama burukluğu var. Kismet olursa bu sene ortaokula yazılcam. Hani engel falan olmassa bi şey olmassa kismet olursa okuyacam yani. O burukluluğu içimden atacam. Çünkü, kardeşim okutuyorum, çünkü niye, biraz onla kendimi avutuyorum. Ama bi kendi okumam farklı, bi de...”

provide those conditions. But to what extent we are able to do that is obvious... But I feel what every father feels. I hope my child would not be like me, but better off than me.”<sup>64</sup>

Yet, there is a nuance between the attitudes of workers of Boston in late 1960s and apparel workers we have interviewed in 2010s. As far as it is reflected in Sennett and Cobb (1972), The Boston workers did not express any doubt about their capacity to sacrifice for their children. However, as it can also be seen from the above extract, Aslan (35), in the lines quoted above, declares that he is struggling to provide the “material conditions” necessary for his children to flourish, however he ends up confessing that he cannot fully accommodate these needs. Ümit (35) is more direct and clear about the fact that, sacrifice is not meaningful as there is almost no chance for his child to climb up in the hierarchy of social position. He asserts that, they already know that his child will become a worker at some point. He compares this situation with the behaviour of miner families, sending their family members to a possible death everyday:

“S: Do you have a dream for him [your child]?

Ü: No! He, anyway him... I believe – exception proves the rule – children of workers, children of labourers live a life similar to their parents’ lives. Now, my children, if I won’t win a lottery, their chance of being educated... Of course, we want them to be educated but we know that they, in the end, become workers as well. Because, for example, mine workers, too, are so; their families know that there is the probability of failing to get out of the mine, but still, they go into there in the morning. But they know that they can stay there. But, although they know it, people can send their families, think about it...”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> “A: Bir baba olarak ne düşünüyorsun? Herkes çocuğunun daha iyi bir hayat yaşamamasını, daha iyi bir eğitim almasını, daha iyi efendim hayatı düzgün bi yerde durmasını ister. Ben de öyle istiyorum tabii ki. Ama bunu yapmanın da materyalleri vardır. Böyle olmasının da şeyleri vardır, koşulları vardır. Ha o koşulları yerine getirmenin çabasını veriyorum. Ama ne ölçüde, ne kadar yapabiliyoruz, vallahi ortada... Ama her babanın hissettiği hissiyatları ben de hissediyorum yani. Çocuğum diyorum “benim gibi olmasın, daha iyi olsun”.”

<sup>65</sup> “S: Onun [çocuğun] için bir hayalin var mı peki?

Ü: Yok! O onu da zaten... Ben şuna inanıyorum – istisnalar kaideyi bozmaz ama - işçilerin çocukları, emekçilerin çocukları da onlar gibi bir yaşamı devam ettirirler. Benim şimdî çocuğumu, eğer piyango vurmazsa bana, onun da okuma çok... Tabii ki isteriz çocuklarınızı okutmak ama, belli bir noktadan sonra onların da aslında birer işçi olacağını biliriz yani. Çünkü örneğin mesela maden işçileri de öyledir; aileleri bile bile bilirler ki o madenden çıkmama ihtimali vardır ama yine de sabah alır tasını madene icer. Ama bilir oradan çıkmama ihtimali vardır. Ama buna rağmen düşünsene insanlar ailelerini gönderebiliyorlar...”

This difference between the attitudes of workers concerned stems from the fact that, “[t]he workingmen of Boston almost never voiced resignation in face of the injuries of class” and they “had a powerful, though complicated, sense of mission in their lives” (Sennett & Cobb, 1972, p. 120), which was providing and maintaining the prosperity of their family and preparing a better future for their children; whereas workers of this study have a more strong feeling of resignation, not always as powerful as the feelings expressed by Ümit (35) somehow. Here, it can be noted that, under the conditions of constant and endemic insecurity and highly demanding flexible working conditions, hidden injuries become less bearable. Still, “paradoxical morality of personal sacrifice” (Sennett & Cobb, The Hidden Injuries of Class, 1972, p. 121) was observed to be at play in the lives of the apparel workers, taking a form of not “hopeful effort”, but as a “hopeless effort” without much enthusiasm and faith.

That can be also a result of the fact that, most of the apparel workers begin sacrificing at early ages and that have created a situation of sacrifice-tiredness. Most of the apparel workers (18 out of 24) interviewed began working in the apparel industry no later than 15 years old. In this situation, it is not the families but the children that make personal sacrifice to satisfy the costs of living of the family. “To help the family in financial distress” is one of the most common reasons for beginning work at childhood among the interviewees. That is especially the case for the families that has moved to Istanbul because of material deprivation from their hometowns or villages. There are also cases where the children, which send some portion of their gaining to their family in hometown, are sent to Istanbul for work, as it is the case for Haktan (31) and Zülfü (30). Most of the apparel workers, which began working in childhood, stated that they gave all or most of the money to their family, only dividing a small portion, if any, for his/her personal needs. Hayriye (33), who reproaches the newly migrated Kurdish families of using their children as sources of revenue by sending them to work in small scale unregistered apparel workshops, speaks about her giving all the money she earned when she was a child as a story of sacrifice and as a source of honour:

“S: What were you used to do, when you were 15-16 years old? Were you giving all money you get to your family?

H: I... They were giving our wage in envelopes. I was delivering it without even opening it.

S: For yourself... haven't you ever said 'I shall reserve this money and buy, say, those shoes for me'?

H: I was telling my needs to my mom, she used to say 'ok daughter' and buy that for me. My sister or my brother were getting their envelopes and immediately taking the amount they needed from that money. I was different. I am still the same. I say directly to my husband whatever I buy, I tell him everything. I was so with my family, too. I think, I am a bit more conservative.<sup>66</sup>

What makes the issue of sacrifice more interesting is that, the workers that have made – or believed to have made – a real personal sacrifice think that they have the authority to judge the “others” in a society, which are thought not to make enough personal sacrifice. Sennett and Cobb (1972, p. 140) argue that, “sacrifice [...] legitimizes a person’s view of himself as an individual, with the right to feel anger” and this legitimacy in their anger gives the oppressed right to “turn on others [in their anger] who are also oppressed rather than on those intangible, invisible, impersonal forces that have made [them] all vulnerable.” In this way, the class society, the cause of the “contest for dignity”, remains unchallenged; putting the people injured by the very mechanisms of this class society in challenge with each other instead. Above quoted lines of Ayşenur (37), criticising the youth for “not breaking their balls enough to work” and trying to make their money through illegal means can also be understood in this respect. In a similar way, Ömür (39) criticizes the workers that often change the firm they work for, and accuse them of “looking for adventure” rather than patiently and meticulously working for one firm, as she did always.

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<sup>66</sup> “S: Sen napardin peki abla 15-16 yaşındayken? Aldığın paranın hepsini ailene mi verirdin?

H: Ben, zarfla verirlerdi parayı. Hiç açmadan teslim ederdim.

S: Sen hiç kendine, ya şunu kendime ayırayım da şu ayakkabıyı alayım...

H: Ben isteklerimi anneme söylerdim o da derdi “tamam kızım”. Alındı. Benim kız kardeşim ya da abım öyle değildi. Zarflarını alırlardı hemen ihtiyaçlarını alırlardı içinden. Ben öyle değildim. Ben burda da öyleyim. Ne alıysam kocama direk söylüyorum şunu şöyle yaptım şunu böyle yaptım. Aileme karşı da öyleydim ben. Ben biraz daha tutucuyum galiba.”

### **3.3.3 Intra contradictions within the class caused/facilitated by the hidden injuries**

The existing divisions within the working class in Turkey, with respect to their legal and contractual status – for example working in the public sector vs. working in a private enterprise, workers with fixed term contract vs. workers with indefinite duration contract, formal vs. informal workers – reinforce the workers' judging of each other. Only a few examples will be provided for illustrating the point, but it can be argued that, based on the interviews done with 24 apparel workers in this study, there is a general unacknowledged disliking among the precarious workers, with only a few exceptions, against the assumingly more secure positions in the labour market, which is identified most of the time with the civil servants or with “desk jobbers”. For example, Selda (23) criticizes the civil servants because of their protests against changing working conditions and loss of rights, as she thinks they already get too much for too less effort. She states that:

“And civil servants... Civil servants get their rights. Still, they are complaining very much, saying ‘we don’t get what we deserve’ etc... But perhaps, textile people, for example, the people working in textile don’t get what they deserve, as well. There is neither insurance, -you can very rarely find some places paying for the insurance-, nor delicious food...”<sup>67</sup>

In a similar manner, Erhan (30) does not feel any sympathy with the TEKEL workers protesting against their loss of working rights after the privatization of TEKEL<sup>68</sup>,

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<sup>67</sup> “Bi de memurlar... Memurlar hakkını alıyorlar. Bi de onlar çok sesleniyorlar, ‘biz hakkımızı alımıyoruz’ falan falan... Ama belki de tekstil insanları, mesela tekstilde çalışan insanlar da hakkını alımıyo. Ne sigortası var, -pek nadiren sigorta yapan yani yerler var-, ne yemeği güzel...”

<sup>68</sup> The demonstrations and protests of TEKEL workers coming from all over the Turkey, which is popularly named as “TEKEL Resistance”, began in December the 15th, 2009, against the deterioration of their working rights and benefits with the privatization of the TEKEL tobacco and cigarette factories; which was anticipated with harsh intervention by the security forces of the state on the second and third day of the protests. The demonstrators were forcefully expelled from the Abdi İpekçi Park, a park in the city centre of Ankara, with use of teargas and pressurized water and a number of workers were arrested. After this incidence, workers moved their protests to the Türk-İş headquarters and around, which lies at the very heart of Ankara, Kızılay. As days passed, the protests took the form of a passive resistance, and the workers began to stay day and night on the streets parallel and next to the street the Türk-İş building lays. They pitched scrappy tents on these streets, made of wood and nylon they could find around, which were quite a novelty when the resistance experiences of Turkish working class is considered. They found support from the Ankara residents, which were touched by the unfair treatment encountered by the workers. During their stay in Kızılay, they found chance to contact with the progressive, leftist and social democrat circles, and most of the workers, previously without much political consciousness, experienced a transformation in their thinking. Their

demonstrations and resistance of which is found legitimate on the eyes of the public and welcomed with much enthusiasm and hope in mostly leftist circles. His approach is not limited to TEKEL workers, but encompasses all the public workers threatened by privatization:

“S: For example, Tekel workers were recently on strike. For about 78 days... They stayed in tents etc. The police... They were exposed to tear gas, cosh. Haven’t you ever felt sorry for them?

E: No, I didn’t. I never feel sorry. Why? There are civil servants around us. They don’t go to work. They get their salaries every month. As long as this system exists, I don’t feel sorry for these men. They should protect their jobs and work. But if they continue in this way, I won’t care, even if all of them will be fired. Because they are being selfish... Nobody regards those people around himself. You say boo! Those men get a salary of 1300 lira - 1500 lira. Plus, every 2 months, they get a premium of the salary of 1 month, etc. You know, I don’t know much about this civil service thing, but they get a high amount... [...] Of course, there are some exceptions... But if we look at the general picture, there are lots of such kind of people. I get angry with those. No one saves his job. Then, the state privatizes us. It would do so, of course! If I were, I mean, I speak for myself, I would make privatizations, as well, I would leave nothing [non-privatised]!”<sup>69</sup>

Precarization of the working conditions, to the extent that it creates divisions and deepens the existing divisions within the working class, creates categories of

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“resistance” in Ankara took 78 days long, and although they could not get what they wanted except minor improvements in their working status after privatization, they reinforced the revival in the literature on class and insecurity and provided the leftist circles “an open-air laboratory” of making of class.

<sup>69</sup> “S: Peki ama mesela geçen, mesela Tekel işçileri eylemdeydi. 78 güne varan... Çadırlarda madırlarda yaşadılar işte. Polisler... Gaz yediler, cop yediler. Onlar için hiç üzülmedin mi abi yani?

E: Yok abi, hiç üzülmembedim ben. Ben üzülmem. Ben niye üzülmem? Çevremizde böyle memurlar falan var. Adamlar işe gitmezler. Tıkır tıkır her ay maaşlarını alırlar. Bu sistem varken ben üzülmem bu adamlara. Adam gibi işlerine sahip çıksınlar, yapsınlar. Ama böyle devam ederse hepsini atsınlar. Umurumda bile olmaz. Çünkü yani hep bana bana bana... Çevredeki insana kimse bakmıyor. Yani yuh diyorsun yani. Bir gün bakıyorsun o dediğim adamlar da yani adamlar 1300 lira - 1500 lira maaş alıyorlar. Artı 2 ayda bir de 1 ay maaş ikramiye alıyorlar, bilmem nesi var. Biliyorsun, ben fazla anlamam devlet memurluğu işlerinden de. Bayağı bir şey alıyorlar yalnız... [...] Canım şimdi istisna yerler var, ben... Yok değil. Ama genel olarak baktığımız zaman çok insan var öyle. Ben onlara kızıyorum. Kimse işine sahip çıkmıyor. Ondan sonra devlet bizi özelleştiriyor. Özelleştirir kardeşim tabii! Ben olsam yani kendi şahsında diyorum, ben olsam ben de özelleştiririm, hiçbir şey bırakmam!”

“others” which facilitates “turning on others rather than the system” through the “paradoxical morality of personal sacrifice”<sup>70</sup>.

Another crack within the working class and in especially garment workers of Istanbul is of an ethnic question. There is a large deal of Kurdish workers emigrated from Eastern and Southeastern regions of Turkey to Istanbul in the garment sector. Although there are no official figures concerning the number of Kurdish origin workers in the garment industry of Istanbul, observational findings suggest that garment work is a major entry-level employment area especially for the younger Kurdish immigrants in Istanbul (Kaya, et al., 2009). A garment worker from Isparta, Southwestern of Turkey, Hayriye (33) confirms this fact with her observation as follows:

“Hayriye (33): Garment sector would never run out of workers...

S: Why?

H: Eastern people began to come. [Workers] are coming from the East. As long as they continue to come, garment sector will not run out of workers. They would come together and open an atelier, and work there altogether.”<sup>71</sup>

This fact creates a tension between the workers that identify themselves as Turkish origin and as Kurdish origin.<sup>72</sup> Because the newly migrated Kurdish youngsters are

<sup>70</sup> Arif Geniş, in his study on workers in the small-scale industry in Ostim-Ankara, also points to a similar antipathy/social distance among these small-scale industry workers towards other layers of workers in relatively more secure sectors, towards unionized workers and towards civil servants (Geniş, 2006, pp. 183, 207-209). The direct accounts of workers he quoted are simply indistinguishable from the accounts of garment workers quoted above. However, he attributes this antipathy/perceived social distance to what he calls a “sense of marginality” among small-scale workers of Ostim, caused by peripheral nature of their works (p. 183). However, this phenomenon may well be attributed to the injuries and actually it is better understood within the terminology of hidden injuries. Likewise, a more recent and influential study on workers of small scale production in Konya, with an emphasis on religion and religious views in employer-employee relations (Durak, 2012) provides testimonies of workers in Konya that despise the resistance of TEKEL workers. Workers in Konya support privatizations and blames the TEKEL workers of not being content with what they have (social insurance, a determined and regular wage, definite working hours; i.e. what the workers in Konya scarcely have) already (Durak, 2012, pp. 90-94). Durak (2012) attributes this attitude towards TEKEL workers to hegemonic culture and ideological distance to collectivities. I hope, above discussion on garment workers have already shed some light on and provided an alternative explanation to the mechanisms through which this hegemonic culture plays a dividing role among the different fractions of working class.

<sup>71</sup> “Hayriye (33): Konfeksiyonda işçi bitmez ki...

S: Neden?

H: Doğular gelmeye başladı. Doğu’dan geliyo. Onlar geldiği sürece, konfeksiyonda işçi bitmez. Ondan sonra toplanırlar bi atölye açarlar, cümbür cemaat çalışırlar.”

more willing to accept lower wages as a result of their chances being low in finding other jobs, this tension is enhanced by the exclusionary tendencies of workers that identify themselves as Turkish. An artificial competition reinforced by ethnic divisions can explain the contempt over Kurdish migrants among previously migrated Turkish origin workers in the sector. This also facilitates the phenomenon “turning on others”, as depicted by Sennett & Cobb, this time with an ethnic flavour. The first reaction to questions about this tension is a denial of such a tension, however as the conversation unfolds hidden tensions are relieved in disputes concerning daily-life subjects. Ömür (39), a female worker that has migrated from Eastern Black Sea Region to Zeytinburnu district of Istanbul<sup>73</sup>, for example, states that they do not have any problems with the “Easterners”<sup>74</sup>, and that they are like friends, like brothers and sisters. However, she also states in the oncoming conversations that the garment sector was “ruined” by the uneducated, uncultured “masses” of Easterners, which she criticizes of “having a habit of breeding like rabbits”, referring to an undefined “golden era of garment sector” before the Kurds arrived in the area; rather than putting the issue in economic terms. She also criticizes them because she thinks that they do not give any priority to education, they prefer their children to work rather

<sup>72</sup> It is important to note here that, such ethnic conflicts are not specific to garment sector. Actually, one can easily observe such a conflict on varying degrees in any sector in any city where workers from different ethnic origins are present. The incidences of violence against Kurdish seasonal agricultural labourers or against Kurdish construction workers have proliferated in the recent years, which have a logic beyond the Kurdish Question. This negative sensitivity of non-Kurdish working class people against Kurds can also be understood in terms of what Castel (2004) call as “resentment” as a specific feeling engendered by the dissolution of a society based on predictable and long-term employment and accompanying rights attached to the employment status. Castel also warns that “resentment leads to a conservative attitude that refuses novelty and at the same time pluralism and differences” (p. 60) and “resentment, as a social response to social misfortune, targets the closest groups” (Castel, 2004, p. 61); which have resonance with what Sennett & Cobb calls as “turning on the other” as will be discussed below. See also Koç (2012) that attributes the tension between Kurdish and non-Kurdish working class people to the new proletarization process lived in the last three decades, for a demonstration of main issues in the Kurdish labour question. Duruiz (2009) also talks about tension between the “Easterner” agricultural labourers and “Westerner” peasants in Söke.

<sup>73</sup> The population in Zeytinburnu is highly comprised of migrants. The migrants coming from Black Sea region, who are believed to have more nationalistic and conservative tendencies and a specific disliking of “Kurds”, constitutes 48,7% of all migrants. The second biggest migrant group in Zeytinburnu comes from Eastern and South-Eastern regions of Turkey, whose migration accelerated after 1990s due to ethnic conflicts in those regions. There is also considerable amount of people coming from Western Thrace and Bulgaria. (Zeytinburnu İlçe Portalı, 2012)

<sup>74</sup> It is also important to underline that the extensive labelling of people as “Easterners” by the non-Kurdish workers and as “Westerners” by the Kurdish-origin workers already indicates a discrimination of “us” and “them” among the garment workers of Istanbul.

than have education. Selda (23), this time a Kurdish garment worker from Diyarbakir who lives in the same district and work in the same garment workshop with Ömür (39), describes the tension in a more direct manner as follows:

“SÇ: For example, there are generally those from Black Sea, from East[ern Anatolia], in Zeytinburnu.

S: That's right, Black Sea people, yeah...

SÇ: I mean they... is there conflict between these two groups or...

S: There is no conflict but there are sometimes quarrels.

SÇ: Hum... Do they bother you, as they were previously here but you came later?

S: They can't do anything, because they are no more strong enough (she laughs); no more, because South-eastern people became even a majority here. They can defend themselves.”<sup>75</sup>

There are several means through which this rather silent “low intensity conflicts” reveal themselves in the daily lives of the garment workers. A very common one is the music listened in the workshops and factories during the production. The non-Kurdish workers are reported to show resistance to listening to Kurdish music in the workplace, however, as the Kurds increased in number in the workshops and factories, the incidences of contestation of Kurdish music has declined.

At most of the workshops and factories in which Kurdish and non-Kurdish workers work and as well in the slum areas in which they live together, there seems to be an unspoken compromise between the groups that live and work together for not interfering with each other's way of living. However, as a result of the competitive logic of the system that pits the garment workers against each other, this unspoken compromise rests on a fragile balance. It was just after a few weeks after the interviews done in Zeytinburnu, on the days following the 14<sup>th</sup> of July, 2011,

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<sup>75</sup> “SÇ: Mesela Zeytinburnu’nda genelde hani Karadenizliler varmış; Doğulular varmış.

S: Doğru Karadenizli hı hı...

SÇ: Yani onlar... bu iki grup arasında şey var mı çatışma ya da...

S: Çatışma yok ama yeri geldiğinde tartışmalar çıkıyor.

SÇ: Hıı...Peki onların “siz sonradan geldiniz” diye böyle, onlar önceden burada olduğundan bi şey yapıyorlar mı?

S: Bi şey yapamıyorlar, çünkü artık gücü yetmiyor (güler); gücü yetmiyor çünkü, hem Güneydoğudaki insanlar burada çoğunluk olmuşlar hatta. Şimdi kendini savunabiliyorlar.”

after death of 13 soldiers in Diyarbakir in a firefight, this fragile balance turned into a an open conflict between Kurds and non-Kurds, which was obviously set into fire by deliberative provocations that were largely organized through social networking sites such as Facebook. The gatherings and protests against the death of these soldiers, quite in a manipulative way, become lynch attempts against Kurds as the events unfolded.<sup>76</sup> Of course, this open conflict does not only have its source in the logic of the capitalist production system that pits the workers against each other, it has its bases on the ethnic question that has been lived for about three decades. Yet, mobilization of the masses against each other would not be that easier if there was not such a division among the lines of garment workers. The interviews made with the non-Kurdish workers indicate that, most of them perceive the Kurdish population and Kurdish garment workers as “invaders” that threaten their living areas and jobs, although all of the garment workers have a common migration story in their lives; i.e. the workers complaining about Kurds as being invaders were themselves once “invaders”. Such a confrontation between the people sharing the same fate can only be understood in terms of alienation. Garment workers under capitalist system not only experiences alienation to themselves as producers, but they are also alienated to their friends in the workplace or in the living spaces they share. Here, it is important to repeat that the politics of capital highly depends on division of the labour, as it is underlined in Lebowitz repeatedly (2003). Concluding on the account Marx wrote about the division and antagonism between Irish and English proletariat<sup>77</sup>, he states that (Lebowitz, 2003, p. 160) “*difference became, under the normal workings of capitalism, hostility.*” In contemporary Turkey, what we live and see – and what is

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<sup>76</sup> See the report of Human Rights Association (İHD, 2011) for a detailed account of course of events and testimonies of the people from the neighbourhood.

<sup>77</sup> Here is what Marx says about this antagonism: “Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class *divided* into two *hostile* camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the *ruling* nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists of his country *against* Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over *himself*. He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker...The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the *English rule in Ireland*.” (Marx, 1870; cited in Lebowitz 2003, p. 159) It is very striking that, what Marx has stated for the antagonism between English and Irish proletarians are word by word applies to current situation concerning the division between Turkish and Kurdish proletarians in the urban spaces of Turkey.

tried to be described in this part making use of the concept “hidden injuries”— strictly confirms this statement.

### **3.3.4 Defences against injuries**

The “injuries” presented above so far, also bring with them some particular dispositions of defence mechanisms. Sennett & Cobb (1972) discuss mainly two categories of defences, each of will be discussed within the context of the fieldwork of this thesis.

#### **3.3.4.1 Dream of autonomous work**

Sennett and Cobb (1972, p. 220) state that, being free in a class society is not only being free from class injuries, but also a state of capability “to do a specific thing” or “to live in a specific way”; and what is offered as a redemption to keep the injured people from despair is so called “autonomous work”. A person working autonomously has a word on her/his own control and will do a self-sufficient job, which do not require a responsibility to others. In that sense, self-employment, beyond the works highly dependent on intellect, such as jobs in academy, is one of the dreams for the workers of Boston. Even if this seems impossible to be realized for themselves, they aspire their children to be self-employed, to have their *own* job. This dream of autonomous work can also be considered as a basic reflexive response to workers’ alienation to his own work, to act of producing over which their command is restricted by the logic of capitalist production process and also to his own being as a producer.

In his work on urban poor, Erdoğan (2007a) indicates that despite hidden injuries clearly observable in the urban poor, there were no significant and solid dreams of autonomous work within the urban poor and he attributes this observation partly to the fact that individualist discourses and culture are not as strong as it is in United States.<sup>78</sup> However, in the interviews done, it could be observed that the

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<sup>78</sup> In another study on workers working in automotive, textile and white goods sectors, Nichols and Sugur (2005, p. 41) state in contradiction with what Milkman (1997, cited in Nichols and Sugur)

apparel workers interviewed have such a dream of autonomous work, male interviewees showing a greater tendency and eagerness to have such a dream when compared to female respondents.<sup>79</sup> The difference between the attitudes of male and female respondents is compensated by the female respondents' dreams of quitting the work after the marriage, with a hope that the earnings of their husbands will be sufficient for their living expenses. Deniz (30) has quitted the work after giving birth to her child, Hayriye (33) had left the work after marriage until her husband's work situation got worsened and would like to leave the job again if she had chance to do so, Efsun (20) dreams of being the "lady of the house" for example. Dedeoğlu (2008, p. 91) also states that, based on her own fieldwork on garment production in Istanbul, women garment workers working in ateliers "see their employment as temporary stage, which is to continue until marriage or until a financial difficulty has passed".

Among the most of the workers, and especially among the male workers, it was easy to point to a desire for establishing their *own* business. And among the 24 workers, Aslan (35), Ümit (35), Erhan (30), Ömür (39) and Fethi (41) were already working in their own apparel workshops, and Hayri (38) and Adil (31) had an unsuccessful attempt to establish their own apparel workshop. The difference between the attitudes towards autonomous work of urban poor Erdogan (2007a) observed and of the workers interviewed in this study may result from several reasons. First of all, there are almost ten years between the researches done for urban poor and for garment workers, which may indicate a change in the society towards individualization and individualist ideology, which seems to be the least likely reason as a change in the common sense of the society within ten years should not lead to such drastic changes. Another reason can be the differences between the samples of the two studies. The people interviewed in Erdogan et. al.'s study (2007) are the people below the line of absolute poverty, although they do not draw strict

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stated, the dream of the workers in Turkey is not an independent work or being self-employed as it is for the workers in United States, but their dreams are working in a big factory with social security rights, as informal work is very common and formal work is preferred over informal work. The garment workers also prefer working in bigger garment factories rather than working informal garment sweatshops, but most of the workers, especially the male ones, would still prefer working for their own account than working in a big factory with social rights, as it will be described below.

<sup>79</sup> Thompson (1963, p. 262) also asserts that aspiration for *independent work* "colours much of the history of early working-class Radicalism".

lines to decide on who can be counted below this abstract line; and their dreaming of autonomous work would contradict with the empirical realism of the subordinated classes; whereas the garment workers have at least a low but more secure source of income. The cost of founding a small scale (up-to 30 people), unregistered apparel workshop, doing subcontract work is said to be between 5000 to 15000 TL<sup>80</sup>, depending on its size, which is a relatively low cost. Founding a contract manufacturing firm is also encouraged by the bigger firms, who want to transfer the risks of manufacturing and volatility of demand to the subcontractor firms<sup>81</sup>. Therefore, it could be said that, the tendency to establish an autonomous work is more common among apparel workers, although neither there is comparable data concerning other industries, nor our sample can be claimed to be fully representative of apparel workers. The structural characteristics of the garment sector, easily subcontractable nature of the garment work, the process of subcontracting and the significant role of small size garment ateliers in subcontracted production<sup>82</sup>, and the wide existence of small-size garment sweatshops all over the slums of Istanbul as a result of these, may all be said to reinforce the dream of establishing their own garment ateliers in the garment workers.<sup>83</sup> Aktar (1990) made a similar observation for the weaving industry in Bursa, in which small-size industrial production also has a significant role. Among the sample he surveyed, a significant portion of 52% declared a desire to work autonomously through establishing their own production units.<sup>84</sup> In another study on the shoemaking workers in Gedikpaşa, Istanbul (Güler

<sup>80</sup> At the time of the interviews, the exchange rate was floating around 1.50 TL to 1.75 TL per 1 USD.

<sup>81</sup> Dedeoğlu (2008, p. 68), in her work on women garment workers in Istanbul, confirms this observation: “New ateliers by ex-garment workers are always welcomed, and are seen as a potential source for decreasing prices in the market.”

<sup>82</sup> As mentioned earlier, according to a study done by Eraydin (2000, p. 100), only 7,9% of the garment firms in Istanbul garment sector have an independent production, the rest have subcontracting relations with other firms. This fact shows the importance of subcontracting relations in the sector.

<sup>83</sup> Establishing one’s own business is also reported to be a common “hope” among the garment workers of South Africa, in Johannesburg, too; although there is a low possibility for them to find necessary loans to establish a garment atelier (Joynt & Webster, 2011).

<sup>84</sup> The “autonomy” of these small-scale ateliers, both in garment sector of Istanbul and in weaving sector of Bursa, is of course questionable since they are highly dependent on the bigger firms or garment traders that have a higher place in the hierarchical commodity chain, but the autonomy discussed here is on a different plane.

Müftüoğlu, 2005), Güler Müftüoğlu found that only 37.5% of the workers interviewed declared they wanted to establish their own business in shoemaking sector. According to Güler Müftüoğlu (2005, pp. 206-208), even this relatively low proportion is quite optimistic in front of the concrete realities of shoe-production world she describes. This relatively low proportion can be ascribed to the limited nature of the survey question as it only enquired the desires to establish a self-owned business only in the shoe-production sector, but not in another sector.<sup>85</sup>

The motives behind having an autonomous work are explained by the words of an apparel worker (Abdurrahman, 32) in this way, directly associating autonomous work with freedom:

“S: Why do you want to run your own business?

A: I want to run my own business and live well and comfortably as everyone. I mean, running your own business is another thing, working under someone else is completely different. If you work under anybody, he gets angry to anything and yells at you. These things happen one after another, for instance foremen, I didn't want to experience this, because of that, I don't generally want to work at big places. That's why I want to run my own business.

S: Is running your own business becoming free?

A: Is running your own business becoming free?.... Everybody has different views. In my view, it is becoming free, of course. Why, because you are engaged in your work, struggling for your own life. You can act in the way you want in your own business. Why? Because there aren't any limitations. You don't encounter an obstacle. For example, if you work at another's place, either the foreman or the boss or the designers interfere into that, when you suggest something, they can say this cannot be done like that, but if you run your own business, you are free to design in the way you like.”<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> It is also important to note that, the small scale shoe production was in a process of liquidation as the production was in the process of centralization in big-scale factories at that time as Güler Müftüoğlu (2005) argued. It is highly likely that, the workers considered opening a small-scale shoemaking atelier not viable in the light of this fact.

<sup>86</sup> “S: Neden kendi işini kurmak istiyodun abi?

A: Her insan gibi kendi işini kurup güzel rahat bi şekilde yaşamak isterim. Yani, kendi işini kurmak ayrı bir de elin içinde çalışmak ayrı. Elin içinde çalışıyosun adam bi şeye kızmıştır gelip sana bağırrır. Bu şeyler üst üste geliyo, mesela ustalar, ben bunu yaşamak istemedim, o yüzden de büyük yerlerde genellikle çalışmak istemiyorum. Kendi işimi kurmak da bu yüzden istiyorum.

S: Peki kendi işini kurmak özgür olmak mı?

A: Kendi işini kurmak özgür olmak mı?.... Herkesin düşüncesi farklı. Tabii ki benim düşüncem özgür olmaktadır. Çünkü niye; bire bir kendi işinle uğraşıyosun, kendi kendinin hayat mücadelemini veriyosun.

The main themes that can be found from this conversation are; working for one's *own* but not for anyone else, the lack of responsibility to and dependence on others, being directly in control of the work done. In this way, the worker can develop a defence against the alienation to the self-activity and alienation to himself. However, this creates alienation to the class position he belongs to. As Sennett argued, “[a]utonomous work, [...], does not make men dream of a class-less society, of a redemption towards”, the autonomous worker is “still immersed in the old world but no longer exposed to its wounding power” (Sennett & Cobb, 1972, p. 242).

The dream of autonomous work, however, is not of sparkling and appealing nature, and dreamers are most of the time denied from the realization of their dream of autonomous work. Although there are no official statistics, it can be reasonably argued that a very high turnover rate in terms of founding and closure of small-scale apparel workshops exists considering the very volatile demand and relatively weak financial position of workshop owners indicated by their level of indebtedness. The workshop-owners interviewed declared that they made their initial investment raising funds through debt mechanisms. The workshop owners, except Aslan (35) and Ümit (35), who have been working in their own workshops for the first time<sup>87</sup>, also pointed out the fact that they had had to close down several workshops before they began operating their current business. Because of the high vulnerability of the small-scale apparel workshops against the market forces, some of the workers' dreams of autonomous work are in a sector other than apparel industry. Abdurrahman (32) thinks of opening an internet cafe, Selda (23) would like to have a patisserie or cafeteria, and Hayri (38) would be fond of operating a restaurant, to name only a few.

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Şöyleden kendi yapmak istedığını kendi içinde yapabilirsin. Çünkü niye? Bi kısıtlanma olmuyor. Önune bi engel konulmuyor. Mesela, bi iş yerinde çalıştığın zaman şunu şöyle yapalım dedigin zaman usta karışıyor, ya patron karışıyor, ya modelistler karışıyor, bu böyle olamaz diyebiliyor ama kendi işini kurduğun zaman istedigin gibi o modeli çıkartabiliyosun.”

87 Aslan (35) and Ümit (35) are also distinct from other workshop-owners with respect to their reason to decide to establish their own business. After some unsuccessful struggles of unionization in the apparel factories they had been working, they were fired by their employer and they claimed they were “black-listed”, i.e. they were denied from working in other apparel factories because of their formal unionization activities.

The current workshop-owners among the 24 interviewees also complained about long working hours, strenuous and stressful working conditions; which could be associated with their being self-exploited in this respect. Some did even argue that they worked harder than the workers working for them, and they did not have a satisfying return considering their efforts. However, they still indicated that they were better off than being “simple workers”, as they did their *own* job and did not have to bear with some other person’s undesirable attitudes and behaviour.

The dream of autonomous work can also be said to be stronger in the early years of apparel workers, when they see their status in the apparel industry as temporary, however, as the years passed, their dreams become dreams without expectations. Aslan (35), when stating that they are “the daunted people of the market”, and Selma (23), when saying that “it is no more possible even to dream of something”, and Abdurrahman (32), while expressing that “the excitement [about founding his own business] faded out now”; point out this fact.

### **3.3.4.2 Dividing the self**

Another defence mechanism against the wounding effect of class society is “a divide in the self”, a conscious alienation of the “active, performing self, seeking recognition from others as a distinctive individual” from “the passive self that just wants to be, enjoy family and friends, to love them” (Sennett & Cobb, 1972, pp. 192,194). Such kind of alienation or keeping the real, caring self hidden can be ascribed to the fact that, in the class society, where there is a contest for dignity, selves are subject to judgment power of others and freedom is limited, which creates fear of and reluctance to exposing the selves. Putting aside the effects of this division in employer-employee relations, it could be stated that such kind of alienation as an active, conscious human defence against the wounding power of class society, hampers the relationship between workers. As the workers put a divide between their active, performing self and real, caring and sensitive self; a real relationship between the workers becomes problematic, which will negatively affect the making of the class. This divide of self is expressed in the accounts of workers as they emphasize that “it is neither necessary nor possible to establish sincerity with everyone in the

workplace" (Ayşenur, 37; Raziye 47), "everybody own their business during work-time, does not bother with other workers" (Haktan 31, Zülfü 30), "there are only some closed groups in the workplace which does not allow you to enter inside" (Seyran, 31), "not everyone is trustworthy, and sharing the problems and secrets is limited to only a few workers" (Hayriye, 33; Handan 42). These accounts become more interesting considering the fact that the very same workers in their speeches indicated that "they had been like a family in the workshop"; "they were like brothers and sisters with other workers" as "they spent their time with their worker friends more than they did with their family". Sennett and Cobb (1972, pp. 217-218) compares this phenomenon with the "cult of masculinity", arriving at the conclusion that "class, [...], makes it rational for men to keep their "soft" feelings to themselves until they are very sure they won't be hurt". However, among the interviewees of this study, "hiding the emotions" is not a dominantly masculine behaviour, rather it is common both among both male and female interviewees, which underlines the class character of this behaviour rather than being mostly related with gender. Consider, for example, these lines from the conversation with a woman garment worker:

"S: Do woman workers come together and share their problems with each other, or do they prefer to hide them?

Hayriye (33): Most of them hides. My best friend knows everything about me, she can tell you my problems frankly, but she hides her own problems. For example, my husband was unemployed, I worked and looked after him; hers was unemployed, too, but she was quiet and retiring... She didn't tell anyone anything. I knew that, I knew that he's unemployed, although she didn't tell me, but she was still hiding. Mine was spoken about, but hers wasn't. That means some people just cannot pour out their feelings."<sup>88</sup>

Her underlining that "some people cannot pour out their feelings" is also noteworthy in showing the two way possibility of shame experiences. It can also be compared

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<sup>88</sup> "S: Peki kadın işçiler sıkıntılarını bir araya gelip birbirleriyle paylaşıyorlar mı yoksa saklamayı mı tercih ediyorlar?

Hayriye (33): Çoğu saklıyo. Benim en yakın arkadaşım benim her şeyimi biliyor, benimkini açık açık ortaya dökebiliyo ama kendisine gelince saklıyo. Mesela benim kocam çalışmadı, ben çalışmam idare ettim onu; mesela, onunki de çalışmadı ama o sessiz sedasız... O hiç kimseye bir şey söylemedi. Ben bunu biliyorum o söylemese de ben çalışmadığını biliyorum ama o saklıyordu. Benimki konuşuluyordu ama onunki konuşulmuyordu. Demek ki diyorum kimisi dökemiyo."

with the “depersonalization”, “dehumanization” process as a result of the difficulty in sharing the experiences of shame as discussed by Lynd (1965).

Another self-divide can be observed when the workers try to distinguish themselves from the “other” workers. For example, Raziye (47) states that she could decide easily on whether the person she sees on the street is an apparel worker or not, it is so much obvious to her; and in a minute adds that other people cannot detect that she is an apparel worker, unless she said them so, as a source for proud and self-respect. In a similar way, Hayri (23) describes the apparel workers as “masses of uncultured people”, with an implicit emphasis on his being different from them. Adil (31), a worker engaged with left politics to some extent, also distinguish himself from other workers, underlining his being a “vanguard” worker. Replying the question whether he feels himself being degraded as an apparel worker, he states that:

“A: Now, as a textile worker, I, in fact... As I said, that I am a bit more rebellious, I mean I stood out of textile workers. I am, for example, a vanguard textile worker now. I don’t mean to be priggish, because, err.. as compared to other friends... I stood out of them.”<sup>89</sup>

In this specific example, Adil (31) restores his injured self-respect and dignity, healing his doubt about himself, through an emphasis on his revolutionary and rebellious character, claiming to be standing out of the unconscious “mass” of apparel workers, as a distinct individual. In this setting, the interviewer, totally unintentionally and being conscious of the importance of a “non-violent form of communication” as conceptualized by Bourdieu (1996), acts as the loci of symbolic domination, a legitimate judging authority, which make the workers feel low and obliged to restore their self-esteem through proving themselves to be capable individuals, standing out in the mass. Adil’s distancing himself from the ordinary apparel worker can also be understood through Bourdieu’s (1984, p. 395) assertion that, “the specific logic of cultural domination means that the fullest recognition of cultural legitimacy can and often does co-exist with the most radical challenging of political legitimacy” and “the awakening of political consciousness is often bound up

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<sup>89</sup> “A: Şimdi, ben tekstil işçisi olarak aslında aaa... Dedim ya hani, benim biraz daha asi, biraz daha isyankâr oluşum, hani ben tekstil işçilerinin arasından sıyrıldım çıktım. Ben mesela artık öncü bir tekstil işçiyim hani. Böyle ukalalık anlamında söylemiyorum da, çünkü diğer arkadaşlara falan baktığımızda eee... Ben hani sıyrıldım aralarından, çıktım.”

with a whole process of rehabilitating and rebuilding self-esteem, which, because it involves a reaffirmation of cultural dignity that is experienced as (and indeed always is) liberatory, implies a submission to the dominant values and to some of the principles on which the dominant class bases its domination". Bourdieu (1984, p. 396) further warns against the fact that, "the most politically conscious fraction of the working class remains profoundly subject, in culture and language, to the dominant norms and values" and therefore can become a loci of symbolic domination against his own class.

### **3.4 Concluding Remarks**

The hidden injuries we have been talking about so far, as *a form of class experience* caused by the *symbolic domination* and enhanced by the *cultural-hegemonic* discourse of individualism that infiltrated through the *common sense* of the subordinated more and more in the neoliberal era, which also made use of the fragmentalizing effect of flexible and precarious working conditions and of breaking off of traditional working class collectives specific to welfare state policies, could also be thought from the perspective of alienation. Seeman (1983, p. 175), for example, states that the work of Sennett & Cobb (1972) is nothing but a euphemism of a classic theme, i.e. alienation; as it is about the "sensed absence of control", deprivation of working class and a specific feeling of inadequacy, which are all varieties of alienation as depicted by him. As far as the findings of this study suggest, the defences against these injuries do not, however, reduce the effect of alienation; but creates a schizophrenic and atomized mass of pseudo-individuals, and in that respect reduce the wounding effect of alienation while increasing the level of alienation in people's lives. "Turning on others rather than the system", as exemplified by the Ayşenur's (37) blaming of unemployed youth for their position or the dislike or contempt among one ethnic group of workers (for example workers with a "Turkish" origin) towards the workers from other ethnic group (for example workers with a "Kurdish" origin), is increasing the level of isolation within the

garment workers, for example. Although class positions and class society are the main causes of these *injuries*, such kind of class experiences, in themselves, have a very low potentiality of being translated into a language of social antagonism and therefore of leading to a making of class as a form of consciousness, viewed from a Thompsonian approach; in other terms they offer a very low potential for non-alienation of the working class. This is so because of the fact that, such injuries are, at least to some extent, a result of the yielding to the individuality discourse of the market hegemony and has a stronger individualizing momentum than a collectivizing one. We have to keep in mind that, “every class struggle is at the same time a struggle over values and that the project of Socialism is guaranteed by *nothing* [...] but can find its own guarantees only by *reason* and through an open *choice of values*” (Thompson, 1995, p. 231). The dreams and defences against these injuries are, as put by Sennett and Cobb, is not intended to a collective –let it be a class-emancipation, but rather to an –imagined and failed more than realized- individual emancipation. Dividing of the selves, sacrificing of one for his/her children so that they are able to be respected through good education or the dream of autonomous work, examples of which can be found in the above accounts of garment workers, are all can be counted as dividing the potential class lines rather than forming a possible front of class struggle.

“Class society takes away from all the people within it the feeling of secure dignity in the eyes of others and of themselves” (Sennett & Cobb, 1972, p. 170), and this discontent and distress arouse their anger, but “they are both angry and ambivalent about their right to be angry” (1972, p. 79), and as a result “this discontent is hard to be organized by the Left because the logic of discontent leads people to *turn on each other rather than on the ‘system’*” (1972, p. 173). “Hidden injuries”, in that sense, to the extent that they remain “hidden” and not *commonly* experienced, however common they may be among the members of the working class, also injure the possible formation of an antagonistic collective identity, as it can be widely observed in the garment workers interviewed in this study. Thompson has already pointed to such a situation by stating that, “[i]f the experience appears as determined, class consciousness does not” (Thompson, 1963, p. 10). And we can add to this assertion that, there are particular ways in which class are experienced and not

all of class experiences enables or gives way to making of class, *hidden injuries* being one of them.

If we return to the Lynd's (1965, pp. 64-71) arguments concerning the low potential of communicability and alienating / isolating characteristics of the experiences of shame, provided that we accepted the assertion that what Sennett & Cobb (1972) call as "hidden injury" imply the variants and cognates of shame (Scheff, 2000), it would be easier to understand why the experiences categorized under "hidden injuries of class" are hard to be translated into a collective identity carrying class characteristics. However, it is also noteworthy to remember that, Lynd (1965, pp. 66, 71, 237) does not totally dismiss the possibility of communicating shame. She even proposes that, overcoming the isolative effect of shame and sharing the experiences of shame through open communication can enhance solidarity ties with other persons and groups (Lynd, 1965, p. 66). Lynd also reminds us of the fact that, mutual love can overcome the fear of exposure by stating that "[t]hrough such love one comes to know the meaning of exposure without shame, and of shame transformed by being understood and shared" and that "a person who cannot love cannot reveal himself[;] [e]xposure in love is beneficent" (1965, pp. 239, 241).

Calling love for combating the alienating and isolating mechanisms of the class society may be considered and criticised as too romantic to be a Marxist call. Although this study does not limit itself to the absolute determinism of the solid mechanisms of economy, which is the most unjust misunderstanding of Marxism at all, it also does not preach for peace and love, stripped from any historical and spatial determinations of these terms. To better understand the position of this study, one should return to the Gramsci's note on feeling and knowledge, an excerpt of which quoted above. In this note, Gramsci (2000, p. 420) strongly emphasizes that, the intellectuals should have a "connection of feeling", what he calls exactly the "passion", with the people, with the popular element in order to make out from the practical, fragmentary and primary feelings of the masses a coherent and scientific world-view, i.e. the knowledge; and that without this passion "one cannot make politics-history". Only through such kind of a *passionate, non-mechanic and living* relation between the organic intellectuals and the people, a historical bloc can be achieved (p. 420):

“If the relationship between intellectuals and people-nation, [...], is provided by an organic cohesion in which feeling-passion becomes understanding and thence knowledge (not mechanically but in a way that is alive), then and only then is the relationship one of representation. Only then does there take place the exchange of individual elements between governed and governing, between led and leaders, and one achieves the life of the whole which alone is the social force, one creates the 'historical bloc'.”

Call it love or passion, without the active and emotional engagement of the “intellectual” in the popular element, there is no possibility of forming an *organic* relation that will lead to a coherent world-view, to the knowledge, out of embryonic and fragmentary feelings of the masses, that has the power to change the world. Without the belief in such kind of a *passion*, the researcher of this study could not achieve in turning the atmosphere of shame and mistrust between the interviewer and interviewee as the moments of talking pass by into a mutual understanding and trust, which is “a process of discovery which gradually eliminates fear of exposure, which is not the result of an act of will but unfolds with the unfolding experience” (Lynd, 1965, p. 209).

Therefore, it is important to understand the twofold character of the experiences of shame and its variants; in the lack of open communication, serving to alienation and isolation of the individual in a society of free competition on the one side; and the possibility of these experiences to be translated into a language of common sufferings and solidarity on the other. Lynd (1965, p. 71) vividly puts forward these two possibilities as following:

“The difficulty of communicating experiences of shame and the markedly different ways of responding to such experiences suggest that they can lead in two different directions: 1. They can lead to protection of the exposed self and of the exposed society at all costs – refusing to recognize the wound, covering the isolating effect of shame through depersonalization and adaptation to any approved codes. 2. If experiences of shame can be fully faced, if we allow ourselves to realize their import, they can inform the self, and become a revelation of oneself, of one’s society, and of the human situation.”

As far as our study suggest, the first direction seems to be prevalent under the flexible and precarious form of capitalism, which is dominant in today's world and in today's Turkey. Experiences of shame, to the extent that they cannot find communication channels to be shared, become hidden injuries of class and injure the selves and the society as a whole as well; leading to alienated individuals and to an

alienated society and in line with these enhances the tendencies towards unmaking of class. Confirming our findings about the subjective experience of class in a precarious society in contemporary Turkey, Özdemir and Yücesan Özdemir (2004, p. 40), in a study about the labour market in the 2000s, states that the “endemic insecurity” has hindered the capacity for organization of an antagonistic collectivity that will pursue collective goals and rather individual goals for survival are pursued:

“Living in endemic insecurity separates the workforce from a kind of identity and the autonomy that would be capable of building new strategies to deal with class struggle and alienation, and, as a result, social exclusion, political indifference and individualised survival strategies are likely to be the outcome for the majority of the population.”

The shame experiences and “hidden injuries” as a special form of these experiences and as an aspect of alienation created by the capitalist production system, as explained in this chapter, may well be said to play at least a part in this isolation and individualization of the scale of struggle. However, whether the first direction or the second Lynd (1965) points will be prevalent in the coming years is not a closed case. It is again, the dynamics of class struggle that will be decisive on the direction; alienation, depersonalization and isolation on the one side, and revelation of the selves and the society as a whole on the other.

## **CHAPTER 4 MOMENTS OF ALIENATION (II): EXPERIENCES OF TIME UNDER PRECARIOUS CONDITIONS**

Time is a central, yet rather unexplored issue in understanding working class and its experiences. In this chapter, it will be tried to be given a detailed account of experiences of time; i.e. attitudes towards and perceptions of past, future and present, of the garment workers interviewed in a world where questions of uncertainty and precarity are immanent to the contemporary relations of production. Before moving to the main body of this chapter, contemplating over some aspects of life-course and daily life of one of the garment workers interviewed will shed much light on the temporal experiences of workers in a flexible and precarious world.

