

WORKING CLASS FEMINISM:  
SOLIDARITY AND EXPERIENCE IN A FACTORY STRIKE IN TURKEY

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## **ABSTRACT**

**WORKING CLASS FEMINISM:**

**SOLIDARITY AND EXPERIENCE IN A FACTORY STRIKE IN TURKEY**

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This thesis, which focuses on working-class feminism, claims that the industrial actions of women workers in their workplace are also promising in terms of transforming the sex based division of labor. This, on the one hand, is related to the re-organization of work on the axis of deepening sexual division of labor as the condition of exploitation, and on the other hand, women workers' efforts to make their burdens of reproduction and sexist practices in the workplace a subject of industrial actions. In explaining industrial actions, the thesis gave priority to the solidarity relations among workers arising from the collective character of the labor process and, with respect to the organisation of work based on sexual division of labour, aimed to display the influence and power of the sisterly bonds among women in industrial actions, and their importance in women's empowerment. In line with this aim, semi-structured interviews were held with women workers who participated the two-day protests including a picketing, slowdown strike and occupation at Mata Automative Factory in Tuzla Free-Trade Zone, İstanbul. Based on these interviews, the study claimed that the struggle to be recognized as women workers with respect to the demands for better working conditions for workers stands at the center of the future and transformative character of feminism and class movement.

**Keywords:** Working-class feminism, industrial action, exploitation, solidarity, sisterhood.

## ÖZ

### İŞÇİ SINIFI FEMİNİZMİ: TÜRKİYE’DEKİ BİR FABRİKADA GREV DENEYİMİ VE DAYANIŞMA

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İşçi sınıfı feminizmine odaklanan bu tez kadın işçilerin işyerlerindeki endüstriyel eylemlerinin cinsiyetçi işbölümünü de dönüştürmeyi vaat ettiğini iddia etmektedir. Bu bir yanıyla üretimin yeni organizasyonu doğrultusunda emek süreçlerinin cinsiyetçi ilişkileri sömürünün koşulu olarak kullanması ve derinleştirilmesi ile bir yanıyla da kadın işçilerin yeniden üretim yüklerini ve cinsiyetçi işyeri pratiklerini endüstriyel eylemlerin konusu haline getirmeleri ile ilişkilidir. Tez endüstriyel eylemleri açıklarken emek sürecinin kolektif karakterinden doğan işçiler arası dayanışma ilişkilerine öncelik vermiş; işin cinsiyetçi işbölümü ekseninde örgütlenmesinden yola çıkarak kadınlar arasındaki kız kardeşlik bağlarının endüstriyel eylemlerdeki etkisini, gücünü ve kadınların güçlenmesindeki önemini sergilemeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda İstanbul Tuzla Serbest Ticaret Bölgesinde yer alan Mata Otomotiv Fabrikasında toplam 2 gün süren protesto yürüyüşü, iş yavaşlatma ve işgal eylemlerine katılmış kadın işçilerle yarı-yapılandırılmış bilgi toplama tekniği kullanarak görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Çalışma bu görüşmelerden yararlanarak, işçiler için daha iyi çalışma koşulları talebi ekseninde kadın işçi olarak tanınma mücadelelerinin feminizmin ve sınıf hareketinin geleceği ve dönüştürücü karakterinde merkezi bir yerde durduğunu iddia etmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İşçi sınıfı feminizmi, endüstriyel eylem, sömürü, dayanışma, kız kardeşlik.

*To the living memory of my beloved  
Nadire Bakan.*

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Aim of the Study**

This thesis aims to discuss the meaning and potentials of women worker's industrial actions for feminism and class politics through the experiences of women workers involved in picketing, slowdown strike and factory occupation at Mata Automotive Factory located in İstanbul Free Trade Zone. This thesis will claim that there is a specific feminism in the experiences of women who are struggling in their workplaces, even the struggle usually involves claims about class positions instead of gender. This specificity, which is called "working-class feminism", has its current inferences for feminism, both in its own history and in terms of important political demands such as equality-difference, recognition-redistribution. This thesis will imply that, these inferences are not limited to feminism's agenda; the agendas of women workers, the struggles and the solidarity bonds with each other are guidance in terms of class politics and show that the women worker's wage and rights struggles compromise both transforming the nature of the work in the capitalist workplace and transforming the sex-based division of labor.

#### **1.2 Subject of the Thesis**

The subject of this study is "working-class feminism". Thesis will consider, experiences of women workers involved in picketing, slowdown strike and factory occupation that lasted for 2 days at Mata Automotive Factory as a case of working-class feminism.

Working class feminism, the subject of this study, dates back to industrial revolution and the early periods of the 20th century. While certain studies aim to reveal the activities of feminist women in trade unions, some others focus on women's struggles at the point of re-production just like community organizations and consumer organizations. In both situations, the main orientation of the studies is to identify the capacity of women's position in sex-based division of labor in terms of mobilizing labor struggle and the specificity of the presence of women in labor struggles in terms of social transformation. Although working class feminism goes back to the beginning of the 20th century, studies that entreat the pasts of working class feminists became common with 1990s. Hence, the attention to this deeply rooted tradition has revived very recently.

It can be said that several reasons played a role in the revival of this interest. First, proletarianization wave has played a part in revival. This new proletarianization wave, particularly in Southern countries, has narrowed collective living spaces, while deepening commodification level in re-production activities. Many women have found working opportunities in factories and ateliers as cheap labor suppliers and they have become visible again in struggles in production and reproduction areas. Women were in the front line in the struggles against wiping off the pasture areas in Mexico, against dam construction and privatization of water in India and in Filipinas (Shiva, 1989; 1991; Federici, 2010). In Turkey, similar to other Southern countries, women took place in struggles against hydroelectric power plants, against privatization in Tekel and Sümerbank. Broadly, one of the consequences of deepening commodification and exploitation across the world is women became visible subjects of struggles in production and re-production fields. In addition to that, as a result of devaluation of the labor along with and in relation to the growing conservatism, "the existential conditions and stages of struggle of labor are growingly feminized" (Özüğurlu, 2013). For instance in the unsecured and nonunion workplaces, employers may decide pregnancy time of women workers themselves (for example, Novamed) or women workers may be subject to the sexual harassments of chief workers of employers (for example, Rimaks). Despite all, in Novamed, interventions of the employers over women's reproduction or interventions to

women's control over their own bodies encountered resistance by women. Similarly in Rimaks Factory,<sup>1</sup> Nuray Bayraktar who was harassed by the chief worker did struggle against the harasser and women workers organized a slowdown strike in the same factory against the harassment cases. Despite deepening exploitation relations and rising conservatism, women workers took place in collective struggles. In some cases, as in Rimaks factory, not only taking places in struggle, women could manage to raise the issues like harassment in the workplace. All these developments revived feminist attention on women's history of struggle.

Secondly, it is emphasized that with the 1990s, feminism is mainstreamed by losing its critical character and harmonized with the neoliberal agenda. The attention towards working class feminism partly aims to remember and recall feminisms' emancipatory character. It can be said that, especially studies that position workingwoman as its subject in the United States of America and Canada throughout 20<sup>th</sup> century, are driven by such an attention.<sup>2</sup>

In the studies entreated the struggles of militant women in Latin American countries, working class feminism or popular feminism approaches collective struggles of women outside the institutions like trade unions (See Domitilia Barrios de Chungara and Moema Viezzer, 1978; Mary Garcia Castro, 1999). Since 1990s in the USA and Canada, working class feminism has been used to define women who are involved in trade union movements (See Dennis A. Deslippe, 2000; Dorothy Sue Cobble, 2004; 2010c; Meg Luxton, 2001; Ruth Milkman, 1985).

Studies originating from USA and Canada started to rise from 1990s flowered debates on whether women taking place in trade union struggles might be considered as a component of the women movement and what possibilities that women workers' struggles carry in terms of feminist politics and theory. These debates took the form of a content that would carry women's struggles beyond the common appraisal of the

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<sup>1</sup> A factory in Tuzla Organized Industrial Zone, İstanbul.

<sup>2</sup>For example, Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas, (1989); Meg Luxton, (2001); Eileen Borris and Annelise Orleck, (2001); Dorothy Sue Cobble, (2014) are among those studies that recall for feminisms' emancipatory potential.

feminist history. This debate on the one hand, is related to how the feminist past would be evaluated in terms of the continuities and the conflicts within the feminist struggle, on the other hand is related to how the future feminism will be built due to its emphasis on a need for an anti-systemic feminist politics. Yet, it may be said that one contribution of feminist historians who study on working class feminism to feminist politics and theory is related to the rethinking of the feminist past.

Through rising questions implicitly such as: Who are the subjects of feminist history and women's movement? Can a movement that does not call itself feminist be characterized as a woman movement? What are the main fields of struggle or claims within this field? From the other way round, where do the claims that are not directly raised in woman's movement but being defended by women in social struggles can be situated in feminism?<sup>3</sup> These studies thus called for questioning feminist claims and subject.

The foundation of feminism both as a movement and a theory is women's claim of being recognized as a distinct collectivity other than men in addition to the claim of equality, achieving their personal autonomies, that is to say their right to speak over their own lives. However, working class feminists defend the idea of personal autonomy and equality both on behalf of the category of woman and of the class that they belong. As it will be discussed later, this debate has re-interrogated the subject of feminism and feminism's claims of equality, difference and freedom.

As afore mentioned, reawakening of the issues that have accompanied to feminism from its start went hand in hand with the new wave of proletarianisation, especially in the Southern parts of the world. Women's entering to wage work in the new proletarianisation wave has been compared with the wave took place in early periods of industrialization in developed countries which contributed to the rise of women's movement. Hester Eisenstein (2005), for example, pointed out that, in America, women's work experience in the 19<sup>th</sup> century "developed both a worker and a

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<sup>3</sup> A similar question has been posed by Emel Akal (2003) in her book "Kızıl Feministler" (Red Feminists) on the works and activities of the members of "İlerici Kadınlar Derneği" (Progressive Women's Association). This study is one of the first interventions to the writings on feminisms history in Turkey.

feminist consciousness"while emphasizing that the expectation of such a pattern in the export-led economies will be far from reality. However, there are also studies demonstrating counter exampleempirically. This thesis looks at the relationship between work experience and the women workers' capacities to struggle on the axis of the experiences of workers in the Mata Automotive Factory. Thesis will claim that, women workers stand to raise feminist demands as an indispensable part of the class struggle against increasing sexist inclination in the new forms of organization of work and at the control of the labor process.

### **1.3 Research Question**

This thesis aims to underline the contributions of women's industrial disputes at the workplaces to feminism and class struggle, even if their demand were seen as based on pure class position. In order to make such approach operational, thesis will question specificity of being women worker. How being women operates within labour process; how being women affects turning labour power into labour; how women workers identify their interests and whom they confront with? And how the sisterly bonds between women affect operate within the workplace and the industrial dispute are the questions that wil be posed. Focusing on sisterly bonds – which has already been ruled out by the self-critical practices of feminist theory – between women paves the way for elaborating politics of workplace, class culture and struggle on the axis of gendered relations.

### **1.4 Method**

This thesis rests on feminist historical materialism. The feminist historical materialist view focuses on gendered and racialised class relations and focuses on women's experiences and standpoints. Feildwork has used qualitative research technique and conducted in-depth interviews with 16 women workers who participated at picketing, slowdown strike and factory occupation at Mata Automotive Factory. Before entering into the field, I interviewed with 2 women in Esenyalı Women's Solidarity

Association (Esenyalı Kadın Dayanışma Derneği), located in Pendik, Aydınlı. These two women were the ones who knows the living and working conditions in the region and the problems women had. The assumption behind making interviews with women who involved in industrial action is that, while women workers raise objections to the working conditions and power relations at the shopfloor, industrial action also manifests challenge to the socially accepted and naturalised hierarchies along the lines of femininity.

The parameters such as the beginning and consequences of an industrial act – specific conditions in terms of success and failure; specific conditions of trade union politics; specific conditions of political climate are decisive, but all in all, the industrial dispute itself as a social relation is significant. In Anna Pollert's words (1981: 205) on strike as a particular form of an industrial action: “[A] strike can be a double-edged experience. It has the potential of victory or defeat: of being a profound learning experience or one of profound confusion – of encouragement or bitter demoralization. This is why it is more important to interpret the process of a strike than to look merely at its end-product.” Besides, a strike is particularly noteworthy as it concretizes the sense of being “us”; and also it conveys the experiences of female and male workers beyond what is ordinary or daily repetition. From the perspective of women workers, breaking repetition is an extraordinary moment. This dissertation claims that although it can be absorbed by the system, extraordinariness is anti-systemic considering its tendencies, it gives the power to change and the sense of being “us.” In this respect, though interviews has been conducted with women individually, thesis will analyse women's histories collectively, underlying the collective identity of being women worker, of the feeling of being “us”. Thus, 16 women's stories are formulated as a collective story of women workers in Mata Automotive Factory. Women's anger towards their mothers, supervisors and sexist co-workers has been at the center space in analysing the story told by the interviewees.



## **1.5 Plan of the Study**

Working class feminism, as a version of feminism, has important implications for evaluating feminism's history and its major political demands such as equality-difference, recognition-redistribution. To illustrate these inferences, the thesis will first demonstrate empirical works in the field of working-class feminism. The workings of working-class feminism have come to the fore as part of a critique of feminist historiography. This chapter, will elaborate how studies on working class feminism elaborated social policy as part of a feminist historiography and through the debates on family wage and protectionism it will be posed that the women worker's wage and rights struggles compromise both transforming the nature of the work in the capitalist workplace and transforming the sex-based division of labor concomitantly.

Then, the thesis will examine how working-class feminism changed the way we comprehend the history of women's movement. There is widely held upon consensus on feminism's history, which relies on wave metaphor. Accordingly, feminist history is classified in three periods. From the latter years of 19<sup>th</sup> century to the gaining right to vote in the early years of 20<sup>th</sup> century is labeled as the first wave. Before the formation of autonomous women's movement in Turkey, from 1960s to 1980s is characterised as second wave of feminism, and 1980s onwards is characterized as feminism's third wave. In Turkey, scholars of women's movement have also followed a similar path. Accordingly, the first wave in Turkey dates from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 1923, when the Republic was founded. The second period, from 1923 to 1980 is depicted as a period of stagnation characterized as "state feminism" (Tekeli, 1986: 193), in which nation state assimilated feminist demands. The last period marks the early years of 1980s, when autonomous women's organizations had begun to be established. In the light of the experiences and biographies of women who have struggled against various forms of social inequality in autonomous women organizations and in mixed-sexed organizations, literature on working class feminism emphasize that feminism can not be reduced in to three-wave model. To illustrate, the claims of 1<sup>st</sup> wave of feminism cannot be limited to the claim of right to

vote. Women's such as Sojourner Truth raised demands for equality and freedom concomitantly and opposed the commodification of production and reproduction in line with the new principles of the existing order. Moreover, while questioning the view that evaluate conflicts and disputes among feminism only within generational terms, it reveals the implicit assumption of the waves metaphor that views feminist history as the history of primarily working class women. In turn, studies on working class feminism contribute on feminist history by underlining feminism's plural roots.

The question of whether the struggles of the working class women in the areas of production and reproduction have any feminist context or not seems important for this thesis. For example, when the demands of women's work place based politics are taken into consideration, it is easily observed that they are not always within the scope of classical feminist demands. Their demands are mostly related to working conditions, collective bargaining, and unionization, based upon their class position. Also, some women in these struggles might even be conservative or politically under the influence of right wing politics. All these qualities bring forward whether the perspective of working class feminism is valid for the striking women.<sup>4</sup> The last part of the first chapter is reserved for the answers to this question and will pose that clash of women's practical gender interests with capital accumulation process enable women to politicize their reproductive works and target sex based division of labour which leads to rising strategic gender interests as one of the claims of striking women.

However, the debate about feminism's subject matter and history is also significant in terms of political tensions based on feminist equality-difference, redistribution-recognition paradigms. Third chapter will be devoted to the discussion on equality difference, redistribution-recognition. Chapter will first summarize the debate, and then with an appeal to life history of Sojourner Truth, will pose the dilemma as a

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<sup>4</sup> Myra Marx Ferree (1980) emphasizes that sociological literature is generally sceptical on the relation of women workers to feminism, since the workers and particularly women workers are regarded as conservative and docile.

false-antithesis. This part reveals that, Sojourner Truth represents the innate relation between recognition, redistribution and emancipation in a social formation in which free labour had begun to be defined as the only condition for freedom. Here Sojourner Truth, like working class feminists, shows anti-thesis between recognition and redistribution is a false one by claiming her labour as the foundational principle for her claim to recognition. In addition, in Sojourner Truth's narrative, emancipation not only denotes to the emancipation from the system of slavery. Emancipation from system of slavery has been co-existed with the new cult of womanhood that confines women into the private spheres and makes them responsible for the well-being of the household. That makes women's emancipation from system of domination interwoven with the attempts to limiting commodification of labour power.

Nancy Fraser is among the feminist scholars who reframes the feminist debate on equality and difference with the terms redistribution and recognition and persists on the view that equality and difference – redistribution and recognition – are not the anti-thesis but should be connected if feminism will sustain its radical potential for social change. Last part of the third chapter is devoted to present Nancy Fraser's works on recognition-redistribution and on protectionism-emancipation and marketization.

The fourth chapter of the thesis aims to portrait current conditions of women's labour market participation and reviews varying explanatory frameworks for analyzing women's labour market participation. The chapter will underline that, studies investigating women's labor market participation mostly revolved around explaining exclusion of women from labor markets and will point out that, by focusing the experiences of women workers at the workplaces, labour process studies are providing a tool to analyse "how gender operates within the workplaces," the question which governs the field-study of this thesis.

The following chapter of the thesis is devoted to defining the method of the study. How I decided to the field, how has entered into the factory, the climate of the interviews, the themes of the study and the themes of analysis will be layed down in the fifth chapter of the thesis.

The first part of the field analysis, will portrait Mata Automotive Factory. Working conditions, the rhythm of work and control at the workplace are among the themes underlined. Moreover, the part will point a brief account of industrial action and the period between 2 days long action and the collective agreement.

The main reason of the industrial action in Mata Automotive, which started with the picketing, is the un-kept promise of wage increase promised by the supervisors and managers. Failure in keeping the promise caused un-written agreement between the workers and employer to breakdown, which resulted in a crisis in, naturalized and internalized hierarchies at the workplace. As a result, workers spontaneously organize slow-down strike; unionisation efforts accelerated and 12 workers are fired from the factory. Then, 2 days long industrial actions takes place at the factory. As a result of these actions, United Metalworkers' Union (Birleşik Metal İşçileri Sendikası) gains the right to collective bargaining at work. It takes about 6 months to sign the agreement. Maintaining solidarity among workers gains importance in this period. As far as labor process control is at the center of these disputes, narratives on the control of labor process will be at the foci of this part of the thesis.

While analyzing the interviews conducted through the oral history technique, I adopted the following method: I tried to follow up the moments where women got excited, felt enthusiastic and got angry throughout all the meetings. The stories of female workers highlight mothers, managers/supervisors and sexist colleagues (male workers), as figures they feel anger towards. The anger women feel against their mothers stem from the fact that they have remained silent against the inequalities and suppression in their families during their childhood and adulthood and have not developed any reflex to change the existing oppressive order. The general framework in which they express their anger towards their mother is the distinction women make between housework, fieldwork and factory work. Therefore, in this part of the chapter, I will attempt to emphasize the assessments women make around the housework, fieldwork and factory work. Conceptions of security and insecurity lie in a central position while classifying various works. It must be emphasized that, women workers define security as a feature that restricts the capacity of transforming

the current job conditions and limiting the control at the labor process, rather than a feature related with the 'work' per se. Security also features a dual meaning in terms of work relationships. While on the one hand it refers to the restriction of the employer's control at the labour process, on the other hand, it refers to disciplining and regulating the spontaneous protests workers will stage against various practices in the workplace. The 3<sup>rd</sup> Subheading of this Chapter "New Routine: Factory, Unionisation and Empowerment" focus on this dual meaning of the security.

The main proposal of the following part titled "Meaning of Being A Women Worker" is the necessity that we should be cautious towards the consideration of employers who imagine female workers as docile, "nimble" and responsible. The reflex that women have against the pay inequality, sexual abuse or sexist acts and discourse that do not include sexuality and the meaning they attribute to being responsible and meticulous workers and guide this chapter. Based on the argument of Maurizio Atzeni (2010) that the solidarity that is born out of the collective character of the labor process is a given of the labor process guided the part titled "Cooperative Character of the Labor Process: Solidarity and Sisterhood". In this last part of the chapter, I will try to display the solidary practices in the workplace. Atzeni's take on the solidarity relation is not limited to that. The labor process is solidary by its collective nature, however, there is an attempt to break down the relationship of through various manners and forms; therefore, the solidarity is also kept hidden the same way exploitation is hidden from the workers' experience. In this subheading, I will try to reveal the given forms of solidarity among women workers in the workplace by associating the argument of Atzeni (2010) regarding the collectivity of the labor process with the sisterly solidarity. On top of the attempt to break the solidarity relation in the workplace, there is also an attempt to break the sisterhood relations, which empower the women. This part asserts that, sisterly solidarity among women to be worked for is also part of the working class struggles and women workers publicizes their claims for abolishing sexism as part of their claims towards limiting workers control at the labor process.

## CHAPTER 2

### WORKING CLASS FEMINISM

#### 2.1 Introduction

The studies on working class feminism are continuation of the debates on women labor, which were brought to the agenda by feminist researchers in the 1960s and 1970s. Marxist and socialist feminist researchers observed at the outset that women's domestic labor is not described as work and that only paid work is defined as work. The researchers concentrated afterwards on the analysis of the main characteristics of unpaid domestic labor and wage labor of women and the relationship between these two as the source of the distinctive position of women in social relations. The feminist researchers investigated the nature of the order existing on the axis of women's wage and unpaid work experiences, and inquired about the necessary conditions to change the order, which has generated inequality based on gender. The researches which consider the characteristics of women's labor as at the center of feminist thought and politics analyzed the labor of women, whom have developed a different understanding about the world on the basis of the sexual division of labor, on the axis of building feminist consciousness and the capacity to change the world.

The early studies, which have incorporated the sexual division of labor and activities of reproduction into Marxist class analysis, mostly focused on explicating women's experiences of oppression. The economic marginalization of women, as a result of elimination of subsistence production and domestication of women's (Federici, 2014) has made the women dependent on men. Feminist researchers explicated in their early period the sources and operation of women's subjection to men as well. As Armstrong and Armstrong (1990: 102) indicated, the action of women against

oppression, their struggle to improve the working conditions and their demands aimed at collectivizing activities of reproduction began to come to the fore of feminist research agenda as more women started to become wage worker and as their existence and influence in unions strengthened. In these studies the contradiction between capitalist accumulation and social reproduction is emphasized and such contradiction is situated at the center of the capacity of women for changing the social order (for instance Benston, 1969; Morton 1971; Picchio, 1992). The studies about working class feminism also emphasized this argument and concentrated, in the context of concrete struggles of women, on the distinctive meaning of women workers' standpoint for feminist politics and theory

Studies on working class feminism, which is generally ignored within feminist history, first revealed biographies of women figures who had been in anti-racist struggles and class struggles, and set light to the line of struggle which can be evaluated as working class feminism via these biographical stories. In this way, these studies had such a function to clarify feminism's plural roots and differences within various strands of feminisms. In short, they tended to move towards a hegemonic narrative of feminism, and redefined the differences among various strands of feminism in order to make visible the subjects of struggles.

The way these studies reevaluates different strands of feminism and its history is not similar to the way that are observed in most of the studies that evaluate the history of feminism. The differences among feminisms are either generally identified as "Radical/Socialist/Marxist/Liberal/Queer" via a criterion that is definitely related to politics but specified according to an intellectual position, or as "First Wave, Second Wave Feminism" based on the differences among the generations. Working class feminism, on the other hand, prioritizes the struggle with a criterion in approaching feminist history. For example, there is no possibility for a demand from the Radical/Socialist/Marxist/Liberal/Queer fronts to turn into a demand that is different from the intellectual tradition. Each front represents a different type of feminism with its priorities, demands, and subjects, but it is not possible to point to a transformation of "becoming feminist" since it is accepted that they also represent the original

feminist positions of the front that they belong to. As to the categorization of the First Wave and Second Wave feminisms, all conflicting feminisms become entirely invisible: once the leading figures define themselves as feminist in this categorization, they become the representatives of the generation that they are part of.

However, contrary to the criteria of both categorizations, working class feminism focuses on the process of how women who might not call themselves as feminists become feminist either in their anti-racism or class struggles; that is, on their transformation during their resistance, and it deals with what this means from the perspective of the feminist theory and politics. In this respect, working class feminism is closest to the tradition of black feminism. It is because both feminisms consider women's experiences and gender together with certain experiences of subjugation, and question the value of women's place in various social struggles in terms of gender hierarchies and production of knowledge. However, we can identify such a difference between working class feminism and black feminism.

Black feminism questions the white character of the feminist movement, and centralizes the production of scientific knowledge by black women's experiences. In this way, black feminists highlight the marginal position. The literature on working class feminism, on the other hand, considers women's places at the center of social structures and focuses on their struggles in terms of their position in production and reproduction. In other words, while the positioning of black feminists at the margins of the power relations provides them with the opportunity to become the subjects of scientific knowledge and social transformation, working class feminists have the power to put restriction on the relations of exploitation by undermining the present hierarchies and the social structure that they are part of since they are at the center of exploitative and oppressive relations. Another difference between the two feminisms is that working class feminists also problematize the relations of exploitation in addition to those of subjugation.



In this chapter, I will first present the studies on working class feminists. The debate on social policies, particularly on protectionism is an important issue within the studies on working class feminists. Since the debate on social protectionism has significance for the current debates where the practices of the welfare state have gone under transformation, I limit these studies with the ones that focus on the debates on “social protectionism”. After that, I will point to certain tensions in working class feminism. Due to the fact that, feminist views on social policies has some implication for how to evaluate feminist history and who are the subjects of feminism, in the following part, I will try to present the criticisms on feminist history. At the end of this part, I will try to develop a perspective on the subject of feminism by asking whether women who confront the state, the employer or potentially their families during their struggles – if they may not call themselves as feminists - can be identified as such.

## **2.2 Empirical Studies on Working Class Feminists: On Protectionism**

Especially in Northern countries protectionism took central place in working class based discussions on feminism. The debate denoted to the general question of equality and difference till the first years of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, witch-hunts had a constitutive effect on a European scale in terms of determining the current social position of women. The Satan was put into the service of the new order by targeting the now fallen women who were craftsmen and peasants in the past that were both the representatives of the collective values of the passing order and the rebels of the new order.

In this period, a new sense of morality emerged through methods such as controlling sexuality, purging the control of midwives and women on women’s reproduction, definition of “crime” as the actions against the private property, and domestication of women are the leading manifestations of change in women’s position in social production and reproduction. This new understanding of morality based on middle

class values became evident in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The privatization of women's subsistence facilities with the new "feminine cult" and the exclusion of women from the guilds due to the increasing competitive pressures resulted in economic marginalization of women. This means that in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, women worked longer hours with lower wages in unhealthy places. For this reason, debates on the regulation of women's working conditions are raised in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In these debates, three basic motivations can be stated: Advocating the exclusion of women from various branches of work as a response to the low level of wages due to the increased competitive pressures; supporting the regulation of women's working hours and conditions as a moral issue since women are seen as dependent members of the households and that their work overlaps with independent masculinity; and finally the socialist view of expanding protective regulations to male workers while advocating the regulation of working conditions by taking into account women's reproductive responsibilities. As an example of the third view, Florence Kelly prepared a bill to shorten working hours for women and children in the United States. Rowbotham (2010: 174) summarizes Florence Kelley's position as follows:

In 1893 Kelley was appointed chief factory inspector for the State of Illinois, and drafted a bill to prohibit garment homeworks and restrict the hours of work for women and children. In making her case Kelley argued that women's biological difference from men required protection. Though she had intended to use the law as a means of shortening the hours of labour for men as well as women (...) the problem she did not envisage was that the laws could rebound to reinforce and stiffen existing attitudes.

In feminist thought, debates on the protective factory legislation continue. During the Second World War, many women began to work and in this period women's unionist activities increased. The feminist debate on protective legislation sharpened during the war and the post-war periods. In the 1920s, the politics of the National Women's Party in America dwelt on equal rights and considered trade unions' defense of protective laws as an obstacle to the equality of women. At the same time, state intervention in the freedom of contract "was anathema to the liberal egalitarians, who defended women's unrestricted freedom to have fulfilling careers or do skilled job" (Rowbotham, 2010: 191).

In America, during the World War II, the gates of workplaces once closed to women were now opened. Although many women returned home after war, some of the workingwomen continued to work as paid workers in their new workplaces or in the workplaces that require low qualifications. Although the participation of women in the labor force decreased just after the war in comparison to the wartime era, the proportion of women union members in the total labor force in 1940s and 1950s increased. Moreover, the experience of these women's struggles in their imaginations accumulated during the war years was still outstanding. With the impact of rising civil rights movements, women became militant within the trade union movement in USA in the 1940s. According to Dorothy Sue Cobble (2004), these women in the trade union movement also constituted the dominant feminism of its time.

Family wages and practices that regulate the working conditions of women, such as prohibiting them from working in heavy tasks, were frequently criticized in feminist studies assuming that they reinforce the assumption of the sexual division of labor and that male workers show a trade union reflex to protect their jobs. However, Cobble (2004) emphasizes that protective politics has a dual meaning in terms of labor feminists. This policy, on the one hand, points to the collective oppression experience of women through the critique of the sexual division of labor based on the duality of the private and the public sphere and involves building themselves as a separate group from male workers. On the other hand, the claim of extending the scope of protective legislation by extending it to male workers would also result in preventing misery of labor in general.

The discussion of equality-difference in the case of protective politics remains on the agenda at a practical level as well theoretical level at a time when the welfare state reforms are liquidated. To illustrate, in the Regulation on Severe and Dangerous Work, which entered into force in 2004 in Turkey, one of the rights granted to women workers is the permission of a period of 5 days per month. However, with a change made in 2010, 42 sectors such as confection, knitwear and weaving, mostly composed of women workers, were removed from the scope of heavy and dangerous work. In 2013, the Regulation on Severe and Dangerous Work was itself abolished.

Thus, although not primarily de facto applied, the period leave with a legal status has been abolished; the scope of the heavy and dangerous work was narrowed and many jobs previously closed for women's work has been opened up (Gülenç, 2016). However, according to Gülenç (2016), this attitude, which seems to be "egalitarian" in the sense that certain workplaces are opened to women, does not open male dominated sectors to women in practice, it has resulted in scythinggender-based rights of women stemming from the previous social security regime. Despite this, even if it is abolished as a legal regulation in Turkey, period leave that is confined to private sphere, is one of the demands that womenpublicize. Therefore, today, the debate on protectionism-equality within feminism of the 1940's has an up-to-date content in terms of contemporary feminist politics and theory.

To get back to the discussion of protective politics in feminism again, the debate back to the period following the acquisition of the right to vote in America. The main topic of the discussion was the "Equal Rights Amendment-ERA" which the National Women's Party (NOW) wants to legislate after the fight for votes. While the National Women's Party defended a formal equality before the 1920s and afterwards, "social justice feminists"(Cobble, 2004) carried out an opposing struggle claiming that the gender politics of NWP was based on free market mindset. For example, social justice feminists in the organizations such as National Women's Trade Union League and the National Consumers League, emphasized that the NWP's demands based on the equality of women and men in front of the law could work as a means of removing the laws that regulate working relations of women and that provide protection for women workers. According to social justice feminists:

Secured initially in the early twentieth century, state and municipal laws across the country regulated the working conditions of millions of women in low-paid service, industrial, and agricultural jobs; social justice feminists judged these laws as crucial in keeping women's wages above poverty level, reducing long hours, and offering women protection from dangerous and unhealthy work. Counted by some social justice feminists as among their proudest reform achievements, these laws needed to be retained, broadened, and extended to all workers, men as well as women (Cobble, 2014: 26).

After World War II Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) and U.S. Women's Bureau were the main organizations where labor feminists gathered together. In addition, the basic trend of the women's movement of the 1940s was in the direction of obtaining better working conditions for all women and to provide some time to them to devote to reproduction activities:

In their view, solving the “double day” for nonprofessional women meant creating more *good* jobs – jobs with higher wages and shorter hours – and greater access to them for all women. It also meant recognizing and revaluing mothering and the work of the home (Cobble, 2014: 44).

Cobble (2004: 3) tells us why she regards these women in trade union politics as feminist:

I consider them “feminists” because they articulated a particular variant of feminism that put the needs of working-class women at its core and because they championed the labor movement as the principle vehicle through which the lives of the majority of women could be bettered.

In sum, the rise of the labor movement in 1930s and 1940s and the diversity of its member base laid the groundwork for women to be active in class and gender politics in America. In addition, the fact that women’s experiences from the wartime period, with relatively high wages and good working conditions, strengthened their belief that they can work in sectors that have both better working conditions and considered as male jobs. “Labor feminism” has become an effective wing of feminism in these conditions (Cobble, 2004: 15).<sup>5</sup>

In his work titled "Rights Not Roses, Unions and the Rise of Working-Class Feminism, 1945-1980", Dennis A. Deslippe (2000), considers the axis what Cobble (2004) named as labor feminism as a period in USA where the stones for the development of working-class feminism were cleansed in the beginning of the 1960s. According to Deslippe (2000), the formation of working-class feminism in the

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<sup>5</sup> Ruth Milkmann (1985) relates this with rise of industrial unionism.

United States has become possible with the experience of the industrial relations of World War II and beyond, with technological change in industrial relations and with the adoption of Article 7, which basically prohibits sex discrimination in employment in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. For Deslippe (2000), the main milestone in the development of working-class feminism is the abandonment of women's advocacy on protective politics in trade unions and subsequent consensus in the Equal Rights Act. Deslippe (2000: 4) expresses his views about protective politics as follows:

While protectionism brought immediate relief to workingwomen, it had inherent flaws that would crystallize only decades later. By considering females as a special category of worker, defined by their physical stamina and moral character and not by their rights or as participants in the "freedom of contract" doctrine that informed male workers' struggles, reformers transformed the domestic code of the nineteenth century into the labor law of the twentieth.

According to Deslippe, thus working-class feminism was formed when female workers politicized within the trade union movement gave up defending protectionism that reinforced the assumption of separate fields. However, as Ruth Milkman (2000) points out, Deslippe (2000) describes feminism with an overly categorical distinction of equality-difference / equality-protectionism. With the adoption of the civil rights law in 1964, protectionist practices became null and void, and according to Deslippe (2000: 512), owing to this, gender equality of unionized women became possible, so unions could open space for feminist politics. Deslippe (2000) brings into question two different trade unionist strategies on the axis of regarding the demand of women's gender equality. In the United Packinghouse Workers' (UPW) union, which is more decentralized at the organizational level, with a lower rate of female members and a higher level of mechanization, attitude of unionised males towards the equality of women workers has been negative. The International Union of Electrical Workers (IUE), which has a more centralized structure and a higher proportion of female members, has pursued a policy consistent with gender equality policy. However, women members of both trade unions have created a strong pressure to follow a policy consistent with the gender equality of the

union. Deslippe (2000) described these women workers within the unions as working class feminists. Although they have different standpoints, the view shared by Cobble and Deslippe is the contribution of the women in the labor movement in the development of the second wave of feminism between 1960 and 1970.

Canadian centered working-class feminist analysis also emerges from the criticism of feminist history conceived as a history of the struggles of white, middle-class women. According to Maroney (1983), one of the key elements in the emergence of working class feminism in Canada is the increase in women's participation in the workforce. Maroney (1983: 55-56) describes working-class feminism, an important trend within the women's movement in Canada in the late 1970s, as the feminist politics of trade unionism among women in the class movement. Maroney (1983) groups working-class feminism which developed in Canada in the late 1970s in three titles. The first group is the women in the trade union and involved in feminist struggle. Women in this group either struggled to raise feminist demands in mixed organizations, or only established union organizations open to women members, refusing to make politics within mixed organizations. The second group is the women who were militant in the course of certain acts and insurgencies. According to Maroney (1983: 60), two resistances at the Fleck factory in 1978 and at the International Nickel Company in 1979 have shown how feminist workingwomen have strengthened their economic struggles and how their struggles have affected women's movement. With the rise of working-class feminism, the social base of second-wave feminism in Canada and Quebec has widened and increased its influence.<sup>6</sup> However, liberal feminism, which conducts lobbying with the state, has gained visibility as a feminist outpost in the following years (Maroney, 1983: 66), since this movement could not turn all the demands into a program.

Working-class feminists, on the one hand, raised generalized demands for male and female workers, such as equal wages on equal work, socialization of care, childcare

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<sup>6</sup>Meg Luxton (2001) stresses that working-class feminism in Canada is influential in the feminist rebirth of the 1960s. For the relationship of working class feminism and women's movement in the case of Canada, see Meg Luxton, (2001).

leave, and minimum working hours. On the other hand, they have included issues that directly address male workers, such as sexual harassment at work, into the agenda of the labor movement. For example, according to Maroney (1983: 64), sexual harassment in the workplace is not only a gender issue, but it is also a class problem: men through sexual abuse remind women that they do not belong to their workplace and operates as a means of control in the workplace.

### **2.3 Some Tensions of Working-Class Feminism**

Working-class feminism includes some tensions that cannot be overcome easily. To illustrate, family relations that are analyzed in the domain of patriarchal relations in feminist theory and politics can also be the area of class solidarity in terms of workingwomen or the family wage which cannot be easily defended within the feminist movement, can mean better working conditions for working women. For example, Cobble (2010a) emphasizes that feminists in the labor movement do not categorically oppose the family wage but criticize the identification of the family wage with the male worker, thus opening the debate on gendered wage. The main question thus, is not family wage for labor feminists, but it is rather why this salary is given to male worker. They argue that the family wage is surely defended as the demands of female workers. Cobble (2010a: 285)<sup>7</sup> states this as follows:

The labor movement's wage demands historically were gendered: if a single wage high enough to cover dependents could be achieved, it was often assumed that men would earn it and their wives would contribute to the family economy as homemakers. Rather than abandon the family wage, labor feminists wanted to degender it, to claim it for women as well as men.

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<sup>7</sup> This essay is translated in Turkish by Haldun Ünal with the title "Eskiden Feminizmin Sınıfı Vardı" in *İşçi Sınıfı Kimlikleri* (2013).



One of the fair wage demands of women is the demand for "equal pay for work at equal worth".<sup>8</sup> This demand was first accepted in the United States as "equal pay for equal work" instead of work at equal value, so women's demands were included at a very limited level. Even if that is accepted in the form of equal pay for work at equal value, this practice has negative consequences for the labor movement. Categorization of work of equal value requires that the work be grouped according to their level of qualification/skill and responsibility and be charged accordingly.

The institutionalization of such a job evaluation system to include every workplace also increases the employer's control over the labor process. In addition, the institutionalization of the job evaluation system implies the reestablishment of "legitimate hierarchies" (Acker, 1991) in the workplace with highly technical measures rather than shaking of hierarchies. Sheila Cohen (2012) emphasizes that in the May 1968 work stoppage action known as the "equal pay" action in the Ford factory in the United Kingdom, the center of the struggles of women was largely the job evaluation system instead of the demand for equal pay.<sup>9</sup> Ford workers (sewing machinists) were struggling to make pass their job descriptions from category B to C level. The identification of this struggle as the "equal pay" struggle has led to it to be ended very far from the demands of the striking women. Women's wages rose, and

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<sup>8</sup> For a comprehensive evaluation of the "equal pay for equal work" claims and job evaluation system, see Joan Acker (1991).

<sup>9</sup> In september 1967, nine months before the sewing machinists' dispute, Ford management and unions signed what was presented as a 'revolutionary' two-year pay deal, introducing a complex new grading structure which dispensed with the multitude of 'custom and practice' pay rates in the plants and built new and higher productivity standards into grade descriptions. The supposedly objective principles of evaluation utilized evoke a focus on 'efficiency' and 'modernization' worthy of the most enthusiastic 21st century management. (Cohen, 2012: 52). (...) By involving shop stewards to a then unprecedented extent in the process of job grading, Ford sought to follow participatory Donovan-style principles of 'regain[ing] control by sharing it' (Cohen, 2012: 52). (...) The new grading structure generated explosive conflict across the entire Ford workforce. (...) Ironically, 'the slogan "equal pay for equal work" cropped up in most arguments over this issue' (Cohen, 2012: 52). (...) The fact that it was women who had submitted the claim was, at the time, of little importance. Infact, the Dagenham convener saw the dispute in the wider class terms of redressing the overall power balance at Ford (Cohen, 2012: 52-53). (...) As against equal pay between different sections of workers in general, the question of equal pay for women vis-a-vis men was not only peripheral; it was invisible (Cohen, 2012: 53). (...) On the 22nd of May, after Joint Works Committee meetings in February, March and April had failed to resolve the matter, the workers voted for an unlimited overtime ban, to be followed by a one-day strike on May 29th if their job was not upgraded to C (Cohen, 2012: 53).

the Equal Wage Bill passed two years later, but there was no change in the job evaluation system and in the place of sewing machinists in that system. According to Cohen (2012), the strike's claim being viewed as an "equal pay" is the result of the consensus between the employer, the unionbureaucracy, and the government. In the eyes of women workers and organizers of the action, the resistance does not even have closeness with the demand for "equal wages". The main agenda is the redefinition of women's skill levels and the reassessment of the work of sewing machinists in the skilled work categories. Cohen (2012: 57) emphasizes that this is highlighted in a speech of Rosie Boland, one of the organizers of the strike:

When a left-wing journalist pressed her on whether 'the women [would] go out on strike forequal pay', Boland answered: "I don't think the women will go out for the 100 percent equalpay in the C grade just yet if they could just get C grade. What we're concerned with is proving that we are skilled workers ... It's up to the girls to decide what to do, but last week they were really ready for another fight, but only for C grade not for equal pay'. And, while in favor of the principle of equal pay herself, when it came to the Ford dispute, her conclusion was firmly back on grading ground: 'Let's face it if the women had got C grade... it would have broken Ford's wages structure. There are so many men fighting for upgrading that if Ford's gave it to us, they would have to give it right through the firm. And the men know that if Fords turn around to us and say "Right, you've got C grade", well they're going to have a better chance to fight'.

Cohen (2012: 57), underlining Boland's speech, notes that the action is related to class struggle, rather than to gender category. It may be said that, this emphasis shows the position of gender within the class struggle. While the demand of 'equal pay for work at equal worth' can be institutionalized as a means of controlling labor processes by employers, union bureaucracy, and governments, it also mediates the questioning of legitimate default (sexist) hierarchies in defining grading levels. In other words, the demands for the upgrading of the skill levels of the work done by the women workers can also mean the politicization of both gender relations and of the definitions of skills they are subject to. Moreover, this identicalness has a content that shakes the existing hierarchies and the controlling process in a workplace insofar as it redefines the levels of qualification of all male and female

workers. It may be posed that the women worker's wage and rights struggles compromise both transforming the nature of the work in the capitalist workplace and transforming the sex-based division of labor. The struggles of the working class women to be recognized as 'women workers' and their efforts to universalize their demands by including male workers, present an important historical heritage for feminism to rebuild itself as a system critique. In the neo-liberal phase, feminism felt the need to rebuild itself through a self-critical approach and this is one of the reasons that increased the interest in working class feminism. In the following section, I would like to briefly mention the studies on determining the position of feminism in this phase. Then I will refer to some of the criticisms of the working-class feminist literature for feminist history.