Take Efsun (20) for example. She is a 20 year old garment worker in a garment factory in Zümrütevler district of Anatolian side of Istanbul. She works as a last-step controller. Her family moved from a small city in eastern Black Sea region, Ordu, in the year 1988. She was born in Istanbul after three years of her family's migration. She is proud of being an Istanbulite, when she puts herself in comparison to her fellow garment workers that have recently migrated from all over the Turkey. After the compulsory education of eight years, she quitted schooling and began to work in a garment workshop near her neighbourhood. Now it has been about seven years that she has been working in the garment sector. Her work insurance, however, just started last year, when she began working in the current factory. She says that the wages are a little bit lower here but the factory pays their insurance premium regularly, which is a rare occasion in the sector. She did not mind having work insurance before, and getting a little more money was more preferable to her. Now she says that "I was just ignorant those times, now I am more conscious of what I am doing." She had stated that she did not have any memories about her life-time before

she began work and she was as if “she was born in a garment atelier rather than being born in a hospital.”<sup>90</sup>

Her workplace’s being in her neighbourhood facilitates the consent of their family to allow her to work. Her headscarf indicates that she is from a rather conservative family. She is a lively and talkative character and her care and attention to her outlook is quite observable. She has matched the colour of her lipstick to her headscarf, for example. Efsun (20) has a real concern about time. She gets up early in the morning, no late than seven o’clock in the morning. Rightly after she puts her clothes on and washes her face, she leaves home. She buys pastry or bagels from the patisserie on her way to work. Workplace is just a ten minute walk from home. She has a quick breakfast before beginning to work with the tea made in the factory and the pastry and bagels she buys. After breakfast, she puts her make-up. That is for her self-respect but for nothing else, she adds. And all of those have to be in half an hour. The work strickly begins at 07:30, but does not have a definite end-time.<sup>91</sup> She describes the time spent in the factory as tiring, tedious and extremely monotonous. There is strict control on how they spent their time in the factory. Their shortest talking to each other is a reason for severe criticism of the foremen in the factory<sup>92</sup>. Even their visits to toilets are surveilled and frowned upon despite the lunch-break and tea-break in the afternoon. Even the period time is not accepted as a valid reason to justify their visits to toilet.<sup>93</sup> She has to keep her concentration high for long hours.

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<sup>90</sup> In her original words: “Benim valla, arkadaşlar da soruyolar da bazen, tekstilden önce hiç yaşamamışım gibi... Bazısı konuşup durur okuldayken söyleydi de böyledi, bende hiiç... Sanki hastanede değil de tekstilde doğmuşum ben. Öncesi yok gibi, inanmazsınız...” [I.. err.. my friends sometimes ask me, too... I feel that I hadn’t been living before textile... Some people talk of their past, it was such and such when I was in school... I, as if I was born in textile, not in a hospital. As if there was nothing before, you wouldn’t believe...]

<sup>91</sup> She says: “Gireceğin zamanı bilirsın ama çıkışını kimse bilmez.” [You know the time of entry but no one knows the exit time.]

<sup>92</sup> She says in her original words: “Yanındakinle, berindekinle en ufak bi muhabbet çevirsen hemen köpek gibi bağırır... O usta dediğimiz kişi yok mu?” [He immediately yells at you like a dog, if you begin even a small chat with those around you... That guy we call foreman.]

<sup>93</sup> “Valla inanmazsınız ama, hani olur ya bazı günler kadınlar için... İnsan rahatsız hissediyor, hani durmadan oturmak da zorunda olduğumuz için... Diyorum ki [ustaya], “sen de kadınsın ya, senin hiç ihtiyacı olmuyor mu?” Yok, diyor; “yasak” diyor. Çıldırıyosun ya... [You wouldn’t believe, but, you know, there are some days for women... You feel uncomfortable, since we have to sit down whole day... I say “you are a woman, as well, haven’t you ever got needs?” She says “no, it’s forbidden”. You get crazy...]

If several defected products escape her attention during a day, she is punished for an hour's pay. She has to control a determined number of products in a given time. Time is always a source of stress and anxiety for her and also acts as a tool for discipline itself. She describes the moments during the work as "they seem to never pass" at one place in her speech; and at another place she talks about "not being able to catch the time to finish the determined number".<sup>94</sup> She says that she sometimes lose the track of time when working. The most depressing moment she describes is the moment when the foreman declares that there will be overtime on that evening:

"Hani akşam kadar çalışmışsun eşşek gibi. İş bitecek diye saate bakıp durursun ya böyle çaktırmadan... Düşünüyosun akşam eve giderken markete uğrarım, belki arkadaşlara takılırım bi yarım saat, şunu yaparım falan... Tam yarı saat kalmış mesainin bitmesine, usta çıkış demez mi: "Arkadaşlar sipariş yetişecek, bu akşam kalıyoruz!" O nası bi bozuyo insanın tüm moralini, anlatamam. Ama itiraz edemezsin, ayda yılda önemli bi işin olur da... Anca öyle. Haftada bi-iki olunca gene neyse. Bazen mesaisiz günün olmadığı haftalar oluyo, insan var ya, bitmiş hissediyosun kendini."

Efsun also talks about her experiences of daydreaming during the work. She says that it is hard to spend time at work without daydreaming. She speaks of several times that she was so much drawn in her dreams that she could not hear the foreman commanding her something to do. She dreams of just ordinary things, about her life, about her sisters and brothers or about the characters of a serial she has watched yesterday. She complains about the loud music in the garment ateliers, however also adds that "without it you cannot fill the time out"<sup>95</sup>. These musics accompany the daydreams of most garment workers. After the work, especially when there is overtime, she feels drained: "I just change my clothes and I pass out on the couch I am sitting. My mum hardly wakes me up to go to my bed." The next day is identical with the day before and she reports that she sometimes lose the track of which day is coming next. It is very hard to wake up in the morning next day. She underlines that every garment worker longs for a wakeless morning sleep.

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<sup>94</sup> In her original words: "Zaman geçmiyo ki hiç... O dakikalar hiç geçmiyo!" and "zamani, dakikaları bi türlü yakalayamıyosun ki adeti tamamlayasin!" [Time never passes... Those minutes never pass!] and [you can never catch that time, those minutes so that you can finish the determined number!]

<sup>95</sup> She states: "Müzik de olmasa hiç zaman geçmeyecek ama..." [Time wouldn't pass without that music though...]

Normally she works six days a week, and most of the weeks she also has to work for a half-day in Sundays. There is almost nothing special she does in her free days, resting at home is the main holiday activity. She hardly has any leisure time and when she has it, she has only impoverished leisure activities, if one can call it activity at all. When asked about her future and expectations, she declares that she does not have big expectations and she quitted making plans a few years ago as the things never went as she planned. She admits that, she of course dreams of a marriage as every young woman does, but afraid of long-term relationships. She does not prefer marrying a garment worker, but rather looks for someone with a “decent and regular” job. Otherwise, it would not be possible to secure a future.

This simple sketch of the life of a garment worker says a lot on its own. In the upcoming parts, similar experiences of time will be provided with possible theoretical explanations and possible implications of these experiences. However, before going into the details of garment workers’ experiences of time, a brief and rather theoretical account of what here meant by time and experiences of it under precarious conditions will be given.

#### **4.1 Time and Experiences of Time as Class Concepts and Precarity**

Coining a concept of “experiences of time” and asserting that it has class content and character may sound clumsy at first. It was during the interviews that I first noticed the problematic quality of garment workers’ relation with temporality. The first and most observable symptom of this problematic relationship was their lack of a decent off-work time, which was a result of long working hours in the garment sector and was a major issue in the complaints of the garment workers. However, the problematic quality of this relationship was not limited to this. I also came up with a specific anxiety, uncertainty towards future, and lack of expectations and rational planning in the workers interviewed. Another thing was an overall loss of control of time in the garment workers’ lives. After I came up with Bourdieu’s work on Algeria (Bourdieu, Algeria 1960, 1977) and his conceptionalization regarding the time experiences of subproletarians – i.e. casual workers and unemployed in Bourdieu’s

terms – of Algeria, I was assured about, among other things, the centrality of different experiences of temporality with respect to class positions in understanding class experiences. Yet, time has a deeper relation with ontological and epistemological existence of class, which cannot be fully grasped without any reference to Marxist political economy and value theory.

To begin with, class in the modern capitalism is the manifestation of a social production relation, in which there always exists a struggle between the worker and the capitalist over the “surplus time” of the labour. Since, in Marxian terms, value is closely tied with labour time, the time worked above the time in which the worker produces the amount necessary for his own livelihood – i.e. the necessary labour time - is decisive on the surplus value and profit, which lies at the heart of capitalist production system.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, time has always been at the centre of class struggles under capitalism, or as Harvey (1989, p. 230) put it “struggles between owners of labour and of capital over the use of time and the intensity of labour have been endemic.” Worker needs “time for education, for intellectual development, for the fulfillment of social functions, for social intercourse, for the free play of the vital forces of his body and his mind” [...]; however capital needs to extend the working-day even beyond its “moral” and “physical” limits to realize its intentionally ever-extending valorization. (Marx, 1976, p. 375). A quick review of what Marx (1976, pp. 340-417) have described on the struggle on the length of the working day at the dawn of capitalism from 17<sup>th</sup> century to 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and what E. P. Thompson (1967) has concluded on the relation between the measurement of the time and work-discipline with the rise of capitalism and an accompanying change in the apprehension and habits of time will easily reveal this fact.

Stemming from the division between the necessary and surplus labour time of workers under capitalist production is a specific form of alienation, workers’ alienation to their own time, which finds its manifestation in the worker’s loss of control of her own time. Worker not only loses his control on his own time, but also loses this control to someone else, to the capitalist, that holds the ownership of the means of production, which are by definition and nature again the products of the

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<sup>96</sup> See Marx (1976, pp. 320-339) for a detailed analysis.

labour of workers. This loss of control over one's own time cannot be confined to space of production only. To the extent that the time spent in the production is forced to its limits by the capitalists, and is subject directly to the up and downs of the market and so the demands of this market; the workers hardly find enough time for the reproduction of their mere livelihood and the time they hardly find is also subject to fluctuations and non-controllable to workers in this sense. Not only their labour, but also their time is appropriated by the capitalist.

Time, as Marx (1865) defines, “is the room of human development”, and to the extent that the lifetime of the worker is “absorbed by his labour for the capitalist” and what he has in hand is only time for reproducing his most basic physical being, he becomes a “beast of burden”, a “mere machine for producing Foreign Health, broken in body and brutalized in mind” (Marx, 1865). As this “machine for producing Foreign Health” produces surplus labour time, in the mean time, it also produces “free time” on the other side. Marx implicitly indicates that this production of “free time” lies on the basis of human development and thus has a positive view on it (Marx, 1863); however, to the extent that the control of this “free time” produced by the workers are appropriated and controlled by the capitalist, the workers, who has produced the “free time” themselves, cannot rightly benefit from it. In a similar manner that the wealth is piling up on the one side and poverty and privation of millions, which created this wealth, piling up on the other side; “*free time on one side corresponds to subjugated time on the other side*” (Marx, 1863; emphasis added).

The *free-time* appropriated by the capital can be argued to be on the very basis of bourgeois culture and its *refined* ways of spending time, that finds repercussion in leisure time activities of the bourgeois, which require time, specific attention and a *taste* for it in Bourdieusian terms. Time management is of a central concern to bourgeois ideology and life style. Whereas the time of the dominated classes is managed rather than their being on control of their own time. On the side of the bourgeois we find leisure activites, but on the side of the dominated classes what we see is “filling of time”, or “prefabricated leisure activities designed for them by the engineers of cultural mass production” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 179). As Bourdieu argues (1984, p. 282), leisure activities are highly related with “capacity to dominate

time and money” and their entailing a symbolic value stems from this fact to some extent, which logically follows having disposable time and money at hand. It should have been clear so far that free time and money, as a form of capital, are created by the surplus labour of workers under capitalist production. Keeping in mind this fact, the correlation between being bourgeois and having capacity to dominate time and command to the future is more than obvious.

In understanding the nexus between the class positions and time experiences, in relation to above discussion, Bourdieu can be said to have another contribution: his conceptions of habitus and field and their interrelations. In this relation, habitus is temporalized and realized through the practical activity:

“Practical activity, insofar as it makes sense, as it is sensee, reasonable, that is, engendered by a habitus adjusted to the immanent tendencies of the field, is an act of temporalization through which the agent transcends the immediate present via practical mobilization of the past and practical anticipation of the future inscribed in the present in a state of objective potentiality. Because it implies a practical reference to the future implied in the past of which it is the product, habitus temporalizes itself in the very act through which it is realized” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 138)

Here, it is important to note that, Bourdieu conceives practice as temporalization, i.e. “practice is not *in* time but *makes* time” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 206). Bourdieu used the game metaphor extensively to acknowledge these conceptualizations.<sup>97</sup> Game here used to account for the field, and habitus as what Bourdieu has called “sense of the game” (see for example Bourdieu & Wacquant (1992b)). As Jeffrey (2012, pp. 37-38) underlines, time has a central place in this analysis. In a similar fashion with a clever footballer who passes the ball not directly to his teammate but to the zone his teammate is running forward to, the advantageous classes has a perfect feeling/perception on managing and controlling the complex fields in order to act with the right timing (p. 37). Jeffrey also argues that, deriving from Bourdieu’s analysis, advantegous classes have the ability to anticipate alternative futures and to determine their theoretical responses accordingly; whereas the culturally disadvantaged poors are dependant and lack the tools that will put them in

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<sup>97</sup> See Calhoun (2003, pp. 275-278) for a more detailed analysis of game metaphor in Bourdieu’s analysis.

advantageous positions in the daily struggles and do not have a spatio-temporal certainty that accompanies the routine success (p. 37) . It is noteworthy to state that, according to Bourdieu, game is not a fair game; people inherit some tendencies in relation to volume of capital they have that put the advantaged on a more advantageous position whereas the disadvantaged lack the necessary tendencies inherent in their habitus to orient their strategies and to gain an upperhand in the game (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 215). Bourdieu's approach is important in understanding the differentiation between the experiences of time of the dominated and advantageous classes and the class character of perceptions of and attitudes towards future and past of the garment workers that we will talk about in the upcoming parts. But for the time being, one can reasonably claim that being from a disadvantaged class, or from the working class in more proper terms, among other things also means a lack of control on one's own time and a specific powerlessness in terms of managing the future.

Control over one's own time and ability to anticipate through future has also gone through a significant change during the last three decades as a result of the economy political transformation of the global capitalism. This change, emphasizing different aspects of it, has been conceptualized in various ways as the transition from fordism to flexible accumulation or post-fordism with an engagement with the regulation school; as an emergence of a new capitalism; as a new international division of labour or the second industrial divide on the global international scale or as globalisation in the mainstream disciplines; the appearance of a Risk Society; transition from a organised capitalism to a disorganised one. All of these approaches carry with them their own theoretical burden and they all have their flaws and limitations. However, common leitmotiffs in these studies are a radical change in the economy and an accompanying transformation on the social and individual level. Changes in the perception of temporality and experiences of time are also two aspects of this transformation. As Harvey (1989, p. 204) underlines, "each distinctive mode of production or social formation will, in short, embody a distinctive bundle of time and space practices and concepts" and flexible accumulation had a primary impact in bringing forward the "volatility and ephemerality of fashions, products, production techniques, labour processes, ideas and ideologies, values and established

practices” (p. 285). This volatility and ephemerality of the flexible accumulation is contrasted with the “rationalized” and “long-term and incremental and above all predictable time” of the Fordist capitalism of the period between 1930s and 1960s (Sennett, 2006, p. 23). The conditions of flexibility, as a result of dismantling the so-called “rigidities” of the Fordist accumulation period<sup>98</sup>, and rise of precarity as a painful human condition daunting the lives of the working class have given rise to a new perception an experience of time that is acceleratingly gaining dominance over the predictable, rationalized time of the Fordist period. Klaus Dörre (2011) conceptualizes this transition as a move from a “linear & organized time régime” to a “discontinuous time régime”, which unfavours the subordinated classes in terms of “acting rationally” in the markets wheras the dominating classes may use this transition to their advantage as they can adapt and manipulate this new time régime. Sennett (1998, pp. 97-98), in dealing with the white-collar workers of the new flexible economy, also underlines that “the new economy” is characterized by a “personal anxiety about time” and it is hard to build sustainable relationships and so a durable and meaningful life narrative and character. Standing (2011, pp. 144-163) also establishes a relation between not having been able to control the time with being precarious and emphasizes that because of intensification and intermittency of precarious work put the people precariously working “under time-stress”. Bourdieu, earlier than any other scholar, suggested that the precarity ruptures the relation of the precariously employed to “the world, time and space”, and through rendering the future uncertain and unpredictable, disables the capacity for “rational anticipation”, “hope and belief in the future”; and this accounts for the contemporary astounding obedience to most intolerable conditions, for difficulty in mobilizing the causalized workers and also for collectivist activities among the subordinated (Bourdieu, 1998, s. 82-83). Following Bourdieu, Charlesworth (2004) also noted some time specific attitudes of casual workers in Rotherham, which we will be able to draw some parallels with the experiences of garment workers in Istanbul.

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<sup>98</sup> There is not much need to repeat that the labour market in Turkey did not “suffer” from that much rigidities when compared to European examples of Fordist accumulation. A considerable portion of the labourforce in Turkey has always been in the informal sector, for example. In informal sector, one cannot much speak about rigidities at all. It is important to keep in mind that, both Fordism and Post-Fordism stand for ideal types.

In the Turkish literature on class or precarity, it is hard to find any detailed accounts of experiences of time as discussed above. It is generally stated that the new precarious working conditions and precarization create an uncertainty towards future. Beyond these, Erdoğan (2011, pp. 99-100) explains two main ways the lower classes in Turkey experiences time: First is a saving the day and daily survival focused way of experiencing the time that sees the plans and dreams about the far future as meaningless; which is mostly observed among the fractions that are totally excluded from the production process. Second is a seeking for a long-term security at the expense of the needs of the present, such as becoming a homeowner or getting a regular job; which is seen among the labourers that have a relatively secure employment. As we will see, there is a tension between these two tendencies in the garment workers; they both seek for long-term security and busy with daily survival strategies and seemingly more and more sceptical about plans and dreams about the future. This can be attributed to the precarization process as the garment workers gradually feel more and more pressure about the stability of their current situation as a result of macro-economic changes.

In the upcoming parts, beyond these theoretical approaches, time related praxis of the garment workers will be dealt with and the theoretical approaches provided here will be tried to be put in practice.

## **4.2 No Command on the Present Time**

As we have discussed above, the time spent in the workplace carries an alienated character to the worker herself under the capitalist production system. This time is under the strict surveillance of the control mechanisms of capitalist work. In this setting, capitalist work itself asserts itself as the most legitimate and powerful mechanism of control. In this part, we will deal with rather direct experiences of time in garment production.

Garment production is characterized by a high time pressure and volatilities in the demand. This has two main conclusions for the garment workers. First, most of the garment workers work under the stress of reaching a certain number of products

in a specified time. If these number targets are not reached, the garment worker can easily be fired or may face with a pay cut. Second is that, ever changing demand levels and volatilities translated into the lives of garment workers as the unpredictability of working time and unbearably long working hours, as Efsun (20) complained in the opening case of this chapter indicating that garment workers know only when to enter the atelier, but do not know when the work will end.

Bahçe & Köse (2010, p. 26) states that, based on statistical findings, the average working hours per week of the urban wage-labourers in Turkey increased from 65.41 hours per week in 2002 to 80.97 hours per week in 2008, with a decrease in real wages per person in households. Although the legal maximum working time is 45 hours per week and 11 hours a day, in almost none of the garment production sites such limitations are respected. Daily working times may extend as much as 15 hours a day, and for most of the workers a six day a week working scheme is valid. The garment workers interviewed also reported overnighting incidences in times of extreme demand to fulfill orders. Although overtime work decision should be given not without the consent of the worker under the 4857 Labour Law (2003), in practice the garment workers are never asked about this decision and they are expected to obey the overtime decision without questioning. A failure to do so ends in dismissal of worker. Overtime pay, although regulated in the Labour Law, is an arbitrary decision of the employer and usually unpaid. The uncertainty of working time also puts a hold on the off-work time of the workers. There remains so little time for socializing, for regeneration and for the family. Sleeping, especially going bed with the sun, most simple need for humans become a burning desire for most of the workers. Selda (23) for example, when asked about what kind of a life she desires, replies that what she desires is going bed with the sun.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> “S.Ç: [...] Peki nasıl bi hayat özlüyorsun; böyle bir hayat tasvir edebilir misin, anlatabilir misin? [What kind of a life are you longing for, can you describe such a life?]

S: Ya sabah uykusuna hayret... hasret kaldım. (güler) Ya şu anda baksan gözlerim de kırmızı sabahleyin erken uyanmaktan. Ya sabah bana kalsa insan beş... ya sabah 9'da işe gelmek en güzel ya... İnsan böyle rahat bi şey istiyo.” [I miss morning sleep. If you look, my eyes are red because of getting up early in the morning. What a beautiful thing is starting work at 9 o'clock... You want such a cushy thing...]

Having no command on one's own time lays at the centre of garment workers' most painful time experiences that also causes most disturbances. Esra (21) cries for gaining her command on the time back as follows:

"I don't want to live based on hours! I don't want to think about the time. I don't want to wait for the time, while doing anything!"<sup>100</sup>

Keeping up with the time targets, gets on the workers' nerves. Having to work under a high stress for long hours for years makes its place in the nervous psychologic character of the garment workers. Having spent just a few weeks among these people, one can easily notice that they can easily get tense as they learn to be over-responsive to external stimuli in the workplace. Being under stress, having high job stress, being unable to relax are common narratives to be found in the speeches of garment workers. Hayriye (33) talks about this stress as follows, without leaving much need for further explanation:

H: [...] And this job is a very stressful job. Garment is very stressful, you can't stay healthy.

S: Why is it stressful?

H: Why is it stressful? Because, the numbers you have to fill out are always high, [...] it happened to me, when I was in Arnavutköy. They gave me 3 lines, they say "10.000 piece will be finished in these 3 lines". I get stressed, this work will be done, this way or that way. You get stressed, if the numbers can't be achieved, because you have to account for it. He asks you 'how much', at the end of the day. Say 5 thousand, it is under 10.000, he asks why? [...] You work whole day, it is stressful, too. It's not easy, you work for 12 hours. We start working at 8 o'clock, I finish at 8 in the evening. Sometimes at 9, 10. There is the stress of not taking a rest. It's not like a normal job, like a desk job, [there] you sit all day, you answer the phone, time passes. But our job is different, you are on the move all day. You have to finish, you say I shall do this and that, the more the better, it's always the same."<sup>101</sup>

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<sup>100</sup>"Ben saatle yaşamak istemiyorum! Saati hiç düşünmek istemiyorum. Hani bi iş yaptığım zaman, saat beklemek istemiyorum!"

<sup>101</sup>"H: [...] Bi de çok stresli bu iş bu. Konfeksiyon çok stresli, sağlam duramazsun."

S: Niye stresli?

H: Niye stresli? Adetler çok olduğu için, [...] Arnavutköy'deyken bana öyle olmuştu. Bana 3 bant verdiler mesela bana diyolar ki "bu 3 banttan 10.000 adet iş çıkacak". Mesela ben stresse giriyorum, bu iş çıkacak, şöyle olcak böyle olcak. Adet çıkmayınca sen stresse giriyosun çünkü hesap vermek zorundasın. Akşam geliyor sana diyo ki ne kadar iş çıkardın? Atıyorum 5 bin, 10,000'in altında 7-8 bin, diyo, "niye çıkmadı?". [...] Bu stresler de çok. Bütün gün akşamda kadar çalışiyosun çalışiyosun onun stresi oluyo. Kolay değil 12 saat çalışiyosun. Saat sabah 8'de işbaşı yapıyoruz akşam ben 8'de çıkıyorum. Bazen 9 10 oluyo. Bi dinlenememezliğin stresi de var. Normal iş gibi değil, masabaşı iş

Reading or listening through the speeches of garment workers, one can easily understand why Marx, talking about the working-day, resembles the capital directly to a vampire, sucking the living labour in order to live (i.e. to valorize itself) (Marx, 1976, p. 342). The capital not only sucks the living labour of workers, but also the livelihoods, joy and mental health of them to the extent that it tries to prolong the working day to the longest possible limit, leaving a very limited time only for basic physiological needs.

The capital's affecting the mental health of the workers is not an empty rhetoric. Doing a highly monotonous, repetitive work<sup>102</sup> that needs utmost concentration for inhumanely long hours have really severe effects on the mental health of the workers. The symptoms of working under high stress for long hours are mostly observed in the households of these workers as (verbal or even corporeal) violence in the family. Esra (21), for example, stated that she was a peaceful person before she began working as a garment worker and reported to cut his wrist with broken pieces of windowglass in a quarrel she had with her parents. Adil (30) reproaches himself for not being able control himself while dealing with younger brothers and usually shouting at them. Raziye (47) talked about avoiding his older sister and old mother, with which she is living together, at home in order to not to break their heart as she cannot control her nerves. Elif (17) states that after the work she cannot bear even a little noise of her younger brothers and hurts them unnecessarily, although she is so passionate and full of love when speaking about them. This stress, of course, not always directed towards outside. Some of the workers live all the tension within themselves and shrink inside their selves. Abdurrahman (32), for example, as reported above had a partial facial paralysis because of this stress. Selda (23) is reported to having a psychiatric treatment and had not spoken with any of her workmates for longer than two months. Ayşenur (37) took her antidepressant pills in a break we gave in our interview, stating that “These are [pointing at the pills] are all because of the stress of this work”. Zülfü stated that

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gibi değil, akşamı kadar oturursun, telefona bakarsın şeye bakarsın, öyle geçer. Ama bizim ki öyle değil, devamlı bi hareket halindesin. Yetiştirmek zorundasın, şunu da yapıyım, bu olsun, daha fazla olun, hep böyle oluyo yani.”

<sup>102</sup> There will be a discussion on the monotony and repetitiveness on the next chapter, under the heading “Impoverishment of Daily Life Experiences”.

he has Behçet's syndrome because of the stress caused by garment work. Seyran (33) directly attributes her nervousness to working in the garment sector and says that main two characteristics of a garment worker is first talking too loudly and second being short-tempered:

"I was a joyful, humoristic person. As years pass by, textile work makes you nervous. And speaking loudly... As you work in noise. When you talk to somebody, it's hard to hear, so you shout out. Now, I can't prevent it, while talking to friends. I mean speaking loud. Then, you notice as your friends warn you, but you just cannot speak quietly. Also, you get angry to even tiny things. You know, it's because of those years, those conditions."<sup>103</sup>

We do not have any statistics or survey results concerning the mental health of the garment workers interviewed, however these incidences encountered in the interviews, off-the-record chatting and participative observations imply that garment work, in the long run, leads to a deterioration in the mental health and psychological well-being of the workers.<sup>104</sup>

Another complaint concerning time and control over it reveals itself in garment workers' speech on overtime work announcement in the evening as they are near to stop working. Consider the examples below:

"S.C.: How does it feel, I mean, how do you feel, when they say 'there is overtime today' for example at 6 o'clock?

Selda (23): They'd better swear!"

"Seyran (31): [...] when the work accumulates, you work overtime. You think all day I'll do this and that when I'll go home, but as he says overtime, all your dreams... That... That psychology cannot be defined, really. [...] You know, you say neurotic... it is really so."

"Esra (21): Err... Textile environment... There are no rights in textile work, human rights... It's too dusty. Plus, you live by hours. Textile means hours. You are getting bored, you sit all day. You are bored of sitting down. At some places, they play arabesque music. I don't know..."

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<sup>103</sup> "Ben de çok şey bi insandım bak. Hani böle şakacı, dolu dolu. Yıllar geçtikçe tekstilin sana verdiği bi sınırlılık kalıyor. Bi de yüksek konuşma... Gürültüde çalışıyosun ya hani. Biri bi şey konuştuğunda duymuyo bağıriyo. Şimdi arkadaşlarla konuştuğum zaman ona hakim olamıyorum. Bi yüksek sesle konuşma. Sonra arkadaşlar uyarınca şey yapabiliyosun ama kışamıyosun. Bi de olur olmayacak şeye, küçük bi şeye de sınırlenebiliyosun. Hani o yılların, koşulların verdiği bi şey."

<sup>104</sup> Of course, all these symptoms cannot be only linked to garment work and stressful working conditions because of time squeeze. One should always keep in the mind that these workers also have lives full of sufferings. What is here asserted is only to claim the possible relation between working conditions, anxiety about time and lack of psychological well-being.

I don't like it... You wait until 7. The boss comes suddenly: 'There is overtime!' I hardly wait until 7; I can't put up with working after 7. I mean it's very... It's not a good job.

S: You go out in the morning but don't know when you will get home. How does it feel? Do you sometimes think that you don't have a say on your own life?

E: Well... We think, when the work is intensive. We finish work at 7, when it's not intensive. If it's intensive, we expect that they would say 'there is overtime tonight, works are to be finished'. When they say so I... I go crazy, I feel very bad. I get pissed off.<sup>105</sup>

It is possible to give more of such accounts. Learning that they have to work for more than evening is, as indicated above Selda (23), like hearing a heavy swear from someone. Also it is important to note here that, workers indicate openly that hearing that there will be overtime heavily gets on their nerves. Although they report that contingent overtime work is one of the most irritating things in garment work, doubly irritating being overtime and being contingent, the incidences of directly and openly rejecting overtime work; although one can imagine of the discontented grumblings in the air and displeased looks in garment ateliers; are quite rare. This is directly related with the fear of losing their job, which is built deep in their consciousness through the existence of a large reserve army and spectre of being easily replaceable. The workers come to learn that there exists a reserve army of labour and they are easily replaceable through experiences of unemployment, which every worker interviewed had at least once in their working lives.

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<sup>105</sup> "S.Ç.: Yani o nasıl bi şey? Mesela saat altı oldu; bu gün mesai var denince nasıl hissediyorsun?"

Selda (23): Valla küfür etseler daha iyil!"

"Seyran (31): [...] işler yoğunla geldiği zaman, dediğim gibi mesaiye kahiyosun. Düşünüyosun tüm gün eve gidince şunu yapcam bunu yapcam, o mesai diyince bütün hayallerin... O var ya... O psikoloji anlatılmaz gerçekten. [...] Hani diyosun ya, sınır hastası... Gerçekten de."

"Esra (21): Şöyledir... Tekstil ortamı... Tekstilde haklar yok, insan hakları... Tozu falan çok. Artı, saatle yaşıyosun. Tekstil demek saat demek. Sıkılıyosun, sürekli oturuyosun. Oturmaktan sıkılıyosun. Zaten radyo çalıyorlar bi de, bazı yerlerde arabesk çalıyorlar. Ben ne bileyim... Sevmiyorum ya... Bekliyosun, 7'yi bekliyosun. Pat, patron geliyo: 'Mesai var!' Ben 7'yi zor beklemişim; 7'den sonrasıńı kaldırıramıyorum. Yani çok... Hiç güzel bi iş değil.

S: Şey nasi bi şey, sabah çıkışyosun evden ama akşam kaçta evde olacağını bilmiyosun. O nasi bi duyguya? Bazen şey düşünüyo musun; 'kendi hayatım üstümde bi hükmüm yok'?

E: Tabii, şöyledir... İşler çok yoğun olduğu zaman düşünürüz. İşler yoğun olmadığı zaman zaten 7'de eve gitiyoruz. İşler yoğun olduğu zaman bekliyoruz; ne zaman diyecekler, "mesai var bu akşam, işler yetişecek". Böyle denildiği zaman ben zaten böyle... Gidiyorum yani, çok kötü oluyorum. Sinirlerim bozuluyo."

The case of contingent overtime work strengthens the idea that, the garment workers have almost no control over their present time. The loss of control of present time goes beyond the capitalist logic, which justifies the appropriation of the surplus labour time of workers in exchange for wage, as a result of the specific characteristics of garment sector. Not having any mechanisms for protections against the volatilities of the market and being always available for the capital's valorization, given that there is a demand for, is one of the typical qualifications of labour in garment work.

The another side of contingent overtime work is, to the extent that demand for labour and level of employment is highly dependant on the global appetite for garment products produced in Turkey, intermittent employment and incidences of unemployment for the garment workers. This intermittent employment is another facet of losing the control of present time. Garment worker, once being unable to find some free time even for her basic needs, in the case of unemployment, now finds himself in an absolute void, in abundance of "free" time, with which he has no idea what to do. This fact not only proves once again the lack of control of his present time, but also ruins the self-respect of the garment worker. The white-collar unemployed in Turkey also lives the unemployment as a threat to their selves, an injury in their egos, which is self-prevented to be expressed explicitly as it also constitutes a threat of loss of respect (Erdoğan, 2011, pp. 89-98) As Denning (2010, p. 79) has truely stated, "under capitalism, the only thing worse than being exploited is not being exploited". Ersan (25), for example, states that being unemployed not only means a lack in respect but also affects the the status of the worker in the social circle:

"S: Well, how is it to be unemployed, to loaf around?

E: Being unemployed sucks, you know. You stay at home alone. You don't have money, you can't go out. You know, there is nobody to chat with on weekdays. Nobody chats with you, everybody is at work. So, it sucks.

S: Does it make you lose your self-respect?

E: Well, let me put it that way, people respect you, if you have money. If you don't, they don't show respect. For example, in a social setting, your friends say: 'This guy is unemployed, he

doesn't have any money in his pocket. How can we stand him up and hang out without him?  
That's it...”<sup>106,107</sup>

As conceptualized by Marx (1976, p. 783), employment and unemployment are not two different separable phenomenons, but ‘greater attraction of workers by capital is accompanied by their greater repulsion . . . the workers are sometimes repelled, sometimes attracted again in greater masses’ (cited in Denning, 2010). Of course, when stating “workers”, Marx uses a categorical worker but not a specific one. However, a garment worker experiences this up and downs in employment in person. Ümit (35) describes this fact, by the help of his empirical knowledge, as follows:

“Ümit: [...] Textile is not so, you know, the work is not regular, you have certain breaks... It doesn't last lon, I mean.

S: How do you live on, when you are unemployed?

Ü: Well; if you can save some money while you're employed, fine. If you can't, you shop on credit, you borrow money from your friends, and you pay your debts as you begin working again. Err... [...] We turn around ourselves like a [he muses]... a... mill, we keep going, by grinding ourselves again and again...”<sup>108</sup>

In this account, Ümit (35) defines the garment work as a drifting from being employed to unemployed, and in the meantime grinding and regrinding themselves

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<sup>106</sup> “S: Peki nasıl işsiz kalmak, boş kalmak?

E: İşsiz kalmak hani kötü bi şey. İnsan evde yalnız kaliyo. Parası olmuyo, dışarı çıkmayı. Ne bileyim hani, konuşacak bi insan olmuyo zaten haftaiçi. Kimse konuşmaz, herkes işte. O yüzden kötü bi şey.

S: Kendine olan saygınlık falan şey görüyo mu? Sarsılıyo mu?

E: Ya söyle deyim, hani paran varsa insanlar sana saygı duyuyor. Paran olmazsa saygı duymaz. Şöyledir mesela, bi ortama girersin. Derler ki mesela, arkadaşların: ‘Bu adam çalışmışyo, bunun cebinde para yoktur. Biz bunu nasıl ekelim de bi yerlere gidelim?’ Öyle...”

<sup>107</sup> It is striking to find such a strong similarity when comparing what Ersan (25) said about being unemployed to that of a white collar unemployed, as quoted by Aksu Bora (2011, p. 130): “[...] Eski güzel zamanlardan kalan tanıdıklar ve dostlar artık o kadar samimi gelmiyor. Karşılaştığımızda beni ilgisizce selamlıyorlar. Artık bana sigara ikram etmiyorlar, gözleri sanki ‘Bunu hak etmiyorsun, çalışmıyorsun,’ der gibi bakıyor.” [My friends from good old days are no more warm to me. They greet me indifferently, when we encounter. They no more offer me cigarettes, their eyes look at me, as if they are saying ‘You don't deserve this, you are not working’.]

<sup>108</sup> “Ümit: [...] Tekstil çok böyle şey değil, düzenli iş yaptığından değil, belli boşlukların oluyor vs... Çok fazla yürümüyor yani.

S: Peki boş kaldığınız zaman nasıl idame ettiriyorsunuz yaşamlarınızı?

Ü: İşte şey; diyelim ki o dönem çalıştık da eğer kenara bir şeyler koyabiliyorsan koyuyorsun; koyamıyorsan zaten tekrar bakkala yazdırıyorsun, arkadaşından borç alıyorsun, iş açıldığında tekrar çalışıp onları ödüyorsun. Yani ee... [...] Şey gibi böyle döneriz... Böyle şey [düşünür]... Bir ... değirmen gibi böyle kendimizi, tekrar tekrar öğüterek devam ederiz yani başka...”

as a milestone in a mill, however in an uneven circularity. Just like a mill is subject to a natural force such as flow of water or wind, the garment workers are also directly subject to the volatilities of the market. This takes us back to again, loss of control of one's own time.

Although losing control of a person on his own present time, different aspects of which were presented above, is one of the most displeasing and distressing experiences the garment workers have, there are too little open objections against it. It seems that, the basic, traditional eight-hour struggle that has been central in the making of the working class in the early capitalist countries still have a significant and urgent meaning for the garment workers of twenty-first century Istanbul. Therefore, as a form of alienation, having no command on the present time has in itself dialectically the potential for being transformed into a discourse of mobilization and collectivization against the capital in terms of claiming back the dignity and the control of their own time of garment workers; i.e. a potential for de-alienation.

#### **4.3 Ways of Escaping from the Present Time: Daydreaming and Others**

To the extent that the workers are alienated to their own-time and accordingly robbed of their command on the present time, some unconscious/semi-conscious responses are formed both in the workplace and in free-time of the workers. These responses not only confirm the alienated character of time of workers, but also implicitly indicate a desire for redemption, for non-alienation and for claiming the control on their time back. However, this desire is not a fully constructed, developed view of an alternative world. It is highly manipulated by the dominant values and hegemonic culture. However, it is significant in its own right to the extent that it is an inner objection to dominance of capitalist hold on the time of the worker, to monotony and to boredom of the work. A noteworthy way of escaping the present time, encountered in the interviews was “daydreaming”.

It was first Seyran (31), who centred my attention upon the issue of daydreaming during work:

“Seyran (31): A textile worker cannot live without such dreams, I guess. I dream a lot, too.

S.Ç: In front of the machine?

S: Of course. There is nothing else you can do. You get scolded, if you talk to your friends next to you. Let alone the foreman, there are huge cameras in the workplace. [...] For example, textile worker is daydreamer, loves daydreaming. I dream a lot, too. I love to daydream especially about my brothers and sisters. Otherwise, a textile worker can't bear the living conditions. For example, some women, married women dream about their children, about their education or marriage...”<sup>109</sup>

She states that, without daydreaming it is impossible to bear this life. A study on daydreaming also confirms this observation of her. Klinger (1987) has found that, rather than being a symptom of poor mental health, daydreaming acts as a way of coping with personal situations and boredom in the job. Through daydreaming, the garment workers create an alternative and phantasmic present-time, into which they escape from the monotonous and boring present-time they have at work. Unlike the lack of control over their own time, their minds float freely on the matters of their own choice. Because the garment work is highly repetitive and does not always require mental involvement in the work, the mind finds an autonomous space to float in. Selda (23) provides us an example for creating an alternative now-time at work in the following speech:

“S: I sometimes think, in the afternoons, “I wish I were outside, somewhere else”. Sometimes, so many ideas come to one's mind... If you work with the machine, never mind, you can do that blindfolded (laughs) One's mind is mostly not in... Say, a beautiful song plays, you beat out... You deliberately beat out on the table. I do that a lot.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> “Seyran (31): Ya böyle hayaller olmasa tekstil işçisi heralde yaşayamaz. Mesela ben de çok hayal kurarım.

S.Ç: Makine başında mı?

S: Tabi ki. Yapacağın başka bi şey yok ki. Önündeki arkadaşınla konuşsan arkadaşıyla konuşsan firça yiyoşun, azarlanıyorsun. Ustayı geçtik, koskoca kameralar var işyerinde. [...] Hayalperesttir mesela tekstil işçisi, hayal kurmayı çok sever. Ben de çok hayal kuruyorum. Özellikle kardeşlerim üstünden hayal kurmayı çok seviyorum. Onlar da olmasa tekstil işçisi o yaşama koşullarına gerçekten dayanamaz. Mesela bazı kadınlar, evli kadınlar varsa çocuğu üstüne hayal kurar. İşte onu okutturcam, evlendircem şunu yapcam bunu yapcam...”

<sup>110</sup> “S: Ya bazen mesela akşam üstü oluyor yani “keşke şu saatte dışında olsam falan falan” diyorum; “yani böyle bi yerde olsam”. Bazen de yani çok şeyler insanın aklına geliyor yani... Makinada çalışıyorsan o işe yapıyorsan boş ver gözü kapalı yapıyorsun (güler) İnsanın aklı [hep başka yerlerde]... Mesela güzel bir türkü çıktı mı, kaset, pedala vuruyorsun... Sehpaya kasten vuruyorsun. Ben onu çok yaparım.”

The daydreams do not have a specific subject. They are most of the time related with daily matters outside work and are about relationships, past or future:

“Hayriye (33): [...] People get locked in while working, It goes so far as to dream.

S: That I was going to ask, as well. Have you ever daydreamed in front of the machine?

H: Of course! How will time pass? They start to dream, you know, either about the past or about the future. They have children... a boyfriend or a fiance. So, time always passes with dreams.

S: What do you daydream about?

H: Whatever that comes to my mind, whatever that I focused on that moment. I mean, momentary things, not daily.”<sup>111</sup>

The crucial thing in the daydreams is not their being about a specific thing or subject, as it can be seen above; it can be about basic daily matters or even momentary thoughts. What is important about daydreams is their being a repercussion of a – “Not-Yet-Conscious” - reaction against the alienative character of work under capitalist garment production. According to Bloch (*The Principle of Hope*, 1996), what is reflected in daydreams is a quest for internal freedom and the Not-Yet-Conscious is latent in it. In contrast to night dreams, the mind consciously selects what to dream about in a world not yet become. Daydreaming “extends [...] into that of the utopian dimensions” (Bloch, 1996, p. 94). However, daydreaming is an individual activity in itself; individual hopes are to be socialized and utopias should be concretized through a revolutionary strategy.

Another way of escaping the present alienating time and constructing an alternative temporality as a reaction can be found in religious views of some of the garment workers. For example, Esra (21) emphasizes that this world –and the sufferings, monotony and boredom it brings- are ephemeral; and constructs an imaginary alternative temporality in her belief in after-life in order to combat the

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<sup>111</sup> “Hayriye (33): [...] İnsanlar çalışırken böyle sabitleniyio, kafanda hayal kurmaya kadar gidiyosun.

S: Ha bak onu da soracaktım. Hiç makine başında hayal kuruyo musun?

H: Tabi! İnsanların vakti nasıl geçecek? Kafasında hayaller kurmaya başlıyolar işte. Ya geçmişî hayal edecek, ya geleceği. Çoğu çocuk olduğu için... Ya sevgilisi vardır ya nişanlısı ya bi şeyi. O yüzden hep hayallerle geçiyo.

S: Sen ne hayal edersin mesela ya da ne hayal ediyosun?

H: Aklıma ne gelirse, o an neye odaklandıysam, aklıma ne geliyosa. Yani günlük değil, anlık şeyler.”

alienation created by capitalist production. Selda (23) finds a moral peace in reading the holy book Quran, and finds herself in an imaginary alternative presence in which her sufferings are tranquilized:

“S.Ç: What do you feel, while reading the Quran?

S: You feel very happy, comfortable. I don't know if you readr or not, but one feels very comfortable.

S.Ç: What kind of a comfort is that...

S: You feel peaceful... If you pray believably, you become peaceful at that moment, you don't make an issue out of anything.”<sup>112</sup>

Of course, religious themes in the speeches of workers need further analysis. This study did not have any intention to enquire about the religious tendencies and beliefs of workers. Here, based on what some of the workers talked about religious themes in passing, a possible link between the loss of control over time and tendencies towards constructing alternative fantastic temporality is tried to be established. Remembering that, “[...] the greater the ephemerality, the more pressing the need to discover or manufacture some kind of eternal truth that might lie therein” (Harvey, 1989, p. 292) and that the etymological root of “precarious” is closely related with “praying” (prec-em means prayer) (The Oxford English Dictionary, 1961), this relation may become clearer.

In the next part, another rather indirect aspect of losing control of one's own time will be discussed, which is about having irregular incomes despite working regularly and having regular payments and the tension engendered thereof.

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<sup>112</sup> “S.Ç: Kuran okuduğunda ne hissediyorsun? O nasıl manevi...

S: Çok mutlu oluyorsun, böyle rahat oluyorsun. Belki okumuşsunuz, okumamışsınız bilmem ama insan kendini çok rahat hissediyor.

S.Ç: Nasıl bir rahatlık o, nasıl...

S: İçine huzur giriyo ya... On dakka yani, kendin çok inanarak okuduğun zaman o dakka hiç bi şey aklına gelmiyor, fazla böyle sorun yapmiyorsun.”

#### **4.4 Irregular Incomes, Regular Payments: The Art of Living on Credit**

The wage-labourers in Turkey, and the garment workers in specific, also suffer from another squeeze in time in terms of income-payment relation. Depending on rather small amounts to live, the timing of incomes they get is crucial. Being unable to get their wages on time means so much trouble for them, as they are burdened with regular payments of rents, utility bills, etc. However, only a few workers stated that they were able to get their money on time. Delay of payment of wages is a committed fact in the garment sector. Beyond the delay of payment of wages, the garment workers also always have the risk of being unemployed at any time, which adds to the mismatch between income and payments. Such a condition of living prompted some specific coping strategies, which are not always proven to be successful, and these will be demonstrated in this part.

In order to understand the time experiences of garment workers, making sense of their art on living credit is crucial. The subordinated classes in Turkey have some traditional ways of coping with the uncertainty of their incomes. Shopping from the neighbourhood's empathetic grocer on credit and paying when money is available is one of them. Another one is falling back on solidaristic ties of kinship or friendship in times of need and paying back after the financial stress is over. Although these traditional ways of relieving financial distress are more and more scarcely observed in our times, it is still able to observe several incidences of such of fund raising in times of need. Another way to survive financial difficulties resulted by decrease in the income is lowering the expenditures to the lowest possible level to allocate the last few bucks for a longest time possible. Hayriye (33) talks of such a financial distress as follows:

"H: I was trying to manage, when we had only one salary. But how? You can neither pay the bills, nor do anything else. You can only eat. You know, we lived from hand to mouth, we were trying to pay for the little things we wanted to do. That's it..."

S: You were meeting basic needs.

H: Yes. But, after my husband started working, we then tried to clear up. And that was difficult, of course.”<sup>113</sup>

Getting by with small amounts of money means deferring most of the needs to an unknown future, and living from hand to mouth only.

In our times, more institutionalized forms of credit become widespread instead. This has close ties with the dominance of finance capital in our era and so called financialization of capitalism. Through financialization, the capital not only defers the crisis of accumulation and profitability through making a bet on future profits, which is non-existent in reality; but with the help of credit expansion and abundance of free capital, also tries to dominate the working classes through the reign of individual indebtedness; but in pursuing this twofold aim, to the extent that the labour does not let the required rates of exploitation that have been bet in the past as a result of its struggle against capital, also makes the capital stand on a fragile basis (Bonefeld & Holloway, Para ve Sınıf Mücadelesi, 2007). However, Bonefeld & Holloway (2007, p. 22) warns against underestimating the disciplinary power of debt and precarious work. In the contemporary Turkey, as Bahçe & Köse (2010, pp. 34-35) found out, the labouring classes in general and urban wage labourers in specific are increasingly cannot meet the expenditures with their incomes and in a continuous and increasing deficit, which means rightly that “the labouring classes in Turkey are indebted classes”. The main mechanisms of debt for the working classes are consumer loans from banks, credit-card uses, and overdraft accounts. Recently, Istanbul Chamber of Certified Public Accountants announced that, in the last five years consumer credits increased by 154% to an amount of 154 billion Turkish Liras, credit card debts increased more than twice in that period to 58 billion Turkish Liras, and debts in overdraft accounts are doubled to 4 billion Turkish Liras (ETHA, 2012). Turkish Statistical Institute (TÜRKSTAT, 2012) also declared that 61.8% of the non-

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<sup>113</sup> “H: Tek maaş olduğu zaman, ben idare etmeye çalışıyorum. Ama nasıl idare ediyorum? Tabi ki ne fatura yatırabiliyosun, ne bi şey yapıyosun. Yiyosun, anca yeme. İşte karnımız doysun, ufak tefek bi şeyler yapmak istediğimizde onları ödemeye çalışıyoruz. Öyle...”

S: Temel ihtiyaçları karşılıyodunuz.

H: Öyle. Ama eşim [işe] girdikten sonra bu sefer toparlamaya çalıştığımız dağılanları. Bu da zor oluyodu tabi.”

institutional population have instalments and loans/arrears; and 26.2% described these payments as a “heavy burden”

In the garment sector, there are only a few places where the payments to workers are made on time. It is quite usual and partly considered as acceptable to the extent that delay of payments is no more than a month. The workers are aware of complex subcontracting web in the sector, in which a late payment in a point affects the payments on the lower chains of the web:

“Hayriye (33): Of course, there were [delays]. If you pay day is, say, on 5<sup>th</sup>, he pays on 10<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup>. That results from, err, the firms, the counterparties. ‘We couldn’t get the money today etc...’. People find it reasonable. It’s not a big deal. 3 days, 5 days, 10 days... not a big deal.”<sup>114</sup> However, complex web of subcontracting also exploited by the employers in order to obscure their responsibility in the delay of payments. Deniz (30), for example, talks about an incidence when she was working for a subcontractor making the job for Turkish Airlines:

“D: For example, working for Turkish Airlines, we worked in a firm producing blankets for them. The boss was paying our wages once in 2 months and fudging our insurance payments. [...] He was giving money to us once in 2 months, but he was getting it from the state regularly. What was he doing with that money? He was getting its interest... With that money, he pays the wages of 2-3 workers.”<sup>115</sup>

Beyond the lending practices from institutional lenders or shopping on credit, workers have also other ways to solve their liquidity process. Abdurrahman (32), for example, says that after quitting the job in an atelier where he could not get his money on time, he got some portion of his payment in advance from where he began working. However, this way of “saving the day” puts the future in problem.

The easiest way of raising immediate funds without appealing to anyone else is using credit cards in satisfying the daily needs for reproduction of workers. Appealing someone else creates a feeling of dependency and loss of self-respect;

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<sup>114</sup> “Hayriye (33): Ya [gecikmeler] oluyo tabi. Mesela atıyorum ayın 5’inde maaş alıyosan tutuyo adam sana 10’unda 15’inde veriyo. O da şeyden, karşı taraftan firmalardan kaynaklıyo. ‘Bugün para gelmedi, şöyle olmadı, böyle olmadı...’. Onu da insanlar artık makul karşılıyo. Pek sorun olmuyo. 3 gün, 5 gün, 10 gün pek sorun olmuyo.”

<sup>115</sup> “D: Mesela Türk Hava Yolları’nda çalışan, biz firmada çalıştık hani oranın battaniyesini falan yapıyorduk. Adam 2 ayda bir maaşımızı veriyordu ve sigortamızı yarımla yamalak gösteriyordu. [...] Adam 2 ayda bir maaşımızı veriyordu. Ama o devletten düzenli alıyordu. Ne yapıyor, işletiyor muş... 2-3 işçinin maaşını bedavaya getirmiş oluyor.”

credit card usage eliminates such concerns about self through making the lending practice a de-humanized process. Thus Abdurrahman (32) describes the credit cards as “best friend when used properly”. However, the relations with this “best friend” can get worsened easily. Being unable to pay the debt to credit card may complicate the things for these people standing on the edge in financial terms. Debts pile up easily, untimely paid debts incur additional interest expenses on the principal debt. With unregular incomes, it is almost impossible for the garment workers to make these payments on time anyway. Therefore, the “best friend” of the garment workers in need, may easily become a powder keg:

“S: Do you use credit card?

Hayriye (33): No. We used once, and we couldn’t manage it. We are still paying its debt. [...] My husband used it excessively. He used it in shopping in the market, and in meeting his own needs, as well. Then he got fired, he stayed at home for 2-3 months. He is still paying its debt.

S: Then, is the credit card a bomb ready to explode in people’s hands?

H: Exactly. Also, for instance, you are supposed to get your money on 10<sup>th</sup>, but you end up being paid on 20<sup>th</sup>. There is the interest of your debt. If you buy on credit or by instalments, you try to pay both the interest and the principal amount. That doesn’t work. [...] It accumulates and accumulates, and you can’t pay.

S: Do you know people among the textile workers, who have trouble in this issue?

H: Most of the people I know have trouble in that, they can’t pay their credit card debts. They say they overused it. Even my brother is now paying for instalments of his credit card. He couldn’t manage to pay the whole amount and made it split into instalments, he is trying to pay that.”<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> “S: Şey var mı peki kredi kartı kullanımı?

Hayriye (33): Yok. Bi kere bi kullandık onu da kullanmadık zaten. Onun borcunu hala ödüyoruz. [...] Eşim onu kullandı ama aşırı derecede. Marketi de onla gördü, kendi ihtiyaçlarını da onla gördü. Ondan sonra işten çıktı, 2 ay-3 ay evde kaldı. Kendi yetişemediği için hala onun borcunu ödüyo.

S: O zaman kredi kartı patlamaya hazır bi bomba mı insanların elinde?

H: Aynen öyle. Bi de şey var, ayın 10’unda anlaşыosun 10’unda alamıyosun. 20’sinde alıyosun. O sana bi faiz veriyo. Kredi kartı ya da başka bi takside girdiğin zaman faizini ödüyosun, hem anaparayı ödemeye çalışıyosun. Olmuyo o da. [...] Birikiyo birikiyor, ödeyemiyosun.

S: Peki bu çevrende tekstil işçilerinden bu konuda sıkıntı yaşayanlar var mı?

H: Kredi kartını, benim tanıdığım insanların çoğu sıkıntında, ödeyemiyo. Aşırı gittik, şöyle oldu, böyle oldu. Benim abim bile şu anda kredi kartından dolayı taksit ödüyo. Onu ödeyemedi, taksitlendirdi ve onu ödemeye çalışıyo.”

Contrary to common middle-class belief that credit card uses are most of the time create problem for the lower classes because of emulating conspicuous consumption, the expenditures made by garment workers using credit cards are not usually for luxury items but for unreplaceable needs. Given that most of them do not have even the basic social security as they work unregistered, in the most extreme and tragic cases credit cards may be used as a last resort to cover health expenditures of the family, as in the case of Ayşenur (37):

“A: [...] For example, I got a credit card in 2008, because my father was sick, he was on a medical program and we had no health insurance. Then what happened... My dad got worse, his illness proliferated. His expenses increased. I used my credit card for him, but I couldn’t pay the debt. Then my dad died, I couldn’t work because of my grief, for about two years. It was always in my mind, you know “How can I pay that?”... They were calling home, sending papers etc. to home. Let me say, the card had a limit of one billion one hundred millions [1100 tl] and the debt was four and a half billions [4500 tl] with its interest... A notification came to home. Legal procedure etc... [...] Then what happens? People can’t pay. Then what? When people sink into depression, they either kill themselves or steal to pay their debts, or get indebted again. They get into bigger debts in order to cover the older one. They fall deeper into the debt trap. Then what? They get depressed, and they either kill themselves or go mad.”<sup>117</sup>

Living on credit, not only indicates a specific form of time experience; but also acts as a disciplining power. Deferring the payments for a certain period, may also mean *defering to the capital*. Seyran (31), one of the workers with a political consciousness and an undaunted passion for revolt, reports resigning herself to unacceptable working conditions because of being indebted:

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<sup>117</sup> “A: [...] Mesela benim 2008’de, ilk aylarda, babam hasta diye ilaç programımız var diye, sigortamız yok diye kredi kartı almıştım. Sonra ne oldu işte... Babamın durumu ağırlaştı, hastalıkları çoğaldı. Masrafları çoğaldı. Kredi kartını ona kullandım, bu sefer ödeyemedim. Sonra babam öldü, onun üzüntüsünden falan iki sene çalışmamadım. Beynimdeydi o, hani “Ben bunu nasıl öderim?”... Evi arıyo lardı, eve kâğıtlar falan geliyodu. Çok affedersin, bi milyar yüz milyon limitli bi kartı dört buçuk milyar olarak eve faiziyle, eve şey geldi... İhbar geldi. Yok işte yasal uygulama falan... [...] E ne oluyo? İnsanlar ödeyemeyince de kaliyo. E n’oluyo bu sefer? İnsanlar daha çok bunalıma girdi mi ya kendini öldürdüyo, ya da bunu ödeyim diye ya hırsızlık yapıyo, ya ordan buradan tekrar borca giriyo. Birini kapatayım diye birine giriyo bu sefer de. Daha çok batağa giriyo. N’oluyo, bunalıyo ya kendini öldürdüyo, ya cinnet geçiriryo.”

“S: I went there, too, the foreman is, sorry but, like a dog. He yells out, kicks the chairs etc. Anyway, I ignored him, because I desperately needed a job. I had a credit card debt, I had to work in order to avoid debt enforcement.”<sup>118</sup>

Bahçe & Köse (2010, p. 33) states that, in times of intensification of excess financial capital, being indebted becomes not only a necessity for the labouring classes but also a new mechanism of discipline; the relation of debt and payment is subjection of potential labourer to a virtual master, to *the capital as property*. What one can conclude is, the art of living on credit, as an experience of time under uncertain presence of precarious garment workers in contemporary capitalism, also puts a hold on the anticipation of future as redemption. However, one should also keep in mind the fragile basis this finance capitalism stands on.

#### 4.5 Saving the Day and Spending the Future for Today

The Fordist accumulation was characterised by a protective labour regulation, which ensured the future of the workers provided that they were part of a social security scheme as an actively working population at hand. The Zeitgeist of the era ensured an idea of progression in the eyes of the working class. This coincides with what Dörre (2011) calls as “linear & organized time regime”. In a similar manner, Tsianos & Papadopoulos (2006) argues that the welfare state has a protective function which is characterised by a time management in which the unproductive times of a worker is ensured into future by his immediate productive labour. They also argue that, in post-Fordist capitalism there is no place for such a time management, the question of future of workers became irrelevant to capital through the dissolution of the welfare state protections. There is only the present for the capital, and it is only interested in labour as far as it is exploitable in its presence in the present. The precarity is explained as such a form of exploitation “which, by operating only on the present, exploits simultaneously also the future” (Tsianos & Papadopoulos, 2006). Garment

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<sup>118</sup> “S: Oraya da gittim, yani ustabaşı da, çok afedersiniz, köpek mi köpek bi adam. Bağariyo, çağarıyo, sandalyeleri tekeliyo filan. Neyse ben aldırış etmedim çünkü onda gerçekten işe çok ihtiyacım var. Kredi kartına borcum var, çalışmak zorundayım ki eve icra gelcek diye.”

workers, in such a precarious condition, are ripped of their anticipative capacity towards future and are reduced to live day by day at the expense of founding a reliable future.<sup>119</sup> In this part, such an experience of time lived by garment workers, in the form saving the day, will be discussed.

Erhan (30), although he is one of the atelier owners and relatively better off when compared to other workers, states that he does not know what is coming next, what he only does is “saving the day, but nothing else.”<sup>120</sup> Similarly, Hayriye (33) tells that she just takes the things as they come and does not have any plans concerning her job.<sup>121</sup> Castel argues that “social insecurity turns the life of a man to a day to day life struggle resolution of which is always uncertain.” (Castel, 2004, p. 35). Such a disposition of garment workers towards future and its material basis is best described by Ersan (25) as follows:

“E: [...] Life of a textile worker is as follows: He waits for the end of the month to get his money. He has money in his pocket for 3 days, after 3 days, the textile worker doesn’t have any money in his pocket. [...] The rest of the month... If there are some shops selling on account, he buys his cigarette, his needs from there and gets indebted... I mean, he has no benefit from the money he gets. Because, you get your money and pay your debts with it. You have nothing left. Textile worker is a worker without money. He works for nothing. Because he starts working at

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<sup>119</sup> However, at this point, we have to remember that “living day by day” is not specific to the condition of working class in the last several decades. Castel (2003) has already genuinely shown that, based on the French experience, the early years of capitalism is also marked by such conditions of living and stated that we can talk of a comeback of pauperism. It is also plausible to argue that, Fordism as a form of capital accumulation and accompanying protective regulations should be seen as an exception rather than rule in capitalist history (Neilson & Rossiter, Precarity as a Political Concept, or, Fordism as Exception, 2008), (Mitropoulos, 2006). We have to keep in mind that, “capital is precarious, and normally so” (Mitropoulos, 2006). Mitropoulos (2006) also points out the fact that, Fordism and regular, full-time, long-term employment, which characterizes it, were only possible through women’s domestic labour and hyper-exploitation of labour in the periphery countries and presence of those labour have always been precarious. Although I agree with most of the implications of these works, such claims should not be a reason to turn blind to the transformations taking place in the last three decades. I believe that, there is some novelty in the form capitalism took in the last three decades.

<sup>120</sup> In his original words: “Biz ne yapacağız... Şu anda bir bilgi yok. Meçhul... Yani biz sadece şu anda yaptığımız şey, günümüzü kurtarıyoruz. Başka bir şey yok.” [What will we do?... Now, there is no info, unknown... I mean, what we are doing now is just saving the day. There is nothing else.]

<sup>121</sup> “[Planım] yok, biz sadece önumüze bakıyoruz nereye kadar giderse.” [I don’t have [any plans], I just take the things as they come.]

8.30 in the morning and works until 10-12 pm, but gains a little money. What would you expect from a man, who earns 600 millions [600 tl]?”<sup>122</sup>

Such a condition of being only able to meet daily requirements creates a feeling of “working for nothing” as seen above quoted lines. As underlined by Ersan (25), such a way of living has the power to characterize the general being of garment workers in the eyes of themselves and also in the eyes of others. Such a condition of being is also an injury to selves of workers, among the injuries we have talked in the previous chapter, as can be inferred by Ersan’s saying that “what can you expect from a person getting just 600 TL a month?”; here the value of the worker is equated with the money he gets and what he is able to do with the money he gets.

A typical example observed among the garment workers of saving the day at the expense of future is their choosing to work unregistered without social security in order to be paid more. Normally, the cost of a registered worker with a legal minimum wage is 1095.68 Turkish Liras to the employer, and the worker gets a net wage of 739.79 Turkish Liras (ÇSGB, 2012). The difference between this cost and net minimum wage consists of the social security premiums paid by the employer. Some of the garment employers negotiate with workers to give some portion of it to directly to workers at the expense of registering them legally in the social security system. Through this way, the worker has more cash at hand; however her rights protected by the Turkish legislation are given away. The employer not only decrease the minimum cost of a worker in this way, but also has the ability to easily fire the worker as there will not be any severance pay.<sup>123</sup> Working unregistered, the garment workers neither have health insurance, nor have job security. The garment workers are not just ignorant to notice the importance of having a social security and job security, yet the heavy conditions the garment workers in force them to save the day

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<sup>122</sup> “E: [...] Mesela tekstil işçisinin hayatı şöyledir: Ay sonunu bekler, işte ay sonunda parasını alır. 3 gün cebinde parası olur, 3 gün sonra tekstil işçisinin cebinde parası olmaz. [...] Geri kalan günler de işte... Böyle yazdırın bakkallar falan varsa hani yazdırır. Sigarasını yazdırır, ne bileyim hani ihtiyacını yazdırır. Öyle geçer... Haa, aldığı paradan bi şey de ona fayda olmuyo. Çünkü, mesela aliyosun borcunu veriyosun, oraya veriyosun. Kalmıyo. İşte tekstil işçi de parasız bir işçi. Boşa çalışan bi işçi tekstil işçi. Çünkü insanlar sabahın 8 buçukta başlıyor, akşam 10-12’ye kadar çalışıyor ama çok güzel bi para almıyor. Ya 600 milyona çalışan bi insandan ne bekliyosun?”

<sup>123</sup> Actually, if the worker can prove that he has worked in a workplace through the testimony of a few witnesses, he can be entitled to his rights retrospectively through bringing a suit against his former workplace. See for example (Burak, 2008) for such an incidence. However, only a handful of garment workers are aware of such a legal process that can help them getting their rights retrospectively.

and do not look into the future. Abdurrahman (32) for example, has to compensate for the unemployment of his elder brother and his younger brother's being on obligatory military service:

“A: I get paid weekly. I did it, in order to meet the needs of the house in an easier way. Because I was carrying the burden of the household, as my brother was on military service. I was supposed to look after my mom and dad, also my bigger brother's children, as he is unemployed. [...] so, I had to work uninsured until my brother finishes his military service. Because if I have insurance, my wage becomes 600-700, instead of 1100, then nothing... In the end, my brother was on military service, you have to send him money. 200-300, you have to send at least 200. There are the monthly expenses of the house, you have to make them. Therefore, I found such a way. We finished 15 months in this way. Hoping for the best...”<sup>124</sup>

Currently, more than half of the workers (13 out of 24) does not have social security and they work unregistered. All of the workers except Esma (17) have an entry to social security system, i.e they have worked at least once for a while registered with social security. However, when the total number of days their social security premium paid compared to their total working time, one can see a great discrepancy between these two figures (see Appendix A for exact figures). What one can conclude examining the duration of working and duration of registered work is that the garment workers spends a considerable amount of time in unregistered jobs. We should also add that, working unregistered is not an exclusive characteristic of small-scale unregistered (*merdivenaltı*, so to speak) garment workshops. Even in the well established, registered big-scale garment producing factories there is a considerable amount of workers working unregistered. Haktan (31) and Zülfü (30), for example, negotiated with their employers and have been “entitled to” social security since one year after years of working unregistered in the same factory. Although they are at the age of thirties and have been in the active employment for more than 15 years, they have just one year of social security insurance paid to the state. What is more, they got this right through informal and personal relations with the employer, without

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<sup>124</sup> “A: Ben haftalık alıyorum. Haftalık aldığım için, biraz evin giderlerini daha rahat karşılamak için böyle bi şey yaptım. Çünkü kardeşim asker olduğu için evin tüm yükü üstüme bitti. Anne baba bende, işte abimin çocuklar bende, abim çalışmıyor. [...] o yüzden kardeşim askerden gelene kadar sigortasız çalışmak zorundaydım. Çünkü sigortalı çalışsam 1.100 değil de 600-700 alcam, bu sefer hiç... Sonuçta asker kardeşim oluyodu, ona para yollamak zorundasın 200-300. En kötü 200 yollamak zorundasın. Ayda bi evin gideri var, onları karşılamak zorundasın. O yüzden, yani, böyle bi yol buldum. 15 ayı da böyle bitirdik. Hayırlısıyla...”

informing their fellow workers about the situation, as this will initiate several more workers to ask for a social security payment from the employer, which will be found disturbing by the employer naturally. They report that, “when they were young” they just cared about the money in their hands and did not think of their future because of the burden of making their living:

“Haktan (31): Our life was wasted, we worked without insurance. We were not aware of what insurance means. We were looking for higher wages, higher increases in our wages.

Zülfü (30): We were just caring about the money we get, not the insurance.

H: We realised the significance of insurance in last 3-4 years. Never mind.

S: Was live money, hot money more appealing?

Z: Of course, and the reason for that was... the burden of making a living.

H: We ignored insurance, in order to get more money.”<sup>125</sup>

Here, it is noteworthy to state that, Haktan (31) has a tendency to attribute not caring for social security in the early years of their work-life to the ignorance of them; and if we consider that they begin working when they were just teenagers, it would be too much to expect from them to know the legal and proper way of an employment relation anyway. Whereas, Zülfü (30) directly attributes not caring for social security to the material deprivation they are in. In this case, a necessary and conscious *choice* is seem to be made on the favour of present gains at the expense of forgoing future benefits; which reminds one of specific time experience of garment workers.

Working unregistered for getting some more cash money at hand, does not only mean forgoing job security, but it also risks the garment workers’ health as they do not have any health insurance other than social security tied to their status in

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<sup>125</sup> “Haktan (31): Ömrümüz hani boş geçti, hani sigortasız geçti. Bilmiyorduk, eskiden sigortanın ne olduğunu bilmiyorduk. Yüksek maaşa bakıyorduk, fazla para alalım diye. Zammımızı, ‘yüksek zam verecem sana, bu kadar zam verecem’ diye.

Zülfü (30): Aldığımız paraya bakıyoduk yani daha doğrusu, güvenceye bakmıyoduk.

H: Son üç dört sene sigortanın ne olduğunu anladık. Yine de sağlık olsun.

S: Canlı para, sıcak para daha mı cazip geliyordu?

Z: Tabiiii; bunun nedeni de şeydi yani... Geçim sıkıntısıydı yani.

H: Fazla para kazanalım, fazla para gelsin diye biz sigortayı düşünmüyorduk yani.”

employment. Without a health insurance<sup>126</sup>, the health expenditures are far from affordable for a typical garment worker. In the wake of possibility of a serious health problem, the workers show signs of fate and fatalism, and even seek refuge in God:

“S: Haven’t you ever been afraid of [because you don’t have health insurance] having a serious disorder or an accident?

Erhan (30): Yes we did, however... It doesn’t make sense to pay for something nonexistent. First it happens, then you pay for it!”

“S: What if you get sick or unable to work?

Ayşenur (37) : I have never thought about that. I was always thankful to God. I said to myself God bless me, if I get sick. I didn’t work for 2 years, when my father died. He died in 2008. I started working again in October, September. God never leaves the subjects in trouble. My mom and me lived on one salary for two years, but we were never short of money. Even I didn’t understand how.”<sup>127</sup>

In these specific examples, the workers seem to turn a blind eye to anxiety and fear about the future; they indeed know they are and their health are in a possible threat, but to the extent that their presence are highly occupied with making the living for today, they hold these fears and threats at a reasonable distance to their selves. It should be stated that, these responses point out neither to the simple ignorance or belatedness of the garment workers, nor their negligence of the importance of a health insurance. It is inherent in being a garment worker to work unregistered and without any social security benefits. There are only a few places where the social security issues of the workers are handled properly. The garment workers are expected to be ready for working without any social security when they enter into

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<sup>126</sup> As of January 1, 2012; all the citizens of Turkey are required to be covered by the General Health Insurance (Genel Sağlık Sigortası – GSS). The interviews were made before this regulation.

<sup>127</sup> “S: Peki hiç korkmadın mı [sağlık güvencem yok diye], ne bileyim ben, ciddi bir rahatsızlık geçiririm, kaza geçiririm?”

Erhan (30): Ya, korktuk da yani... Olmayan şeyi de ödemenin, ödemeye tutmanın bir anlamı yok. Olacak ki, ödeyeceksin!”

“S: Peki hasta olsan, çalışamayacak falan olsan?

Ayşenur (37) : Onu hiç düşünemedim. Allah'a şükrettim. İňşallah dedim, böyle hani hasta olursam falan da Allah mutlaka bi yerden yardım eder. Benim babam öldüğünde ben 2 sene çalışmadım. 2008'de babam vefat etti. İşte daha Ekim mi, Eylül mü ne başladım işe. Allah sevdığı kulu hiçbir zaman darda bırakmaz. Biz iki sene annemle tek maaş yaşadık, ama bi gün de parasız kalmadık. Nasıl oldu ben de anlamadım.”

this business. Social security in garment sector is not a right provided by the legislation, although it has to be so in legal terms, but a privilege of the few workers in practice.

One of the garment workers (Ümit, 35), with an engagement with left politics, argues that there is a difference between the attitudes of garment workshop workers and garment factory workers towards social security. He asserts that a workshop worker thinks and lives daily and prefers cash money at hand to social security:

“Ü: An atelier worker –maybe you know, too- thinks daily; he thinks daily, he lives daily, so he doesn't care about social security. He cares about the concrete money in his hand. However, a factory worker is different. He is aware of the fact that the wages are lower, but he wants to have at least social security, and regarding the future, he thinks about the chance of becoming retired or the possibility of going to hospital in case of an illness. But the atelier worker doesn't care about these...”<sup>128</sup>

As a garment worker for more than two decades, we have to rely on the knowledge of Ümit (35) about the garment sector and garment workers considering his years of empirical observation; which cannot be replaced even by the best field work done. Here what we see is that, there can be a difference in terms of time experiences between the secure and insecure workers. That observation is also in line with what Erdoğan (2011) has said about the time experiences of the lower classes in Turkey as quoted above. The workers with more secure positions also seem to value more the social security, whereas the relatively insecure workers seem to do not care as much about it. This difference may lead one to think about the effect of precarization on anticipation, apprehension and attitudes towards future, some aspects of which will be dealt with in the next part. But, one should think about two cautions on this subject: First is, the workers working in larger scale garment factories have a history of working in the small-scale garment workshops and the vice versa may also be true. And one should also keep in mind that, working in a larger scale garment

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<sup>128</sup> “Ü: Bir atölye işçi -belki sizler de biliyorsunuz- günlük düşünür; günlük düşünür, günlük yaşar, bu açıdan da sosyal güvenceye şey yapmaz yani. Onun eline gelecek somut paraya bakar. Ama mesela fabrika işçi öyle değil. Daha düşük ücret olduğunu bilir ama en azından şey, sosyal güvencem olsun, ileriye yönelik –atıyorum- “emekli olma şansım olabilir” ya da “herhangi bir rahatsızlıkta hastaneye gitme ihtimalim olabilir” düşüncesini taşıır. Ama atölye işçi böyle düşünmez...”

factory does not automatically mean working with full social security; there is also a large deal of workers working unregistered in the registered, big scale garment factories. So, it is difficult to draw a definite boundary between these two groups of workers. Second is about the relation between “expectations” and “objective chances”. Bourdieu (2000, p. 216) argues that, “[...] through the dispositions of habitus (themselves adjusted, most of the time, to agents’ positions) expectations tend universally to be roughly adapted to the objective chances”. As a result of the “fact” that the industry should employ the labour with the minimum cost possible in order to be “globally competitive” and any kind of social security rights are seen as an extra cost; objective chances of finding a job with social security is much lower in the garment industry. Seyran (31), for example, experienced an unemployment that took for five months because she did not want to work anymore in unregistered *merdivanaltı* garment workshops and desired a job in a *decent* registered garment factory. It is possible that, the totally insecure garment workers seem not to care about social security and benefits because they have already internalized the idea that finding such a job with social security rights is almost impossible.

So far, although it is not possible to define solid demarcations between present and future, our concern has been largely on the garment workers’ experiences of present time. Upcoming parts will try to reveal what the garment workers experience about future.

#### **4.6 “There is no future!”: Deadening of Expectations, Lack of Rational Anticipation, Corroded Characters**

Sennett described the paradigmatic change in the meaning and perception of time in the new economy as “time’s arrow’s being broken” (Sennett, 1998, p. 98). This metaphor implied that, time was no more a predictable, plannable, linearly progressing concept. The question of future consisted of no more an idea of predictable progress but that of a risk, unpredictability and uncertainty and an accompanying future anxiety. That is a loss of a sense of future, where “any firm

sense of continuity” cannot be easily kept as a result of “volatility” and “ephemerality” of this flexible capitalism characterised by the “accelerations in turnover times in production, exchange, and consumption” (Harvey, 1989, p. 291). We have already seen in the previous parts, working in insecure conditions means a specific loss of control on the present time. But that is not enough. Castel (2004, p. 34) argues that, talking about the 19<sup>th</sup> century working class, “being in a continuous insecurity means neither having control on the present, nor being able to have a positive anticipation on the future.”

Such a disposition of anxiety about time and uncertainty about future finds its repercussion in the deadening of expectations and a loss of a confident and hopeful outlook towards future among the garment workers. For example Aslan (35) answers the question about his future expectations as follows:

“S: What is your expectation from the textile job, for after five years, ten years?

A: Not expectation... our expectation is, we can't see our future, I mean, we don't know what will happen tomorrow. The only thing we know is that textile sector is getting smaller, shrinking... What are we doing, what are we thinking regarding the future, in fact, we are trying to survive. [...] We don't have any idea about that, I mean, our future.”<sup>129</sup>

Aslan (35) emphasize that they give the struggle of their daily presence and are not able to have an idea about the future at all. The present conditions of their being occupy all their projective capacity. The present is already enough uncertain, and in these conditions future simply become incomprehensible for those workers. Even if they had some sort of expectations to be fulfilled in the future, in the wake of precarious conditions of working and being, these expectations fade away in the vagueness of future<sup>130</sup>:

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<sup>129</sup> “S: Peki bundan sonra bu tekstil işinden beklenen nedir; beş sene sonrası için, on sene sonrası için?

A: Ya beklenen değil... beklenimiz ya önlüğümüzü göremiyoruz; yani yarın ne olacak onu bileyemiyoruz. Ama bildiğimiz bir tek bi şey var, tekstil sektörü git gide ufalmakta, küçülmekte, daralmakta... Hani geleceğe dönük ne yapıyoruz, ne düşünüyoruz, var olmanın çabasını harcıyoruz daha doğrusu. [...] Ona dair, yani geleceğimiz hakkında bir fikrimiz yok.”

<sup>130</sup> For more on questions of dreams, expectations and hope see the part on dream of autonomous work in the previous chapter, and see the part on the killing of hopes in the next chapter. I think they have a close interplay with what is discussed here in this part, but every part has its own framework and way of dealing with these questions.

“Abdurrahman (32): I had some expectations, when I moved up from apprenticeship to machine. Why? I moved forward with the dream of starting my own business. I had that excitement, but, in line with our current lifestyle, I can say that my excitement died.”<sup>131</sup>

Beyond the deadening of expectations, the garment workers complain about not being able to make even simplest plans about their future. Sennett insistently argues that the motto of dominant time perception of flexible capitalism is that: “There is no long-term!” (see Sennett, 1998 and Sennett 2006). What we feel in the speeches of garment workers is that, this perception of time under new capitalism made its way into the common senses of the workers. Consider the following examples:

“S: Do you make plans together [with your wife]?

Erhan (30): Yes we do, but we can’t do much. We just work all day for the time being, there is nothing else.”

“Fethi (41): For me it’s like that... In the past, I was saying, for example ‘I’ll do that next week, it will happen next month.’ [...] I was making such plans, but now, I can no way make even tomorrow’s plan. We are in such a situation... I mean, I don’t know what will happen tomorrow, I’m just living. [...] We live in today, we live daily. In the past, I was able to say “this will happen next week, that will happen next month etc.”, but now, as I said... Daily or even hourly.”<sup>132</sup>

The emphasize on the first example is should be on Erhan’s (30) saying that “Now we are just working, and there is nothing else”; which reveals the fact that the grounds of the present are taken away from the garment workers to a point that they cannot think further than working for the time being. Fethi’s (41) statement, although what he means by “before” has in itself some ambiguity, is clearer in terms of the shortening of the horizon in his present condition of being. We have to remember that, this new conception of time is not neutral: “The time of flexibility is the time of

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<sup>131</sup> “Abdurrahman (32): Mesela çıraklıktan çıkip makineye oturduğumda güzel bir beklemiyordum. Çünkü niye? İlerde kendime bi iş kurma hayaliyle ilerledim. O heycan vardı ama şu andaki yaşam tarzına göre o heycan bende öldü diyebilirim.”

<sup>132</sup> “S: [Eşinle] birlikte plan yapar mısınız?

Erhan (30): Yaparız ama fazla yapamıyoruz. Şimdi hep çalışıyoruz, başka bir şey yok.”

“Fethi (41): Şimdi ben de söyle... Önceden mesela diyorum ki, mesela ‘bi hafta sonra şunu yaparım, işte bi ay sonra söyle olacak.’ [...] Böyle bi plan yapıyorum, ama şu anda yarının planını kesinlikle yapamıyorum. Öyle bi şeye girdik. Öyle bi... Yani, yarının ne olacağını bileyemiyorum, böyle yaşıyorum yani. [...] Bu günü; günlük yaşıyoruz. Önceden ben bunu, ‘bi hafta sonra şu olacak, bi ay sonra şu olacak, söyle söyle olacak’ diyebiliyordum, ama şu anda dediğim gibi... Günlük, saatlik bile diyebiliyorum.”

a new power” (Sennett, 1998, p. 39). This new power engendered by the capital’s never-ending thrust to get rid of any kind of rigidities in the labour market. This new power, to the extent that it means an almost uncontested control on the lives and life-times of masses of labourers in the flexible capitalism, also means a powerlessness of these labourers in terms of their control on their own time. This powerlessness not only plays down the significance of the sense of existence of these precarious workers, but also undermines the “projective absorption” of them; which means a further alienation to their future time:

“when the grounds of the present are taken away, people’s projective absorption ceases, and they are left with a debilitating experience of malaise that damages their sense of existence at the very deepest level. [...] What has been destroyed for these people is the sense of the conditions of their time as something they can use, through their action in the world, to realize themselves. Instead of the future being a field that stretches beyond them, it has become a vertical face they cannot begin to conquer.” (Charlesworth, 2004, pp. 196, 198)

In this new time regime, as the sense of succession of time is disrupted to a large extent, the past experiences cease to be the ground for present actions and present actions are no more targeted at a future progression. In such a setting, “the sense of personal lives became serialized, episodic, that of an atomised, never-ending present, bereft of past co-ordinates or progression” (Charlesworth, 2004, p. 162). Such a disruption is experienced in times of “intense phase of time-space compression”, as coined by Harvey (1989, p. 284), which is characterized by the dialectics of capital’s crisis and its being solved through temporal and spatial shifts. Capital, in its nature, consists of unrest. It is this nature of capital that, in times of crisis of capitalist expansion (into temporal and spatial dimensions), such a disruption of time experiences can be observed. Fordist accumulation period, which did not last longer than three decades, was an unsuccessful attempt in the end to standardise and normalise the capitalist unrest through certain regulations on the labour and capital on a nation state scale and may be reasonably seen as an exception in the history of capitalist production system.

Of course, such conditions of uncertainty, ephemerality, and volatility do not affect all segments of the society in the same way. Such conditions of presence have also made “risk-taking” for the people with enough economical, social, cultural and

educational capital a virtue and a way to assert themselves and their capabilities in the new era. What is experienced as a painful anxiety about the future in the garment workers as a group lacking any kind of capital to benefit from uncertainty may be seen as an opportunity to experience the joy of venture and claiming their individuality through the risks they have taken for especially the groups with abundance of various capitals who are eager to become the entrepreneur of their own labour, a disposition that can be seen mostly in the relatively better-off segments of white collar workers who are illusioned by the trendy values of mobility and flexibility of the new economy. Here, it is not claimed that risk is not a common feature of contemporary society for all of the workers; yet there is a qualitative difference between been reluctantly exposed to risk and willing to take risk and consciously seeking for risk.<sup>133</sup> Here, we can again apply to Bourdieu and his well known metaphor of game and sense of the game in understanding the difference between receptions of risk by dominant and dominated classes:

“Only for someone who withdraws from the game completely, who totally breaks the spell, the illusio, renouncing all the stakes, that is, all the gambles on the future, can the temporal succession be seen as a pure discontinuity and the world appear in the absurdity of a futureless, and therefore senseless, present, like the Surrealists' staircases opening on to the void. The 'feel' (sens) for the game is the sense of the imminent future of the game, the sense of the direction (sens) of the history of the game that gives the game its sense.” (Bourdieu, 1992a, p. 82)

Here, what Bourdieu compared to “surrealists’ staircase opening on to the void” is the best description for the meaning of present action and its relation with future for garment workers. They are in a continuous struggle to cope with the uncertainty, deprivation and ephemerality of the present time and in that situation they are not in a place to meaningfully contemplate about the future, which is rendered just meaningless in the exclusionary existence of daily coping activities they are fully busy with. The future is subsumed in presence. Likewise, in such a context, although they may seem to be similar at first sight, one should also distinguish between the “saving the day” practices of the lower classes and “live for the moment” practices of

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<sup>133</sup> Financially, risk is defined as two-way: both better-than-expected returns and worse-than-expected returns are included in the definition of risk. Risky assets have a higher return in general, but a higher probability to make a loss at the same time. That may mean, risk in the contemporary society both create losers and winners.

relatively better off middle class sections (Erdoğan, 2011, pp. 100-101). The main difference between these two seemingly similar time practices is the control and power on the time; for the first set of time practice life is out of control, while for the second one it seems to be under control.

Indifferent to the capacity to benefit from it, the permanent risk and a specific time experience related with the denunciation of the “long-term”, inherent in the logic of new capitalism, undermines the characters of the workers in precarious conditions. Sennett (1998) analyzed this situation with respect to the white collar workers in the USA. However, as Erdoğan (2011) has already proved its validity for white collar workers facing unemployment in the contemporary Turkey, basic premises from his conceptualization may well be extended to understand some specific future oriented time experiences of garment workers working under precarious conditions in a flexible capitalism and some implications on the potential of solidarity among the garment workers in search for a counter-hegemonic worldview. Sennett argues that, in a new economy, motto of which is “no long term”, it is not possible to establish a meaningful and sustained life narrative and in the lack of “sustained human relations and durable purposes”; trust, loyalty and mutual commitment and so the character are “corroded” (Sennett, 1998). In a similar manner Standing (2011, pp. 33-34), with an analytically very problematic definition of precariat as a class somehow, attributes several characteristics to the people precariously working as a result of their precarity: acting opportunistically as sense of cooperation and or moral consensus is endangered; fear from establishing long-term commitments; fragile moral reciprocities and “disavowal of empathy” as a result of competition among precarious workers.<sup>134</sup>

In the garment workers of Istanbul, it was possible to observe such tendencies in ways of acting, feeling and behaving. Especially, mutual commitment in the social relations can be said to be jeopardised, which found its manifestation in the workers’

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<sup>134</sup> However, we should approach these all with a caution and keep in mind that these attitudes, emotions and behaviours can also indicate a tendential disposition or we are ended up with a mechanistic and deterministic conception that assumes some determined ways of acting, feeling and behaving derived from a certain set of social production relations. The existing political atmosphere and existence/lack of political moment towards a collective consciousness also has an important effect on these isolative/divisive/alienating tendencies of the new economy.

relation to their family and friends. The most of the workers reported that, they usually do not form long-term friendships with their fellow workers, although the very same workers indicated that they spent too much time together, more than they spent with their family, and therefore become brothers and sisters. Only a few of the workers responded positive to the question whether they had a friend they still regularly communicate and meet, which they got to know themselves in an atelier/factory they worked together previously. Aslan (35), for example, states that although the garment workers got to know too many people, only shallow relationships are formed between them in terms of friendship:

“Textile is like... our sector is one, in which a lot of people work and get very tired, quantitatively a lot of people work in this sector, so you have a friend everywhere but it's like, you know, in terms of its level, it's not intimate, loose ties [...] So, you know, there are so many relationships but only a few become your close friends in time, not many, I mean...”<sup>135</sup>

In a similar manner, Erhan (30) tells that after his compulsory military service, he did not have any intimate friendships; his friendships do not go further than have a nodding acquaintance and they do not have any home visits to their friends. Ersan (25) also says that his friendships in the neighbourhood are just superficial, despite the fact that he has spent 10 years in the very same neighbourhood. The friendly neighbourhood image which entails warm relations, solidarity, and mutual assistance, seem to have long been a glorified memory in the past.

Familial relations are not exceptions to jeopardization of durable social relations. Yet the family still preserves its role as a buffer against the volatilities of the market in times of misfortune such as unemployment. However, the visits between the members of families are reduced to visits made in religious fests or in special days. Even within the household, these relations become superficial. The home is not a warm nest in which family gathers together and exchange experiences, rather most of the workers defined the role of their home as being simply a hotel to stay overnight. Of course, one also has to note that, beyond the shortening of time

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<sup>135</sup> “Şeydir tekstil, bizim iş kolu insanın çok çalıştığı, çok yorulduğu, sayısal olarak insanın çok çalıştığı bir sektördür; dolayısıyla çok her yerde bir arkadaşın, bir dostun olur ama hani bu şeydir, derecel anlamda söylediğin zaman böyle sıkı fikti olmadığını, gevşek ilişkilerin olduğu bi [...] O yüzden hani ilişkiler çok olur ama zaman içerisinde efendim dostun olduğu çok az insanlar vardır; o kadar çok değildir yani...”

horizon in the new capitalism, which hampers durable, sustainable social relations; the garment workers also characterised by lack of leisure time, which totally disrupts their relation to world outside the production place.

The lack of durable, sustainable social relations and mutual commitment, deterioration of sense of cooperation and increasing tendency to act opportunistically, and renunciation of empathy to each other among the workers as a result of instability, uncertainty, unpredictability and ambiguity of the future in the flexible capitalism also hamper the potential solidaristic ties among the workers in the ateliers and factories. The workers interviewed have a belief that, against the injustice encountered in the workplace, most of the garment workers will keep their silence and will not back up the one that is subject to injustice. Although almost all of the workers complain about this passivity of garment workers against the injustice in the workplace, they all claim that they would cry out against injustices in the workplace. Of course, this is not coherent in itself and it would not be wrong to think that, although most of the workers declared they would protest the injustice and believe this would be the right thing to do; in real life they also go silent in such situations. Selda (23) attributes this lack of solidarity to the lack of mutual trust among workers:

“S.Ç: Well, in the workplace, in these textile ateliers... do your friends back you, when you face with injustice?

Selda (23): They don't! Textile life sucks...

S.Ç: Why don't they protect each other? I don't know err... you say, we work for long hours, I mean, maybe you spend more time with these people than your family... Isn't there any solidarity among you?

S: There is nothing like that in textile life.

S.Ç: Why? [...]

S: People, nobody... in textile... there is not much trust in textile... Do you know why? You say something inside, they say ok, but they don't speak in front of the boss. Such is that.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> “S.Ç: Peki, mesela çalışma ortamında, bu tekstil atölyelerinde eee... senin... sen bi haksızlığa uğradığında arkadaşların senin arkanda duruyorlar mı?

Selda (23): Durmazlar! Tekstil hayatı berbat bişi...

Ersan (25), in a similar manner, declares that he does not trust his fellow workers and what is more he finds garment workers untrustable in general:

S: You say, you have no trust and belief in people?

E: No... They say ok to you now, they run away as you turn your back.

S: Are you saying that nothing can be expected from the textile worker, that they can't unite?

E: I am saying, I worked in various firms. I never saw such an environment, where people are interlocked with solidarity. Previously, I worked in a printing house as well. When the boss tells them to work until 10 pm, they were saying "no, we don't!". They were shutting the machines down and go out, no one could say anything. However, textile worker is not like that.

S: Why is printing worker so, but not the textile worker?

E: Textile worker... He is generally from the east[ern part of Turkey]. Easterners are the majority among the workers. They are obliged to work. I regard so. There are those thinking 'Who will look after my child, my home, if I am fired?'

S: Don't the printing workers think about it, I mean, being fired?

E: Printing workers, you know, as the number of workers is low in that job, employers have no choice but to work with them. [...] On the other hand, you can find a textile worker everywhere. Children leave school and start working in the textile sector. What will they do? There is nothing else to do. I mean, the number of workers increases every day.”<sup>137</sup>

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S.Ç: Niye tutmazlar birbirlerini? Ne biliyim eee... şimdi diyosun ki işte uzun süreler çalışıyoruz, yani belki ailenden daha fazla vakit geçiriyorsun bu insanlarla... Böyle bi dayanışma oluşmuyo mu aranızda?

S: Tekstil hayatında öle bişey yok.

S.Ç: Neden yok peki? [...]

S: İnsanlar kimse... tekstilde insanla... tekstilde güven fazla yok... Niye biliyo musun? Ya bunu, gelip içerde dersin "bu böyle" tamam derler ama patron karşısında çıkışınca konuşamazlar. Böyle bi şey.”

<sup>137</sup> “S: İnsanlara karşı bi güvenin, bi inancın yok mu yani?

E: Yok yani... Sana şimdi tamam derler, arkani dönersin senden önce kaçarlar.

S: Tekstil işçisinden bi şey olmaz, bunlar birlilik olmaz mı diyosun?

E: Ya ben diyorum, ben çok firma değiştirdim. Hiçbiri de ortam görmedim böyle. Birbirine kapatılmış bi ortam görmedim. Haa, bundan önce matbaada çalıştığımıza vardı. Mesela adamlar diyodu ki, '10'a kadar çalışın!' "Biz çalışmayız!" diyordu. Makineyi kapatır giderlerdi, kimse de bi şey diyemezdi. Ama tekstil işçi öyle değil.

S: Niye değil peki, matbaa işçi öyle de tekstil işçi niye değil?

E: Ya tekstil işçi... Zaten genellikle böyle doğudan olduğu için yani. Doğu kısmı daha çoktur yani işçi olarak. Adamların mecburiyeti var sanki. Öyle görüyorum yani. 'Ben işten çıkarsam çocuğuma kim bakacak, evime kim bakacak?' diye düşünenler var mesela.

What is interesting here is that, comparing garment sector with his experiences in a printing workshop, Ersan (25) explains the lack of solidarity among garment workers with the relative insecure position of garment workers in comparison to printing workers. The abundance of substitute workers in the labour market, given the fact of a reserve army of labour, which maintains a belief in those in the work that “they are no way irreplaceable” and “their jobs are [...] a privilege, a fragile, threatened privilege” (Bourdieu, 1998, s. 82-83), sustains a docile workforce in the garment industry. The uncertainty of the present, the insecurity of the future, not being able to predict what will happen if she is to be fired, as she could be fired quite easily as has no job security... All these factors, which are at the basis of the precarization process we have been talking about, are put in play to acknowledge the lack of solidarity and relative docility of the garment workers by a garment worker himself in his own language.

But the precarity and temporal experiences it creates as discussed so far, do necessarily lead to a deadening of expectations, lack of rational anticipation of future and deterioration of durable relations, mutual commitment and so the basis of a solidarity that has the potential to form a collective against the capitalist class? According to Bourdieu, it is usually the case. As a theme he first dealt with in his book on *Algeria* (1977) and then returned in his concise and pioneering article on precarity debates, *The Precarity is Everywhere Now* (1998, s. 81-88) and then in *Pascalian Meditations* (2000, p. 225); the unemployed and the causalized workers who are deprived of a stable employment and a sense of predictable future, to the extent that their “capacity to project themselves into the future” are deformed, which lies on the basis of rational conducts, are hard to be able to be mobilized. Bourdieu himself, does not give any explicit account of how such a mobilization can be achieved, but he does not dismiss the probability to break the “circle of expectations and chances” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 234). He asserts that there is a “relative autonomy of the symbolic order” and this relative autonomy “can leave a margin of freedom for

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S: Matbaacılar bunu düşünmüyo mu, işten çıkarsam ne olur diye?

E: Ya matbaacılar hani, bu meslek fazla yapılmadığı için hani işveren biraz mahkum. [...] Tekstil işçisi yani her yerde var. Okuldan çıkyo tekstile giriyo çocuk. Ne yapacak? Başka bi şey yok. Yani çalışani artıyo, her gün artıyo.”

political action aimed at reopening the space of possible" (p. 234). However, what he says about "the relative autonomy of symbolic order" and its relation to so-called "margin of freedom for political action" seems obscure. It is anyway problematic to think of a closed determination relation, which is based on the Bourdieusian perspective that suggests a social system producing and reproducing itself, between the position taken in the production process or forms of employment and political act as Bora & Erdoğan underlined (2011, p. 39). We will return to the questions of collectivity, political action and subjectivity with respect to experiences of time in flexible capitalism of the neoliberal era in the concluding remarks, after summing up together the discussions in this chapter.

#### **4.7 Concluding Remarks: Revolutionary Ideas as an Escape from the Time-trap of Precarity?**

We have seen that, time is a central issue in the class experiences. Time experiences of class not only yields essential information about the basics of class, but also give information about the living conditions and conditions of being of workers in a specific form of capitalism. Behind the symbolic power of having leisure time or not lies the basic mechanism of capitalist production relations, mechanism of which is uncovered by the value theory. Having no control on one's own time on the one side and holding the control of time of others on the other is closely related with the dialectics of alienation under capitalism. Under capitalism, subjects are objectified and objects are subjectified (Holloway, 2005, p. 61). Rather than people's subordinating time, they are subordinated to time in capitalist production system. It is so much valid in flexible capitalism of our time, where capital knows no limits and "rigidities" to its valorization and accumulation. Garment workers, in our case, not only lose their hold on their own present time through extremely long and irregular working hours; but also are ripped of their capacity to plan/organize their future time.