#### **2.4 Feminism's Turn into Mainstream**

The debates on the criticisms of feminist history writing, which also include the studies on working class feminism started to become common in a period when the claim that feminism turned into mainstream was made. This is no coincidence that these two ideas came out simultaneously. First of all, the conditions that contributed to the discussions of feminism's turn into mainstream brought about the efforts to remember, convey, and defend the critical heritage of feminism.

Secondly, the claim on feminism's conformity with neoliberalism created a need to reevaluate the feminist assumptions on the issues such as the welfare state policies, family wage and social protectionism. Thirdly, the claim for feminism's conformity with neoliberalism mainly embarked with hegemonic narrative of feminism. Although it is not possible to deny the influence of neoliberalism to women's movement, such as flowering of non-governmental organizations; of micro-credit programs as the essential tool for empowering women; spreading projects defining the focus of studies on women, the claim for feminism's turn into mainstream was mainly rested on particular interpretation of feminism. In turn, several demands of

the various strands of feminism have been generalized to the entire movement. This, in turn, led to the revival of a debate if feminism represented a unity that make possible to discuss its cooperation with neoliberalism.

Lastly, as it is known, on the one hand capital, especially in Southern countries, as in many free trade zones, invited women to join the workforce without any social protection, union membership and social security and on the other hand the welfare state policies has been shrunked and the state withdrew from education, health and care services that resulted in an increase in the burden of women's reproductive activities. These developments, on the one hand, brought about "the conditions of exploitation and patriarchal oppression" on the other hand "the conditions of struggle" (Özüğurlu, 2013:5) for women. In other words, women not only had to deal with patriarchal oppression individually within the private spheres, but they also determined the agenda of the women's movement and the working class movement by rejecting the conditions of exploitation that specifically concerned women and by de-privatizing their demands (Özüğurlu, 2013). In this respect, the Novamed Strike has a great significance in terms of the women's movement in Turkey as well as the course of working class movement. Here I will discuss the Novamed Strike as an example in which for the first time in the history feminist movement in Turkey, feminists displayed a powerful solidarity with the women strikers.

#### **2.4.1 Novamed Strike**

As a brief reminder, 83 workers, 81 of whom were female, working at Novamed Factory, an Associative of a multinational company called Fresenius Medical Care, which produces medical equipment, situated in Antalya Free Trade Zone, went on a strike in 2006. The demand for becoming a trade union member had increased since 2005 due to the low wages and poor working conditions, and the workers who are members of Petrol-İş Union went on a strike on 26 September 2006. The strike lasted for 447 days. Many women's organizations and individual supporting women came together in Ankara, İstanbul, İzmir, Adana, Eskişehir, Bursa, Malatya and Kocaeli to

support the strike, and The Women's Platform for Solidarity with the Novamed Strike was established (Karakuş, 2007). The employer accepted to come to the table with the Petrol-İş Union on 18 December 2007. The union signed a 3-years-contract; the line for giving birth was off the table; there was a rise in the salaries. It is emphasized that during the period of the collective contract, the employer had kept its oppression over the union members and the solidarity among female workers could not last.<sup>10</sup>

First of all, the solidarity with the strikers in a workplace where the workplace bargain is not so powerful contributes to the success of the strike to a great extent. At the same time, since women's organizations in various cities came together during the Novamed Strike, it helped the establishment of significant organizations within the women's movement.<sup>11</sup> In a brief interview that I held with Necla Akgökçe (2016), who had been in feminist movement for long years then, and was the general publication editor of the Petrol-İş Union Women's Magazine at the time, and also played an effective role in the solidarity with the Novamed Strike, she stated that the interaction between the resisting women and feminists was not limited to the support for the women on strike, but also the Socialist Feminist Collective was founded during the Novamed Strike. The Socialist Feminist Collective in Turkey came out as "part of the need to redefine the self-positioning of feminism" as opposed to the agenda of its turn into mainstream (Özügürü, 2012: 125). In her article titled "Neoliberalism and Revisiting Class Perspective in Feminist Politics" Aynur Özügürü (2012: 132-3) further states:

We can easily suggest that beyond the critical observations on the period of last 30 years lies the concern to redefine feminisms as a social movement. Also, if we are to remember that since 1980s with postmodern and poststructuralist theories, the differences

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<sup>10</sup> For a documentary film on the Novamed Strike, see "Kadınlar Grevde" (2010) directed by Güliz Sağlam and Feryal Saygılıgil ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJnlk\\_E97zU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJnlk_E97zU)); for other documentaries by Güliz Sağlam and Feryal Saygılıgil, on female workers, working at different Free Trade Zones in Turkey, see "Kafesteki Kuş Gibiydik" (2009), "Bölge" (2010) (<https://vimeo.com/151545732>).

<sup>11</sup> I owe this emphasis to a short interview that I made with Necla Akgökçe.

among feminisms have been significantly blurred and even invalidated, we can evaluate the socialist feminist effort to rename and theoretically reconstruct itself as a sign of the search for a place in the face of capitalism. (...) We might well consider the establishment of the Socialist Feminist Collective in Turkey within the same context after 21 years following the publication of the magazine called *Socialist Feminist Cactus*, which started its publication for the first time in 1988, but had a short time of running.

Yet, the publicity part titled “As we begin” of the first issue of “Feminist Politics”, which is a media organ of the Socialist Feminist Collective, emphasizes that feminism is a plural movement in a period when women’s politics are in the agenda of such international organizations as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union, and when “global capitalism needs to integrate women into world economy, to benefit from women’s paid or unpaid labor, and to press women into service to fight against poverty”, and it states that they consider “socialist feminism as part of or a component of anti-systemic feminism” (2009: 32-33). Since the publication of its first issue, the journal of “Feminist Politics” has taken the resistance of working class women/women workers as its subject, and discussed the possibilities and meaning of these resistances for the feminist movement and women’s solidarity.<sup>12</sup> Besides the Novamed Strike, Desa Resistance also was the focal point of this discussion. The discussion included highly important and comprehensive questions that extended from the meaning of the difference between a strike and resistance for women’s solidarity, and the difference between a campaign for solidarity and a feminist campaign to the route that feminist politics will follow.

In summary, as a result of the forgotten past of feminism and an insistence on its radical potential, working class feminism have become one of the important issues of debate among feminists in a period when the capital invited women to workplaces as cheap labor force; the emphasis on gender equality was included in the agenda of

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<sup>12</sup> In the first, second and third issues of the journal, Gülnur Acar Savran (2009/2) discusses identity politics, women’s solidarity, Gülfer Akkaya (2009/2) on women workers resistances and possibilities from the perspective of feminist politics, Hülya Osmanağaoğlu (2009/3) writes on women workers place in feminist politics, Necla Akgökçe (2009/1; 2009/3) on the difference between women’s strike and women in strikes and asks “Where are working class women situated in feminism?”.

such international organizations as the UN, EU, and World Bank; the welfare state politics in the reproduction-production areas such as health, education, and sheltering were dissolved.

In as early as 1989, Johanna Brenner mentioned the difficulties that feminist politics faced, and questioned “where, then, lies feminism’s transformative promise” (1989: 248). She also stated that the institutionalization that feminists faced and the conditions that brought about the risk of cultural conformity provided an opportunity to start a new type of feminist organization based on the self-activities of a new type of working class women and to rely on feminist working class women’s self-activities (Brenner, 1989: 248). According to Brenner, the class inequality among women first of all deepens in terms of its impact. For example, while it is possible to find individual solutions to the issues of care for upper classes, the material conditions of the working class women do not allow for such individual solutions. Therefore, they needed the redistribution of resources, the reduction of work hours, and socialization of issues of care in order to reorganize their lives and activities of care. This conflicts with the interests of individual employers and of the state (due to the reorganization of reproduction activities). Brenner (1989: 248) further tells about the movement based on working class women’s self-activity as follows:

Such a movement would not necessarily be revolutionary – any more than trade unions or other working-class organizations are. Nonetheless, by both their structural position and experience working-class women are best placed to create and respond to a political practice that does go beyond reformism to bridge socialism and feminism. The realization of this potential depends in part on whether the revolutionary socialist left will embrace, in its vision of revolution and modes of organization, the insights and experience of feminist theory and practice.

In other words, the position of feminism within the neoliberal stage and the difficulties that it faces lead to the need to clarify the class differences among feminisms. Besides, the new wave of proletarianisation and the deepening commodification in reproduction activities turned the agenda of feminism into that of labor (Borris and Orleck, 2011). One of the consequences of the revived interest in

working class feminism is reviewing feminist history and identifying the position of working class women in feminist history. The dominant form of feminist history writing is formed through the wave metaphor. In the following part, I aim to convey criticisms on feminist history writing within the framework of the limitations of the First, Second, and Third Waves of feminism.

## **2.5 Working Class Feminism as Criticism of The History of Women's Movement**

### **2.5.1 Mainstream Feminist History Writing: Wave Metaphor**

The history of feminism is categorized in three periods by the broadly accepted narrative of women's movement. As it is well known, the period from the 19<sup>th</sup> century until women received the right to vote is the first wave of feminism. The second wave of feminism is the period between the 1960s and 1980s as defined by the international feminist movement, which was a period, twenty years before the time when autonomous women's movement and feminism started to rise in Turkey. The period after the 1980s is called the third wave feminism. The third wave feminism is used to refer to the type of feminism, which criticizes "feminism's sameness/collectivism as sisterhood" (Sara Evans cited in Eileen Boris, 2010: 90), which started to become visible in the 1990s; and which emphasizes the fluidity of gender, instead.

The same path is followed in Turkey. Nükhet Sirman (1989) periodizes the women's movement according to the Turkish political life. Accordingly, the first period dates back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and 1923, when the Republic was founded. The second period between 1923 and 1980 is described as the period of stagnation, and defined as "state feminism" (Tekeli, 1986: 193) since the construction of a nation-state included feminist demands. The last period dates back to the end of the 1980s when autonomous women's organizations started to appear. Şirin Tekeli (1986, 1995)



similarly dates feminism in Turkey at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first period reaches its peak during the Second Constitutional period. The actors of this period are middle-class Ottoman women. Their struggles are observed in their organizations and publications. The main demand of the period is to participate in educational, professional, and social life (Tekeli, 1995: 30).

There is a long period of stagnation in the history of the women's movement in both texts of history writing. This period covers the years between 1923 and 1980 in Turkey, and the period between the 1920s and the 1960s in the world. However, the period in Turkey, described as years of stagnation and state feminism, is also a period when Turkish leftist politics was quite vivid. Similarly, in relation to the period between the 1920s and the 1960s in America, Dorothy Sue Cobble (2010a: 279) makes the following observations:

I came to understand that there were multiple and competing visions of how to achieve women's equality in the so-called *dölsrum* years – the supposedly quiescent through of feminist reform between the 1920s and the 1960s. Moreover, the Wolfgangs of the world, far from being oddities, were the *dominant* wing of feminism in that era. In other words, a feminism that put class and social justice as its core did not end with the Progressive-era generation of women reformers. Indeed stimulated by the rise of a new labor movement in the 1930s and the heady experiences of World War II, it emerged refashioned and modernized by the end of the war. And significantly, unlike the social justice feminism of an earlier era, it was led by *labor* women, women who had identified with and worked in the labor movement, arguably the largest and most powerful social movement of the period.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Myra Wolfgang (1914-1976) is known as a trade union leader and a women's rights activist in USA. She is the daughter of a Jewish family who emigrated to America from Eastern Europe. Her family had settled in Detroit when she was 2 years old. While studying interior design in Pittsburgh, Wolfgang dropped the school because of the economic depression period and returned to her family's house. To find a job there, she applied to the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union, HERE and started working as a union secretary. Then, she started to take part in collective bargaining negotiations. She played an active role in the strikes in 1937 in Detroit. She is also known for her struggle for the unionization of the Detroit Playboy Clubs in 1967 (Wolfgang ve Green, 2010: 4-7; Cobble, 2010a).

One criticism of the wave metaphor is directed because the first wave feminism limits feminism with suffrage struggles and the demand for equality before the law. Another criticism is addressed to the conception of self-evident second wave feminism. Although Deslippe's work (2000), to which I referred above, does not discuss the waves metaphor, it still underlines the role of the union-based women's movement in the emergence of the second wave feminism in the 1960s and in its rise. Despite the fact that the second wave feminism was evaluated as a social movement of dominantly middle-class white women, the historical studies within the framework of working class feminism show the contributions of women's struggles in the trade union movement to the feminist politics. Accordingly, it is an undeniable fact that female workers and trade union activists played an important role in the development of the second wave of African-American feminism (Milkman, 2000: 512). Cobble (2004; 2010a; 2010b; 2010c), on the other hand, argues that the place of women workers in the women's movement is not limited with their influence in the development of the second wave feminism.

On the contrary, women's politics within the trade union movement is not only class politics but also feminist politics. Therefore, women did not have to support independent organization, which was supported by the radical feminists of the 1970s, in order to be accepted as actors in the women's movement. Similarly, they did not have to regard men as the only cause for their oppression, or to defend the rejection of conservative politics as the mainstay of patriarchal analyses. It is certainly possible to describe a movement as a women's movement although it is not accepted as part of the mainstream feminist history considering the historical conditions into which that movement was born. Setting out with this idea, Cobble (2004; 2010a; 2010b) criticizes the partial narrative of feminism, and sustains this criticism for the broadly accepted feminist history. According to Cobble (2010b: 87),

One of the most intractable problems of the waves metaphor has to do with the widely used two-wave framework. Currently, we have only two waves of women's reform, quiescence, a second tidal wave follows, erupting in the late 1960s. This two-wave model assumes a half-century that was devoid of waves, which flies in the face of the now voluminous literature documenting activism during

this fifty-year trough [...] One alternative would be to “wave” that missing half-century, adding a new wave between the first and the second. A second possibility would be to adjust the periodization. The first wave could be extended into the 1920s and ‘30s, and the second wave lengthened as well, emerging earlier, in the 1940s or ‘50s.

As Cobble (2010b) states, it is possible to modify the first and second waves of feminist history writing. These waves could be extended to include working class feminists in America, or there could be another period in between that covers the union-based feminism in the chronology of feminist history. However, when the scope and basis of criticisms against the wave metaphor are considered, it will not be sufficient either to extend the history of women’s movement to include the politicization of working class women or African-American women (Cobble, 2010b). For, the basis of this discussion is related to the question of which women’s experience and whose demands are universalized as actors of the women’s movement.

### **2.5.2 History of Women’s Movement in Turkey**

The women’s movement in Turkey was opened for discussion within the framework of events, demands, and activities after independent women’s organizations began to be established in the 1980s. In other words, feminist social scientists started to do researches on the roots and course of the women’s movement in Turkey in search of a support for a newborn movement. Thus, the studies in this field bear the traces of the intellectual debates of independent women’s organizations that developed after 1980. The debates particularly with their questions were shaped through the intellectual atmosphere of the 1980s. In this atmosphere the distance of the feminist researchers with Kemalism plays a special role in narrating the women’s movement in Turkey. The construction of the field of women’s history required a critical distance towards the official history writing, and this was taking place during a period when leftist/socialist organizations were oppressed as a result of the military coup; when political Islam was supported; and when the policies of welfare state

were shaken. In an environment where the idea that “the controversy between Islam and secular ideology had long been in favor of secularism in the public sphere” (Arat, 1998:96) was quite prevalent. Women researchers used to organize themselves in independent women’s organizations and to rewrite the history of the women’s movement. There were founding researches on women’s gender roles, the effects of Kemalist reforms, and its character during the period of Turkey’s modernization at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s.<sup>14</sup> The feminist movement that reconstructed itself via these studies traced back the women during the last times of the Ottoman Empire instead of the activism and demands of leftist/socialist organizations, which preceded the movement.

The distance between the feminist researchers and Kemalism also plays an important role in periodizing the history of the movement. In the years of the 1980s and the 1990s, the feminists criticized the “intellectual consensus” (Arat,1998: 91) on the idea that the Republican reforms liberated women, and they emphasized that the modernization project instrumentalized women. In 1985, in her article titled “The Meaning and Limits of Feminist Ideology in Turkey,” first published in the journal *Yapıt*, Şirin Tekeli (1988: 329) refers to the feminist efforts after the declaration of the Second Constitution, and emphasizes that the reforms carried out by the state during the establishment of modern Turkey left “no say for feminism” by following a strategy of including women’s demands. She also defines the period between 1920 and 1935 as one of the leading “state feminisms.” Tekeli’s (1988) definition was also taken up by the following researchers, and the period between the last eras of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment years of the modern Republic was evaluated as the first wave feminism of the women’s movement in Turkey. The years after 1923 were labeled as “barren years” or “state feminism” (Tekeli, 1986: 193); the years of the 1980s and afterwards were identified as the second wave feminism in which the women issue was turned into “protest from discourse” (Abadan-Unat, 1998). It is quite understandable for a movement, which set out under the conditions

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<sup>14</sup> See Yeşim Arat (1989); Deniz Kandiyoti (1989); Ayşe Durakbaşa (1998); Nilüfer Göle (1991); Zehra Arat (1994); Şirin Tekeli (1991).

of the post-military coup of 12 September 1980, to place itself in opposition to the existent traditions, and to define itself as ‘new’. Aksu Bora (2013: 200) analyzes the feminists’ relationship with their recent past as follows:

Within the second half of the 1980s, when the feminist movement revived, the main question was not about the connection with their recent experiences of struggle. When we look back today, I remember that the tendency of those years was to make a new start instead of learning from the collective experiences of that time. A fresh start, a new collective understanding, and a new construction of “us”... It is not difficult to understand. There are two reasons: it was after the striking coup and defeat, and we needed to push the limits for opportunities in an environment where politics was impossible. A new field, a new discourse, a new organization.” (Bora, 2013: 200).

However, in a period when we can talk about a settled feminist movement thanks to the feminists of the previous generations, I think, it is also possible to discuss the limitations of history writing about women’s movement.

To sum up again, in the 1980s feminism in Turkey firstly shook the consensus on the idea that the Republican reforms liberated women; then focused on the history of women; particularly, women of the last era of the Ottoman Empire and the early years of the Republic as leading figures of the women’s movement; and constructed its own history writing of a hundred years including a long period of stagnation which was claimed to last until the 1980s. However, this history excludes two main groups: Kemalist women who were activate in vocational organizations and revolutionist women who were active in leftist/socialist organizations between the 1970s and 1980s.

Yeşim Arat (1998) identifies Kemalist women as “equality feminist,” and young women, who distanced themselves from Kemalism after 1980, as “feminist”. In her study, Arat (1998: 92) evaluates Nermin Abadan Unat and Şirin Tekeli as representatives of two different groups who played an important role in the development of feminism in Turkey, and explains the relationship between the two as follows:

Recalling Professor Abadan-Unat and Şirin Tekeli may help us to identify the generational differences in political life and to determine a perspective for the contemporary feminists. Both women are distinguished and well-educated intellectuals. In order to receive the education that she aimed for and to play her distinct role in academic life, Abadan-Unat had to break her bonds with the traditions that casted the role of housekeeping for women and to cling to the opportunities provided by the modernization project. It was different for Tekeli. She could rely on a secular education accessible to everyone, which she received as a daughter of Kemalist parents, living in Ankara, the central city for the Republic. [...] Kemalist modernization project provided her with a different opportunity contrary to the previous generation: she could have critically distanced herself from the architects of the project. Feminism thus emerged in Turkey under the unprecedented conditions of the 1980s when local and global factors redefined the parameters of the political space.

According to Yeşim Arat (1998: 91), the aim of the feminists is “not to reach equality with men in the public space, but to be liberated and to question the heritage that produced this discourse of equality”. Nermin Abadan-Unat (1998: 332), on the other hand, emphasizes that both groups “finally defend equality,” and points to the difference between radical feminists and equality feminists:

A considerable majority of the radical feminists aim to protect their equality without taking men as their example or playing men’s role in the public space despite their differences. The second important difference is their perspective about secularism.

Despite all the difference in perspective, Abadan-Unat (1998: 332) agrees with the idea that “the struggles over and discussion on the concept of feminism are to a great extent a generational problem”. The consensus on the idea that the disputes between equality feminists and feminists are identified as a generational problem that resembles to a dispute between mothers and daughters reflects the implicit consensus on the idea that the women’s movement belonged to middle-class women. It can be said that, the limits of periodizing the history of the women’s movement in Turkey through a wave metaphor is related to this consensus.

Another group that was excluded from the broadly accepted history of the women’s movement in Turkey is revolutionist women, who were active in the socialist

organizations between the years of 1975 and 1980. Progressive Women's Association (PWA-in Turkish İlerici Kadınlar Derneği) was founded upon the decision of the Turkish Communist Party (TCP-in Turkish Türkiye Komünist Partisi) in 1975.<sup>15</sup> Following the coup of 1971, political parties, associations, and some unions were closed down; however, the leftist movement started to get popularized after the amnesty in 1974. PWA was founded in 1975 after the decision of TCP in 1974 to establish a women's organization, under which women from various leftist organizations might unite (Keşoğlu, 2007: 180). "The period between 1975 and 1980 is the period when women most intensely and massively participated in politics and produced policies" (Keşoğlu, 2009: 246). "1975 is the year when Adana, Tunceli, Pülümür, Ardahan, and Giresun Revolutionist Women's Associations, *Ankara Women's Association*, which was to form *The Federation of Revolutionist Women's Associations*, and PWA, which was to gain the most prevalent association with its 26 branches and almost 15.000 members, were founded (Devecioğlu, 1988: 2153).<sup>16</sup> *Democratic Women's Association* was founded in 1978. PWA organized in factories, neighborhoods, and unions; and it went out on the streets with such demands as "Equal pay for job of equal value," care rights, extending maternity leave, or birth control campaign.<sup>17</sup> Besides these demands, they also offered various courses and trainings in working neighborhoods.

In the article titled "Women's Organization between 1975 and 1980: A Missed Opportunity" in *Encyclopedia of Socialism and Social Struggles* (in Turkish *Sosyalizm ve Toplumsal Mücadeleler Ansiklopedisi*), Ayşegül Devecioğlu states that she considers women's place in leftist oppositional side "as a missed historical opportunity to politicize around their specific problems, and their failure to participate in the struggle in order to create a permanent and real women's

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<sup>15</sup> For the history of PWA see Saadet Arıkan (1996); Muazzez Pervan (2013); Emel Akal (2011).

<sup>16</sup> Arıkan (1996) in the book titled ...*Ve Hep Birlikte Koştukunderlines* that the number of the branches is 33 (p.11). The circulation of the newspaper called *Kadınların Sesi* as their publication is nearly 35.000.

<sup>17</sup> See Muazzez Pervan (2013).

movement.” Although PWA is not evaluated as a real women’s movement, it is not necessary to consider its brief presence merely as “a missed opportunity.”

Women in PWA question their history through a self-criticism: first in their co-authored book *And We Always Ran Together* (in Turkish *Ve Hep Birlikte Koştuk*) (1996), and secondly in an active PWA member Emel Akal’s work titled *Red Feminists: An Oral History Study* (in Turkish *Kızıl Feministler: Bir Sözlü Tarih Çalışması*) (2003).

In the texts where PWA members evaluate their history, the question of “who were we?” plays an important role. For example, in her book titled *Searching for Freedom* (in Turkish *Özgürlüğü Ararken*) Saadet Özkal (2005: 35) states in an interview with an anonymous interviewee:

As a result of our experience in PWA, most of us thought about ‘the state of women,’ and questioned our own approaches. We joined the feminist movement relying on our experience there. The history does not start after 1980; there is a history before that. There is a history from which we learn lessons though full of errors.

In the preface, which she wrote in 2003, for her study *Red Feminists* (2008: 20) Emel Akal, answers the question of “who were we?”:

When we gave up fearing to become a feminist, the fact that we, PWA members, were the feminists of the day in the second half of the 1970s was clear as daylight to me. [...] Then, we used to reject this fact and present proof that show we were not feminists, but I now see that we were pure and simple feminists: red feminists.

It can be said that, although the periodization of the feminist movement as the first and second wave feminisms, offers some conveniences, it sets limitations on the transfer of the historical background and heritage other than opportunities. In the texts where women in the leftist opposition side, who worked in the women’s movement, reevaluated their history between the years of 1975 and 1980, they consider this history as “a missed opportunity” or “a fallacy”, which does not actually matter considering that the development of the feminist movement after



1980, which was undeniably thanks to a generation of women that used to be involved in women's politics with their prevalent branches and populous members. In her study that searches for the answers to "the questions of what heritage the socialist women's organization in Turkey in the 1970s left behind, and whether it contributed to the feminist movement that developed after 1980 or not," Birsen Talay Keşoğlu (2007: iv) emphasizes that women who received experience of mass organization in PAW activities transferred their experience to the feminist movement after 1980.<sup>18</sup> To illustrate, Keşoğlu (2007: 25) underlines that, most of the pioneering cadres of feminist movement were women from leftist backgrounds of 1970s; the founders of the feminist journal *Pazartesi* were the women who were the members of PAW.

It is certainly understandable to periodize the women's movement as the first and second wave of feminism, while appreciating the feminist movement in its continuity, in order to point to the changes in this continuity. However, this periodization may also lead to ignoring some debates in feminism and some opportunities. Unfortunately, this is not a limitation special to the periodization of the women's movement in Turkey. Similar discussions are carried out in different countries. The significant problem here is the meaning and limitations of the wave metaphor in the feminist history writing.

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<sup>18</sup> We might conclude from Birsen Talay Keşoğlu's (2009: 246) interview with PAW member Gönül Dinçer that PAW also had an influence on the unionist movement. In this interview Gönül Dinçer states the following: "The workers in the trade unions usually talked about their rights, their holiday fare, or how many times they are to be given a work suit, but they did not talk about the maternity leave. They had no idea of anything related to the maternity leave or of putting an article about it. It was not considered as wrong not to do so." Women's struggles in the 1970s and the effect of women in the leftist opposition on the trade unions exceed the limits of the scope of this thesis; however, it is unfortunately not included within the history of the trade unions in Turkey. One of the few exceptions of this blindness is Büşra Satı's (2016) study titled "Gendering Trade Unions: Women in Tekstil, 1965-1980". In a work focusing on the history of female rank-and file workers' activism in The Trade Union of Textile Workers (in Turkish, Tekstil İşçileri Sendikası) in 1960s and 1970s, Satı reveals the role women played in union politics.

### 2.5.3 Limitations of the Wave Metaphor and Plural Roots of Feminism

From the perspective of the history writing shaped around the wave metaphor, the diversity in the women's movement is chronological. While stating the differences of the feminist demands across generations, conflicting demands among generations and are not included. These demands are white, middle-class, and Western women's. The main consensus is that feminism aims for gender equality. As long as the demands of working class women, black women, or postcolonial women are solely related to their gender relations, they can be included in the feminist history. Thus, the relationship between such parameters of experiences in race, class, colonialism-underdevelopment, and gender are extrinsic. Women workers, marginalized in feminism, can only be included in black women's history of "hegemonic feminism" (Gallagher, 2010: 82) in two ways: relying upon the idea of sisterhood, which unites women's tensions, and conflicting feminisms in a singular; or compromising upon the idea of a feminist movement, at the center of which is always white and middle-class women, as examples of feminist class and race bias (Gallagher, 2010: 82). In fact, both views are at the two opposite ends of the same assumption. The main assumption is that women's movement is based on the demands of white, middle-class, and Western women. The reason why they are at the oppositional ends is the difference in their conception of the category of gender. For the former opinion, sex based inequality is the fundamental dynamics that collectivizes women. For the second one, the category of gender is questioned around the themes of sex, womanhood, and status of experience.

The history of the women's movement is plural at its roots. Black feminist writing criticizes the wave metaphor as white women construct it, and makes the women's experiences, which have not been included in the feminist history writing, visible.<sup>19</sup> For example, the anti-slavery movement cannot find a place for itself in the first wave feminism, or it is hard to see working class women's demands among the

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<sup>19</sup> See Patricia Hill Collins (1990; 2000); Paula Giddings (1984); bell hooks (1981); Becky Thompsom (2002); Deborah King (1988).

demands that have been publicized by feminism. A similar problem is observed in the second wave metaphor. In the second wave writing, the effects of the period, which was defined, as “stagnation years” in American feminism, and “barren years” in Turkish feminism, over the women’s movement are not included in the debate. However, although the years of “stagnation” or “barren” years are not identified within a feminist perspective, there was a strong women’s movement, organized in the leftist opposition, as observed in unions in Turkey.

The schematization of the women’s movement in two waves does not only lead to the invisibility of some demands. Another limitation of this periodization is the exclusion of conflicting demands of the same generation and different feminisms (Cobble, 2010b: 89). For example, the suffrage struggle for black women was not yet completed in the 1920s<sup>20</sup>, or the only demand of the first wave feminism was not the right to vote for women. In her article, in which she criticizes the idea that date back the women’s movement in America to The Seneca Falls Declaration of 1848, Nancy Hewitt (2010: 15-26), states that this Declaration is a crucial moment in the history of the women’s movement, and it represents a meeting where the movement was crystallized; however, she adds that it cannot be considered as the beginning of the women’s movement, and emphasizes that the political demand cannot be reduced to the right to vote. It is because women at that time also demanded the abolition of slavery, the termination of the military intervention in Mexico, and the improvement of working conditions for the workingwomen. According to Hewitt (2010: 32-33),

No single trajectory or chronology, such as that from Seneca Falls to suffrage, can capture these multifaceted developments. Those participants in woman’s rights and suffrage movements who envisioned themselves as part of broad campaigns for racial, economic, and gender justice provide a critical bridge between feminism and other initiatives for progressive social change. [...] Less concerned with suffrage than with more general questions of political, economic, educational, and occupational access, these pioneer feminists created the foundation on which later generations of women would build antiracist, global, and multicultural coalitions. African American women, Mexican American women,

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<sup>20</sup> See Nancy Hewitt (2010).

labor-union women, and radical immigrant women played similar roles across the twentieth century, whether or not they embraced the term *feminism*.

In relation to the periodization with the wave metaphor, even the criticisms that point to the white and middle-class character of the feminist movement have a tendency to accept the compromise that the history of this movement is based on the white and middle-class women. The contemporary version of this compromise follows such a path of thinking: the first and second wave feminist generations universalize the experiences of white and middle-class women around the category of gender. Thus, black feminism emerged as a criticism of a partial and dominant feminist movement and theory. The contemporary questioning of feminism moves away from the demand for equality to that of difference, and proceeds to become a more inclusive movement and theory, by emphasizing the differences among women via the criticism of the previous generations about the partial and homogenous category of women.

One of the problems about this path is that it turns the tension between equality-versus-difference into a categorical division, and it defines the first and second waves of feminism as an equality-centered women's movement and the third wave as a difference-centered movement and theory. Becky Thompson (2010) and Leela Fernandes (2010) underline that recent studies that criticize the white character of feminism also derive upon the same assumption, and thus exclude the struggles of black women and anti-slavery white women of the second wave feminism in the mainstream feminist history writing once more.

According to Thompson (2010a), this approach towards the second wave feminism is a version of "hegemonic feminism."<sup>21</sup> This is problematic not only because it points to the hegemonic, but also it does not match the history of the women's movement (Thompson, 2010a: 40-41) because the black women's movement and the anti-

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<sup>21</sup> Beck Thompson (2010: 39) defines hegemonic feminism as such: "Hegemonic feminism deemphasizes or ignores a class and race analysis, generally sees equality with men as the goal of feminism, and has an individual rights-based rather than justice-based vision of social change".

slavery white women's struggles did not emerge as a reaction to the dominant feminist movement; they had already been present since the roots of the feminist movement. Leela Fernandes (2010: 113) states that each generation's definition of itself as a separation from the previous one points to the loss of historical continuities and historical memory, which are vital to the feminist movement and theory. Accordingly,

A move from the wave model of feminism to a history rooted in living memory is not simply a symbolic strategy for honoring the contributions of previous generations of feminists. Rather it is a question of remembering that successive generations of feminism can never move beyond past histories through a simplistic attempt at creating a clear temporal break from the past (Fernandes, 2010: 112).

Nadasen (2010: 169) stresses that the struggles of black women to increase their social rights were turned into means of the feminist theory and action. Thus, the struggles of black women from the 1960s to the 1970s to broaden the extent of welfare services are gradually turned into the demand for freedom for women. Nadasen (2010) uses the desire for freedom to refer to freedom from the market's requirements instead of an individual ideal. Therefore, what is meant is extending the rights that would enable women to free from the market relations rather than their domestic economic freedom, which they gain as a result of their participation in the labor market as a laborer.

Similarly, Lara Vapnek (2010), in her article titled "Staking Claims to Independence: Jennie Collind, Aurora Phelps, and the Boston Working Women's League, 1865-1877", analyzes the claims to independence of women workers within the framework of women's demand for land. Women workers, who became laborer in the middle of the 19th century in unprotected circumstances, united around the demand for land reform in order to sustain their lives and to free themselves from the limitations of the free market. They announced the establishment of Boston Women's Association in 1869, and emphasized that their doors were open to every workingwoman, employed as wage laborer in Boston. The demand for land reform refers to the politics of the time that aimed for women's independence and freedom from the market rather than

a conservative demand that points to the recently and increasingly unskilled labor force's desire to return to the previous system. Vapnek (2010: 305-6) states this as such:

Their petitions and public statements explained that women who had no choice but to work as domestic servants or underpaid needleworkers could hardly be considered "free". Asserting their own entitlement to freedom, these women sought to increase their independence by joining labor organizations, demanding land, and calling for full rights of citizenship.

In conclusion, our approach towards the wave metaphor is closely related to how we perceive feminism (Naples, 2005; 2010; Laughlin, 2010). The discussion on the history of the women's movement depends on what we understand from feminism, whom we consider as feminists, and what we take as feminist demands. Thus, the debate on the feminist history includes more than an effort to reevaluate the past. For example, it is important to present the feminist historians' return to the struggles of the women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a question in relation to feminism's today and its future because although the question we ask is addressed due to contemporary interests, we formulate our answers in reference to the past (Laughlin, 2010). One result of making women and their struggles that are excluded in the mainstream feminist history visible is that we cannot limit the actors of the feminist movement only with the women's organizations, or we cannot reduce the subjects of the feminist struggle to gender relations.

In brief, the criticisms of the wave metaphor are related to the approach towards the heritage of the feminist movement. These criticisms suggest that there should be a "transformative memory" (M. Jacqui Alexander in Fernandes, 2010) that bears the historical continuity and is shaped through today instead of the claims of "new" feminism that constructs themselves as a separation from the previous generations. However, women, who are called working class feminists, might not identify themselves as feminists. For this reason, I think that it is necessary to touch upon the position of working class feminism in relation to naming.

## **2.6 Can We Name Working Class Women as Feminists: The Question of Naming**

Feminism has always faced the questions of what feminism is, and who feminists are since its early years (e.g., Juliet Mitchell and Ann Oakley, 1986; Nükhet Sirman, 1989). For the studies on working class feminists, the questions of who feminists are, whether we can call someone who has feminist tendencies, but who do not call themselves as feminists, or what it means to have feminist tendencies. Who are called feminists is closely related to what feminism is and the dominant narrative about feminism. Within the framework of the wave metaphor, I partly mentioned hegemonic feminism.

To put it once more, the hegemonic version of feminism considers the equality between men and women as the basis of feminism. For example, Karren Offen (1988), in her study on the historical roots of the concept of feminism and its development, states that the definitions of feminism in certain dictionaries are based on the demand for equality with men. Becky Thompson (2010: 39) expresses that mainstream feminism is indifferent to the categories of class and race of feminism and considers the equality between men and women as the core of the feminist movement.

Historically speaking, feminist struggle is not limited with the demand for equality with men. Since the 1980s, hegemonic feminism has displayed its exclusionist character and revealed the differences and conflicts within the women's movement (Bunjun, 2010). In conclusion, since the 1980s the marginalized groups have challenged the first world, white and middle class assumptions about feminism and the relationship of these assumptions with the categories of race and class. Although the most commonly accepted narrative about feminism does not consider the existence of women's anti-racist and class struggles as part of feminist history, the hegemonic narrative about feminism can be considered only one part of working class women's question of naming. It may be said that, the perspective on strikes is decisive about the problem of naming.

There are several attempts to relate and distinguish to what extent women's specific experiences makes them to view the world through feminist standpoint. For example, Temma Kaplan (1982), employs the term "female consciousness" to describe working class women within the grassroots movements and politicizing their gender roles within radical politics. Kaplan (1982: 545) explains to whom she refers to with the notion of "female consciousness":

Those with female consciousness accept the gender system of their society; indeed, such consciousness emerges from the division of labor by sex, which assigns women the responsibility of preserving life. But, accepting this task, women with female consciousness demand the rights that their obligations entail. The collective drive to secure those rights that result from the division of labor sometimes has revolutionary consequences insofar as it politicizes the networks of everyday life.

Kaplan maintains, female consciousness is not necessarily feminist and she makes distinction between female consciousness and feminist consciousness as far as those women centered on the maintenance of life do not call themselves feminists. She further notes that, although they are not self-defined feminists they recognize the sexism through the collective actions. Kaplan (1982: 565) points out "preoccupied with providing for themselves and their neighbors, women assumed revolutionary positions in order to defend everyday life and the female rights they needed in order to carry out their obligations". Thus, in Kaplan's work, female consciousness pertaining to the women's specific relation with the control of everyday life makes them the possible agents defending collective livelihood of the community. In turn, agency in collective struggle necessarily leads to violate the once taken for granted roles and hierarchies grounded on the so-called docility of women.

Another attempt to differentiate between women's struggles which primarily grounded on gender and women's class or community struggles comes from Maxine Molyneux (1985). Molyneux (1985) makes distinction between women's practical gender interests and their strategic gender interests. Practical interests are identified with women's immediate needs, similar to those emphasized by Temma Kaplan with the notion of female consciousness. Molyneux (1985: 233) defines practical interests



as such:

Practical interests are usually a response to an immediate perceived need, and they do not generally entail a strategic goal such as women's emancipation or gender equality. Analyses of female collective action frequently deploy this conception of interests to explain the dynamic and goals of women's participation in social action.

Strategic gender interests are the ones mainly identified as feminist. They are grounded on women's specific gender subordination. In Molyneux's (1985: 232) words,

Strategic interests are derived in the first instance deductively, that is from the analysis of women's subordination and from the formulation of an alternative, more satisfactory set of arrangements to those which exist.

Strategic interests imply to gender subordination and its transcension in a theoretical sense. Distinctions between female consciousness-feminist consciousness, practical gender interests and strategic gender interest are at the same time attempts to qualify distinctions and differences among women. For example, Molyneux identifies gender interests rather than women's interests and qualifies those interests between practical and strategic in order to differentiate them from the false homogeneity of the unitary category "women." Relatedly, working class women's, black women's or third world women's movements usually pertain to the domain of livelihood, to the domain of practical interests.

Molyneux's (1985) differentiation between practical gender interests and strategic gender interests provides a viable framework for the scope of this study. Particularly, the relationship between practical gender interests and strategic gender interests and the display of the material functioning of the transition between the two is of critical importance in terms of feminist studies and politics. Molyneux argues that the transition between the two constitutes the basis of feminist politics. According to Molyneux (1985: 234), "it is the politicization of these practical interests and their transformation into strategic interests that women can identify with and support

which constitutes a central aspect of feminist political practice.” Deriving upon this differentiation, since women’s politicization of their practical interests brings about the politicization of gender-based hierarchies; it is difficult to make a categorical differentiation. Heather Jon Maroney’s (1986) review of the effect of strikes on women workers presents a good starting point in relation to women’s self-organization within the struggle and the working class feminist perspective. According to Jon Maroney (1983: 61):

Militant strike action by women is also an objective challenge to their economic exploitation, their individuation into the illusory privacy of the family, and the ideological construction of women as passive dependents protected by men which is at the core of women’s place in the contemporary capitalist sexual division of labour. At Fleck, the strikers explicitly articulated this challenge (...) The lesson that they confirmed was that, given the right political conditions, self-organization in struggle will radicalize, mobilize and broaden feminist consciousness and action.

In this study I draw upon from Maroney’s perspective about the strikes, and I propose to keep Maxine Molyneux’s differentiation between practical interests and strategical interests, which she considers as feminism’s basis, as an analytical differentiation, and use this differentiation in a flexible manner.

In the parts that have been so far introduced, I have tried to convey the studies on working class feminism; particularly the ones that deal with the debate of protectionism, and discussed the literature’s criticisms directed at feminist writing. The following chapter aims to make the contributions of working class feminists to the discussions on equality and difference more visible.

## CHAPTER 3

### FEMINIST DEBATE ON EQUALITY AND DIFFERENCE

#### 3.1 Introduction

As afore mentioned, studies on working-class feminists focus on the struggles of women in their communities, their workplaces, and the relationship between their reproduction and production activities regarding their positions in the social struggles. Domitila Barrios De Chungara is the leader of Housewives Committee in Bolivia. De Chungara, whose husband is a miner and who live in a mining town argues that housewives are workers, too. According to Barrios (1978), the wives of miners are indirectly exploited by capital and all women must join miners' resistances on behalf of their families and communities (De Chungara and Viezzer, 1978). Similarly, women in the Women's Union Card and Labor League, which was established in Seattle early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, put both being women and being worker on their agendas. They used the term houseworker together with 'housewife' (Greenwald, 1989). They argued that women must be able to become a worker; housekeeping labor needs to be reorganized. Therefore, defended the interests of the working community as house workers.

Maurine Weiner Greenwald (1989: 139) examined in her study the letters published in the Seattle Union Record, the publication of the Washington State Federations Studies, and commented on the workingclass feminists who wrote in the journal as below:

The *Record's* working-class feminists approached the problem of labor market competition in terms of gender rights and class obligations. They were conscious of themselves not only as women who wanted the right to work for wages, regardless of the marital

status, but also members of a community of workers who had trouble getting and keeping jobs (...). Their commitment to paid employment was an expression of their belief in personal autonomy. They viewed the right to earn wages as inalienable, as inextricably tied to the American belief in individual liberty. But these women did not subscribe to the view that individual rights mattered above else. They wanted the Seattle labor movement to combine individual rights with group responsibility. The feminist respondents valued individual liberty as well as family, class, and community obligations.

Some working-class feminists, such as a trade union leader Sonia Oliva, who worked in the Yarn factory in Guatemala in the 1970s, also took part in trade union struggles. Within the trade unions, women's responsibilities in housekeeping and child care were also reminded in order to shorten the working hours of women in the workplaces, while at the same time shaking normative views restricting women to housework. Even if women do not aim to shake gender norms, they have to face current gender relations as well as their employers in order to become a union activist. In Latin American countries that have history of coups and in various Southern countries, women workers such as Sonia Oliva, have to face the state and state law enforcement agencies.<sup>22</sup> In the article titled "*The Loneliness of Working-Class Feminism*", Deborah Levenson-Estrada (1997) writes:

For some women, class consciousness has sometimes involved the recognition that not only are they more than what is socially defined as a "worker" – a non-self-directed, nonthinking, manual being – but they are more than "women" as well. As Oliva explained, she had to be outside the relations that imprisoned her as a woman in order to live her life as a woman class activist.

In brief, studies on working class feminists, conducted in various countries, show that working class women's challenge against exploitative relations also entails questioning gender relations, or their challenge against gender relations brings about questioning exploitative relations. In their struggles women question the sex-based division of labor in two ways: First, they make reproduction activities as part of their

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<sup>22</sup>See Malek Abisaab's (2010) work on the history of working women in Lebanon's tobacco industry and Rivera-Gusti's (2003) doctoral dissertation on Puerto Rican women tobacco workers analyzing the formation of working-class feminism and how they drew on "their role as mothers to justify their participation in the public sphere of work and politics" (Rivera-Gusti, 2003: 5).

demands for the restriction of exploitation, and thus reject the fact that they are abstracted only as physical labor force. Another way is that they demand equality with men through the emphasis on individual rights. As we can infer from Greenwald's (1988) quotation above, working class women's demand for recognition as women as a group and their demand for equality with men as an individual not contradicted with one another, but coexisted. For this reason, working class feminists remind us that the concepts of equality and difference coexist, and contribute to the question of feminism, which can be expressed as the tension of equality-vs-difference.