Bourdieu, referring to K. In Kafka's novel *the Trial*, describes the "alienated time" as follows:

“His uncertainty about the future is simply another form of uncertainty about what he is, his social being, his ‘identity’, as one would say nowadays. Dispossessed of the power to give sense, in both senses, to his life, to state the meaning and direction of his existence, he is condemned to live in a time orientated by others, an alienated time. This is, very exactly, the fate of all the dominated, who are obliged to wait for everything to come from others, from the holders of power over the game and over the objective and subjective prospect of gain that it can offer, being therefore masters at playing on the anxiety that inevitably arises from the tension between the intensity of the expectancy and the improbability of its being satisfied.” (Bourdieu, 2000, p. 237)

Garment workers, just like the K., “condemned to live in a time oriented by others”. However, this condemnation is not uncontested. The deficiency of Bourdieu in understanding an alternative world view stems from his dedication to his concept of Habitus. Habitus, as a structuring structure derived from practices, functions as a robust forecaster of the acts of people in a determined social position; however Bourdieu does not leave much space for the will of the person so an exit from the area structured by Habitus is almost impossible, although he tries to relax the inflexibility of Habitus by employing a language of “tendencies” and “possibilities” rather than fixed determinations. Gramsci, in trying to answer the question “Why do the great majority of individuals perform only certain actions?”, criticizes the people who stick too much to the law of adaptation as follows (Gramsci, 2000, pp. 46-47; emphasis added):

“Anyone who posits these pseudo-laws as absolutes lying outside individual will, rather than as a psychological adaptation to the environment due to the weakness of individuals (to their not being organized, and hence ultimately to the uncertainty of the future), is incapable of seeing that *psychology can change, weakness can become strength.*”

The “alienated consciousness” of their time’s being alienated to themselves, in reference to Meszaros (1970), finds its repercussion in the daydreams of garment workers. These daydreams consist in themselves a seed of a nascent/inchoate (or Not-Yet-Conscious) imagination of an alternative temporality, which contests the highly alienated nature of existing temporality. More developed and coherent accounts of conception of an alternative temporality, finds its expression in the expectations/dreams of workers that have gripped by revolutionary ideas. Here we see clearly how “the psychology can change, and weakness can become strength”, as

argued by Gramsci above. Take Adil (30) for example in replying to the question about his future expectations and hopes:

“Adil (30): I don’t have a plan for the future, at the moment. Because, I have no job security, no social life... So, my only hope regarding the future is that workers shall get conscious, destroy this order, and create a society, within which peace, fraternity and humanity rule. I mean... One day, something will really occur, an avalanche will fall. You know, really, neither palaces nor sultanates will remain. A really big avalanche will fall. I don’t know when the storm will break out, but I am waiting for it. I am really waiting for it, because being a freedom fighter, instead of living as a slave under this order, is something to be proud of for me. I think so...”<sup>138</sup>

The break we read through the lines of Adil is especially significant. He began answering the question as ordinary garment workers, stating that “he has no future plans” as he did not have the minimum security and sense of stability required, in Bourdieusian terms, for a “capacity to project himself into the future”. Then, suddenly, he breaks with the alienated time he is condemned to live in and proposes a totally different alternative temporality. An avalanche will fall suddenly; a storm will break out and will sweep the reign and its palaces! This reminds one of about Benjamin’s famous train metaphor concerning his understanding of history and revolution: he asserts that, contrary to Marx’s saying that “the revolutions are the locomotives of the world history”, the revolutions are the attempts to pull the emergency brakes by the human race travelling in that train.<sup>139</sup>

In a similar manner, Seyran (33), another worker with revolutionary ideas, describes her expectations and hopes from the future as follows:

“Seyran (33): What can be my expectation from textile? In other jobs, people talk about career. My expectation from textile is that people get more conscious and unionized. We shall do the necessary preparation, be with workers in factories, tell them these. My expectation from the

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<sup>138</sup> “Adil (30): Onun için şu an geleceğe dair bi planım yok. Çünkü, eee, hiç bi iş güvencen yok, sosyal yaşıntın yok... Dolayısıyla geleceğe dair sadece umudum işçilerin bilinçlenip, bu, gerçekten bu düzeni yıkıp da yeni bir barışın, kardeşin, insanlığın, insanlığın özellikle egemen olduğu bir toplum yaratmaları için bi umut taşııyorum. Yani eee... Birgün hani gerçekten bir şey, bir çığ kopacak. Hani gerçekten ne saraylar kalacak, ne sultanatlar kalacak. Gerçekten çok büyük bir çığ kopacak. Bilmiyorum ama hani fırtına ne zaman kopacak, hani fırtınanın aslında kopmasını ben bekliyorum aslında. Gerçekten bekliyorum hani; çünkü bu düzende hani köle gibi yaşamaktansa, bir özgürlük savaşçısı olmak benim için yani onur vericidir. Ben bunu düşünüyorum yani...”

<sup>139</sup> “Marx sagt, die Revolutionen sind die Lokomotive der Weltgeschichte. Aber vielleicht ist dem gänzlich anders. Vielleicht sind die Revolutionen der Griff des in diesem Zuge reisenden Menschengeschlechts nach der Notbremse.” (Benjamin, 1974, p. 1232)

textile is that people there shall revolt against exploitation, against this order. They shall demand 8 working hours a day. ‘That’s enough, you have exploited us by now, we won’t let ourselves to be exploited from now on!’ [...] I really have a hope about textile. Something will happen. If I wouldn’t believe that, I would become an ordinary person. I become ordinary, if I don’t have any expectations.’<sup>140</sup>

Without her belief in revolutionary ideas and a conception of an alternative anti-hegemonic temporality, Seyran feels herself as reduced to any ordinary person. When we consider the replies of other workers concerning the future that are quoted above or will be quoted in the next chapter, these two examples are really extraordinary. Only through their revolutionary ideas and a conception of an alternative temporality, Adil (30) and Seyran (33) seem to escape from the time trap of precarity which locks the garment workers in a serialized, episodic, fragmented presence, which is the time of their exploitation, evading the past and the future.

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<sup>140</sup> Seyran (33): Bundan sonrası için beklenim tekstilden ne olabilir? Hani başka işlerde olsa derler ya kariyerdir, kariyer yapar. Benim tekstilde beklenim şudur; insanlar biraz daha bilişlensin, bu sendikalaşma olayları olsun. Bunun ön çalışmalarını yapalım, fabrikalarda işçilerle birlikte olalım, bunları anlatalım. Benim tekstinden beklenim ordaki insanlar artık sömürüye, bu düzene başkaldırsınlar. Biz, 8 saatlik işgücü istesinler. ‘Yeter artık bunca zamana kadar bizi sömürdünüz, bundan sonra kendimizi sömürtmicez!’ [...] Benim gerçekten tekstil üzerine umudum var yani. Bi şeler olacak yani. Zaten bunu şey yapmasam ben de sıradan bi insan olurum yani. Sıradanlaşırım bi beklenim yoksa.”

## **CHAPTER 5 MOMENTS OF ALIENATION (III): EXPERIENCES OF NECESSITY UNDER PRECARIOUS CONDITIONS**

Class is also a question of possibilities and especially necessities and their dialectical relationship. This fact is aggravated in a flexible economy, which leads to precarious working conditions and precarious lives for working classes of our time. In this part, it will be touched upon the “necessity” as a constructive and essential element of the working-class experience.<sup>141</sup>

### **5.1 “The Political Economy” of the Necessity: Alienation and “Choice of the Necessary”**

Working-class, or the proletarians to the extent we use the term to identify the modern working class, in definition, is in a close relationship with moralities of necessity, as they are “reduced to sell their labour power in order to live” (Marx & Engels, 1848 [1977]), i.e. their being is defined by the very necessity to sell their labour power. Aslan (35), through his empirical consciousness, put this situation preciously and clearly in words: “What you call a worker is this: The group that lives off their labour; survive through their labour and has *no other possibility*.<sup>142</sup>”

Beyond the worker class’ position in the relations of production, and their position with regards to market, with all its fluctuations, the necessity is experienced in almost every aspect of daily lives of workers, including their taste and preferences, consumption patterns, thoughts, dreams, life-styles. As Bourdieu (1984, p. 372) suggests, “necessity includes for them [the working class] all that is usually meant by the word, that is, an inescapable deprivation of necessary goods”. When considering

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141 Class as a potential form of possibilities is also an important subject. We will speculate on the relation between class and possibilities in the Conclusion chapter.

142 “İşçi işçi dediğin budur. Emeği ile geçinen, emeği ile hayatını idame ettiren, başka da şansı olmayan topluluktur yani...”

necessary goods, which are “not only physical needs but also [...] historically developed social needs, which become second nature, in the life of the working class” (Marx, 1981, p. 999), on which the value of labour-power is decided, it should have to be noted that, they are not some set of constant needs. They are dynamically and historically determined through the struggle of working class against the capital.<sup>143</sup> However, at some certain points in time, the struggle over necessary goods can go unnoticed, but it is inherent in the capitalist logic of production. Ability of workers to completely satisfy their needs is rendered impossible as their consumption capacity is restricted by the capital’s inner dynamic of growing bigger, which is manifested in its dependence of making profit:

“The consumption capacity of the workers is restricted partly by the laws governing wages and partly by the fact that they are employed only as long as they can be employed at a profit for the capitalist class.” (Marx, 1981, p. 615)

The domain of necessary goods is of an alienated character to the worker. Workers, as they are free<sup>144</sup> from the means of production and obliged (and freely able) to sell their labour-power to the capitalists, i.e. the owner of the means of production, in order to acquire the goods they need for their daily livelihood, experience a self-divide between the labour-power that they have to sell, which is commodified, and their being. In the capitalist production system, the worker is paid for his necessary labour, and his surplus labour is appropriated by the capital, or by the personified form of the capital –i.e. the capitalist-. This surplus labour, which is put into the circulation of capital afresh in a continuous way for the sake of revalorization of itself and thus become the surplus-value, is the only resource of the profit and therefore expanded capital. With this expanded capital, more means of production can be acquired and more workers can be put to work on those means of production. In the production site, what the workers face as machines, infrastructure and

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143 For a broader discussion of “necessities of workers” with respect to capitalist relations of production see Lebowitz (2003, pp. 30-50), where he critically assesses the Marx’s assumption of constant level of needs of the workers in a specific historical moment in the Capital, and draws our attention to “necessities of labour” in search for constructing the proposedly missing book on wage-labour.

144 Labourers under the capitalist production system are free in the “double sense”; “they neither form part of the means of production themselves, as would be the case with slaves, serfs, etc., nor do they own the means of production, as would be the case of peasant-proprietors”; and they are, “therefore, free from, unencumbered by, any means of production of their own. (Marx, 1976, p. 874)

equipments are nothing other than their labour-power objectified in this sense. As Marx (1972b, pp. 96-105) argued:

“...this absolute divorce between property and labour, between living labour power and the conditions of its realisation, between objectified and living labour, between the value and the activity that creates value -hence also the alien nature of the content of the work vis-a-vis the worker himself, this separation now also appears as the product of labour itself, as an objectification of its own elements.”

In this way, the products of workers' labour are confronted by the workers as capital, and in this sense they are alienated to their own labour. However, Lebowitz (2003) argue that, alienation stretches beyond the alienation of labour; the workers also produce alienated commodities:

“Insofar as the wage-labourer has relinquished the right of disposition over her labour-power to a capitalist whose goal is surplus value, she must perform surplus labour in order to engage in necessary labour. Having surrendered all claim to the use-value of labour-power in order to realize its exchange-value, the wage-labourer produces a commodity in which she has no property rights. It is the property of another, an *alien commodity*; and that commodity, as capital, *confronts her as an alien power over her.*” (Lebowitz, 2003, p. 34)

Thus, the lives of workers under capitalism are lives dominated by the commodity world. The worker has created something of an alien nature out of his very own being, and this situation is the very source of all kind of symbolic domination. As Marx (Marx, 1976, p. 1062) noted, the wealth, created by the workers through their alienated labour, “faces him as an alien world dominating him”; as the “subjective poverty, need and dependence” of the worker grows larger. What the worker has in his hand in the end is a world of deprivation. What here referred as “experience(s) of necessity” is deeply interrelated with that deprivation to the extent that the experiences of necessity are formed through the practice of continuous deprivation, so that they form a “sense of coherence”, “in which a sense of the world configures itself for the subject, a form of practical knowledge that we might see as wisdom, a sense of where one stands because of certain aspects of one's experience that have cause to make one loyal to what one knows in virtue of what one has been through”, as depicted by Charlesworth (2004, p. 179).

## 5.2 Early Deprivation from Education

Deprivation imposes itself in the early life of the garment workers, traces of which can be followed in “their narratives of their life”, especially in explaining why they *had to* quit the school early and begin working in the apparel industry. As Ömür (39) indicates, leaving the school is a “necessary choice”:

“Ö: ... Let me put it in that way, now it was, as I told the burden of making a living, because my dad went bankrupt... I mean, because we needed working more, I had to choose working.”<sup>145</sup>

Ömür’s (39) speaking of “choice”, though implicit and hidden, or rather “swallowed” in her wording, and could go unnoticed if word pair “yana kullanmak” was not used afterwards; and her stating that she *had to* (or *forced to*) is not a simple ambivalence. At first hand, she can be said to still claim a *will*, in front of the material deprivations confronted, as a defence of her individuality. However, this phenomenon can also be understood in terms of Bourdieu’s (1984, p. 372) terms, strikingly in parallel with Ömür’s terminology, “the choice of necessary”, which is an implication of his famous conception of habitus. Although Bourdieu’s main focus in Distinction (1984) is on the tastes and life-styles of the social classes, his coining of the choice of necessary, which implies “a resignation to the inevitable” (1984, p. 372), can well be extended to the whole aspects of life of garment workers discussed here.<sup>146</sup> In a similar manner, in our conversation with Haktan (31) and Zülfü (31), two young men migrated to Istanbul from their village in Van in their early ages, say that it is needless to ask why they had to quit the school; for them, the prospect is already known:

“S: Have you ever asked why you couldn’t go to school; I mean have you ever asked “why couldn’t I go to school”?

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<sup>145</sup> “Ö: ... Şöyledi bi şey söyliyim, artık şey olmuştu, babam dediğim gibi iflas ettiği için geçim sıkıntısı... Yani çalışmaya daha çok ihtiyacımız olduğu için mecburen [tercihim] çalışmaktan yana kullanmak zorunda kaldım.”

<sup>146</sup> Of course, one could also observe the so-called experiences of necessity here being discussed in the lives of other fractions of the working class, in that sense these experiences can be said to be not specific to garment workers. For example, Charlesworth (2004) also make use of the term in analyzing the lives of working class living in his homecity, Rotherham, which is haunted by the insecure working conditions. Parallels will be drawn between his findings with that of the findings of this study.

Z: We don't need to ask, our background is already obvious, our problems are obvious, the conditions, within which we grew up, are obvious.

H: Because everything is obvious...

Z: Because everything is obvious, because we saw and lived everything, we don't have such a thing.

S: Then, are you saying that there is a destiny, we cannot go beyond that? Is it just destiny?

Z: Hum it is not destiny, it is burden of making a living.

S: Burden of making a living...

Z: I think so.

S: Is burden of making a living destiny for you?

H: No it is not destiny; everybody, I mean rich or those having a job; you need to subsist in the end. Destiny...

Z: Destiny is something else but; burden of making a living... For example, as I told, we saw neither bag nor uniform, nor book, nor notebook, nor pencil, while we were students.”<sup>147</sup>

However, Zülküf (30), who has a religious world-view and is proud of it, does not categorize this “certainty” as an Islamic view of “simple fate/destiny” (*kader*), but directly attributes their condition to their deprivation, to financial difficulties they face with and have always faced with, to privation they suffer from (*geçim sıkıntısı*). This twist from acknowledging their situation through metaphysical concepts such as *kader*, to directly ascribing their situation to material relations such as *geçim sıkıntısı*, can be read as a moment of sudden illumination formed through their direct experiences, as a moment of their empirical consciousness.

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<sup>147</sup> “S: Niye okuyamadınız diye soruyor musunuz hiç; yani “niye okuyamadım ben” diye soruyor musunuz hiç?

Z: Sormamıza gerek yok, zaten nerden nasıl geldiğimiz belli, çektiğimiz sıkıntılar belli, ne şartlarda büyündüğümüz belli.

H: Her şey belli olduğu için...

Z: Her şey belli olduğu için, her şeyi gördüğümüz için, yaşadığımız için öyle bi şeyimiz yok.

S: O zaman bi kader var; bunun dışına çıkamıyoruz mu diyorsunuz? Kader mi yalnızca?

Z: Ya kader değil, *geçim sıkıntısı*. *Geçim sıkıntısı*...

Z: Bana göre öyledir.

S: *Geçim sıkıntısı* kader midir sizin için?

H: Hayır kader değil; herkes yani zengin de olsa bi iş sahibi de olsa sonuçta geçineceksin. Kader...

Z: Kader ayrı bi şeydir ama;      *geçim sıkıntısı*... Mesela söyledim ya biz okula giderken ne çanta gördük, ne önlük gördük, ne kitap gördük, ne defter gördük, doğru düzgün kalem görmedik.”

Apart from this, what is striking in their speeches is their recurrent emphasis on the belief that, “everything is determined, all prospects are known” with respect to their education life. It is also very important taking into consideration the meaning *okumak* (which means to read literally, and being educated or having education figuratively) has within the dominated classes<sup>148</sup>, in that it is conventionally thought as a way to jump to the higher in the hierarchy of the society, as a way to save one’s skin from the social suffering the parents are living under, and as a source of honour and dignity both for the educated one herself and also for the parents of her. Although, as Boratav (2004, pp. 46-60) has already shown some decades ago based on data gathered between 1991-1992, in Turkey, inter-generation and intra-generation social mobility is relatively low both in urban and rural classes, which may well mean that the importance attributed to education with regards to chances of upward social mobility has weak material basis. It may also well be argued, the class structure has become more solid since the 1990s, that the transitivity between classes is lower than ever now. Education, as a result of the neoliberal tide, has been more and more commodified and became more costly to the lower classes. The emergence and expansion of private teaching institutions (*dershanes*) throughout the last three decades, and the growing and uncontested importance they play in being able to be enrolled in prestigious high-schools and universities, which are expected to pave the way for upward social mobility, render it more and more impossible for the lower classes to make their children break their ties with the class their parents belong to. Education system in Turkey, rather than being an instrument for upward social mobility, plays a role in fixing the social positions. Yet, education as an ideal for upward mobility, although has lost some of its spell in the lower strata of the class society, is still valid for most of the families with lower-middle class origin, which have at least a low possibility of pushing the financial limits for the purposes of education of the children. In such a context, an early withdrawal from schooling is, as well as being a choice of the necessary, a realistic strategy for the working classes

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<sup>148</sup> Education system is also important for the dominated classes as it is “the chief institutional site through which they come to learn the dominant criteria of evaluation and realize their own competence as negatively valued” (Charlesworth, 2004, p. 280).

as it is less likely to compensate for the expenditures made for the education of the working class children.<sup>149</sup>

### 5.3 Garment Work as a Necessity

Garment industry also imposes itself on the newly migrated masses of people as the only available choice in the labour market, given their lack of education and skills required for getting another job and easiness of their socialization in the sector because of the existence of their relatives or fellow townsmen's as former employees in the sector. A recent study on the integral migration in Turkey (Kaya, et al., 2009), confirms this observation. It states that, the children and youth of the Kurdish families, which are victims of forceful migration, and especially the female children occasionally work in the garment industry and have difficulties in finding jobs in other sectors because of their lack of education (Kaya, et al., 2009, pp. 145, 148, 149). It would not be an exaggeration to state that, this phenomenon is not confined to only Kurdish families forcefully migrated to İstanbul, but also can well be the case for the families migrated to Istanbul from other parts of the Turkey, for reasons of material deprivation. Abdurrahman (32), whose family migrated from Bitlis in the year 1992, when he was just 13, describes a common "fate" shared by most of the garment workers as follows:

"S: You came here and you immediately started [to work] in textile. Why did you enter this job? I mean, how did you indulge in it? Why did you enter this and not have another job? Did anybody direct you to textile?

A: Of course, I was directed to it. Because we didn't know anything, when we came to İstanbul. There was a textile atelier on the street next to our home. Those days, there wasn't much ateliers in this quarter. We, I suppose, there were 3 or 4 ateliers in this quarter. One of them was down

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<sup>149</sup> The role played by the religious communities in education, through providing a free or inexpensive alternative for the children of the poor and working classes, in return for an expected commitment of the children as they climb up the ladders of social hierarchy is another question when considering the problem of education. This study is not at a point of making solid conclusions about this issue, but it may not be exaggeration to mark the religious communities and their private teaching institutions as the only alternative for the children of the poor and working classes for upward mobility. This fact, among others, may explain the appeal of these communities in the eyes of the people from lower classes.

to this house. My dad brought me there, to the owner of the atelier. He said to him, pointing me: “Now he is under the command of you. You do whatever you want with him.”<sup>150</sup>

In a similar fashion, Seyran (31) puts the situation of “having no other option” clearly in these words:

“I was 12, when I started to work. There are a lot of people, who started to work at the same age. We came from suburbs, there is nothing to do, textile is very common here. So, what can you do, they send you to textile. *That is, you have no choice.*”<sup>151</sup>

The destination of the migrations from all over Turkey to Istanbul, with reasons either of material deprivation or of “ethnic enclosure”<sup>152</sup> or of both, is almost certainly the slums of the Istanbul, all of which are without exception characterized by the informal/quasi-formal garment production taking place in workshops – or better to say sweatshops - placed in a nested fashion with the dwelling buildings. Having been living there, the migrated population, and especially the unskilled women and children who are under social-patriarchal pressure<sup>153</sup>, find it easy to work in a workshop that is just one or two buildings away from their home. Once began working in the garment production, it is hard to change the tracks in the working life thereafter. A reason for that is they are already socialized in this sector and find it harder to get used to working conditions in other sectors, another reason is their lack of skills necessary for jobs other than garment production, and one more reason is the high unemployment rates and precarized working conditions, which create a fear of losing job and in that which makes undesirable working conditions, the conditions

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<sup>150</sup> “S: Peki hani buraya geldin, hemen de tekstile başlamışsun. Bu mesleğe niye girdin? Yani, ya da nerden bulaştın? Yani niye buna girdin, başka bi iş tutmadın? Tekstile bi yönlendiren mi oldu?

A: Tabi ki yönlendiren oldu. Çünkü İstanbul'a geldiğimizde yol bilmezdi, iz bilmezdi. Bizim evin hemen bi sokak aşağısında teknstil atölyesi vardı. O zamanlar, bu çevrede atölye fazla yoktu. Biz, zannedersem ya 3 ya 4 tane atölye vardı bu civarda. Bi tanesi de bu evin alt tarafındaydı. Babam oraya götürdü, atölye sahibinin yanına. Eti senin kemiği benim diyip teslim etti oraya.”

<sup>151</sup> “Ben 12 yaşta işe girdim. Benimle aynı yaşta işe giren bir sürü insan var. Bu da varoşlardan gelmişiz yapacak bi şey yok, teknstil işi burada çok yaygın. E napcan mecbur teknstile gönderiyolar seni. *Seçeneğin yok yani.*”

<sup>152</sup> The term “ethnic enclosure” is discussed under the “new wave of proletarization” sub-heading of the second chapter.

<sup>153</sup> Patriarchy, as used by Weber, does not only denote domination of men over women but as their ruling of the societies as the heads of households, thus also it concerns the domination of younger men who are not heads of households (Walby, 1990, s. 19).

necessary to be put up with. In that sense, becoming a garment worker most of the time excludes any other job possibility. Ersan (25), complaining about the undesirable working conditions, talks about the imposing of being a garment worker itself as the only available possibility, as the necessity:

“E: ....Textile, I mean, is not a desirable occupation in Turkey. Because working conditions are very harsh. You wake up at 7 in the morning; I come home at 12-1 in the evening. Sometimes I come at 4, 3. Human body can’t stand it physically. For example, you don’t want to wake up in the morning sometimes. You say “Hum I am so tired today”. But you are obliged on the other hand. Because if you don’t go 1 day, they cut [your payment] for 3 days. That is, you work for nothing for 3 days. You wake up and go forcefully. For example, I don’t want to work in textile. But you *have to*...”<sup>154,155</sup>

This necessity is learnt through the lived experiences, rather than being anticipated beforehand. As the years pass by in the dusty atmosphere of the garment sweatshops and factories, and the dreams of independent work are shattered, a sense of going nowhere, a resignation to the idea of remaining as a garment worker in the foreseeable future settles down deep in the garment workers; just like the dust of textiles settling down deep their throats. As Zülfü (30) states, they “don’t have any chances of finding another job at all.” As a matter of fact, most of the time this sense/experience of necessity is acquired even before starting to work in the garment industry, it is inherited from the close circle in which the garment worker candidates are brought up (Ersan, 25):

“S: Had you had an expectation, when you entered into textile? What was it?

E: I didn’t have any expectation, when entered into textile. Hum, we already knew more or less, my bigger sisters and brothers were textile workers. Were they able to secure a future for

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<sup>154</sup> “E: ....Tekstil, hani, yapılacak bi meslek değil Türkiye’de. Çünkü çalışma şartlarına bakarsan çok ağır. Sabah saat 7’de kalkıyosun, akşam 12-1’de geliyorum eve. Yeri geliyo 4’té geliyorum, 3’té geliyorum. Hani, insan bünyesi dayanmijo buna. Mesela yeri geliyo sabahleyin yataktan kalkmak istemiyosun. “Ya bugün çok yorgunum.” diyosun. Ama mecbursun bi yandan da. Çünkü bi gün gitmesen 3 gün kesiyolar. Yani 3 gün boşça çalışacaksin. Kalkıp zoru zoruna gidiyosun. Ben mesela istemem, istemiyorum, tekstil yapmak istemiyorum. Ama *mecbursun* [...].”

<sup>155</sup> It is strange how this account of a garment worker in the twenty-first century resonates with the below account of a “A Journeyman Cotton Spinner” of early nineteenth century, as quoted by Thompson (1963, pp. 199-200), in terms of experiences of necessity: “It is in vain to insult our common understandingswith the observation that such men are free; that the law protects the rich and poor alike, and that a spinner can leave his master if he does not like the wages. True; so he can: but where must he go?”

themselves? [He nods his head in a pessimist way meaning “No”] I didn’t have an expectation, because they didn’t get a very very high position.”<sup>156</sup>

Having been necessarily chosen to be a garment worker, raises the question of burden of making a living, which also encompasses the whole aspects of life of a garment worker, as will be described below.

## 5.4 Burden of Making a Living

Having been stuck being a garment worker, which means working most of the time insecure for long hours for a wage hardly above – or even below - the minimum wage, the people we have interviewed experiences the deprivation in its fullest meaning. The question and burden of making their living (*Geçim sıkıntısı*) encompasses all aspects of their life, which does not leave much space for future imagination, hope, planning and/or rational management of their time<sup>157</sup>, leisure activities or opportunities for self-development. The dominance of this burden quite often felt in the speeches of the garment workers, and sometimes directly revealed, as implicated by this conversation with Haktan (31) and Zülfü (30):

“S: Do you have any expectations?

Z: My expectation is only subsistence; you cannot think about anything else. You just consider the money you take.

S: You don’t think about anything other than that?

H: You don’t think.

Z: You don’t have the opportunity to think about that.”<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> “S: Peki tekstile girerken bi beklenin var mıydı? Neydi beklenin?

E: Tekstile girerken bi beklenim yoktu. Hani nasıl deyim, zaten az çok biliyoduk ablalarım olsun, ağabeylerim olsun tekstil işçisiydi. Onlar bi gelecek kurdum mu? Çok çok üst bi mevkiye makama gelmediği için beklenim yoktu.”

<sup>157</sup> The specific issues concerning the experiences of time are dealt with in breadth in the previous chapter.

<sup>158</sup> “S: Var mı senin beklenin?

Z: Beklenim ancak geçim sıkıntısı yani, ondan başka bi şey düşünemiyorsun ki. Sadece yani aldığın paraya bakıyosun.

S: Ekstra bi şey düşünmüyorsun?

H: Düşünmüyorsun.

This burden of making a living, or more precisely *geçim sıkıntısı* as a more loaded term in the context of dominated classes in Turkey, does not only stem from low-levels of wages in the garment sector. The uneven payment of these extremely low wages is another thing that makes the issue even more complicated for the garment worker. Most of the garment workers reported not being paid for periods as long as three months, or being paid only a portion of the wage and the rest is postponed to an indefinite future. The employers have many justifications for not paying on time. They are reported to claim that they could not collect their receivables from the “market”; that they needed solidarity from the workers for a short period of time as the economy is in crisis; that an unanticipated rise in the prices of the inputs has put the business in danger and the firm is at the point of collapsing; that they could not get any orders from the firms they were doing job with and etc.

The burden of making a living is also expressed as “lack of money”. Money, as the main bearer of wealth in modern capitalism and as the fetishized form of the value created by the working class, is the most visible form of alienation of worker to the her own labour. “Lack of money”, for the garment workers we are discussing, does not only denote an objective material situation, but also means a lack of self-worth, a deep-seated feeling of inadequacy, a doubt about the ontological being of the workers themselves. This fact is manifested in garment workers’ speeches when they state that “you are not taken into account if you do not have money”, or that “one feels trust to himself when you have money in your pocket” and “you can decide on whether a person is rich from his self-confident manners and his bloated way of walking” or even that “if you do not have money you just do not exist”. This subjective experience of inadequacy articulated in the term “lack of money” gains a more tragic character in the case of a parent who is responsible for the needs of his family. Founding a family is, therefore, a socially necessary and desirable, however, materially difficult task to be accomplished. That is why most of the younger workers, and especially the male ones as the patriarchal order perceives them to be primarily responsible for the making of a family’s living, are hesitant to marry with someone. For the married ones and especially for the ones with children, the pain of

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Z: Fırsatın yok yani, onu düşünme şeyin yok.”

this devastating subjective experience of “lack of money” doubles. Abdurrahman (32), a father of two children, talks about his experience of lack of money in a period of unemployment caused by the financial crisis of 2008:

“It has been 2-3 years I guess, [the effect] of global warming [he means global economic crisis], I am still suffering from that. Why, because our low income -we have low payments in textile-, gets smaller, when you divide it to months, but the strait is big. For example, we drained all our money in 4 months. Why? I know that I have no money in my pocket, that my child expects a chocolate from me. I realized how much it hurts then. Why couldn’t I give the money to my son and say go to the market and buy that chocolate. I know that I got out of home and cry, for example. Because we didn’t work for 4 months, not just me, it was throughout Turkey, even throughout the world. Most of us couldn’t even find a piece of bread. Now, I am grateful for my situation. Because I am healthy, I can earn some money and feed my children.”<sup>159</sup>

Abdurrahman secretly shed his tears, leaving his home after his children wanted chocolates that he could not afford. He describes this experience as “great pain”, but it is impossible to understand how deep a cut is inflicted in the depths of the self, “[a]s words are often insufficient to describe them, the strongest emotions may be concealed by the thinness of actors’ accounts of them” (Sayer, 2005b, p. 40) However, he still attributes his being unemployed to neutral mechanisms of the economy, and tries to restore his self-esteem through stating that he was not the only one that became unemployed at that time, but many people in Turkey and in the world as well. And now, he is grateful that he can satisfy the basic needs of himself and his family; this severe experience of deprivation does not seem to trigger at least some hostility towards an antagonistic collective, such as “the capitalists” or “the riches”.

As it can be observed in Abdurrahman’s (32) case, besides the uneven payments in the case of employment, the periods of employment is also often cut by

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<sup>159</sup> “2-3 sene oldu heralde küresel ısınmanın [küresel ekonomik kriz demek istiyor] şeyi, hala onun sıkıntılarını yaşıyorum. Çünkü niye, maddi olsun, şey olsun, belli bi kit bi gelirimiz olduğu için tekstilde, o kit gelir aylıklara böldüğün zaman küçülüyor ama sıkıntı büyütü. Mesela 4 ay boyunca sağdan soldan olsun, kendi birikimimiz olsun, hepsini tüketti. Çünkü niye? Benim cebimde param olmadığını biliyorum, çocuğumun benden çikolata istediğini biliyorum. Onun ne kadar büyük bi acı olduğunu o zaman anladım. Çünkü niye bakkala gidip oğlum al şunu diyip eline veremedim o çikolatayı. Hani dışarı çıkip mesela ağladığımı da biliyorum evden. Çünkü niye; 4 ay boyunca hiç çalışmadık, sırı ben değil, Türkiye genelinde oldu, dünya çapında oldu hatta. Çoğumuz belki bi parça ekmeği bulamadık. Şu anda kendi halime şükrediyorum. Çünkü niye; elim ayam tutuyo, kendim bi şeler kazanıp çoluk çocuğuma yedirebiliyorum.”

periods of intermittent unemployment, which of course means for a while there is no income. All of the workers interviewed gave accounts of periods in which they were unemployed. However, as discussed in the part 7.1.3, the payments are never delayed; they are always to be paid on time; which make the burden of making living more painful. In such periods of non-payment, workers have to rely on their familial relationships, use the last bits of savings if there is any or live on credit through using credit-cards. All of them, however, bring their own burden with them. Getting help from the family means implicitly that they have to pay for the cases of financial distress of other family members to maintain reciprocity, using the last bits of savings mean they have to live more on margins thereafter and living on credit turns to them as cumbersome interests to be paid to banks. All these considerations numb their minds, they do not leave any space for other thoughts and fills the air with thoughts of how to make their living or see this week/month through. Charlesworth (2004, p. 181) illuminates this point by stating that

“living a life within strict confines, or a life in which life is simply awful, there can be little incentive (there could be no interest) in developing other forms of consciousness beyond those of the ‘mindless’ everyday coping skills through which it makes sense to live such conditions.”

The garment workers’ life being only comprised of “mindless everyday coping skills”, does not mean necessarily that they do not even question the absurdity of living such a life or looking for alternative ways of living. However, as evidenced by the below quotation from Haktan’s (31) speech, they are again surrendered by the necessities in their life, and again by the burden of making their living:

“H: Hum you say, ‘I shall leave everything behind and go away. I shall have a huge debt or stay unemployed for a year, as long as I shall not have to put up with this. I shall not bow to this. I should resist this’. But then, you think, either you are a renter or your brother doesn’t work, he is under arms. You say, ‘If I quit the job, there is nobody at home who can work...’ So, you have the house, subsistence, the rent of the house... Because of that, you think, you have to stand up with that.”<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> “H: Ya diyosun ki, ‘Bırakayım gideyim. İsterse dünya kadar borcum olsun, ya da bi sene boş gezeyim. Yeter ki bunu, kahrını çekmeyim. Buna boyun eğmeyim.’ diyorsun. Ama sonra düşünüyorsun, ya kiradasın ya kardeşin çalışmıyor, kardeşin askeredir. Diyorsun, ‘Ya ben de çıksam evde çalışacak kimse yok...’ Yani ev var, geçim var, kira var... Bunun için düşünüyosun, mecburen katlanıyosun.”

Beyond rendering any alternative way of life unlikely, this burden of making their living also prevents them from enjoying the fruits of this life, from pursuing their interests freely and limits them to a determined spatial and temporal being, as manifested in the “impoverishment of daily life experiences” in the garment workers.

## 5.5 Impoverishment of Daily & Working Life Experiences

What Charlesworth (2004, p. 193, italics added) has concluded for the working class people in Rotherham, is also valid for the garment workers of Istanbul: “the world given in experience to these people is one mediated by an *economic necessity given in their social position* that is part of the network of relations they find themselves in.” Such an experience of the world governed by economic necessities also finds its repercussions in the tastes and life-styles of the workers, which are limited by these necessities. Seyran (31), for example, had an aspiration of performing in a theatre play, and she took part in two plays in an organization held by Halkevleri. However, she *had to* quit theatre and *choose* to work instead. Likewise, Abdurrahman (32) used to play his *bağlama* and sing, which he could not deal with anymore as he had to work, and Ersan (25) and Adil (30) claimed they could have become a football-star “if they had someone to go to bat for them”, which also implicitly points to their lack of social capital. The way garment workers spend their leisure time, which is so hardly available to them, also indicates the impoverishment of their daily direct experiences. Most of the garment workers, which are a group of relatively young people who normally should have an appetite for socializing, expressed that they “preferred” to spend their leisure time at their homes, resting. They do not go out too much, and if they do they usually hang out around their neighbourhood and they have a very limited experience of space, comparing the hugeness and social life opportunities Istanbul provides. Ersan (25), one of the younger garment workers, who lives in İnönü District of Sefaköy<sup>161</sup>, exemplifies this issue as such:

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<sup>161</sup> This district is described as below by one of the authors of [www.eksisozluk.com](http://www.eksisozluk.com), the most famous web-based collaborative hypertext dictionary that is an important source of idea formation for mostly middle class youth, as follows: “sefaköy istanbul'da bulunan bir mahallenin ismidir. nüfusu yaklaşık

“S: Where do you hang out with your friends?

E: Where... We hang out in the neighbourhood, in the park. I mean you cannot do anything else. You can't do anything else, because the conditions are very bad now. Try to go to a place, there should be at least 50-60 million liras in your pocket to wander. That doesn't happen every time. You can do that once a month.”<sup>162</sup>

With regards to what Ersin calls “hanging around”, Standing (2011, pp. 162-163), concerning what he calls “the Precariat”, talks about such experiences as “leisure poverty” and describes it as follows:

“The notion of ‘street corner society’ has become one of the great urban images. ‘Hanging around’ becomes a dominant form of using time; filling time becomes a challenge. Some call this ‘leisure poverty’. Material poverty limits the leisure lives of the young precariat, with

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200 bin olan bu mahallede metrekareye üç ağır abi düşen ender yerleşim yerlerimizden biridir. her köşebasında ve elli metrede bir yirmişerli gruplar görülmeli muhtemel olan bu yerde hayatı kalmak bir numaralı kurallıdır. fırından ekmek veya marketten bir kalıp peynir almanın bile insan için hayatı tehlikesi vardır, kız arkadaşınızla gezemezsiniz hatta onu bir yana bırakıyorum kendi başınıza hiç gezemezsiniz, mutlaka tahrık edici sözlere maruz kalırsınız, hele ki görünüşünüz ve görüşleriniz onlardan farklısa. farklılıklar onlar için yok edilmesi ve olağana benzetilmesi gereksiz şeylerdir! 20 yaşına gelmiş bir genç en az iki kere gaspa maruz kalmış, hor görülmüş veya meydan dayağı yemiştir. yaşadığı sitenin içerisinde, binanın önünde bıçaklanma olasılığı %40 olup bıçaklısa bile polisin bıçaklayan kişileri yakalama olasılığı %2 ya vardır ya da yoktur. burada hayatı kalmak istiyorsanız yapacağınız şeyler; evden işe/okula , işden/okuldan eve olmalıdır. böylece yaralanma ve gaspa uğrama olaylarını yarı yarıya azaltabilme imkanına belki kavuşabilirsiniz. eğer inönü mahallesine yolunuz düşerse anlattıklarım aklınızda bulunsun (umarım inönü mahallesine yolunuz düşmez, eğer düşerse; dua edin de benim anlattığım şahsiyetler insanlıktan nasiplerini alıp kendilerine normal bir hayatı seçmiş olsunlar).” [“sefaköy is the name of a district in istanbul. this district, population of which is approximately 200 thousand, is one of our rare settlements, where there are three big shots per square meter. survival is the number one rule in this place, where it's possible to see groups of twenties at each corner and every other fifty meters. even buying bread from the bakery or a brick of cheese from the market is life-threatening for a person, you can't hang out with your girlfriend, let alone that, you can never go out alone, you would absolutely be exposed to provocations, most particularly if your appearance and views are different from theirs. according to them, differences are unnecessary things to be destroyed and assimilated into the ordinary! a young person at the age of 20 has already been grabbed, insulted or beaten in front of the public, at least two times. the possibility of being stabbed in front of the building, within the building complex he lives in, is 40%, whereas the possibility of the stabbers' getting caught by the police is 2% at best. if you want to survive here, what you need to do is going only from home to work/school and from work/school to home. by this way, maybe, you may have the possibility of decreasing the risk of being injured and grabbed. keep in mind what I told you, if you come across to inönü district (I hope you never go to inönü district, if you do; have you fingers crossed that those personalities I mentioned had become more humane and chosen a normal way of life for themselves).”] This “entry”, besides providing a sense of what İnönü District of Sefaköy look like, is typical in terms of reflecting the conventional fear of the middle classes from the working class, labelling them as “the dangerous class”

<sup>162</sup> “S: Peki nerelerde takılıyosunuz arkadaşlarınızla?

E: Nerelerde... Mahalle'nin başında takılıyoz, parkta takılıyoz. Yani başka bi şey yapamazsun. Başka bi şey yapamazsun ki hani, çünkü şu anda şartlar çok kötü yani. Kalk, bi yere gitmeye kalk, hiç yoksa cebinde 50-60 milyon paran olacak ki yani, gezesin. O da hani her zaman olmuyor. Ayda bi kere onu yapabilirsin deyim.”

neither the money nor the occupational community nor the sense of stability to generate the control over time that is needed. This feeds into an anomie attitude to all activity, including work and labour.” (Standing, 2011, pp. 162-163)

Even if the garment workers, especially the male ones as the women are under double pressure of economic necessities and patriarchal values, can find the opportunity to wander around Istanbul, their experience of it remains shallow to the extent that they can only experience the city, the space, through passive observation but not through direct involvement as they have neither the economic power nor the cultural capital needed to become involved in the space. For example, Haktan (31) said that he is fond of going to Taksim, the city centre of Istanbul, and his favourite activity there is sitting around the Taksim Square and watching the people flowing through the square all day. Another garment worker, Adil (30), asserts that he has “been in almost every part of Istanbul”, however he “has not been in any historical or cultural places” as they ask for a fee most of the time. His conclusion is in a stunning resonance with what has been said a few lines above: He states that, he knows the city *visually* quite well; however he “*cannot participate* in any cultural or artistic events”.<sup>163</sup>

*Visual* experience is among the most passive sensory experiences of the all others, and in that sense visual activity can be called as *pseudo-activity*. In a world where not only the commodities – products of alienated labour – dominate, but also - as Debord (1970) has put it clear more than four decades ago - the images of commodities prevail as “the tangible world is replaced by a selection of images which exist above it, and which at the same time are recognized as the tangible par excellence” (Debord, 1970); activities related to *seeing* and *appearing* becomes central. The garment workers, who are affected by the impoverishment of experience, with no surprise give a prior place to television watching within the time they spend at their homes, which can well be understood through the observation of their TV-centred living room designs, a design in which the visibility of the television screen from all sitting places is the fundamental principle.

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163 In his original wording: “Onun için İstanbul'u şey olarak, görsel olarak, her tarafını biliyorum ama kültürel, sanatsal olarak hiçbir faaliyete doğru düzgün katılmıyorum.”

Adding to the sensory deprivation, or impoverishment of experiences in the life outside the sweatshops/factories; the life inside the production place is also suffers from the high time pressure and highly tedious, monotonous, repetitive and demanding working conditions typical to garment production. The minutes, hours, days and weeks in the production process are insanely identical that, most of the garment workers lose the track of the time they spend in the production place and at the same time have to keep up with the time schedule of production; the time is perceived as a homogeneous, uniform and indiscrete mass, burden of which is always on their shoulders. This make the outside observer to think that, their backs are curled and their body is leaned towards as if to carry this burden on their shoulders. Ersan (25), complaining about the monotony of the work in garment production expresses that even the songs they are listening to (or *made* listening to in order to cover the otherwise unbearable noise of the all kinds of sewing, stitching and hemming machines) are all the same every day:

E: The same song, at the same time, you listen to it again the following day.

S: It is like the same thing every day, ha?

E: Yes, no day is different from another day. Just working hard is different for us.”<sup>164</sup>

All the examples explained above indicates the “homogeneity of the directly experienced social world”, which, according to Bourdieu (1984, p. 381), creates a “closure effect”. This “closure effect” is also defined as the “most ruthless call to order” as it unconsciously instil the working class the idea that “the universe of possibles is closed” (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 381). The consequences of such kind of a “closure effect” are varied from a particular feeling of nothingness raising the question self-worth in the garment workers to killing of hopes or typical disposition of workers to require only what is available to them and even to a “mass” experience of powerlessness; all of which will be discussed in the upcoming parts of this chapter.

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<sup>164</sup> “E: Aynı şarkıyı, aynı saatte ertesi gün geri dinliyosun yani.

S: Her gün aynı gibi, ha?

E: Evet yani, günü birinden farklı bir günü yok. Sadece eşek gibi çalışmanın farkı var bizde.”

## **5.6 Sense of nothingness and questions of worth<sup>165</sup>**

The conclusion Charlesworth (2004, p. 193) has drawn for the working class people he interviewed in Rotherham is in a powerful resonance with what may be concluded for the speeches of the garment workers (emphasis added): “What emerges from these people’s speech is that their primary experience of existence is of a *concern over necessities* and conditions that impact upon them so severely that it curtails the possible ways for them to realize their way of living.”

The overarching primacy of this “concern over necessities” in the lives of the working class people, examples of which are tried to be given in the above lines, also give way to questioning of the self and meaning of the world, which also finds its expression in “deliberate but unselfconscious of repetition of” idioms containing the word “nothing” (Charlesworth, 2004, pp. 193, 172). This fact is confirmed by the extensive uses “yok” and “hiç”<sup>166</sup> by the garment workers describing several different aspects of their lives. For example, when asked about how he felt when he is unemployed, Ümit (35) simply answers “You feel yourself [as] nothing!”<sup>167</sup>; Aslan (35) states they have “no possibilities to live out their culture” or “nothing would change” if he possessed an occupation different than being a garment worker; Adil (30) says that they “did have nothing at home” and “they knew nothing” when they had come to Istanbul and he has “no plans for the future” as he has “no security” and “no social life”; Seyran (31) tells that the women only deal with household chores in leisure time and could only have some chat with other women in her building and “had no other things in her (social) life”, that she had “no other choice than being a garment worker” as she had “no education”; Hayriye (33), when asked about what they did with their family in leisure time, answers by saying that they do just

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<sup>165</sup> The concepts that will be discussed here such as sense of nothingness and questions of worth can also be linked to the discussions in the previous chapters concerning “shame”, “hidden injuries” and “self-worth”. However, this part is not a simple reiteration of what is discussed there. Rather, a new outlook from a different perspective tried to be provided based on the discussion of experiences of necessity.

<sup>166</sup> Nothing in English corresponds to “hiç” and “yok” depending on the context and form of the usage.

<sup>167</sup> In original wording he says: “Hiç hissediyosun!”

“standard things”, “there is nothing novel”, they did just “fixed things”<sup>168</sup>; Abdurrahman (32) in trying to explain why the economic crisis occur expresses that “they had nothing in their hands”, they are subject to what the “big bosses” do, they could just blow them out with a small movement of their fist; Selda (23) articulates that they “could do nothing” despite all the efforts they make when compared to the riches who are “living their lives”; Erhan (30) tells that there is no place for planning in their life, they “just work all the time, and there is nothing else”<sup>169</sup>; Raziye (47) states that they are nothing when compared to their bosses, they are not even taken into consideration.

Nothingness need not always to be iterated verbally, however. Even, as a matter of fact, feelings of nothingness are manifested more in mediated ways. This is partly because, declaration of oneself to be “nothing” or “worthless” to a “stranger”, independent from how much a level of trust is established between the interviewer and interviewee, something that can pose a threat to the self-identity, to the dignity of the declaring self. A manifestation of this sense of nothingness finds its repercussion in the statements of the workers in such questions as “Who am I to challenge the order of this world?” For example, after having been talked about the inequalities of this world and the controversies of the lives lived by riches and the poor, Raziye (47) clearly show signs of a feeling of injustice; however, when asked about “why there were riches and the poor in this world at all”, she answers as follows: “I do sometimes think of [this subject], but not so much in depth. I cannot find a solution to this, but one thinks of it. I do not reflect upon much.”<sup>170</sup> And in some other interviews, the workers give similar answers to questions aiming to get them to the reasons of their deprivation and poverty. They simply indicated that “they just don’t know” or answered back with question “Do you know why?” “You say why it does happen in that way.” These answers do not simply point to their arrogance or not being able to answer these questions, however they indicate that the workers do not

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<sup>168</sup> In original wording her account is as follows: “Öyle geçiyo yani. Standart aslında. Bizim bi değişikliğimiz hiç bi şeyimiz yok. Standart aslında. Sabit şeyleri yapıyoruz, farklı bi şey yok.”

<sup>169</sup> “Şimdi hep çalışıyoruz, başka bir şey yok.”

<sup>170</sup> In her words: “Ya düşünüyorum da [bu konuyu], öyle derinlemesine değil. Onun çözümünü bulmuyorum ama düşünüyo insan... Derinlemesine girmiyom işte...”

feel themselves that important to give answers to such “big” questions. They feel that, their answers will not be respected as themselves are not respected at all. This fact also has an implication on questions of struggle in that, as long as the workers do not consider themselves as worthy of something, they feel that their contribution to any kind of struggle would be insignificant. This also explains why the politically engaged workers interviewed were more eager to answer grand questions concerning the reason of their deprivation and poverty.

As one reads through the pages of speeches of the garment workers interviewed, comes to feel that their feeling of themselves as “nothing” or “unworthy” is reflected in their belief that their ideas are not worthy of listening, of taking into consideration. However, such a belief cannot be regarded as a solid belief that is unchallenged within the selves of the garment workers. Rather, there always exists a desire to be heard, as implicated by almost all of the workers after the interviews by stating that “are these speeches we have made will be heard?”, or that “the interviews done will do any good for”. This desire to be heard on the one hand, and the belief that their ideas and speech are just insignificant on the other hand, points to a contradictory character in the selves of garment workers. This contradictory character is typically exemplified by one of the most talkative garment workers interviewee’s, Hayri’s (38), stating that “We are the children of the slums, we don’t know how to speak”, at one point in the interview and “if you let us speak, I could speak till the morning”, or “we have lots to say, but do not have any listeners” at another point.<sup>171</sup> Within this respect, the findings of this study confirm the Erdogan’s (2007a, pp. 56-58) observation about the voice and silence of the urban poor in Turkey.

Beyond the contradictory position of regarding garment workers’ themselves as unworthy or insignificant on the one hand and their wanting their voices to be heard on the other, this account indicates one more thing: Non-existence of a subject that is willing to hear the voice of them. That means, they do not only see themselves as insufficient to express themselves in a “proper” way, which can be seen as a result of their aversion to speak, but they also feel the absence of an actively and

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<sup>171</sup> In his original wording “Biz varoş çocukuyuz, nasıl konuşulacağımı bilmeyiz.”; “Bıraksanız daha sabaha kadar konuşurum da...”; “Konuşacak çok şeyimiz var da, bi dinleyen yok ki!”

emotionally engaged subject, which reminds of the organic intellectual with passion as discussed by Gramsci (2000) in his prison notebooks, concerning herself with their sufferings and they desire to be taken seriously, to be paid attention. This aversion from speaking can also be attributed to experiences of shame and the difficulty in communicating them, which is discussed in chapter 5. It is again underlined in that discussion, difficulty in communicating shame did not always mean impossibility of sharing shame experiences. A “non-violent form of communication” through “active and methodical listening”, as conceptualized by Bourdieu (1996), is tried to be employed and proven to achieve some success in overcoming the difficulty of communicating shame and reversing the aversion of speaking to a relief after talking for the interviewees. Hayriye (33) for example, a woman worker with a headscarf and with a conservative background, talked even about the relationship and problems with her husband, and declared after the interview that she felt for the first time in a long period of time herself to be worthy of something, worthy of being taken into consideration.

Adding to the sense of nothingness and feeling unworthy, what is striking about the narratives of the garment workers is a lack of a perception of meaning in their lives. Since their lives are covered with stories of denial from valued ways of living, they come to learn to live the things as they come, without much questioning. As the workers live under an endemic insecurity and permanent instability given the flexible and precarious working conditions of the garment sector and hardly making their days, let alone having a sense of getting better as the time unfolds; they do not see themselves as having a mission in their life, which is also manifested in their dreams and plans about the future, if there still exists any. These concerns have been discussed in previous Chapter under the experiences of time and will not be reiterated here; however workers’ accounts of their dreams and future plans quoted there should also lead one to consider what happened to meaning of life to the garment workers. Although not all of them displays a homogeneous attitude towards class politics, exceptions to this loss of life’s meaning in the garment workers are the workers that have a specific political consciousness, as they seem to find a fresh challenge that give at least to some extent a sense of mission to themselves and a meaning to the life they live. Their experiences will be dealt in detail in the next

chapter. In the next two parts, it will be tried to be shown how such a loss of meaning in life will be manifested in workers' killing of their hopes and specific ignorant attitudes towards issues concerning their own life and why they choose to do so.

## **5.7 “Killing of hopes”, “self-willed ignorance” and “working class realism”**

Erhan (30): “Actually we can't dream, because there is nothing to dream of. I mean, even if you dream, it is a pipedream...”

Aslan (35): “Not expectation... our expectation is... We can't see our future; I mean, we can't know what will happen tomorrow.”

Selda (23): “You can't dream... If you dream, you experience frustration; I mean... [...] Hope... hopes are continuously destroyed [she laughs cynically].”

Hayriye (33): “That is, I don't have an expectation anymore.”

Ersan (25): “From now on, I don't have any [expectations].”

Ömür (39): “From now on, I have no hope. I left everything to time, destiny, luck... I don't know; but frankly speaking, I have no hope.”

Zülfü (30): “I can't think about anything other than subsistence strain!”

Adil (30): “Because of that, I have no plans for the future. Because, err, you have no job security, no social life.”

Abdurrahman (32): “[....] I cannot see a light of hope for the future.”

Esma (17): “In fact, I have not much hope for the rest [of my life].”

Gülseren (42): “We have always hoped for something until now, see what happened? Nothing...”

Zehra (45): “From now on, my hope is... at most, for my children... For myself, there is nothing left to hope for.”<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>172</sup> Erhan (30): “Valla hayal kuramıyoruz, çünkü hayal kuracak bi şey yok ortalıkta. Yani hayal kursan da boş bi hayal...”

Aslan (35): “Ya beklenen değil... beklenimiz ya önumüzü göremiyoruz; yani yarın ne olacak onu bilemiyoruz.”

Selda (23): “Kuramıyorsun ki... Hayal kursan yıkılıyor; hayalin yıkılıyor; yani artık... [...] Umut... umutlar hep yıkılıyor (güler).”

Hayriye (33): “Beklentim yok artık yani.”

Ersan (25): “Bundan sonrası için [beklentim] de yoktur.”

Ömür (39): “Bundan sonra hiç bi umudum yok. Her şeyi zamana bıraktım, kader kismet... Bilmiyorum yani; hiç bi umudum yok ama açıkçası.”

Above quoted lines from the speeches of garment workers, of both the younger and the older ones, clearly indicates a specifically interesting human condition shared by almost all of the garment workers interviewed: killing of hopes. This being so even for the younger garment workers aged no more than 25, which are normally expected to be have a more hopeful look since the time they are denied from valued ways of living is shorter, is even more attention-grabbing. It is clear that, the life deemed proper to them does not leave much space for hope. However, even in their conditions of persistent misery, aggravated by the precarious life and insecure future, the author of this thesis did not anticipate such strong accounts of killing of hopes. Yet, as it has been discussed so far in this part, from the early years on, the lives of the garment workers are marked by a strong concern over necessities, a really heavy burden of making an only decent living, impoverishment of daily-and-working life experiences, a sense of lack in self worth and in the meaning of life. Killing of hopes is, in that respect, a result of experiencing such conditions over a long period of time, with less or even no progress achieved as the time unfolds through their lives.<sup>173</sup>

Killing of hopes, however, does not indicate a passive acceptance of the domination inherent in their lives. Rather, it is an active strategy of the subordinated against the suffering they would receive from relentless breaking of their hopes. All these expressions of killing of hopes, does not at all mean that they have lost their capacity to hope, a basic feature of human condition. We cannot easily conclude on “hopelessness” of these workers, “killing of hopes” is another thing. It is an active strategy to defend their selves against unfulfilled hopes. As Selda (23) states above,

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Zülfü (30): “Ben hiç geçim sıkıntısından başka bir şey düşünemiyorum ki!”

Adil (30): “Onun için şu an geleceğe dair bi planım yok. Çünkü, eee, hiç bi iş güvencen yok, sosyal yaşıntın yok.”

Abdurrahman (32): “[...] umut ışığı artık göremiyorum ileriye dönük.”

Esma (17): “Çok da bi umudum yok bundan sonrası için aslında.”

Gülseren (42): “Bu zamana kadar bi şeyler umut ettik de ne oldu?”

Zehra (45): “Bundan sonra umudum... Olsa olsa çocuklar açısından... Kendi hesabıma umut mumut edilecek bi şey kalmadı artık.”

<sup>173</sup> This situation of garment workers can also be compared with the shoe-production workers in Gedikpaşa as reported by Güler Müftüoğlu (2005). A significant portion of those workers (45.7%), when surveyed about their future expectations, indicated that “they have no expectations and just live day by day” (Güler Müftüoğlu, 2005, pp. 209-210).

“the hopes are always shattered”, so it is better to kill the hopes before they are shattered. Another garment worker, Gülsen (42), this time a bit older, states that hoping has not brought them anything to date, which justifies her current state of killing her hopes.

This state of killing of hopes is in a close relation with the current economy under we all live: the precarious economy. As Castel (2003) argued several times in his book *Transformation of the Social Question*, in today’s economy the art of living day to day, “getting by from day to day” seems to make a comeback since it has been last seen in the early industrialization period of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. As it was the case for the pauperism of that period, the labour is directly exposed to the volatilities of the free market as a result of the dismantling of the policies specific to welfare or developmentalist states that have a protective characteristic for workers against the market. What is specific of our contemporary era of precarious and flexible economy is that, an expectation of minimum security that has been created once with welfare policies, effectiveness of which of a questionable nature even in the existence of most protective social policies in case of Turkey however, has been now demolished and that creates a discrepancy between socially constructed expectation of security and a given society’s capacity to apply these securities actively, as Castel (2004, p. 11) argues. As Aslan (35) states, they are not just able to see their future, they do not what is coming on tomorrow, so there remains no room for expectations. Adil (30) similarly states that he has no plan for the future as he has simply no job security. And Zülküf (30) clearly indicates the situation of human in a precarious condition, burdened with deprivation: “I cannot think [anything] further than making my living!”

But what happens when they happen to problematize their conditions of living, and ask why they are denied from living a better life? Charlesworth, (2004, p. 182) concluding on his interviews with the precarious workers from Rotherham, asserts that questioning make things too complex for the working class people to handle with, which leaves them with the only alternative of “killing of hopes” :

“To begin to develop forms of consciousness that make the world consciously problematic, something to be thought about; to move away from the efficiency of habits attuned to life in this world would be to invite a slide from semi-conscious frustration to absurdity and transform

ordinary unhappiness into misery. Living life in the context of minimal expectations, the only strategy that makes practical sense is to maintain an ignorance of anything better, to kill one's hopes.”

Eventually, Charlesworth (2004, p. 182) identifies this abstain from hoping for the better with “emotional refusal and self willed ignorance”. This peculiar state of being is confirmed by the thinness of their accounts on their expectations, which are relieved in the course of the conversations. However, anyone hearing about the future expectations and plans about the garment workers, if she can hear some at all, could easily be astonished by lack of any imagination and bewildering simplity of these expectations. Following are some samples taken from the conversations:

“Raziye (47): “What can be my expectation, from now on... I can complete my pension liability, if we work more or less as well, we can carry on somehow.”

“S: Don't you have a hope for the future?

Ersan (25): I have, we have some hope more or less for ourselves. How? We grew up, we get married some time. We can start a proper family. We continue to work in textile. That is it...”

“Zülfü (30): But, by working, a man can't... Now, I can't, Zülfü can't do anything by working. You can buy neither a house nor a car, you can't set up a business... Work... You can't do, that is, you can't set up a business with a wage of one billion. I mean, a man can't work up to anything with his labour.”

“S.: Do you and your husband have a plan, it would be like that in 5 years, 10 years?

Hayriye (33): How can I say. We had a dream of a house, we achieved it. We want to have a happy and peaceful family in 5 years. Nobody would force us, without any debts, we want such a thing. I want to be in peace, at ease. I tell him “you will provide us with comfort; you will work and we will stay at home”. That's it... We don't want to buy anything. It is enough that we have a car and a house. I don't want anything else. [...] I want to sit alone, with my daughter, stay just in peace.”<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> “Raziye (47): İşte bundan sonrası için beklenim ne olur... Emekli primimi doldururum, üç beş bi şey de çalışırsak işte, geçer gideriz.”

“S: Geleceğe dair bi umudun yok mu ya?

Ersan (25): Vardır, bizim de az çok kendimize göre bi umudumuz var. Nasıldır? Yaşımız geldi, evleniriz. İşte düzungün bi aile kurarız. Gene böyle tekstilde devam ederiz, çalışırız. Bu...”

“Zülfü (30): Ama şimdi çalışmakla insan... Ben şimdi çalışmakla, Zülfü çalışmakla bi şey yapamaz. Ne ev alırsın, ne araba alırsın, ne iş kurarsın... Çalış... Yapamaz yani bi milyar maaşla bi iş kuramaz, yapamazsun. Yani emekle bi insan bi yere varamaz ki.”

“S.: Peki eşinle bi planın var mı, 5 sene sonra şöyle olur, 10 sene sonra şöyle olur?

Raziye's (37) wish to complete his social security premium to be entitled to pension, Ersan's (25) desire to find a girl to marry and continue being a garment worker, Zülfü's (30) belief that one cannot make his life through his labour, Hayriye's (33) desire to live on her own in her own home peacefully with his daughter at her side and several other testimonies from workers' speeches indicate a deliberate "modesty" in their wants.<sup>175</sup> Yet, this modesty does not certainly imply a lack of imagining capacity or capacity to fantasy of these workers. The years spent under tight budgets, the ever-existing primacy of concern over necessities, constant denial of these workers from alternative ways of living and a clear lack of an alternative counter-hegemonic imagination for most of the workers have taught them to be modest in their future plans and to have minimalist expectations. This is a knowledge extracted from practice of daily life by the garment workers, which is coined by Bourdieu (1984, p. 381) as the "extraordinary *realism* of the working classes". Elsewhere, Bourdieu (2000, p. 216) also stated that "one is always surprised to see how much people's wills adjust to their possibilities, their desires to the capacity to satisfy them".

Having expectations that have almost no chance of realization, trying to live in a way contradicting this deliberate modesty is frowned upon among the garment workers. Such people's expectations are mocked upon, and never taken seriously; they are considered to be just superfluous. Such people are accused of "being a wannabe" (or *özenti olmak*). Adil (30), for example, despises people that spend their money on their look rather than spending on their necessities as follows:

"Men are hungry, err... very err... they have serious chronic diseases, illnesses. He doesn't spend this for his health, he doesn't eat or drink water, but he buys a nice t-shirt [with this

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Hayriye (33): Nasıl diyim. Bi ev hayalimiz vardı, onu gerçekleştirdik. 5 sene sonra mutlu, huzurlu bi yuvamız olsun istiyoruz. Bizi kimse sıkmadan, borçsuz, harçsız, öyle bi şey istiyoruz. Ben huzurlu olmak istiyorum, rahat etmek istiyorum. Ona da diyorum "sen rahat ettireksin; sen çalışıksın biz oturcaz evde". Öyle... Bi şey alma derdimiz yok. Bi arabamız olsun, bi evimiz olsun, yeter. Başka da bi şey istemiyorum. [...] Şeyi istiyorum, tek başıma, kızımla bi yerde oturup, sessiz sakin durmak istiyorum."

<sup>175</sup> Comparing these findings with those of Bora (2007, pp. 121,122), concerning the future plans and dreams of urban poor in Turkey in the beginning of 2000s is really interesting. There is a close similarity of attitudes towards future. Bora (2007, pp. 121,122) states that "the women and men interviewed stated that they do not dream. Even when they did, they wanted such [ordinary] things such as a house and a regular job. It seems as if the situation they are in limits even their capacity to dream and to will."

money]. Or he puts hair-gel... [...] Err... wannabe! I mean his being oppressed... He wants to show off via t-shirts, jeans, hair-gel, shoes... I mean this is being oppressed, in fact. The main thing is that they try to camouflage all their oppression through clothes.”<sup>176</sup>

Such a look towards the people aspiring for lives marked as “better” by the dominant values is typical and similar testimonies can be found in conversations with Seyran (31), Haktan (31), Zülfü (30), Abdurrahman (32), Zehra (45), Hayri (38) and Raziye (47). However, these people themselves are not exempt from looking upon the lives other than theirs being “wannabe”’s at some times. Adil (30), for example, confesses himself that he does the thing he despises and accuses of “being a wannabe” and buys “preppy” clothes even when he hardly finds money for buying something to eat. Morally, there is nothing wrong with desiring what upper classes use and wear, as what is termed as “posh” can also be good as indicated by Sayer (2005b, p. 124). The thing here is that, the dominated classes who are continuously denied from valued ways of living and deemed to a constant concern over necessities desire but also have a doubt about their right to desire what is classified as good by the dominant values.

Living such doubtful lives, hoping something inside but knowing indeed these hopes are destined to be shattered sometime, coming up with the idea that the best is to kill the hopes or to have minimal expectations, being willingly ignorant of any possibility of a better life; adding to what we have so far discussed in the previous parts, lead us to another aspect of the alienation of the contemporary working class people and garment workers in particular face: - mass – experience of powerlessness.

## 5.8 Concluding Remarks: ‘Mass’ experience of powerlessness?

Alienation, and so the social class, are matters of power. As Holloway (1997, p. 146) argued, under the capitalist production system we are all “dis-empowered”, in terms

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<sup>176</sup> “İnsanların karnı aç, eee... çok eee... ciddi kronik rahatsızlıklar, hastalıkları var. Bunu sağlığına harcamıyor, yemeye, yemek yiyeip su almıyor, ama gidiyor bunu güzel bir tişört alıyor. Veya gidiyor saçını jölelettiriyor, jölelettiriyor... [...] Eeee... özenti! Yani işte o şeyini o ezilmişliğini, eee, şeyler eee... Tişört üzerinden, pantolon üzerinden, jöle üzerinden, giydiği ayakkabı üzerinden hani insanlara fiyaka olarak göstermek için... Yani bu, bu da çok büyük bir ezilmişliktir yani aslında. İşin temeli insanlar eee... bütün o ezilmişliklerini eee... kıyafetlerle kamufla etmeye çalışıyorlar.”

of “our creative power” and “power to control our lives”. Powerlessness, in this respect, is also a central theme in Marx, which is tried to be understood through conceptualization of estranged labour (Seeman, 1983, p. 173), as it was discussed under the heading of “political economy of necessity”. The above accounts of garment workers, all indicate the loss of control over their lives which is aggravated by the insecure and precarious working conditions of garment industry in the neoliberal era. This loss of control over their lives are tried to be conceptualized as “experiences of necessity” in this chapter, different aspects of which are tried to be demonstrated. Coining this experience of powerlessness as “mass”, rather than “collective” serves two purposes: One is emphasizing its being experiences wide-spread among the garment workers, another is underlining the fact that such an experience of powerlessness, however wide-spread it can be felt, does not seem to lead to a collective identity, in terms of combining the people experiencing the similar conditions against the class society, which creates these conditions. It can be said that, most of the garment workers interviewed live out the same struggling conditions and face with similar daily stress and lack of self-worth caused by these conditions in their own isolated, atomized worlds. As Lebowitz (2003, p. 95) argues, because of the mystified character of the power of capital:

“It is as *individuals* that wage-labourers experience their powerlessness in this realm – and that powerlessness (their inability to satisfy needs, etc.) does not appear foremost as the result of the power of capital as mediator within society. Rather, it appears as a powerlessness of the individual with respect to society – a powerlessness that is expressed as the absence of a thing, *Money.*”

It is both interesting and depressing to notice that, although they have very similar life stories and share very similar living conditions, the garment workers have very low levels of capacity for sympathy to each other. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that, as Lebowitz argues (2003, p. 122), “*a necessary condition for the existence of capital is its ability to divide and separate workers – in order to defeat them.*”

However, regarding the second purpose, one should always keep in mind that alienation is not an unchallenged condition; rather it is “a process and present struggle”, a struggle “of labour against capital” (Holloway, 1997, p. 148):

“If the reproduction of capital depends on the struggle of alienation, then our struggle, the struggle of labour against capital, is the struggle of disalienation. Disalienation is not something in the future, it is not the post-revolutionary condition that we shall reach after passing through this vale of tears; nor is it the privilege of the enlightened, of the emancipated few. On the contrary, disalienation is here, now, in our existence as insubordinate labour, in our existence not only within but against capital.”

Although it is not easy to provide a couple of examples that indicate a concrete counter-hegemonic moment in the garment workers concerning the experiences of necessity, having a too pessimistic approach underestimates the potential and capacity of the working class to desire for their freedom and dignity, which is a common feature of Bourdieusian approaches to understanding experiences of class. Reading through the lines of Charlesworth (2004), for example, one cannot help ending up with a feeling of defeat, pessimism and suffering. What is important to keep in mind is that, all these experiences undermine the dignity and freedom of the garment workers. This fact, together with the knowledge that “the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessity and mundane considerations ceases [...]” as suggested by Marx (1981, pp. 958-959), should lead one to think about the seemingly strong but fragile basis the alienation stands on. Gramsci (2000, p. 83; emphasis added) also underlines how the individual struggling of a worker on the necessities of life provides an unguaranteed basis for de-alienation as follows:

“In the sphere of general capitalist activity, the worker too operates on the level of free competition; he is an individual and a citizen. But the starting conditions in the struggle are not the same for everyone, at the same time. The existence of private property places the social minority in a privileged position and makes the struggle uneven. *The worker is continuously exposed to the most deadly hazards: the bare necessities of his life, his culture, the life and future of his family, are all exposed to the sudden consequences of a shift in the labour market.* So the worker attempts to free himself from the sphere of competition and individualism. The principles of combination and solidarity become paramount for the working class; they transform the mentality and way of life of the workers and peasants.”

Alienation, as a by-product of capitalist production system, secures the reproduction of capital one the one hand<sup>177</sup>, and it undermines the legitimacy of capitalism through the degradation of humanity on the other hand. What is at stake is the human dignity, as emphasized by Holloway (1997, p. 148). Struggle of disalienation is, therefore, also a struggle for human dignity:

“Dignity is to assert one's humanity in a society which treats us inhumanly. Dignity is to assert our wholeness in a society which fragments us. Dignity is to assert control over one's life in a society which denies such control. Dignity is to live in the present the Not Yet for which we struggle.” (Holloway, 1996, p. 24)

Mészáros (1970, p. 181) describes these two dynamic contradicting tendencies in the process of alienation in a dialectical way as follows:

“Alienation is an inherently dynamic concept: a concept that necessarily implies change. Alienated activity not only produces “alienated consciousness”, but also “consciousness of being alienated”. This consciousness of alienation, in however alienated a form it might appear [...] not only contradicts the idea of an alienated inert totality, but also indicates the appearance of a need for the supersession of alienation.”

However, “supersession of alienation” as depicted by Mészáros, is not possible without the *demystification* of the mystified nature of capital and functioning of “free” market, which in itself seems to be a natural and neutral process. The position Marxism holds with regards to this struggle is the mission of *demystification*, that is why, as Lebowitz (2003) argues, Marx had spent a large deal of his time to analyze and bring into light the nature of capital, at the expense of dealing less with the political economy of labour.

What one can conclude concerning the experiences of necessity is, then, its twofold character. The garment workers, who work under conditions of permanent insecurity, low and irregular wages and precariousness, one the one side, live under a heavy burden of a continuous and persistent concern over necessities, which results in a deep-seated sense of deprivation, an impoverishment of life experiences, lack of meaning in this life and in this world, questioning of self-worth, a specific human condition of killing of hopes and in the end an experience of powerlessness. All these

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<sup>177</sup> See Wennerlind (2002) for a detailed and brilliant analysis of alienation both as a process of human degradation and also an instrument of social control that plays a crucial role in the valorization of capital.

experiences lead one to a universal pessimism. However, on the other side, unbearable character of living such a life, of this universal pessimism, forms a potential for “consciousness of being alienated” that can well be a basis for revolt and counter-hegemonic struggle. Marx, in line with this view, criticising the humanitarian approach to society, says that seeing “in poverty nothing but poverty” is not enough, one should also “see in it the revolutionary, subversive side, which will overthrow the old society” (Marx, 1847). The experiences of garment workers that “has been gripped by the theory” (Marx, 1843), that gained the knowledge that only source of profit and capital is their labour indicates such a direction. Their experiences, although not exempt from contradictions and confusion, confirms the idea that alienation is not a constant, stable condition; rather it entails in itself an unstable essence that carries the potential for an anti-hegemonic struggle. Although there is not enough room to discuss fully more open confrontations and struggles some of the garment workers have talked about, they will be touched upon a bit on the conclusion chapter. They also experience what has been described above as “experiences of necessity” in its fullest extent, but to the extent that they can attribute their being deprived and denied from valued ways of living to the logic of capitalist production system, they can claim their right to power and supersede their alienation at least to some extent. The other workers display “consciousness of being alienated”, as coined by Mészáros, only in alienated and fragmentary forms. However, these experiences also points to the potential of claiming their right to power, in the wake of experiences of powerlessness.

## CHAPTER 6 CONCLUSION

“Class struggle is not a puerile dream -it is an act that is freely determined upon and an inner necessity of the social order.”  
(Gramsci, 2000, p. 44)

Discussions that have been made up to this point may seem to draw a pessimistic picture concerning the working class experiences and levels of class consciousness of the garment workers. Although there has been an emphasis of the dialectical nature of alienation and inchoate potentials for revolt, the three main categories of experiences discussed in the previous chapters were all concerned primarily with the moments of alienation. During the fieldwork, it was possible to observe some more open confrontations and struggles against the reign of capital. Here, we suffice ourselves with only touching upon them a bit. Yet, one has to be careful about the fact that, the sample of this thesis may be biased in terms of class consciousness since the first contacts that could be found in the garment sector had always been garment workers that were engaged with left politics at least to some extent. Beyond the open confrontations between the workers and the employers and capital in general, some examples of which will be provided in a minute, there were of course hidden forms of resistance among the garment workers. Slowing down the production and excusing that “the model is hard to follow” or that “the machine continuously breaks the thread”, visiting the toilet more often to escape from the work, pretending to work harder when the supervisor or the boss come into the scene are only a few examples found in the workers’ speeches.

In terms of open forms of resistance, there were some unionization experiences of workers Ümit (35) and Aydin (30), both of which were engaged with left politics. They had very similar stories of unsuccessful unionization: They began the organization practice and began registering members for the Union (TEKSİF), and when the number of members was so near to the minimum limit (which is 50%

of the workers working in that workplace) for the Union to be entitled to make collective bargaining and agreement in the name of the workers, one of the workers, who seemed to be engaged in the organization practices, blew the whistle on unionization to the employer. They reported being fired afterwards and then even being blacklisted. Quite controversially, Ümit (35) found his own *merdivenaltı* garment atelier with a few friends to overcome blacklisting; whereas Ayhan (30) could only find a place in one of his friend's atelier.

Another form of open resistance experiences are workers' taking legal action against the illegal practices of the employer. These legal actions are not only important in showing the level of consciousness of workers involved in the action<sup>178</sup>, but they also have yielded material returns to the workers. Seyran (31), Aydin (30) and Adil (30) have shared such kind of experiences and were able to get their severance and notice pay through legal action after their employer fired them<sup>179</sup>. The role played by the neighbour based organizations such as that of *Halkevleri* (*People's Houses*), *Dayanışma Evleri* (*Houses of Solidarity*), and *İşçi Kültür Evi* (*Workers' Culture Houses*) are significant in terms of legal counselling for the work related issues of workers, although their impact is limited concerning the large size of garment workers spreaded all over Istanbul. Another drawback of this kind of action is that, they are essentially individual struggles and have very low possibility of being transformed into a collective struggle, even have the possibility that the worker taking legal action may suffice herself just with the material gain she has yielded from the legal action. But it is not deniable that, especially the legal actions won against the employers with the help of above stated organizations are sources of prestige among the workers for these organizations.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>178</sup> It should be stated again that, most of the workers are not aware of even their basic rights.

<sup>179</sup> Interested reader can see the interview with Adil provided in the Appendix B to read his experiences of taking legal action against the employers in his own account.

<sup>180</sup> Adding to the above forms of open resistance, TEKSİF's struggle to create a public awareness especially in the countries, to which the garments are exported, about the bad working conditions in garment production in Turkey and using this as a threat to the employers in Turkey for the betterment of working conditions has also succeeded in several cases (Arslanoğlu, 2011). However, becoming of this kind of struggle the main form of struggle for the trade union that has the biggest number of member workers can also be considered as an indication of lack of grassroot worker activity in this industry. This does not necessarily mean that there are no struggles in the industry, tough. Two recent ongoing resistance stories in garment industry are that of Roseteks workers and of Hey Tekstil

Beyond these examples of hidden and open resistances, form and level of workers' consciousness also desire to be mentioned at some length here. To begin with, with respect to their perception of the conflict between interests of them, as workers, and employers or capital in general; we can say that almost all the workers feel their exploitation, although not all of them define it exactly as exploitation. Some say "there are certainly people that make money over them", some argue that "it is the bigwigs that take the gilt of the ginger", and some claim resolutely that "in every country there are exploiters and exploited people". However, most of them are far from expressing this exploitation in class terms and in class ways. Also, when it comes to define "who" exactly is the one that exploits them; their answers are rather fragmentary, scattered and unclear<sup>181</sup>. They do not put the main conflict in this country as between the employees and employers or labour and capital, but it is considered to be between the "riches" and the "poor". Some of the workers seem to define their relationship with their employer as relationship between a brother/sister. This paves the way for a paternalistic obscuring of exploitation relations.

When asked about of which class they consider themselves to be, some answer that "I am a first class person." or "I am from the good class.". These answers partly stem from the fact that, the term "class" is not a much loaded term in the

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workers. For the story of Roseteks workers' resistance see (Sendika.org, 2012b) and fort hat of Hey Tekstil workers' resistance see (Sendika.org, 2012a).

<sup>181</sup> That is partly because of the fact that the scale of the workplaces where most of the interviewees work are rather small and it is hard to distinguish the employer from the employee as he takes part in the daily production activities as the workers. He is also indistinguishable in his manners and behaviours. He can be considered as a "Klein Meister", or "small master", as defined by Marx (1976, pp. 423, 448) as the employer who could not move from the simple reproduction to expanded reproduction, which would free him from manual labour himself, and therefore who could not be considered as a capitalist. But there are also cases where the worker works in a larger scale garment factory where there certainly is expanded reproduction, but he/she still cannot exactly answer the question of "who is exploiting me?". Another thing is that, in garment production, there is such a complex web of subcontracting, which transcends the national and regional boundaries and also make itself felt even in the most obscure streets of the slums, that the mechanisms of appropriating the surplus is much blurred. Interestingly, some of the workers indicate that "the larger firms" or the "garment chain stores" are the real ones that make money out of their labour. Geniş (2006, p. 133) states that, commenting on the small scale industry workers in Ankara, the workers somehow have a feeling that their surplus is not only appropriated in their own workplaces but also absorbed in the complex web of subcontracting and this feeling blurs the class relations within the workplace. That also seems to be true for the garment workers discussed in this study. Yet, although this feeling may blur the class relations on the workplace level, it may point to the workers that not this and that specific capitalist is responsible, but the capital in general and the capitalist system itself for their exploitation. Such a perception of confrontation on a general level may have the power of engendering more radical struggles.

popular culture when compared to other countries where capitalism and politics and language of class has been more established.

As it has been also discussed in one part of “experiences of time” chapter, the level of solidarity is reported to be low among the garment workers. Most of the workers complain that, if they were to stand against an injustice in the workplace, their colleagues would not support them all, as they fear from being fired and unemployed. Yet, this complaint about lack of solidarity may also mean that these workers also have a desire for solidarity among their working fellows. One factor affecting the solidarity between the garment workers is observed to be the differences within the workers in terms of their status. One could observe the registered workers with employment insurance, unregistered workers without any security and employment insurance and the daily labourers who are hired from the informal worker agents in the peak times where demand is high within the very same workplace. Existence of that kind of differences observed to carry a potential for creating divisions among the class lines. These groups drank their tea separately in the break times, to give just a simple example.

When it comes to their perception of justice with regards to the wage relationship, it can be detected that they had internalized the wage relation in itself. They do not question their labour power’s being a commodity in the labour-force market, what they problematise is the level of their wages. Yet, the level of their wages seems to become mostly a concern when they had a real impoverishment due to their wages’ eroding in front of the rising prices of necessary goods. At other times, they still do not find the wage levels satisfying, but they seem to have internalized that the garment work is a poorly paid job. However, they felt a deep sense of injustice when they compared their wages with other fellow workers as they either think that they are working harder or they have better qualities. As far as the findings of the field research suggest, they seem to perceive injustice only within a comparative framework within their experiencable environment. Another comparative injustice is felt by the garment workers when they compare their working conditions with those of workers with a more secure employment status. For example, most of the workers voiced their displeasure of public workers and officers, since they are perceived to be “sitting behind a desk all day and do nothing” and still

grumbling about their working conditions. In that sense, it can be argued that the divisive strategy of capital against the labour is working well to turn the different segments of the working class to each other rather than turning on the system.

Adding to these observations concerning the level and form of consciousness the garment workers have, it can be asserted that what Özugurlu (2008) concluded on the textile and weaving workers of Denizli, as followed, is also valid to a large extent for the garment workers here presented:

- “a) They are inclined to describe the labour-capital relation in divine terms and they have a comprehension of divine equality and earthly contradiction.
- b) Concerning the employer-employee relation, they are aware of the fact that these two are two different social groups; however they have a welcoming attitude towards ways of corporatist and paternalist internalization.
- c) They believe that the wage paid to them is not what their labour deserves to be paid, whereas they give credence to traditional paternalist understandings concerning wage relation.
- d) They are very inclined to describe the labour-capital relation within popular terms and have a very strong perception in the direction of inequality and injustice, however it is observed that they are not expressing the moral outrage they strongly feel in class terms as strongly as they feel it.” (Özugurlu, 2008, p. 212)

Having speculated about the aspects of class experience which are more directly related with the macro politics of class and that could not find a place in the discussions in the body of the thesis up to now, we may now turn to the main findings of this thesis concerning the class experiences of the garment workers, which are mostly consisting of alienative moments. These experiences were categorized under three main headings, and the same can be done in presenting the main findings.

Concerning the first category of experiences, which deals with the emotional, evaluative and psychic aspects of class and named as experiences of shame; we can conclude that, in a flexible world where the working-life is hegemonically reconstructed as a success-failure story of individuals that are fictionally conceptualized as the entrepreneurs of their own labour, the garment workers take their class position more personally and feel themselves inadequate in the society of free competition, which engenders injuries in the self, and a questioning, a doubt

about one's self-respect and worth. To the extent that the class positions are translated into the individuality through the camera obscura of the fetishized capitalist social relations, the defences against these injuries to become respectable are also aimed to individual (pseudo)emancipation, rather than collective struggles. As a result, the experiences of shame, to the extent that they cannot find open communication channels with other members of the working class who also share the very same experiences, lived as hidden injuries that puts the members of the same class against each other, isolates them in their own grievances and creates an alienated society, which in result seem to reproduce the capitalist production relations and its hegemonic culture through mechanisms of symbolic domination. Another important point is that, capitalist relations of production and mechanisms of the modern class society put the dignity, respect and worth of the garment workers at stake.

When it comes to the second category of experiences, i.e. the experiences of time, we see that beyond the alienation of the humankind to its own time in the capitalist production system through the very logic of the mode of production itself, in an era of flexibilization and precarity where the horizon of time is shortened to intensify the exploitation to its humanly physiological limits and past and future is melted into the presence, which is the time of never-ending exploitation; the garment workers have lost not only their control over their present time through extremely long and irregular working hours; but also are ripped of their capacity to plan/organize their future. They are caught in the time trap of precarity which locks the garment workers in a serialized, episodic, fragmented presence, which is the alienated time of their exploitation, evading the past and the future.

The last category of experiences, the experiences of necessity, suggests that, in a world of global competitiveness to be sustainable as a national / regional / sub-regional economy where the workers of the countries that are placed on the labour intensive/semi or low-skilled production side in the New International Division of Labour, should work for the lowest minimum wage possible; the people, who have a migration story in his family and choose garment work necessarily as a result of their lack of educational, social and economic capital, live under the burden of continuous and persistent concern over necessities, which results in deep-seated

sense of deprivation, impoverishment of life experiences, lack of meaning in this life, killing of hopes and consequentially experience of powerlessness.

In sum, in general, the garment workers experience the flexible and precarious conditions in highly alienated ways that finds their repercussion in what is conceptualized as experiences of shame, time and necessity. Yet, this work is not a mere contribution to the general pessimist belief that the precarity immobilizes the workers and there is almost no possibility for them to collectively struggle and be active agents of their own life. On the contrary, it tries to underline the bidirectionality of the possibility: towards making and unmaking. This two way possibility should not be understood as treatment of moments of making and unmaking as two separate identities; rather these two are internally related and coexist in a dialectical unity. As it is already underlined, alienation does not refer to a completed, static situation of humankind under capitalist production system, rather it carries within itself an inevitable tendency for nonalienation, traces of which also tried to be found in the experiences of workers in the form of daydreams, seeking for self-respect, and their desires for a decent life. The unstable, unbearable character of the alienation under capitalism is the very basis of Marxist understanding of emancipation, as in alienation it does not only see alienation but also the rebellious side and tendency to struggle for nonalienation. As we have quoted from Gramsci in the opening of this chapter, “class struggle is not a pueril dream, but an inner necessity of the social order” and “it is freely determined upon the social order”. One has to remember that, labour is, by its very nature, divided. It is through the years of experience and struggle that the class is made by itself. Therefore, underlining the current divided state of labour is not enough in itself. Making is not a mechanic once-for-all process and a completed mission; it can be made and then unmade, which then constitutes the conditions for its remaking of itself. In the very conditions of severe alienation found in the precarious lives of garment workers, the possibilities for struggle in the direction of making the class should also be taken into account seriously. It is equally important, however, to take into account the immobilizing aspects of culturally hegemonized class experiences before speculating on the possibilities for class struggle and consciousness.

It is already seen in the accounts of the workers that are engaged in left politics and have a class consciousness, which are occasionally provided in the discussions throughout the thesis, the worldviews of the ordinary workers may change dramatically to surprise even the author of this thesis. As Gramsci noted for the experience of workers that took part in the factory councils, once the workers have the conviction that “they are arbiters and masters of their own destinies” one can see “how limitless the latent powers of the masses are, and how they are revealed and develop swiftly” (Gramsci, 2000, p. 109). In that respect, this thesis tried to provide a modest contribution to the politics of class that try to understand and – hopefully – change the social reality of classes under conditions of precarity.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: List of Interviewees<sup>182</sup>

#	Name	Gend er	A ge	Age of Start ing	# of year s wor ked	level of educa -tion	Worki ng as a...	# of firm s wor ked for	curre ntly have socia l secur ity?	total social securi ty premi ums paid	Politic ally Enga ged?	City born in	Year moved to Istan-bul	Intervi ew Date	Leng th of Inter view
1	Abdur-rahman	M	32	12	20	primar y school	machi ne operat or	30	no	1 year	no	Bitlis	1992	22.05. 2011	2 h 08 min
2	Adil	M	30	11	19	primar y school	machi ne operat or	30+	no	3 years	yes	Arda-han	1989	21.05. 2011	2h 08 min
3	Aslan	M	35	15	20	vocati onal high-school	machi ne operat or	9	no	3 years	yes	Sivas	1976	25.12. 2010	1 h 35 min
4	Aydin	M	30	20	10	6th grade	machi ne operat or	4	no	4 years	yes	Sivas	1995	07.05. 2011	1 h 01 min
5	Ayşenur	F	37	12	25	primar y school 4. year	machi ne operat or	4	no	25 days	no	İstanbul	1979	08.01. 2011	2 h 07 min
6	Deniz	F	30	11	19	primar y school	machi ne operat or	4	yes	3 years	no	Erzin-can	1989	26.12. 2010	2 h 03 min
7	Efsun	F	20	13	7	8th grade	contro ller	4	no	1 year	no	İstanbul / family moved from Ordu	1988	08.07. 2011	1 h 48 min
8	Erhan	M	30	8	22	primar y school 4. year	machi ne operat or	5	yes	2 years	no	Mardin	1989	26.12. 2010	2 h 03 min
9	Ersan	M	25	15	10	8th grade	packi ng	10	yes	4 years	no	Arda-han	1988	21.05. 2011	1 h 05 min
10	Esma	F	17	13	4	primar y school	contro l and packa ging	4	no	none	no	Adana / moved to Adana from Diyarba kir	1992	08.07. 2011	1 h 20 min
11	Esra	F	21	14	7	7th grade	machi ne operat or	6	yes	1 month	no	İstanbul	1989	18.06. 2011	1 h 10 min
12	Fethi	M	41	15	26	high-school	machi ne operat or	3	no	<2 years	no	Giresun	1989	18.06. 2011	1 h 15 min
13	Gülse-ren	F	33	28	5	primar y school	contro ller	3	yes	1 year	no	Gümüş-hane	1983	24.06. 2011	1 h 27 min
14	Haktan	M	31	15	16	primar y school	ironing & packa ging	3	yes	1 year	no	Van	1995	11.06. 2011	2 h 14 min

<sup>182</sup> The original names of the interviews are not used here for the purposes of confidentiality.

1 5	Handan	F	42	18	24	high-school	machi ne operat or	8	yes	13 years	no	Ankara	1979	24.06. 2011	2 h 03 min
1 6	Hayri	M	38	11	27	7th grade	machi ne operat or	10	yes	10 years	no	İstanbul / family moved from Malatya	1960	23.06. 2011	2 h 55 min
1 7	Hayriye	F	33	11	22	primar y school	forem an	8	no	7-8 month s	no	İstanbul	1976	11.06. 2011	1 h 14 min
1 8	Ömür	F	39	17	22	high- school	machi ne operat or	2	no	<2 years	no	Giresun	1989	18.06. 2011	1 h 15 min
1 9	Raziye	F	47	30	17	8th grade	machi ne operat or	9	yes	14 years	no	Kara- bük	1999	22.06. 2011	2 h 25 min
2 0	Selda	F	23	13	10	primar y school	machi ne operat or	7	no	2 years	no	Diyar- bakır	2001	18.06. 2011	1 h 09 min
2 1	Seyran	F	31	13	18	primar y school	machi ne operat or	15	yes	5 years	yes	Arda- han	1992	21.05. 2011	2 h 18 min
2 2	Ümit	M	35	14	21	8th grade	machi ne operat or	8	no	6 years	yes	Muş	1972	25.12. 2010	1 h 1 min
2 3	Zehra	F	45	28	17	high- school	atelier - keepe r	4	no	5 years	no	Kasta- monu	1993	23.06. 2011	1 h 34 min
2 4	Zülfü	M	30	15	15	primar y school	ironin g & packa ging	5	yes	1 year	no	Van	1996	11.06. 2011	2h 14 min

## APPENDIX B: A Sample of Interviews

### AN INTERVIEW WITH ADİL (ADİL'LE GÖRÜŞME - 14.05.2011)

(Bu görüşmeyi, Sefaköy'ün İnönü Mahallesi'nde bulunan bir İşçi Kültür Evi'nde gerçekleştirdik. Konuşmayı şehetle seven Adil, 1981 doğumlu. 9 yaşlarında ailesiyle İstanbul'a göçen Adil, yeni okulunda yeni bir şehrde gelmiş olmanın, "yol-yordam bilmeme"nin, şehirli çocuklar gibi konuşamamanın sıkıntısını çekmiş ve kabuğuna çekilmiş. İlkokulu bitirir bitirmez de tekstile başlamış. Çocukken varlıkla yokluğun, ölümle kalmı olduğunu deneyimlemiştir. Bugünden baktığında, ara-sıra çalışıkları yere uğrayan patron çocukların sanki onlara "tanrıının çocuğu" gibi geldiğini söylüyor ve iyi giyimli, varlıklı çocukların –kendilerinden büyük olsalar da- dar gelirli ailelerin çocuklarına hep küçük görünüşünden bahsediyor. Bugüne kadar değiştirdiği firma sayısının iki yüzü bulduğunu iddia eden Adil, sektördeki prekarlaşmanın somut örneği olmakla birlikte, "daha iyi bir yer" arayışının boşunallığını anlamış durumda. Aslında o firmada ve bu firmada da yaşanan hikâye, kendi nüanslarını içinde taşımakla birlikte, aynıdır. Giyimine kuşamına özen gösteren Adil, ne kadar uğraşırsa uğraşın sınıf kimliğini saklayamayacak olduğunu belirtirken, bu konuda hiçbir önbilgisi olmaksızın, ancak empirik bir kesinlikle, aslında Bourdieu'nun habitus bağılığı altında anlattıklarını örneklemekte. 16-17 yaşlarında, devrimcilerle tanışmasıyla bilincinin tersyüz oluşunu anlatır ve kendini öncü bir işçi olarak anlatırken, asında "sıradan" ve "bilinçsiz" işçilerle arasına bir mesafe de koymakta. Yakında sektör değiştireceğini ve market işçiliği yapacağını söyleyen Adil, bunun dışında içinde bulunduğu güvensiz koşulların ona başka bir gelecek planı yapması konusunda izin vermediğini belirtirken, heften yılmasa da geleceğe dair de pek umut taşımadığını da itiraf ediyor.)

SONER: Şimdi, önce istersen ben n'apıyorum, duydun mu, burda miydin ben söyleken?

ADİL (30): Yaa... Bana haber veren arkadaş hani senin bi tekstil işçileri üzerine bi çalışma yaptığını söyledi. Onunla ilgili sorular falan sorucan. Hani benim tekstilde yaşadığım sıkıntıları falan anlatmamı şe' yaptı.

S: Tamam, tamam. Güzel o zaman. Benim tekrar açıklamama gerek kalmamış. Şeyden başlayalım. İstanbul'da mı doğdun? Buraya göçle mi geldin? Ne zaman geldin? Ne zaman tekstile başladın? Biraz hayat hikâyeyinden bahsetsene.

A: İii... Benim hayat hikayem... Ardahan'da doğdum.

S: Kaç doğumlusun?

A: 1981 doğumluyum da hani kimlik yaşımin doğru olmadığını da kestirebiliyorum hani. Çünkü hani mesela köyler ilçelere filan uzak oldukları için hani. Belki de zamanlıdır hani, zamanı da doğrudur ama hani 79'lu filan olduğum biliniyo. Öyle söyleniyo. Çünkü hani amcamın çocuklarıyla filan ilkokula giderken onun okul çağydı. Bizim geçmişte onu okula almadılar, yaşı küçük diye bize göre. Onun için yani 1981'de doğduğumu, 79'da doğduğumu ama 81'de nüfusa geçtiğimi..... geçmişim. Ya işte ilkokul 3'e kadar Ardahan'da yani Kars, Çıldır, Ardahan üçgeninde okudum. Yani köydeyken de ben 1,5-2 yaşındayken annemi kaybetmişim.

S: Başın sağolsun.

A: Teşekkürler... Mesela ben annemi çok merak ederim. Yüzünü, siluetini, fotoğrafını görmedigim bi insandan dünyaya gelmişim. Mesela böyle dokunur yani bana böyle gerçekten annesizlik. Şeyde mesela, babam annem ölüktenden sonra ikinci bi kadınla filan evleniyo. İşte o da çok genç yaşta ölüyo. İşte ben onu da hatırlıyorum hani. 4-5 yaşlarındaydım hani onu da hatırlıyorum hani. Hafızam aslında 2-3 yaşına kadar olan olayları da karmakarışık filan hatırlayabiliyorum. Mesela yani köyde işçilik hiç sınır tanımiyo, çok erken başlayabiliyo. Hani mesela bazı romanlarda okumuşuzdur işte. 1700lerde 1800lerde çocuk işçiler vardır hani. Fabrikalara gönderirler, kiralalar, çalıştırırlar. Yani bu

Güneydoğu Anadolu'da, Doğu Anadolu'da, İç Anadolu'da, yoksullğun olduğu her yerde küçük adamlar vardır. İşçiler vardır. Yani bu ille sanayinin olması gerekmeye. Yani ne bileyim onun da yapabileceğim bi iş mantığı vardır her zaman hani. O annede de, babada da o köy yöneten ağıda da o mantık vardır. O kendine bi, bizim orda sopaya çırrı derler. Onu alır, hayvana vurur. Onu götürür öbür tarafa, otlatmaya bırakır. O da bi iştir yani sonuçta. Ben 9 yaşımda geldim savaş öncesi. 1989 filan... Savaş patlak veriyodu. Irak-İran savaşı... O dönemde geldik biz. Daha köydeyken danalara gönderiyolardı filan. Efendime söyleyim, yapabileceğimiz işleri hani köydeyken de hiç bi fark yok yani çocuk için de yapardık yani. Biz de mesela çocukluğumuzu yaşayamamışızdır. Yani böyle gerçekten 32 dışımızın göründüğü kadarıyla güldüğümüz kolay kolay olmamıştır. Arkadaşlar arasında, o bilince varmadan önce olmuştu ama hani gerçekten aile tarafından sevgi, şefkat o çocukluğun verdiği başıboşluk... ben hani ailemin hani yöredeki insanlara göre biraz daha ilerici olmasına rağmen ki o çocukluktan kalan o şiddetti, o küfürleri çok fazlasıyla hissetmişizdir üstümüzde.

S: Ailen ne iş yapardı? Hayvancılık mı yapardı? Tarımla mı uğraşırdı?

A: Bizim Kars bölgesinde tarım çok yaygın değildir. Çünkü 8-9 ay karlar altındadır. 3-4 ay patates, soğan ekip biçme işleri vardır. Bizim bulunduğu köy konum itibariyle Ardahan'ın en verimli köylerinden birisiydi. Toprağı boldu. Hani insanları, aegalık düzeni yoktu. Belki vardı aegalık düzeni de ben yetişemedim. Benim dedemin ekonomik durumu falan çok iyi... En ekonomik durumun olan ailelerden birisi bizdik. Ama hani o insanlar çalışır çabalar yemezler ya. Benim dedem de böyle bi adammış. Yoksulluk görmüş onun babasından. İşte aegalar bunları ezmiş. Çalışmış, biriktirmiş. Çalışmış, biriktirmiş, yememiş. Biz o varlığa yetiştiğimizde bize de yedirmediler. Anlatabiliyor muyum? Böyle komik hikâyeler vardır ki hani insanlar espriler falan üretirler şovlarda filan. Aslında bunlar hikâyeler yani. Kimsenin yeniden ürettiği bi şey yok. Çok nadirdir yani yeni bi şey üretir. Aslında herkesin hayatı bi esprı. Benim dedemin o kadar çok parası varmış ki. Neneme veriyó işte parayı sakla diye. Nenem de götürüyo, yağ yapmak için yayıklar vardır. Yayığa saklıyo parayı. Aradan zaman geçince arıyorlar, tariyorlar, parayı bulamıyorlar. En sonunda 7-8 ay sonra o yayıklarda sarı yağ yaparlar. Sarı yağın içinden para desteyle çıkyo. Amcam götürüyo o parayı bankaya veriyó. Rica minnet yarı yarıya veriyó, yeni para aliyó. O varlığı her zaman aç kalma kaygııyla, günümüzde bu kaygıyı halen bizler de taşıyoruz. Sonuçta hiçbir sosyal güvencemiz olmadığı için, devletin sosyal alanlardaki eksikliklerini ne kadar siyasal bilince varırsak varalım, bu bilinci ne kadar alırsan al, ne kadar ekonomik durumun iyi olursa olsun, bugün 10 lira kazanırsan yarın için 2 lirasını ayırmam gerekiyo. Öyle bir bilinc yerleşmiş insanlarda. Çünkü geleceği yok bu ülkede. Ülkemizin her şeyden zengin olduğunu, her bakımdan işte tarımdan, hayvancılıktan, altından, madencilikten, petrolden zengin olduğunu söyleniyo; fakat ne hikmetse biz bunların hiçbirini göremedik yani.