One of the main tenets of the feminist theory and politics is the demand for equality, that is, accepting that women and men are equal individuals, and the demand for providing women's needs different from men's. These two demands are usually formulated as the tension of equality-vs-difference.<sup>23</sup> Equality feminists defended the idea that women should have the rights that men have, and argued that difference feminists interpreted womanhood in an essentialist manner by putting emphasis on the differences between men and women, and as a result they secured the present hierarchies. Difference feminists, on the other hand, claimed that equality feminists shared the liberal assumption of competitive individual who possess her own body and exists as an abstract individual in a contract relation. In brief, while equality feminists ignored women's specific needs grounded in reproduction activities, difference feminists took the ideology of separate fields as granted; and might have strengthened the cult of womanhood by freeing it from the material resources of oppression.

In the 1990s, when multiculturalism was celebrated in the name of plurality (Benhabib, 1995), and while inequalities among classes kept increasing but class as an analytical category lost its importance (Epstein, 1996), works implying that equality-difference (equality/liberty) might not be considered as a categorical

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<sup>23</sup> It is rather formulated as the binary of equality/liberty by political science.

division but analytical one has been flourished.<sup>24</sup> For example, Nancy Fraser (1996) emphasized that the tension between equality and difference (in her words, redistribution and recognition) points to the limited horizon of feminism, and it is crucial that feminism should transcend the tension to develop a future perspective. However, it can be said that, as Judith Squires (2000) states, most of these contributions, mentioned above, failed, since they did not corresponded to a political strategy or the political agenda of the day in their efforts, as a result reflected the deepened discontinuity between feminist theory and practice.<sup>25</sup>

The rise of the feminist studies on working class women overlaps with the period when there were attempts of synthesis to transcend the tension between equality-vs-difference. Surely this is not by chance. Rising concerns on multiculturalism and pluralism concomitant to rising post-structuralism and the questioning of the gender category paved the way for the studies in both fields. Studies on working class feminists has been oriented towards historical analysis and focused on specific female figures with an emphasis on relations of class and exploitation. Studies aiming to synthesize the tension between equality and difference have been oriented towards encapsulating the critiques of post-modernist theory in a philosophically oriented way. In these studies, the question at foci has been between universality and particularity and the studies attempted to qualify a perspective of universality that is not exclusionary as the “false universality” of bourgeois thought. This chapter argues that, working class feminists contribute to the debate on equality and difference through politicizing women’s specific needs (based on their positions within sex based division of labor) within the confines of relations of exploitation.

In terms of classifying the discussions centered around the concepts of equality and difference in feminist literature, first of all it is important to identify the nature of the

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<sup>24</sup> See Denise Riley (1988); Etienne Balibar (1994); Nancy Fraser (1996); Seyla Benhabib (1995); Joan Wallach Scott (1997); Anne Phillips (1999). See Judith Squires (2006) for an evaluation of a recent study on the concepts of equality and difference.

<sup>25</sup> For a criticism of the discontinuity between feminist theory and politics: Linda McDowell (1995); Chandra Talpade Mohanty (2003).

relationship between the two concepts. The relation can be seen as a contradictory one; each concept can be evaluated as a dilemma or the relation between equality and difference can be viewed as laying bare a tension. This chapter agrees with the studies which evaluate the relationship between the concepts of equality and difference as a tension. This tension stems from the fact that liberal ideology situates equality and difference as two oppositions and that although it claims to provide equality it is far away from executing its own claim. This is because the basis of the social contract in liberal ideology is founded on a divide between the private sphere, which is characterized by differences and freedom and the public sphere, which is determined by the principles of citizenship and equality. In this respect, at the root of conceptualizing difference and equality as a tension lies the functioning of patriarchal capitalism and liberal ideology.

Besides, liberalism fails to provide the principle of equality based on citizenship, which is promised for the whole society. For this reason, it is more appropriate to evaluate the dilemma of equality and difference as the one belonging to capitalist patriarchy and liberal ideology instead of feminism. The second hypothesis that draws the framework of this chapter is related to the idea that views the dilemma as attached to capitalist patriarchy and liberal ideology. That is to say, resolving feminism's tension of equality-vs-difference is only possible as long as women are emancipated from patriarchal capitalist relations. Thirdly, if we pose that the concepts are prerequisite for one another, and their realization means the termination of liberal ideology and patriarchal capitalism, resolving the tension gains meaning in struggle for self-realization. For this reason, the effort to synthesize the sides of feminism's equality and difference is not only part of a mere theoretical questioning, but should also be part of a questioning related to how to build a political unity. In other words, resolving theoretical tensions of feminism at the level of the conflict between equality and difference has to be related to "a hope for conceiving a concrete future" (Acar - Savran, 2004: 173). Similarly, working class feminists remind that equality and difference can only be realized simultaneously; that their

realizations are related to emancipation, and the debate of equality and difference is related to “a hope for conceiving a concrete future.”

To illustrate, while emphasizing that women and men must be equal, Pinar,<sup>26</sup> who works at Mata Factory, defines equality as such:

Does not equal mean the same, does it? Equal does not mean the same. What I mean is equal rights, that is, equality of rights. In order to be equal with men, everyone should recognize one another; there should be freedom of difference; and there needs to be equal opportunity to be different. I have to be different; I need to realize this, but it does not mean that I am a woman and I have to be different as a woman; it is to say that I am a woman and I can become what I want. We need to provide the conditions for everyone to become what they would like to become because I think that as humans we are responsible for one another.

*Burcu:* As if it was a revolution...

*Pinar:* Exactly. The world would not be the same in my opinion. It would be nice. Isn't it? Why not? (She goes on saying “We did this then”. She associates it with the sense of ‘us’.)

As Terry Eagleton (1996: 117-8) states:

To treat two people equally must surely mean not giving them exactly the same treatment but attending equally to their different needs. It is not that they are equal individuals but that they are equally individuals. And to this extent a reasonable concept of equality already implicates the notion of difference (...) universality exists finally for the *sake* of difference. Confronted with the ‘given’ differences of human beings, we must first abstract from these specificities so that all of them end up with equal political rights. But the point of that abstraction is to move us to a ‘higher’ stage of difference, in which individuals will now have the freedom, protection and resources they need to develop in their own ways.

Deborah Levenson Estrada’s quotation on Sonia Olivia given above and Aygül’s emphasis on equality reflect the restrictiveness of normative conceptualization of womanhood and the desire to transgress it. This shows that the debate on equality

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<sup>26</sup> The names used here are not the actual names of the women I interviewed.



and difference is also related to the question of how to rebuild a new social relations matrix.

In this chapter, I will first touch upon feminism's two poles of equality and difference. Since the 1980s, the differentiation between equality feminists and difference feminists has started to take another form. While the discussions on active politics, demands, and laws were decisive at the early stages of feminism, the changing approaches towards the nature of scientific knowledge have begun to determine the criteria of differentiation since the 1980s.

In this respect, in the first part I will try to classify equality feminism and difference feminism in relation to the views towards universalism and evaluate the division between equality and difference feminists in terms of three perspectives: objectivist, constructivist, and radical constructivist epistemologies. In particular to concepts of equality and difference, first perspective adopts the strategy of inclusion, second approach adopts the strategy of reversal and the last one adopts the strategy of disposition. These three strategies are identified by Judith Squires, and as Squires states, it is not possible in feminist theory to make a categorical division between equality and difference feminism. For this reason, the epistemological position and accompanying strategies corresponding to varying perspectives should be evaluated as archetypical.

Liberal feminism is the typical example of equality feminism and its inclusion strategy. The Standpoint Theory can be considered as the representative of difference feminism and its reversal strategy. Finally, poststructuralist theories represent diversity feminism and its disposition strategy.

In the reviews of the relationship between post-structuralism and feminism, it is stressed that there is a close relationship between the Standpoint Theory and the disposition of the poststructuralist theories. Although the proximity of the strategy of reversal to the method of disposition is striking, there is a major difference between the standpoint theory and the poststructuralist theory's methods of questioning the

relationship between theory and politics. The second part focuses on the transition from the perspective of difference to the perspective of diversity. This part aims to present the transition from the perspective of difference to that of diversity by exemplifying it with the biography of Sojourner Truth, one of the symbolic names of anti-slavery movement in America.

The last part focuses on Nancy Fraser's search for a synthesis that emphasizes, the differentiation between equality and difference is a false anti-thesis. Nancy Fraser opens the concepts of equality and difference to discussion within the framework of the demands for redistribution and recognition, and re-evaluates a demand for justice that includes the struggles and demands for redistribution and recognition.

### **3.2 Feminist Equality-Difference Debate**

To argue that equality and difference are two contradictory terms is highly a liberal construction. In liberal thought, difference refers to the private sphere where individual needs and interests are fulfilled while equality refers to the public sphere. Moreover, the private and public spheres are identified as two different levels of human relations. In contrast to the claims that the social contract theories are based on the rejection of differences and acceptance of the principle of equality, Anne Phillips (1994) argues that the idea of contract stems from the idea of difference, which is the characteristic element of liberalism. According to Phillips (1992:74-75), in a period when nature or tradition lost its qualification for authority over preserving the present hierarchies, liberalism needed to bind the political authority with a contract as a way of presenting various and different interests and demands as a unity. In achieving this, the main motivation was to unite the newly emerging idea of a society around the principle of order. While the primary assumption of the principle of order is conflicting interests and differences, its main aspiration is to reach common good, common purpose, and collective interests. According to Phillips (1992: 74-75), besides the fact that difference is politically and theoretically

important in liberalism, it is privatised within the privacy of house and family. The difference in the social space, on the other hand, is generalized to refer to the differences in expression and ideas as main qualities of human mind.

When we consider each woman's experience or women's experiences in general, it is difficult to imagine the private sphere as a field where differences are realized as it is argued by liberalism. As revealed by the feminists, the private sphere is also formed through oppression and exploitation; the division between the private and the public is itself one of the signs of oppression against women. Besides the failure of the private sphere to realize the differences, the concept of liberal social equality is rather built through exclusions as displayed during the suffrage struggles.<sup>27</sup>

### **3.2.1 Current Version of Feminist Equality-Difference Debate**

First of all, the tension of equality and difference is related to different propositions about women's emancipation in feminist history. Jane Rendall (1987:2) describes the tension as such: "there were two possible routes for women excluded from the world of authority and activity, in the claiming of equality or the assertion of difference." Carole Pateman (1989) calls this as "Wollstonecraft's dilemma." In her book titled *The Disorder of Women Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory*, in which she discusses the exclusionism and partiality of citizenship, Pateman (1989) emphasizes that citizen is constructed as a male figure. For this reason, although women were included in the formal democratic process after the extension of the right to vote, women's labor and their assigned duties were still not considered valuable. In other words, demand for equality meant inclusion in the patriarchal structures for women. According to Pateman (1989), demanding for women's differences and recognition is almost impossible considering that present democracy and citizenship categorically

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<sup>27</sup> For an analysis of exclusion of women from liberalism's universalism see for example: Mary G. Dietz (1987); Sallie A. Marston (1990); Carole Pateman (1989). For several critiques toward universalism within feminists see: Moraga and Anzaldúa (1981); (eds.) Chandre Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo and Lourdes Torres (1991); Maxine Baca Zinn and Bonnie Thornton Dill (1996).

operates within the confines of patriarchal principles. With “Wollstonecraft’s dilemma”, Pateman (1989: 196) refers to that: “the two routes towards citizenship that women have pursued are mutually incompatible within the confines of the patriarchal welfare state, and, within that context, they are impossible to achieve”.

Martha Minow defines the dilemma as “difference dilemma”. According to Minow (1985: 160), while ignoring the demands of the oppressed or marginalized groups might cause “faulty neutrality”, insistence on their demand for difference causes stigma of deviance. For this reason, according to Minow, “both focusing on and ignoring difference risk recreating it. This is the dilemma of difference.”

In brief, when we solely focus on differences, there is a possibility that conservative view, which naturalizes inequality with an emphasis on the difference between women and men, will gain power. A demand for equality that disregards differences seems away from realizing its own demand. We can form the main question that rises among the supporters of equality and difference as such: Does removing the barriers from women’s participation in the present system and promising a legal equality guarantee the equality that is demanded by women? Or, will focusing on legal equality within the patriarchal capitalist relations lead to deepening oppression and exploitation against women?

In conclusion, the debate is related to how women will emancipate from the relations of oppression and exploitation. One side to this question is about how to sustain solidarity among women. While the leading feminist studies of the 1960s and 1970s focused on the differences between women and men within the framework of the criticisms of patriarchy, in the 1980s with the analysis of differences among women the main agenda of feminism directed towards the question of how to build a political unity among women. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the question of difference was deconstructed in such an extent that it allowed no questioning of any subject or political unity. This is accompanied by a rewriting of feminist history.

Poststructuralist theories situate the category of gender at the center of the tension between equality and difference while they analyze the feminist history as the history of the category of gender. In this period, the feminist debate over these two concepts was over the source and nature of scientific knowledge rather than proposing palpable politics. With the guidance of the poststructuralist theory, the feminist tension between equality and difference acquired an epistemological character. Seyla Benhabib (1999) emphasizes that the dilemma between equality and difference has existed throughout the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries but the construction and contestation around this opposition has changed. As Judith Squires (2001) states, the feminist dilemma in question has acquired a new content with the influence of the rise of poststructuralist theories and identity politics since the 1980s. The nature of the debate was determined by the post-theories' criticisms of the feminist use of modern epistemology and the category of gender in terms of universality and essentialism. For example, Joan Scott (1996), who examines the history of gender and labor within the poststructuralist analyses, stresses that Western feminism is loaded with abstract individualism based on liberalism's universal inclusivity. According to Scott, women's exclusion from universal rights led to a fallacy of a universally agreed idea of womanhood. That is to say, although feminists questioned partiality of liberalism's universal idea of an individual, they defended liberalism's view of universality by referring to the general category of woman. Deriving upon such criticism, studies with postmodern perspective had the tendency to point to the limits of modernist knowledge via criticisms of the universalist and essentialist uses of the category of gender. The debate on equality-vs-difference has continued as part of the epistemological questioning, and the rejection of difference has been related to "any universalist project concerning human nature" (Zack, 2005: 10).

Another consequence of the rise of identity politics and poststructuralist criticisms of the category of gender is that searching for a new synthesis, certain studies came out, which were based on the poststructuralist theories' criticisms but still kept the principle of universality, and resituated the relationship between the binaries that were emphasized by the post-theories. For example, Seyla Benhabib (1999) claimed

for an ideal of universality, which would make “women’s emancipation project” possible. For this aim, she put forward a model of deliberative democracy, in which differences are re-evaluated in terms of democracy rather than a politics in which differences are unconditionally affirmed. Similarly, Nancy Fraser (1996; 1997) resituated the debate on equality-vs-difference as the question of redistribution and recognition. After an analytical differentiation between the questions of recognition and recognition in an political atmosphere, which is entirely dominated by the identity politics, defined as struggles for recognition by Fraser, she aims to transgress the dilemma between economy and culture; inequality and identity politics; the questions of redistribution and the questions of recognition.

### 3.2.2 Equality, Difference, Diversity Feminists

Table 1 summarizes main positions of the debate on equality and difference prepared with reference to Christine Di Stefano (1988); Sandra Harding (1986); Judith Squires (2000); Seyla Benhabib (1996).

Tablo 1 Current forms of equality-difference debate

archetypal forms	equality	difference	diversity
<i>Epistemological stance</i>	Objectivist Epistemology	Constructionist Epistemology	Radical Constructionism
<i>Methodological stance</i>	Attached to the principle of neutrality: (methodologically principle of neutrality is distorted due to contingent reasons; sexism and androcentrism can be secured by adherence to norms of scientific inquiry.)	Knowledge is partial: (claims for the partiality of knowledge but still urges for generalizable, universal and objective knowledge via distinction between false universalism and oppositional consciousness; claims the power of marginality.)	Argues knowledge is permanently partial and uses deconstructive methodology, which sees binary opposition between equality and difference as the very system of domination that must be disposed and deconstructed.
<i>Theoretical archetypes</i>	Liberal Feminism	Standpoint Feminism	Post-Structuralist Feminism
<b>Contemporary forms</b>	<b>Equality feminism:</b> Attempts going beyond the tension through making synthesis of two concepts. Nancy Fraser’s and Seyla Benhabib’s works are examples. <b>Difference feminism:</b> Pluralism/multiculturalism in politics and Feminist Intersectional Theory. <b>Diversity perspective:</b> Endorsed with difference for political purposes.		

### **3.2.2.1. The strategy of inclusion**

Liberal feminism, the typical version of equality feminism, supports the view that women's inclusion on the present system after removing the obstacles in the way of equality between men and women is sufficient. Liberal feminists argue that feminists who emphasize women's differences normalize the hierarchies between women and men, and thus they lead to marginalization of women within the present system. According to Di Stefano (1988:7), in equality feminists' view – Di Stefano calls them “rationalist feminists”- “difference has been used to legitimize the unequal treatment of women and therefore must be repudiated theoretically and practically in order for women to assume their rightful place in society as the non-differentiated equals of men.” Equality feminists stress that women are marginalized by the present institutions and theories although they are rational individuals just like men. They also emphasize that an impartial and universal theory might be possible.

### **3.2.2.2 The strategy of reversal**

The strategy of reversal focuses on the specificities of women's experiences. Squires (2000: 3) emphasizes, that radical, maternal or cultural feminists often support difference politics. The strategy of reversal is about reversing the devaluation of women's material needs and care activities by the dominant ideology, and values women's distinctive experiences. The focus of the feminist researchers on women's experiences within the framework of epistemology leads to questioning partiality of the researcher, and to “the ideal of neutrality as itself partial” (Squires, 2000: 119). Accordingly, knowledge is partial, biased, and situational. The strategy of reversal both claims that knowledge is partial, and also questions the possibilities of acquiring generalized and objective knowledge. Patricia Hill Collins (1990), one of the representatives of the Standpoint Theory, differentiates between false universalism and oppositional consciousness. From a position that generally underlines the partiality and situatedness of knowledge, it is claimed that (since they are

marginalized in the social structure) women are more inclusive and critical of scientific knowledge because of their own position in society.

### **3.2.2.3 The strategy of displacement**

The strategy of displacement aims to destabilize “the apparent opposition between the strategies of inclusion and reversal” (Squires, 2000: 3).<sup>28</sup> Sandra Harding (1986), similarly, names the epistemological assumption of diversity approach as “permanent partiality.” According to the strategy of displacement, the binary opposition between equality and difference is constructed through exclusions, and has the same operation as the procedure that establishes gender, pointing to power relations (Squires, 2000).

In particular, in the Standpoint Theory, difference feminism and poststructuralist feminism have a similarity in terms of their questioning of partial universality, partiality and bias of knowledge. Poststructuralist studies and difference feminist studies also share another similarity in terms of their efforts to value the hierarchically undervalued side of the binaries.<sup>29</sup> However, the poststructuralist criticism of universality, questioning of the agent, and the relationship that it forms between politics and theory significantly differs from Standpoint Theory’s criticisms. It may be said that, it is possible to make a connection between the poststructuralist approach and the strategy of inclusion, especially when its deconstruction of all binaries leaves no place for any claim for privileged knowledge and in terms of the relationship between politics and theory that they form. In the following part, I propose to focus on the transition from difference feminism to diversity feminism within the framework of guiding studies of the Standpoint Theory and Poststructuralist Theory.

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<sup>28</sup> I have to mention, Squires (2000: 5) notes that these types are oversimplified and can not be found in their pure forms, “individual theorists may oscillate between and within” the three perspectives “but it does not lessen the significance or pertinence of the archetypes”.

<sup>29</sup> There are various studies that emphasize the similarities between feminist theory and poststructuralist theory. *See* Jane Flax (1986); Susan Hekman (1987); Christine Di Stefano (1988); Patricia Hill Collins (1990); Sandra Harding (1986); Nancy Fraser and Linda Nicholson (1988).



### **3.3 Sojourner Truth and Feminisms: Different Ways of How Truth's Life is Included in Feminist Writing<sup>30</sup>**

#### **3.3.1 Introduction**

In this section, I will discuss the life of Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) (who is one of the iconic figures of the anti-slavery movement and women's movement in the United States) and the ways of how her life is included in the feminist writing. I will particularly analyze the diversity of evaluating Truth's life and her question (Ain't I a Woman?), as stated in Squire's study (2000) above, within the framework of transition from "strategy of reversal to strategy of diversity". For this reason, I will draw upon the scopes of two different studies: one is the Standpoint Theory that refers to the reversal perspective, and the other one is the Post-Structuralist theory that refers to the diversity perspective. In relation to the Standpoint Theory, I will specifically draw upon black feminism while Denise Riley's study titled "Am I ThatName" is one of the examples of the poststructuralist studies that I will refer to.

There are only a few individuals in the history, included in the feminist writing with their life or the only question that they asked. Sojourner Truth, then Isabella Baumfree, was born into slavery. She worked for three different masters; she got married and had kids; she witnessed one of her children to be illegally sold; she applied this to the court; two times she also filed lawsuits against those who charged her; she gained her freedom in 1827 after the abolition of slavery; later, she renamed herself as Sojourner Truth by consulting God in order to search for and tell the truth as a preacher by claiming that the black and white workers will not be emancipated when they are equally included in the labor market (Truth, 2015).

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<sup>30</sup> A version of the part on Sojourner Truth is published in *Akademide Yolculuk: Mehmet C. Ecevit'e Armağan*, "Bir Kadın Farklı Feminizmler: Sojourner Truth'un Hayatının Feminist Yazında İçerilme Biçimleri", NotaBene Yayınları, 2017, İstanbul.

### 3.3.2 Feminist Interest in Truth

The main reason for the feminist interest in Truth is her speech at the platform of the Women's Convention in Akron, Ohio, in 1851. This speech has two written versions. There is not any comprise about which version is the closest one to the actual speech. According to the researches focused on Truth's biography, and what is highlighted and what is silenced in her narrative, the version transmitted in *Anti-Slavery Bugle* is the closest to the actual speech text. However, the most frequently referred version is the text, which was written down by Frances Dana Gage in 1863, and published after a series of editions in the book *History of Women Suffrage* in 1881. *Anti-Slavery Bugle* of 1851 was published near the time when Truth gave her speech.

Truth's speech in Akron, as used by *History of Women Suffrage*, is as follows:

-Well, children, where there is so much racket there must be something out of kilter. I think that 'twixt the negroes of the South and the women at the North, all talking about rights, the white men will be in a fix pretty soon. But what's all this here talking about? That man over there says women need to be helped into carriages, and lifted over ditches, and to have the best place everywhere. Nobody ever helps me into carriages, or over mudpuddles, or gives me any best place! I have ploughed, and planted, and gathered into barns, and no man could head me! And arn't I a woman? I could work as much and eat as much as a man – when I could get it – and bear the lash as well! And arn't I a woman? I have borne thirteen children, and seen them most all sold off to slavery, and when I cried out with my mother's grief, none but Jesus heard me! And aren't I a woman? Then they talked about this thing in the head; What's this they call it?

-Intellect. (whispered someone near.)

-That's it, honey. What's that got to do with women's rights or negro rights? If my cup won't hold but a pint, and yours holds a quart, wouldn't you be mean not to let me have my little half-measure full? Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, because Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him... If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right

side up again! And now they are asking to do it, the men beter let them. (History of Women Suffrage, 1881)<sup>31</sup>

The version of the same speech, as it was published in *Anti-Slavery Bugle*, is presented below:

May I say few words? Receiving an affirmative answer, she proceeded; I want to say a few words about this matter. I am a woman's rights [sic]. I have as much muscle as any man, and can do as much work as any man. I have plowed and reaped and husked and chopped and mowed, and can any man do more than that? I have heard much about the sexes being equal; I can carry as much as any man, and can eat as much too, if I can get it. I am strong as any man that is now. As for intellect, all I can say is, if woman have a pint and man a quart – why can't she have her little pint full? You need not be afraid to give us our rights for fear we will take too much – for we won't take more than our pint'll hold. The poor men seem to be all in confusion and don't know what to do. Why children, if you have woman's rights give it to her and you will feel better. You will have your own rights, and they won't be so much trouble. I can't read but I can hear. I have heard the Bible and have learned that Eve caused man to sin. Well if woman upset the world, do give her a chance to set it right side up again. The lady has spoken about Jesus, how he never spurned woman from him, and she was right. When Lazarus died, Mary and Martha came to him with faith and love and besought him to raise their brother. And Jesus wept – and Lazarus came forth. And how came Jesus into the world? Through God who created him and woman who bore him. Man, where is your part? But the women are coming up blessed be God and a few of the men are coming up with them. But man is in a tight place, the poor slave is on him, woman is coming on him, and he is surely between a hawk and a buzzard.

This furious and passionate speech is inspiring for all feminisms. Moreover, this speech and the feminist interest in Sojourner Truth reveal the history of feminism, the roots of which belonged to the struggles for suffrage, and extended to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, together with the main outlines of the theoretical discussions.

For example, bell hooks (1990), one of the leading feminist theorists, revisits Truth's question in order to disclose the historical characteristics of the black women whose lives have been interwoven with sexism and racism. In black feminist writing, Truth

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<sup>31</sup> Retrieved from <http://www.blackpast.org/1851-sojourner-truth-arnt-i-woman>.

points to the ethical responsibility of narrating yourself within a collective identity and claiming for its truth. For black writing, the demand for truth turns into the demand for right, or vice versa; that is, the demand for right actually means the demand for truth. It also means criticizing the objectivity claim of traditional modern thinking. Patricia Hill Collins (1998), on the other hand, focuses on a brief period of Truth's biography based on the perspective of the character of scientific knowledge, and how it refers to what is possible. Also, Denise Riley (1988), in her study that integrates poststructuralist theory with the history of feminism, revisits Truth's question with an aim to reflect upon the tension due to the equality-versus-difference debate, to which feminism has been destined to work for from the suffrage movements until today.

The feminist interest in Truth is mostly focused on the question "Ain't I a Woman?" However, in her study on the history of women's labor, Xiomara Santamarina (2005) deals with Truth as represented in the book *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* rather than her question. By focusing on Truth's biography again for this stop of Truth's long theoretical journey, Santamarina questions what might be silenced in this work by Truth and her friend and co-author of the book Olive Gilbert<sup>32</sup>, and why they might be silenced. She also emphasizes how Truth grants herself an agency by narrating herself.

In order to analyze the feminist interest in Sojourner Truth, I particularly derive from such questions: What caused the feminist studies on Truth to be reduced only to the question "Ain't I a Woman?" and how did that happen? More importantly, how did this furious speech turn into "Ain't I a fluctuating identity?"<sup>33</sup> from "Ain't I a Woman?" in the poststructuralist discourses.

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<sup>32</sup> Upon leaving New York in order to preach, Truth joined the Northampton Association in 1843, and she met Olive Gilbert (1801-1884), her anti-slavery white woman friend, there.

<sup>33</sup> See Denise Riley (1988).

### 3.3.3 One Woman, Two Speeches

Since her birth, Truth had worked as a slave until 1827. Although there is no compromise concerning her accent, the studies that tend to show her as a victim of slavery claim that Truth had a heavy accent, and the speeches that I have mentioned above differ in their accents and intonations. Some studies use Truth's speech with her southern accent, which symbolizes the cruelty of slavery while some others simplify<sup>34</sup> Truth's accent based on the period's accent as they take the essence of the accent issue as debatable. Truth's biography is recounted in the book *The Narrative of Sojourner Truth* (1850-1881), which she co-authored with her friend Olive Gilbert during a period when she was not a well-known figure, yet. Since Truth was not literate, Gilbert, to whom she told her life story, wrote down this work.

According to Roseann M. Mandziuk and Suzanne Pullon Fitch (2001: 120), the writing process of Truth's biography was realized within two rhetorical phases of construction: the transformation of her narrative and her transfiguration. The transformation of Truth's narrative points to the process of redefining her as a representative of victim to the cruelty of slavery system via some additions of certain details to or omissions from her biography. Thus, Truth is redefined as a victim who reflects the cruelty of slavery system in a period when the anti-slavery ideas became widespread, and free labor was just considered as the fundamental component of freedom. Such transformation of Truth's biography can be rather observed in the resources that were written close to Truth's period.

The fact that a literate white woman wrote down Truth's biography is also evaluated as a reason for speculative claims about her life. For example, it is argued that Gilbert emphasizes such elements that can be easily included within the anti-slavery political discourse in Truth's narrative (Mandziuk and Fitch, 2001:124). Although Truth mostly talks about the Dumonts, her former masters, in a positive manner,

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<sup>34</sup> See Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (1989).

Gilbert grays these positive moments, which can be considered as an example to such interventions. Moreover, when Truth tells about Mr. Dumont's favors or how Mr. Dumont appreciates her efforts, Gilbert adds that these might be some kind of bribery given by her master to Truth. Or, she made such additions as "In this period ... she used to see her master like God; even God himself, and she believed that he always watched her," which would shake the trust in Truth's words about this issue (Santamarina, 2005:52-53). Also, some moments of silence within the narrative are filled with implications of violence or sexual abuse. For example, Gilbert states that Truth kept her silence for certain moments while she was talking about her time as a slave to the Dumonts because most probably it must be too painful for her to speak about it then (Mandziuk and Fitch, 2001: 127). Gerda Lerner (1973) claimed that the reason for this silence is Dumont's sexual assault on Truth. Following this, Nell Irvin Painter (1996) claimed that it was Sally Dumont, John Dumont's wife, whose sexually assaulted. However, according to Mandziuk and Fitch (2001), both Lerner and Painter filled Truth's silence with their own voices, and they did not present any valid proof for their claims.

To turn back to the well-known speech, a quite significant part of the feminist studies refer to the version of the speech, published in *History of Women Suffrage*. Such reactions as the white people's interruption of Truth's words or making fun of her are also included at the beginning of this speech. The question of "Ain't I a Woman?" is not included in any sources other than Francis D. Gage's narrative, and it is only stated in Gage's text (1863) that Truth has 13 children. In fact, Truth had five children. Although this fact was edited in the latest versions of *The Narrative* (1850-1881), Truth was still known as the mother of 13 children. The emphasis on 13 children, according to Mandziuk and Fitch (2001: 126), is one of the most important means to turn Truth into a tragic figure. However, Truth appealed to court for her children who were unfairly sold into slavery and followed their case. As a strong and courageous woman who did not stay back from appealing to court for her children's freedom, Truth was turned into a poor mother in this way (Mandziuk and Fitch, 2001: 126). Besides their tone, another difference between the two speeches is that

the question “Ain’t I a Woman?” is not included in the second text; instead, there is such a phrase as “I am a woman’s right.”

In this transfiguration, the subject of the story is both elevated and reduced to an iconic sign. Mandziuk and Fitch (2001) discuss this transfiguration as a reduction of Truth’s entire life and ideas to her 1851 Akron speech. In fact, recent feminist studies also mention Truth only in relation to this speech. The works of bell hooks and Denise Riley are among such types of studies.

### **3.3.4 Standpoint Feminism, bell hooks, Patricia Hill Collins, and Sojourner Truth**

Standpoint theory develops out of African American women’s criticisms of both white, European, and male character of sciences and white, European, and middle-class character of feminist politics. According to Patricia Hill Collins, “as other oppressed groups, African American women have not only developed independent interpretations of their oppression, but also they opened alternative ways to produce and evaluate knowledge in the first place” (1995: 99). This claim is based on the criticism of common assumptions that mind is the only criterion to accept a human being equipped with rights of modern scientific conception, and that as the oppressed are identical with the oppressor, they cannot develop an independent consciousness.

In the introduction to her book titled “Ain’t I A Woman”, bell hooks (1990: 13) states that she aims to transcend the racist and sexist assumptions about the nature of black women and to reach the specificity of their experience by relating to the black women of the 19<sup>th</sup> century in America. This book presents Truth’s experience interwoven with a history of struggle, which connects slavery with apartheid, and racism with sexism.

In the introduction of her book, hooks (1990: 12-13) states:

We cannot form an accurate picture of woman's status by simply calling attention to the role assigned females under patriarchy. More specifically, we cannot form an accurate picture of the status of black women by simply focusing on racial hierarchies. (...) As the work progressed, I became increasingly aware that I could arrive at a thorough understanding of the black female experience and our relationship to society as a whole only by examining both the politics of racism and sexism from a feminist perspective.

After her discussion on the sexist characteristics of the anti-slavery movement, hooks mentions Truth's speech as a reference in a feminist argument; that is to say, she refers to this speech to criticize white feminism. Confining herself to the version of Truth's speech published by Gage (1881), hooks describes how Truth came to the stage base:

When Sojourner Truth stood before the second annual convention of the women's rights movement in Akron, Ohio, in 1852<sup>35</sup>, white women who deemed it unfitting that a black woman should speak on a public platform in their presence screamed: "Don't let her speak! Don't let her speak! Don't let her speak!" Sojourner endured their protests and became one of the first feminists to call their attention to the lot of the black slave woman who, compelled by circumstance to labor alongside black men, was a living embodiment of the truth that women could be the work-equals of men.

hooks refers to Truth's speech at the fifth chapter of her book, titled *Black Women and Feminism*, and examines this speech as an example of marginalizing black women's experience within the feminist movement. According to hooks (1990), women had racist and sexist assumptions during the suffragette movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and black women still kept their marginal status under the white hegemony of feminism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Patricia Hill Collins (1998), on the other hand, refers to Truth in her questioning the marginal place of black women in both social life, and academic and scientific world. Collins (1998) starts her article, in which she discusses what Truth means for black

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<sup>35</sup> It is stated as 1852 in bellhooks' text, it should be edited as 1851.



feminism and standpoint epistemology, by stating that Truth renamed herself. In slavery, people's naked bodies belonged to their masters and their masters gave slaves' names. Sojourner Truth, who was also named by her master as Isabella Baumfree, renamed herself after consulting God, which is the story of her escape from slavery.<sup>36</sup> Sojourner means "wanderer". According to Collins (1998:230), the note of sojourner in Truth's name points to one of the significant assumptions of feminist epistemology and feminist standpoint theory. Truth's wandering between the different positions of both a slave and a free laborer; both black and woman rights defender; that is, her wandering between "outside within" positions enables her to gain a different perspective from her contemporaries. Collins (1998: 231) states this as such:

Sojourner Truth's mobility as a "sojourner" among multiple outsider within locations highlights the importance of social contexts in determining truth. [...] Just as Sojourner Truth was situated in the context of hierarchical power relations, searching for truth requires similar contextualization. [...] By selecting the name Sojourner, Truth proclaimed that specialization and movement were both required in legitimating truth claims. No truth was possible without a variety of perspectives on any given particularity.

In other words, Collins (1998) emphasizes Sojourner Truth's specific position within the hierarchical power relations, and considers this position at the center of conceiving the truth. Thus, when we think about the question on the nature of knowledge, Truth stands out as a representative figure of the standpoint theory. First of all, Truth's sojourning between the various positions of outsider within reveals distinctive standpoint that there is a possibility for knowledge contrary to the hegemonic one. This is equal to the claim for the situatedness of the knowledge. Secondly, Collins evaluates Truth's rejection of dominant interpretations or naming

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<sup>36</sup> Sojourner Truth tells about her story of renaming herself as such: "My name was Isabella, but I left everything behind when I left the house of my imprisonment. [...] so I turned to God and asked Him to give me a new name. God named me Sojourner (Wanderer) because I was supposed to travel around in the country up and down to show people their sins and to become a sign for them. Then, I asked from God another name because everyone had two names; thus, God gave me Truth since I was supposed to tell people the truth (Sterling 1984: 151; Patricia Hill Collins, 1998: 229).

as a terrific revolt by considering that Truth renamed herself by consulting God. In Collins (1998: 237) words:

Naming oneself and defining ideas that count as truth are empowering acts. For those damaged by years of silencing, Truth's act speaks to the significance of self-definition in healing from oppression. However, Sojourner Truth's biography also points to the importance of actively proclaiming truth. Although important, private naming is not enough – truth must be publicly proclaimed.

This revolt shows that knowledge is political for the oppressed. For African American women, the desire for truth simultaneously means the demand for right. The epistemological privilege can be evaluated both as an effort to reconstruct oneself in opposition to the hegemonic group via politicization, and as criticism of hegemonic practice of science.

Although hooks insists on the idea that sexism and racism, or categories of sex and race cannot be extrinsically handled as two separate categories, Truth's biography has been reduced to her question of "Ain't I a Woman?" When the historical conditions and hierarchical power relations that the question of "Ain't I a Woman?" belonged to are ignored, this reduction makes it possible to portray Truth as a representative feminist who questions the differences among women.

### **3.3.5 Sojourner Truth's Question in Poststructuralist Discourse Analysis**

Another feminist writer Denise Riley (1988) claims that if Sojourner Truth had lived today, she would have instead replaced her Akron speech question with the question of "Ain't I a Fluctuating Identity?" In her study, in which she focuses on the discursive construction of the category of women, Riley's replacement of Truth's question is an example to how the question of "Ain't I a Woman?" is translated into the poststructuralist theory's discourse.

In her book *Am I That Name? Feminism and the Category of 'Women' in History*, Riley (1988) sets out from the tension of the equality-versus-difference present in the

feminist movement, and evaluates Truth's question within the framework of this tension. Riley's work primarily reduces the history of feminism to the history of the category of women that bears the tension of equality-versus-difference; then opens the moments of the history of the category of women for discussion based on the hypothesis that the category of women is discursively constructed.

Riley's (1988:1-2) discussion of the feminist history with reference to the main structures of the category of women is unsettling both for feminism and the history of women. Her main thesis can be summed up as such: The category of women is discursively constructed, and it has always been related to all other changing categories. This statement radically differs from modern science's such commonly accepted assumptions as that categories also have a history; they are determined through social relations or they can be understood in relation to these social relations. There is an emphasis on the idea that we cannot accept any claim for truth besides or transcending discursive constructions. For example, to return to Truth's question once more, the resonance of the question seems to sum up 150 year-old history of feminism: since the suffrage times, the feminist movement has demanded that women should be recognized as a different category, and also demanded equality and universality in their struggle for rights.

According to Riley (1988), postulating the category of women or accepting the claim, which can be turned into a slogan like "Women exist!" as if it is a fact is an element that the feminist politics cannot abandon. However, the feminist theory is not supposed to rely on this claim. Thus, Riley deconstructs the main structures of the category of women. Her claim is that the category of women has been reorganized in relation to the definitions of what is "natural" and "social." For this claim, Riley traces the changes in such categories as soul, body, mind, nature, and the social from the 1790s to the 1980s.

Accordingly, the critical moments for the construction of the category of women now concern the redefinition of the categories of what has been natural and social since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. For Riley, the implications of the category of women changed

together with the reconceptualization of the idea of nature in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In this period, the ancient Greek idea that the ‘soul’ has no sex was replaced by a totally gendered category of a woman. Another crucial moment that constructed the woman is the construction of the category of what is social and the emergence of social sciences in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Riley, the category of women was also placed within the newly organized social field despite the claim that women were imprisoned in the private sphere at the axis of private-public dichotomy. In the social field, which is organized as a non-political area, such problems of poverty, misery, health, hygiene, shelter, or fertility are described as “social questions” and women are envisaged as the subject of the solutions to such problems. As the problems in question are accepted as social problems and women are considered to be main actors in solving these problems, women are excluded from what is political. The third critical moment is the suffrage movement that started at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and lasted until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In this period, feminists, according to Riley, rely on the tension of equality-versus-difference, as she associates it with Truth’s question. During the suffrage movement, women both popularized the demand for accepting women as a category and they also demanded equality with universal citizenship. According to Riley, the tension of feminism is that it is almost impossible for women as a category to become collective candidates of freedom because when women demand this, they have to deny their gender.

Although this study, which presents Riley’s rephrasing of Sojourner Truth’s question, seems to remind the standpoint school with its publication, it symbolizes, in my opinion, the modernity’s return to orthodox understanding of science due to the post-structuralist language that it uses, its disregard for historical specificity, its differentiation between feminist politics and knowledge, and its displacing experience to be the subject of a scientific practice produced in opposition to the hegemonic. Riley’s work looks like a vicious circle. The starting point and the conclusion of the study are the same: the tension of equality-versus-difference in feminism (Stanley, 1990: 151). This is what Riley shares with the deconstruction method of the poststructuralist theories. For example, the leading scholars of

poststructuralism Joan Scott and Judith Butler (1992: xix) define post-structuralism as questioning all activities that determine positions rather than as a position itself. Riley's work also assumes such type of positionlessness. However, this positionlessness allows for no opportunity or possibility in terms of the feminist history. In my opinion, when Riley's argument that the category of women should be assumed for feminist politics, but this assumption is not true at ontological level is taken into consideration, it is not only a political but also a methodological problem. Here, I want to go back to the part where Riley discusses the relation between the emergence of the social and the category of women.

After emphasizing that as the heritage of the 18<sup>th</sup> century there was already a naturalized conception of women characterized within the family, Riley (1988: 46-47) states that the social was constructed as a realm of domestic intervention in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Riley (1988: 50-51) explains the proximity of the category of women and social in this way:

One of the peculiarities of 'women' in its proximity to 'the social' is a doubled feminization. In so far as the concerns of the social *are* familial standarts – health, education, hygiene, fertility, demography, chastity and fecundity – and the hearth of the family is inexorably the woman is also solidly inside of that which has to some degree already been feminized. The 'social' does not merely admit women to it; something more constructive than a matter of entry or access is going on; it is as if 'women' become established as a new kind of sociological collectivity. 'Women' both come under and direct the public gaze in the later nineteenth century as sociological subjects in a double sense. Studies of poverty and of family life, of 'social conditions', are from the 1880s to the 1930s frequently explained as the ravages of deprivation on the family whose pivot and hearth is 'the working class woman', she who may also be represented as its ignorant saboteur. (...) This closeness of 'women' and 'the social' is then refined and underwritten by philanthropic, feminist and women's labor associations, who frequently understand themselves, *qua* women investigators, to be apt investigators and managers of the plight of the 'working class woman'.

During the construction of the social in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as stated above, women had a double role to play. In fact, the roles of women from two different classes differ in terms of social problems. If working class women were to fulfill their gender roles in

managing their homes, poverty and misery would possibly disappear. On the other hand, bourgeois women were defined as the actors in solving the social problems. Accordingly, bourgeois women could be good-hearted, charitable people, and reformers of poor houses or expert social investigators; these appropriate women roles of the bourgeois women were only possible because social was defined as a non-political realm. Or, worked via a certain type of a cult of womanhood. However, although poverty, health, lack of education, and addiction were defined and thus depoliticized as individual or social problems within the envisagement of bourgeois liberalism, and this case was a founding element of constructing a society which can be called as a generalization of bourgeois publicity, we do not have to content with this vision. Social is also a place for struggles against the depoliticization of poverty, unhealthy conditions, or misery, which are coded as social problems.

Additionally, the cult of womanhood in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was constructed within a liberal understanding, was also created within the context of exploitation in opposition to African American culture. For this reason, Riley's analysis both takes out experience to be the basis of science, and it also silences all social movements of working class origin or by black women workers that aim to reject the ideal of liberal society which reached its peak in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the cult of womanhood.

Although Sojourner Truth's slave labor was considered to be a sign of cruelty within the anti-slavery discourse, or black women had to apply for the jobs at the lowest level of labor market hierarchy, Truth told about her experience of plowing the fields, cropping, and harvesting, and she put her labor at the center of her struggle for recognition. For this reason, the fact that Truth announced herself as a defender of women's rights after stating that she worked as hard as a man, or more than that, and she had as muscular a body as a man's clashes with the cult of womanhood according to which Riley evaluates feminism. This is because through her biography Truth both rejects going back home, and becoming moral actors in solving domestic problems that are described as social questions, and the ideals of climbing upon the hierarchical layers at the axis of free labor, which is commonly accepted by the anti-slavery movement (Santamarina, 2005).

To sum up, the participation of women organizations in the moral reform movements is influential in depoliticizing the social because women organizations first helped to define problems of health, education, sexual protection, hygiene, and poverty as social problems. Secondly, while these highly class-distinctive and political problems were defined as social problems, women's mediation also had such an aim to spread middle-class culture across the whole society. Thirdly, while poverty was moralized and emancipated from the economic operation especially thanks to the differentiation between "deserved" and "undeserved" poor, women were seen as the actors responsible for the good of the family.

Yet, it would be misleading here to state that women's efforts ended in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries to fight against the destruction of their lives and the opportunities of their collective livelihood, and the identification of women as dependent members of the family as the moral figures of poverty. As Silvia Federici (2014) similarly states, it is a constant feature of capital accumulation to restrict the opportunities of collective living and alternative subjectivities and to obstruct them sometimes by referring to violence. In other words, as actors in a life shaped through the relations of collective property in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, women were financially marginalized, imprisoned at home, and this was a constant patriarchal effort to destroy women's control over their bodies and their authorities.

However, we cannot be content with Denise Riley's framework in relation to the women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. For example, Jane Rendall (1987:7) emphasizes that a considerable number of women in the 19<sup>th</sup> century joined the Chartist movement and the struggles against the Poor Law Amendment Act of 1834. Women's roles in that period are not restricted with being reformists<sup>37</sup> of the poor houses or moral actors of deprived households. We should also acknowledge women's efforts to evaluate poverty as a social problem as well as to reconstruct social problems as collective problems unlike the liberal tendency to depoliticize the social. This is because

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<sup>37</sup> The role of women philanthropist portrayed by Riley, Dorothy Thompson (1987) argues had changed from 1834 onwards, as the state got more control in workhouses, resulted in eroding middle-class women's authority in public matters.

women recreate their efforts everyday in various forms to reestablish their control over their bodies and lives and opportunities of collective living although the practices that spread in the European area in the 16<sup>th</sup> century with the witch hunts, and settled down with the amendments in relation to poverty and factory legislations are the constructive tendencies of the capital accumulation. Moreover, the effort to politicize the social also includes the conflicting interpretations of what womanhood is.

To turn back to feminism's tension between equality and difference, bell hooks (1990) evaluates Sojourner Truth's question as a question directed at feminism itself, and questions the racist assumptions at the roots of the women's movement. Patricia Hill Collins (1998), on the other hand, analyzes Sojourner Truth's naming herself and her journey between the positions of outsider-within as an example to epistemological privilege of the Standpoint Theory. In brief, the Standpoint Theorists, particularly bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins place Truth at the center of the claim for the partiality of scientific knowledge, which reevaluates the source of scientific knowledge as marginalized and oppressed. Denise Riley (1988), on the other hand, approaches Truth's question from the perspective that argues for the idea that all categories are discursive formations, and deconstructs the category of woman in the question; she replaces the expression of "Ain't I a Woman?" with "Ain't I a fluctuating identity?". Any doubt concerning that a casual relationship might exist between experience and representation of experience leads to the idea that there are endless interpretations of a biography, or a method of interpretation that makes every comment contingent. The claims that interpretation of a phenomenon is entirely contingent or reversely objective share a mutual ground. Both claims derive upon contradictory points, but share a claim that the relationship between knowledge and politics is an external one. For example, the objective claim produces dominant knowledge in relation to reality based upon the assumption that power relations do not affect scientific knowledge, poststructuralist theories, claiming that there is a contingent relationship between experience and representation of experience, might



accept the dominant discourse as a data based upon the assumption that practice of scientific knowledge is a discursive formation.

Studies that aim to synthesize the problems of equality and difference or redistribution and recognition following the 1990s tried to include postmodernist criticisms within the modernist theory. In contrast to the particularizing tendency of the post-structuralist theory, this debate can be evaluated as a search to find out how universality and particularity can coexist. Thus, these studies criticize both the abstract universality and objectivity of modernity and radical constructivism of the poststructuralist theory. Nancy Fraser attempted to achieve this by re-problematizing the debate on equality and difference as redistribution and recognition. Fraser (1997) calls this de-universalizing effects of poststructuralist analysis as “cultural turn” which resulted in to focus essentially on assertions of difference, group representation and recognition means feminist struggle has been less concerned with material circumstances and redistributive claims.

The following part will analyze the synthesis attempt concerning feminism’s equality-vs-difference debate, positioned by Nancy Fraser within the framework of redistribution and recognition. Fraser’s analysis is multidimensional. First of all, her analysis aims to open the tension between equality and difference, which is restricted to a debate based on feminism’s epistemological assumptions, for discussion as a subject of politics, again. Secondly, it enables to make an analysis of feminist history within the framework of the relationship among social protection, marketization, and emancipation. However, at this point, Fraser’s association of authority with male domination, of emancipation with emancipation from structures, and of feminism with criticism of authority disrupts her effort of synthesis. In the part below, I aim to analyze Fraser’s studies. Firstly, I will refer to her studies on feminist history; then, I will try to summarize her approach towards social protection, marketization, and emancipation. Lastly, I will try to present the approach that she proposed in relation to the problems of recognition and redistribution.

### **3.4 Nancy Fraser's Studies to Synthesize Redistribution and Recognition**

#### **3.4.1 On Feminist History**

According to Fraser (1996: 62), the feminist movement in America is divided into two successive periods. During the 1960s and mid-1970s, feminists focused on the gender difference between women and men. Since the late 1980s, as observed in the works of bell hooks and Patricia Hill Collins, exemplary studies of the Standpoint Theory, the question of gender difference was replaced by the question of differences among women. In the first period, although there were essential conflicts among the liberal, radical, or socialist feminists about how to gain equality, they agreed upon the idea that the gender equality would be possible when differences between men and women are eliminated (Fraser, 1996: 63). Two lines of criticism were directed at feminism that addresses to the differences among women. First criticism emphasizes that feminism universalizes experiences of some women. Assuming womanhood as a given state and that there raises a solidarity relationship among women leads to the indignation and distrust in lesbian, black, or women of Third-world countries (Fraser, 1996: 65). Secondly, when feminist movement rejects the differences among women, it ignores the relationship between gender oppression and the problems of class exploitation and racist oppression. According to Fraser, with the criticisms raised in the movement, feminism would have achieved an integrative perspective within the framework of the problems of redistribution and recognition; feminism's failure to achieve this is one of its missed opportunities. Fraser (1996: 67) states it as follows:

Once again, however, U.S. feminists did not develop such a new perspective. Instead, current debates focus chiefly on group identity and cultural difference, and they divide into two related streams. One of the streams goes by the name of "anti-essentialism"; it cultivates a skeptical attitude toward identity and difference, which it reconceptualizes as discursive constructions. A second stream goes by the name of "multiculturalism"; it cultivates a positive view of group differences and group identities, which it seeks to revalue and promote.

According to Fraser (1996: 67), neither anti-essentialism nor the defense of differences as multiculturalism is sufficient for the feminist struggle. Both are away from offering a criterion to differentiate between democratic or impartial identity demands and anti-democratic ones. Besides, both approaches are indifferent to the economic inequalities. In her study, Fraser (1996: 67) reminds that “cultural differences can only be freely elaborated and democratically mediated on the basis of social equality.”

One of the consequences of differentiating between the struggles for recognition and redistribution in terms of the feminist history is related to the contemporary state of feminism. In her article titled “Feminism, Capitalism and the Cunning of History”, Fraser reevaluates the history of the Second Wave feminism within the framework of various phases of capitalism in order to analyze “the challenges we face today” (2013a: 209). Fraser categorizes the period that she calls as the second-wave feminism into three periods. The first period is the phase when the movement was recently born during the “state capitalism.” The second period is feminism of the rising neoliberal wave. The third period is about “reactivating feminism’s emancipatory promise in a world that has been rocked by the twin crisis of finance capital and US hegemony” (Fraser, 2013a: 210).

The criticisms by the Second Wave feminist movement challenged economism, male-centrism, state bureaucracy, and Westphalianism. According to Fraser, feminists’ criticism of economism at the neoliberal stage contributed to spreading the cultural analysis, as well. The prevalence of cultural analysis also led to ignore the problem of redistribution. The Second Wave feminist criticism on the family wage because of its male-centeredness took an reinforcing role in devaluing labor in the neoliberal period.

While its criticism on etatism functioned as a support for the dissolution of welfare state politics, in the northern countries, criticism on state authority was turned into a great interest in Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (Fraser, 2013a: 86). In a period when macro-structural politics were under change, practices of micro credit,

as means of marketization, were included by neoliberalism together with “such feminist values as democratic participation” (Fraser, 2013a: 86-87). The Second Wave feminism’s criticism on Westphalianism displayed a character in conflict in the neoliberal stage. Although the feminist struggle that was contented with a national scale reached an international scope during this stage, this led some movements, which failed to produce any national politics, to attempt to produce politics that would be involved within the political agendas of international organizations. Fraser (2012: 113) expresses the fate of feminism at the neoliberal stage as follows:

On the one hand, the relatively small countercultural movement of the previous period has expanded exponentially, successfully disseminating its ideas across the globe. On the other, feminist ideas have undergone a subtle shift in valence in the altered context. Unambiguously emancipatory in the era of state-organized capitalism, critiques of economism, androcentrism, etatism and Westphalianism now appear fraught with ambiguity, susceptible to surviving the legitimization needs of a new form of capitalism. After all, this capitalism would much prefer to confront claims for recognition over claims for redistribution, as it builds a new regime of accumulation on the cornerstone of women’s waged labour, and seeds to disembed markets from social regulation in order to operate all the more freely on a global scale.

Fraser (2013a: 218) emphasizes that it is no coincidence that feminism’s emancipatory potential is included by neoliberalism, resulting in feminism’s becoming mainstream and cooperative, which stems from the “elective affinity between” characteristics of feminism and neoliberalism. In the neoliberal stage, the criticisms on economism, male-centeredness, etatism, and Westphalianism gained a new meaning, and feminism’s anti-system nature became indistinct. For example, feminist criticism on family wage was accompanied in many free trade zones of the world by devalued women labor; its criticism on state-centeredness was accompanied by Ngo-ization, as identified by Islah Jad (2013), and the spreading of micro-credit programs which are “innovative synthesis of individual self-help and community networking” (Fraser, 2013a: 221-2). Feminism’s opposition to “traditional authority” in general established the basis for its cooption with neoliberalism. Accordingly:

Such authority is a longstanding target of feminist activism, which has sought at least since Mary Wollstonecraft to emancipate women from personalized subjection to men, be they fathers, brothers, priests, elders, or husbands. But traditional authority also appears in some periods obstacle to capitalist expansion, part of the surrounding social substance in which markets have historically been embedded and which has served to confine economic rationality within a limited sphere. In the current movement, these two critiques of traditional authority, the one feminist, the other neoliberal, appear to converge. (Fraser, 2013a: 224)

Among the criticisms on Fraser's ideas (2013a) comes the idea that the feminism she proposes is only one type of feminism and it is not possible to consider that the claim for conformity is valid for all types. For example, feminist positions on the family wage may change from its rejection or inclusion of women. Fraser (2013a) was criticized particularly because she presented liberal feminism, one type of feminism, as the representative of the Second Wave feminist movement (Sangster and Luxton, 2012). One of the significant limitations in terms of reconstructing feminism as an anti-systemic movement is related to Fraser's use of the concept of authority. Firstly, as it can be observed in the quotation above, authority is limited to male domination. There are two consequences of associating authority with male domination, which can be at times "obstacle to capitalist expansion."

First of all, authority in this definition (though it has a restrictive quality in terms of being an obstacle to capitalist expansion) has a negative meaning. The association of authority with male domination makes women's demands for authority invisible. Secondly, while emphasizing traditional authority's quality as an opposition to market relations, it leads us to ignore the authoritative quality of market relations. When we think about these two features of Fraser's analysis of authority (2013a), the historical meaning of women's revolutionary tradition disappears. Certainly, since the history of feminism is also the history of oppression, challenging against individual or collective authority figures that affect women's lives is one of the cores of feminism. For this reason, while challenging the state authority has been one of the constitutive forces of feminism's existence, challenging the authoritative operation of free market is another one of the constitutive assumptions. Besides, the association of authority with male domination means reducing feminism to a critical

tradition that is only based on negation. However, women's various revolts and struggles cannot be limited to a criticism of the present system since these revolts and struggles also include the demands of authority for a new order. The reduction of feminism to a critical tradition based solely on negation and description of criticism on market authority as an exterior quality are more obvious in Fraser's works on social protection, marketization, and emancipation.

### **3.4.2 On Social Protection, Marketization and Emancipation**

In her article in which she discusses the relationship among social protection, marketization, and emancipation, Fraser derives upon Karl Polanyi's analysis of the capitalist crisis in *The Great Transformation* (1944). Briefly put, here Polanyi argues, development of market societies has consisted double movement for two hundred years in which marketization and laissez-faire liberalism is on one side while counter movement of protectionism is on the other. While self-regulating market system tends to expand with three fictitious commodities, the society turns towards precautions for self-protection from self-regulating market system with various means of labor regulations. The double movement points to the influence of these two tendencies on one another. Proponents of self-regulated market searched for a society subjected to the principles of the market. This is made possible by the commodification of nature, human beings and money into the "fictitious commodities", the objects that can be sold at the market. As Fraser puts (2013b: 228), "[t]he effects of this "fictitious commodification," as Polanyi called it, were so destructive of habitats, livelihoods, and communities as to spark an ongoing counter-movement for the "protection of society". That is what Polanyi calls a "double movement" between marketization and protectionism.

Fraser adds to Polanyi's double movement a third element, that is, emancipation. However, in Fraser's approach, emancipation means emancipation from state rather than free markets. For this reason, the tension where she places the Second Wave

feminism is between emancipation and social protectionism. Fraser (2013b, :128) states that, “feminists revealed the oppressive character of protections premised on the ‘family wage’ and on androcentric views of ‘work’ and ‘contribution’, showing that what was protected was less ‘society’ *per se* than male domination.” And feminism together with struggles of anti-racism, anti-imperialism, anti-war, the New Left and so on “(d)emaning access, as opposed to protection, their paramount aim was not to defend ‘society’ but to overcome domination” (Fraser 2013b: 128).

The same criticism on Fraser’s conception of authority might be employed for her use of the concept of emancipation. Proposing a triple movement that includes emancipation as a third element to Polanyi’s double movement of social protection and marketization, Fraser’s approach towards emancipation points to the perspective of emancipation from the state, and subordinates emancipation from free market and commodity relations. Differentiating between decommodification’s forms that deepen relations of oppression and forms that emancipate from is critical for feminist politics, and Fraser (2013b) reminds us of the importance of this differentiation. However, I think that we could achieve this by focusing on the innate relation between what is social and what means to be woman rather than the conflict between defending society and overcoming relations of oppression.

In fact, throughout the feminist history, the debate on reproduction by utopian feminists, socialist or Marxist feminists, both has an aim to non-commodify reproduction activities and concerns how to build the relationship between sexes in reconstructed social relations. In these discussions there is an internal relationship between how to organize reproduction activities in today’s social relations and how to emancipate from. Which principles will be used in constructing the new society, elimination of relationship of exploitation, and how needs will be organized all reflect an effort to design a future based on the relations constructed today. This effort requires a reevaluation of the past feminisms’ heritage and aspects of various future prospects that are exposed in the present social relations. It is important in terms of the experiences of the working class feminists. It is also necessary to remember that the working class feminists’ demands of restricting relations of

exploitation and efforts of politicizing naturalized needs are related to a hope of designing a future for the problems of recognition and redistribution.



## CHAPTER 4

### POSITION OF WOMEN'S LABOR IN LABOR MARKET

#### 4.1 Introduction

The studies that examine the position of women in labor market have been carried out at various levels of abstraction. The debates mostly focus on feminist analysis of patriarchy and capitalism. It is possible to categorize this type of debates as dual system approach and unitary approach, which has a patriarchal capitalist stance. Particularly, the claim for marginalization of women, based on the dual system approach, has been effective in the analysis of the labor market. In this part, after referring to the different sides of the debate carried out at this level, I aim to focus on certain assumptions and implications of the approaches about the position of women in labor market. Following that, I will try to convey the analysis of the labor market that aims to analyze the position of women. Relying on Ben Fine (1992), it is possible to categorize these studies under three labels: reserve army of labor thesis, segmented labor market theory and labor process analysis.

Labor process analysis offers a highly viable framework to make women's practices of resistance and solidarity in the point production visible. Within the scope of this dissertation, such analysis was substantially useful in order to perceive women's experiences. For this reason, I will first touch upon the analysis of the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism. Then, after presenting the approaches of segmented labor market and reserve army of labor, which preserve the basic assumptions of the dual system, I will focus on the evaluations of the labor process analysis in relation to women's labor and the situation of women in labor market.

One of the most significant arguments of the labor process analysis is the thesis that the capital will increase its dominance over labor through deskilling throughout capitalism. As an indirect conclusion of this basic argument, Marxist labor process analysis portrays the potential for resistance and the level of militancy as a quality that belongs to skilled workers. This idea often leads to the exclusion of the activities of women workers who work in unskilled sectors or jobs from the labor process analysis. The analysis discussed below which is based on the dual system approach (segmented labor market and reserve army of labor) accepts this as a given situation and ignores women's militant activities in production and reproduction areas by focusing on the history of women's economic marginalization. The focus in these evaluations is on revealing the structural elements of women's suppression rather than their capacity and potential to resist and reform.

When we consider the levels of both analyses, another significant point in relation to this thesis is that dual system analysis and Marxist labor process analysis are either based on a class culture that is indifferent to gender, or a women's culture that is indifferent to class divisions. Since feminist history of labor and labor process analysis both search into the history of the militant activities of women and provide an opportunity to evaluate the concrete operations of the sisterly bonds among women, they offer a substantial source within the framework of this dissertation.

#### **4.2 Marginalization of Women's Labor**

Three elemental signs of employment (rate of participation in employment, sectoral division of employment, wage levels) simply reveal the inequality based on gender in general. With various levels, this inequality favors male workers in developed or developing countries, leading to certain questions in relation to the source of such inequality.

The main question waiting to be answered within the light of the data on the position of women in labor market and employment is why there is inequality between

women and men in labor market and workplaces. The sources of such inequality, defined as economic marginalization of women, were the subject of the feminist studies from the 1970s onwards. While such commonly asked questions of “Why do women receive less payment than men? Why are women concentrated in certain jobs?” (Rees, 1992: 12-13) serve this interest; there have been several approaches of explaining women’s economic marginalization.

The history of women’s economic marginalization has been at the center of the studies that analyze the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism. It is possible to categorize these studies as socialist feminist studies and Marxist feminist studies, which define patriarchy and capitalism as two different systems (Hartmann, 1976; Walby, 1989) and socialist feminist studies, which emphasize patriarchal capitalism as a unitary system.

According to the dual system approach, capitalism and patriarchy are two independent systems. There are different perspectives about the type of relation between the two systems. One of these perspectives is the idea that present-day gender relations are the remnants of past social formations. Thus, present-day gender relations are independent of capitalism and related to ideological and cultural relations. According to another idea based on the dual system approach, capitalism has a pragmatic relationship with patriarchy within the framework of its capital accumulation principle, and liquidates the relationship types, which set itself back from, using facilitating relationships within the light of its capital accumulation principle. The common quality of the studies, which evaluate patriarchal relations as heritage of past social formations, is the fact that they consider the development of free market relations as a potential for women’s emancipation. In other words, according to this idea, the development of capitalist production relations and free market has a potential to solve patriarchal relations rather than presenting an obstacle for women’s emancipation.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> It is not wrong to suggest that this assumption of the dual system approach lies at the center of Nancy Fraser’s analyses, which were mentioned in the previous chapter.

One of the earliest studies in the dual system approach belongs to Christine Delphy, whose study is translated in English with the title of “The Main Enemy”.<sup>39</sup> In her work, which was first published in 1970, Delphy theorized the relationship between patriarchal mode of production and capitalist mode of production, and defined women as a class. Heidi Hartmann (1976; 1981) later identified patriarchy and capitalism as two different systems; she defined patriarchy as male power over women, and analyzed the relationship between patriarchal system and organization of capitalist labor process. Evaluating the criticisms<sup>40</sup> on theories of patriarchy, Sylvia Walby (1989) developed a model of patriarchy as six partially interdependent structures. According to Walby (1989: 214), patriarchy “is composed of six structures: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions, such as religion, the media and education”.

The unitary system approach towards the relationship between capitalism and patriarchy is entirely different from the dual system approach. In unitary approach, capitalism is conceived as a system at the center of which lie the relationships that are based on exploitation, suppression, and alienation, and as a system, which creates hierarchies. Also, it challenges the idea that patriarchal system based on reproduction is independent of capitalist production relations. The distinctive quality of the studies with unitary system approach is that they situate the historical development of the capital accumulation process at the center of the history of women’s labor and women’s relations with paid work. In these studies there is a correlation between process of primitive accumulation and capitalist development and women’s contemporary positions. The history of women’s loss of power over daily and collective life opportunities is situated within the process of primitive accumulation

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<sup>39</sup> Originally published in 1970 with the title *Liberation des femmes: anne zero*.

<sup>40</sup> For earliest criticisms on theory of patriarchy, see Maxine Molyneux (1979); Michele Barrett and Mary McIntosh (1979); Michele Barrett (1980); Sheila Rowbotham (1981); Anna Pollert (1996). For an early summary and review of patriarchal analysis, see Veronica Beechey (1979). For a contemporary evaluation of the term patriarchy and its usage in a plural way, see Kumkum Sangari (2015).

(Mies, 1982; 1986; Fortunati, 1995; Federici, 2004). In the studies, which adopt a unitary system approach, social reproduction is regarded as a critical concept in extensive reproduction of the capital. There are different variations of analyses of patriarchy by the dual system approach. A detailed analysis of each variation is out of the scope of this study. However, I want to focus on two analyses that have been influential in later analyses of women's positions and the marginalization of women's economic activities in the history of labor market. One of these studies is Heidi Hartmann's (1976; 1979) analysis of patriarchy and her thesis on women's economic marginalization; the other one is Sylvia Walby's study, *Theorising Patriarchy* (1989).

#### **4.3 Analysis of Patriarchy and Thesis of Economic Marginalization of Women's Labor**

In the analyses of Heidi Hartmann and Silvia Walby, there is a close relationship between patriarchy and women's participation in the labor market. Heidi Hartmann's "The Unhappy Marriage of Marxism and Feminism" has been extensively debated among feminist studies. Hartmann's perspective on patriarchy and historical exclusion of women from industrial work via resistance of working men and unions remains one of the most well-known representatives of the dual systems theory. Hartmann (1979: 11) defines patriarchy as such:

We can usefully define patriarchy as a set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which, though hierarchical, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women" and "the material base upon which patriarchy lies most fundamentally in men's control over women's labor power. Men maintain this control by excluding women from access to some essential productive resources (in capitalist societies, for example, jobs that pay living wages) and by restricting women's sexuality.

According to Hartmann, men have controlled women's labor force by excluding them from productive sources and limiting women's control over their sexuality. Their basic means is sex-based division of labor, which existed long before the

development of capitalist mode of production relations. In Hartmann's study there is no explanation in relation to the source of the hierarchical and unequal structure of sex-based division of labor. For this reason, her view that men's control over women is based on their capacity to control women's labor force is criticized for its tautological stance (e.g. Anna Pollert, 1996). Moreover, Heidi Hartmann's (1976; 1979) works are also criticized by feminist studies for using theories of patriarchy in a universalist, ahistorical, and reductive manner. Hartmann's (1976; 1979) extensive criticism of the definition of patriarchy is not included here. The significant point in Hartmann's work, which interests this study, is the fact that she identifies patriarchy as source of women's marginalization in labor market or their employment only in certain jobs and sectors. Based on the analyses within this theoretical framework, during the industrial capitalism in Britain, male workers united against female workers' employment and displayed male solidarity; they excluded women from the labor market through family pay and laws that protect women.<sup>41</sup> Although the capitalists are not necessarily patriarchal, women are excluded from the labor market as a consequence of the compromise between employers-unions-state and male workers. Hartmann (1979: 16) explains this in the following lines:

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<sup>41</sup>The idea that protective labor laws are the source for women's positions in present-day work life and they lead to segregation in workplaces and sectors is challenged in many ways. For studies that challenge this view, see Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas (1984), Ben Fine (1992), and Ruth Milkman (1985). For example, according to Johanna Brenner and Maria Ramas, very few workplaces applied protective labor laws, and there have never been any strict control over the application of these laws. Besides, when these laws were prevalent, the working hours in the places where the skilled male laborers worked were already shorter than those where women worked. In the 1870s when these laws became commonplace, many unions succeeded to limit the daily work hours to 9 in various sectors. Brenner and Ramas emphasize that the shortening of working hours for women in such sectors as textile where women and men worked dependently on each other led to the shortening of working hours for male workers, as well. Certainly, these evaluations do not suggest that unions of the time did not exclude women workers or they did not have a sexist organization. Brenner and Ramas (1984) challenges the view that interprets the shortening of women and children's working hours as a result of patriarchal system as such: "The earliest and most consistent demand made by the working-class component of the factory movement was a call for the reduction of the working day for all. However, the bourgeoisie's adamant opposition to any restriction of adult male labor on the one hand, and the growing middle-class outcry against the condition of factory children, and later factory women, on the other, moulded the strategy which emerged from the 1830s onwards. The strategy was to reduce the adult working day indirectly, through legislation that would fix the hours of child labor in such a way as to make it impossible for adults to work longer hours".

Men reserved union protection for men and argued for protective labor laws for women and children. Protective labor laws, while they may have ameliorated some of the worst abuses of female and child labor, also limited the participation of adult women in many 'male' jobs (...) Instead of fighting for equal wages for men and women, male workers sought the 'family wage', wanting to retain their wives services at home (...) 'Family wages' may be understood as a resolution of the conflict over women's labor power which was occurring between patriarchal and capitalist interests at that time.

Sharing Heidi Hartmann's idea (1976; 1979), Silvia Walby (1989) also emphasizes that the factory laws and the laws that protect women have led to the exclusion of women from labor market. After the criticism of the dual system approach, particularly its criticism on ahistoricity, Walby (1989) identifies six systems that are interrelated in her study which revises the theory of patriarchy: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions. According to Walby, there are various practices of exclusion and inclusion for women in the labor market: women are either excluded from the labor market through protective measures or included in the labor market via segregation. Women were excluded from the labor market via protective laws due to the pressure of male workers during the earliest phases of industrialization, which indicates private patriarchy that closes women in private spaces and hinders them from joining other social activities. In the following stages of industrialization, especially during the war years, women started to work in various places and departments. Walby identifies it as public patriarchy. Public patriarchy is realized through the interaction between capitalism and patriarchy, and as a result of the feminist movement. The system had to include women -though unequally. However, due to this inequality, the social structure is still patriarchal. As a consequence of the relationship between patriarchy and capitalism, sexual division of labor in paid work has gained a new form (1989: 216):

[E]mployers seek to employ women, when they are seeking cheap labor, because they are cheaper than men. Husbands have historically resisted this process because it undermines their control over and exploitation of women in the household. This conflict of

interest over the exploitation of women's labor has sometimes taken the form of political struggle at the level of the state. For instance, the so-called protective legislation of the nineteenth century sought to limit women's employment in the best paid sectors of work (the mills and the mines were better paid and had shorter hours than agricultural labor, domestic service and housewifery, which were the main alternatives) (...) The key feature of patriarchal relations in paid work is that of closure of access by men against women. This involves the exclusion of women from paid work or the segregation of women within it. This leads to the devaluation of women's work and low wages for women, which itself becomes a social fact with determinate effects, not only on women's paid work, but in other areas including the domestic sphere and other aspects of gender relations (Walby, 1989: 216).

In summary, according to the dual system approach, women's economic marginalization is a consequence of an overall patriarchal process. During this process, capital accumulation plays a role to fix patriarchal relations, and though a compromise among male workers, unions, male employers, and the state, women are either excluded from the labor market, or they could find themselves a place at the lowest stages of a hierarchical structure. The theories of patriarchy provide the possibility to question the divisions between women and men, which have been considered natural so far. Also, they contributed to revealing that gender-based differences in payment are not due to sectoral concentrations of women or such divisions that are considered natural as physical capacity, but they are the result of unequal social system. Despite its contributions, the dual system approach is criticized as it presents male workers' resistance against women's employment in factories responsible for women's exclusion from production while introducing the history of women's economic marginalization. This is because some unions (e.g. UAW, which was mentioned in the first part) made protective legislations in working hours of women workers not with the purpose of excluding women but supporting them to have better working conditions. As an indicator of this, in some workplaces (based on the character of the labor process) the shortening of working hours for female workers and children means the shortening of working hours for male workers. The second problem with the dual system analysis is that male workers and unions have the power to exclude women workers from workplaces before



employers. Moreover, in the analyses of the dual system approach, the history of women's marginalization has such content that it obstructs various women's resistances.

In contrast to dual system approach, unitary system approach does not consider patriarchy and capitalism as two separate systems. The unitary view of capitalism and patriarchy, which is shared by Maria Mies (1986) and Silvia Federici (2004), examines the history of women's labor and resistance in relation to capital accumulation process. Mies (1986) and Federici (2004) evaluate the history of marginalization of women's activities as a strategy to break the control over women's collective subsistence facilities. In the following part, unitary system analysis of capitalism and patriarchy, which explains the marginalization of women's economic activities with capital accumulation strategy, will be analyzed.

#### **4.4 Capital Accumulation and Thesis of Women's Economic Marginalization**

Unlike the dual system approach that considers women's economic marginalization as male workers' and unions' activities to control women's labor and sexuality, there are studies that analyze women's marginalization, their relationship with paid work from the perspective of the historical development of capital accumulation process (Mies; 1986; Federici, 2004) or the main characteristics of capital accumulation (Mies 1986; Brenner and Ramas, 1984; Federici, 2004). These studies focus on the tension between capital accumulation, search for profit and women's control in the reproduction areas. One of the leading figures of this approach is Maria Mies.

In her classical Marxist feminist work, Maria Mies (1986) argues that capital accumulation threatens reproduction of life and subsistence, and that patriarchy and capitalism are necessarily connected. According to Mies (2014[1986]: 2) it is necessary to understand women's oppression "in the context of all social relations that constitute our reality today – that means in the context of a global division of labor under the dictates of capital accumulation" and "[t]he subordination and

exploitation of women, nature and colonies are the precondition for the continuation of this model". She proposed a unitary view of capitalism and patriarchy in the form of capitalist patriarchy in which neither capitalism has a potential of dissolving old system of patriarchal relations nor patriarchy is a relic from the past. According to Mies (2011: 48-49), if:

[O]ne does not fall into the pit of moralism and individualism, it is inevitably necessary for that person to look beyond what is visible and to reach a historical and materialist approach towards *the interaction* between gender-based division of labor, social division of labor, and international division of labor. This is because they are the objective divisions that have been created respectively by the capitalist patriarchy and determined everything, lying at the center of our differences.

Liberal democracy and the bourgeois revolution are far from providing women with the equality that they promised for. The basic democratic rights, which exist as ideals during the period of the welfare state, can be ignored when there are needs for capital accumulation in spite of all claims for universality (Mies, 2011: 58-59). One of the main characteristics of the social contract is that violence is given to the sovereign's monopoly. But, the violence against women is shaking confidence in the claim that modern state and civilization have abolished direct violence; in modern society, power based on force and "rule of law" coexist side by side (Mies, 2011: 77). Shortly, neither does capitalism have a character or tendency to resolve the patriarchal relations that are based on the authority of the father before capitalism, nor it supports the sides of patriarchal relations that serve its purposes, as they remain external to capital accumulation. Capitalism is inevitably patriarchal: "Capital accumulation process is not realized without preserving or reproducing patriarchal relationships between women and men." (...) Patriarchy comprises the invisible underground of the visible capitalist system" (Mies, 2011: 95).

In the underground world of civilized society, there are exploitation of nature, colonization, and turning women into housewives, and all of them lead to destruction of economies in transition. There is a close relationship between destruction of economies in transition and women's economic marginalization. In this respect, the

history of capital accumulation is in a sense the history of limiting women's control over their collective subsistence opportunities and of pulling off women from their means of income concomitantly. Within this framework, Mies (2011) emphasizes that capital accumulation coexists with housewifization of labor. In the process, which is defined by Mies (2011: 12) as housewifization, "women are made invisible after being labelled as housewives" and this situation is "naturalized"; however, the process is not limited to this. Also, due to housewifization, women's paid labor is similarly devalued. Therefore, women's economic marginalization is part of capital accumulation process. Moreover, housewifization is not only limited to women. As Mies (1986) states in the preface of the new edition of her 2011 book, capital accumulation process also makes men more resilient, that is, they work as cheap labor in flexible, non-secure, non-unionized jobs (Mies, 2011). According to Mies (2011:13),

Economic violence (or urgent need) was not sufficient to realize such working relations, and it has still not been sufficient recently. The secret of this system was violence. As clearly observed in the subjects of households and husband violence, violence is not only a means that is used in relation to women labor or exploitation of women's body, but also a means that was used by the early European capitalists to conquer foreign lands, to take sovereignty over those lands, and to colonize people.

Similar to Mies, Silvia Federici (2004) also stresses that violence is a perpetual feature of capital accumulation process. Federici (2004) too considers violent attacks on the control over women's labor and their sexualities as the secret of capital accumulation, and she emphasizes that there is a constant tendency to suppress alternative life opportunities.

To summarize, in contrast to dual system approach, which evaluates patriarchal relations as a relic of the past social formations that are external to capital accumulation, and which in this way considers capital accumulation process and capitalist development as a relationship with a potential to resolve previous authoritative relations, unitary system approach, which is represented by Maria Mies (1986) and Silvia Federici (2004), emphasizes patriarchal character of capital

accumulation process by analyzing capital accumulation within its historical development. There are significant differences among the ideas on marginalization of women's labor, introduced by dual system approach. These differences are especially crucial in terms of analyzing contemporary positions and experiences of men and women in labor market. First of all, as indicated in Maria Mies's study (1984), the recent form of women's labor, which is defined as housewifization, signals devaluation of labor. It shows the major character of the labor market. Therefore, in contrast to the unitary system view that presents women's labor as marginal to the central labor force, it claims that women's labor represents the main tendencies of the labor market.

It is difficult to persuade women who face violence in their lives and people of the colonized countries that civilization is not violent (Mies, 1984). As emphasized by Maria Mies, the idea that the discourse of human rights can be easily ignored by the bourgeois as long as the ways of punishment based on the sovereignty of law contradict the needs of capital accumulation is even more topical today. While capitalism turns traditional values upside down during capital accumulation process, it employs these values in order to prevent any possible efforts to collectivize production and reproduction. However, despite this dark view and predictions, as noted by Silvia Federici (2014: xii) in the preface of the 2014 new edition of Maria Mies' work *Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale*, Maria Mies' study is not pessimistic. This is because the contradiction between the tendency of capital accumulation and reproduction of humanity (Mies, 1984; Ramas and Brenner, 1984) positions women as the leading actors of social struggles (Mies, 1984; Ramas and Brenner 1984; Federici, 2004). One of the distinctions between the unitary system view and the dual system approach is related to this idea. The dual system approach puts male workers' resistance at the center to understand the contemporary status of women's labor. This view has a content that introduces men as subjects and turns women into passive beings. However, the unitary system view explains today's status of women's labor by centralizing their control over collective life and their capacity to organize an alternative life in production and reproduction. The unitary

system approach centralizes women's labor in its analyses and (in contrast to the dual system analysis) considers women's position in production and reproduction as essential actors in organizing alternative ways of life against capital accumulation.

The analyses of the dual system approach and unitary system view are at the center of the studies on the position of women in the labor market. Together with this central focus, the other group of literature in this field directly deals with the position of women's labor market participation. Following Ben Fine's ideas (1992), it is possible to classify these studies into three categories: segmented labor market perspective, reserve army of labor thesis, and labor process analysis. It is necessary to state that these three theses do not reflect different theoretical positions. However, when the studies that focus on different thesis statements in the Marxist theory about the organization of capital accumulation are included within the feminist theory, they present the differences in approaching the relationship between patriarchy and capital accumulation. While dual system approach is influential in the theses of segmented labor market and reserve army of labor, the analyses of the labor process rely on unitary system approach.

#### **4.4.1 The Segmented Labor Market View as an Explanation of Women's Economic Marginalization**

The segmented labor market thesis was first introduced in the 1970s. The studies that relied on this thesis rapidly became widespread in the 1980s (Peck, 1989). These studies criticize the approach of the "orthodox or neo-classical" understanding towards labor market by focusing on the effects of the class struggles, such organizations as the state and unions, and reproduction over the labor markets (Peck, 1989: 119). Reich, Gordon, and Edwards (1973) define labor market segmentation "as the historical process whereby political economic forces encourage the division of the labor market into separate submarkets, or segments, distinguished by different labor market characteristics and behavioral rules."

According to the early studies of the segmented labor market view, labor market was stratified as primary and secondary markets (Reich, Gordon and Edwards, 1973). While the jobs in the primary labor market require skill; they are high paying, and they have the potential of durability and promotion, the jobs in the secondary market offer no possibility of developing skills; they are low-paying jobs with a high rate of turnover. The secondary labor market often employs women, ethnic minorities, and young people. In this respect, labor market is also stratified on nationality and gender (Reich, Gordon and Edwards, 1973). The main factor in the segmentation of the labor market is the capital's will to increase its control over the labor process (Reich, Gordon and Edwards, 1973). According to Edwards (1979: 165), in order to identify the reasons for segmentation, it is necessary to analyze the realization of labor force during the labor process. The struggles of the laborers who have become a more homogeneous group under the conditions of competitive capitalism create a tension for the capital: "[t]he new needs of monopoly capitalism for control were threatened by the consequences of homogenization and proletarianization of the work force" and they conclude from the historical analysis that "to meet this threat employers actively and consciously fostered labor market segmentation in order to 'divide and conquer' the labor force" (Gordon, 1972; Reich, Gordon and Edwards, 1973: 361).

This was made possible by the internal organization of control at firms "through intensification of hierarchical control" which furthered "labor market segmentation through the creation of segmented 'internal labor markets'" (Reich, Gordon and Edwards, 1973: 362). There also existed dualism in industrial structure due to systemic forces. Larger and more capital intensive firms had necessitated stable market demand, and when demand was unstable, certain products "were subcontracted (...)to small, more competitive and less capital-intensive firms on the industrial periphery" which concomitantly resulted in the "dualism of working environments, wages, and mobility patterns" (Reich, Gordon and Edwards, 1973: 363) in which women, ethnic minority groups, younger people, and disabled people are heaped together in the disadvantaged secondary markets.

Within segmented labor market theory, there can be differences in evaluations of the importance/priority given to such institutions as family and state in the segmentation of the labor market, and the impacts that these institutions make on the labor market. For example, while Offe and Lenhardt (1984) focus on the effects of state organization in transforming labor force into paid labor, feminist researchers deal with revealing the effects of the responsibilities of family and women in reproduction or the effects of the unionized labor movement in the segmentation of the labor market (e.g. Hartman, 1979; Barrett and MacIntosh, 1980; Humpheries and Rubery, 1984, Rubbery, 1988; Walby, 1989).

As noted by Ben Fine (1992: 48), segmented labor market theory “has proved attractive tool for analyzing women’s employment because of its general ability to differentiate between men’s and women’s positions in labor-markets.” But, they lack any explanation why they are women who filled the secondary markets? When studies attempt to explain why women heap together in the secondary markets, they turn to analysis of patriarchy external to labor market processes. In this sense, the analyses of the feminist researchers on the segmented labor market follow the dual system approach mentioned above. Although these approaches basically aim to present a causal explanation for the position of women in the labor market, they sometimes limit themselves to a descriptive account, which only identifies women’s positions (Fine, 1992).

#### **4.4.2 Women as Reserve Army of Labor**

Reserve army of labor thesis develops from Marxist theory of capital accumulation. Unemployment is an internal element of capitalism and structural part of capital accumulation for Marxism. There are two basic functions of reserve army of labor during capital accumulation process. While the first one is to keep labor force ready for the economies expansion periods, the second one is to suppress the workers’ demands, particularly the wages. In short, the presence of the reserve army of labor

means both keeping the labor force that the capital needs in times of emergency and growing periods ready, and disciplining the labor (Luxemburg, 1995; Magdoff and Magdoff, 2004). Therefore, within the Marxist theory, the reserve army of labor has an additional function of disciplining the labor besides putting the cost of the wages under pressure.

The reserve army of labor thesis has been applied in order to explain women's positions in labor market. The reserve army of labor thesis relates the inclusion women's labor market participation and their exclusion from it with the capital's need of labor power. Accordingly, when the capital needs labor force, women become paid workers; when the capital's need of labor force decreases during the recession period, women go back to their home (e.g. Margaret Benston, 1969; Juliet Mitchell, 1971; Beechey, 1978; Fox, 1981). Defining housework and domestic works as the primary role for women makes them most probable candidates for the reserve army.

According to Bruegel (1979: 12), reserve army of labor thesis:

Places the specificity of female labor within a general Marxist model of capital accumulation and so provides some material basis for the differentiation of male and female wage labor, and it also shows up the similarities between the situation of women as wage laborers and that of other groups of workers such as immigrants.

The significance of women concerning reserve army of labor thesis turns around the question of whether women are more 'disposable' than men (Bruegel, 1979). The label that women are low skilled and they work in small and non-unionized workplaces makes it easier for them to get discharged during the recession periods. It is also emphasized that the family ideology/patriarchal ideology that limits women's primary roles with reproduction activities, makes them more disposable (Benston, 1969; Beechey, 1978; Bruegel, 1979).



Phillips and Taylor (1980: 80) summarize the reserve army of labor thesis as such:

Women workers are particularly useful as this 'reserve army of labor' because their family responsibilities and (usually) partial dependence on a man's wage ensure that they are viewed (and often view themselves) as secondary workers, who can be pushed back into their primary sphere-the home-whenver they are not needed on the labor market. Women's family role makes them particularly vulnerable as workers, and their vulnerability is capital's strength. They are the super-exploitable.

The view that women are among the ones to be discharged first during recession periods and to be employed just to ask to leave again during growth periods leads to certain criticisms. For example, for Jean Gardiner (1976) considering women as a significant part of the reserve army of labor because of their function of reserving labor does not comply with the main orientation of the capital accumulation since women's employment increases. According to Gardiner, the fact that women's labor is cheaper than men's labor means that in the long run women's employment will increase, and women will apply for men's jobs. Thus, as it is profitable for the capital to employ women workers, it is not correct to consider women as the first disposable workers. With a different starting point, Ruth Milkman arrives at the same conclusion with Gardiner (1976). Milkman (1976) states that the segmentation in labor market blocks the mobility of labor among male and female workers and protects women from becoming unemployed during the periods of economic stagnancy. In a similar manner, Bruegel (1979) emphasizes that the enlarged capacity of service sector keeps women employed and prevents their return to home. However, Bruegel (1979) also stresses that the increased use of technology in the sectors that ensure women not to go back home might block the protective effects of segmentation.