S: Oralara da geleceğiz de. 9 yaşında Ardahan'dan geldin. Buraya gelince eğitimime devam ettin mi?

A: Buraya gelince evet eğitimime devam ettim. Ardahan'dan çıktığında buraya gelince ilkokul 3'e gidiyodum. 3.sınıfa... İşte buraya gelince okula kaydolmam da biraz problem oldu. Biz burayı hiç bilmiyorduk. Bi sokaktan bi sokağa gittiğimiz zaman kayboluyorduk. Kentleşme yoktu, ama hani köyden çıkıştırsun, başka bi dünyayla karşılaştırsun, yeni insanlar görüşüsun, bizim konuşmamız insanlara abes geliyo, bizim konuşmamız birbirimize hep küfürlü, argo... Biraz daha köyden bizden önce gelenler bizim deyimimizle biraz daha sosyete dili kullanıyo. Hani kendi öz değerlerini bırakıyo, istese de onu konuşamıyo, ama onu konuşmaya çalışıyo. Dilini Türkçeye kıvırmaya çalışıyo, ama onu beceremiyio. Biz geldiğimizde burada bi hemşerimiz vardı. Onun evine geldik. Babam zaten o dönemlerde geneti. Abim köyde kaldı, ortaokulda okuyodu. Ablam bizimle geldi, onu hemen bi konfeksiyona verdiler. O orda çalışmaya başladı. Yeter Yenge diye bi kadın vardı. Onun bize çok yardımçı oldu. Bizim evimizde hiçbir şeyimiz yoktu. Şehir hayatı hiç görmemişti, hiçbir şey bilmezdi yani, yeme, içme... Reçel nedir görmemişti. Köye gelirdi sarı reçeller. Ama biz buraya geldik vişne reçeli varmış, efendime söyleyim kayısı reçeli varmış. Bal görüyorduk, ama çeşidini göremiyorduk. Mesela biz köyde sadece tereyağı yerdik. Buraya geldik, şimdi tereyağını beğenmiyoruz. Şimdi bu yaşa geldik şimdi tereyağını görünce gözümüze sokuyoruz. O kadının evinde yani iki sene, üç sene... O kadar iyi insanlardı ki, yememize içmemize... Şimdi halen görüyorum, yaşı ilerlemiş. O götürdü beni, okula kaydettirdi. Kayıt zamanı da bitmişti işte.

S: Akrabalık var mıydı aranızda?

A: Yakın köylü olduğumuz için uzaktan yakından akrabalık var evet. Sadece bize değil ama hani. Bahsettiğim olay bundan yirmi yıl öncesinde, insanlar o zaman daha bu kadar kirlenmemişlerdi.

Herkes için öyleydi bu kadın yani. Çevresinde belki bi sürü kötü insanlar da vardı. Biz fark edemiyorduk belki ama bu kadın iyilik ediyordu yani. Herkes gelirdi onun evine. Kendi evi gibi yerdi, içerde onun evinde. Ama bi başkası onun gösterdiği şeyi göstermiyordu. Beni okula götürürken kayıt tarihleri geçmişti hani okul başlamıştı. Beni okula götürdü, rica minnet kayıt yaptırdı. Okula gittiğimde de daha hiç hani... Biraz kıvrak zekâ var ama insanlarla konuşmayı beceremiyorum. Hep böyle yalnız işte! Okul başlamış, herkes bir iki arkadaş edinmiş. Ben işte yalnız, yüzüm mantarlı mantarlı... Köyden gelen kırmızı yanaklı, fotoğrafım bile yok hani mesela o dönemi andırın. Hani kendimi öyle ifade edeyim. Şu andaki hayallerle ifade ediyorum ancak. Okula başladım işte. O dönemde öyle geldim. Doğru dürüst arkadaşım bile yok. Ancak benim gibi köyden gelen bi çocukla ilişki kurabiliyosun. Ya da gariban olduğunu hissedebiliyosun. O dönemde en lüks harcamalardan birisi mesala bize o dönemin parasıyla 50 kuruş verilmiştir. O parayla yemekten içmektense bizim için en büyük eğlence okulun önünde satılan siyah küçük çekirdekler... Minik çekirdekler vardı böyle, içini de çıkaramıyorduk. Aliyorduk, kabuklu kabuklu yiyyorduk. En büyük eğlencelerden biri oydu. Cebimizdeki en büyük para da oydu.

S: Kaça kadar okudun?

A: Ben 5. sinifa kadar okudum. Zaten ilkokul 3 ile 4 arasında da bizim yakın bi akrabamız vardı. Onun benden iki üç yaş büyük bi oğlu vardı. Onun boyası sandığı vardı. Okurken bi de boyacılık yapıyodum. Bu konuda babam hani yap ya da yapma da demiyordu. Okulda hani derslerim çok iyi değildi. Ama sınıfı çok mazlum duruyordum, şımarıklık yapmıyorum hani. Biraz insanlardan utandığımdan kaynaklı; konuşursam pot kırarım, bana güllerler... Sürekli hani suskun geçirdim, ama işte öyle ricayla, minnetle zar zor okul bitirdim. Ama o çalıştığım dönemlerde boyacılık yapıyordum. Okula giderken üstümüzde başımızda yani çantamız yoktu. Defterimizi, kaleminizi siyah naylon poşetlere koyuyorduk, okula öyle gidiyorduk. Kitabımız mitabımız yoktu ki ders çalışalım

S: Peki niye göctünüz? Dedenin durumu iyiymiş, az çok kendini idare edebiliyormuş. Maddi zorluklar yüzünden mi göctünüz?

A: Yok, maddi durumdan değil. Dedemin ekonomik durumu iyiydi. Dedem 1984'te vefat edince, üç kardeşi benim babamlar. Bi de benim babamın kardeşinin oğlu vardı, Beş on yaş küçük falan. Dolayısıyla sermaye.... Yani miras dörde bölündü. Bize yirmi hayvan filan düşüyodu. O dönemde yani köyde yirmi hayvan iyiaslarda. Ama benim babam 70'lerde İstanbul'a geldiği için, İstanbul'un havasını soluduğu için zaten biz köydeyken de çolوغunu çocuğunu, karısını var diye yok diye hiç umursamadan bucağa giderken İstanbul'a kaçarmış. Böyle bi sorumsuz adammış. Hiç düşünmüy়o yani, benim karım var, çocukların var. Babam da olsa, babasının yanına bırakıyo ama benim karım rahat edebilecek mi? Hatta benim çocukların ihtiyacı olunca kendisi giderebilecek mi? Bizim köye elektrik 1987'de falan geldi. Ben hatırlıyorum işte. Babam köye biçim zamanı falan gelirdi. Biz koşardık böyle köyün başına, biz tanımadık, ama bize derlerdi işte baban geldi. Biz koşar sarıldık babamız gelmiş diye. Şimdi dramatik falan geliyo ama gerçekten böleydi yani. Gelmemizin sebebi hani köyümüz kavga, hir gür; köyümüzde kavga bitmiyodu hani.

S: Niçin kavga oluyordu? Yer kavgası mı, hayvan kavgası mı?

A: Genellikle hep böyle çocuklar yüzünden, hep böyle cahilce kavgalar... Nasıl söyleyeyim yani. Gerçekten klasikleşmiş, ama gerçekten böyle şeyler var. Mesela; hayvandır, girmiştir adamın tarlasına otlamıştır. Hayvana şey yapamazsun ki. O yüzden vay sen hayvanına niye sahip çıkmadın? O ona ana avrat küfür. Bu buna ana avrat küfür...

S: Kan davası falan yok ama değil mi?

A: Bizim orda yok. Olmuştur belki eskiden ya da civar köylerde olmustur. Bizim köyde kan davası yoktu. Oluyordu hani birbirine ateş etmeler falan ama kan davası yoktu. Düşmanlıklar da oluyordu hani namus, berdel gibi şeylerde kan davası olmadı.

S: Peki baban buraya gelince ne iş yaptı?

A: Babam buraya gelince işte, abim köyde kaldı. Ortaokulu okuyodu, Şimdiki annemin köyünde, onun babası bakıyodu. Babam buraya gelince döküm işinde çalışmaya başladı. O dönemde kazancı gayet iyiydi yani. Bugünkü koşullara göre iki –üç bin civarındaydı. Ben okula gidiyordum, ablam çalışıyordu. Kıt kanaat geçiniyorduk. Ama hani kıt kanaat geçinmey olmamızın sebebi, babam hani bilinçli bi insan olsa, bilinçli bi aile reisi olsa... Daha önce gelmiş, 17 sene önce gelmiş, Ayazağa'da

çalışmış, Bursa'da çalışmış, Çanakkale'de çalışmış. Şey, kumar hastalığı var. Babam 60 yaşına gelmiş, Hiçbir sosyal faliyeti kalmamış şu anda mesela cebinde 10 lirası var, kahvede okey oynuyo. Ve bu paralı kumar yani, eğlence için olsa, çay için oynasa, arkadaşlarından kalan partiyi çayı sen verirsin, önemli değil. Ama bu paralı kumar yani. Çünkü yapacağı iş yok. Kendi kendisini hiç bi alanda geliştirememiş, gezmeyi tercih etse, kardeşi var abisi var onları ziyaret etse... Babam dökümde çalışmaya başladı, geçimimizi öyle sağlıyoduk hani.

S: Kaç kardeşiniz?

A: Biz altı kardeşiz. Üçü benim ölen annemden; ablam, abim, en küçükleri ben olmak üzere. Üç de benden küçük var. Altı kardeşiz yani.

S: Anladım. Onlar ne işe meşguller?

A: Şimdi bu ablam da, abim de tekstilde çalışıyor. Ablam gömlek içinde çalışıyor. Abim de ütü, paket işi yapıyor. O da taşeronluk yapıyor. Başka bir firmanın bünyesinde ütü paket işi yapıyor. Abim orda usta olarak gözüktü resmi prosedürde; ama o işçiler abimin işçileri. Kar da etse, zarar da etse abime ait.

S: Ama bu kendisine ait atölyesi filan yok da, çalıştığı firmanın bünyesinde mi yapıyor bu işi?

A: Evet. Çalıştığı firmanın içerisinde yapıyor. Elektriği, suyu, işçilerin sigortaları firmaya ait; ama karı zararı kendisine... Mesela diyelim ki ayda yirmi bin tane tişört yaptı, yirmi bin tişörtün bedeli mesela örneğin dokuz milyar abimin orda çalıştığı 16 işçinin servis masrafları da abim de dahil olmak üzere, diyelim hesabını kitabını yaptıktan sonra 8,5 milyar. Abime kalan 500 lira.

S: Peki bu yaygın mı? Ben ilk defa duyuyorum, firmanın içinde böyle bir uygulamayı.

A: Tabi, taşeronlaştırma dediğimiz şey zaten bu işte. Çünkü şimdiki kesimde de dikimde de mesela adamın büyük bi fabrikası vardır. İşçilerle uğraşmak istemez; işçinin yemeğiyle, maaşıyla, sigortasıyla, hastalığıyla, işçinin hastam var, bugün gelemediyorum demesiyle... Hiçbir şeyle uğraşmak istemiyo. Firmada çalışan eski, güvendiği, iş bilen birisi varsa ona, yoksa çevredekilerin tavsiyesi üzerine dışarıdan birisini buluyo. Hiçbi şeyine karışımıyo. Abiminki diğer taşeronlardan biraz daha iyi. Hiç değilse işçinin yemeğine, elektirğine, suyunu, sigortasına karışımıyo. Ama öbürleri öyle değil, bi fabrikada çalıştırıyoysa insanları patron işçilerin hiçbir şeyine karışımıyo; sadece işini veriyo, iş güvenliklerini sağlıyo işçilerin. O da tam değil, işi veriyo, iş bitince, sipariş bitince gönderiyo. Şu anda bütün firmaların içinde yüzde seksenin üzerinde taşeron vardır.

S: Diğerleri ne iş yapıyor, kardeşlerin?

A: Kardeşlerimden biri askerden yeni geldi. Bir yıl falan oluyo. İş bulamadığı için Azerbaycan'a gitti. Burada bulduğu işlerde iş güvencesi yok, sigorta yok, çalışma saatleri çok uzun olduğu için şu an Azerbaycan'a gitti. Bir, bir buçuk aydan beri Azerbaycan'da çalışıyor.

S: Orada ne iş yapıyor?

A: Orda da binaların dış cephe işlerini yapıyor. İskele üzerinde filan çalıyor galiba yani, iyice bilmiyorum. Bu işte de uzman profesyonel bi eleman filan değil yani. Hani artık para kazanmak için gitti. Hiçbi can güvencesi falan yok, Türkiye'deki gibi. Öyle zannediyorum Türkiye'den daha geri kalmış bi ülke Azerbaycan. Ülkemizdeki koşullardan yola çıkarsak bence Azerbaycan daha kötüdür koşullarda.

S: Peki diğerleri ne yapıyor?

A: Diğer iki kardeşimin birisi de lisede okuyo; lise ikide, diğer kardeşim de ortaokul birinci sınıfı gidiyo.

S: Onlar nasıl, okuyacaklar mı, yoksa gübeli mi gidiyorlar?

A: Şimdi bi hata ettik, eve bilgisayar aldım mesela, kendi kişisel egomuzdan kaynaklı ve yahut hevesimizden kaynaklı. Birisi küçük olanın dersleri iyiydi. Bilgisayar olunca dersler çok kötü... Okumak istiyorum ama dersleri çok kötü. Büyüdüükçe çevreyi tanıyo, daha çok arkadaş ediniyo, daha çok oynamak istiyorum. Ondan kaynaklı son bi iki senedir dersleri daha kötü. Diğer ise lisede okuyo, bi sene kaldı zaten. Dersleri çok kötü. Ailenin huzursuz olduğundan kaynaklı, hani bizim çocuklara nasıl davranışlarımızı bilmediğimizden kaynaklı. Hani ne... Şiddet uygulamıyor, ama şiddetten aşağı

kalır da bi yanımız yok. Hor görüyoruz, bi şey yaptığı zaman hemen bağıriyoruz. O feudalitenin, despotluğun getirdiği şeyle. Çocuklara ne şiddet uyguluyoruz ne de huzur veriyoruz. Ama şiddetten daha beter ediyoruz. Psikolojik olarak bizim üzerimize düşen yükü biz de çocuklardan çıkarmaya çalışıyoruz yani. Onlar da bizim çocuklarımız arasında. Kardeşimiz ama hani biz onlardan on beş, on altı yaş büyüğüz. Onun için şey yapamıyoruz yani, bizden kaynaklı dersleri iyi değil yani. Bunun nedeni de bizleriz yani.

S: Anladım. O zaman ailenle birlikte yaşıyorsun?

A: Evet, ailemle birlikte yaşıyorum.

S: Di mi yani; daha bi evlenme falan bi şeyi...

A: Şimdi...Eee... evlenme, eee... nasıl söyliyim?

S: Artık baskıya başlamışlardır evlen diye şimdi?

A: [güler] Yok; benim ailemde eee... öyle bir baskı yok.

S: Hı hı...

A: Hani eee... baskıyı şey yapacak eee... iş güvencesi de yok. Çünkü ben eee... şu bilinci taşıyabiliyorum mesela; evlendiğim zaman, ekon... bu günki ekonomik koşullarımın bana ne kazandıracagini bildiğim için.

S: Anladım!

A: Ben de evleneceğim insanın daha çok böyle bilinçli akıllı... Yani bilinç düzeyinin en aşağı benim kadar olmasını istiyorum, çünkü birbirimizi eee... anlayabilelim yoksa...

S: İdare edebilelim...

A: Evet idare edelim; bugün eee... yani tekstilde ben makinacılık yapıyorum. Aldığım maaş, eee... fiks bir milyar. O insan çalışmazsa, bana destek olmazsa, bana omuz vermezse ki yani...

S: Geçinmek...

A: Geçinmek imkansız. Çünkü 500 en kötü evin kirası 450 lira...

S: Buralarda öyle mi?

A: Evet!

S: 450 mi?

A: 450 lira hani, ikinci katta oturulabilir temiz bir yer 450 lira.

S: Anladım...

A: Eeee... İşte cep telefonu artık hepimizde var eee... yani...

S: Faturası bilmem nesi...

A: Cep telefonu foturası, evin foturası, internetin foturası zaten 600-700 lira ona gidiyor yani hiç elini suya sabuna dokunmadan.

S: Anladım... Şey; tekstil işçiliğine nasıl başladın?

A: Eee... tekstil işçiliğine...

S: Ne zaman başladın?

A: İşte ilkokulu bitirdim eee... beni ablam gömlekte çalışıyordu, işte bugünkü eee... marka tabir ettiğimiz Kolleyzon. Kolleyzon o zaman çok küçük bir atölye idi, yani 9-10 kişinin çalıştığı bir yerdi. 91'di, evet 91'di. Kolleyzonda ablam orda çalışıyordu, beni de götürdüler işte, bu Güneşli - Şahin Durak diye bir yer var oraya. İşte arabanın... Eee... bu geçen 2009 da bi eee... selde şeyi aaa... arabanın arkasında birkaç tane kız ölmüştü.

S: Ha ha...

A: İşte biz de aynı öyle, 30 – 40 kişi doluyorduk böyle bir minibüsün arkasına, nereye gittiğimizi de bilmiyorduk, böyle ufacık ufacık deliklerden... İşte orda başladım ilk eee... tekstile. İki üç gün çalıştım ondan sonra dayanamadım gitmedim işyerine kaçtım. Ondan sonra eee... ağbimin çalıştığı bir yer vardı. Sefaköy Beşyol' da, oraya gittim [güler], daha hani ilkokulu biti... yeni bitirmiştim, hani eee... olayı aslında böyle hani eee... keşke yalnız bi dili kullansam hani anlatsam da... Daha yeni sünnet olmuştu; [güler] hani o kadarı da komik vahim bi durum yani. Yeni sünnet olmuştu, daha üzerime giyecek doğru düzgün kıyafetim yok, sünnette verilen elbiseyi ben kendime hani bugünkü marka olarak giyiyorum. Böyle [güler] geziyorum [güler] sünnet elbisesiyle, onunla işe gittim, işte 7 – 8 ay falan orda çalıştım. Orda da hani eee... çalıştığımız yer o gün dönemki koşullarda orta ölçekli bir iş yeri idi. Yani hani şeye çok kötü davranıyorlardı... Çıraklıara. Hani küfürler, bağırmalar, hakaretler...

S: O zaman ilk girdiğinde ortacı gibi mi başladın?

A: Tabi; ortacı çırak olarak girdim işte, 11 – 12 yaşında falan... Ortacı olarak girdim, eee... orda da hani eeee... çalışma alanımız o kadara dar ki hani bir kişinin yürüyebileceği kadara bi şey düşünün eee... hani eee...

S: Koridor?

A: Koridor, evet öyle bir koridor düşünün, makinaları öyle bir sıkıştırmışlar. Geçerken hani makinalara kalçalarımız değiyor, bazen kalçalarımız ağrıyordu o kadara dar alanda. 8-10 tane makinaya bakıyordu ve bu bütün makinaların önünden de işleri topluyorduk. Şimdi gibi teknikdeki gibi otomatik makinalar gibi makinalar yoktu. Makinalar ipleri koparmıyordu, o iplikleri elimizle kopardığımız zaman sökülüyordu, eee... makasla kestiğimiz zaman da bizim için zaman kaybı oluyordu. Bazen şey yapıyorduk yani, makinacı bize bobin fırlatıyordu dövüyordular ciddi ciddi. Hem de eee... yani patron gelip kızıyordu işte “niye koparıyorsunuz?”, ya da patron vuruyordu hani biraz daha dış geçireceğini bildigine. Yani kendisini ifade edemeyen çocukların, dövüyordular yani. Ben dahil ordan çıkış sebebi de öyle oldu yani. Bir makinacı iş yetiştiremedi diye bana küfür etmişti. Eee... çok ağır yani “orospu çocuğu işte hadi” falan, ben de gittim bunu makasladım artık yani.

S: Ne?

A: Tabii, bunu makasladım.

S: Kaç yaşındasın bu şeyde?

A: 12 yaşında.

S: 12 yaşında!

A: İşte bunu makasladım, yani makasladım derken hani böyle öldürücü değil; karnımı falan çizmiş böyle makas. Bu da benden bi iki yaş büyük yani bu makinacı dediğim o dönem işte.

S: Haaa...

A: Tabii öyle yani...

S: Haa... o da çocuk yani...

A: Tabii; o da çocuk ama çocuk ama işte öyle bir hava vardı. Hava var ya, diyorum ya öyle bir hava var işte; Türkçeyi kıvrıma çalıyor, Türkçeyi de kıvrıramıyor. Kurtçeyi de konuşamıyor, kendi dilinde konuşamıyor işte artıda ortada gidiyor. Şimdi makinacılar da öyle; daha oturmuş hani bu bugünkü koşullarda zigzag yapmayı bilmiyor ama makinaya oturmuş ya artık makinacı. Şimdi işte bize bağırıyor küfrediyor şey yapıyor... İşte ben de onu makasladım patron beni çağırdı. Eee... o dönem ben öyle işte işten çıkardılar o dönem; ondan daha başka bir yere gittim, bu sefer terzi gibi bir yerdi. Oraya da girdiğimde, teksitilin aslında eee... pis çirkin yüzünü aslında orda hani eee... anlamaya başladım. Bi kadın vardı hani, eee... kocasından boşanmış üç çocuğu var. İşte adamla her halde eee... sevgililer yani dost hayatı yaşıyorlar muhtemelen. sen bunları eliyeceksin herhalde değil mi?

S: Yookk... Rahat konuş.

A: Hayır hayır şey yazarken hani... Her halde dost hayatı falan yaşıyorlar eee...

S: Rahat ol ya... Her şeyden bahsedebilirsin, siler gideriz.

A: [güler]

S: Rahat ol...

A: Herhalde dost hayatı yaşıyorlar adamlı işte eee... İşte işleri olduğu zaman beni dışarıya gönderiyorlar, onlar dükkanda yalnız kalıyorlar. İşleri şey olduğu zaman da beni dükkâna çağrıyorlar. İşte sağda solda işte hani elemanlık yaptrıyorlar işte, "bakkala git", "şuraya git", "buraya git" veya hâl da eee... Diktirdikleri işleri o dönemde koşullarla bazen birkaç defa pazara çıktı hani 12-13 yaşında olmama rağmen. O dönemde, bi kaç defa beni pazara çıkardılar hani diktirdiği taytları eşofmanları sattırmak için. Ben öyle hatırlıyorum ki sırtında 2 tane kocaman torbayla eee... 2-3 km gittiğimi hatırlıyorum bazen. Hani belki yol parası veriyordur o dönemde birçok kere. İyice onu da hatırlıyorum ama samimi yetimle söyleyorum, belki o para bana kalsın diye yolu tepiyordum yani. O para bana kalsın harçlık yapıyım diye yol tepiyordum, eee... onun için öyle. O iş yerinde de bi 8-9 ay çalıştım artık bilmiyorum ordan da niye çıktıysam... İşte en son gene ablamin çalıştığı yere Kollezyon'a başladım. Orda makinacı oldum işte yani.

S: Anladım. Şimdi o zaman eee... 12 yaşında başladın, şimdi otuz...

A: 11 yaşında başladım.

S: 11 yaşında başladın, şimdi 30 yaşındasın...

A: 32 yaşındayım şimdi...

S: 32 yaşındasın. Yani 20 seneyi aştin...

A: 21 senedir evet...

S: 21 sene...

A: 21 sene çalıştım.

S: 21 senedir tekstil işinde çalışıyorsun.

A: İşte eee... evet 21 senedir tekstilde çalışıyorum.

S: Kaç iş değiştirdin peki, kaç firma değiştirdin?

A: Çok!

S: Yani?

A: Sayıyla...

S: Tam sayısını veremezsen bile ortalama bir rakam...

A: Yüzün üzerinde!

S: Yüzün üzerinde!

A: Evet!

S: O zaman yılda 2 kere falan değiştirmişsin.

A: Yok; yılda iki kere değil, yani yüzün...

S: Daha fazla...

A: ... çok üzerinde yani yılda en az 4 tane iş yeri en az. O kadar yani tekstil işi. O kadara istikrarsız bir iştir ki zaten yani istikrarsızlıkta biraz da hani eee... şeyden kaynaklı; mesela ben işte en eski çalıştığım işyerlerinden birisi Kollezyon'du yani. En çok çalıştığım, bir buçuk yıl falan çalıştım orada. 93'ün ortalarında girdim 95'te falan çıktım Kollezyon'dan, 1.5 sene orada çalıştım. Orda da çalıştığım dönemler işte eee... Bağcılar'da idi o dönemde Kollezyon, işte artık 3-4 seneyi geçmişti aradan, büyümüştü kendi fabrikasını yaptırmıştı. Artık marka olmuştu iç piyasaya. Orda çalıştığımız dönemler orası eee... nasıl söylüyim, eee... bayramlarda falan bu günkü şeylerde işte insanlara ayakkabısını veriyordu, pantolonunu veriyordu. Biraz daha büyümüşü ekonomik şey yani fabrikası açısından ete kemiğe bürünmüştü o Kollezyon o zaman, iyiydi yani o dönemde işte. Eee... şeyi

hatırıyorum mesela, benim gibi çıraklar var işte o zaman. Kot pantolondu o zaman, işte o dönemde Bağcılar biraz daha şey yani eee... Muhofazakârların olduğu biraz daha dincilerin olduğu bir kesim. Eee... hep böyle çarşafla marşafla dolaşıyorlardı ve herkes de şey tutuyordu yani, oruç tutuyordu. Yani benim gibi ya 2 tane çocuk vardı ya da tek ben. O da tutamıyorum o zamanlar hani dayanamıyorum; veyahut da tutuyordum da bilmiyorum hani içimde bi şeyler beni tutma diyor. İşte tutamıyor, tutmuyordum yani. O dönemde işte hani şeyi kavramaya başladım aslında eee... İnsanların ne kadar bi baskı altında olduğunu, hani eee... kendi isteği dışında aç bırakılıyor insanlar. Hani ben oruç tutmak istemiyorum, ama bana diyorlar ki mesela "ayıptır işte ya, utanmıyorum musun sen?". Yani "niye tutuyorsun, bak senden küçük çocuklar tutuyor olum sen niye tutmuyorsun ya..." [güler]. Bu gibi şeylerde, bi sürü şeylerde hani, insanların yüzünü şey yapılıyor mesela halen bile. İnsanlar şey yaparlar, oruç tutmadığı zaman: "ya eşek kadar adamsın niye oruç tutmuyorsun, ayıptır ya". Yani bilmiyorum, yani o dönemler, böyle gerçekten insanların, dinin insanlar üzerindeki etkisi falan kavramaya başladım.

S: Adil Usta; 12 yaşında 11 yaşında başlamışsin mesleğe, senin yaşıtların da vardır mutlaka. Arkadaşların da vardır burada...

A: Evet...

S: Hani onların hepsi çalışıyor muydu, yoksa okula giden var mıydı, çalışmayanlar var mıydı?

A: Şimdi...

S: Onlarla ilişkin nasıldı yani?

A: Eee... ya şimdi söyleyim, aslında hani ben aaa... diğer eee... tekstilde çalışan arkadaşlarımla oranla biraz daha böyle cingöz bir tiptim. Hani biraz daha yırtıcı bir tiptim hani biraz da kendimi daha çabuk geliştirebildim onlara oranla. Nasıl geliştirebildim aslında şunlarda eee... İnsanın kendini geliştirebilmesi için bi tecrübe hani... Sürekli sık sık iş değiştirmek bence hani eee... Biraz kabuğunu yırttıyorsun; sürekli bir işyerinde çalışıp 15 kişi tanımak varsa 10 işyeri değiştiriyorsun 150 kişiyi tanıyorsun bu vesileyle yani. Yüzlerce, 300-500 kişiyi tanımiş oluyorsun ve onlarca işletmeyi tanıyorsun. Onlarca yani... İşte mesela düşünün ki siz Ankara'da yaşıyorsunuz mesela, Ankara'da sadece ODTÜ de okusanz 20 yıl dünyanız yani ODTÜ olacak. Yani nasıl biz köyde yaşıyorsak işte, İstanbul'a geldiğimiz zaman farklı şeyler görüyoruz, başka bi sokağa gelince kayboluruz. İşte tekstildeki işler de öyle. Ben mesela sürekli farklı yerler değiştirdiğim için, eee... aynı eee... o arkadaşımın yaptığı olay hani bizim başımıza geldi. Ben işte 13-14 yaşında falan makineci olmaya başladım Kollezyon'da o dönemde tabi. Ortaokul öğrencileri, lise öğrencileri falan geliyordu, bu sefer onlar çıraklık yapmaya başlıyorlardı ama fakat hani eee... Nasıl söyleyim, bunlar biraz daha eee... şey oldukları için, hani bu işi geçici yaptıkları için, biraz daha rahat hareket ediyorlardı. Hani bizim hani o tekstile ilk girdiğimiz zamanki pisirlik yoktu hani.

S: Anladım...

A: Biz korkuyorduk hani, işten çıkarırlar ailemiz bize kızar işte. Veyahut da aldığımız paraları eee... Mesela o günde koşullarda bilmiyorum, ben ilk maaşımı hatırlamıyorum da 150 bin lira mı ne alıyorum. Hani 150 bin lira alıyorsam aileme diyorum "130 lira alıyorum", yani 20 lirayı kendime saklıyorum, ailemden çalışıyorum. Çünkü ben biliyorum ki, ben o paranın hepsini aileme verdigim zaman, bana hiç bir harçlık vermeyecek. Dolayısıyla ben de iş yerinde paydoslarda, eee... şeyi eee... ateriye gidemeyeceğim ya da langırt oynayamayacağım yani. Öyle de şeyler oluyordu hani, öbür arkadaşlar eee,,, diğer arkadaşlar, öyle değişti ama yani insanlar aile baskısı o kadara haddinden fazlaydı ki insanların üzerinde, hani cebinde çok uzak yerlerden gelmelerine rağmen, eee... şeyi yoktu yani, yol paraları yoktu bazen. Yani çocuğu... Çocuğu iş yerine gönderiyorsun, annesi babası, çok da uzak bir semt, ama hani eee... Bi aksilik olduğunu düşün servisi kaçırıldığını düşün, çünkü zaten hiçbir o dönemde iş yeri çıraklı beklemez. "Ya sen çıraksın işte çıkış 15 dakika önce, bekle"; yani o kadara küçük görüyorum insanlar, hala halen bile öyle; eğer ki kalifiye bir elemansan, ancak sözün ancak öyle geçer, yoksa hani öbür türlü eee... Kadının ikinci planda olduğu gibi iş yerlerinde de, tekstilde imalat bölümünde makinecilerin önceliği vardır. Öyle yani, yoksa çıraklar çok eziliyordu. Şey yapılıyordu yani, hor görülüyorlardı, küfür yiyeceklerdi, dayak yiyeceklerdi.

S: Şey benim sormak istediğim başka bir şey de; yani sen o yaşlarda çalışmak zorundaydın ya?

A: Evet...

S: Çalışmak zorunda olmayan arkadaşların falan vardı. Sen onlara karşı kendini böyle, şey hissediyor muydu... ezilmiş?

A: Ezik?

S: Ezik...

A: Şimdi; şu aslında eziklikten ziyade şöyle bi şey oldu mesela. Kollezyon'da çalıştığım dönemler o çocuk yıllarda; işte eee... patronun oğulları mesela geliyordu. Hani patron çocukların depoda çalıştırıyordu yani. Daha toz falan yoktu, ama hani çalıştırıyordu hani eee... işte ufak tefek işlerde kullanıyordu. Hani işte serseri olmasınlar falan filan sokağa çıkıp şey yapmasınlar diye. Tabii yani inanılmaz derecede ezik hissediyorsun onlara karşı kendini; çünkü aynı yaşıt olarak aynısın onların üstleri tertemiz pırıl pırıl, senin saçların yani darmadağın. Yüzün, bazen sabah kalktıyorsun o sersemlikle yani, servisi yakalayacağım diye kalktıyorsun yüzünü yıkamadan çıkyorsun. Veyahut da gidiyorsun yırtık pantolonun var, fermuarını çekmemişsin. Görüyorlar senle [güler] alay ediyorlar. Ya ayakkabıları yırtık mesela, düşünseneze camiye gidiyorsun bazen ayakkabını açıyzorsun namaz kılmak için o dönem, çorabın yırtık! O utanç insana ne kadar ağır geliyor yani...

S: Evet...

A: Eee... evet yani, o insana şey eee... ekonomik durumu fakirlikle yoksulluk o dönemde çocukların için eee... yaşamakla ölmek gibi bi şey yani. Ölümün şeyini kavrayabilse asında, ölümün varlığını kabullenemeyince, ölümün ne değerli olduğunu bilebilse... O dönemde o yaşta çocuklar için zenginlikle fakirlik, güzel elbise ile çirkin elbise, iyi ayakkabı ile kötü ayakkabı yani insanlar için ölümdür yani o kadar ağır şeylerdir yani. Ama işte o psikoloji ile yani gerçekten büyük yani, şeyi de yok yani bu işin... duygusu sömürüsü falan da yok yani; halen de böyledir yani.

S: Hı hı... Peki onlara öfke duyuyor muydu, patronun çocuklarına? Ya da ne biliyim kıskanıyor muydu; nasıl bir duygusu?

A: Ya şimdi...

S: Şeyi içindedyin...

A: Öfke...

S: Duygusal yapı içindedyin?

A: Öfke duymaktan ziyade asında şöyle mesela... Köyden de şöyle bir alıntı yapayım buraya. Şimdi ben mesela diyorum ya diğer arkadaşlara göre biraz daha cingöz bir tiptim böyle sosyal bir tiptim, köydeyken mesela öğretmenin çocuklarınvardı, bizim yaşıtmızdı. Ben mesela eee... İnsanlarla çok çabuk iletişime geçiyorum. Bilmiyorum ne derler, çok çabuk iletişim kuruyorum, öğretmenin çocuklarınyla falan eee... gidip oynuyordum falan. Öğretmen işte gittiği, gideceği zaman, hani ben çocuklarına iyi davrandığım, iyi oynuyorum falan diye... Kavgacı bir tip de değilim yani kavgacı bir tipi yani, hayatı hiçbir zaman kavgacı bir tipim olmamıştır. Sinirliyim, çok asabiyimdir çocukluktan beri, kavgacı değildim. Öğretmen bizi götürmüştü o zaman, eee... daha benim mesela hani, yumurtaının ilk defa o kadara lezzetli olduğunu o zaman anladım yani. İşte öğretmenin eşı eee... o dönem bize yumurta yaptı hani beni davet etti evine o çocuk yaşta olmama rağmen, bize yumurta pişirdi böyle onun çocuğuyla birlikte yumurta yedik. Ondan sonra bana teşekkür ettiler falan, böyle gönderdiler. Burda da fabrikada da söyle yani, kıskanmaktan hani hor görmekten ziyade yani böyle hani ağırlıma gidiyor hani. Seni incitiyor. Mesela yaptığı bazı hareketler, ukalalıklar, mesela seni beğenmemesi veyahut da senin eee... saçlarına bakıp gülmesi... Veyahut da senle o şeyden eee... kaynaklarıyo hani çalıştığın ortamdan kaynaklı kafanda toz olması, pantolonunun kirli olması, çocukların hani sana böyle bir bakması veyahut da onunla bakıp da sürekli böyle hani bakıp da alay eder gibi olması... Hani şimdiki çocuklar bakar, dillerine laf dolarlar ya hani. İşte mesela benim yeğenlerim vardır şimdiden diline dolamışlar "dema dem demaa"... Artık ne demekse o bilmiyorum, [güler] şimdi o çocuğun da aklında şimdiden onlarda öyle mesela eee... Örneğin mesela işte "sümüklü Adil", mesela öyle o gibi şeyler... O gibi şeyler zoruma giden asında, bi şey yok asında hani ben hep hani insanlara böyle, bilmiyorum hani, artık hani tanrıdan gelen bir şey mi de hani paylaşmayı çok sevmişimdir her zaman. Yani okulda iken de böyledi, yani cebimde ne varsa, yiyeceğim ne varsa, giyeceğim ne varsa her zaman arkadaşlarımla böyle paylaşmışım hani. Ki bu zamana kadara da hep böyle olmuştur paylaşmışım, böyle kıskanma falan olmamıştır o öbür zengin arkadaşları; onların

üst kimlikleri falan beni hiçbir zaman beni böyle rahatsız etmemiştir. Bunların içinde çok da iyi böyle benden daha eee... cömert arkadaşlarım davardı böyle cebinde ne varsa benimle paylaşan, yemesini içmesini bilen ama çok mesela ekonomik durumu iyi olup da böyle gözümüzün önünde mesela çok güzel şeyler, bizim o zaman parayla alamayacağımız şeyler yiyp de böyle bize hani inat yapan çocukların da var hani. Onları da dövesimiz de geliyordu yani, böyle küfür edesimiz...

S: Peki mesela hiç düşünüyor muyduñ böyle patron çocuğu geliyor, ondan sonra üstü başı düzgün bilmem ne, sen de orda ekmek parası için çalışıyorsun ne biliyim işte doğru düzgün eee... bi şeyin yok hani giyimin kuşamın; ne bileyim elin yüzün şey senin anlattığın kadarıyla, yani soruyor muyduñ neden böyle diye; ya da bir yanıtın var mıydı buna?

A: Ya şimdi aslında hani o dönemde eee... çocuk kafasıyla hani o dönemde kafamda böyle bir şey yoktu hani. Mesela çünkü zaten az önce de dedim ya hani şimdi öncelikte hani benim kendi hayatımda anne şefkati... Bi insanın hayatında çok önemli yeri vardır, çünkü çocuğu anne yetiştirir. Hani eee... ben mesela anneden yoksun büyüdüğüm için, belki şimdiki eee... annem de hani belki bize şefkat gösteriyor ama öz annenin varlığı eee... dünyadaki hiçbir şey onun yerini dolduramaz. Ben öyle gözlemiyorum. Şimdi anne yetiştirdiği için eee... o çocukların yani kafamda öyle bir soru oluşmuyordu. "Neden böyle?" diye... Sadece hani ben bunu doğanın bir kanunu olarak, yani yapmam gereken... Sanki şu an bir robotsun, o dönemde, çocuk yani, o yaşta robot gibidir. Ona o görev verilmiştir onun görevi odur, onu yapmak zorunda hissediyordum kendimi. Yani eee... İşte iş disiplini de ordan başladığım yani, görev gibi görüyordum hani. Daha irdelemeye sorgulamaya hani eee... ne zamanki 16-17 yaşlarına geldim, o zaman hani sorgulamaya başladım: "Lan neden böyle yani, zenginlik eğer ki buysa, yani eee... çalışarak zengin olunuyorsa biz niye ben niye zengin olamıyorum?" Ben de yani o dönem iyi sabrediyorum, 6-7 sene önce çalışmışım yani 97'de falan. Diyordum: "Ben de çalışıyorum, benim babam da çalışıyor, abim de çalışıyor ablam da çalışıyor, biz niye zengin olamıyoruz; yani çalışarak zengin olunuyorsa biz niye zengin olamıyoruz?" Ki yani aldığımız, ben aldığım para kiraya gidiyordu yani, yani çalışarak zengin olunamayacağını hani aslında 90 yani, 16-17 yaşlarında falan kabullenmeye başladım. O dönemde hani patron çocukların falan görüyordun, o sana şey gibi geliyordu hani; şimdiki kafamla söyleyeyim, eee... bir eee... tanrıının çocuğu gibi geliyordu. Hani öyle de kutsal görünüyor çocukların sana; çünkü tertemiz pırıl pırıl bakımlı ayakkabılar, şeyler... Hani sen çocuk olduğun halde, senden belki yaş olarak bir yaş iki yaş büyük olsa bile, sen onu çocuk gibi görüyordun, çünkü sen artık hani o çalışma koşulları seni yetiştirmiştir ergenleşti büyük adam konumuna getirmiştir. Hani öyle yani maalesef, öyle yani çünkü şey yapamıyorsun ki eee... hani boyundan büyük çuvallar taşıyorsun, adamlar sana hakaret ediyor, gidiyorsun büyük adamların yaptığı işleri yapıyorsun, büyük adamların girip çıktığı yerlere çıkyorsun, hak nedir bilmiyorsun... Eee... nasıl söyleyeyim, dondurma yani, ben düürümle, düürüm diye bir yiyecekle ben 95'te falan tanıdım yani. Hala o ilk yediğim düürüm tadi, hala inanılmaz damağımıdadır yani böyle. O da işte hani gene o iş yerinde patron tarafından, kocaman kocaman masaları taşındık böyle yürüyerek, kamyonetin yapması gereki yapmıştık böyle. Koskoca kamyonun yapması gereken görevi 6-7 tane çocuk böyle her demirin bir köşesinde, kesim masalarını eee... 400-500 metre uzağa taşıyarak götürmüştük. O zaman işte patron bize düürüm söylemişti ödüllümüz olarak da, hani bize de çok iyi geliyordu o dönem. Hani patron diyorduk ki, "Ekrem abi ne kadar iyi bir insan" işte, "ya" diyorduk, "bak ne kadar bize düürüm söyledi.". İşte düürüm de sanki yani düürüm de bu günde koşulların 300-500 milyonluk yemek gibi. Görmemişiz ya işte bilsek yani, onun için öyle şeydir yani eee... öyle bi patronların çocuklarına karşı biz hani eee... bizden büyük de olsalar biz kendimizi onların yanında abi olarak gördük çünkü biz hani eziliyorduk ya, biz yetişmişik yani hayatı, eee... ezilmenin verdiği o şey insanların olgunlaştırıyor yani.

S: Evet... Adil; bir çok şeyi anlattın; soruları yani bağlantısız sordum da... Peki, yani 12-13 yaşından itibaren, çocuktun ama, bu işe girerken beklenen var mıydı, ya da bir hayalin var mıydı 3 – 5 sene içinde şöyle olacak falan diye?

A: Ya şimdi hayalim aslında benim eee... futbolcu olmaktı böyle. Çok da iyi futbol oynardım, gerçekten hani mesela bu mahalle Türkiye'nin en kalabalık mahallesidir, yani şey olarak nüfus yoğunluğu olarak, üçüncü resmi mahallesidir en kalabalık mahalle olarak. Çok iyi futbol oynardım mesela, böyle eee... her hafta yani olmasa bile 15 günde bir ayakkabı yırtardım. 15 günde babam alırdı ayakkabımı 2 hafta geçerdi ayakkabının ucu kalkmış babam gelirdi kafama "tık!", neşter [güler] derlerdi, böyle neşterle kafamıza vururdu. Ayakkabı gene yırtıldı, adam haklı çünkü bize ayakkabı almaktan ayakkabıcılar, bütün ayakkabıcılar bizi tanır olmuştu. Babam da giderdi böyle pazarlıklı işte

ayakkabı alacaksın, en iyisini en ucuza almaya çalışırdı. Bi de yani ayakkabıcıyla pazarlık yapacak ya “yav vallahi billahi kardeşim ben 15 gün önce senden ayakkabı aldım”. Halbuki o ayakkabıcıya ilk defa gidiyoruz. Vallahi adamlı şey yapar, ne eder ederdi pazarlık yapardı ayakkabı alırdu. Yani ben mesela futbolcu olmak isterdim, işte 1994’te falan Galatasaray’ın seçimlerine gitmiştim yani o dönemler. Böyle eee... şey bizim mesela çocukluğumuzda o zaman futbolcular vardı işte şimdi Ronald Kuman falan vardı, Gullit falan vardı, ben böyle Kuman’ı çok severdim şeyden, böyle saçları sarıydı ya, böyle sarı saçlı, düz saçlı olduğu için böyle çocuk gibi gelirdi o futbolcu bana ve frikikleri böyle penaltı gibi atardı adam. Ya o kadar usta bir futbolcuydu. Belki sen de hatırlarsın, Kuman... Ranold Kuman’ı; işte Galatasaray’ın formasını almıştım o dönem, bilmiyorum hangi paramla bilmiyorum, 10 numara forma... Arkasında da böyle kumaş boyasıyla yazmıştım Kuman [güler]. Galatasaray’ın formasına yani... Keoman diye yazılırdı şimdi aklıma geldi, ben Kuman olarak yazmıştım. Galatasaray’ın seçimlerine gittim. Seçmelere, yani Florya’ya o gün o defa ikinci kere gitmiştim. Bi kere arkadaşlarımla gitmiştim Galatasaray’ın antrenmanlarını seyretmek için, bi kere de kendi kabuğumu yırttım Florya’ya gittim ve Florya’yı da hiç bilmiyorum ben. Zenginlerin yaşadığı bir yöre o dönemde koşullarda; eee... ya bütün insanlar böyle eee... Yeşilköy’den gelen geliyor işte, Bakırköy’den geliyor. Herkesin annesi babası yanında. Böyle çocukların arabalarla geliyor, işte vidalı grampon diyorlar, ben mesela bu yaşa gelmişim hala vidalı grampon nedir mesela bilmem. Vidalı işte... Çocuklar şey yapıyor, “aaa o çocuğun gramponu vidalı, vidalı grampon giyiyor!”. Biz de durmuş nerdeyse eğiliş çocuğun ayağının altına bakıyoruz ki, acaba vidalı grampon ne ya? Biz de ayağımızda yırtık bi tane ayakkabımız var. İşte grampona benzeyen. İşte tozluklarımız yırtık, tabanları taa bileğimize kadar yırtılmış, yani çorabın yırtığı ordan gözüküyor. Biz de gidip hani dedim, “seçmelere gideyim belki futbolcu olurum”. O gün iş yerinden izin aldım zarla zorla, babamdan zorla yol parası aldım ağlaya sızlaya, seçimlere gittim, seçimlere gittiğimizde işte ben eee... o dönem 15 yaşından gün almıştım. 12-14’e seçimlere girdim, 15 yaşından gün almışsin diye hani beni seçimlere almadılar. Sabahın sekizinde gittik, öğlen bire kadar bekledik hani seçimlere katıldık diye. İşte kimliğini verdim, hani adresini soyadımızı yazdılar. İşte o dönem 17-18 yaşındaki çocuklar vardı eee... bize dediler hani sen dediler ki hani yaşın eee... büyümüş. Sen işte 15 yaşından falan gün almışsin ya da 14 yaşından gün almışsin, iyice hatırlamıyorum. “Sen seçimlere giremezsin!”. Şimdi hani eee... biz de sahiplenme hani, elimizden tutup da bi yer götüren büyüğümüz olmadığı için, o bi başkasının söylediği laf bize kanun gibi gelmişim. Yani eee... sana söyleyo, sen onu bir emir olarak algılıyorsun. “Tamam” deyip, çıkıştı gidiyorsun. Hani aslında o kadara da yetenekliydim ki gerçekten inanılmaz derecede futbolda yetenekliydim. İşte çıkıştı ordan, ağlaya ağlaya geldim. Evde işte banyoda duvarları yumrukladım, gözyaşlarım eğer... Gerçekten böyle büyük bir hayal kırıklığı olmaz yani. Halen mesela böyle çocukların görevim ben mesela, yolda top oynarken, o topa bi iki defa vurmamak şey yaparsam içime dert oluyor yani. O kadar yetenekliydim ama işte yani, eee... hayatı koşullar hani seni yani, “işçisin sen işçi kal” diyor.

S: Haa... Peki, o ailesinin arabasıyla gelen çocukların mı aldılar acaba o seçimlerde?

A: Tabii ki, kesinlikle öyle yani. Çünkü, eee... benim bulunduğu dönemde daha Emre Belezoglu, o zaman Zeytinburnu’ndan Galatasaray'a gelmişti ve işte eee... Okan falan, Okan Buruk vardı şimdi jübile yaptı bıraktı futbolu. O dönemde işte çok inanılmaz yetenekleri olacak da hani, bir de göze gireceksin. Evin Florya’ya yakın olacak, sevileceksin, afacan olacaksın, veya hatta çok paran olacak, gideceksin hocalara yemek yedireceksin, eee... işte ne bileyim annenin babanın hoca ile veya hatta kulüpte bir yönetici ile ilişkisi olacak ki, arkadaşlığı olacak ki seni öyle şey yapsınlar hani. Şimdi futbolculara mesela bakıyorum, gerçekten öyle mesela ben 32 yaşındayım ayağıma belki kaç seneden beri doğru düzgün top değilim, ben altı ay çıkışım kondisyon çalışmam hani, futbol şey yapayım, inan ki ben hala çıkışım sana Türkiye’deki en iyi kulüpte iyi futbol oynamam yani. O kadara da şey yani ki yani bu mahallede ve Türkiye'nin bir çok yerinde o kadar iyi yetenekli çocuklar vardır, futbol açısından söyleyorum, hani çünkü benim en iyi yanım futboldur. Çocukluğumdan beri yatar... futbolla yatarım futbolla kalkardım ve okusaydım yani öğretmenliği çok seviyordum öğretmen olacaktım ama işte eee... dediğim gibi yani kesinlikte o eee... ailesi ile birlikte gelenler ekonomik durumu iyi olan çocukların seçimlerde seçtiler. Hani bizim gibi eee... böyle yırtık gramponlu eski ayakkabılı yüzü böyle kırmızı kırmızı... Onlardan olmayanları gönderdiler yani. Çünkü eee...