The views that consider women as a fluent part of the reserve army of labor share the same ground with the segmented labor thesis. Like the segmented labor thesis, women's position in the labor market is determined either by the family ideology that is external to the capital accumulation or by patriarchy. Yanz and Smith (1983: 95)

makes the following evaluation of the reserve army of labor view towards the relationship between patriarchy and capital accumulation:

[W]omen's oppression is seen to be primarily located in the family and it is this that ultimately determines their subordination in the labor force.[...] This determination of women's labor force subordination by their role in the family implies the separation theoretically of family relations from capitalist 'economic' relations. [...] This analysis thus separates patriarchal relations, which have their basis in the family, from capitalist relations, which are purely 'economic'.

Consequently, the feminist analysis of the reserve army of labor brings up reproduction relations into the agenda as an internal part of the capital accumulation. Women's existence as cheap labor force is identified as a result of their position in the family and in the sexual division of labor. This also supports the idea that it builds an external relation between production and reproduction. Secondly, considering particularly the second function of the reserve army, that is, disciplining labor, women's presence in labor market and their exclusion from it is evaluated in reference to male workers' resistance against jobs' becoming unskilled, flexible, or cheaper; that is to say, devalued labor. This view, which can be considered as a follow-up to Hartmann and Walby's ideas, might complicate studying women's militant activities especially when it is combined with the idea that regard women as 'docile' given the main characteristics of their workplaces.

In the following part, I will summarize the labor process analysis used in order to explain women's positions in workplaces. Feminist labor process analysis is functional in two aspects. It first serves to explain the main assumptions of patriarchal analyses about why in some workplaces male workers follow a strategy to prevent women from employing there; why in other workplaces they support women's demands for equality; and it also offers an opportunity to examine women workers' compliance and their resistance together.

#### 4.4.3 Labor Process Analysis

While the segmented labor thesis and the reserve army of labor thesis discuss women's positions on the axis of the effects of reproduction such as family; feminist labor process analysis focus on the role of gender in transforming labor into labor power, and question the operation of the gender relations/patriarchal relations at the production. Unlike segmented labor thesis and reserve army of labor thesis, feminist labor process analysis is interested in exploring gender relations at the point of production.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, while the first two approaches focus on women's secondary positions, feminist labor process analysis calls for questioning the role of gender in the organization of capitalist production.

The labor process analysis in Harry Braverman's work *Labor and Monopoly Capital* (1974), prepares a viable framework for the development of literature focusing on mechanization, deskilling, and workers' struggles around control of the labor process. Braverman (1974), in his work, proposed the thesis of deskilling as a means of control in transforming labor into labor power. That is, capitalist logic of valorization and profit constructs the tendency towards the strategy of workplace control and deskilling (Cohen, 1987: 36-37). The specificity of the production unit lies in the fact that it is the site of the central dynamic of relations of exploitation and the creation of the surplus value (Cohen, 1987: 39). All in all, for Braverman (1974), according to capitalist accumulation rule, labor is devalued, deskilled, and a more homogenous labor force is created.

According to Braverman, Frederick Winslow Taylor's principle of scientific management, which was introduced in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was based on the idea that labor process should be detached from laborers' skills, conception should be dissociated from execution, and it supported the use of monopoly over

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<sup>42</sup>The studies on labor process rely on highly various theoretical approaches. While some studies analyze labor process through a poststructuralist stance, some others adopt an intersectional approach. In this part (which also determines the approach of this dissertation), I will only limit the scope to the feminist labor process analysis, which benefits from Marxist labor process analysis and develops itself through criticizing Marxist labor process analysis.

scientific knowledge for controlling labor process at its every stage. The main idea behind this principle was the principle of reducing the cost in order to increase the profit.

In a broader sense Braverman's (1974) work, Jonna and Foster (2014: 220) put:

[S]ought to capture the dialectical relation between the labor process on the one hand, and the changing structure and the composition of the working class and its reserve armies on the other. This broad view allowed him to perceive how the changes in the labor process were integrally connected to the emergence of whole new spheres of production, the reformation of the working class and the development of new structural contradictions.

This larger context of Braverman's work paved the way for further studies on labor process.<sup>43</sup> In his landmark study, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, Richard Edwards (1979) notes labor process as an arena of class conflict and workplace as a contested terrain because they are the arenas of profit and capital accumulation. Edwards (1979: 15-16) points out:

Faced with chronic resistance to their effort to compel production, employers over the years have attempted to resolve the matter by reorganizing, indeed revolutionizing, the labor process itself. Their goal remains profits; their strategies aim at establishing structures of control at work (...) Work has been organized, then, to contain conflict.

Edwards (1979:19) labeled the most rudimentary form of control as the simple form of control (entrepreneurial control and hierarchical control) in which managers and foreman ruled the firm. In entrepreneurial control "mechanisms for achieving it were very unsophisticated, and the system of control tended to be informal and unstructured. The personal power and authority of the capitalist constituted the primary mechanism for control" (Edwards, 1979: 25). Hierarchical type of control is

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<sup>43</sup>This larger context of Braverman's work paved the way for further studies on labor process. Two themes became prominent in the course of labor process debate: minimizing the role of class struggle in the shaping of the labor process (Friedmann, 1977; Zimbalist, 1979) and a deterministic character of deskilling thesis. Studies oriented towards poststructuralist view accused Braverman's study of neglecting subjectivity (e.g. Knights, 1990; O' Doherty and Willmott, 2001). As far as Burawoy (1996: 299) puts, labor process studies retreating from materialist critique "opens the door to idealism-structure dissolved into a linguistic construction and history reduced to narrative."

the outcome of the battles between craftsmen and the capitalist of the reorganization of the labor process and industry. These two forms of simple system of control are not just “historical curiosities” (Edwards, 1979: 34). Hence, near the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, efficiency of simple control has declined and technical control and bureaucratic control of the workplace has been the solutions of the question of the crisis of control on the shop floor. System of simple control remains the dominant form in the economy’s periphery. Accordingly, simple control

Represents a reservoir of stagnant and backward technologies or, paradoxically, of firms built on recent innovations that have not yet been engulfed by some corporate giant. The periphery provides generally low wages, few forms of job protection, and high labor turnover. (...) The pretty tyranny of the bosses extends to nearly every aspect of factory life and colors all social relationships (Edwards, 1979: 35).

The tyranny of the bosses in the simple control system extends to all social relations including the sexual ones (Edwards, 1979: 35). With the growth of corporations and centralization in the core, such as General Motors, General Electrics and so on, large corporations had difficulty in controlling labor and ensuring productivity. New types of control in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are the result of both new contradictions emerged in corporations and workers struggles. Edwards (1980: 125) associates technical control with ‘continuous-flow’ of production, represented by Ford where control becomes “truly structural, embedded in that hoary old mystification, technology” and the workforce tends to become more homogenous. Bureaucratic control is essentially a product of post-war conditions in America. The significance of this control system is through an organizational structure of the firm as Edwards (1979: 131) notes:

Bureaucratic control, like technical control, differs from the simple forms of control in that it grows out of the formal structure of the firm, rather than simply emanating from the personal relationship between workers and bosses. But while technical control is embedded in the physical and technological aspects of production and is built into the design of machines and the industrial architecture of the plant, bureaucratic control is embedded in the social and organizational structure of the firm and is built into job categories, work rules, promotion procedures, discipline, wage scales, definitions of responsibilities, and the like. Bureaucratic

control establishes the impersonal force of “company rules” or “company policy” as the basis for control.

Edwards (1979) points that the system of control is more crucial than the specific jobs for creating the context for the labor demanded, composition of the workers and the forms of struggle of the workers. In turn, control of labor process and reorganization of the work organization creates a working class divided along the lines of the firms being in the core and in the periphery of the economy. In *The Politics of Production*, Burawoy (1985) has focused on shop floor control. According to Burawoy, a factory regime incorporates both organization of work and ideological apparatus (state). Factory regimes, Burawoy puts forward, has varied from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to 21<sup>st</sup> century, from despotic, hegemonic, and finally to hegemonic despotism. Hegemonic regime portraits a consensus, a counter attempt of employers in order to maintain control of the labor process and depends on workers consent in place of coercion.

If one part of the labor process studies was exploitation and control the other part was the struggles of the workers. For example, Rick Fantasia (1988) had revealed capitalist labor process’s cooperative character through the concept “cultures of solidarity”, which refers to the oppositional workplace culture formed among workers. Maurizio Atzeni (2010) notes embryonic solidarity found in the collective and cooperative nature of the labor process. This is a two-fold process for Atzeni (2010: 30): pre-existing form of solidarity based on the collective character of labor process, collective experience of exploitation and workers’ dependence on wage labor may also “tend to create (...) group of workers fully identified with the particular capital employing them and proud of the quality of their work take its active form the question for the workers is mostly of creating and consolidating it.”

These insightful studies of labor process effected flowering of feminist works on labor process although their class-only approach had excluded analyzing gender on the shop floor. It is possible to state that from Braverman’s *Labor and Monopoly Capital* onwards labor process studies’ focus on both exploitation and control led to the development of the field of feminist labor process studies with a critical

perspective. Previous studies' emphasis on innate relation between domination (control) and exploitation paved the way to analyze gender and patriarchy at the point of production; to question power relations and exploitation with a critical engagement with labor process debate and a concern on gendered class struggle.

The question of how gender or patriarchy effects turning labor into labor power has been the main question elaborated by feminist scholars. It may be said that feminist labor process studies has followed three paths. First and foremost of the feminist studies questioned the relevance of deskilling thesis (e.g. Phillips and Taylor, 1980; Cockburn, 1983; Crompton and Jones, 1984; Baron 1987). In the age of what Edwards call "bureaucratic type of control," by questioning the naturalness of the skill, feminist scholars have demystified the naturalized hierarchies at the shop floor, and they recalled the relation between jobs and the characteristics of the people who fills them. Central to Anna Phillips and Barbara Taylor's (1980: 79) essay *Sex and Skill: Notes towards a Feminist Economics* is the idea that skill is an ideological category depending on the power of the workers who perform the work. In brief, superior bargaining power of men has resulted in an equation between men and the skill. Cynthia Cockburn (1988: 38) notes that: "People have a gender, and their gender rubs off on the jobs they do. These jobs in turn have a gender character which rubs off on the people who do them", and she agrees with the view that skill has been constructed historically as a male attribute. Cockburn also questioned deskilling thesis and the assumption of homogenization of the labor force. Her study has shown that introduction of the new technologies and machinery in several industries is accompanied by the reorganization of jobs in a gendered division of labor. Technology being at the hands of male workers and their bargaining power led to their work being identified as a skilled one.

Secondly, feminist scholars have focused on construction of gender difference within the point of production (e.g. Davies and Rosser, 1986; Game and Pringle, 1984; Blewett, 1993; Salzinger, 1997;2003; 2004; Munoz 2016). This strain of works hasbeen culminated with the stagnation of the theories of patriarchy and shift from the concept patriarchy to the gender as an analytical category. These studies'

theoretical perspectives varied from feminist historical materialism to intersectional analysis and post-structuralism. Miriam Glucksmann's, a.k.a. Ruth Cavendish's work *Women on the Line* (1982) was among the pioneering studies of experiences of women workers in the workplace. The book was the outcome of an ethnographic study at the factory, which began at the early 1970s (Pollert, 2012: 174). Anna Pollert's book *Girls, Wives, Factory Lives* (1981) is another early work of women's experiences in the workplace.

Anna Pollert (2012: 174-5) evaluates the aim of her study after thirty years of its publication as such:

Theoretically, it aimed to explore capitalist class exploitation and gender oppression as process, and I saw how they become inextricably fused in consciousness and workplace dynamics. For example, in the chapter "Workers: So What If They're Women," women reveal a "them and us" consciousness of management and workers being on different sides, but also a complex sense of resignation to, and rejection of, male stereotypes of "fiddly" "women's" jobs.

Their works are pioneering works on gender and labor process written in a feminist historical materialism perspective. While Cockburn's (1983) study represented a shift from dual system approaches to a unitary system as a conceptual tool for analyzing work-organizations, Cavendish's (1982) and Pollert's (1981) works highlighted the limits of patriarchy as a conceptual tool and gave gender analytical priority in understanding social processes. Cavendish (1982) and Pollert (1981) show that the process of gendering takes place within class relations and can be elaborated empirically in micro-level analyses of gender relations at work. In examining wage labor, Pollert (1981: 4) points out that, "the experience of female oppression shapes their exploitation, their exploitation alters their oppression. The two together combine into an unstable whole: both the "double burden" and a potentially explosive challenge". In a more recent study Carolina Bank Munoz (2016) studied two factories of transnational tortilla manufacturing corporations and exposed the fundamental role of race, class and gender dynamics at the point of production producing different factory regimes. Munoz's (2016) study, *Transnational Tortillas*



is among the studies having intersectional perspective in which intersection between race-class and gender positions at the point of production determines experiences of the producers.

Lastly, scholars have studied different strategies of management in the control of labor process and shop floor and consent to oppression (Ecevit, 1991; Lee, 1998; Ngai, 2005; Ngai and Smith 2007; Munoz, 2016). Control of labor power and its gendered character had gained raising emphasis till the 1990s because of the “feminization of labor”. Especially in newly industrialized regions of the world capital’s call for young, unmarried and docile labor force into the factories led to a rising concern in the meaning and functioning of gender in capital accumulation process. These studies mainly focused on the types of control at the labor process. For example, Yıldız Ecevit (1991) in an essay, which is part of her doctoral study focusing on women’s employment in Bursa province of Turkey, defines patriarchal control at the workplace. Similarly, Pun Ngai (2002) in her book titled *Made in China* elaborates the use of gender in control at the workplace and how femininity is used in urban export-processing zones of reformed China.

Ngai (2007) identifies a dormitory labor system<sup>44</sup> as a gendered form of use of labor for the export oriented production in the new industrialized regions of the world. It is the system that combines work and residence for the rural poor. The problem of residence for the masses migrated temporarily (not allowed to migrate permanently) into the cities is resolved for the sake of capital accumulation process which furthered workers control by controlling daily reproduction of labor power, surpassing wage increases and lengthening workday. Then, gender occupies a central place for the formation of “transient working class” in export producing zones of China. Despite its enormous rise in workers control, dormitory regime also paves the way for cooperation, solidarity, and sisterhood among workers (Ngai, 2012).

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<sup>44</sup> As far as Ngai (2007: 239-40) points out, since the 1970s with the development of new export oriented industrialized regions and Special Economic Zones, migrant laborers who work in the factories live in the dormitories of the factories and “all companies that employ migrant workers – irrespective of the company’s industrial sector and whether it is domestic or foreign-invested – provide accommodation to these workers.”

According to Ngai (2012: 255), new working class, predominantly women, have to struggle both for improvement of working conditions and for access to the citizenship rights to create their own working-class community and alternative ways of trade union struggle. She points out that, “Dormitory-based organizing along gender lines that generate sisterhood solidarity among workers may well be one of the alternatives.”

To sum up, feminist labor process studies differ from both segmented labor market theory and reserve army of labor thesis, by giving analytical priority to workplace in analyzing women’s wage labor. We can formulate the difference between segmented labor market theory, reserve army of labor thesis and labor process theory as such: Once former studies focused on labor market; latter one focused on labor process to explain women’s disadvantaged position. In addition, while the first two seek to investigate women’s subordinated position in labor market the latter one seeks to investigate patriarchy or gender at the capitalist work organization. This has been particularly important in the way they evaluate the relation between gender and class, patriarchy and capitalism. While first two positions are predominantly inclined to dual system theories, labor process studies have been prone to unitary view of patriarchy and capitalism or gender and class as the two faces of the same process.<sup>45</sup> Relatedly, the relationship between gender and class puts forward with feminist labor process, central to understanding the history of the labor movement has enabled male workers’ and trade unions’ responses to inclusion of women in a specific sector on

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<sup>45</sup> Still, some studies substantially reflect the effects of the dual system approach. This is particularly valid for the studies that re-analyze the thesis of deskilling and homogeneity. It is possible to consider Cockburn’s (1983) work as an example to this type of analysis. While she notes that capitalism and patriarchy is produced simultaneously at the workplace (2009: 269), when she evaluates job segregation by sex she appeals to the notion of male self-interest or male dominance as the main actor of women’s exclusion or segregation. Joan Acker (1989: 236) notes that in practice it is very difficult to talk about capitalism and patriarchy, gender and class as a simultaneous process and “theorists still talked about patriarchy and capitalism, or gender and class as separate phenomena.” The emphasis on the idea that patriarchy and capitalism are different phases of the same process is replaced by the emphasis on the interactions between class and gender in the feminist historical materialist and intersectional approaches of the feminist labor process analysis. Especially, the concept of patriarchy has remained in used in empirical examples to refer to various ways of the labor process control.

the axis of organization of work and specific form of type of control at the workplace.

Feminist labor process analysis develops by adopting Marxist labor process analysis through criticizing it. For example, as Joan Acker remarks, it is difficult to find a proper analysis of gender or gender difference even in the debates on workplace democracy, which is the closest concept in the studies on labor process or politics of production. In fact, one of the influential mottos of feminism, that is, 'private is political' has a particular role in the studies on labor process and politics of production. For instance, Burawoy (1985: 9) states this as such:

The very concept of production politics owes much to the feminist movement: to its critique of the distinction between public and private, and to its notion of the personal is the political. There are, in other words, politics outside of the state.

Yet, labor process analysis and studies on workplace politics have been the starting point of feminist workplace analysis. Following chapter of the thesis will concentrate on explaining the discussions on feminist labor process in a more detailed way. At this point, I will reformulate the main question that is the source for the fieldwork of this study. The study builds upon Maurizio Atzeni's claim that capitalist labor process is not only the place for exploitation but also a place for solidarity. In Atzeni's words (2010: 26):

[T]he capitalist labor process, like any other labor process intended as creative human activity, is not just the site of exploitation per se, but also the site of cooperation. In fact, despite the tendency to divide workers, to segment work and to separate mental from manual work, the production process imposes at least a minimum level of cooperation. If on the one hand this cooperation becomes functional to capital's valorization, on the other it represents a first associational moment among the collective workers, upon which solidarity links may be created.

When we generalize the character of labor process and its control that enables solidarity or sisterhood among women by considering sexual division of labor in workplaces, as Pun Ngai notes in relation to dormitory type of control, it offers an opportunity to evaluate specific form of solidarity out of collective experience of

labor process (its exploitation and control) for women workers. Here, we can reformulate the question governing field research as such: How does pre-existing form of solidarity (as an immanent character of the collective experience of labor process) function in sex-segregated workplaces and how does gender affect active form of solidarity (of consolidating it within and after the struggles at the workplaces)? The answers to these questions will be given in the following section devoted to the analysis of the field-study.

## CHAPTER 5

### METHOD OF THE STUDY

In line with the purpose of this thesis and considering the main characteristics of workplace actions in Turkey, I initially planned to hold in-depth interviews with women workers in two different factories: Serapool and Mata Automotive Factory. However, in the later stages of the study, I decided not to include the interviews I held with workers in Serapool into the analysis and kept my entire focus on the experiences of women workers in Mata. Within the scope of the thesis, I met with 16 female workers who participated in and organized various actions including picketing, slowdown strike and factory occupation in Mata Automotive Factory located in Istanbul Tuzla Free Trade Zone. I benefited from qualitative research technique and in-depth interview technique of data gathering during the interviews held with women workers. I conducted interviews from 2017 March 9 to 2017 April 4.

Before determining the field of the study, I conducted in-depth interviews with 2 women who are active in Esenyalı Women Solidarity Association (in Turkish Esenyalı Kadın Dayanışma Derneği), organizing various activities for women in a worker neighborhood in Tuzla, Istanbul and who had knowledge about the working and living conditions of women. One of the founders and chairwoman of Esenyalı Women Solidarity Association, Adile helped me have an interview with a young worker who work in Mata Automotive and joined the slowdown strike and factory occupation in the factory, thus intermediated the process of determining the research field.

The main assumption lying behind the decision to conduct interviews with women workers who joined industrial actions in various forms is the assumption that the industrial actions have a transformative potential on workers in general and changes the lives of women workers in particular. Industrial actions evidently aim to improve the working conditions, however, a potential of a protest is not limited to that. The demand for improved working conditions also has a potential for change in the lives of women struggling. Moments of actions which develop within the given structure of industrial relations or outside of these structures are special moments where the deeply-rooted hierarchical relations mostly at the point of production turn upside down, are questioned and redefined. With this aspect, protests which can take on forms such as strike, factory occupation, slow-down strike etc also refer to an intervention in the way these relations at the point of production operates. When the women workers are on the agenda, it can be said that these actions have a transformative potential on sexist practices considering the fields of production and reproduction.

During the initial stage of the study, as I mentioned in the Introduction chapter, I started with the following assumption: an action itself is transformative for those who participate in it whether or not for instance, a strike or a factory occupation results with a gain. It is because an action points out to the desire of breaking down the taken for granted assumptions and procedures and to establish a new order. This is the joint experience of female and male workers. Besides, processes such as strikes, factory occupations also mean the shaking of accepted, appropriate and conventional understanding of womanhood which underlines specific experience of women workers, unlike their male workmates. In other words, the desire to transform also aims for social order, social control and oppression along with improved working conditions in the workplace. It is because industrial protest carves a new horizon of experience onto the collective memory of workers.

The research claims that the industrial actions are transformative for women workers. The transformative aspects are related with the role sexual division of labor plays in the control of labor process and deepening exploitation. I can outline the main

research problem of the study as follows: there is a close relation between the characterization of women as a housewife and devalorization of labor. This study problematizes relation between unequal sexual division of labor and deepening exploitation on the axis of the relation between class politics and feminist politics.

Starting from 1960 and 70s, the feminist researchers brought to the agenda the function of sexual division of labor in terms of capital accumulation. To briefly mention, the unpaid domestic labor was revealed to be in relation with the terms, paid work, commodification, devaluation, capital accumulation and exploitation (e.g. Dalla Costa, 1971; Morton, 1971; Secombe, 1974; Luxton, 1980; Mies and Salleh, 1990). Accordingly, if feminist scholars have posed that like wage laborers who sell their labor power at the market, housework is not a free activity but “to the extent that, directly or indirectly, it is exchanged for a wage, reproduction work is, at all points, subject to the conditions imposed on it by the capitalist organisation of work and relation of production” (Federici, 2013: 92). When women’s unpaid domestic work is reformulated within the confines of reproduction of labor-power, feminist scholars have reformulated the point of reproduction as an arena of contradiction, resistance, and struggle (Federici (2013). The researches which consider the characteristics of women’s labor as at the center of feminist thought and politics analyzed the labor of women, whom have developed a different understanding about the world on the basis of the sexual division of labor, on the axis of building feminist consciousness and the capacity to change the world.

The proposition that women’s location in sexual division of labor has the potential to create feminist consciousness and the capacity to change the world is also a methodological proposition. This study relies on the historical materialist vein of Feminist Standpoint Theory. It is possible to talk about various versions of feminist Standpoint Theory that feeds on Marxist theory, albeit controversial at times.

Standpoint theory commences with the famous feminist methodological claim that idealized agent of the scientific knowledge claim as the disengaged observer who occupies no specific position is itself biased. Feminist methodology in general, in

explaining social relations, revalued women's experiences and relied on women's experiences as a more reliable account of the world. Standpoint theory commencing with the general feminist methodological principle gives priority to women's standpoints and political engagement to acknowledge scientific knowledge. As far as Sandra Harding (2004:6) points out, "the more value-neutral a conceptual framework appears, the more likely it is to advance the hegemonous interests of dominant groups".

Within this shared ground there also occurs diverse views on origins of knowledge, plurality of standpoints, of conceptions about truth. Whether a standpoint denotes to the various social locations or a standpoint is achieved is among one of the themes central. This thesis argues that social location of women defined within the confines of sexual division of labor makes women at the forefront for livelihood struggles and makes them potential actors for social change. However, sexual division of labor denotes to the common experience of oppression, the commonality and solidarity among women is something to be achieved. Objective contradiction between deepening exploitation and women's reproductive tasks makes a dispute in terms of unequal sexual division of labor issue within the class terms, and vice versa. These arguments have framed the study and constituted the objective rationale to study feminism rooted in working class solidarity.

The potential of women's labour's specific position historically to change the world order, to form alternative collective livelihood and the simultaneity between class disputes and gender disputes operated as a subjective rationale for studying working class feminism in Turkey. As mentioned before, "finding hope" in difficult times was among one of the factors of renewed interest in working-class feminists, this study's subjective rationale also reflects an aspiration for hope in non-democratic atmosphere in Turkey. Women workers struggles in difficult conditions at various shopfloors in Turkey and the things that their perspective offers may renew feminisms hope for a better future.



To go back the transformative aspects of industrial actions for women workers, we can evaluate these aspects in three ways. First of all, as women take place in protests, they also oppose to the dominant view of womanhood (Garcia Castro, 1998: 79). Secondly, improved material conditions in the shopfloor both reinforce the belief in power to transform the existing social relations and workers also transform themselves by transforming their material conditions (Atzeni, 2010: 26). Thirdly, collective power to change existing workplace relations furthers women workers, whose sense of being ‘us’ perpetuates within the collective action, power to change their lives individually (Garcia Castro, 1998: 83). Following the protest in Mata which resulted in unionization, it is clearly seen in women workers’ narratives that this positive change in their working conditions and becoming a part of a collective empowered them individually.

In such periods of conflicts such as an industrial action, conflicts at each area of life become clear and new horizon of experience shows that old issues and conflicts can be resolved in new ways. The women workers in Serapool, the second factory where I conducted interviews shows that the protest, even if it does not resulted in ‘success’, points out that even an action resulted in “defeat”, it empowers women and old issues can be resolved in other unconventional ways.

I conducted in-depth interviews with 2 women workers and and conducted focus group interview with 4 women workers in Serapool Factory. However, I will not benefit from the interviews I held in Serapool in the analysis section of the thesis thinking that they require further depth. I limit the evaluations in the upcoming chapters to the interviews in Mata Automotive. Yet, I believe that the reasons behind leaving out the interviews in Serapool in the analysis section and some differences between Mata and Serapool shall be briefly mentioned. It is because the interviews in Serapool and the conditions under which they were held continue to operate in the background of the interviews in Mata Automotive Factory and in the analysis of these interviews.

I can summarize the main differences between Mata and Serapool as follows: First of all, Mata and Serapool are two factories where different products are produced. While the parts of luxury automobiles in the World are produced in Mata, Serapool is where porcelain-based materials and luxury ceramics are produced for pool panels. Therefore, they are not in the same sectors; their employment conditions and union situations significantly differ from each other. The second difference is due to the positions of the factories within the city. Mata Automotive is located in İstanbul Tuzla, Free Trade Zone. There is a considerable distance between the factory location and workers' houses. In Mata, workers reach factories via shuttle buses and minibuses they take from their neighborhoods and this journey takes about half an hour. Serapool Factory is in Kavakpınar neighborhood, Pendik district of İstanbul which is a workers neighborhood and almost all workers live closeby. The factory is situated within walking distance to workers' houses. In addition, Serapool is a woman-dominated factory and the women were always on the front line throughout the protests and fight for unionization. However, the strike that started with the demand for unionization in Serapool lasted for about 200 days, the employer would not hire back the workers despite the court ruling. Some workers started to work in other factories throughout the action. The others became pensioners after being paid their severance pays in Serapool. In this aspect, the action in Serapool resulted in a "defeat" in terms of workers' demands not being met.

As the workers who participated in the protest and organized the workers were removed from the factory, the experience of women workers in Serapool largely differentiates itself from Mata. As one of our main areas of interest within the scope of thesis is to address the change that takes place in relations at the moment and following the protest, this differentiation is important for the ongoing discussion and is the main reason why Serapool is excluded from the analysis. Another reason why I decided to leave the womens' experiences at Serapool out is that the diversity of workers experiences after the action. Tracking these experiences is not possible especially under the state of emergency conditions in terms of time concern.

I should mention that the industrial action resulting in a gain in Mata has a significant effect on the desire of women to talk about it. Even though the action caused important changes in women's lives, one aspect of their desire to talk about it is related with the present. The fact that the action resulted in a gain and the workers who joined continue working in the same workplace together under improved conditions keep the action *ongoing*, the gains of action *continuous*, and women *empowered*. This is an aspect of workers in Mata to become more open to meet and tell. To the contrary, the action in Serapool failing to meet the concrete demands and at least short term effects of the defeat' in the lives of workers became quite different from that of Mata. Following the act, some of the workers had to work for longer hours and under tougher conditions in workplaces without union or in workplaces in which union is ineffective in solving workers's problems. After getting laid off, some women workers had to make more time for their houses or activities such as patient care which they were away from throughout the protest that took a long time. This is one of the obstacles ahead of the desire of women in Serapool to tell the events. On the other hand, the fact that the protest took quite long and common differentiation and varied experiences in the lives of workers after the protest deserves to touch upon the experiences of being a worker and a women for women that protested in Serapool one by one.

The main interest of the thesis is to study how the workers actions affect the social relations in the workplace and what kind of changes it leads to in women workers lives. In terms of the research agenda, Mata is distinguished from Serapool in that it is an industrial action that enables us to see the change and continuities in the relations at the point of production. This is the fundamental reason why the experiences of women workers analyzed in the following sections is limited to the workers experiences at Mata. The protest in Mata Factory resulted in the workers' demands being accepted and the employer had to acknowledge Birleşik Metal-İş union as the authorized union. In addition to the sense of being *us* among workers that became clear with the action, the material improvements in the working

conditions and limiting supervisory control at the labor process, perpetuated collective and individual sense of confidence and make Mata experience significant.

Firstly, I should mention that the fact that the industrial action in Mata Automotive resulted in a gain determined the way the interviews were realized. To begin with, as mentioned above, the fact that the protest in Mata resulted with the improved working conditions and enabled the restriction of the employer's control of labor process. This presents an important example in terms of displaying the changes created in the workers themselves by changing their working conditions. Secondly, the union provided by the industrial action makes the union strong in the shopfloor. While planning this study, I did not expect to conduct interviews with workers during the working hours in a factory in Free Trade Zone. Yeşim intermediated the interviews with shop stewards in Mata Factory. The first time I visited to Mata was at August 2016. Then, I had to return to Ankara upon the academicians have been dismissed from various universities by the statutory decree issued by the Council of Ministers on September 1, 2016.

I went to Mata Automotive again in March 2017. Despite the long time period lapsed, I could reach out to the shop stewards in Mata. This was partly possible due to the strong union organization and relative job security created by this in the factory. Based on my experiences during field research I can say that after a certain amount of time passes, even if it is relatively short, it becomes quite difficult to access the same people and create the necessary time for interviews.

Yeşim was the key person of the research. We went together to the factory and she introduced me to workers and shop stewards. After the first day, I started the interviews by telling the shop stewards about what kind of a study I wanted to do. In order to make interviews shop steward was asking the women workers working at various departments at the factory if they want to make interview on their life stories and was informing the supervisor of the particular department. We were conducting interviews during the work hours in the room of the union located in the factory yard or in the yard depending on the weather and level of noise. I can say that the fact that

the interviews were made during the work hours made workers more willing to talk as the interviews were stealing time at work. I stayed in Izmir during the time I held interviews. I took a train and minibus from İzmit to go the gate of Free Trade Zone to hold the interviews. From here I frequently walked to the factory and sometimes by the car provided by the shopstewards. I usually had conducted one interview in the morning and one after the lunch, then get on the shuttle busses together with workers at the exit of the shift. All interviews took about 3 weeks.

I prepared a structured interview form before going to Mata Automotive Factory and starting the interview. I prepared this form relying both on the interviews with Adile, Yasemin and Yeşim and the feminist labor process studies. I set nine themes to elaborate via various questions on the interview form. These were namely as follows: demographic information, work experience/experience of insecurity, getting to wage work, division of labor in the factory, how the control was experienced within the factory, sexual division of labor, forms of solidarity among workers and cliques among workers, process of industrial action and and going back to routine, home, factory. After the first day when I started the interviews, thinking that the structured form of interview made it difficult to proceed, I left aside the interview form and started to conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews. After a brief small talk, we would start these interviews with the following question: “When you think about your life, what would be the turning points that are important for you?”

The information gathering technique based on semi-structured interview was compatible with the main interest of the study. It is because rather than presenting a comprehensive view of women’s lives, I was trying to capture what conflicts they saw as important in their lives and how they gave meaning to these conflicts. Along with that, women workers assessments on sexist and hierarchical relations existing all areas of social life; the sense of being part of a collective; and bonds formed among women were among the relations that the study aimed to question. Semi-structured interview technique would be quite compatible for a study framed by these questions. Qualitative research technique is a technique whereby contradictory ideas can be expressed and these conflicts play an important role in the analysis of the interview.

In this aspect it enables to reveal important figures, moments and conflicts in the lives of women workers.

One of the important themes that set the tone for interviews I realized in Mata was the desire that women had to change. Remembering is an act concerning the past, for sure. However, the fact that is related with the past does not change the fact that it is a product of the present social relations. What is remembered and how is shaped within the current relationships. What sets the tone of the story seems to be the current social relationships.

In the chapters above regarding how feminism narrates its own history, I tried to touch upon the difference between “nostalgic memory” and “transformative memory” (M. Jacqui Alexander in Fernandes, 2010: 111-112). The workers’ narratives in Mata point out to a “transformative” or “living memory” rather than a nostalgic one. Transformative memory is both related with conditions under which remembering and narrating takes place and the transformative type of memory itself renders the transformation possible. We can evaluate this as women workers holding their past experiences subject to critical assessment on the axis of collective experience of being a women worker. Like the way Sojourner Truth renders herself an agent by narrating (Santamarina, 2005) or Patricia Hill Collins (1998) emphasizes that a claim for right is also a claim for truth, we can say that female workers in Mata render themselves as agents by narrating themselves.

First of all, making visible and publicizing working class experiences as the subject of history have empowering effects as they intermediate the process of working class memory to be carried to today. As the working class experiences are related with various protests and social justice demands, their becoming public issues intermediate another kind of a social justice idea to spread. Thus, in the face hegemonic understanding that regards the elites as the agents of history, becoming evident of the view that sees history as the history of ordinary people’s, displays that the claim for truth coexists with the struggles for rights.

The following chapter of the thesis relies on the experiences of 16 women workers who are industry workers whose families mostly moved Istanbul from rural parts of Turkey when they were not borned yet. They all worked as a waged worker before starting to work at Mata. Their first work experiences usually took place in non-unionized, informal workplaces and commonly in the form of works they see as an extension of the reproduction activities they carry out around the house. Some of the women I interviewed with are married, some were single and some were divorced and their ages were ranging from 25 to 40, mostly in their 30s. Table two shows some of the information such as age, educational status, work experiences of women workers I interviewed.

Tablo 2. Age, educational status and work experiences of women I interviewed

	Name	Year of Birth	Place of Birth	Educational Status	Marital Status/Number of Children	Work Experience
1	Pınar	1978	Litz	Primary-school	Divorced/3 children	Food processing factory,
2	Gül	1974	Tunceli	Secondary-school	Married/2 Children	Family farm, school canteen, supermarket,
3	Derya	1998	Samsun	High-school	Unmarried	Textile
4	Gülây	1967	Sivas	Secondary-school	Married/two children	Hospital, Leather factory
5	Gönül	1973	Giresun	Primary-school	Married/two children	Textile
6	Esra	1992	İstanbul	University	Married	Plastic factory, textile
7	Selma	1963	Maraş	Secondary-school	Married/ 1 child	Cafeteria, plastic, textile
8	İlknur	1982	Erzincan	Secondary-school	Divorced/1 child	Food factory, automotive factory
9	Meral	1968	Sivas	Secondary -school	Divorced/1	Textile
10	Özlem	1993	Konya	Secondary-school	Unmarried	Textile
11	Meryem	1973	Denizli	Primary-school	Divorced	Day nursery, bakery shop, supermarket
12	Hayal	1984	İstanbul	Primary school	Married/2 children	Textile, plastic factory
13	Asiye	1994	Sivas	Secondary school	Married	Food processing factory
14	Aylin	1993	Samsun	Primary school	Married/1 child	Supermarket
15	Figen	1978	Bingöl	Primary school	Married/2 children	Automotive
16	Pelin	1986	Samsun	Secondary School	Unmarried	Textile

There is no doubt that each woman's story is different. But these different lives have many things in common. Throughout the thesis I have attempted to integrate the life experiences of these women within a story focusing on the commonalities. In turn, life stories of 16 women workers are framed as if it was one story shared among women workers. In the following chapter, based on women's stories, I will try to discuss being a women worker in terms of class politics and feminist politics. The interviews I conducted in Mata Automotive cannot be generalized, however it can be said that womens' efforts to limit exploitation and sexism at the workplaces is a tendency that women workers in Mata share with a lot of women working in different factories in different regions in the world.



## CHAPTER 6

### MATA AUTOMOTIVE FACTORY: LABOR PROCESS, SOLIDARITY AND SISTERLY BONDS

#### 6.1 Introduction

In this chapter of the thesis, I will elaborate the stories of 16 women workers in Mata Automotive Factory who witnessed two day long picketing, slowdown strike and factory occupation protests in February 2016. I have used semi-structured interview technique while interviewing with the women workers.

In the first part of the chapter I will present main features of shop-floor struggles in Turkey from the years between 2013 and 2017. In the second part, I will present the working conditions in Mata. Division of labor at the shop floor, the rhythm of the work, who decides what to produce and who decides the numbers of the products will be among the themes elaborated. Next I will try to describe the industrial protest that took place in the Factory along with its before and after.

The interviews held with female workers constitute the main source of this chapter. While analyzing the stories women workers told, I adopted the following method: I tried to follow up the moments where women got excited, felt enthusiastic and got angry throughout all the interview. The stories female workers told highlight mothers, managers/supervisors and sexist colleagues (male workers) as figures they feel anger towards. The anger women feel against their mothers stem from the fact that they have not tried to go beyond the “patriarchal bargain” which perpetuated the inequalities and oppression in their families during their childhood and adulthood. The general framework in which they express their anger towards their mother is the distinction women make between housework, agricultural work and factory work.

Therefore, in the third part of this chapter chapter, I will discuss how women classify housework, agricultural work and factory work. Besides, the notion of “security” lies in the center stage while women classify various works. Women workers propose to define security as a feature that limits the rights of employers at the labor process and a capacity of reforming working conditions, rather than a feature of the ‘work’ per se.

Security also features a dual meaning in terms of work relationships. While on the one hand it refers to the restriction of the employer’s control at the labor process, on the other hand, it refers to disciplining and regulating the spontaneous protests workers will stage against various practices in the workplace. The fourth part of this Chapter *New Routine: Factory, Unionisation and Empowerment* focus on this dual meaning of the security.

The main proposal of the following part titled *Meaning of Being A Female Worker* is the need to be cautious towards the employer’s consideration on women workers who imagine female workers as docile, “nimble” and responsible. The stories that women told and the reflex they showed against the pay inequality, sexual abuse - sexist acts and discourse that do not include sexuality and the meaning they attribute to being responsible and meticulous and nimble fingered workers will guide this chapter.

In the part titled *Cooperative Character of the Labor Process: Solidarity and Sisterhood*, based on the argument of Maurizio Atzeni (2010) that the solidarity is given in the labor process because of its cooperative character, I will try to display the solidary practices in the workplace. Atzeni’s take on the solidarity relation is not limited to that. The labor process is solidary by its collective nature, however, there is an attempt to break down solidarity through various manners and forms; therefore, the solidarity is also kept hidden the same way exploitation is not directly available to workers’ experience. In this part, I will try to reveal the given forms of solidarity among women workers in the workplace by associating the argument of Atzeni (2010) regarding the collectivity of the labor process with the sisterly bonds. On top

of the attempt to break the solidarity relation in the workplace, there is also an attempt to break the sisterly relations, which empower the women. I will try to argue this point based on the gossip imputation directed by male workers and supervisors towards women, and show that the sexist ideology which spreads women hatred constitutes the central element of the class movement as well as the feminist movement.

## **6.2 Key Features of Workplace Protests in Turkey between 2013-2017**

Turkey does not have a database that allows us to track the quantitative and qualitative development of the workers' action. The Ministry of Labor and Social Security presents only the number of workers participating in the strike/lockout and the number of working days lost in the strike/lockout in relation to the strike and lockout applications at public/private workplace separation. Registered industrial actions only involve strikes of unionized workers' interests disputes framed in the collective bargaining law. It does not contain information on the right strike prohibited by collective bargaining law and other forms of actions by workers (occupation, job slowdown, press release, sit-in action, etc.). This point is important as according to researches on workers actions in Turkey, strikes based on their interests disputes (I will define these as a legal strike from now on) constitute a very small part of the workers action.

There are some recent studies to overcome this lack of data, which is extremely important in terms of understanding the course, development and patterns of workers' actions. The study of Metin Özugurlu (2006) is the first example of a recent effort in this direction. İrfan Kaygısız's studies (2014; 2015) published at DİSK-AR on the quantitative breakdown of workers' activities in the previous year has been an important milestone because of its scope and continuity. Labor Studies Society (Emek Çalışmaları Topluluğu – EÇT from now on) established by a group of academics, trade union expert and the researchers in 2014, is the most comprehensive labor actions database in Turkey based on scanning local and national media in the

subject. EÇT's first report on workers' actions relates to the year 2015 and continues to collect and disseminate data by diversifying the number of variables by improving the method of collecting data. Kaygısız's studies (2014, 2015) and EÇT reports (2016, 2017a, 2017b) are the most important resource that can be consulted for the last 5 years on the main patterns of labor actions in Turkey. In this study, Kaygısız's and EÇT's studies are used regarding the weight and quantity of the women workers in the worker's actions and the characteristics of the activist workers. In order to be able to comprehend the news on labor action beyond quantitative data, 2014-2017 issues of Evrensel Newspaperis scanned and labor actions is readindividually. The evaluations I will make below are mainly the patterns that I could identify both through the studies of Kaygısız and EÇT and through the labor news at Evrensel Newspaper. These patterns have been decisive in the election of Mata as a field research of this thesis that takes worker feminism as its subject.

Tablo 3. Worker's actions 2013-2017

<b>Year</b>	<b>The Number of Not Workplace Based Action</b>	<b>The Number of Workplace Based Action</b>	<b>Total Case</b>	
<b>2013</b>	180	365	545	
<b>2014</b>	206	795	1001	
<b>2015</b>	126	628	754	<i>1116 action</i>
<b>2016</b>	188	420	608	<i>729 action</i>
<b>2017 (six months)</b>	140	198	338	<i>596 action</i>

Source: EÇT (2017b).

Table 3 presents the combination of the data on working-class actions of Kaygısız (2014, 2015) and EÇT (2016, 2017a, 2017b) and provides a breakdown of the last 5

years of worker actions (as working class is defined in a context that includes public officials, their actions are also included). The concept of “workplace-based action” is described as the actions by workers in a workplace to address the problems or demands of that workplace (EÇT, 2017). Actions that are not workplace-based include general actions and solidarity actions. Although the EÇT database is inspired by the work of Kaygısız, there are some differences in data entry and presentation techniques between the two studies. For this reason, there is no absolute correspondence in the data. However, since both studies are fed from a common systematic, they can be considered commonly while addressing the general trends (EÇT, 2017a: 10).

The year 2014 is the highest number of cases of workplace-based worker actions and subcontracted workers’ actions has the lion’s share. According to data of Kaygısız, subcontracted workers carried out 56% of the total actions in 2014. It is clear that these actions have made subcontractors and their problems visible, and have forced the political power to regulate the concept of the subcontractor. Indeed, in 2014, the government had to make some improvements in the rights of the workers, and issued the regulations that facilitated their unionization. In the fragile political environment of the country, along with the government’s search for social support, the transfer of subcontracting workers to employment with cadre could be realized<sup>46</sup>.

The first thing that is observed in the table is the continuous decrease in the number of workplace-based action cases following the peak in 2014. In 2015, workers actions called "Metal Storm" were carried out in a widespread and massive fashion, which shook the established trade union in the metal sector. Nevertheless, workplace-based actions have fallen behind the previous year numerically, and the decline continues in 2016 and 2017. The contested environment of the country and the authoritarian political climate has a significant share in this downfall. Suruç in 2015, the massacres in Ankara, the attacks of İŞİD, the July 15 coup initiative and the following state of emergency declaration have been effective in the decrease in

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<sup>46</sup> It is stated that this transfer to the cadre did not solve the problem, yet created the problem of "permanent contractor worker". See Özveri 2018 for the debate.

workers actions. The authoritarian oppressive political climate created by the state of emergency regime appears to have increased the dominance of capital in the workplace by restricting workers actions.

I will not take a long look at the main patterns of workers actions in the last 5 years. However, I would like to talk about some features that are effective when I choose the branch of industry and the workplace where I conducted the fieldwork of my study.

First, as expected, cities such as İstanbul, İzmir, Ankara, Kocaeli, Bursa, Adana and Gaziantep where population and waged work are concentrated stands forward in the geographical distribution of the actions. Parallel to this, the Marmara region where the working population is concentrated is the region where the actions are most experienced. Other than public employees, the most common workplace-based actions are seen in metal, construction, textile (weaving, ready-to-wear and leather), petrochemicals and food sectors. These sectors continue to remain in the top five where the most action takes place, with the order of changing places. When focused only on the actions of subcontracted workers, the prominent sectors are construction and general affairs (especially municipalities).

Mata factory, located in Tuzla free trade zone, İstanbul, is classified in metal sector. Considering the official rate of unionization of the ministry, unionization rate in this sector as of July 2017 is 18%, 6 points above the average of Turkey (12%). A small but steady increase in unionization rate is observed for 2013-2017. The Turkish-Metal Trade Union affiliated to Türk-İş is the biggest trade union in the metal sector. Çelik-İş, affiliated to Hak-İş and Birleşik Metal-İş affiliated to DİSK are the other significant trade unions in the sector. Metalworkers' actions in 2015 are also a rebellion against the hegemony of the Turkish Metal. However, the actions have failed to create a radical transformation in the union structure at the sector.

It should be noted that worker actions are not always achieved by organizing formal institutional structures like unions. 36% of the actions taken in the first six months of 2017 were made by workers unions, 29% by civil servant unions and 1% by non-union organizations (EÇT, 2017, 2018b). The share of spontaneous worker actions that does not belong to an institution but based on informal worker networks is 34%. In 2015 and 2016, this share is 36% and 27% respectively. Thus, non-institutional actions have a certain prevalence. Construction, metal and textile sectors stand out in non-institutional actions. Based on the news in Evrensel Newspaper, this type of action shows that it takes radical forms of action, such as actual strikes, not leaving the workplace, and results faster than other workers actions. On the one hand, such actions have become a way of transcending bureaucratic action arrangements of trade union legislation. From time to time, trade unions seem to head for such actual actions that force the framework of trade union legislation. Mata is important for Birleşik Metal-İşto include an actual strike by enforcing legislation against the unionization attempt against employer's attitude.

Tablo 4. Types of actions -2016

	2016 (%)
Press statement/marching (Against the employer, subcontractor, public, ministry, municipality, etc.)	52
Actual Strike	19
Permanent Resistance	11
Sit-in Action	3
Hunger Stike	2
Not Leaving the Workplace	2
Legal Strike	2
Others (work slow down, closing the path, going up to the roof/crane, food boycott, etc.)	9

Source: EÇT, 2017a.

It is seen that press statements and marching are the most common form of actions (Table 4). These are followed by actual strike, permanent resistance and sit-in actions. The rate of the legal strike in all actions is extremely low. One notable element is the slow but steady increase in actual strikes. If Turkey's industrial relations systems in corporate structures are considered, this fact is highly understandable. With the serious resistance of employers to the collectivization of working relations, the official unionization rate declined to 12% and the actual unionization rate declined to 10% (DISK, 2017). Moreover, the legal strike can not be used as an effective bargaining tool for reasons such as the authorization process in collective bargaining, non-recognition of the right/interest strike, prohibition of strikes and the long procedural transactions related to the strike. In these conditions, an actual strike is becoming the only effective bargaining tool for unionized workers gripped by the regulations and millions of non-unionized workers. Actual strikes are actions carried out with the participation of a significant part of the workers at a workplace, which in most cases can take forms such as not leaving the workplace and/or occupation. In these actions, workers both transcend the limits of the legislation governing their working life and disrupt the hierarchical order of the workplace. In this respect, these actions are critical moments of class formation. Actual strikes are one of the most appropriate types of action in the context of this study. For this reason, a workplace with actual strike experience is selected for the field survey.

Although the rankings can show significant differentiations over the years, dismissal, unionization and seizing the wage at work are the main reasons for workers actions. These are especially the dominant reasons for an action in private sector employers. It is known that employers are very resistant to unionization and exercise various methods to prevent unionization (Bakır and Akdoğan, 2009). The best-known examples of this are the dismissal of unionized workers. The current unionization rate can be seen as a success of employers in preventing employment conditions from being a collective regulatory issue. On the one hand, there are a large number of small and large unionization initiatives in industrial areas where the number of



waged workers is high. As a result of some of these initiatives, the union is recognized as a legitimate interlocutor and it enters to the workplace, despite the employer's resistance. Particularly if achieved as a result of a conflicting process, unionization can lead to significant consequences in terms of limiting the employer's authority at the point of production. The direct reaction of the employer to the unionization efforts of workers who are uncomfortable with the working conditions in Mata and who aim to bring working conditions as a matter of collective regulations through the union, has been the dismissal of a group of workers. When employees protect their friends and their union with an actual strike, employers had to recognize the union. In this sense, Mata is an example of observing the transformative effects of a victorious workers action over the workers.

Tablo 5. Sex of participants of workplace protests

	2016	2017 (first six months)
Men Only	40	37
Men Dominant	25	26
Men-Women Equal	26	24
Unknown	3	4
Women Only	3	5
Women Dominant	2	5

Source: EÇT, 2017a, 2017b.

Table 5 illustrates the sex of participants in workplace-based actions. The sex of the participants is possibly one of the less emphasized aspects of worker actions. The information about the gender of activist workers is usually not mentioned in the news about actions. It is for this reason that in some cases it is not possible to make an

observation about the gender of activist workers. EÇT has specifically put the issue of the gender of activists on the agenda in its 2016 and 2017 reports, and produced significant data on this subject. According to this, it is certain that women activists participated in 57 percent of the worker actions in 2016 and 59 percent of the worker actions in 2017. It must be emphasized that such rate is considerably significant since women constitute merely 27 percent of waged workers and unionization rate of women workers is just 19 percent according to the official data of (Social Security Institution (in Turkish Sosyal Güvenlik Kurumu) The apparent existence of women in 33 percent of worker actions (32 percent in 2016) is significant to reveal the inconsistency of conventional wisdom about the participation of women in unions and industrial actions. Such point also makes clear that there is a need for studies concentrating on women's actions in the work place.

### **6.3 Mata Automotive Factory: Foundation, Labor Process, Working Conditions and Two Day Industrial Protest**

#### **6.3.1 Foundation of Mata Automotive Factory**

Mata Automotive Factory was founded in 2004 in Istanbul Tuzla Free Trade Zone. The factory is one of the world factories producing for export. Erce Kaşlıoğlu, who is the founder and one of the 4 owners of the factory, states that when he was on the board of the directors of Lawrance Company which produces wooden interior parts of luxurious cars in the UK, he suggested relocating the factory to Turkey where the labor costs are low and production is labor intensive, compared to the higher labor costs as in the UK. This proposal got accepted.<sup>47</sup> Erce Kaşlıoğlu contacted Mata Furniture and laid the foundation of a factory in Istanbul Tuzla Free Trade Zone, one of the Free Zones exempt from standard export and import taxes and protectionist

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<sup>47</sup>See <http://mataauto.com/?p=3535>.

labor regulations. The factory started the production within 6 months. As a result of high profit margins due to tax reductions, it was decided to relocate a major part of the factory in the UK to Tuzla. Before the factory in the UK was relocated to Tuzla, a Chinese company acquired the company and the production shifted to China. Next, the founder of Mata Automotive Erce Kaşlıoğlu and the owner of Mata Furniture Cem Mataracı continued, creating a partnership with Ahu Büyükkuşoğlu Serter, the daughter of Farplas, which produces spare parts, and Moiz Zilberman. Mata factory that competes with China in terms of production costs increased its production every year and had its number of employees increase from 160 including the management staff in 2008 to 650 workers comprising only blue-collar workers in 2016.

Factory is located in a region that is inconvenient for transportation. Transportation to Tuzla Free Trade Zone is through autobus and dolmuş (small collective buses) from Pendik and Tuzla. When you get on dolmuş from Pendik, it takes about 1 hour to reach the entrance of the Free Zone. It is close to 20 minute walking distance from the entrance of the Free Zone to the factory. The workers in Mata Automotive either live in various parts of Pendik (especially in Aydınlı neighborhood) or districts on Kocaeli Border such as Gebze or Darıca. A shuttle bus for the transportation of workers to Free Zone is a must. The limited transportation facilities of workers from the factory to their neighborhoods other the shuttle bus make it harder for them to leave the factory in case of taking a sudden leave at the time of sickness and getting home. It also limits the possibility of leaving the work upon getting angry with something in the workplace.

Exterior and interior design parts of luxurious car brands such as Aston Martin, Jaguar, Corvette, Tesla, Land Rover and Cadillac are manufactured in Mata Automotive. The factory has two buildings in the Free Zone. In the first building, management staff and carpenters work. Manufacturing takes place in the second building where I had the interviews. The factory called Mata 2 is a two-story building, containing 11 units. All parts are manufactured for foreign market. During the time of industrial action which lasted two days, 650 workers worked in the factory. Following the protests that took place in 11-12 February 2016, United

Metalworkers' Union (in Turkish Birleşik Metal-İş, UMU) became the authorized union in the factory. The earliest result of the picketing, slowdown strike and workplace occupation that started with the layoff of 12 workers is the sense of trust among the workers and laid-off workers getting back to their jobs. Collective Agreement was signed about 5 months after the union ensured the majority in the workplace, on 27 July 2016.

### 6.3.2 Division of Labor

Car design parts are manufactured with wooden or carbon fiber material in Mata Automotive Factory. Carbon fiber material is an easy-to-process, light and strong material. If carbon fiber is to be used in manufacturing a car part, first of all, the material is cut.<sup>48</sup> Carbon fiber can be imagined as a large and flexible plate, neither too hard nor too soft. It is slightly harder than a cardboard and quite strong when pressed. After the plate is cut, the material is spread.<sup>49</sup> Cut and spread of each car part is done differently. For instance, the cut and spread of right door material and left door material is different. Cut and spread are actually tables next to each other within the same part. After the spread, the material is cooled off. Next, it is swaged according to its form in hydraulic press. The carbon unit where cut and spread takes place and hydraulic press unit are in neighboring rooms. The material swaged in hydraulic press are either sent to the sanding unit or a robot-cut depending on the part to be produced. After it is robot-cut, the part is repressed together with the parts spread on it in the press. Then, it goes to the raw sandpaper unit. After the material is sandpapered, polyester is dyed on it, it gets painted in the dyeing shop and it goes to the quality control. These generally cover the works from the cut of the carbon material till its final version in the most general sense. If the material is wooden, it

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<sup>48</sup>For an example of a cut of a carbon fiber material see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rwQm92nKeEY>.

<sup>49</sup>For an example of spread see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OoH2UhA-95Y> (from 0.30 to 2.44).

directly is sent to sandpaper. It then gets pressed and after being painted, a final product is manufactured. This process and order of tasks vary depending on which product is manufactured. 6 units on the upper floor of the factory are located in two rooms, one small, and one large. The carbon unit, which include cut and spread units, is in a room. Robot, trambulador, press, raw sandpaper and CNC<sup>50</sup> units are altogether in a large room; small wooden walls divide the units. Downstairs, there are quality control, dyeing shop, robot, polyester sandpaper and assembly- disassembly areas.

While only women work in dyeing shop and carbon spread, only men work in press and polyester sandpaper. In other units, both female and male workers work together, however, there is only one female worker in the CNC unit. In the first collective bargaining after unionisation, the union approves the articles for shifting workers among different units when needed in an effort to avoid a layoff. The employer uses this article to make pressure on workers. The only female worker working in CNC unit, Gül, started working in CNC due to unit shifting after unionisation.

### **6.3.3 Work Rhythm**

What and how much will be produced is determined weekly. Production managers determine what material will be manufactured into and how much. Since in some units (when it is established how much time it will take to complete a certain stage of a product) there is a maximum daily amount to be manufactured that is not possible to exceed. Therefore, in some units an upper limit is established. For example, as noted by Derya who works in carbon cut, there cannot be more than 35 right Corvette cut a day. Chiefs and department heads supervise what products are manufactured at what amount. Gülay from the robot unit describe how the numbers are determined as follows:

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<sup>50</sup>For a sample CNC machinery see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VdISvRnRms>. CNC machinery can vary in size.

For example, he calculates the number he assigns to me, he says if you go for lunch or tea break taking turns, you can manufacture 130 products. Meanwhile (in between two materials) we change the end part of the machinery, there are a few seconds lapsed when the door is opened to clear off the dust, but he does not calculate them. He tells me that you manufacture 16 materials an hour. I tell him that I cannot manufacture 16 materials an hour. It would be 12, maximum 14. 5 minute distance in between two materials is mine. Turning it on and off, replacing the end part, waiting for the dust, which cost you 5 minutes. So, it is not possible. If we do not take turns and go for lunch together, then, it would be 12. The other mate would manufacture 5 or 6 materials, because mine is manufactured once every 2,5 minutes, hers at every 8 minutes. If the product is out every once in 1.5 minutes when you cut a console, depending on the material, you can easily manufacture 160 to 170 until the end of shift. When you object, they tell you that that is their calculation; they do not say anything when you mention these time lapses. They say alright. Because you are the one doing the work.<sup>51</sup>

The engineers working in the Research and Development Department in Factory run trials to increase the speed of work at certain intervals in departments such as robot where especially the machinery speed determines the number of manufacture. Gülay from Robot describes the speedup as follows:

Now, they have sped it up. They upload a programme on the machinery. They introduce a period during the programme speedup. During that time, he comes and stands with you. He checks how many parts have come out. He either says not more than this much can come out or he himself tries it. Right now, we are on a speedy programme, a part used to come out once every 4 minutes. That was too long. Materials got delayed; shipment got delayed, so they wanted to speed it up. They tried it for 2 days. When it was positive, they continued. It was also in our interest,

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<sup>51</sup> Mesela bana verdiği sayıyı hesaplar, sen diyor dönüşümlü çaya yemeğe çıksan çıkaracağın malzeme 130 tane. Arada (iki malzeme arasında) makinanın ucunu değiştiriyoruz, tozun dökülmesi için kapı açıldığında beklediğimiz birkaç saniye, onları hesaplamıyor. Bana diyor ki saatte 16 tane malzeme çıkartırsın. Ben de diyorum ki ben saatte 16 malzeme çıkartamam. 12, taş çatlasın 14 tane diyorum. 2 malzeme arası o 5 dakikalık mesafe benim. Açılıp kapanması, ucu değiştirmesi, tozu beklemesi var o 5 dakikayı zaten kaybediyorsun. Çıkmaz. Eğer dönüşümlü çıkmaz da yemeğe beraber çıkarsak o zaman da 12 tane. Diğer arkadaşın yaptığı malzeme de 5-6 tane malzeme çıkar çünkü benimki 2.5 dakikada bir çıkıyor, onunki 8 dakikada bir. Malzemeye de göre, bir konsol kestiğin zaman 1.5 dakikada bir çıkarsa vardiya bitimine kadar rahat rahat 160-170 tane çıkar. İtiraz ettiğin zaman diyor ki ben böyle hesapladım, sen süreleri söylediğin zaman bir şey demiyorlar. Peki diyorlar. Çünkü işi sen yapıyorsun.

because at least you are not waiting, getting bored and shipment is on time.<sup>52</sup>

Similarly, since the waiting period is long for the material to come out in the press unit, engineers run trials to shorten the waiting period. There is an agreement among workers not to increase the number of product. For this purpose, when engineers watch workers for how long it takes them to manufacture a material to increase the number, for materials that require manual labor in particular, workers prepare the material taking longer time than the usual. As other workers ostracize the workers who increase the number, they have to get back to the factory average after a while. Derya expresses the attitude towards workers increasing the number as follows:

For instance, when a person speeds up, the other workers are expected to do the same. Therefore, the other workers make pressure not to increase the number. For example the boss says that 20 materials have to come out while it is normally 14. If you manufacture 20, it means one worker has nothing left to do. Then the employer does not want to keep that 3<sup>rd</sup> person anymore, why would he? If they cannot think rationally, and the number is increased, fights begin. It happened once, for example, one increased the number from 14 to 20; and then no one talked to him in that unit, there was a distinction that happened. Now, he also manufactures 16. He says he regretted it, that he is sorry. He says he did 20 not to ingratiate himself but just to clear his conscience; of course he is not doing that anymore.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Şimdi hızlandırdılar. Makineye program atıyorlar. Program hızlandırması yaparken bir süre koyuyorlar. O süre boyunca gelir, yanında durur. Bakar ki kaç parça çıktı? Bu kadardan fazla parça çıkmaz der ya da kendisi dener bakar. Şu an hızlı programdayız, daha önce 4 dakikada bir çıkıyordu bir parça. O da çok uzundu. Malzeme yetişmiyor, sevkiyat yetişmiyor, hızlandıralım dediler. 2 gün boyunca denediler. Olumlu olunca devam ettiler. Bizim de işimize geldi, en azından beklemiyorsun, sıkılmıyorsun, sevkiyat yetişiyor.

<sup>53</sup> Mesela bir kişi üretimi artırdığında diğer işçilerden de üretimi artırması bekleniyor. Dolayısıyla diğer işçiler üretimi artırma diye baskı yapıyorlar. Mesela patron diyor ki günde normalde 14 malzeme verirken, “20 tane malzeme vermek gerekiyor” diyor. Eğer ki sen 20 verirsen zaten bir işçi boşa çıkmış oluyor. O zaman da işveren 3. kişiyi barındırmak istemiyor, neden istesin ki? Eğer o mantıkla düşünülmez de sayı artırılırsa kavgalar başlıyor. Mesela bir kere yaşanmıştı, biri artırmıştı 14’ten 20’ye çıkarmıştı; sonra o bölümde kimse onunla konuşmamaya başladı, bir ayrım oluştu. Şimdi o da 16 yapıyor. Pişman olduğunu söylüyor mesela, üzgün olduğunu... Yaranmak için değil de kendi vicdanını rahatlatmak için 20 tane yaptığını söylüyor, şimdi öyle yapmıyor tabii.

Chiefs and department heads fill in the performance chart. They state the number of materials produced by workers in the relevant department. Just as important as the number, how many rejection that product receives also determines the performance of the workers. Actually, there is no performance system in place in the factory. Neither pays are established in line with the performance nor workers write the exact amount of materials they manufacture on the chart. However, especially after workers unionised, performance charts have started to be kept and hung on places visible to everyone. Workers underline that managers follow this method to create competition among workers (I will try to argue the solidarity forms of workers against this in the final chapter titled *Labor Process, Solidarity and Sisterhood*). If the rejections received do not result from any fault on the worker side (defining this is hard in some work places, even where there is a machinery-based fault, it can be defined as a worker's fault), it is not a problem. However, if the material is flawed due to a worker's fault, this leads to significant pressure on the workers.

It says that the new workers have a 2-month training period on the webpage of Mata Automotive, however, a new worker is told what to do and how to do the work by the foreman on the first day of his job. Actually, more senior workers teach the job to the beginner. Especially following unionization, when the performance of a new worker who has been taught the job by a more senior worker is shown higher, this becomes upsetting for the senior workers and special effort has to be spent to prevent the fights and conflicts as a result.

#### **6.3.4 Working Conditions**

Pays in Mata vary based on the units. For example, while a higher pay is received in the polyester unit where only men are hired, pays are lower in the spread unit employed only by women. Pay inequality is the most important reason of unionization. Major reasons behind this unrest include the lack of any pay difference between new and senior workers, a new worker getting paid more than the senior workers at times or the pay being determined on a personal basis than the work being



done, rather than the differences of pay among units. Even though the pay difference continue among units after unionization, the pay difference among the new workers based on a person is eliminated. Since an agreement was reached on a raise on an equal basis in the collective contract, getting a raise based on the former pays leads to continued pay differences. The second issue regarding the pays is concerned with the shifting workers across units that I have mentioned above. In case of need through bargaining, it has become possible to shift the unit of the worker. When the worker is placed into a different unit, a raise is not projected based on the pay of that unit, for instance, despite receiving a higher pay in CNC, a female worker previously from a different unit works on a pay lower than that of the workers in CNC although she does the same tasks.

The outfit in the workplace is standard. It is obligatory to put on the steel shoes, t-shirt and trousers provided by the employers while working. When a worker fails to do so, a statement is taken down. The outfit of the employees from Quality Control is grey while the outfit of the workers from other units is dark blue. Therefore it is possible to tell which worker works in which unit in the factory backyard. On the first day of work before starting to work in the factory, worker's health and occupational safety trainings are provided. Gönül from the retouch unit described this training as follows:

You go there on the first day and they give you occupational safety training, a course created by the factory itself. They describe it in such a way to make you think that the conditions are perfectly healthy. Then you understand when you start working. For example they tell you that blue gloves are not sterile, it is not right to use them for carbon because they are permeable. They are not proper with materials causing cancer. No way! But then you go and they give you the blue gloves. Or they tell you that you need to put headphones on, but again you go but they do not give you the headphones. You are supposed to put on a mask but there is no mask. It was somewhat contradictory.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> İlk gün gidiyorsun, sana iş güvenliği kursu veriyorlar. Fabrikanın kendi oluşturduğu bir kurs. Orada öyle bir anlatıyorlar ki, sanıyorsun ki mükemmel sağlıklı koşullar var. Tekrar işe döndüğün zaman anlıyorsun. Diyor ki mesela mavi eldiven steril olmayan eldivenler, onları karbon için kullanmak doğru değil çünkü geçirgen. Kansere maddeleri için uygun değil. Asla olmaz! Ama gidiyorsun sana

Another major issue regarding worker's health in the workplace is the lack of ventilation materials. Ventilation, inappropriate gloves, bonnet use, regarding worker's health and occupational safety make up the most important concrete gains out of the fight for unionization. As I mentioned above, it is hard to get to the city centers from the Free Zone. Another issue faced before being a union member is that there is no follow-up after taking a worker to a hospital in the region in case of job accidents, that the worker who suffered from an accident is not accompanied in the hospital and afterwards. The changing rooms being too small and lack of a toilet flush were two of the problems that got partly resolved after the action. Before unionization, female workers were in charge of cleaning some units and toilets whereas after cleaning personnel was hired. This represents a major gain for women. I will try to discuss the meaning of this for female workers in a chapter titled *New Routine: Factory, Unionization and Empowerment*.

The cafeteria of all the factories in the Free Zone is common. Most factories use the cafeteria owned by Despaş Company. The lunch breaks are 30 minutes. Changing rooms is where subjects such as layoff gossips, new hires (exchange of information in between shifts as the shifts overlap) are discussed the first.

### **6.3.5 The Lead-up to the 2-Day Industrial Action**

The development that sped up the unionization activity before the 2-day long protest, slowdown strike followed by the factory occupation protests which resulted in unionization in Mata is the failure to offer the workers their promised performance raises and additional raises. In 2015, the managers in the workplace told the workers that they were going to get a performance raise. Thus, workers worked hard to earn the high performance pay. In 2016 as a result of the minimum pay raise offered by

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mavi eldiven veriyorlar. Ya da kulaklık takılması gerekiyor diyorlar, gidiyorsun sana kulaklık vermiyorlar. Maske kullanman gerekiyor ama maske yok. Kendi içinde çelişkiliydi biraz.

the government as an election investment, the net minimum pay was announced at 1300 TL in January. The pay of single and childless workers became 1300 TL while the pay of married and workers with a single child became 1344 TL. However, in Mata Automotive Factory, the promised performance raise for January pays were not provided. Then the rage created by the fact that the workers could not get their long overdue pay came out. Derya from carbon cut unit describes this as follows:

When they did not give us the additional raise, we saw that the maximum raise was 100 TL. They know it was not the pay that the senior workers deserved to get. Since the minimum wage was raised, one with 2 month experience started to get 1300 TL, one with 5 years of experience started to get 1400 TL, then it occurred to us that the first thing we could do was unionization. A couple of people from each unit started to go to union meetings. There was no female worker in the first meeting, and then they started to come. Meanwhile, work slowdowns were started. If there were 100 products, let say, they made 20, a work slowdown started in the factory on its own, without making a decision about it. Engineers did also knew there was injustice because of this very little pay, so they could not tell the workers to produce 30-40. They were scared. In some units, some workers came at a few engineers: “What are you talking about? You are paying us just 1300 TL, we are not working anymore, we are giving it up” etc.... When the unionization process started, we decided not to show that we were unionized and to do the job slowly. There was a huge burst of anger, which triggered unionization.<sup>55</sup>

As noted by Derya, when the promised raise was not given to the workers, the work slowdown strike (which was not continued in order not to grab attention when the unionization process started), started all of a sudden. Three options stepped forward among workers who saw the raise in their pays; breaking down the works done, getting a rejection or slowing down the work. The average cost of a product getting

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<sup>55</sup>Ek zam verilmeyince baktık, 100 lira zam verilmiş en fazla. Eski işçilerin hak ettikleri ücret de o değil, onu biliyorlar. Asgari ücrete zam yapıldı ya, 2 aylık bir kişi de 1300 lira almaya başladı, 5 senelik bir kişi de 1300 lira almaya başladı, o zaman yapabileceğimiz ilk şey sendikalaşmak geldi akla. Her bölümden üçer beşer kişi sendikayla toplantılara gidildi. İlk toplantıda hiç kadın işçi yoktu, sonra sonra gelinmeye başlamıştı. Bu arada bir anda iş yavaşlatmalar başladı. Diyelim eskiden 100 yapıyorsa 20 yapıyor, kendi kendine iş yavaşlatma başladı fabrikada, hiçbir karar alınmadan. Artık mühendisler de haksızlık olduğunu biliyor ya, çünkü çok az bir maaş verildi, gidip işçiye 30-40 yap diyemiyordu. Korkuyordu. Bazı bölümlerde birkaç tane mühendisin üstüne yüründüğü bile olmuştu: “Ne konuşuyorsun bize 1300 lira veriyorsun, çalışmayacağız bırakıyoruz işi” gibi... Sonra sendikalı olma süreci başlayınca, belli etmeyelim sendikalı olduğumuzu onun için yavaş yavaş yavaş yapalım işi diye konuştuk. Çok büyük bir öfke patlaması vardı, o öfke sendikalaşmaya yardımcı oldu.

rejected is 3500 USD for the employer. After thinking if they should get a rejection for all parts across the entire factory, the workers very quickly decided to slow down the work. Esra from carbon cut describes the atmosphere in the factory as follows:

People, senior workers in particular, had expectations. When they saw the raise, there was rage in the factory, rage for as if it was a joke on them. You ask about it, they tell you that it was a promise made by the former manager. So it means as new managers take over, promises made will not be kept. Actually everyone worked for it. Then a work slowdown started. There was an atmosphere in the factory suggesting that I would never work for that money in the factory, no one needed to say anything. It was obvious that no one wanted to work, that everyone was angry. Even the engineers could not say anything.<sup>56</sup>

Gül who worked at the dyeing shop at the time and then started in CNC describes the mood before the 2-day protest:

We were waiting for a new year raise. A very little raise was made here for a new year. The workers with 10 year experience only got 50 TL more than the new workers, which started to offend everyone. Everyone started saying that it would not have been like that if only they had unionized, that they should not wait any longer as they did not keep their promise that made a year ago. So everyone had enough of this. On top of that, managers saying, “How is it not enough for you!” “Which factory pays well?” “Everyone works on a minimum wage” “If you do not like it, the door is there” as if they are making fun of you. So, people got offended. No one wanted to work. If everyone was already paid a minimum wage, we would just go to another job and get paid our minimum wage there, what do we have to lose, right? That was the general mindset.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup>İnsanlar, özellikle eski işçiler beklenti içindeydi. Zammı görünce, fabrikada öfke vardı böyle dalga geçilmiş gibi. Soruyorsun eski yönetici söz vermiş deniliyor. Yönetici değiştikçe verilen sözler tutulmayacak o zaman. Herkes çalışmıştı bir de. Birden iş yavaşlatma başladı. Nasıl diyeyim fabrikada o paraya beni öldürseler ben çalışmam gibi bir hava vardı, o hava dolaşıyordu, kimsenin bir şey demesine gerek kalmadı. Kimsenin çalışmak istemediği, öfkeli olduğu belliydi. Mühendisler bile birşey diyemiyordu.

<sup>57</sup>Yılbaşından sonra, biz yılbaşı zammı bekliyorduk. Yılbaşı zammında burada çok az bir zam yapıldı. Sonra çok komik rakamlar verildi. 10 senedir çalışıyor 50 lira fark alıyor yeni girenlerle. Bu da herkesin zoruna gitmeye başladı. Yılbaşı maaşını aldıktan sonra herkes başladı işte sendikalaşsaydık böyle olmazdı. Bir senedir söz verdiler sözlerinde durmadılar, biz niye onları bekleyelim. Artık insanların burasına kadar da geldi bir de müdürlerin dalga geçer gibi konuşmaları “neyine yetmiyor?” “hangi fabrikada yüksek ücret alınıyor?” “herkes asgari ücretle çalışıyor” “beğenmeyene kapı orada” demeleri. İnsanların zoruna gitti yani. Kimse çalışmak istemiyordu. Bir de öyleyse herkes asgari ücret

Gülay from dyeing shop describes the unionization effort as follows:

Since our dyeing shop unit was all women, we could talk at ease. We are about 13-14 people in this unit. Most have relatives, husbands, siblings. We could talk about, it was talked about upstairs, and also downstairs because if you get an idea from each one at home, you will find that you are right. We did this by talking about it with each other, consulting each other... We sometimes checked our e-devlet on our phones. There are male units upstairs, starting from raw sandpaper to... because as I said, we were texting each other when we got home, telling each other that this one also agrees and so on.<sup>58</sup>

While the unionization activities continued, towards the end of 08.00-16.00 shift on 11 February, (15 minutes left till the end), it was heard that 12 workers were laid off. Then the workers whose shifts ended started marching towards Mata 1 where their laid-off coworkers were located and which is used as the management building of the factory.

### **6.3.6 Protest that Resulted in Unionization (Picketing, Work Slowdown, Factory Occupation)**

Towards the end of 8.00-16.00 shift, it was heard that the 12 workers, last hired, were called in to Mata 1 and laid off. Even though it was not known exactly if their layoff was directly related with the unionization effort, the word that went around is that the workers were laid off to block their efforts to unionise and there was a list of 120 people to be laid off next. It was also mentioned that the boss was planning to

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zaten alıyorsa, gider başka işte asgari ücret alırız, ne kaybımız olacak ki! Öyle değil mi? Böyle de düşünmeye başlamıştı insanlar.

<sup>58</sup>Bizim boyahane bölümü hep kadın bölümü olduğu için rahat konuşulabiliyordu. Yaklaşık 13-14 kişiyiz burada. Çoğunun akrabaları var, eşleri var, kardeşler var. Biz konuşuyorduk, yukarıda ayrı konuşuluyor, aşağıda ayrı konuşuluyor çünkü evlere gidip de herkesten bir kelime kapsan haklı olduğunu bulacaksın. Biz öyle konuşarak birbirimize danışarak, dayanışarak... Bazen biz kendimiz telefonlarımızla e-devletten şifremizi alarak hemen girdik. Yukarıda da erkek bölümleri var ham zımparadan tut...çünkü dediğim gibi evlere gittiğimiz zaman mesajlaşıyorduk bak bu da kabul ediyor bak bu da, bu kadar çıktı diye.

hire contracted workers to replace the layoffs. All workers went outside at the end of the shift and the march towards Mata 1 starts. First of all, the march where the layoffs were protested were held, next most workers on 08.00-16.00 shift did not get on the shuttle buses when they got back to Mata 1. Esra describes the situation:

We held a march in Mata 1, then the resistance started. All at once. On one hand, shuttle buses were taking off, people were scared, if they should stay or go, the buses were leaving, are we leaving or staying! (...) we said we were staying. Everyone ran out of cigarettes, they started getting hungry, anyways... My husband, a friend of ours and I, got on car, he took us. Everyone paid something, one 50 TL, he paid 100 TL, there was even someone who paid 200 TL. I was new back then, it had been just about 4 months, I did not know anyone like I do now. I looked at the guy in the face and said “you are giving this money to me now but what will I get out of this? Will I be able to find you again” “It is ok, it is not a big deal!” Then I asked the next, “Take whatever you can, people are hungry here,” I liked that so much. Then we got on the car and bought some biscuits from a place around the exit of the free zone. I say that “This is your change, this much is left” he says, “Never mind, that one is hungry, give one to him” After that we fed ourselves, they bought some breakfast food. Alp from white collars, they say, blocked the food from coming to us, I do not know, but people were quite full.<sup>59</sup>

The workers whose shifts ended thought if they waited outside the factory management would have taken them out, so they went inside the factory. 2 hours left till end of the 16.00-24.00 shift, 08.00-16.00 shift was in the factory, started waiting in the middle section. Ezgi continues:

Then came the news, the 08.00-16.00, get inside. We did, 3 people including 2 women and a man. When I looked back I saw that the

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<sup>59</sup> Biz Mata 1’de yürüyüş yaptık geldik, direniş başladı zaten. Bir anda. Bir yandan servisler kalkıyor, insanlar korkuyorlar, gitsek mi kalsak mı, servisler kalkıyor, burada kalıyor muyuz gidiyor muyuz! (...) Biz kalıyoruz dedik. Herkesin sigarası bitti, acıkmaya başladı millet, neyse işte... Eşim, ben, bir arkadaşımız bindik arabaya, o götürdü bizi. Herkes para veriyor biri 50 lira veriyor, o 100 lira veriyor, 200 lira veren bile oldu. Ben de yeniydim o dönemlerde, 4 ay filan olmuştu fabrikaya başlayalı, kimseyi şimdiki gibi tanımıyorum. Adamın yüzüne bakıyorum, “ya abi” diyorum “sen bunu bana verdin ama ben bundan ne alacağım? Seni bir daha bulabilecek miyim?” “Olsun önemli değil!” İşte bir sonrakine soruyorum, “ya ne alırsan al millet burada aç,” o kadar hoşuma gitti ki. Biz bindik serbest bölgenin çıkışında bir yer var oradan bisküvi aldık, çekirdek bile aldık. Abi diyorum “para üstün bu kadar, bu kadar kaldı” sen diyor “boş ver, şuradaki aç, bir tane de ona ver” Ondan sonra baya karnımızı doyurduk, kahvaltılık almışlar. Beyaz yakalardan Alp bey dediler ben bilmiyorum ama, bize yemek gelmesini engellemiş ama insanlar karnını doyurmuştu.

gate was closed, there was no one, they locked the gate. They said Volkan. I did not see. We forced open the gate with those outside, when we pushed it, whoever there was stepped in. We went upstairs, to the second floor. My friend wanted to do some damage inside, we told her not to. We were there for ourselves. Then she pulled herself together, she was raged but no one wanted to do damage as everyone was responsible for each other, we all acted together.<sup>60</sup>

Derya describes this moment:

There was a moment when I got pretty excited; the boss was standing downstairs, not letting anyone in from the gate. We went inside and he closed the gate. That moment, I was in the front which I was not aware of but then suddenly I noticed. The boss closed the gate on us; we opened it. We went upstairs, chanting slogans, all of us!<sup>61</sup>

The 16.00-24.00 shift was on to their machines, but everyone was working very slowly, after the 16.00-24.00 shift workers finished their shift, they joined among the 08.00-16.00 shift and this time, 24.00-08.00 shift workers stopped production upon the approval from the union.

When the production halted, the threats by bosses got more frequent. The workers who stayed outside and the workers in the factory were prevented from getting in and getting out, respectively. The workers inside were given a hard time when they wanted to meet their basic needs such as water, food, smoking etc. Meanwhile, one of the chiefs made statements to the police that the female workers were kept inside

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<sup>60</sup> Sonra haber geldi 08.00-16.00 girin içeriye diye. Biz girdik, 3 kişi 2 kadın 1 erkek. Arkama döndüm baktım kapı kapanmış kimse yok, kilitlemişler kapıyı. Volkan bey dediler. Ben görmedim. Dışardakilerle birlikte kapıyı açmaya zorladık, kapıya yüklenince orada kim varsa içeriye girdik. Yukarıya çıktık, ikinci kata, benim arkadaşım biraz zarar vermek istedi içeride, yapma dedik, biz bunun için gelmedik buraya, kameralar var. Onlara koz vermeyelim. Biz kendimiz için geldik. O da kendini topladı, öfkeliydi ama herkes birbirine karşı da sorumlu olduğu için kimse zarar vermek de istemedi, hep ortak davrandık.

<sup>61</sup> Çok heyecanlandığım bir an vardı, patron aşağıda duruyor, izin vermiyor kapıdan içeri girmesine bizimkilerin, biz içeriye girdik kapıyı kapattı. O an işte bir an işte en öndeymişim, farkında değilim en önde olduğumun bir anda farkına vardım. Patron kapıyı üzerimize kapatmış, kapıyı açtık. İşte yukarı merdivenlerden çıktık, hepimiz sloganlar atıyoruz... Patron önümüze dikildi onu ittik ve devam ettik, çok heyecanlıydı benim için...

by force. Then, female workers sent a message to the chiefs that they were there at their own will. No one left the factory.

Workers still became members to the union throughout the night. The workers who could not decide whether or not to become a member were shown movies. Everyone called people they knew to work for unionized workplaces or have an opinion about a union, made the other around listen to those calls. Selma who worked in the dyeing shop that day during 16.00-24.00 shift describes the situation as follows:

During the day, the threats were abundant, for sure. We went into passive protest which I found out what it was that day. We did not leave the job, we were on it. There were those sending away the people, swearing at them, and if you pardon me “f... you, I will hire the Syrians here, who do you think you are?” during the day. We were good at night. People from the union came at 24.00, they told us not to work after which a full-swing protest started. We pulled an all-nighter here. I called my brother because he knew about this union thing. There were those who had never heard of a union. There were again those who said unions were bad. Let me be very honest, there were those who believed they were terrorists. But everyone was thinking about it. Thank god, they did not cut off our internet connection. We continued to be members there; they cut off our water, but not the internet. It did not occur to them. For example, my brother was very much into the union thing. I called my brother asking him to explain it to me. He answered, “You should follow such and such way”. Tell your friends. Then everybody became a member right away.<sup>62</sup>

Gül, one of those who got laid off that day, describes the incident as follows:

I was talking to my husband at home, he did not want me to work, but I told him when there were issues. It might be okay if I did not work but not everyone is in that position here, they have children.

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<sup>62</sup> Gündüz tabi tehditler filan çoktu. Biz pasif eyleme geçtik, pasif eylemin ne olduğunu öğrendim ben. Bırakmadık işi, başındaydık. Gündüz milleti kovmalar, işte küfürler, affedersiniz “s. gidin, ben Suriyeli çalıştırırım burada, siz kendinizi ne sanıyorsunuz?” filan diyenler oldu. Gece rahattık ama. 24.00’de sendikadan geldiler, dediler çalışmayın, ondan sonra tamamen eyleme geçildi. Sabahladık burada. Ben abimi aradım, o bilir sendikaları diye. Hiç sendika duymamışlar var. Sendikaya kötüdür diyen var. Çok açık söyleyeyim terörist gözüyle bakan var. Ama herkesin aklı da var yani, aklında da var. Neyse ki internetimizi kesmemişlerdi. Hemen orda üye yapmaya devam ettik, suyumuzu kestiler ama internetimizi kesmediler... Onu düşünemediler. Benim abim mesela çok sendika işiyle uğraşıyordu. Abimi arıyorum abime telefon ediyorum bak böyle böyle soruyorlar nasıl bir şeydir. O oradan cevap veriyor: “Böyle böyle bir yol izlemelisiniz”. Arkadaşlarına söyle. Ondan sonra zaten herkes patır patır yazıldı.



So he knew about the situation, I would tell him “What would others do if I left?”, he thought I was right. I called him to let him know that I would not be able to come home. He told me to be determined, not to take a step back. You started a journey, if you take a step back, they will come onto you. I told him to say to friends. I put him on speaker. He said if you take a step back, worse things will happen. He said, “Is everyone taking the risk to be laid off? If you do, it is all right, if you do not, they might keep you under heavier conditions. Never give up,” said my husband.<sup>63</sup>

İlknur who worked on the 24.00-08.00 night shift called a friend with whom she worked together in a previous factory (Otoliv), she trusted and knew would approve unionization. She asked her what type of a union was UMU and what they were supposed to do. Her friend told her to discuss this with her friends in Mata who knew about the situation and became members. İlknur describes that night as follows:

I was on the night shift back then, we had three shifts in the factory. We came at night, shuttle buses came and took us, but it was a disaster, all civil servants, everyone was there. We used to scan our faces in Mata 1 back then, on the way from Mata 1 to here, the union members were all standing on the edges. Our quality engineers stood in the middle; waiting for us said “Without turning right or left, you go straight ahead in, to Deniz’s (our manager) room, “Without changing your clothes. He took us out of the union people and directly to the manager’s room. We were all in the room. The manager made a speech for us: “Friends, these are armed guys. Do not do such a thing, do not become a member”. All made-up stuff of course. Then she pulled me away and said “look, İlknur, you have a child, you are on your own looking after your kid, do not get involved.” Then I told her “I have not become a member yet”, which was a lie but I said “I will do what the community does”. She told me to think well, which I already did.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Ben eşimle evde konuşuyordum, benim çalışmamı istemiyordu ama sorunlar olduğunda anlatıyordum, böyle böyle oldu diye. Ben belki çalışsam da olur ama burada herkes bu durumda değil, çoluğu var çocuğu var herkesin. Neyse durumları biliyordu yani, “ben ayrılısam diğerleri ne yapacak?” diyordum, hak da veriyordu. Onu aradım eve gidemeyeceğim filan diye haber vermiştim zaten. O dedi ki kararlı olun, geri adım atmayın. Bir yola girmişsiniz, geri adım atarsanız üzerinize gelirler. Sen dedim arkadaşlara da söyle daha iyi olur. Hoparlör aldım. İşte geri adım atarsanız daha kötü şeyler olur. Dedi “işten çıkmayı bile göze alıyor mu herkes? İşten çıkmayı göze alıyorsanız tamam, işten çıkmayı göze almazsanız daha ağır şartlarda çalıştırabilirler sizi. Asla vazgeçmeyin” böyle şeyler söyledi eşim.