S: Peki...

A: Öyle olmamış olsa...

S: Şimdi böyle diyorsun da...

A: Hii...

S: O gün o ayrimı hissetsin mi sen?

A: Tabii ki o gün; o, o ayrimı hissetmemiş olur musun yani... Şimdi o ayrimı şöyledi o zaman kafamda sorguladım ya ben şimdilik 6. ay doğumlu olsam ne olurdu, 8. ay doğumlu, şey... 1. ay doğumlu olsam ne olurdu yani? Yani bu senin yeteneğinden ne kaybettirir ki yani? Birkaç ay yani, bir insanın bütün bir istikbalı bütün bir hayatı için... Veyahut da bir kulüp açınlar, çok mu önemli hani bi eee... ben mesela 2.ay doğumluydum, 8.ay doğumlu olmuş olsaydım belki, beni seçimelere alacaklardı. Veyahut da 82'nin 12. ayında doğmuş olsaydım yani... O gün o ayrimı fazlasıyla hissettiriyorlar sana zaten hani. O günkü eee... insanların politik düzeyi de yani bu kadara yani bu gün, o gün biraz daha fazlaydı bence hani. Aslında o günü söyleyecektim de aslında, o gün biraz daha fazlaydı ve hissettiriyor yani. Sınıfların olduğunu orada sana hissettiriyor yani. Çünkü sen oraya eee... Biz orda, ben evden 7.30'da çıktım, 8.30'da Florya'da oldum. 9'da eee... biz kuyrukta bekliyoruz, insanlar geliyor elinde çocuğuyla birlikte giriyor soyunma odasına çocuğunu veriyor. Bu hakkı ona kim tanıyor? Yani orada sana hissettiriyorlar yani aslında eee... zenginin-fakirin, paralının-parasızın, işte sahiplinin-sahipsizin, eee... veyahut da Kürt'ün, Laz'ın, Alevi'nin, Çerkez'in; orada senin eee... dinsel eee... kişisel şeyi etnik kimliğine orada hani resmen ayıırıyorlar yani. Çünkü eee... zaten eee... öyle yapmamış öyle ayırmamış olsalardı, bu toplumda öyle bir algı oluşmuş olsayıdı, hani biz bugün eee... televizyonlarda kendi futbol takımlarımızın maçlarını seyrederdik. Kendi futbol takımlarımızla övündürük, bu gün gidip de eee... İngiltere Premier ligini veyahut da La Liga'yı seyretmezdim. Messi'ye, işte Ronaldo'ya hayranlıkla bakmazdık şimdiler. Kendi futbolcularımızı övdik ve kendi gurbetçi futbolcularımıza şimdiler bakıboruz başka başka milli takımlar formasyonu. Ama niye, neden? Bu ülkede öyle bir adil bi düzen olsa, herkes kendi yeteneğiyle bir yerlere gelse bizim ülkemizde de insanlar eee... bi şeyleri kendi elleriyle tutsa, kendileri üretse daha güzel olur yani.

S: Peki adil dedin ya, yani adil olmak, adalet ne demek senin için?

A: Eee... benim için eee... yani şimdilik böyle politik bir dille sana cevap vereyim de; benim için adil olmak hani, eee... yani benim var olduğum her şeyi... Benim için aslında adalet şu; benim neyim varsa ben çevremdeki insanların da onların olmasını isterim. Hani hiç bir insanın... Ben şöyledi bir şey istemem: benim altımda araba olsun da Ferrari olsun öbürün altında işte hiçbir şey olmasın veyahut da Şahin olsun. Ben ona sınıf kimliği hani eee... adalet... adalet kavramı hani bence insanların önce şeyden, sabah kalkarken hani eee... bireylere veyahut da kendisine nasıl davranışları? Bir insan önce kendisine adaletli olmak zorunda; anlatabiliyor muyum yani? Eğer ki sen, ben bu dünyaya geliyorsam kendimi seviyorsam; eee... saçımı, gözlerimi, kaşımı, kulaklarımı hani insana yaraşır bir şekilde eee... temizleyip topluma öyle çıkıp, hani kendine olan saygıdan kaynaklı... Kendine adil davranışacsın ki çünkü bi insan kendisini sevmezse, kendisine saygı göstermezse, kendisi için mücadele etmezse o insanın hiçbir kimseye hani yarar sağlamaz, fayda vermez ki... Bir insan kendi saçını taramıyorsa gidip başkasının çocuğunun saçını okşar mı? Okşamaz. Çünkü kendisini sevmiyor ki... Ben çocuk olsam mesela beni böyle eee... çocukken yani böyle bir algı oluşmuştu bende, böyle pis bi adam sevdığı zaman böyle tiksinirdim ondan. Bu şeyden kaynaklı yani çünkü eee... İnsan önce kendisiyle barışık olur kendisini sever ki insanlar da onu sevsin. Veyahut da o insan başkalarını da sevsin. Yani ben adaleti böyle yorumlayabiliyorum. Hani ki şimdilik hani sana politik dilden konuşacak olursam, adaleti hani aaa... adalet yok derim şu anda benim için. Adalet diye bi şey yok şu an için. Yok ama, çocukken yani ben adaleti öyle tanımlayabiliyorum; yani ben kendimi seversem başkalarını da severim, kendime nasıl iyi davranışsam başkalarına da öyle iyi davranışırım.

S: Peki mesela sen çocukken kendine bakamıydın, işte ne bileyim saçını tarayamıydın belki, kendin güzel elbiseler giymiyordun o zaman adaletli değil miyidin?

A: O zaman da etrafındaki çocuklar da öyleydi ama; çünkü bulunduğumuz semt itibariyle, şey itibariyle mesela başka semtler... Ben mesela, ben ilk kabugumu işte kırıp Florya'ya gidişim 1995'te oldu. O zaman da 14-15 yaşındaydım hani eee... o zaman gittiğim dönemlerde, artık biraz daha hani kendimize bakıyorduk, aynaya bakıyorduk, biraz daha genleşmişlik hani, biraz daha büyümüşük yani. Saçımızı saçımızı tarıyorduk. Ama hani şey olarak, hani biraz da çalıştığımız zaman dedim ya hani, babamızdan mesela parayı iç ediyorduk. Çalışıyorduk mesela babamın haberi olmadan. Mesela pantolon alıyordu, babam geliyordu, "bu pantolonu nereden aldın?". Veyahut da "şu verdi", "işyeri

verdi”, “bu verdi” diyerek hani geçiştirmeye çalışıyordu; ama öbür türlü eee... Çocukken zaten bütün çocuklar bizim gibiymi yani. Ailesinin ekonomik durumu olan çocuklar zaten eee... ya kolejlerde okurlardı gene, bu günkü altında bi araba olan adam çocukların devletin okullarına vermekten kaçırıyor, yani bilmiyorum niye devletin okullarına vermekten kaçırıyorsa gidip koleje yazdırıyor, işte dershanelere yazdırıyor. Bilmiyorum hani burada ne varsa... Yani çocuğuna aslında iyi şefkatli bi baba olsa çocukta eee... Planla programla çocuğunu dersine çalıştırırsa bence o çocuk yani, kolejdeki öğrenciden daha başarılı olur. Öle şey yapıyorum hani. Evde huzuru sağlansa, eğer kendisi iyi bir fert olursa... Yani dediğim gibi çocuklar, hani o dönemki çocuklar bizim gibi oldukları için, üstü başı saçları yüzleri bizim gibi oldukları için hani öyle bir eee... ayırm yapma ihtiyacı hissetmiyorduk.

S: Anladım... Şu an baktığında giyimin kuşamın gayet özenli. Böyle birbirine uydurmaya çalışmışsun, şey yapmışsun falan, modaya da uygun di mi yani özen...

A: Tabii...

S: Özen gösteriyorsun anladığım kadariyla...

A: Tabi özen gösteriyorum. Çünkü az önce de dedim ya eee... Mesela bu biraz da alışkanlıktan kaynaklı, ben mesela kendimi çok seviyorum. Belki yakışıklı değilimdir, güzel değilimdir, anlatabiliyor muyum hani, ama kepçe kulak da olsam, kocaman burun da olsam, kafam da kel olsa bu şeyi kabul ediyorum yani. Bu kel kafa benim kafam, eee... bu koca kulak benim kulağım, bu burun benim burnum, eee... Onun için hani tekstilde de falan çalıştığımız için, şeyi mesela modayı şöyle yakından takip etmeye başladım. İşte tekstilde çalıştığımız için kendimize bazen bazı atölyelerde tişört falan dikiyorduk mesela, yani iyi malın kaliteli malın kötü malın... Anlıyorsun çünkü mesleğin artık bu senin. Mesleğin olduğu için iyi malı kötü malı kaliteyi kalitezisi eee...

S: Ayırabiliyorsun...

A: Tabi ayırabiliyorsun, eee... mesela eee... kendime dediğim gibi eee... koşullarım iyi olsa en iyisini yaparım kendim için. Ama başkaları için de her zaman da mücadele ederim yani. Onlar temel haklarını özgürlüklerini, işte ne biliyim temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılayabilecekleri için hani elimden gelen her zaman mücadeleyi de vermekten yanayım yani.

S: Şimdi nerden giyiniyorsun, nereden alış veriş yapıyorsun?

A: Ya şimdi eee... aslında söyleyiyim, mesela benim üzerinden şu an eee... iki üç yıldır, hatta üç, dört-beş yıldır hiçbir tişörte çok nadirdir para vermedim, vermiyorum da yani. Çünkü tekstilci olduğum için... Bir dönem işte mesela, atölye çalışıyordum. Atölyeye gelen hep iyi markalar geliyordu, bizim çalıştığımız firmalar büyük firmalardı, kaliteli markalar geliyordu. Kaliteli markaların mesela tişörtlerden çalışıyorduk yani; yani tekstilde bu şeydir hani bu bi eee... 7-8 sene önceye kadara bütün tekstilde çalışan işçiler tişört çalardı. Çünkü çalışmaktan başka yol bırakmıyorlar insanlara. Düşünün yani 100 bin tane tişört dikiyorsunuz bir ayda, bu bir tane tişörtü size vermiyorlar. “Al bu göz hakkıdır ya, al çocuğum bunu giyl!”. Yani yüz kişiyse yüz taneden bi şey olmaz yüz bin tişörtte. Çünkü o zaten eee... ihracatta söyle bir şey vardır, bi firma eee... ihracat sayısı vardır, doksan beş bindir ama yüz bin tane kesilir. Niye? Yüz bin tane kesilir, işte kesimde diyelim mesela yüz tane fire verir, işte dikime gelir yüz tane fire verir, ütü pakette gider yüz tane fire verir, 300 tane. Atölyelerde çalanma malınma riskine karşı üçbin tane, beşbin tane fazla kesilir. Ama insanlar o kadara işçileri küçük görüyor veya hatta umur... görmezlikten geliyorlar ki, eee... o kadara istemenize rağmen patronlardan hani tişörtleri yer bezi yapıyorlar. Pantolonları yer bezi yapıyorlar, camları siliyorlar, veya hatta kışın geliyor sobaya atıyorlar. Çok nadirdir hani böyle işçisine eee... kıyafet veren iş yeri; ben işte sadece Kollezyon’da gördüm hani bize veriyordu o adam. Vermiyorlardı yani, bize çalışmaktan başka seçenek bırakmıyordu.

S: Niye vermezlerdi?

A: Eeee... Niye vermezler; yani işte ben bu günkü dile sana anlatıyorum, bu günkü algılıyışımıla anlatıyorum. Çünkü eee... bu gün sana her iş... her işveren işçisine tişört verdiği zaman, bu sefer onların mağazalardaki tişörtler satılmayacak.

S: Hımm...

A: Düşünsene ben bugün yüz bin tane tekstil işçisi var, her diktigi modelden bir tane almış olsa, bu sefer bu adamın hiç tekstil şeyi eee... tişört almasına gerek kalmayacak ki; bu malları kime satacaklar?

S: Anladım.

A: Yani onun için bize çalmaktan başka yol bırakmıyorum. Ben dört beş yıldır, tişörte para [güler] verip giyemedim yani; hep çalıştığım atölyelerden çaldım ve en son kendi çalıştığım atölyede 40 tane 50 tane tişört hani olabildiğince arkadaşlarına da getirdim o tişörtlerden hani.

S: Şimdi; o atölye macerasından da soracağım da, 21 senedir tekstil işçisisin...

A: Hı hı; 21 senedir tekstil işçisiyim...

S: Eeee, 21 sene sonunda beklentin nedir; hem hayatıda hem iş hayatında?

A: Şimdi... eeee... zaten 21 senenin sonunda hani [güler] tekstile ilk başladığım zaman zaten dördüncü senedir zaten benim hayalim eee... depremle yerle bir oldu. O Florya'daki futbol şeyinden sonra, hani yerle bir oldu hani, bu sefer dedim hani en azından eee... girip çalışayım para kazanayılm hani ne bileyim, belki 18li 20li yaşlara gelince altımızda arabamız olur, şuyumuz olur, buyumuz olur ama hani babanın eee... ailenen bilinçsiz olması, işte başında bir aile reisinin akıllı olmayışı... Hani çalıştığım, kazandığın bütün paraları... Biraz da senin ailene böyle asi davranışım, söz dinlememe gibi bir çocuktum ben, eee... aileme destek olmama, eee... Yani bu gün geldim açlığında, hani gerçekten cebimizde metelik olmamasına rağmen hani ne kadara da iyi giyinirse giyin, çünkü zaten insanlarda şöyle bir algı olmuş -hani bu bende de böyle-: ya karnım aç, yemek yemeye para bulamıyorum ama gidiyorum en iyi markayı giyiniyorum. Diyorum ya ben tişörte para vermiyorum kolay kolay, pantolona da para vermem. Bana arkadaştan, eşten dosttan böyle tanıdığımı ben ona tişört veririm o bana pantolon verir iş karşılığı. İnsanların karnı aç, eee... çok eee... ciddi kronik rahatsızlıklar, hastalıkları var. Bunu sağlığına harcamıyor, yemeye, yemek yiyeip su almıyor, ama gidiyor bunu güzel bir tişört alıyor. Veya gidiyor saçını jölelettiriyi, jölelettiriyi...

S: Neden peki?

A: Eeee... özenti ! Yani işte o şeyini o ezilmişliğini eee... şeyler eee... tişört üzerinden, pantolon üzerinden, jöle üzerinden, giydiği ayakkabı üzerinden hani insanlara fiyaka olarak göstermek için.

S: Anladım.

A: Yani bu, bu da çok büyük bir ezilmişliktir yani aslında. İşin temeli insanlar eee... bütün o ezilmişliklerini eee... kıyafetlerle kamufla etmeye çalışıyorlar. Çünkü hepimiz de biliyoruz ki.

S: Edebiliyorlar mı peki?

A: Edemiyorlar. Bunu neden edemiyo... çünkü bugün bunu...

S: Neresi sıritiyor?

A: Haaa? Aaaa... neresi sıritiyor? Bugün hani eee... otobüse bindiğiniz zaman... Bugün eee... nasıl söyliyim, bi Beylikdüzü'ndeki insanla, Sefaköy'deki insanın profili bir değil... Beylikdüzü'ndeki ve... Beylikdüzü böyle bir tabir olarak şey yaptım. Adam biner arabasına gazetesini alır, eee... efendi efendi kendisini giyinmişdir. Yani ben evet temiz giyinirim ama eksik bıraktığım şey vardır yani kendime. Ya sakalımdan unutmuşumdur, ya saçımdan unutmuşumdur, ya giydığım pantolon unutmuşumdur, ya üzerine koku sürememişimdir... Yani bunlar şeydir eee... o sınıf kimliğinin insanlara verdiği eee... eziklidir. Yani ben mesela gider üç milyonluk deodorant alır sıkırm, adam gider üç yüz milyonluk deodorant alır, beş gün o gömleğinden çıkmaz. Yani saklayamıyorsun sen bunu, ne yaparsan yap saklayamazsan. Çünkü otobüse bindiğin zaman bile, insanlarda şöyle bir algı var artık. Yani önceden otobüse binerdik yani eee... biraz daha insanlara saygı davranırdık, şimdi o saygıyı biz de yitirmeye başladık zamanla. Kadın kaç yaşında olursa olsun o kadına biz yer verirdik hani otobüste. Ama şimdi öyle bi şey yok, hani bunu da eee... aslında şeyler yok etmeye başladılar, immm... zengin diye tabir ettiğimiz o lüks semtlerde yaşayan başlayan insanlar yok etmeye başladılar.

S: Nasıl?

A: Eee... Mesela biz varoşlarda yetişik, mesela biz mahalle, semt çocuğu olduğumuz için biraz daha yaşa büyük olan insanlara ağıbı, abla, amca diye hitap ederiz. Ama aaaa.... O gibi insanlarda şey yoktur yani, terbiye edep denilen olay yoktur. Yani eee... bi araçta eee... efendime söyleyeyim, bir parkta, bi insana saygılı davranışma biçimimi yoktur. Hani şey genel anlamda hani bu tabi bu semtler daha yoğundur, ama hani o kültürü taşıyan insanlar aslında şey yaptılar. Eee... benim ekonomik durumum ne kadar iyi olursa olsun o otobüse bindiğim zaman, eğer ki o adamın kılığı kıyaftı kötüyse, ona yer vermem yani ben. Çünkü o senin... Senden alt kimlikli bir insan. Yani giyinişi güzel değil. Şöyle olay gelişti, eeee... Eğer ki benim gençsem, giyimim kötüyse benden daha güzel giyimli bi benden beş yaş büyük bi insana yer verebiliyordum. Çünkü bunu dedim ya az önce de, çocukken sen bunu kabullenmişsin. Bu bir emir olarak bi görev olarak geliyor; şimdi bu da o insanı öyle gördüğün zaman “aaa bak ne efendi bu memurdur”, veyahut da, aaa, nasıl söyleyeyim, “öğretmendir buna yer verelim”... Ama o insanlar öyle yapmadılar, o insanların çocukların kendisinden daha kötü giyimli, daha fakir insanları hor gördüler. O sınıf kimliği işte zaten burada açığa çıkıyor. Yani bi işçiyse yaşı ondan otuz yaş da, kırk yaş da, elli yaş da büyük olsa yer vermeyecekler insanlara. Yani bunu zaten otobüsle de gittiğin zaman siz de görüşünüz. Öyle bir şey kalmamış yani, sınıf kimliği aslında oradan da açığa çıkıyor. Yani az önce dedimiz ya, hani sen bunu nasıl örtebiliyorsun vayahut da nasıl saklayabiliyorsun. Hayır saklayamıyorlar yani. Şey olarak belki eee... Medeniyet, medeni olarak hani Sefaköy'deki, Küçükçekmece'deki, işte Bağcılar'daki bir insanla; Mecidiyeköy'deki, Florya'daki, veyahut da uç noktasını söyleyeyim, Suadiye'deki bir insanın şeyi bir degildir. Çünkü ben, eee, ilk tiyatroya gidişim yani benim devrimci arkadaşlarla tanışmamla birlikte oldu. Yani ben tiyatro nedir bilmiyordum ki! Tiyatro yani neyi anlatır? Benim için saçma sapan, sanki üç beş tane arkadaşın bir arada durup komedyapıldığı bir şey. Yani ben, eee, ilk sinemaya bilmiyorum, eee, kaç yaşında arkadaşlar götürdü. O da Yenibosna'da bi Yıldız sineması varmış, o dönem orası porno oynatılmış [güler].

S: [güler]

A: Yani gerçekten öyle, o sinemaya orada tanıştım yani. Şimdi o sinema dediğimiz sinema, sinema diyorlar aslında... Eee, ne biliyim karşına dikiyorlar hani şeyi, perdeyi koyuyorlar bi sürü şey yani... Evet belki izlemek gereklidir, takip etmek gereklidir toplumun yararına olan şeyler varsa, ama hani toplumu yozlaştmak için, toplumu ahlaksızlaştmak için de, yani kendi cepleri dolsun diye de birilerine kapı aralıyorlar. Yani düşününsize; ben 15, 14... 15,16 yaşında porno film seyretmeye gidiyorum yani. Böyle bir ahlaksızlık olabilir mi? Bir türkede büyükler buna nasıl müsaade edilebilir yani, böyle yerler de resmi açık yani, bütün topluma açık yerler yani.

S: Kocaman yazıyorlar “3 film birden” diye...

A: Tabii. [güler] Eveet, öyle yani...

S: Peki sen kendinin tekstil işçisi olarak aşağılandığını hissediyor musun bazen?

A: Aaaa...

S: Zengin ortamlarda...

A: Şimdi, ben tekstil işçisi olarak aslında aaa... Dedim ya hani, benim biraz daha asi, biraz daha isyankâr oluşum, hani ben tekstil işçilerinin arasından sıyrıldım çıktım. Ben mesela artık öncü bir tekstil işçiyim hani. Böyle ukalalık anlamında söylemiyorum da, çünkü diğer arkadaşlara falan baktığımızda eee... Ben hani sıyrıldım aralarından, çıktım. Beni o gözle görmüyor insanlar aslında, ben mesela tekstilde artık çalıştığım zaman, makineye geçtiğim zaman, veyahut da bi patronun yanında gidip maaşımı falan konuşmaya gittiğim zaman hani ben onlardan değil, artık onlar benden çekinmeyen yani. Çünkü giyim, kılık, kıyaftet insanların aynası olmuş. Hani az önce de onu söyledim ya... İnsanlar, hani sen eğer ki yüzünde tiraş olmayı becerememişsen, kendine saygınlık yoksa o adam sana saygı göstermez. Sen kendine bakamamışsun, sen kendine saygı duymuyorsun ki o adam sana niye saygı duysun. Şimdi ben patronlarla falan maaşını konuşmaya gittiğim zaman insanlar şöyle vardır; patronun karşısına gider, el pençe divan durur. Yani patronun karşısına gidecek ya, şöyle [taklit eder] durmayı bi adet edinmişlerdir. Yani şöyle ellerini ovalarlar, avuçların içi terler, şey yapar... Patronuna sor... Yani patron sorar “yavrum ne maaş istiyorsun” der. “Eee... yani eee...”... O insan da “abi sen benim hakkımı ne görüyorsan, sen doğru iyisini bilirsın”. Ama yani ben o şeyi çok uzun zamandan beri yıktım yani. Ben mesela öyle bi şey değil yani, yani ben diyorum ki, “Benim hakkım bin liradır, ben bin liranın aşağısında çalışmam!”. Çünkü artık hani, çok şükür diyorum ki yani devrimcilerle

tanıştım, iyi insanlarla tanıştım; namuslu, şerefli, ahlaklı insanlarla tanıştım. Yani son 12-13 yıldır ben devrimcileri tanıyorum, devrimcilerle birlikte hayatın en güzel anlarını paylaştım. Onun için, artık hani ben o insanlara giderken çekinmiyorum. O insanlardan aşağı kendimi görmüyorum, hatta ben onları küçümsemiştim çünkü yani kendimi geliştirmek ihtiyacı hissediyorum. Kendimi geliştirmek zorunda hissediyorum. Yani eee... Benim neyim eksik yani o insanlardan? Hani eee... küçük... Kimseyi küçümsemiştim, ama hani kendimi de küçümsetmiyorum. Yani kimseyi küçümsemiştim hani kılığından, kıyafetinden, bulunduğu, yaptığı işten kaynaklı; yani herkesin yaptığı işe saygı duyuyorum. Yani ekmek parası için yapılan bütün işlere ben saygı duyarım ama hani o pozisyonada kimseyi getirmiyorum. O da kimsenin haddine düşmedi daha yani...

S: Peki; tekstil işçiliği toplumda saygı gören bir meslek sayılır mı?

A: Immm... Şey olarak hani, eee, sanayi olarak yani benim kişisel düşünmem Türkiye'nin % 60'ı tekstile doyuyor! Ben böyle düşünüyorum; hani özellikle Marmara Bölgesi... Ama saygınlığı yok yani, çünkü hiçbir güvencesi yok. Yani bugün günde 11 saat, mesajları birlitke 14-15 saat çalışan bir iş yerinin hiçbir saygınlığı olmaz. Hani günde 11 saat en aşağı çalıştığımız tekstil atölyelerinde yemekler, afedersin, içrenç derecede kötü yani. Buz gibi yemekler gelir, demir tabaklara konur, sen de gidersin, eee, o yemekleri yemeye çalışırsın. Hani aldiğın 800-900 lira maaş, eğer ki biraz daha hani insan gibi yaşayan insanları gördüğün zaman hani, o güzel, önündeki güzel yemeği de yiyeceksin. Çünkü diyorsun "ben bu yemeğe layık değilim" hani. Hemen, eee, itiraz etme potansiyeli başlıyor. Ama diğer insanlar bunu kabullenmiş yani.

S: Anladım.

A: Eee ben kendi açımdan hani ben kabullenmiyorum; onun için hani dedik ya 21 yıldır çalışıyorum, belki iki yüzün üzerinde iş yeri değiştirdim hani kabullenemediğim için; kabullenemiyorum ben.

S: Kabullenenler nasıl kabulleniyor, hiç düşündün mü?

A: Eeee... Kabullenenler, eee... Yani aile baskısı çok, "aman oğlum, aman kızım işte gir çalış", yani. "Bak herkes çalışıyor burada bir sen çalışmıyorsun ki, öbürü nasıl yiyor o yemeği, sen de öyle ye". "Anne ya, yemeğin içinden böcek çıktı!" Baba diyo, "oğlum, gözünü kapat ye gitsin bi şey olmaz!". [güler] Gerçekten böyle yani; ya diyorsun "ama yemeğin içinde de kıl var!". "Oğlum ne olacak; evde kıl olmuyor mu?" Ama yani bu sağlık yani, yemeğin içinde toz var, tekstil tozu. Zaten yani, bu toz zaten kanser yapıyor, akşamda kadara affedersin burnun doluyor yani, insanların burnu öyle doluyor ki yani, o sobanın borusu vardır ya hani sobayı çıkarırsınız kurum çıkar, insanların burnu da gerçekten tekstile inanılmaz böyle. Tekstil lavabolarına falan bi gir, küçük atölyelere... Şu an biraz daha gelişmiş bi çağda hani tekstil, büyük fabrikalar böyle güzel temiz... Ama o eskiden (kalma) halen birçok atölyeler var böyle, girdiğiniz zaman, eee, bir daha insanın yemek yiyesi falan gelmiyor. Bu kadara rezil bir ortam! Bunu kabullenemediğin için... Eee... Dolayısıyla şey, ustaya diyorsun ki, "ya usta, bak bu lavabolar pis kardeşim, lavaboya gidilmıyor, lavaboya gittiğim zaman yemekhaneye gidemiyorum!". Bu sefer çünkü lavabodaki o içrençliği gördüğün zaman yemek yiyeceksin. "Sen çok mu kibarsın" diyor ya; "ya bu giden insanlar nasıl gidiyor?" Eee... Bu şeide artık hani onunla ortak bir noktan kalmıyor, onunla oturup masada konuşabilecek bir şeyin kalmıyor, o adam o lafi sana söylediğinden sonra... Kardeşim ben, ben bir insanım yani! Ben insan gibi çalışmak istiyorum yani... Bu burada, eee, hayvan girmiyor lavaboya. Yani giren insanları eğer kişi orası bir iş yeriyse, işyerinin de bir temizlikçisi vardır. İnsanlar eğitilir, çağrıp söylenir; anlamadı tekrar söylenir, tekrar söylenir. Yani sonuçta, eğer ki insanları kazanmak gibi bir derdimiz varsa, insanları yetiştirmek gibi derdimiz varsa burada; o insanların üzerinden para kazanıyorsan, o insanları da eğitmek, yetiştirmek zorundasın yani. Eee... Ben onun için bilmiyorum, ben kabullenemiyorum, kabullenen insanlarda dediğim gibi aile baskısı çok. Çıktıkları zaman şeyi de biliyorlar aslında... Hani ben bunu biraz geç kavrayan bir arkadaş olarak, eee, çıktıkları yerde... Çıktıkları yerin gittikleri yerden çok daha iyi olmadığını biliyorlar. Ben bunu aslında çok geç kavradım, hani koşullar maalesef her yerde böyle yani. Birisi diğerinin aynısı; yani insanlar bunu biliyorlar, bunu çabuk kavradılar. Ben bunu çok geç kavradım; şimdi geç kavradım fakat şimdi de kabullenemiyorum. Çünkü yani insan olduğundan kaynaklı hani ben insan olduğumun farkına diğer insanlara göre çok erken vardım ve ben insan gibi yaşamak istiyorum, insan gibi çalışmak istiyorum. Yani boş gezmek, serseri gibi gezmek istemiyorum. Gelip insan gibi belirli saatte girip, belirli saatte çıkış, belirli saatlerde arkadaşlarımla buluşup çeşitli sosyal etkinliklerimi gerçekleştirmek istiyorum. Yani o insanların bu gibi derdi yok. İnsanların hayatları sabah gireyim işte, bu gün, bu ay yüz saat mesai yapayım da işte üç yüz milyon para alayım. Üç yüz

milyon aldin, ne yapacan üç yüz milyonu yiymedikten sonra? Parayı harcayamıyorsun ki sen yani; ben ne yapacağım yani? Ben hayatımın en güzel yıllarda, gençliğimin en güzel yıllarda yiymedikten, içemedikten, gezemedikten, eğlenemedikten sonra... Elli yaşında, altmışında o para trilyon olsa ne olacak ki yani! Bilmiyorum yani; onun için hani insanların böyle bir derdi sorunu yok. Yani eee... Hani iyi koşullarda çalışayım, iyi şeyler getireyim gibi dertli, dertleri yok. Var olan insanların sayısı da çok az, bu gibi, eee, şeylerde de hani dile getirdiğin zaman da eee... İşte şeyden kaynaklanıyor, biraz dinden kaynaklı... Hani dinin insanların üzerinden etkisinde inanılmaz bir etkisi vardır dinin. İşte eee, "Aman oğlum, yani yapma! Gunahtar; gir çalış. İsyân etme; bak işte peygamber efendimiz de zamanında çalışmıştı, ticaret yapmış. Yavrum bu ayıp midir?..." Yani eee... Din ve yani insanların hiçbir sosyal, eee, yani o sosyal devletin şeylerini görmedikleri için, meyvelerini görmedikleri için, devletin insanlara hakları tanımı gereken hakları bilmek için, insanlar dolayısıyla hayatı böyle biliyorlar. Yani, yemek; sabah, şey, işe gitmek, akşam gelip yemek yiyp uyumak ve işte bir de televizyon... En güzel, en lüks şeyleri; "A bak, televizyonumuz da var, kimseye muhtaç değiliz!". Bu yani... İnsanlar hayatı sadece bundan ibaret biliyorlar onun için.

S: Peki dedin ya hani bu din falan çok etkiliyor insanların hayatlarını işte kabullenmelerinde bir şeyleri... De mi?

A: Tabi ki...

S: Yanlış anlamadım...

A: Tabii tabii...

S: Ama bi yandan da hani en büyük günah ne? Kul hakkı yemek...

A: Tabi...

S: Yani sömürü kul hakkı yemek olarak görülmez mi?

A: Eeee... Şimdi bunu şeyler, hani yapan insanlar, hani devletin başındaki otoriteler de hani biz de küçükken şöyle bilirdik ya: "televizyonda bir şey söylenilmişse o doğrudur"; "koskoca televizyon yalan mı söylüyor?" Biz de böyle bilirdik hani birkaç sene önceye kadara; şimdi gözünüzün içine bakıp da hani, bi insan televizyondan çıkip da işte mesela en yakın dönemde hatırladığımız Japonya başbakanı zehirli su içiyor, yani "suyu için bu suda bi şey yok". Şimdi cahil olan Japon halkı ne yapacak, suyu içecek yani. Yolu var mı bu işin? Yok şimdii... Şey de böyledir yani, eee, kul hakkını yiyan insanlara da büyük patronlar diyor ki: "bak küçük ölçekli işletmeler bunlar ticaret yapıyor, size ekme sunuyor; ekme kapısıdır bunlar; bunlara ihanet etmeyein. Allah bunlardan razı olsun ki, paralarını yastık altı etmiyorlar, işte size iş imkânları sunuyorlar, siz de çalışıyorsunuz. Bu adamlar aslında parasını saklasa bütün bir ömür boyu huzur ve rahat içinde geçinecekler ama bu insanlar sizin için çalışıyor" deyip insanları kandırıyorlar hani; ticaret yaptıklarını söylüyorlar. Evet yani; bu insanlar ticaret yapıyorlar ama insan ticareti yapıyorlar. İnsanların alın terlerini, emeklerini sömürüyorlar; hayallerini çalışıyorlar yani insanların. Yani ticaret... Sen çalışırdığın bir işçinin parası, evet kul hakkı şudur; yani eee... Bizim, benim bildiğim kadarıyla, bir işçi çalışıyorsa, onun daha alınının teri kurumadan onun parasını verirsin; emeğin karşılığını verirsin ki "al anam bak senin alın teri kurumasın; Allah öbür dünyada benden hesap sorar." Evet, ben de Allah'ın varlığına inanıyorum. Bi yaratıcı mutlaka vardır; yani birçok kere de ilahi [güler] adaletlerini görmüşüzdür. Eeee, yani budur... Ama sen tutarsın önceden, ben işe girdiğim zaman ayın birinde maaşlar ödenirdi. Ondan sonra ayın beşine maaşlar ödenmeye başladı bu Marmara bölgesinde, bilmiyorum, diğer şehirlerde. Ayın onu oldu; şimdiyse ayın on beşi, yirmisi, yirmi beşi, yani seni her işe yeni bir işe girmişsen elli gün sonra maaş alman demek bu. Eee? Yani şimdii eee... İşte dediğim gibi, senin başbakanın çıkıyorsa "bu ülkede işte küçük ölçekli, büyük orta ölçekli, büyük ölçekli işletmelere Allah razı olsun", işte "bunlar olmasa siz aç kalırsınız, size kim iş verecek? Devletimizin imkanları kısıtlı"... Sen devletin imkânlarını birilerine peşkeş çekersen, işte bu ülkenin vergisini ödeyen insanların parasıyla gidersen özel uçaklara, özel iş adamlarını bindirip tatillere gönderirsen... İşte eee... Aydın Doğanların milyarlarca liralık borcunu yedi yıllık, 2009'a ertelersen... Ondan sonra aralarında kavga çıkar böyle, birbirlerinin kavgaya birbirlerini sıkıştırmaya çalışır. Şimdi gerçi çıkarları da ters düştü hani. Ama böyle yani... Kul hakkı yemek, hani dediğim gibi, yani insanlar kul hakkı olarak görmüyor, insanlar ticaret görüyor. "Sen de yap" diyo, "sen de kazan" diyor. "Sana engel yok."

S: Anladım... Yani tekstilde çalışan işçilerde mi böyle düşünüyor?

A: Tabii ki yani... Eee... Yüzde doksanı evet yani... Akıllı, hani benim deyimimle, yani benim düşüncem itibariyle, ideolojik düşüncem itibariyle; evet temiz insanlar var, ama hani bunlar da okyanusta damla gibi bir şey. Onu da kimse kaleye alımıyor, ancak sıkışıkları zaman...

S: Emeklerinin kullanıldıklarını hissetmiyorlar mı, sömürüldüklerini hissetmiyorlar mı?

A: Diyorlar eee... Evet, yani...

S: Bilmem on saat on bir saat çalışıyorlar, maaşlarını geç alıyorlar, sigortaları belki doğru düzgün yatmıyor...

A: Evet; ben yani yirmi bir yıllık işçiyim. Dedim ya hani, bugün bin gün sigorta günüm var. 1995'te sigortaya girişim var. Yani bugün bir yere girip, evet kafamı eğip full çalışmış olsaydım bu gün on altı yıllık sigortam var olmuş olacaktı. Bugün benim pirimin dolmuş olacaktı dolayısıyla. Şimdi insanlar... Şimdi insanlar emeklerinin sömürüldüğünün çok iyi farkındalar. Nasıl farkındalar? Yani en basitinden, yani pratik örnek olarak şu karşısına çıkarıyor: Bugün ben bir tekstil atölyesinde çalıştığım zaman, ben işi iyi bildiğim zaman gidip başka yerde kendime bir atölye açtığım zaman, o işyerindeki işçi senin yanına geliyor. "A, bak!" diyor; "bu adam makinecilik yapmış, para kazanmış, gitmiş kendisine atölye açmış; şimdi bu adam da patron oldu! Dolayısıyla demek ki hani bu patron bizi kandırıyor." Veyahut da patron ona 500 lira maaş veriyorsa, öbür patron ona 600 lira veriyor. "Ulan" diyor, "bu adam" diyor, "bu şerefsiz bizim hakkımızı onca sene yedi" diyor. Aslında arada oynayan para 100 lira ama; 500 lira veren yerin de söyle şeyi vardır: adam senin sigortanı yapıyordur, yemekler biraz daha güzeldir, çalışma saatleri biraz daha azdır... Ama o adam, o iyi koşulları istemiyor. Parayı istiyor, yani beyninde, artık çünkü düzende artık her şey parayla dönüyor ya... Artık "50 lira" diyor, "bana 100 lira fazla gelsin de 2 saat fazla çalışıyım ne olacak?" diyor; "eve gidip de ne yapacağım?" diyor... Yani, [güler] aslında herkes farkında. Yani eee... Birgün hani gerçekten bir şey, bir çığ kopacak. Hani gerçekten ne saraylar kalacak, ne saltanatlar kalacak. Gerçekten çok büyük bir çığ kopacak. Bilmiyorum ama hani fırtına ne zaman kopacak, hani fırtınanın aslında kopmasını ben bekliyorum aslında. Gerçekten bekliyorum hani; çünkü bu düzende hani köle gibi yaşamaktansa, bir özgürlük savaşçısı olmak benim için yani onur vericidir. Ben bunu düşünüyorum yani...

S: Anladım... Peki durmadan iş değiştiryorsun ya, iki yüz tane iş yeri firma değiştirdiğini falan söylüyorsun, belki kendi başında bir rekor bu...

A: Evet çok büyük bir rekor; benim gibi çok iş yeri değiştirmiş biri yok!

S: Arkadaş çevren de değişiyor mu; yani senin kalıcı bir arkadaş çevren var mı? Yani 20 sene önceki arkadaş çevren duruyor mu?

A: Duruyor.

S: 10 sene önceki...

A: İşte hani bu... Hani nasıl söyleyeyim, şöyle bi şey oldu: Ben ilk girip işte bi atölyede bıçaklıdım bir arkadaşı eee... 2002'de ben böyle geçtim makinede çalışıyordum, o da benden bir iki yaş büyüğü böyle makinede çalıştığım bi dönem, kafamı eydim böyle çalışıyorum yani... Siması falan da, çünkü aradan çok uzun yıllar geçmiş hani artık o zaman çocuktuk, saçı sarı o zaman o arkadaşın. Saçları uzundu, böyle çocuk şeyiyle böyle güzel bir çocuktu. Ben de işte gittim makinede çalışıyordum başka bir bantta, onun önüne verdiler tesadüfen, ben bunun ismini Ercan biliyordum hani işte aklımda esmedi hani işte bu çocuğun ismi Ercan'dır falan diye. Gittim, böyle makinede çalışıyordum, birisi dedi ki "Mesut" dedi "şu işi versene!". Mesut deyince hemen akıma calındı zaten, ses tonu kulağımla halen tınlamış yani çok uzun zaman geçmesine rağmen. O arkadaşlığın özlemi insanın bazı arkadaşların şeyi eee... Yani nasıl söyleyeyim, bir arkadaşın vardır mesela, çok iyi şarkı söyle. Onu hiçbir zaman, ömrün boyu unutamazsınız. Yani her zaman aklında kalmıştır. Bir arkadaşın var çok yakışıklıdır, her zaman o yakışıklılığı aklında kalmıştır. Bu adamın da sesi benim kulağımda kalmış hani, sesi kulağımda tınladı. "Bana" dedi, "iş ver!". Geriye bi döndüm, yani aradan 15 yıl geçmişti bakın; 15 yıl 92 nere 2007 nere? 15 yıl... Döndüm dedim "senin ismin Mesut mu?". Dedi "Mesut". Dedi, "sen beni tanıdin mi?". "Tanıdım..." Dedi, "öküz oğlu öküz; yani tanıyorsan insan bir yani merhaba der yani, bir tokalaşır." "Bak" dedim "ben Mesut, senin ismini Ercan bildiğim için seni hiç hatırlatmadım.". "Ben seni", dedim, biz eee... Kerim'in orası diyoruz, "Kerim'in orada beraber çalışıyorduk" falan... Dedi, "ben seni tanıdım!". Tanıdansa insan der yani, "merhaba Adil, ben Mesut; hatırladın mı beni?" Hani, 15 yıl önce falan böyle yani, halen o ilişkiler falan koruyorum yani, çünkü

insanlarla ilişkilerim yani... Ahlaki bir sorun olmadığı sürece insanlarla ilişkileri hiçbir zaman koparmıyorum yani; elimden geldiği zaman da hani eee, fabrikalarda falan sıkışan arkadaşlar falan oldukça bilgilerim doğrultusunda, hani bildiklerimi de paylaşmaya çalışıyorum hani... Kanuni yollardan haklarını falan anlatmaya çalışıyorum. Var yani 20 yıllık, hala arkadaşları var çok eskiden çalıştığım arkadaşlarımla görüşüyorum.

S: Ama yani devamlı görüşüyor musun?

A: Evet; periyodik olarak görüşüyorum evet; telefonla olsun, şey olarak hani bir halı saha maçı olsun mesela veya...

S: Böyle etkinlikleriniz var mı?

A: Eeee, oluyor!

S: Oluyor...

A: Oluyo, halı saha maçları falan yapıyoruz yani bazen.

S: Mesela birinizin evine gidip yani oturuyor musunuz?

A: Şimdi şöyle bir şey... Mesela şimdi, eee... Gene aile baskısının şeyi öne çıkacak, çünkü mesela şimdi ben 32 yaşına geldim halen bekârım; hani bazı arkadaşlarım vardır mesela benim çocukluk arkadaşım çok sevdiğim candan bir arkadaşım, evlendi hani ben o arkadaşımın evine bu saatte kadara belki iki defa ya da üç defa gitmişimdir. On bir on iki yaşında halen kızı var. Evine gitmedim yani neden; çünkü bu arkadaşım hani eee... Toplumda şöyle bir ahlaksızlık vardır ya yani, belki gidicem, belki onun eşine yan gözle bakıcam... Çünkü daha insanlar devrimcileri, hala devrimci işçileri daha tanımiyorlar. Devrimci işçiler kendi öncü işçiler eee... İşçilerle arasında bir duvar ördüler. Hani, devrimci oldular ya, veyahut da devrimci olmaya çalışıtlar ya veyahut da bir şey, sen ben o insandan bir çok şey biliyorum ya, yani kendimi her şey zannediyorum. Her şeyi ben bilirim! Hani şimdi o arkadaşların evine ben evlenemediğim, o evli olduğu için gidemiyorum; çünkü o evinde eşile ve dolayısıyla ben gittigim zaman onun eşine yan gözle bilmek kaygısı var o insanlarda. Yani yoksa hani sadece işte siyasi anlamda evine gidip geldiğim arkadaşları var. Onlar benim evime giderler ben onların evine giderim kalırım işte. Otururuz, yeriz, içeriz...

S: Peki şey, bu iş değiştirme süreçleri zarfında işsiz kaldığın oldu mu peki?

A: Bu iş değiştirme süreçlerinde hani, [güler] nasıl söyleyeyim, hani şöyle bir söz vardır hani, "boş gezmek serserinin tatıldır". Çok güzel bir sözdür; bilmiyorum hangi yazardan okumuştum ama şimdi hani yani iyi bir işyeri olmadığı için, hiçbir zaman benim de içimde çalışmak olmadığı için, öyle rezil koşullarda çalışmak olmadığı için, hani bu 15 yılın içerisinde inan ki en az 4 yıl boş geçmişimdir.

S: Himm... Ama bu kendi isteğinle mi olan bi şey?

A: Hayır kendi isteğimle değil. Eeee... Toplumdaki koşulların kötü olmasıyla kaynaklı. Yani mesela bir iş yerine gidiyorsunuz; "sabah 8" diyor, "sabah 8'de iş başı akşam 7'de paydos", işte diyor "akşamları mesaimiz oluyor"; "mesai kaça kadar ağrı?"; "Hele sen bi gel gir". "Abi yani şartları bileyim de ona göre gireyim." "İşte akşamı 9'a kadara," "yemek veriyor musun?" "Yok yemek vermiyoruz bir bisküvi veriyoruz." "Ya bisküvi ne ya?" "Ya biz bisküvi veriyoruz kardeşim her yer böyle." Eee?... İyi de yani ben sabahın zaten sekiz buchuğunda zaten iş başı yapıyorum, dolayısıyla yedi buçukta kalkıyorum. Bi saat önce kalkıyorum, bi saat de iş yerinden geç çıkıyorum, dokuz onda da mesaiden çıktığımı düşün onbirde eve geliyorum. E ben gelincek evli bir insan olmuş olsam bi saat bile çocuğumu göremiyecem; yani böyle bir yaşam koşullarında ki yani, böyle bir en son 10 yılın üzerinde böylesine düşünüyorum. Şimdi ben bu işyerine nasıl girip çalışabilirim ki yani, günde 16 saatimi sadece uyumak için öbürünü çalışmak için; yani onun için hani eee... Böyle koşullarda hani şey, çalışmayı tercih etmedim bir çok yerde ama çalışmak zorunda da kaldım. Parasız kaldığım dönemlerde çalışmak zorunda da kaldım yani.

S: Peki bu, eee... İş değiştirmiştir ya, yani belki bir kısmında patron seni işten çıkarmıştır, bir kısmında da sen kendin çıkışmışındır.

A: Evet.

S: Bu hani senin şartllerin attığı tak ettiği nokta ne? Yani hangi noktada “tamam kardeşim çalışıyorum ben!” deyip kapıyı çekip çıkıp gidiyorsun?

A: Ya şimdı ben... [güler]

S: Seni öfkelendiren, sinirlendiren şey ne?

A: Şimdi aslında o şeyden kaynaklı hani; aileden başlayarak hani... O hep ikinci sıradaki birey aslında bu çocukluktan başlayarak, çalışma alanına kadar gidiyor yani. Hep böyle emir altındasın ya yani, bu askerde de olmuştur. Ya bir iş yerinde şalterlerimi attıran mesela şöyle bir olay oldu: Piramit diye bir jeans, Piramit Jeans diye bir marka vardı çok eski çok büyük bir marka idi Piramit Jeans, burda çalışıyordum işte o dönem. Çok da iyi çalışıyorduk yani ama sigortamız falan yoktu yani tabii, yani herkesin vardı, biz o zaman askere gideceğimiz zaman bizim yoktu 97-98'lerde. Bi usta vardi işte o da bizden 2 yaş-3 yaş büyütü, bir problem oldu öndeği bir arkadaşla, bu arkadaşa küfretti, “kalk” dedi “git” dedi, “siktir git dedi çalışmadısan” falan, baktım bunlar böyle yaka paçaya geldiler ben kalktım ayırmak için. Hani dedim yani “oturun” dedim, “ne yapıyorsunuz?”. Ben onlardan biraz da küçüğüm falan, bana dedi “siktir git lan” dedi. “Sen yerine otur” dedi. “Vay efendim sen bana nasıl siktir git dersin!” diye buna bir kafa vurdum, böyle ağızı burnu çarşaf gibi oldu, darmadağın. Bi daha üstüme geliyor, bi tane daha tekme vurdum, gitti böyle makinelere makinelere çarparak. Çorba gibi oldu, çok da büyük bir yerdı yani bu günü koşullarda bile öyle tesisat yok yani öyle bir iş yerinde. İşte patronun yanına gittik, patron dedi “ne oldu?”. “Ya” dedim, “böyle böyle oldu” dedim, yani “arkadaşlarla” dedim, “tartışıyorlardı ben gittim ayırmak için bana, dedi ‘sen siktir git yerine otur’, ben de bir anda tutamadım kendimi vurdum” dedim. Biraz konuşuk hani, biraz da iyi çalışıyorduk, işimize sadık kullardık [güler]. Adam dedi tamam, geçin çalışın. Onu da makineye oturtturdular, ondan ustalığı alıdalar makineye oturttular, oturtturdular. Eee... Ondan sonra başka bir iş yerinde, yani eee, nasıl söyleyim, artık eee... Askerden geldikten sonra yani bir çok iş yeriley çalıştım yani, hem de binlerce, binlerle ifade edilebilir fabrikalarda. Mesela BJ Tekstil<sup>183</sup> diye bir yer vardi Hadımköy'de. Yani buradan arası çok uzaktır. Sabah yedi buçukta da iş başı, akşam altı buçukta paydos. Yani ben bazen sabah, tam askerden geldiğim dönemde, sabah kalkıyordum 6'da, seyy 5:45'te uyuyordum sabah. Servise yetişmek için bazen gidiyordum, caddeden böyle otobüs geçiyordu, otobüsün geçtiğiğini görüyordum otobüs durmuyordu. Arkasından basıyordu kükür, yani durup böyle o sokağa baksa beni görecek ama durmuyor yani durakta olmadığı için. O işyerinde böyle hani dedim, “burada çalışmayı”. Çünkü temizdi iş yeri, yemekler falan güzel. Hani sosyal hakları, sigorta falan yoktu ama, diğer iş yerlerine göre işte mesailerini maaşla birlikte ödüyordu, işte cumartesi falan mesai olduğu zaman yüksek veriyordu. Koşullar biraz iyiydi. Orada da 7-8 ay kadara belki çalıştım çalışmadım, bana dediler “sigorta kağıtlarını getir, sigortanı yapacağız.” İlk girdiğimde sigorta kağıtlarımı götürdüm; sigortamı, kağıtları... Sigortamı yapmamışlar, alıyorlar bekletiyorlar. Çalışma Bakanlığı'ndan görevliler geldiği zaman “Ya işte bu eleman yeni girdi, sigortaya başlatacaktır, siz geldiniz. İşte size veriyorduk” gibilerden... Çalışma Bakanlığı müfettişleri de aslında bunu yemiyo ama cebine para girdikleri için, rüşveti iyi aldıları için, bunu şey yapıyorlar hani, işverenin doğrultusunda kabul ediyorlar. “Evet haklısınız!”, hani yeni alınmış gibi gösteriyor yani. Bu iş yerinden de çıkış sebeplerinden birisi, gene bi gün bir futbol maçı vardi. İzin istedim, hani dedim ki böyle böyle, “Bu akşam maç var bir de benim evim uzak, ben bu maçı seyredeyim. Hani başka zaman ben mesaiye kalırım, mesai olmadığı bir gün de ben mesaiye kalırım.”. Yok işte bana dedi... Hayır, pardon özür dilerim, yok demedi ya “tamam” dedi. “Ben seni akşamaya gönderirim.” Akşam oldu benim ismimi mesai listesine yazmış yavşak herif, yazmış yani. İsmimi mesai listesine yazmış, ben de hiç mesai listesine bakmadım hani bana gidersin dediydi ya, mesai listesine bakmadım o gün. Kartımı bastım servise bindim, hatta koltuklara saklandım, gelip koltukları indirmesinler olur ya hani seni mesaiye kal demişti falan gibilerden bi şey de geçiyor akımdan, ama listeye bilmek akıma gelmiyor o anda heyecandan. Kaçıcam ya işten hani yorgunluğa bakıcam. Ertesi gün geldim işte usta bana dedi “sen dün mesaiye niye kalmadın?” “Ben sana söyledidim ya” Hani bunlar ikiz kardeşler o dönem, bunlar bir de şey sözüm ona Alevi. Hani biz Alevileri günümüzde şey biliriz ya daha...