<sup>64</sup> O zaman gece vardiyasındaydım, 3 vardiya olarak çalışıyoruz. Gece biz geldik, servisler geldi aldı bizi, ama buralar felaket bütün memurlar, herkes burada. O zaman Mata1’de yüzümüzü okutuyorduk. Mata 1’den buraya gelene kadar sendikacılar sağda solda kenarlarda filan. Geçmiş ortaya bizi bekliyor kalite mühendisimiz. “Sakın sağa sola sapmadan kesinlikle doğru içeri gidiyorsunuz, Deniz hanımın

People were dancing *halay* (a type of collective dance in Turkey) all night long in the factory, preparing posters, having chats. Derya describes the atmosphere in the factory as follows:

We were preparing a poster with workers who never thought that way “live long the unity of workers!”... We were chanting slogans, that was a perfect moment for us; everyone was trying to find a spray from somewhere; one looking for a paint; one looking for a piece of cloth for the poster; two people were thinking what to write there. These adventures ended, then someone danced, we watched... normally you would be feeling embarrassed to lie down as a woman but there was no such thing. Everyone laid down, took a nap wherever they wanted.<sup>65</sup>

A rumor that the police might come towards the morning went around in the factory. There were some who came for the 08.00-16.00 morning shift. Some workers went back to their homes as there would be no shift and some workers supported those inside from the backyard of the factory. Following the meetings between the union and the boss, occupation was finalized upon the commitment of hiring back the workers who were laid off on Friday, 12 February and the employer acknowledging the union. Esra describes the finalization of the occupation as follows:

Mr. Adnan came and said “we won,” “our fight is over.” Then there came a full round of applause, which we filmed. We said “alright, is it for sure or do we continue?” “Alright, you all go home, there is no production here today anyways, everyone go get a rest and you will resume the work tomorrow morning,” said he. We said “alright”. Everyone changed and went downstairs. Everyone was downstairs; there were those who pointed their

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odasına!” (bizim müdür oluyor), “Üstünüzü giyinmeden” dedi. Bizi sendikacıların arasından çekti götürdü müdürün odasına kadar. Hepimiz topluştık falan filan. Müdür bize konuşma yaptı: “Arkadaşlar bunlar silahlı adamlar. Sakın öyle birşey yapmayın, üye olmayın.” Bir sürü hikaye tabi. Beni sonrasında çekti kenara, “Bak İlknur” dedi “Senin bir çocuğun var tek başına hayat mücadelesi veriyorsun, sakın bulaşma” dedi. Ondan sonra ben de dedim ki “Deniz hanım dedim şu anda üye olmadım”, halbuki olmuştum ama dedim “Topluluk ne yaparsa ben de onu yapacağım” dedim. Sen iyi düşün falan yaptı. Ben düşünmüştüm zaten.

<sup>65</sup> Daha önce hiç böyle düşünmemiş işçilerle birlikte pankart hazırlıyoruz, “yaşasın işçilerin birliği!” gibi... Ya da sloganlar atıyoruz, bizim için mükemmel bir andı yani; herkes bir yerden sprey bulmaya çalışıyor; biri boya bulmaya çalışıyor; biri pankart için bez bulmaya çalışıyor; iki kişi düşünüyor, buraya ne yazsak diye. Bu serüvenler bitiyor, birileri dans ediyor, onları izliyoruz... Normalde diyelim ki uzanmaya utanırsın hani kadın olarak ama o an öyle bir şey yok yani. Herkes istediği yerde uzanıyor, uyuyor.

fingers at us, telling us that we would see. They were there too; shaking hands. I did not shake hands. I just skipped, leaving their hand hanging in the air. Because I was offended, them pointing fingers, standing right there and swearing. I did not hear the curse word but I saw pointing fingers, because it was at me. That is why I did not want to shake hands. Then I felt I accomplished a lot so I acted very cool.<sup>66</sup>

Following the protest, on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> of February, workers resumed the work, congratulating each other. It took 6 months to sign the collective agreement after the authority application of the union. The agreement was signed in July 2016. Within these 6 months, the employer tried different ways to get the unionized workers to leave work.

### **6.3.7 Employer Pressure between the Industrial Protest and the Collective Bargaining Signed in July**

As stated above, the protest that was staged in Mata Automotive came to end as the employer committed to acknowledge the union and hire back the layoffs on 12 February 2016. As a result of the agreement reached with the employer, the union applied to identify an authority. About 6 months later (on 25 July 2016), the first collective bargaining to apply from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019 was signed. Meanwhile the employer tried different ways to break down the solidarity of workers and get workers to leave at their own will. While the employer increased the pressure on the workers, the workers spent an intense effort to continue the sense of unity, the solidarity among workers that was felt deeply throughout the industrial protest.

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<sup>66</sup> Adnan bey geldi, işte dedi “kazandık,” “mücadelemiz tamam.” Orada alkış kıyamet videoya çektik. “Tamam” dedik. “Kesin mi, devam ediyor muyuz?” “Tamam” dedi. “Hepiniz evinize gidin” dedi. “Bugün zaten üretim yok, herkes dirlensin, yarın sabah işbaşı yapacaksınız” dedi. “Tamam” dedik. Herkes giyindi aşağıya indik. Herkes aşağıda, bir gün öncesinde orada gezenler, siz göreceksiniz diye parmak sallayanlar. Tokalaşmak için. Ben elimi vermedim. Şöyle geçtim. Adamların eli havada kaldı. Çünkü zoruma gitmişti, parmak sallamaları filan, şurada durup küfür etmesi. Küfrünü duymadım ama parmak salladığını gördüm ama çünkü bana sallıyordu, o yüzden de istemedim elimi vermek. O zaman ben çok şeyi başarmış hissettim, geçtim böyle edalı edalı.

One of the tools used by the employer to get workers to leave work is to offer incentive to those who leave work. In order to encourage leaving work, the information that there will be a layoff in the factory is shared with workers by department heads or department heads tell workers that there is a crisis in the company, they will soon have to shut down the factory and if they leave their job before the company shut downs, they may get an incentive. In return workers promised each other to stand side by side until the agreement. Gülay describes the pressure before the bargaining as follows:

After we unionized, they made a lot of pressure. I was in the dyeing plant, they said they were going to cut down on the number of workers, so whoever wanted should quit on incentive. The manager just arrived he never listened to us. If we quit, there would be less members of the union, so there was a change that one or two might have quitted as they needed an incentive, but panic never took hold of the atmosphere, no one left. We said no one shall leave until a bargaining is signed. None of us quit.<sup>67</sup>

The second method applied by the employers is to shift the units of workers, send them to units they do not want. The workers interpret breaking the solidarity within units as the reason of shift. Gül whose unit is constantly shifted says:

They wanted to break our unity. We thought, we would be fine in any unit. They wanted us to say we cannot work under these conditions so just open the gates. But I did not say that, instead I said “No, I cannot work under these conditions, get me a proper job.” I came onto them. I did not run away. No one did until the bargaining.<sup>68</sup>

During this period one of the practices applied by the employers to deter the workers and which is recognized in the bargaining is the ability to shift the units of workers

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<sup>67</sup> Bize sendikalaştıktan sonra çok baskı yaptılar. Ben boyahanedeyim, işçi azaltacağız, isteyen teşvikle çıksın dediler. Müdür yeni gelmişti, hiç dinlemiyordu bizi. Biz gidersek sendikanın da üye sayısı azalacaktı sonunda ya da hani olur ya 1 kişi 2 kişi ihtiyacı olan gider ama panik ortamı olur o zaman, olmadı, kimse gitmedi. Sözleşme yapılana kadar kimse çıkmasın dedik. Hiç birimiz çıkmadık.

<sup>68</sup>Onlar herhalde biz birliktik, birliğimizi kırmak istediler. Biz de şöyle düşündük, her bölümde yaparız. Yani onlar istedi ki biz diyelim ki biz bu şartlarda çalışamayız, beni çıkartın. Ama ben öyle demedim, ben dedim ki “ben hayır, bu şartlarda çalışmam, bana düzgün bir iş ayarlayın.” Üzerlerine gittim. Kaçmadım, sözleşmeye kadar da kimse kaçmadı.

when needed. The union agrees to shifts across units against the options of cutting down the number of workers and laying off workers. It is because this practice is of special importance for female workers, leading them to work in units where men work, on a less pay I will elaborate this practice on the following pages.

Another method used by the employers during the five and a half months is to make the working conditions harder within the same unit without shifting the units. Pinar describes how the managers took away the chairs they sat on while working and the methods that they came up with against this:

After the union, there was a lot of pressure, not from the union but the boss. In the dyeing plant, retouch workers have to work in a seated position. The manager came and took away the chairs. There were 4 chairs then and we were 12-13 people in the unit. You know what we did? We said since we brought the union here, we stand by this, girls. We said it altogether: “We will fight till the end!” I worked standing, she sat down; she worked standing, I sat down. We talked to our steward who told us “What can we do! Let those who work standing not work but write it equally in forms.” She got a rest, I sat down, I got a rest she sat down. We sat on top of the chests; our supervisors came and took away the chests. We hid in a deep corner and sat down again, we insisted. We told each other not to quit and get involved even in the smallest quarrel. We had to get over this stage until an agreement is reached.<sup>69</sup>

Another method to break the solidarity among workers is to make pressure to increase the number of materials manufactured. During this period, it was started to log performance charts in units. Although there was no performance-based remuneration in the factory, a chart was logged and signed to show who manufactured how many materials in each unit. In return, workers distributed the

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<sup>69</sup> Sendikadan sonra epey bir baskı oldu, sendikanın değil patronun baskısı. Boyahane bölümünde, rötuşçular oturarak çalışmak zorunda. Müdür aldı sandalyeleri götürdü. 4 sandalye vardı o zaman biz 12-13 kişiyiz bölümde. Biz ne yaptık biliyor musun? Biz buraya sendikaya getirdiysek arkasındayız kızlar dedik, hepimiz bir aynı ağızdan söyledik: “biz sonuna kadar mücadele edeceğiz!” Ben ayakta çalıştım, o oturdu; o ayakta çalıştı, ben oturdum. Temsilcimizle konuştuk, dedik ki “ne yapalım! Ayakta çalışanlar iş yapmasın ama formlara eşit yazalım.” O dinlendi ben oturdum, ben dinlendim o oturdu. Kasaların üstünde oturduk, amirlerimiz geldi kasaları kaldırdı. Biz dip köşeye sakladık yine oturduk, yine inatlaştık. Birbirimize sakın pes etmiyoruz, en ufak bir tartışmaya dahi meyletmiyoruz dedik. Anlaşma sağlanana kadar bu etabı geçmek zorundaydık.

total number of materials which was required to be manufactured in that unit across everyone equally regardless of the amount manufactured by the worker. If for instance, 20 products in total were to come out in a unit of four people, five was written for each worker. Hence, the existing solidarity relation is sustained by avoiding any fight or competition among workers.

The most important gain created by the protest culminated in the unionization possible include the increased confidence workers have in each other and thus themselves and solidarity getting concrete. I will evaluate the meaning of this gain and the effect of unionization on the control of work rhythm, control of labor process and the limitation of personalization of the work in the section on *New Routine*. In the following part, I will briefly touch upon the gains acquired as a result of collective agreement.

### **6.3.8 Gains of Unionization**

Collective agreement is signed between the employer in Mata Automotive Factory and United Metalworkers' Union on 26 July 2016. Workplace committees were set up following the protest in order to identify the points to be brought forward, requested or settled in the collective bargaining. Most of these committees were made up of men. A few female workers participated in the committees. Women set up a women's committee prior to collective bargaining meetings, which gathered two or three times until the collective agreement. It was planned to gather women's committee after the agreement.

The first and foremost gain brought by unionization includes a sense of confidence, power to change and a sense of unity. One of the reasons behind the continued sense of confidence of workers in themselves and their friends and sense of unity even today is that the solidarity, which took place with the union in the factory, has the power to change the internal relations in the factory. Leaving that aside for now, major gains brought by collective bargaining include the end of layoffs, improved

wages (hourly pay is 0,85 kuruş for the first year, second year inflation plus three percent, third year inflation plus 4 percent raise; first year 2, second year 3, third year 3,5 bonus salaries; overtime during the week is raised by 50 percent during the first year, 60 percent during the second and 75 percent during the third year; for weekend overtimes, 100 percent raise), increased annual leaves (annual leaves for workers of 1 to 5 years increased to 16 days, workers of over 5 years increased to 23 days), March 8 International Women's Day as a day off for women, eve days becoming off days, improved working conditions for the worker's health and occupation safety and employer providing support such as in bayrams. Along with these gains, an article to prevent hiring rental workers in the factory was added to the collective bargaining. Accordingly, "a worker of fixed term through special employment agencies or subcontractor or directly under whatever name" cannot be hired in the workplace. The article "otherwise, the workers hired are considered workers hired through the labor agreements of indefinite term by the primary employer" was incorporated into the collective bargaining.<sup>70</sup>

Requests were discussed during the workplace committee which convened before the meeting with the employer. As a result of these meetings, settlement was reached on shifting the workers across units when necessary in return of not laying off workers. However, the lack of any regulation regarding the wages of workers who were shifted in the bargaining has led to pay inequality for female workers in particular.

One of the distinctive articles of the bargaining signed by UMU and the employer includes March 8<sup>th</sup> International Women's Day as holiday. One of the workplace committees gathered before collective agreement was the women's committee. One of the requests highlighted by women in this committee was the period break. Women go through pms for a couple of days at work, or they have difficulty working or if they can get a report, they get it and miss the work by getting an unpaid leave. Even if they can work sometimes, they can experience various discomforts including

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<sup>70</sup> See *Collective Bargaining for Birleşik Metal İşçileri Sendikası'nın Mata Ahşap ve Otomotiv San. Tic. A.Ş. İşletmesi* during the period 01/04/2016-31/03/2019.

high blood pressure, nausea, headache or lumbar pain, especially while working on foot, when they get to work by taking a leave or a report, it is deducted from their pay. The request for women to get one-day leave a month was expressed in the factory committee meeting. Derya describes the moment when she expressed this:

We were about 35 people in the committee meeting. 28 out of 35 were men. There were union branch leaders who were men. I thought of saying this in public or in private. I thought what if they got me wrong, and then I decided there was nothing to misunderstand here. Let them get used to that! I raised my hand and said “We want unexcused leave for one day a month as we have periods.” They said “okay”, which was very good and received applause from the women in the back. At the beginning, we believed they would agree to our request.<sup>71</sup>

Women spoke out about the period break, but it did not happen. Women thought they could not stand behind this request strongly as it also seemed like “a dream to them”. The period break got squeezed into a technical argument. “How can you tell who is on period when?” etc. On the other hand, March 8th International Women’s Day was declared as a holiday and some of the women in factory attended women’s protests on March 8<sup>th</sup>. Pınar describes the event:

Derya raised her hand, and said we want a period break.” There were 40 men there, and we showed the courage to raise our hands. We wanted that because there were so many women in our workplace! But it didn’t happen. We got March 8<sup>th</sup> as an official day off. We attended the protests of worker women last year in Uğur Mumcu. To be honest, I was taking part in marches before that as well, sometimes they coincided with the weekdays, so I could not attend them. I like taking part in women-related protests.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Biz şubede 35 kişi filandık, komite toplantısında. 35 kişinin 28’i filan erkek. Şube başkanları var onlar da erkek. Ben bir düşündüm çıkıp söylesem mi yoksa ayrı mı söylesem? Beni yanlış mı anlarlar diye, sonra dedim ki bu yanlış anlaşılacak bir şey değil. Böyle düşünüyorlarsa da alışsınlar buna. El kaldırdım, “biz” dedim “kadınlar ayda bir gün ücretli mazeretsiz izin istiyoruz, regli olduğumuzdan dolayı”. “Tamam” demişlerdi, çok iyi. Arkada kadınlar alkışlamışlardı. Kabul edileceğini düşünüyorduk aslında ilk kendi aramızda konuştuğumuzda da.

<sup>72</sup> Yeşim arkadaşımız el kaldırdı, dedi “biz regl izni istiyoruz.” Orada 40 erkek var cesaret edip el kaldırıyoruz. Bizim iş yerinde çok kadın olduğu için istedik mi istedik! Olmadı ama. 8 Martı resmi izin olarak aldık. Biz geçen sene Uğur Mumcu’da emekçi kadınların gösterilerine katıldık. Ben ondan önce yürüyüşlere gidiyordum açıkçası, bazen hafta içine geliyor gidemiyordum. Kadınlarla ilgili eylemlere katılmayı seviyorum.



There are other gains brought by unionization for female workers. For instance, while it was the women who did the cleaning of the units they worked at in the past, following unionization, cleaners are now hired additionally for the cleaning job, thus they have gained a more defined job description.

In the following part, I aim to present the distinction women make between the housework, factory work and agricultural work. The term security plays a determining role in this distinction. Along with that, women propounds past, present and future perspective while making a distinction among various jobs based on their labor within the scope of security. The significance of the capacity of their relationship with their mothers and children and various works to transform the existing social relation lies at the center of the distinction.

#### **6.4 How Women Workers Differentiated between Factory Work, House Work and Agricultural Work: Two Conceptions of Routine Tasks**

During the interviews I held in Mata Automotive, routine, order, security, lack of security and oppression laid at the center of women's life stories. After a brief introduction, we started the interviews as follows: "Could you describe your life in terms of turning points?" The workers we interviewed reformulated the question: "So, how did I become me?" or "What did bring me here?" or "Ah, things that make me who I am!"

*Gülay:* Things that make me who I am... I was a little bit of a rebel, was not like anyone else. My relatives also say that. I don't know if it is because of always trying to stand on your own feet. Or maybe lots was offered to my brothers and not me, so I did everything myself? I am somewhat calmer now. I have some security too... I still fight with my mother too, but. "Why didn't you do anything for me", "You gave everything to your sons". When I got married, I became a stranger. I sometimes cooked for my brothers when I was young, they could not even warm up a meal, there was food but they couldn't eat it. Why not? Because if my mother had provided me security, I would have been more comfortable now. If you have security, you would be stronger against your husband. I

spent too much effort to claim my right. That is why the factory work is better, because not only I but also all fought for it, finally the union took over.<sup>73</sup>

*İlknur:* I think what causes me to be here is myself. I have always fought, I sometimes feel like I am standing up to the entire world. I actually did that when I think about it. My father died when I was a kid, my mother remarried. My grandparents looked after me. It was as if I did not have any family. I always experienced its difficulty; you are doing everything on your own. No one supports you. You become worried, rebel, you are a woman on top of, so you need to protect yourself. My turning point could be my marriage. I was working in Yazaki. When Yazaki relocated to Bursa, they called me, I could have gone. I was expecting to get married, I wish I had gone. But I got married and got a divorce, now I am settled. I draw a path for myself and got stick to that. I raised myself.<sup>74</sup>

41-year old Rahşan describes it as follows:

*Selma:* I grew up in a village until I was 12. Extremely difficult. I was not that old, but you are replicating the lives already lived by parents; literally the same life! (...) You asked about the turning point it was leaving the village for me. I was 12 at that time. Leaving the village was an escape for me, because the entire housework in the village was on you. To be more precise, they let you shoulder the entire load, all the responsibility, everything. So you cook, set up the table, remove it over and over again at an early age. You lift and put back a 30 kg mattress at an early age, you actually drag it. Living conditions! You do anything but you

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<sup>73</sup> Beni ben yapan şeyler... Ben biraz asiydım, pek kimseye benzemedim. Akrabalarım da söylerler. Hep kendi ayakların üzerinde durmaya çalışmaktan mı bilmiyorum. Ya da abimlere çok şey sunuldu. Bana sunulmadı, kendim yaptım ondan mı? Şimdi biraz daha duruldum. Biraz da güvencem var... Annemle hâlâ kavga ediyorum ama... Niye bana yapmadın, her şeyi oğullarına verdi. Ben evlenince el olmuşum. Yeri geldi küçükken abimlerin yemeklerini de ben verdim, bir şeyin altını ısıtıp yemezlerdi, yemek vardı yiyemezlerdi. Neden? Bana annem bir güvence sunmuş olsaydı daha rahat olurdu. Güvencen olsa eşine karşı da güçlü olursun. Ben hakkımı almak için çok emek verdim. Fabrika işi güzel o yüzden, burada sadece ben değil hep birlikte mücadele verdik, sendika girdi sonunda.

<sup>74</sup> Benim burada olmama sebep, kendimim diye düşünüyorum. Ben hep mücadele verdim, bazen tüm dünyaya kafa tutmuş gibi hissediyorum kendimi. Tuttum da aslında, düşününce. Benim babam ben çocukken öldü, annem de evlendi. Bana dedemle babaannem baktı. Şimdi düşünüyorum da çocuksun yani... Hiç ailem olmadı gibi bir şey. Bunun zorluğunu hep yaşadım, her şeyi kendin yapıyorsun, kimse senin sırtını sıvazlamıyor. Endişeli oluyorsun, asi oluyorsun, bir de kadınsın, kendini koruman gerekiyor. Benim dönüm noktamı düşününce evlenmem olabilir. Yoldan sapmam yani. Yazaki'de çalışıyordum. Yazaki Bursa'ya taşınırken bizi de çağırdılar, gidebilirdim. O zaman evlenmeyi bekliyordum ben gitmedim. Keşke gitseymişim. Ama evlendim boşandım, şimdi düzenimi kurdum. Kendime bir yol çizmiştim o yolda durdum ben. Kendimi yetiştirdim yani.

don't get to have a say! It was an instant decision, an escape because in that summer my uncle's daughters came over: of course they were lot older than I was but they came over and said to me "will you come to Istanbul with us?" It was an escape for me. I am not going to do anything; not any work. I thought I would be just in a house. "Tell my mother," I said. They did. My mom barely decided, said "alright." (...) It marked a turning point for me, making a radical decision and starting from scratch in Istanbul and doing this at the age of 12. You become the turning point for everyone, while you live their life, you turn around everyone's life with your own decision (...) I did not go back, I was scared if I could not come back to the village again if I left onewhen I was single, so they came to me, after selling their livestock.

*Burcu:*How was the journey?

*Selma:* I can never forget that journey actually. I left the house and had a perfect journey. I don't think it would be possible to experience that again. I can describe it to the smallest detail. Because it marked a first time for everything; being away from the parents which means when you want something you do it without looking into the eyes of your mother, without getting scared of your brother for the first time: For example, I drink water, because I want to, not because I was allowed to do that. Even drinking water in the village would be met with "Why are you up?" "Why did you disturb my sleep?" If it is a man, then you have no chance to do it yourself. I still argue with my mother because she allowed this to happen. If she had not, no one would have made oppression on me. She did everything herself, so maybe she was scared or shy but she did every work around the house, so she had to have a say but she did not use that. Housework is not considered work, alright, but my mother was not weak. She did not have to let them do that to me. And then no one could dare to do that.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Ben köyde büyüdüm. 12 yaşına kadar. Fazlasıyla zor. Yaşımız çok büyük değil ama anne babanın zaten yaşanmış olan hayatını aynısıyla yaşamış oluyorsun; birebir yaşıyorsun, ne eksik ne fazla! (...) Dönüm noktası sordun ya, benim için köyden çıkışım bir dönümdü. 12 yaşındaydım ama benim için köyden çıkış bir kurtuluştu, bir kaçıştı. Bir kurtuluştu çünkü köyde bütün evin işi sana bakıyor. Daha doğrusu bütün yükü senin üstüne vermişler, sorumlulukları vermişler, her şeyi senin üstüne vermişler. Yani, küçük yaşta yemek yapıyorsun, sofrayı kuruyorsun, kaldırıyorsun, bir daha yapıyor bir daha kaldırıyorsun. Küçük yaşta 30 kiloluk yatağı kaldırıp indiriyorsun, aslına bakarsan bunu yaparken de sürükleyerek kaldırıyorsun. Kaldırma denirse buna da... Hayat şartları! Her işi yapıyorsun ana söz hakkın olmuyor! Bir anlık bir karardı, bir kaçıştı çünkü o yaz dayımın kızları misafir gelmişti: tabii ki onlar benden çok büyüklerdi ama bize gelmişlerdi ve bana dediler ki "bizimle İstanbul'a gelir misin?" Benim için kaçış ve kurtuluş. Hiçbir şey yapmayacağım; hiçbir iş yapmayacağım. Bana göre sadece evin içinde olacağım. "Anneme söyleyin" dedim. Anneme söylediler. Annem zar zor bir karar verdi. "Tamam" dedi. (...) Bu benim için bir dönüm noktasıdır, radikal bir karar alıp bir hayatı bırakıp başka bir hayata başlamak için buraya, İstanbul'a gelmek ve bunu 12 yaşında yapabilmek. Herkesin dönüm

Family, restrictions attached to the unwaged domestic work in terms of offering a predictable future and the disputes between the mother and daughter lie at the center of women's life stories. Maintaining order, in its existing form, could not be put more simply than Selma's way of describing it as "You are replicating the same life that your mother and father have already lived, literally the same life". The housework, continuing the oppressive order on the axes of the repetitive housework tasks and being resistant to change are closely related in women's stories. Besides, the lack of security in housework and agricultural works are highlighted as features distinguishing them from the unionized workplaces:

*Gül:* It is not exactly a turning point but working is a certain milestone in my life. I grew up in Bursa, as the youngest of eight siblings. I worked before. Since it was our own business, my dad did not let me work outside. We were doing agriculture and running a grocery store as well. But working in the field extremely tough. And since it was our own business, we worked so hard. Then frost hit and all the crops were gone. You had no guarantee or security. It was the case. Then I got married after which my husband did not want me to work. Then his business did not go well, he quit his job. We went through so many issues. He set up his own business but then went bankrupt and so on. Money problems started, we had problems to pay for electricity or water. So I decided to work. He did not let me but I started to work in a school canteen through a friend. My insurance was not paid for about 1 year. I thought of why it was not although I was working abroad. My husband got angry when I told him about the factory. He said I could not work there. Then I started working in a grocery store for about threemonths, my husband also opposed to. I quit

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noktası oluyorsun, sen onların hayatını yaşarken, senin kararınla herkesin yaşamını bir çeviriyorsun. (...) Ben hiç dönmedim, bekarlığımda bir kez gidersem köye bir daha gelemem diye korktum, onlar geldiler. Hayvanları satıp yanıma geldiler. *Burcu:* Yolculuk nasıldı? *Selma:* Ben o yolculuğu hiç unutamıyorum zaten. Evden bir çıktım ki çok güzel bir çıkış oldu, müthiş bir yolculuktu. Bir daha da hiç kimseye böyle bir şey kısmet olmaz diye düşünüyorum. En ufak ayrıntısına kadar söylerim, santim santim, milim milim. Çünkü ilk yaşıyorsun. Her şeyi ilk yaşıyorsun: aileden uzaklığı ilk defa yaşıyorsun yani ilk defa bir şey isterken annenin gözüne bakmadan istiyorsun, abinin korkusunu yaşamadan istiyorsun, kardeşinin korkusunu yaşamadan istiyorsun... Misal ben su içiyorum, su istediğim için içiyorum, bana izin verildiği için değil. Köyde kalkıp su içmek bile "niye kalktın?" "beni niye uykumdan ediyorsun?" Bir de erkekse, kendin yapma imkanın sifıra iniyor. Buna annem neden müsaade etti hâlâ ben annemle tartışıyorum. "Neden yaptırдың?" diye. Benim annem müsaade etmeseydi kimse bu baskıyı yapamazdı. Kendi her iş yaptı, belki korktu belki çekindi evde her işi yaptı, o zaman söz hakkı da olmalı. Söz hakkını kullanmadı. Ev işi iş olarak görülüyor, tamam ama benim annem güçsüz biri değildi. Yaptırmayabilirdi. O zaman kimse de yapamazdı.

there too. My husband opposed to the factory job but I worked anyways.<sup>76</sup>

We can describe order as continuation of existing relations as they are. In this description the word order is attached with a negative connotation. Being resistant to change, being the carrier of repressive relations or maintaining them, adapting to and being accustomed to the usual flow of various power relations are some of these negative connotations. In the case of a work, daily, repetitive routine tasks have a similar meaning. Routine or repetitive work tasks are used in two areas. One of them is the argument that is briefly touched upon in the chapter 4 which concerns devaluing and deskilling of labor. The other is the discussion about domestic labor.

In the labor process analysis, the development of monotonous, repetitive and routine work tasks are analyzed in two ways. First of all, the work taking on a repetitive aspect is related with the degradation of work and deskilling of the labor (Braverman, 1974). Job fragmentation in line with scientific management principles and taking on a repetitive character means to minimize production costs and increased control on the labor process. As the work is reorganized in tandem with scientific management principles, the conflict between the employers and workers in the workplace is surpassed (Feldman and Pentland, 2003: 98). Secondly, studies on labor process analyzed routine work tasks around the formation of *consent* at the point of production (Burawoy, 1985).

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<sup>76</sup> Dönüm noktası tam değil belki ama çalışmam hayatımdaki bir kırılma. Ben Bursa'da büyüdüm. 8 kardeşiz, en küçükleri benim. Daha önce çalıştım. Kendi işimiz olduğu için, babamlar dışarıda çalışmaya göndermiyordu. Tarım yapıyorduk bir de bakkalımız vardı. Fakat tarla işi çok zor. Bir de kendi işimiz olduğu için çalışıyorsun, 1 seneni veriyorsun bir dolu vuruyor, bitiyor. Garantin yok. Güvencen yok. Öyleydi. Sonra evlendim. Evlendikten sonra eşim istemedi çalışmamı. Sonra eşimin işleri iyi gitmedi işten çıktı bir sürü sorun yaşadık, kendi iş kurdu onu batırdı falan. Maddi sıkıntılar başladı, elektriği suyu ödemeye gelene kadar sıkıntı yaşadık, çalışmaya karar verdim. O izin vermedi ama ben gittim bir arkadaşımın vasıtasıyla bir okula gittim girdim. 1 seneye yakın dediğim sigortam tam yatmadı. Ben nasılsa evden çıkıyorum neden sigortalı değil diye düşündüm. Eşim de fabrika deyince çok kızmıştı, gidemezsin, çalışamazsın. Sonra işte markete gittim. 3 ay kadar da markette çalıştım. Eşim yine karşı geldi çıkacaksın diye. Oradan da çıktım. Eşim fabrika olayına karşı çıktı ama ben girdim yani.

Burawoy (1985) distinguishes the despotic factory regime of 19<sup>th</sup> century and the hegemonic factory regime which is the dominant tendency following the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War in particular. Whereas the despotic factory regime is coercive while controlling labor, the hegemonic regime relies on consent in the control of labor.<sup>77</sup> Hegemonic factory regime is a product of the agreement between the labor struggle, the capital and the state. In the hegemonic factory regime, as a result of different political devices that have an impact at the point of production (collective bargaining and internal labor market), the interests of labor and those of capital are reconciled to some degree. Therefore, hegemonic factory regime and the labor process with which it is in relation refer to both the struggle of labor against capital and also imply restriction on the forms of struggle at the shopfloor.

It can be said that, the collective agreement signed after unionization in Mata Automotive Factory created such an impact. The tendency of the employer was to withdraw the workplace practices written in the contract in a way serving to own interests. I will discuss this point in the following parts of the chapter.

Revisiting to address repetitive work tasks and factory routine in labor process analyses, Burawoy (1985) made a distinction between the labor process and political devices of the production. By taking into account this distinction, we can say that the routine, albeit not directly as an outcome of repetitive work tasks but somewhat in relation to that, has meant both deepening control of labor through contract and employment with protection. Burawoy's (1985) study is differentiated from Braverman's labor process analysis for its dual meaning.

Routine work task is associated with the household labors of women as well as the factory work. Household labor depends on daily repetition. The continuity of given

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<sup>77</sup> The disputes on the shopfloor which resulted in the transition to hegemonic factory regime from despotic regime overlaps with the rise of working class feminism. The reason of this overlap is not limited to the increased number of women working in factory in the post-war period and right before it. The fact that the militant union like UAW which claimed for workplace democracy is one of the leading unions regarding the rights of women workers points out to the relationship between the claim for workplace democracy and working class feminism.

daily needs (cooking, setting up the table, clearing the table, dusting...) determines the character of household labor of women equipped with the responsibility to meet these needs in the family. As the way to meet physical needs is naturalized like the needs themselves and attached to women within the existing sexual division of labor, this means mystifying the hierarchical relations within the household and keeping up the order as it is. The positive connotation of the routine pointing to security is more limited in house labor than the factory work. Deniz Kandiyoti (1988) has conceptualized the relation between unwaged domestic labor, security and the oppression with through the concept "patriarchial bargain". Security attained by women through bargain is limited compared to factory work due to the fact that domestic work and bargain is interpersonal. According to Kandiyoti (1988:288), the cyclical fluctuations of women's power positions, as older women gain power and inherit authority over labor of younger women in the household, result in "their active collusion in the reproduction of their own subordination." Security attained by women in classical patriarchy seems to be an old age security of women over their younger fellows in the household.

Although self-reflexive activity of performing routine tasks and their transformative character are questions widely debated, here I will limit the frame with women's stories. In women's narratives the term connoted to the dual meaning emphasized above: oppression and security. Women workers interviewed defined factory work, domestic work and agricultural work on the axis of their labor with a conception of past, future and present circumstances. Their anger towards their mother has been at the foci when thinking on the oppression and the lack of family security.

One side of the dispute women have with their mothers is related with childcare. The most difficult part of working for a paid job for female workers is the issue of who will take care of their children especially if their children are young. Although many women say that they want to work for a paid job for themselves in order to be financially independent from their husbands or parents, not to be stuck in the house, establish new relations, learn about different things, discuss different things and be secured, the difficulty on surviving on a single salary for a household makes it

obligatory for women to work in paid jobs.<sup>78</sup> The workers I have interviewed explain their insistence of working for a paid job and whom will take care of their children when they start working become a major issue:

*Gülay:* Financial independence is so important for women. I am always for working. Your world is changing. Against whom will you defend your right at home! I don't like sitting at home, waiting around. There are both more works as you are taken for an idler, you have the family work, there are those who get sick and you need to look after them. But when you work, you have a routine. It is certain when and where you will work and the job you will do. Not in every job, for sure. In textile, for instance, what you will do is not certain or how many hours a day you will work. But I don't imagine anybody enjoying sitting at home. You work in the house too but no one calls that a work. You know when you feel obliged to loan a person then after a while that person asks you for something and tell you that you will do that, you need to give in and do that. That opportunity, you will not give that to anybody. You will make the other party feel that you are an individual. Working is also challenging, when the children were young, it was hard. But I still did not quit, kept on working. When a person wants to do something, he/she justifies it. We had economic difficulties. In the past, it was possible to survive on a single salary but it is no longer possible to do that now. So you have to work. But I wanted to work myself.<sup>79</sup>

*Selma:* You are mainly working for security. When I was at home, I did not stay at home, always did something but you work so can you have a rhytm, a quarantee, I worked in the textile for a long time. Textile is something else. You never know what you will do.

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<sup>78</sup> Still, one needs to be cautious towards the reason that working is an economic obligation for women. It is because sometimes the economic obligation can be the first argument brought forward by women to make their working in a paid job something acceptable in cases when their working is not supported, and not even seen legitimate. For a study questioning the reason of economic obligation see Mirta Zaida Lobato (1997).

<sup>79</sup> Kadınlar için ekonomik bağımsızlık çok önemli. Her zaman çalışmak taraftarıyım. Dünyan biraz değişiyor. Evde hakkını kime karşı savunacaksın! Ben evde oturmayı, beklemeyi sevmiyorum. Hem boş görüldüğün için çok da fazla iş oluyor, ailenin de işleri oluyor, hastası oluyor. Çalıştığında bir rutinin oluyor. Ne zaman nerede olacaksın ne iş yapacaksın. Her yerde değil tabii ki. Tekstilde ne yapacağın belli değil mesela ya da günde kaç saat çalışacağın. Ama ben sanmıyorum ki kimse de evde oturmayı sevsin. Evde de çalışıyorsun ama çalışmak denmiyor ki. Mecburen bir insana borç verirsın verirsın de bir süre sonra senden bir şey istediğinde, bunu yapacaksın dediğinde boynunu büküp yapmak zorunda kalırsın ya o fırsatı kimseye vermeyeceksin. Birey olduğunu karşı tarafa hissettireceksin. Zorlukları var çalışmanın da; çocuklar küçükken çok zordu. Buna rağmen bırakmadım devam ettim. İnsan biraz da yapmak istediği şeye gerekçe buluyor. Ekonomik zorluklarımız vardı. Eskiden olsa tek maaşla geçinebiliyordu insanlar ama şimdi öyle bir şansın yok o yüzden çalışmaya mecbursun ama ben biraz da çalışmak istedim.



There are people shouting around. I was not after the money but I had to have insurance. You don't have a future in the house! You never know what this life will bring you! There is no guarantee that I will be living with my husband forever! He gets upset when I say that, that is a different subject. But we shouldn't rely on each other in that sense. We should not depend on each other! (...) My mom looked after my kid for 2,5 years. Or else it would not work. There was no daycare or anything. When my kid was 6 years old, I quit work, had to take care of him for a while. Everyone starts working when their children starts school, I did the opposite. I was with my mother so I was more comfortable. But the schools are not the way they were in the past anymore, you need to take care of everything so your child can become something in the future. So it was hard. I gave a 6-year break.<sup>80</sup>

Meral, from quality control department and one of the shop stewards describes the difficulty she went through when she started working.

*Meral:* I wasn't working. I started working after I split from my husband. I did weaving for a while after getting a knitting machine in the house, but that was not enough to make a living, so I looked for a work outside of house. I did not have any insurance either. I didn't have a support. I lived with my son then. He was 6-7 years old. Our challenge was that there was no one to look after him. I started working when he was around 6 or 7. Since my parents were far away, I was leaving him with the neighbor; by leaving I mean he was alone in the house so the neighbor was only going to watch for him. My mother didn't come for help, as she was upset with me since I got married too young and dropped out.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Esas güvence için çalışıyorsun yani. Ben evde durduğum zamanlarda da evde durmazdım, hep bir şeyler yaptım ama çalışıyorsun ki bir güvencem olsun bir düzenim olsun. Tekstilde çalıştım çok uzun zaman, tekstil bambaşka hani belli olur ya bir gün ne yapacağın. Belli değil. Bağırın çağırın. Sonrasında işin parasında değildim ama benim sigortamı doldurmam lazımdı. Evde bir geleceğin yok ki! Hayat bize neler yaşatır, başımıza neler gelir bilemeyiz! Ben eşimle ömür boyu bir ömür sürdüreceğim diye bir garanti yok ki! Bunu söylediğimde kızıyor, ayrı bir şey. Ama bu konuda o da bana güvenmesin ben de ona. O da bana sırtını dayamasın, ben de ona! (...) Çocuğuma 2.5 yıl annem baktı. O bakmasa yolu yok zaten. Kreş filan yok çünkü. Çocuk 6 yaşına gelince ayrıldım işten biraz ilgilenmem gerekiyordu. Herkes çocuğu okula başlayınca işe başlar, ben tersini yaptım. ben annemleydim o yüzden daha rahattım. Ama okullar da artık eskisi gibi değil, her şeyiyle uğraşmak gerekiyor ki çocuğun bir yerlere gelebilsin, o bakımdan da daha zor yani. 6 yıl ara verdim.

<sup>81</sup> Ben çalışmıyordum. Eşimden ayrıldıktan sonra çalışmaya başladım. Başta bir süre evde bir de triko makinası temin ederek dokuma yapmaya başladım ama bu benim için geçimim için yeterli olmadığı için ev dışında iş aradım. Sigortam da yoktu çünkü. Desteğim de yoktu. Oğlumla beraber yaşıyorduk o zaman. Oğlum 6-7 yaşlarındaydı. Bizim zorluğumuz ona bakan kimse olmamasıydı. O 6-7 yaşındayken işe girdim. Annemler uzakta olduğu için komşuya emanet ediyordum, emanet dediğim, o evde yalnız da göz kulak ol gibi. Annem gelmedi biraz kızgındı da bana erkenden evlendim, okumadım diye.

*Gül:* As I said my husband didn't want me to work. I started working when we could no longer pay our debts. My kids were 10 and 13. I was just leaving them at home. When I got home, sometimes I saw things I didn't want to, for instance the gas tube stayed on which really upset me. But as I said if I had stayed home, they would have been in financial difficulty. Also, they could understand what it means to work.<sup>82</sup>

Gülay explains the conflict with her mother due to childcare:

I was working in the hospital back then. I quit when I had a child although I did not want to. I asked my mother-in-law to look after my kid but she said that she did not have anyone look after her's so she cannot do it for mine. I asked my mother but she told me very heavy stuff. She said that I was not one of them now that she would look after my brother's kids. I asked her what I am to her. If my daughter grows up and gets married, which is not a must if she doesn't want to, I will never say that to her. I raised myself by comparing to my mother, trying to be her opposite. If a woman does that to you, it is normal for others to do that. My mother never said anything when her sons were around. How strange, is it! She gave birth to them, did everything for them, how come she never said anything! The society is patriarchal, it is to the advantage of my brothers, so why would you support that, why would you make a distinction among us? Now, no one is looking after her, only I am. So she regretted the past. I wish she had not done those things...<sup>83</sup>

The increasing tension women have regarding childcare is, without a doubt, closely related with limitation of welfare services by the state. The fact that child care facilities such as daycare centers has not been able to make it to the agenda in Turkey

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<sup>82</sup> Ben demiştim ya eşim çalışmamı istemiyordu. Ben borçlarımızı ödeyemez hale gelince çalışmaya başladım. Çocuğumun biri 13 biri 10 yaşındaydı. Onları öyle bırakıyordum. Eve gidiyordum bazen istemediğim şeylerle de karşılaşırıyordum. Bir bakıyordum tüp açık kalmış, o da beni çok üzüyordu ama işte dediğim gibi evde kalsam maddi olarak güç durumda olacaktı. Hem onlar da çalışmanın ne olduğunu anlasınlar.

<sup>83</sup> Ben o zaman hastanede çalışıyordum. Çocuğum olduğu zaman ayrıldım. Ayrılmam da şöyle, istemiyordum. Kayınvalideme dedim, gel bak her şeyin benden, dedi benim çocuklarıma kimse bakmadı, seninkine de bakamam. Anneme dedim, annemin bana söylediği şey çok ağırdı. Sen artık el oldun, abinin çocuklarına bakarım dedi. Ben kimim o zaman dedim. Neyim? Ben kızım büyüüp olur da evlenirse, isterse de evlenmesin, şart değil, ona asla böyle bir şey söylemeyeceğim. Ben anneme bakarak yetiştirdim kendimi, onun tersi olmaya çalıştım. Sen şimdi hemcinsin yapıyorsa bunu elin oğlunun yapması çok normal. Annem oğullarının yanında hiç sesinin çıkarmazdı. Ne tuhaf di mi? O doğurmuş, her işlerini yapmış, ses çıkarmamak ne demek! Toplum ataerkil, abinin zaten işine geliyor, sen niye çanak tutuyorsun, çanak tutmak da değil ayrı gayrı yapıyorsun? Ama şimdi bakanı yok, bir ben bakıyorum yani onunla birlik yapıyor ama bir şey de kazanmıyor. Pişman da oldu. Yapmasaydı keşke...

and children's education has been privatized to the extent that it cannot be fully left to public regulation drives the tension between childcare and working. A similar situation applies to patient care. Renouncing protective healthcare regulations, privatizing of healthcare increase the workload of women. Within this general framework, the tension women experience becomes a subject of conflict with their mother. As the concept of patriarchal bargain (Kandiyoti, 1988) points, the women's position in social power relations is shaped based on their life cycles, which can direct them towards a consensus in patriarchal relations. However, women workers are upset with their mothers, as they do not push on the limits of security presented to them by the patriarchal bargain. Women felt anger to their mothers as they did not use their say that they are supposed to have as a result of the reproduction labor they have spent for years in favor of their daughter, that they protect their son instead of building solidarity with their own daughter. It is also possible to interpret the anger felt by women as a desire to change things. A desire to change the current patriarchal order is expressed in the comparison between the factory work and housework on one hand, a comparison between mothers-daughters and their children, on the other.