S: Daha ilerici...

<sup>183</sup> BJ Tekstil: <http://www.bjtekstil.com/>

A: Daha ilerici, daha demokrat, insanları daha severler falan böyle... Aslında işin gerçeği de, sömürünün Alevi'si, Türk'ü, Sünni'si, Laz'ı, Ermeni'si, Çerkez'i yok yani. Zaman bunu öğretiyor. Dedim, "Ben sana söylediğim ya abil!" dedim, hani böyle böyle işte falan diye. Dedi, "Seni Fatih Bey çağrıyor.". Fatih Bey de işte o dönemde işte bizden 4 yaş büyük okumuş bir adam. "Sen mesaiye niye kalmadın?"; dedim "Yani ben söylediğim; dün işim vardı onun için gittim". "Ama dün Kodaman usta dedi ki, 'ben onu mesaiye yazdım ama o kalmadı.'". Yani böyle kendi aralarında oyun yapıyorlar, bir birlerine kur yapıyorlar. Dedim, "Öyle değil..." dedim, "Benim işim vardı, ben ona söylediğim gittim. Benim ismimi mesai listesine yazmış, ben de mesai listesine bakmadım.". Dedi o zaman, "Ver şeyi o zaman, çok git" dedi, ben de çıkışım önlüğü yüzüne fırlattım. "Al!" dedim önlüğünü; "Sikerim senin önlüğünü!" [güler]. Dedim yani, "Başlarım senin önlüğünne!", böyle çıktı. Şimdi sigortam yok ya... O dönemde tabi artık yani insan, güzel insanlarla tanışmışım. Az çok hani hakımı hukukumu biliyorum. Askerden gelmişim ki, askerde askerlik olayları zaten tam bir vukuat [güler].

S: Dur, askerlik anılarına girmeyelim çıkamayız...

A: [güler] İşte gittim 15 gün sonra paramı almaya. Bana sadece maaşımı ve mesailerimi vermişler. Ben de sigortalı olduğumu biliyorum, ya bana çünkü öyle dediler. Dedim, "Yani beni işten siz çıkarmadınız mı?"; "Evet biz çıkardık." Dedi. "Peki," dedim, "benim burada ihtar tazminatım yok; ihtar tazminatımı neden vermiyorsunuz?". "Ya işte sen burada sigortalı değilsin ki..."; "Tamam," dedim, "ben sigortalı değilsem ben o zaman Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü'ne gideceğim.", dedim. "Ben diysem, burada 7 ay çalıştım 8 ay çalıştığını beyan edicem, benim sigortamı yatırmamışsınız. Yani ben, hiçbir kuruşumu burada bırakmam!" dedim. "Gerekirse" dedim, "inada binerse ben sigortasız çalıştığım günlerin parasını da isteyeceğim sizlerden.", dedim. Aslında şeye razıym hani, ihtar tazminatını versin de ona razıym. Ondan sonra gitti geldi 12 günlük getirdi işte o dönemdeki yavaşlığın birisi. Kandıracak yani böyle, çocuk şeyi, çocuk gözüyle görüyor seni. Daha toy gözüyle görüyor, bi de toplumun bilinç düzeyi yüksek insanlar hak hukuk nedir bilmiyor, işçi ki dem tazminatı nedir bilmeyi. 12 günlük getirmiş. "Ya bu ne kardeşim?" dedim, "Ben saydım parayı burada 12 günlük var." Dedim. "Üç günlüğü?" dedim, "ben sana ceza kesttim." "Sen" dedim, "kimsin ki bana ceza kesiyorsun ya!". Gerçekten böyle dedim. "Sen kimsin ki bana ceza kesiyorsun!" dedim. "Ya Adil işte sen müdüre böyle böyle yapmışsun."; "Sana ne!" dedim, "Müdür bana hakaret etti, yani dolayısıyla o da burada işçiyse ben de burda işçiyim." Ve dedim, "Verecek kardeşim, paramı verecek!" dedim; "Ben paramı almadan burada şurdan şuraya gitmem.". Ondan sonra şerefsiz çıktı cebinden bana parayı veriyor. Meğerse parayı kendisine ayırmış, üç günlüğümü kendisine ayırmış ahlaksız. Ben istemesem o parayı muhasebeye verecekmiş gibi gösterecek iç edecek; yani böyle ahlaksız insanlar var yani. İşçi yani, bu da işçi. Belki benden 50 lira yukarı veya 50 lira aşağı çalışıyordu idarı kadroda temiz yerde çalıştığı için; bu da kabullenmiştir. O salak kendisini bi şey zannediyio, yani işçi işçiye bunu yapıyor yani. Yani senin parana gözünü dikiyor. Aslında seninle eee... Sana omuz verip mücadele edip haklarını, ikramiyesini, sendikasını sokmak varken o iş yerine... Ve burası da kot pantolondu, eee, o dönemde işçiler seyde yıkıyor, hani şimdi selülozik kanser [silikozis demek istiyor] oluyorlar ya... O dönemde o iş yerinde taşlama yıkama da vardı, o işlem de yapılyordu bir ara. Hatta ben de tamirhanede çalıştım, dikiminde falan. Gerçi ona uzaktım ama hani ne pis koşullarda çalışıldığını falan biliyordum. Yani bu gibi nedenlerden işte en son mesela seyde çalışmışım... (parmak sıklatıyor, anımsayamadı) Handeks<sup>184</sup> diye bir iş yerinde çalıştım, burası da 500 kişilik bir yerdi.

S: Epey büyük...

A: Epey büyük ama, iş yeri çöplük yani. Yani şimdiki bugünkü dikkatim marka var Altınyıldız, Kığılı, İGS, Hatemoğlu, Sevenhill, Kollezyona fason çalışıyor ve kendi imalatı da var. İş yerinde yemek eee... Köpeğin önüne dökse köpek o yemeği yemez. Yemekhaneye bir gir, hani o kitaplar okuruz ya, 1800'lerde böyle masalar katranlaşmıştır, yağ bağlamıştır. Böyle elini koyarsın da masaya, şeye, elbisen kalır masada yapışır. Yaa gerçekten öyle; böyle bir iş yerine girdim çalıştım 2003'te. İşsiz kaldığım bir dönem sonra tekrar girdim 2005'te falan. Girdim çalışmaya başladım, en erken sigorta yaptığı insanlardan birisi benim yani. Altı ay içerisinde sigortamı yaptı Allah razı olsun! Aaha aaa [güler] Altı ay içerisinde sigortamı yaptı, işte burda çalışmaya başladım. Şimdi dediğim gibi ama, işte hiç yemekhaneye çıkip yemek yediğim gün sayısı çok nadir, azdır yani. Yemekler yenmiyor ama

<sup>184</sup> Handeks Tekstil: <http://www.handeks.com/profil.htm>

yemek zili çalışıyor ya, o yemekhaneye yani gören de diyecek her gün yani bu gün bizim tabirimizle bizim için düşük bütçeli insanların en güzel yemeği İskender... Ama ne yemekse, bir döneri kesiyorlar, üzerini dolduruyorlar; İskender, güzel yemek! Yani bizim için çok güzel yemek geliyor, bütçemiz düşük ya. O insanlar var ya merdivenleri yıkacaklar yemeğe koşarken. Var ya sanki her gün İskender yiyorlar. Yau yemeği yemin ediyorum aaa... Affedersin ama köpeğin önüne dökşen köpek o yemeği yemez yani; bunu kabulleniyor yani, bu koşulları kabulleniyon insanlar. Neden biliyor musunuz? İşte parasını gününde veriyor, sigortadan yoksun ama bak sigorta yok, çalışma saatleri uzun, mesai olduğu zaman her pazartesi gününden sabah sekiz buçuk akşam 10 Cuma gününe kadara böyle. Bir gün eve bile gidemezsın! -“Mesaide işim var!” -“Abla evimde hastam var.” -“Bana ne yavrum, gidemezsın ya, işimiz var, Cemal Bey kızıyor!”. Cemal Bey de, Cemal Ş., şimdi trilyon ve milyar dolarlık yani... Altınyıldız'la, Boyner'le boy ölçüşen bir adam. Boyner'le iş yapıyorsa bir merhabalığı varsa bu adamin.. Boyner yani sıradan bir insana selam vermez herhalde, Cem Boyner gibi büyük bir adam öyle değil mi? İşte bu işyerinde de böyle çalışmaya başladım, 11 aylık falan oldum. Bayağı çalıştım yani bu iş yerinde de, 11 ay benim için çok büyük bir rekor. Yani benim gibi biri için çok büyük bir rekor yani. 11 ay çalıştım, gene 2006'nın, eee, 2006'nın mı ,2007'nin mi 30, şey 29 Nisan'ında falan böyle bir arkadaşımda gece beraber uyuduk amcamın oglunda arkadaşlarla falan. Yastık değiştirdim, boynum tutulmuş. İş yerine gittim böyle boynum, yamuk boynumla çalışıyorum falan. Gittim, sigortam da yeni yapılmıştı işte o zaman 4 aylık falan sigortam vardı, dedim “Abla,” dedim böyle böyle... Hani “Boynum tutulmuş.” dedim, “Başka bir arkadaş...” dedim, yani “Ya izin ver!” dedim, “Bi sağlık ocağına falan gideyim, ya bir merhem versinler, ya bir iğne vursunlar.” Dedim. Yani böyle ne kendime faydam var ne de iş yerine faydam var. -“Yok olmaz!” İşte ondan ertesi gün de 1 Mayıs...

S: Hımmmm....

A: 2007'de falan 1 Mayıs... Meğerse bir takım arkadaş işte, siyasi partinin şeyleri arkadaşlar işte, şey dağıtmışlar... 1 Mayıs'a çağrı yapmışlar. Bu da ben görmeden bunların eline geçmiş yani. Benim ideolojik düşüncelerimden kaynaklı, beni bırakmıyorlar işte yani. “Yarın 1 Mayıs ya, gider rapor falan alır 1 Mayıs'a da gider...”. Aslında öyle bir derdim de yok yani. Yemin ediyorum, hani ben şeye gitsem, o gün gidip hastaneye gitsem ertesi gün 1 Mayıs'a gitmiyecem ki! Hayatımda ilk defa öyle bir şey yapıcam yani, çünkü o bana öyle iyilik yaparsa... Ya ben oluyorum, o oluyor bana izin vermiyo; ben de inat ettim yani direttim. Yani “Ben” dedim, “rahatsızım” dedim, “doktora çıkışcam”. “Ben” dedim “öyle rahatsızız çalışamam.”. Bu baktı ki hani benle baş edemiyor, çünkü bi kaç defa daha tartıştık. Hani ben işimi beğendiği için beni işten çıkarmıyor ama sevmiyor da yani. Eeee... Patronun yanına gitti, üç dört dakka sonra benim yanına geldi, dedi “Adil yavrum” dedi, “sen şeyyy, Cemal Bey'in yanına git; Cemal Bey seni görecek,” dedi “izin verecek.”. Patronun yanına gittim, böyle karşısına gittim böyle, gülüyo çakal, böyle yüzüme bakiyo gülüyo. “Söyle” dedi, dedim “böyle böyle Cemal bey ben” dedim “yani boynum ağrıyo rahatsızızım” dedim. “İzin alıp bi sağlık ocağına, klinigine falan gideyim” dedim. “Ne” dedim, “size faydam var ne de kendime faydam var.”. Güldü böyle çakal, dedi “Seni işten çıkarmak istiyorum.” dedi. Allah Allah... “Siz bilirsiniz de” dedim, “yani verirsiniz hakkımı çıkarırsınız.”. Hani ben de “Niye çıkartıyorsunuz?” falan dedim yani, “Gerekçeniz ne?”. “Ben” dedi, “senle çalışmak istemiyorum.” dedi. “Tamam” dedim; “yani çıkarmak isteyebilirsın” dedim, “hakkımı verirsin çıkarırsın.”. “Senin” dedi “ne hakkın var?” dedi, “Gel gidelim bakalım muhasebeye.”. Muhasebeye gittik işte işçilerin arasından gittik, muhasebeci de tabii bildiğimiz sansar çakal muhasebeci, muhasebeci bana diyor ki... “Ben” dedi, “ben bu arkadaşla çalışmak istemiyorum.” dedi “bunun hesabını kes.”. Muhasebeye gittim, muhasebe dedi ki, “Sen” dedi, “bizde” dedi, “resmi olarak 4 aylık bir elemansın, senin dört aylık maaşını...” dört ay dört aylığa bi... eee... ihtar tazminatı o da herhalde ihtar tazminatı da verilmiyor da onlar da başından def etmek için verdiler çünkü ama veriliyor pardon, ihtar tazminatı...

S: Kıdem tazminatı verilmiyor.

A: Kıdem tazminatı 6 ay.

S: Bir seneyi doldurmayınca verilmiyor.

A: 6 ay doldurmayınca .

S: Altı ay...

A: Kudem tazminatı da var evet. İşte “İhtar tazminatın var!”, ben de dedim ki, “Ben” dedim, “11 ay 15 gündür buradayım.”. Tam daha 11 ay 15 gün olmuştu. “11 ay 15 gündür buradayım, benim bir yıllık kudem tazminatım, izin paramı, maaşımı, mesailerimi hepsini verirsiniz, ben de size imzayı atarım çeker giderim.”. “Yok” dedi; “Bak” dedim, “giderim” dedim, “yani ben bu parayı” dedim, “sizden kat kat fazlasıyla alırım yani. Bu benim anayasal hakkımdır.”. İşte “Git” dedi, “kime isterSEN ona şikayet et!”. Öyle mi? Öyle! Ben ordan çıktım hemen direkt Bakırköy’de Sosyal Sigortalar Müdürlüğü var; Sosyal Sigortalar Müdürlüğü’ne gittim. Müdürin yanına çıktım, dedim böyle böyle. “Ben bir iş yerinde çalışıyorum, rahatsızım, bana izin vermedi boynum ağrıdığı için, vizite kağıdı da vermiyor hastaneye çıkışım diye, beni iŞten çıkardı.”. Müdür telefon açtı iki dakkada o yavşak, bana artislik yapan patron on saniye sürmedi faksla hemen vizite kağıdını oraya gönderdi. Ordan gittim Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü’ne dilekçe yazdım, “Şu şu tarihten beri şu iş yerinde çalışıyorum, şu şu gerekçelerden dolayı beni iŞten çıkardı, 8 ayım sigortasızdır.” diye. Şey yaptım, dosya numarasını aldım, koydum cebime geldim. Ondan sonra bunlar benim böyle yaptığımı öğrenince şey yapıyorlar, ertesi gün iş yerine beni çağrıyorlar. “Ya işte gel seninle anlaşalım, iyi anlaşalım.” bana diyorlar. “Geç istedığın bölümde çalış, gene aynı bölümde çalış.”; “Tamam çalışayım!”. Yani gerekçe, “Sen de dilekçenden vazgeç!”. Sadece zannediyorlar ki ben SSK’ya şikayet ettim, yani Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü’ne şikayet ettiğimi bilmiyorlar. “Tamam” dedim; ben kabul ettim ertesi gün herhal muhitemelen Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü’nden bunlara telefon falan geliyor çünkü aralarında o kadara örgütlü çalışıyorlar ki... Yani normalde Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü’ne ben şikayet ettiysem, Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü’nün anı bir baskınla, hani 300-400 kişinin de sigortasız olduğunu da yazdım Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü’ne bu işyerinin... Nasıl öğreniyorsa beni “Ben” dedim, “sizi Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü’ne de şikayet ettim.” dedim. -“Yani bak benim haklarımı vermezseniz...” -“O zaman,” dedi, “seni işe almıyoruz.”. Bana önce diyo “Gel istedığın yerde seni işe alıcaz.”; ondan sonra konuşunca, benle konuşurken patronun oğlu Emre Ş. eee... Bi şey yazıyorsan bunların isimlerini yazın, teşhir olsun bu namussuzlar.

S: Öyle diyorsan...

A: Haaa... Emre Ş., o zaman yani benim yaşıtmadı bana diyor ki, “Ya bak Adilim cim bak; işte biz de sizinle aynı yemekhanede yemek yiyoruz, işte görüyorsun biz de sizinle çalışıyoruz.” Halbuki yalan; bizim yediğimiz yemeği köpek yemez. Yani bu kadara namussuz adamlar. İşte, eee, “Gel tekrar işe başla; işte bak ben sana güveniyorum, ben de CHP’de şeyim, Bakırköy Gençlik Kolları’nda üyeyim ben de; işte bak biz de solcuyuz.”.

S: Ayar veriyor sana...

A: “Biz de solcuyuz!”, bana ayar veriyor. Hani ben de diyordum ki, “Fark etmez, ben” dedim yani, “gelir çalışırm.” dedim; “Yani aynı yerimde çalışırm.”. Bunlar öğreniyor işte, Sosyal Sigortalar’da şikayet ettiğimi falan, iyice emin de oluyorlar. Beni bu sefer işe almadı, bu sefer beni tehdit ediyor. Yani iş yerinin önünde, yalancı şahitler de yanında bir kaç kişi... İşte bana diyo, “Şikayetini geri alacaksın!”. Ben dedim “Almadım”, “Aaa! Duydunuz bana küfür etti.”. Aynı böyle aptalca şeyler yani. Yanındakiler de kesimhanede çalışan usta ile başka bir adam, herhalde çaycısı. “Sana ana avrat küfür etti!”, böyle anlaştılar aralarında. İşte ben gittim bunları dava ettim böyle; mahkeme üç sene üç büyük sene falan sürdürdü. Şeyi kaybettim yani, mahkemeyi kaybettim. Kaybetmemin sebebi de şeyler, namusları şerefleri üzerine yemin ediyorlar. Yalancı şahitlik... Orda o olayı bilmedikleri halde, odada olmadıkları halde, şey yapıyorlar kesimhanenin ustası Mahmut, çece diye bir adam var hani Onur Akın’ın ağbisi. Bizim bildiğimiz Onur Akın’ın abisi orada Dış Pazarlama Müdürü, gelip mahkemedede yalancı şahitlik yapıyorlar. Namuslarının şereflerinin üzerine yemin ederek. İşte yani güya ben onları tehdit etmişim, toplantı halindeyken basmışım, tehdit etmişim onları şey yapmışım... İşte davayı Yargıtay bana veriyor; mahkemedede kaybettim davayı, Yargıtay’da kazandım. O zaman 8 maaşlık kudem tazminatı aldım. Evet 8 maaşımı aldım, kudem tazminatımı, ihtar tazminatımı aldım. Eee... Ondan sonra bi de çıkarken artık o kadara iş yerinden beni çıkardıkları zaman o patron, ben hemen iş yerine gittim bütün makineleri durdurдум. Bütün arkadaşlara bağırdım işte “Durun arkadaşlar!” falan. Böyle dedim, “Böyle böyle arkadaşlar beni iŞten çıkardılar, rahatsız olduğum halde izin istiyorum, bana vizite kağıdı da vermiyor, izin de vermiyorlar. Beni iŞten çıkarıyorlar hiçbir hak vermeden, eğer” dedim, “siz birlikte örgütlü olmazsanız” dedim, “yani durumunuz benden daha kötü olacak; çünkü” dedim, “biliyorum ki hiç biriniz de benim kadara bilinçli değilsiniz işçi hakları konusunda!”. Ondan sonra kadın geldi, müdürler geldi, “Sen ne yapıyorsun!”. İşte sen iştir falan filan ordan hemen koşarak çıktıım gittim. Hani güvenlik falan şey yapar hani, polise falan şey yaparlar

hemen çıktım uzaklaştım. İşte o işyerinde öyle... Kıdem tazminatı, 8 maaş şey aldım, işsizlik parası falan aldım, o iş yerini öyle dava ettim orda öyle kazandım. Ondan sonra başka Hey Tekstil'de çalışmıştım bir de; Hey Tekstil'e girdim. Eee, 2008 in başlarında falan... O zaman bana 550 milyon lira maaş veriyorlar ve benim piyasadaki maaşım 800-900 lira.

S: Hımm... Düşük veriyorlar.

A: Evet çok düşük veriyo. Eee, işte Hey Tekstil'e girmemin amacı da hani artık biraz daha, eee, politik işçi oldum hani, hem ordaki inanlara bir şeyler anlatırım hem de işçileri artık hani sendikaya falan üye ederim, sendikal işçi falan oluruz gibi biraz daha toy ama biraz da şey gibi düşünce yani çok aceleci davra...

S: Hangi sendikaya üyeydin o zaman?

A: Sendikaya üye falan değilim... Kendi kafamdan çalışma yürütecem!

S: Anladım, yani bağlantın yok sendikayla...

A: Bağlantı yok ama hani, girip çıktığım siyasal yapılar oldular... olduğu için, o siyasal yapılar üzerinden sendikayla da direk teması falan görüşebiliyorduk. Sendikacılarla falan görüşebiliyorduk. Eee... Hey Tekstil'e girdim işte; bir-iki ay falan deneme süresinden sonra 550 lirayla çalışıyordu. 550 liraya çalışıyoruz ama nasıl çalışıyoruz biliyor musun? Ayda 70 saat, 80 saat mesai yapıyoruz. Müşterileri geldiği geldiği zaman yalandan bize kağıt imzalattıyorlar yani gönüllü mesaiye kalıyorlar diye halbuki zorla, işte "Mesaiye kalmazsan çek git, çıkışını veriyoruz!". Şimdi öyle bir şey ki... Tamam, ben çıkar giderim ama hani kendim için belirlediğim artık bir şey var; kendime bir yön çizmişim hani onu yapmam gerekiyo. Bazen kalmıyorsun, bazen kalmıyor. Çok itiraz ettiğim için o bölümden, imalattan beni... Sürekli insanlarla da çabuk kaynaşıyorum, çok çabuk samimi oluyorum hani, insanlarla çabuk iletişime geçiyorum. Hani orda 10 yıl, 15 yıl çalışan insanlar var, daha adamın ismini bilmiyor. Anlatabiliyor muyum yani? Hey Tekstil'in kuruluşundan beri orda çalışan insanlar birbirlerine selam vermekten aciz insanlar. Yani o da işçi o da işçi; onun departmanı da aynı onun departmanı da aynı. Eeee? Ben orda 2000 kişi vardı 300-400 kişiyle böyle çok haşır neşir oldum, çok iyi arkadaş oldum. Hani böyle öğlen çıkışıyorum mesela, bazen tavla oynuyoruz, bazen çayırda oturup sohbet ediyoruz, işte ne bileyim bazen hafta sonları işçi derneklerine gidiyoruz, bazen konserlere gidiyoruz falan. Böyle... Çok aktif olmaya başladım, dolayısıyla hani böyle aktif olduğun zaman da hani senin şeyin, rengin ortaya çıkıyor. Hani ne düşündüğün ortaya çıkıyor, yani patronlar için iyi şey düşünmediğin ortaya çıkıyor aslında. İşçiler için gayet güzel şeyler düşünüyorsun ama patronlar için tehlike oluşturduğun ortaya çıkıyor. Dolayısıyla burda da patronun casusları, bizim işçi arkadaşlarımız, patronun casusları devreye giriyor. Eee.... Sana ayak yapıyorlar işte onların da aslında bu gibi şeylerle, işçileri bilinçlendirmek, işçilerin kötü koşullarını düzeltmek için mücadele ettiklerini anlatıyorlar, sen inanıyorsun dolayısıyla. Çünkü inanmaktan başka çaren yok! Evet dikkatli olmak gerek ama inanıyorsun yani bilemezsin ki yani kim ajandır...

S: Güvenmek zorundasın...

A: Evet güvenmek zorundasın; öyle bir şey var yani. Herkes bu ajandır, bu polistir...

S: Şüpheyile yaklaşırsan...

A: Bu muhbirdir dersen hayatı yaşamamazsun yani. Ama yani o onlar öyle oldu diye de ben kimseye güvenmiyecem diye de bi şey yok yani. Ben insanlara hala güveniyorum. Bi toplantı oldu gene orda da, işte tam bu 2008'deki kriz patlamıştı. 11'inci ayın 15'i falan 2008'in. İşte bana dediler ki; eee... O zaman beni tamirhaneye verdiler insanlardan uzaklaştırdılar böyle. Yalnızca iki üç kişinin çalıştığı bir yere verdiler; 500-600 kişininin, 1000 kişinin çalıştığı yerden o kadara yere verdiler. Çünkü insanlarla da böyle bi de haşır neşrim ki, her geçen bana camdan el sallıyor, meraba şey yapıyor, tokalaşıyorlar, yanına geliyolar, ziyaret ediyolar falan. Dedi "Pazar günü çalışıcaz.", işte fabrikanın müdürü; "Pazar günü çalışacağız arkadaşlar, işte kriz başlamıştır. Dünya başında kriz vardır, bu krizi zararsız bir şekilde atlatabilmemiz için buradan işçi çıkarmamamız için bol bol mesaiye kalmamız gerekiyo. Siparişlerimizi göndermemiz gerekiyor ki iş alalım.". Zaten böyle yavşakların ağızları iyi laf yapıyor, öyle onun için yönetici oluyorlar, insanları iyi kandırdıkları için. İkna kabiliyetleri çok güçlü olduğu için, insanları çok iyi ikna ediyorlar. Çene ile sadece ama... Hani böyle iyilikle falan değil. Ben de orda dedim ki, bizden daha önce Reebok varmış orda, Reebok şeylerini denetliyormuş; hani yaptığı işleri falan denetliyormuş hani iyi koşullarda çalıştırılmasını falan istiyormuş güya insanların. O

zaman 100 lira da mesaiye kalmadığı için insanlara şey veriyorlarım prim. Hani geçinmekte zorlanan insanlar için destek amaçlı. Rebook çalışırken öyleymiş. Ben de işte orda daha önce arkadaşlar falan çalışıkları için, hani onların bildığını biliyorum, girerken oranın koşullarını falan da biliyordum. Ben de dedim ki, "Sinan Bey ben" dedim, "Pazar günü çalışıcaz tamam, çalışalım yani problem değil." Dedim. "Peki pazar günü çalışmınca" dedim, "hafta içi bizi, yükleme bitince bize istirahat verecek misiniz hafta içi bir gün? Pazar günü çalışıyoruz ya...". "Hayır" dedi. Dedim, "Peki Reebok buradayken böyle yapıyormuşsunuz?" dedim, "Yok," dedi, "öyle bi şey". "Peki mesaimiz kaçta kaç?" dedim; dedi "% 50.". "Neden," dedim, "kanunlara göre Pazar günü dedim % 100". Meğerse %50 imiş gerçekten şeide eee... Artık bilmiyorum kaçtı 2008' in. 2007 Ocak'ta mı ne öyle bir karar olmuş Pazar günleri de % 50 imiş. artık ben de bilmiyorum. Bunun da herhalde konuşurken artık bu simirleri bozuldu, bana göstermemeye çalıştı. O da artık kendisini ifade edemedi. Dedi "Yok böyle bişi." işte falan dedi. "Ama" dedim, "yani kanunlarda" dedim, "Pazar günü %100 mesaidir" dedim. Ben de öyle biliyorum ya... "Yok" dedi falan, işte böyle biraz şey yapınca ben de dedim hani "O zaman" dedim hani, "ben Pazar günü gelip çalışmam. Benim Pazar günüm en özel günüm yani. Ben gelip % 50 mesaiyle niye gelip çalışıyım? Haftaçi izin de vermiyorsun." falan. Dedi, "Tamam sen gelmezsen gelme!". Hani çıkarırım falan demedim, tehdit edemiyor insanların önünde. "Sen gelmezsen gelme ama diğer arkadaşlar falan gelecek" falan gibilerden... Kimse de zaten sesini çıkarmıyor. Dedi "ama bu konuyu" dedi, "senle başka bir platformda tartışırız. Hani bu iş haklarıyla falan ilgili başka bir platformda tartışırız." dedi. "Tamam." Dedim. Orda işçi sözcüsü var yani, işçi sözcüsü ama aslında oranın en eski elemanlarından birisi. İşte orada kariyer sahibi olmak için, işte belki idari kadroya geçerim, koşullarım daha iyi düzgün olur falan diye, bizden de 150-200 lira fazla alıyorlar ya... Sesini çıkarmıyor. Aslında işçi sözcüsü hani, onun müdafahale etmesi lazım. "Ya kardeşim bu insanları böyle çalıştırıyorsun, ben bu işçilerin sözcüsüüm; işçiler beni sözcü olarak seçmiştir. İşçilerim Pazar günü çalıştığı zaman %100 mesayı alacaklar, ya da hafta içi bir gün dinlenecekler Pazar günün yerine." demesi gereklidir, müdür ne derse o da koyun gibi başını sallıyor, işçi sözcüsü ya... Bana dedi işte iki üç gün sonra, "Selami; bu arkadaşı getir görüşelim!". İki üç gün sonra beni çağrırlar muhasebeye, [güler] sepet...

S: [güler]

A: - "İşten çık, çıkarılıyorsun!" - "Gerekçe ne?" "Ben," dedim, "işten çıkmak istemiyorum, ben işimden memnunum.". Yani artık hani öncekiler gibi bırakıp çıkmıyorum; hani kalıp artık mücadele etmek istiyorum. Yahut dedim "Ben işimden memnunum, ben çıkmak istemiyorum!". Yok işte, "Çıkışın verildi yani yapabileceğimiz bi şey yok!" falan filan. "Ben" dedim, "o zaman" dedim, "haklarını verirsiniz şeye göre, yasal prosedüre göre, ben öyle çıkarım.". "Yok kardeşim işte! Senin yasal hakkın ne ki? Sen burada dört aydır çalışıyorsun." falan filan. "Ben" dedim, "ihtar tazminatımı verirsin, bi de ihtar tazminatımı da net aldığım parayı, net maaş üzerinden hesaplarsın.". Hani kanunları falan, işçi haklarını falan iyi bildiğim için az çok hani kendime yetecek kadar dedim ki hani, "Ben 550 lira maaş alıyorsam, 550 liranın üstüne %40'ı koyarsın. Bu da benim sigorta primimdir, maaşımı 850 liradan hesaplarsın verirsin bana. İhtar tazminatımı da böyle verirsin bana, ben öyle çıkarım.". "Yok, sen çok biliyorsun! Bu iş öyle olmaz." falan filan... Ben dedim, "Bu iş böyle olur." dedim. "Sen" dedim, "muhasebecisin. Sen çok daha iyi biliyorsun ama..." dedim. "Hani neye hizmet ettiğini ben senin iyi biliyorum." dedim. Böyle verirsin, yok işte verirsin vermezsin; neyse bunlar bana parayı vermediler. Ben gittim dava açtım, Hey Tekstil'e de kötü niyet tazminat davası... Ama bu iş yerinde kıdem tazminatı davası açamıyorum 6 ayı doldurmadığım için. İşe iade davasını açamıyorum, en az 6 ay çalışmanın gereklidir işe iade davası açabilmen için. Kötü niyet tazminat davasını açmamın sebebi de hani benden sonra çalışacak arkadaşlarım da bi örnek dava oluşturursun diye açtım ben bu davayı. Bu insanlara bari böyle davranışmasın diye; bu davayı açtım, bu davayı da kazandım. Eee... İşte ondan sonra bana telefon açtılar, gel hani paranı verelim sen bu davadan vazgeç. Hatta beni davayı mahkemeye verdigim zaman Heçelen [H&M]<sup>185</sup> diye bir müşteri var; çok yüklü adetleri var Türkiye'de. Şey, çok yaygın işte, onları aradım. "Müşterilerin hani beni böyle haksız yere işten çıkardılar, siz böyle yerlere neden iş veriyorsunuz, ürünlerinizi neden diktiriyorsunuz?" diye... Heçelen'in danışmanı beni telefonla aradı, işte "Gel bi görüşelim, niye sana böyle falan yaptılar.". Öyle deyince, 6 aylık olmadığımı şey yapınca bu da çark etti yani, "Artık biz buna bir şey yapamayız.". Çünkü o da kanunları benden iyi biliyor yani. İşte şeide çalışmış, bu yoksul Afrika

<sup>185</sup> H&M: <http://www.hm.com/>

ülkelerinde falan danışmanlık yapmış, işçi kanunlarını çok iyi biliyo. Altı ay olmadığını duyunca ya... “Biz artık buna bi şey yapamayız artık, istersen gel forum doldur, tekrar seni yeni bir işçi gibi işe alalım.”; “Hayır ben” dedim, “yeni bir işçi gibi değil, ben” dedim, “orada dört aylık çalışıyordum. Dört aylık üzerinden eski bir işçi olarak çalışacam. Ben gelip davamdan vaz geçip, şeyi çıkardıktan sonra, işten çıktıktan sonra nerden bileyim yeni işe girince deneme süresinde beni çıkarımıyacağınızı?”. “O zaman siz bilirsiniz.” dedi; o da öyle çark etti. İşte öyle yani... Hey Tekstil’le olan davamda Çalışma Bölge Müdürlüğü’ne dilekçe yazdım, bana cevap 2 sene sonra geldi. İki sene sonra bana cevabı geliyor yani, ben ondan sonra başka bir iş yerine girdim, eee, Karahan Tekstil<sup>186</sup> diye. Karahan Tekstil’de de işte dört ay falan çalıştım. Karahan Tekstil’de de koşullar, yani, diğer iş yeri gibiydi. Krizde girdiğim için maaşlar gene çok düşüktü. Mecburiyetten girdim çalıştım; cebimizde para yok pul yok...

S: Şimdi Adil usta; bütün şimdi iş yerlerinden çıkma maceralarını anlatma. Ehee... Bitiremeyiz yoksa çünkü. Ben sana şey sorayım; senin için işçi kimdir, işveren kimdir; işçinin rolü nedir, işverenin rolü nedir ? Bunları tanımlayabilir misin?

A: Simdii... Eee... Benim için işçi, eee, her şeyden önce insan olmayı becerememiş, namusuyla, şerefiyle, ahlaklıyla gidip işini yapan... Ama işini layıkıyla yapan hani, gününü öldürmek için değil, hani “Ben geliyorum, aman işte bana ne ya işimi yapayım da işte akşam saatim dolsun eve gideyim” diye bi işçi kimliği yok yani. Bu zaten işçilik değil bu aymazlık, hani karşısında durduğumuz sistemin bire bir aynısı [olan] insandır. Hani işini layıkıyla yapan namuslu, şerefli, ahlaklı iyi bir, eee, memleket sevdalısı insan benim için bi işçidir. Eeee... İşveren ise, eee, nasıldır hani... Benim gözümden söyleyeyim; çünkü ben de bir dönem iş verenlik yaptım hani. İster istemez hani o şeyi, yani ne kadara da içimde insani duygular da olsa insanların sömüürü, onların haklarını gasp etmek bana da nasip oldu. Hani ben de gasp ettim ama hani şöyle gasp ettim; hani patron olarak. Çünkü ben küçük bir işverendim, dolayısıyla benim beynim de küçüktü. Diğerleri kadar çakal degildim. Onlar kadara iyi sömüremiyordum; iki ipin ucunu birbirine toplayamıyorum anlatabiliyor muyum? Hani mmm, 20 kişi falan çalıştırıyorum, 3 tane 4 dört tane sigortalı elemanım vardı. Yoktu bile, bunlardan içinden sigortalı biri de bendim. Kendi sigortamızı yaptırıyorum insanların maaşlarını denkleştiremiyorduk. Hani kendi köylü kafamızla patronluk yapıyoruz ya, bunların maaşlarını denkleştiremiyorduk onun için, eee, insanların yemeklerinden kısiyorduk, çalışma saatlerini uzatıyordu. Benim için patron; eee, hiçbir insanı duyguya gözetmeden eee, insanların temel haklarına özgürlüklerine, diline, dinine, irkına saygı göstermeyen; hayatı her şeyi paradan ibaret gören, sermayeden ibaret gören ama, eee, içinde hala insan denen hayvana da barındıran bir insandır.

S: [güler]

A: Patron, işveren, benim için budur yani, şimdi...

S: Yakın gelecekte tekrar bi atölye açmak gibi bir hedefin var mı?

A: Şimdi aslında tekstil sektöründe eee... İşte bu günden itibaren bir iş görüşmesi yaptım bırakmayı düşünüyorum. Çünkü, eee, yani çalıştığım 21 yıl boyunca bana hiçbir katkı getirmedi.

S: Ne, ne sektörde konuştun, yani ne iş yapacaksın?

A: Eeee, bu market, Tansaş hani... Reyonlarında falan bazı ürünleri falan düzelticez.

S: Haa, anladım...

A: Çalışma saatleri de biraz daha kısa. Çünkü 21 yıl tekstilde çalıştım, saçlarımdan döküldü, gözlerim inanılmaz derecede rahatsız oldu.

S: Peki ordaki koşulların daha iyi olacağını düşünüyor musun?

A: Koşullar söyle; çalışma saatleri biraz daha kısa. Eee, en azından insanları böyle tekstildeki gibi bağırma çağrıma hor görme yok. Zaten bana bağırıamıyorlar ama insanın doğasında, yani benim doğamda şu var, bana bağırmasa da olur benim yanındaki insana bağırdığı zaman ben rahatsız oluyorum.

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<sup>186</sup> Karahan Tekstil: <http://www.rukim.com.tr/>

S: Anladım.

A: Çünkü insanı değerler biraz ağır basıyor. Orda öyle yok yani; biraz daha eğitimli, biraz daha medeni işçiler var. Yani aslında proletarya dediğimiz işçiler aslında onlar yani. Çünkü tekstildeki çalışan insanlar yarı feodal, yarı prolet. Çünkü ihtiyaçları olduğu zaman gidip köyden yağını, peynirini, sütünü, pekmezini getirir; ihtiyaçları olmadığı zaman gider fabrikada çalışır; veyahut da yazın gider köyde çalışır. Yani aslında proletarya dediğimiz bu insanlar; çünkü tamamen, eee, iş gücüne dayalı performanstan elde ettiği ücretle yaşıyorlar, kent işçiSİ...

S: Anladım. Peki, İstanbul' u ne kadar biliyorsun, İstanbul' da nerelere takılıyorsun boş zamanlarında?

A: Şimdi iş...

S: Nerelerde vakit geçiriyorsun?

A: Şimdi İstanbul'da en iyi kahveleri biliyorum [güler]. Yani doğal olarak... Yani yaşadığım semtlerde... İstanbul'un aslında birçok yerini gezdim. Diyebilirim her tarafını gezdim hani, biraz da erkek olduğumdan kaynaklı... Bu tabii bayan işçiler için geçerli değil. Her tarafını gezdim, her tarafını biliyorum ama hani tarihi ve kültürel yerlerini, hani o kapalı mekânları aslında gezemedim. Biraz parasızlıktan, maddi imkânsızlıklardan kaynaklı... Çünkü bu gün en ufak bi en kıytırık bi müzeye bile girecek olsanız, eee, tarihi bi yere girecek olsanız size hemen 10 lira 15 lira para dayatlıyo. Ben zaten cebimde 15-20 lirayla çıkışıyorum İstanbul'u gezmeye. Toplu taşıma araçlarına biniyorum, bazen yemek yemiyorum hani yol param kalmaz diye. Onun için İstanbul'u şey olarak, görsel olarak, her tarafını biliyorum ama kültürel, sanatsal olarak hiçbir faaliyete doğru düzgün katılamıyorum.

S: Anladım... Bi de şey soruyım; devrimcilerle ne zaman tanıştin, nasıl tanıştin; senin bilinç dünyani nasıl değiştirdi [bu tanışma]?

A: Şimdi eee... Devrimcilerle aslında tanışmam, eee, bizim köylü bi abi vardi benim abimin arkadaşı...

S: Hı hı...

A: O o dönem EMEP'liydi, EMEP çok etkindi burda, eee, bugünkü Evrensel. [güler] Çok etkindi burada. İşte onunla ilk 1998 ya da 97'de ilk 1 Mayıs'a gitmiştim, o zaman Abide-i Hürriyet'te oldu 1 Mayıs. O zaman işte Grup Yorum'u dinliyorum, işte Marşlarımız kaseti olmuş inanılmaz derecede etkileniyorum böyle dinlerken tüylerim diken diken oluyo. Hala daha böyle Grup Yorum marşları... Eee... İşte o beni 1 Mayıs'a götürmüştü, ama benim için iyi bir 1 Mayıs geçmedi. Çünkü gene toplumun maalesef yani, 1 Mayıs'ta bile olsa, insanlar, böyle devrimci öncü devrimciler bilincsizler; çünkü neden bilincsiz? Ben daha orda 16-17 yaşında bi ilk defa 1 Mayıs'a gitmiş bi genç olarak, sabahın dokuzundan akşamın üçüne kadara pankart tutturdular. Yani eğer ki sınıfı örgütlemek istiyorsanız, fabrikalardan insanları adamları çekmek istiyorsanız hani bunu daha yeni eee... Bizim yapılar yapmaya başladı hani benim gibi arkadaşları eleştirisinden kaynaklı hani, eee, insanları alanlarda pankarta veya belirli bi yerlere mahkûm etmeyeceksiniz ve insanlar bi yerlere mahkûm olursa o insanlara bikkinklik verir. 1 Mayıslar, 8 Martlar hak ve adalet, özgürlük isteyen mitingler eylemler insanlara kâbus olur. Yani ben böyle düşünüyorum. Devrimcilerle 1997-98'de tanıştım ve bilinç dünyamı aslında tam tersine çevirdiler. Çünkü ben, eee, askere kadara normalde oruç tutardım; askerde bile oruç tuttum yani askerdeki zor koşullara oranla. Bazen namazlara gidiyordum, çok dindar değildim ama gene de namaz kılıyordum, oruç tutuyordum. Ondan sora işte devrimcilerle tanıştıktan sonra hani gerçek hayatı dinin, benim açımdan da öyle, hani onların anlattığı gibi olmadığını, din sadece Tanrı ile ve kul arasında olan bi şey, bi bağdır. Eee, nasıl söyleyim... [parmak sıklatır] Hani manevi bi bağdır. Maddiyata hiçbir şekilde dokunmayan... Eee, yani devrimciler benim hayatımın temel taşıdır yani. Ben de, eee, her zaman devrimci işçi olmaya çalışırım; devrimci olmak o kadara zor değil ama o kadara da kolay değil. Bedel ödemesi gereken bir şeydir yani, ben bunun bilincindeyim her zaman. Ama devrimciler bu toplumun namusu, ahlaklı, şerefi, onurudurlar.

S: Anladım...

A: Yani her zaman şey yaparım bunu yani...

S: Seçimlerde ne yapacaksın?

A: Seçimlerde, eee... Bağımsız adaya oy vericem. Belki...

S: Levent Tüzel'e?

A: Evet Levent Tüzel'e oy vericem. Belki tamam parlamento kurtuluş değil ama, orda ezilen bir halk var ve ezilen halkın görünülmemezlikten gelinmesine hani göz yummak insancıl bir şey değildir yani.

S: Anladım. Peki geleceğe dair hayalin, inancın var mı, varsa ne?

A: Valla...

S: Daha sonrası için...

A: Geleceğe dairaslında... Hani hayatımın en güzel çağı gelmiş geçmiş, en güzel yıllarım hani çalışarak geçmiş veya hut da serserilik boş gezerek geçmiş. Hani boş gezerlik demeyeyim aslında, birçok insana göre kendimi geliştirdiğime inanıyorum, birçok insanın da ileride olduğumu düşünüyorum, bilinç olarak da, ahlak olarak da, ne biliyim ekono... Kendi ekonomomimi de diğer insanlara göre kurtardım hani. Eeee, her işi yapabilirim; hiçbir iş yani eee... Affedersin gidip bok da taşırım ekmek paramı kazanmak için hani görev onu gerektiriyorsa bundan da utanmam. Ama geleceğe dair yani çok büyük endişelerim var, çünkü mesela evlenmekten korkuyorum ben. Çünkü, eee, bugün yeni başlayacağım sektör [market işçiliği], sektörde 630 lira fiks maaş veriyorum. 630 lira bu gün ben bir eve çıkacak olsam, yaşadığım semt ki Türkiye'nin en yoksul semtlerinden birisi diyebiliriz; işçi mahallesi, 450 lira. Eee, benimle evlenecek kızın vay haline yani... Onun için şu an geleceğe dair bi planım yok. Çünkü, eee, hiç bi iş güvencen yok, sosyal yaştan yok... Dolayısıyla geleceğe dair sadece umudum işçilerin bilinçlenip, bu, gerçekten bu düzeni yıkıp da yeni bir barışın, kardeşin, insanlığın, insanlığın özellikle egemen olduğu bir toplum yaratmaları için bi umut taşıyorum. Eğer bu da olmazsa zaten hani insanlığın durumu bu gün, eee, şeyden gördüğümüz gibi... Kütahya'da miydi, şey Bergama'da bugün siyanür...

S: Kütahya...

A: Kütahya Bergama'da işte insanlar zehirli sularla hala. Hala bugün işte siyasi partilere o kadara mitingleri tıka basa doluyo. Yani biz bu toplumla bilmiyorum nereye kadara gidicez, işte zehirli topraklarımız zehirleniyi, içtiğimiz su zehirleniyi, hava zehirleniyi... Eee, bilmiyorum bu insanlar nasıl bilinçlenecek, nasıl örgütlüyecek veya biz kendimizi o insanlara nasıl gidecez. Hani onun mücadele ile geçecek herhalde ama çok umutlu değilim... Çok umutlu değilim açıkçası. Ama halen umutsuz olacak kadara da şe'zapma... yılmadım yani...

S: Umutsuz da yaşanmamıyo ama diyosun?

A: Umutsuz da yaşanmamıyo tabi ki...

S: Anladım.

A: Umutsuzluk umududur düşmanın yani [güler].

S: Teşekkür ederim.

A: Rica ederim; umarım eee... [güler] senin işine yarıyacak bilgi falan...

S: Mutlaka yarar.

A: Almışsındır...

S: Yarar.

A: İnşallah...

## **APPENDIX C: Tez Fotokopisi İzin Formu**

### **ENSTİTÜ**

- |                                |                                       |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü        | <input type="checkbox"/>              |
| Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X |
| Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü | <input type="checkbox"/>              |
| Enformatik Enstitüsü           | <input type="checkbox"/>              |
| Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü      | <input type="checkbox"/>              |

### **YAZARIN**

Soyadı: ÇUBUKÇU

Adı : SONER

Bölümü: SİYASET BİLİMİ VE KAMU YÖNETİMİ

**TEZİN ADI** (İngilizce): “**Making and unmaking of class: An inquiry into the working class experiences of garment workers in Istanbul under flexible and precarious conditions**”

**TEZİN TÜRÜ:** Yüksek Lisans  Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınır.
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullancılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

Yazarın imzası .....

Tarih ...15/10/2012.....