The following statement of Pinar from retouch unit presents a meaningful example on the distinction between the housework and factory work based on the struggle and capacity to change things:

I say women should absolutely work, stand on their own feet. A mistake made in some marriages is to think that the man will change. No one changes, it is not easy to change someone. It should come from within. Here when there was one person objecting to things, they would show the door. You spend your whole life trying to change a man and it is not happening. When there was a crowd here, we would change in three days. Is everything good? No but there are things that can be better with time. You can't change it because you are weak. Although you would think to change the order here is more difficult but there is an order there as well, we live in a patriarchal system anyways. When you try to change it, you also exhaust yourself you fight against your mother, father, brothers and even your own children (not in my case since I have a very good communication with my

own children). But once we reached unity we changed the order in the factory.<sup>84</sup>

Patriarchal bargain (different from workplace bargain) is an interpersonal negotiation (Kandiyoti, 1988). Kandiyoti emphasized in the article dated 1988 that the penetration of capital into agrarian relations and poverty resulted in a change in classic patriarchy. In Kandiyoti's (1988: 282) words:

Among the propertyless and the dispossessed, the necessity of every household member's contribution to survival turns men's economic protection of women into a myth. The breakdown of classic patriarchy results in the earlier emancipation of younger men from their fathers and their earlier separation from the paternal household. While this process implies that women escape the control of mothers-in-law and head their own households at a much younger age, it also means that they themselves can no longer look forward to a future surrounded by subservient daughters-in-law. For the generation of women caught in between, this transformation may represent genuine personal tragedy, since they have paid the heavy price of an earlier patriarchal bargain, but are not able to cash on its promised benefits. (...) Despite the obstacles that classic patriarchy puts in women's way which may far outweigh any actual economic and emotional security, women often resist the process of transition because they see the old normative order slipping away from them without any alternatives.

Women's reaction against the crisis of patriarchal system is of course not limited with the old system that ensured security (Kandiyoti, 1988). The anger women working in Mata Automotive that I have interviewed, feel towards their mother can be interpreted as anger towards their mothers' efforts to hold on typical patriarchy in crisis. Daughters' reaction against their mothers is related with the crisis experienced in social relationships and conditions as well as future expectations. This relationship is revealed in women's stories about their mothers and children. Gülay describes it:

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<sup>84</sup> Ben kadınlar mutlaka çalışmalı diyorum. Çalışmalı ayakları üzerinde durmalılar. Bazen evliliklerde yapılan bir hata bir adam değişir diye bakmak. Değişir düzelir diye... Kimse değişmiyor, değiştirmek de kolay değil, kendinden gidiyor. Burada tek kişi bir şeylere itiraz eden olunca kapıyı gösteriyorlardı. Bir ömür bir adamı değiştirmeye çalışıyorsun, zor, olmuyor da. Burada kalabalık olunca 3 günde değiştirdik. Her şey çok mu iyi? Hayır ama zamanla olacak bir şeyler var. Değiştiremiyorsun çünkü güçsüzsün. Gerçi buradaki bir düzen belki daha zor diyeceksin ama oradaki de bir düzen, ataerkil düzende yaşıyoruz sonuçta. Değiştirmeye kalktığında kendin de yoruluyorsun, annenle savaşıyorsun, babanla, abilerinle yeri geliyor çocuklarınla bile savaşıyorsun (kendim için demiyorum benim çocuklarımla çok güzel bir iletişimim vardır). Burada birlik olunca değiştirdik ama fabrikadaki düzeni.

I try to raise my children doing the opposite of what I saw my mother doing. I don't let a distinction between girl and boy. If I give birth to them both, they are equal. Sometimes my son looks down on girls, tells me that "they [the girls] don't know what is what" which upsets me a lot. I shove how old fashioned his opinion is on his face right away. He cannot think his sister, girlfriend or me as less than man. I am proud of that.<sup>85</sup>

Pınar describes her relationship with her children:

Since I divorced my husband, we all grew up together; my children and I. My son and daughter were equal. I would never let it be otherwise. They would both study, find a job. It is okay if they don't get married. They warn me if I say something wrong and I do the same for them. For example, there is a gay kid in our neighborhood, everyone is mocking him, making fun of him, you know... I tell my son to keep an eye on him. He sometimes jokes, asking me if I am a lesbian since I don't let men into my life anymore. What do I know! If it is conservative, I am conservative but I don't like men. Am I wrong? My mom was rightist, she didn't know anything to do with homosexuality, but that's the way I am, a little bit of a rebel. So people can be more than what they see if they really insist and they should. Women should insist more. I go to women's protests. That's why my son asks me if I am a feminist. I say yes. Feminism isn't bad. Men and women should be equal, right? That's how I raised my children and I did the right thing. I am lucky too. It is nice that some things are changing.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Ben çocuklarımı annemden ne gördüysem tersini yaparak yetiştirmeye çalışıyorum. Kız-erkek çocuk ayrımı olmamalı buna izin vermem. Ben doğurduysam ikisi de eşit. Bazen oğlum kızları küçümsüyor, anne onlar anlamaz diyor o zaman çok sinirleniyorum. Hemen düşüncesindeki geriliği yüzüne vuruyorum. Ne kız kardeşini ne beni ne kız arkadaşını erkeklerden geri göremez. Bununla gurur da duyuyorum.

<sup>86</sup> Ben eşimden de boşandığım için hep bir büyüdük çocuklarımla. Oğlan kız hep bir. Asla izin vermem, aralarında bir fark olmaz. İkisi de okuyacak, işlerini bulacak. Evlenmeseler de olur. Ben yanlış bir şey söylediğimde onlar beni uyarır onlar yanlış bir şey söylediğinde ben. Mesela eşcinsel bir çocuk var bizim mahallede, herkes çok şey söylüyor. Kötü konuşuyorlar, dalga geçiyorlar, bilirsin işte. Ben oğluma diyorum, diyorum ki göz kulak olsun. Hatta benle bazen dalga geçer, anne sen de lezbiyen misin diye. Erkekleri de sevmiyorum ya artık. Birini hayatıma almıyorum ya. Ben ne bileyim! Muhafazakarlıksa bu konuda muhafazakarım ama ben erkekleri sevmiyorum. Haksız mıyım ama? Benim annem sağcıydı, bilmez öyle eşcinsellik bir şey ama ben böyleyim, isyankarım biraz. İnsan demek ki gördüğünden başka bir şey olabiliyor ısrar ederse. İnsan ısrar etmeli bence. Kadınlar daha çok etmeli. Kadın eylemlerine de gidiyorum. Oğlum ondan da diyor: anne sen feminist misin diye. Evet diyorum. Feminizm kötü bir şey değil ki. Erkekle kadın eşit olsun öyle değil mi? Tabii iyi olanda eşit olsun. Çocuklarımı bunlarla büyüttüm ben. İyi de yaptım diyorum. Şanslı... Ben de şanslıyım. Bir şeylerin değişmesi güzel.

*Selma:* I tried to raise my son more differently. I wouldn't want him to say or do anything bad to a woman. He shouldn't say, "I don't care". Life is not about not caring. Life doesn't work with I don't care's. On one hand, it seems like he doesn't do anything. On the other, he does a lot. He really likes the elderly, the people. He is afraid of hurting people. I raised such a person, so nice. He tells me if he gets married he will make his wife work like a maid just to get to me angry. I tell him "I would kill you". This is the best way to upset me. What lies beneath me taking a more radical stance against men is my experience in that village. What I lived in that village, women getting oppressed, not being comfortable, surrendering. We the women were already sitting in the quarter of the chair, now they are trying to rise from that limited space, this tempts me. Being a human also means being responsible that's what I believe. Coexisting comes with responsibility. You are responsible for what goes on around you. You can't say you didn't know. If you say you didn't know or you didn't hear about it you take what you are told as reality. You should know the history of the person in front of you. You will learn about that history and develop such an attitude so some things can change. Doesn't it apply to everything, anyways?<sup>87</sup>

The relation Rahşan establishes with the past, present and future is stimulating. Determining the future by knowing the past and taking an attitude in the present; addressing people's potential to change as the minimum requirement of coexisting relies on a remarkable vision of agent. The stories that women I interviewed, based on the relationship between their mothers-their own positions and their children, through putting their labor in center reflects the desire to transform the order from the past, present and future perspective.

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<sup>87</sup> Ben oğlumu daha farklı yetiştirmeye çalıştım. Bir kadınla ilgili kötü bir şey desin, kötü bir şey yapsın istemem. Bana ne demesin! Bana ne değildir hayat. Hayat bana ne'lerle olmaz çünkü. Bir yandan hiç bir şey yapmıyor gibi. Bir yandan çok şey yapıyor. Yaşlıları çok seviyor, insanları seviyor, incitmeye korkuyor. Öyle bir insan yetiştirdim, o da güzel bir şey yani. Bazen beni sinirlendirmek için anne evlenirsem kadını hizmetçi gibi çalıştıracağım diyor, seni gebertirim diyor. Beni kızdırmanın en iyi yolu o. Belki benim erkeklere karşı, bazı şeylere karşı daha radikal tavır almamın altında o köyde yaşadıklarım yatıyor. Köyde yaşadıklarım, kadınların ezilmesi, o kadar rahat olmaması, boyun eğmesi. Zaten kadınlar şu oturduğumuz yere çeyrek oturmuştuk, oradan da kaldırmaya çalışıyorlar ya çok öfkeleniyorum. Ne bileyim insan olmak biraz sorumluluktur, ben öyle biliyorum. Bir arada yaşamak sorumlulukla olur. Sorumlusun, yanında yörende olan biten bir şeyden. Ben bilmiyordum diyemezsin. Ben bilmiyordum ben duymamıştım dersin sana ne anlatılıyorsa onu bilirsin doğru olarak. Karşıdakinin tarihini bileceksin! O tarihi öğrenip bir tavır geliştireceksin ki bir şeyler değişsin. Bu her şeyde böyle ama değil mi?

I think it is necessary to elaborate the fact that women consider waged labor more secure than the domestic work further. Even though waged labor is associated with security, as stated in the above references, “not every job is the same”, women I have interviewed also made distinctions among works and sectors. Along with the insurance, working conditions and control of labor process are also determining in this aspect. Most of the women workers changed many jobs until they started working in their final workplace Mata Automotive. While women who have worked in various sectors emphasized the distinction between the jobs, textile sector has a distinctive place. Most of the women I interviewed started to waged work in the textile sector and the sector holds a special place in the stories women tell. While underlining that paid jobs provide security but not every job is the same, the first example that comes to mind is small scale workshops in particular. For example, 27-years old Özlem describes the workplaces she worked at as follows:

I worked in textile; I worked in plastics. Since it was a first time, I was inexperienced. Did not know my way around. I was so young then. I was basically a kid, 16-17 years old. I don't call it working. We were working from 8 to 9 in the workshop. We were also working on Saturdays until 12 am. When I first started in 2008, I started as an errand-girl then moved on to the overlock machine. I was getting paid 470 or 500 TL in 2009. I quit as an errand girl, moved on to the machine, so my pay increased. I worked there for a while. I was going there with 6-7 girlfriends from the neighborhood. The shuttle bus used to take us right front of our doors and leave in the evening. It was a small, under the counter workshop, they treated us differently than here, and they were hard on us. Everyone just cared about meeting the deadline. The minimum wage was around 850-900 TL then, they would pay half of that wage, if they had cared about their workers, they would have given a full amount. There was the owner of the workshop, Cahit, our boss. We were about 20-22 people. He had a slick path from the front of the office to the end of the workshop. He would stand over us. He stared at us whenever we had even the smallest breaks. Once, I left the work and just went away. We were trying to catch up with the shipment. We were doing women's and men's undershirts. His son would deliver them in the evening. We sent out the shipment, it turned out there were bursts in the armpit place. Then his son came back and said a mouthful of things: “If you cannot do it, just leave” “We can't deal with you” and similar insults. I had been working there for 5-6 months then, running errands, picking products that came out at the machine. I got mad. I had scissors in my hand. I threw it and just took off. After barely 1

week, he called my father, the boss also called him to call me so that we could talk. I went and then learnt about the machinery, worked for a little while more, then I quit. He shut down the workshop after a short while. But it was not like working. I don't know is it because it was the first job, or we were very few people, or because of their characters, it wasn't called working, you know.<sup>88</sup>

Esra started working for a paid job in a textile company (CPS). She describes the environment in the factory:

That was a rather absurd workplace. People were more interested in each other's lives than the actual work. Who was there, talking with whom, doing what? There was a lot of gossip going around. I have this thing: When I am assigned a task, I have to do that on time. I would do more, but not less. Because I don't want anyone scolding me, it didn't happen in my family. Then you see, I was working with a partner, my partner went to chitchat, which I got really angry with. Then I saw I started getting into arguments, we had experts there who always stood by me, liked me. They told me that I was right but I should just leave her... But then they ask me why the job was not done! I had so many arguments. I was psychologically exhausted a little. Then I ended up leaving the job after an argument.

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<sup>88</sup> Tekstilde çalıştım, plastikte çalıştım. İlk konfeksiyonda başladım. Orası ilk olduğu için tecrübesizsin. Kime nasıl davranacağını bilmiyorsun, daha çok gençtim o zaman. Çocuktum yani 16-17 yaşında. Çalışmak demiyorum ben ona. Konfeksiyonda sabah 8 akşam 8 çalışıyorduk. Cumartesi de 12'ye kadar çalışıyorduk. İlk başladığımda 2008'de ortacı olarak başladım sonra overlok makinası var ona geçtim. O zaman 470 lira ya da 500 lira o civarda bir şey alıyordum, sene 2008. Ben ortacılığı bıraktım, makinaya geçtim maaşım da yükseldi belli bir süre çalıştım. Mahalleden 6-7 kız arkadaş gidiyorduk, servis kapımızın önünden alıp akşam bırakıyordu. Tekstil ortamı, merdiven altı küçük bir atölye, buraya nazaran çok daha farklı davranılıyordu yani, kötü davranılıyordu... Küçük bir yer, insanları da sadece iş çıksın derdinde. Asgari ücret 850-900 lira mı vardı öyle bir şeydi, ablam çalışıyordu çünkü oradan biliyorum. Asgari ücretin yarı yarıya altında bir ücret veriyorsun, çalışanına kıymet veren bir yer olsa asgari ücret verirsin. Atölyenin sahibi vardı Cahit bey, patronumuz. Zaten 20-22 kişi filandık. O onun böyle ofisinin önünden atölyenin sonuna kadar ince bir yolu vardı o şekilde gider gider gelirdi... Başımızda öyle dururdu yani. En ufak bir boş durmamızda bile hemen dikilir bakardı. Bir kere ben işi bıraktım gittim öyle. Sevkiyatı yetiştiriyoruz... Kadın atletleri ve erkek atletleri yapıyorduk, biz. Akşamına oğlu götürüyordu. Sevkiyatı gönderdik biz, koltuk altı dikim yerleri var, orda patlaklar çıkmış. Sonrasında akşam oğlu geri geldi, ağzına geleni saydı: "yapamıyorsanız bırakın gidin!" "sizinle uğraşamayız!" falan hakaretler. Ben o sıra 5-6 aydır çalışıyordum, ortacılık yapıyordum, makina başında çıkan ürünü topluyordum. Sinirlendim. Elimde makas vardı. Makası attım, çıktım gittim. Aradan 1 hafta geçti geçmedi babamı aramış, evin numarası vardı patrona aramış gelsin konuşalım anlaşalım falan demiş gittim, ondan sonra makinayı falan öğrendim bir süre daha çalıştım sonra çıktım. O da çok geçmemiş kapatmış fabrikayı, atölyeyi. Fakat ne diyeyim, çalışmak gibi de değildi! İlk iş diye mi, az kişi çalışıyoruz diye mi, yoksa insanlıklarından mı ama çalışmak denemez ona yani.



*Burcu:* To whom you have argued with?

*Esra:* A women around 40 years old. We were coworkers. We worked together on that day. There was a problem related with numbers. "They always stand by you" "Don't we also work here?" "I have been working here for 6-7 years you have barely worked for a year" "They always stand by you, how do you do that?" etc. They were both women, what can I do? It means I was able to give her something proper, you didn't. I believe one minute is enough to know a person. We actually came onto each other. And I got on top of the table, was about to jump over that women. Then I said I was going. They wanted to give me an annual leave. I said okay but i wouldn't change my opinion. Then they extended it by one more week. I saw that I was still angry. And it is hard to be in the same place with a person after an argument. Usual argument is something, fighting is something else. I somewhat hold grudge. And the others were not so different from us in that working environment which was not the healthiest. They also tried to get into a union, but it didn't happen so that hurt every one. People now think what to do so they can get into an argument. The top management also made pressure which coincided with the time I was there. There was, actually too much of pressure. I have never seen anything like that here. Here is very comfortable for work but that place was full of pressure. We were doing car awnings, the one you pull over cars with. They were coming to us from the machinery. I was in the quality control. From the quality, they went to packaging. There weren't many employees. There were 100-150 people but we were like 1000 people. We had a manager (our quality manager) and an expert. For example, he would come and there would be a certain number of products I had to produce. On top of that we increased that number to compete better with the others. Actually there was no pressure at the beginning. But the new workers would produce more than the senior ones. I didn't do it on purpose. I had dexterity. For instance we had reclamation coming which I never had. That also played a role. When she did a little bit slowly our supervisor would come and say "Why is that?" "Look at the new comers, they produce that much", stirring up the atmosphere, then our manager would come. They were both women. They would say, "She does that much but you can't!" "She started working later than you did". Supervisor would also send me to over to the computer when she couldn't produce on time they would make me do my own job and her job. It would take about 2 to 3 hours. When I came back, I would see all the materials piled up, faces starting at me... There were a lot of them. They actually pit people against each other. I fell into that trap now that I think about it. Normally bosses come over from time to time; our boss would come everyday. Her stares were enough. They really got to me. She would never directly address you. She would never say anything to me when she was around. She would go and talk to the manager. I would be very upset. (...) Both our manager

and our foreman made pressure on us. For instance the union gave me a rose on March 8<sup>th</sup>. She said “Why would you take that rose?”. I said that it was none of his business as long as I did my job. It was a thing outside of CPS, not inside. It was very unhealthy in every aspect. We couldn’t manage the unionization. I don’t call that working.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Çok saçma sapan bir iş yeri idi. İşten çok insanlar birbirinin hayatlarıyla ilgiliydi. Kim kiminle nerde ne konuşuyor ne yapıyor? Çok dedikodu olan bir ortamdı. Bende şöyle bir özellik vardır: Bana bir iş verildiğinde ben onu saatinde zamanında yapacağım. Fazlasını veririm, eksikliğini vermem. Çünkü laf işitmeyi sevmiyorum, çünkü ailemden de görmedim. Bakıyorsun, ikili çalışıyordum (bir de orda ikili çalışıyordum tek başıma çalışmıyordum), karşımdaki insan giderdi orada laklak burada laklak ben çok kızardım öyle şeylere. Baktım çok tartışmaya başlıyorum, orada eksperlerimiz vardı hep arkamdalar yani beni seviyorlardı. Doğru söylüyorsun tamam ama onu öyle bırak... E sonra geliyorsun bana hesap soruyorsun bu niye yetişmedi! Çok tartışmalarım olmuştu. Psikolojik olarak yıprandım biraz. En son da tartıştım çıktım zaten. Öyle. *Burcu*: Kimle tartışmıştın? *Ezgi*: 40 yaşlarında bir kadın. Çalışma arkadaşımı. O gün beraber çalışıyorduk. Bu sayılar yüzünden bir problem oldu. “Hep seni tutuyorlar” işte “Biz burada çalışmıyoruz mu?” “Ben 6 sene 7 senedir buradayım sen daha 1 sene olmamış”, hani “Sürekli senin arkadalar ne yapıyorsun ne ediyorsun?” filan... Kadınlara ikisi de, ben ne yapabilirim ki? Demek ki ben ona düzgün bir şeyler vermişim, sen vermemişsin. İnsanı tanımak için 1 dakika bile yeterli bence. Baya bir birbirimizin üstüne geldik. Ve masanın üstüne çıktım, kadının üstüne atlayacaktım nerdeyse, baktım olacak gibi değil, ben gidiyorum dedim. Bana senelik izin vermek istediler. Tamam dedim ama fikrim değişmeyecek dedim. Ondan sonra 1 hafta daha uzattım. Baktım sinirim düzelmedi. Bir de bir insanla tartıştıktan sonra bir araya gelmek zor. Normal tartışma farklı kavga farklı. Ben bir de biraz kinci bir insanım. Bir de çalışma ortamı sadece biz değil herkes birbirile öyle. Hani kanlı bıçaklı nerdeyse. Çok sağlıklı bir ortam değil orası. Bir de sendika girmeye çalıştı, olmadı, onun yıpratması var. İnsanlar artık birbirine ne yapsak da tartışsak diye bakıyorlardı. Üsttekiler de baskı yapıyorlardı. Ben de o döneme denk geldim. Araba brandası, arabanın üstüne geçiriyorlar ya onlardan yapıyorduk. Makinelerden geliyordu bize, ben kalitedeydim, bizden de paketlemeye gidiyordu. Çok çalışanı yoktu 100-150 kişiydi ama 1000 kişi gibiydik. Hepimiz aynı yerdeydik zaten. Tüm bölümler. Bütün kaç kişiydik 7-8 kişiydik, iki vardiya çalışıyorduk, 3-4 kişi bir vardiya, 3-4 kişi bir vardiya. Bir de oraya gelen durmuyordu. 2-3 gün duruyordu, kaçıyor. Çünkü hani baskı baskı baskı insanlar ben nasıl dayandım bilmiyorum. Gelen gidiyordu ama...Müdürümüz (kalite müdürümüz) bir de eksperimiz vardı. Mesela geliyordu, benim yetiştirmem gereken belirli bir sayı var. Bir de artık insanlar o 100 yaptıysa ben 200 yapacağım, şöyle böyle biz kendi kendimize artırdık sayıyı. Aslında baskı yoktu başlarda. İşte eskiler, o gelenler yeni geldiler bizden fazla yapıyorlar halbuki ben onu böyle bilerek yapmıyordum. El çabukluğum var mesela bir de benim reklamasyon (red) geliyordu bize, bana hiç gelmemişti. Onun etkisi de vardı bu yemiyor ben yiyorum. Biraz yavaş yapıyordu, yavaş yapınca bu sefer geliyordu eksperimiz “Bu niye böyle?” “Bak yeni gelenler şöyle yapıyor, ortalığı da kızıştırıyorlar, sonra müdürümüz geliyordu. İkisi de kadındı zaten, işte “O yapıyor sen yapamıyorsun!”, işte “O senden sonra geldi bak!”. Bir de beni bilgisayara gönderiyorlardı, yetiştiremediği zamanlarda. Bana hem kendi işimi yaptırıyordu, hem kendi işini yaptırıyordu. 2-3 saat filan sürüyordu. Geldiğimde bu sefer birikmiş malzemeler, sana böyle ters bakan yüzler... Baya vardı. İnsanları biraz onlar birbirine düşürürdü. Biraz önce dedim ben de ona düşmüşüm belki de şimdi düşününce...Bir de bizim patron gelirdi, normalde patronlar ara sıra gelir, gelirdi patroniçe daha doğrusu, her gün gelirdi, hani böyle onun o bakışları bile yeterliydi. Beni çok etkilemişti o. Gelip seninle direkt muhatap olmazdı. Giderdi müdüre, müdür gelirdi. Yanımdan geçiyor, muhatap olmazdı, gider müdüre söylerdi. Ben çok kızardım buna. (...) Bizim hem müdürümüz hem ustabaşımız baskı kuruyordu, kadınlar gününde mesela gül vermişti sendika bana. “O gülü niye alıyorsun?” dedi. Dedim sizi ilgilendirmez, çalışıyorum ama kimden gül alıp almayacağım sizi ilgilendirmez, CPS’nin dışında olan bir olaydı bir de. İçinde değildi. Çok sağlıksızdı, her konuda çok sağlıksızdı. Sendikalaşmayı bile beceremedik orda. Ben ona çalışmak diyemiyorum.

In this long quote that I quoted from Esra, I believe there are three important issues. Firstly, in the work environment, attributing the conflicts resulting from the labor process and control of labor process to the characteristics of workers is something employers do which is hard to be eliminated by workers. As noted by Maurizio Atzeni (2010), the labor process is collective by its very nature, it is a given. However, just like exploitation, solidarity is also not obvious. It is hidden, mystified. Therefore the real question for workers is how to maintain and materialize the solidarity rather than how to build it. That it cannot be materialized does not mean that there is no solidarity among workers.

Considering the features resulting from the control of labor process as characteristics of people is one of the instruments employers use to control the labor process, the solidarity among workers resulting from the collectivity of the labor process is replaced with interpersonal conflict. As stated by Esra, pressure in textile is rather intense. Managers pit workers against each other to produce on time and more. This leads to the pressure made by managers regarding the control of labor process being perceived as competition, conflict by workers. Both the self-confidence of workers and the relation of trust and solidarity among workers end up getting hurt. Thus, for instance, despite an agreement among workers that the effort to increase numbers is a negative type of behavior, the numbers end up going up. As mentioned by Esra, there was an earlier attempt to unionize in this factory and this attempt resulted in a layoff of workers who tried. The number pressure made by supervisors being made invisible and experience of that in a conflict form in relations among workers hurt the trust among the workers, hindering new attempts to unionize and organize. The fights among workers also lead to leave of employment without severance pay. For instance, Gönül from quality control describes how she left textiles:

I had a dispute there, I don't recall why but there were always disputes, a lot of gossip there. Since I left myself, I left without the severance pay. If you missed onw day at work, they would cut off three days worth of pay. It was the same everywhere. There was no union, no security. They did the same for national holidays, religious holidays. I was paid a minimum wage, around 1100 TL anyways. I would miss one day in a month just like everyone. They

would cut that off of my pay so I was left with 800-900 TL. I didn't even care about the compensation. I got mad and took off, didn't come back.<sup>90</sup>

I will try to address the attribution of features of the work to personal features in the chapter titled *Routine: Factory, Union and Empowerment* in further detail. Coming back to Esra's story, telling her story and reconsidering it while telling it undoubtedly plays a role in her acknowledgment that the unhealthy work environment may result from the labor process and how it is controlled. We have to stress that along with telling her experience by contemplating it, her experience of unionization in Mata Automotive has an impact on the way she evaluates her experience in textiles. As a result of unionization in Mata factory, the pressure against workers deepens. In the face of these pressures, workers spend a tremendous effort in order not to crush the solidarity. It can not be denied that the efforts spent in order for the control of labor process not to cause disputes among workers and the workers' constant warnings to each other on this subject effects the way Esra evaluates her work environment in textile.

Secondly, I think that there is a need to pay attention to when Özlem and Esra say that they don't call their time in textile as work. The workers I interviewed with frequently stated that they hold the textile sector in a separate position while making a distinction between housework/field work and factory work. Either the incidents witnessed or the experiences in their own workplace confirmed the notoriety of the working conditions in textiles. For instance, Meral underlines that what she saw in workshops they made distributions to while she was working in a textile factory did not comply with working. Selma from Mata also noted how hard the textile is and there is neither insurance nor certain working hours. Esra, like Özlem, did not

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<sup>90</sup> Orada ben kavga ettim, sebebini de hatırlamıyorum ama kavgalar hep olurdu. Çok dedikodu olurdu. Kendim çıktığım için tazminatsız çıktım. Zaten 1 gün gitmiyorsun 3 gününü kesiyorlar. Her yerde var bu. Sendikasızdı zaten, güvencesiz bir yer. Bayram olur keserler, tatil olur keserler, zaten asgari ücret o zaman ben ne kadar alıyordum 1100 mü ne alıyordum. Ayda 1 gün gitmiyordum mesela, herkesin olur zaten. Onu kesiyor bana kalıyor 800-900. Gözüm görmedi tazminatı. Sinirlendim çıktım, dönmedim de.

recognize working in textile as an actual work that could be considered important in two aspects. Firstly, it was emphasized during various studies that women see housework as their principal responsibility and duty even when they work for a paid job and therefore they cannot describe themselves as workers (Eraydın and Erendil, 1999; Kümbetoğlu and Çağa, 2000). This is explained with the division between the public and private sphere and women associating themselves with private sphere. Despite this shared consensus, whether or not women see what they do as an actual work shall be revisited based on the current developments in the new organization of work. It is because along with the domestic responsibilities of women, the features of their workplace also become important when it comes to women describing themselves as workers. The reason why Özlem and Esra did not describe the work in textile as an actual work is related with the characteristics of the work rather than limiting their responsibilities with reproduction activities such as housework, care etc. It is possible that the characteristics of the workplace have a determining role in the way women describe themselves. Secondly, we can say that the limitation of control of labor process becomes important in the distinction women made between the housework, field work and factory work. The limitation of deepening control of labor process by employer plays an important role in women's understanding of security and routine.

The rhythm of the work in textiles is rather susceptible to uncertainty especially in factories and workshops producing on a small scale. The source of uncertainty here lies in the weight being on foreman, manager or boss during the control of labor process. In small-scale workshops that are unorganized the workers' control is limited in terms of how to do the work. Thus, the distinction between the housework, field work and factory based on security does not apply to small scale factories and workshops in textiles.

What makes working in factory distinct from domestic work and field work by making it predictable, secure and safe is the limitation on control of labor process by the employer. This has become more obvious after unionization. In the chapter above, I tried to elaborate the meaning of resistance which culminated in

unionization and the gains it ensured. Gülay describes the gains by unionization as “factory’s tradition has changed”. As a result of the industrial dispute, there were changes in the form of working in the factory and as a result of unionization, collective agreement was signed. In this sense, the work relations were reorganized around the consent of workers. I aim to discuss the tensions of the new order in the subchapter titled *New Labor Agreement after Unionization: Difference and Equality*. However, putting aside the restriction of the agreement regarding limiting the forms of workers’ disputes, the trust and confidence created among workers is important for women’s understanding of security.

To sum up, security and routine, plays a central role in the distinction women make between housework, field work and factory work. While domestic work and field work are considered works deprived of security and predictability, factory work points out to a predictable work day and security for women. The distinction between various forms of work has a determining place in women’s life stories; their labor lies at the center of their stories. The increased penetration of capital into agriculture and privatization of reproduction activities increase the burden of women in households. The tension between meeting reproduction activities and working is deepened by women’s conflicts with their mothers. The daughters keep their mothers responsible for the oppression they felt as they do not push the limits of security presented by classical patriarchy which entered into a crisis with the transformation in agrarian relations. The women I interviewed with do not consider security a given aspect of paid work while distinguishing unwaged domestic labor, unwaged agricultural labor and paid work based on security, which shall be emphasized herein. What makes the meaning of various works distinct for women is the power to determine the rhythm of work and possibility to change working conditions. As noted by Pinar, as the factory is crowded, changing the order in factory seems more possible than changing the order of things at home. The textile sector is where there is a high level of supervisory control especially in small workshops and small-scale factories. Hence it shall be emphasized that paid works present security to the extent that the control of labor process can be limited. As Esra mentioned in the textile example, the

employer's control of labor process is manifested in conflicts among workers and this hides the fact that conflicts is an aspect of labor process, disputes are treated as an issue related with the personalities of workers.

In the following chapter, I will revisit the interpretation of work-related features as personality features in relation with the aspects of unionizations that empower women workers. In the next chapter I will try to evaluate the new order built with the collective agreement within the framework of equality-difference argument. We can say that the workers limited the supervisory control at labor process and as a result get empowered. But the new order projects a consent-based control at the same time. As stated by Burawoy (1985), this new order is two-way: both providing workers with security and limiting their spontaneous protests. It is possible to express this in equality-difference tension in the Mata example.

### **6.5 New Routine: Factory, Unionization and Empowerment**

As briefly mentioned in the chapter above, routine and security in the factory has two meanings. On one hand, as presented by Burawoy (1985) in his hegemonic factory regime analysis, the regime based on collective bargain which took hold after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War is the product of settlement between the class struggle, state and capital. This both shows the labor's resistance against capital and limits the way the conflict takes place between the worker and capital at the point of production. In this sense, the new order established by unions have an impact that limits and regulates the workplace conflicts.

In Mata Automotive Factory, restriction of employer's control of labor process made a tremendous effect on the empowerment of workers including female workers in particular. As I tried to mention in the chapter above, female workers attributes pivotal importance to security while making a distinction among various works, whereas they consider security a result of the capacity to change, rather than a work aspect. Within this context, security is related with who determines the rhtyhm, speed of work, who controls working conditions. For instance, like Esra's comparison

between the textile factory and Mata Automotive and not acknowledging her job in textile as an actual work or Pinar's emphasis on the capacity to change while making a distinction between the domestic and factory work, security is related with the control rather than the technical aspects of that work. In this chapter, I will try to discuss the relation of unionization as a result of the industrial protest that took place in Mata Automotive and the empowerment of female workers as a result of the new order built in the workplace by relying on the stories of women I interviewed with.

### **6.5.1 Unionization and Empowerment**

In the introductory part of the thesis, based on one of the early studies on feminist labor analyses, Anna Pollert's study (1981) titled *Girls, Wives, Factory Lives*, I stated that the strike in the workplace includes orderless tendencies in terms of lives of women and this was possible as women stepped out of the routine in their lives. It is obvious that the industrial protest includes orderless tendencies. The meaning of stepping out of routine for women is related with the aspect of current social relations that is based on oppression and exploitation. Therefore, during the industrial protest, any moment which disrupted the routine in factory (eg: Joining the march to Mata 1 when the shift did not end yet or not getting on the shuttle buss while they were ready to take at the end of the shift on the way back from Mata 1) can be said to reflect the power and desire to transform current social relations. In my opinion, the fact that the rage women feel against their mothers in their life stories is positioned at the very center is related with the power and desire to change. One part of the power to change is related with resisting against the current working while the other part is related with building a new order and routine.

In this chapter I will try to convey the empowering aspects of industrial protest and unionization achieved at the end of industrial protest for women. The consequences of protest and unionization can be read under three headings. One aspect of empowerment is the sense of confidence women have in themselves and each other. One of the aspects of unionization is restricting personalization of work and



preventing work and work-related aspects from being considered personality traits. Finally, we can say that improving working conditions and restricting relations of exploitation have an important effect on empowerment of women.

One of the most important results of the unionization along with the protest and factory occupation may be the sense of confidence felt by all workers. The confidence workers felt in themselves and each other determined the way this study was realized. As I stated in the method chapter, we held the interviews with the workers in Mata Automotive (depending on the weather, noise level in the yard and whether there was any meeting in the union room or not in the factory backyard and prefabricated room of the union in the factory backyard). The union representative would inform the department heads in the factory and ask a worker in a unit that I was going to have an interview and I met with the workers during the shift hours. This is an example that union has a part in the decision making process in the workplace. While planning the study, I did not hope to interview with an approval of the shop steward of the union in a factory located in a Free Zone.

It can be said that the union's opinion being sufficient regarding the realization of interviews also affected the content of the interviews. As compared to the interviews I held in some other factories, the women I interviewed with in MATA Automotive were inhesitant as to how the information and stories they shared would be used or if they were going to cause them any trouble or not. It is both because the union was intermediating and since the protests ended up a success, they did not see any problem with them becoming public. Along with the desire to tell fueled by the sense of confidence, the fact that interviews took place within work hours also had an undeniable effect on women workers' willingness to tell their life stories.

Going back to the sense of confidence felt in the factory, the sense of confidence is mainly in close relation with limiting the employer's control of labor process. Preventing the personalization of work and considering the work-related features as personal traits and improving working conditions are a few of the indicators of limiting employer's control of labor process. It is hard to distinguish three of them

from one another, therefore I believe these three effects created by the protest and unionization can be studied together. For instance, Gülay's statement displays these three elements:

I keep saying; the factory's tradition has changed. If you ask how it has, before union entered you would need to practically beg for the smallest things, you had to ask it in a way to please your supervisor. We were working entirely under psychological pressure. The people were threatened to be laid off at times: "You are not the only workers," "Tons of workers would come when we post a job announcement", those times are over. Actually women's self confidence came back. Because in these cases you do not talk to your supervisor, you talk to your union representative and the issue is solved.<sup>91</sup>

Almost all of the women I interviewed with tell that they were threatened to be laid off right away when they objected to something in the workplace before the occupation. The fear of being laid off prevents the complaints towards improving the working conditions in the workplace whereas the layoff threat boosts the feeling that the worker will not be able to change the condition even if he/she makes an objection. This in turn keeps those who do not want to get involved in a personal relation as the weak party of the power play from speaking out their objections to the way the work gets done in the workplace. Özlem describes the situation:

We had among us more aggressive ones. Rather than aggressive, maybe I should say those who claim their rights. They didn't get anything. Because everyone was backing whom he or she knew up, to whom they benefit. I wouldn't say much to the supervisors, thinking that way. Even if I had said, I would have been scolded the same. These changed anyways. When something happens either we say it or if they don't do it, we convey it to our representative, he/she deals with it.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Diyorum ya fabrikanın töresi değişti. Nasıl diyecek olursan: eskiden en basit bir şey için rica minnet etmen gerekiyordu, amirine soracaksan onun hoşuna gidecek bir biçimde sormaya çalışıyordun. Tamamen psikolojik baskıyla çalışıyorduk. Yeri geldiğinde çıkışını veririz diye tehdit edilen insanlar: "Tek işçi siz değilsiniz," "İlan verdiğimizde bir sürü işçi gelir" denildiği zamanlar geçti şimdi. Bilhassa da kadınların kendine güvenleri geldi. Çünkü böyle durumlarda amirle muhatap olmuyorsun, sendika temsilcinle konuşuyorsun, hem de sorun çözülmüş oluyor.

<sup>92</sup> Hani daha kavgacı olanlarımız vardı. Kavgacı da değil de hakkını savunan mı diyeyim? Eline bir şey geçmiyordu. Çünkü herkes kendi tanıdığı, çıkarı olan insanı koruyordu. Ben de öyle düşünerek

Selma describes the difficulty of speaking to supervisors about the issues in the workplace:

I used to tell the issues in the past too. For example I didn't speak out loud when it came to the performance issue, but we were always told that the door was right there. Now that is how it happens: I tell my chief, if he doesn't understand, I tell him to speak to our shop steward. So what happens is I do not get into any dispute with my chief, actually I do but then I don't. I avoid hurting myself. I don't become aggressive. It is like being equals, almost.<sup>93</sup>

The difficulty in speaking with the supervisors in cases when a problem occurs in the workplace in individual cases such as taking a leave disappears as the power of workers against supervisors increase through unionization. Also, workers are also prevented from having a divergence among each other with descriptions such as a 'querrelsome', 'yes-man', and 'fainthearted'. It is a bigger problem for female workers to stay exposed to personal treatment than it is for male workers. I will try to elaborate this in the following chapter. Pınar stresses that they can now answer, as necessary, about work-related issues to the supervisors:

We had confidence in ourselves. Our self-confidence came back and when it did we made the necessary warnings about work, gave the due answers, not caring about the supervisors or anything. If we are right the union is with us. We felt that we were free. It is different to have a say instead of working under pressure. We are able to say out loud our anger instead of keeping it all bottled up. When we said "This doesn't work that way! You are wrong here. This product will go to reclamation! They try to listen to us before reacting to us. So you say "This is wrong! This is the way it should

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amirlere pek bir şey demezdim. Desem ne olacak aynı lafları işiteceğim. Sonra bunlar değişti zaten. Bir şey olduğunda ya biz söylüyoruz ya da yapmazlarsa, olmazsa temsilcimize iletiyoruz, o hallediyor.

<sup>93</sup> Ben eskiden de sıkıntıları sorunları söyledim. Ya da izin alacak olurum. Performans meselesinde mesela ben konuşmadım ama her şeyde kapı orada denilirdi. Şimdi şöyle oluyor, ben amire söylüyorum anlamadıysa, sen anlamadın, temsilcimizle konuş diyorum. Ne olmuş oluyor ben müdürümle amirimle tartışmış olmuyorum, aslında tartışıyorum ama tartışmış olmuyorum. Kendi sinirimi de yıpratmamış oluyorum. Kavgacı da olmuyorum. Eşit olmuş gibi oldu, hemen hemen.

be!” or “I wouldn’t sign this, you go ahead and sign it if it is correct”, which we weren’t able to say before.<sup>94</sup>

Workers can now raise an objection with regards to taking a leave, determining the number of materials to be produced and worker’s health, occupational safety without getting into a personal argument with their chiefs.

The say for female workers is not limited to the number of materials to produce. Before unionization, in some units women worked like the cleaners of that unit. Before starting the work, the worker in charge of cleaning on that would mop the floor; clean the glasses, toilets in every unit. These were only done by women workers. Cleaning was not expected from male workers in the factory. Although women told supervisors many times that they didn’t want to do the cleaning and they should hire cleaning staff, they didn’t do it, women were forced to do the cleaning. After unionization, cleaning staff was hired and now women only do their job. Meryem who has been working in the spread unit in Mata Automotive for five years talks about how hard it was for her to do cleaning:

When we first got here, we would mop our own unit. It was at a construction stage. The toilers were gross. We would clean up after the workers. We also wiped the glass until this year, until the union arrived. We also cleaned our own changing room. We did everything from the glass to the floors. We saidenough was enough. I said finally that I don’t want to do this. It was a small space but still you barely had time to do everything. When I couldn’t mop so that I could focus on my actual work, the other workers were upset with me. So we had many quarrels, disputes. Then I finally said I was tired of mopping. Because when you mop, you see other guys from the press unit went ahead and left their footprints. So you had to mop again. Then you got angry, leading to disputes. They couldn’t get man to do the mopping. We mopped our own unit, and the press unit aswell. Men never did cleaning.

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<sup>94</sup> Biz kendimize güvendik. Özgüvenimiz yerine geldi. Yeri geldiğinde amir memur dinlemiyoruz işle ilgili gerekli uyarıları yapıyoruz, gerekli cevabı veriyoruz. Biz haklıysak, sendika bizimle. Özgür olduğumuzu hissettik. Mecburen, bir baskıyla çalışmaktansa söz hakkının olması daha farklı. Karşıdaki insana içinden sinirlenip kendini yemektense ben size şu konuda çok kızıyorum diyebildik. “Bu iş bu şekilde olmaz! Sizin burada hatanız var. Bu mal redde gider!” dediğimizde o bize tepki vermeden önce dinlemeye çalışıyor. Yani, diyorsun ki “Bu yanlış! Böyle yapılması gerekiyor!” ya da diyebiliyorsun ki “Ben bunun altına imzamı atmam doğruysa siz atın.” Öncesinde diyemiyorduk.

We said a few times that we didn't want to do that. When the union came, we didn't do it any longer before talking to Meral [shop steward], Emrah came [engineer] and said "girls, you stopped mopping. It used to be so clean around here, we have to be clean." And I replied "Okay I understand but in other units, neither women nor men mop their own units. In which factory have you seen workers wiping glasses? Then hire me as a cleaner." We used to do cleaning every weekend.<sup>95</sup>

Women working in carbon unit cleans their own units and press unit. Meryem continues:

Every weekend, I said that enough was enough. I said that I don't wipe glasses this much at home, don't clean this much at home. And he didn't like my work either. Then we had an agreement with those from our unit on not mopping anymore. We said that if they have us clean, then we would not do our job. Then we agreed with the girls and told Meral, that we don't want to mop anymore. After one or two days, Emrah said "I saved you from the mopping work. You will not mop anymore. The cleaners will." I answered, "Did you save us or the union did? He didn't answer. I figured it was the union."<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Biz buraya ilk geldiğimizde bizim bölümümüzün oraya paspas atardık. Biz atıyorduk. İlk geldik burası inşaat halindeydi, tuvaletler çok iğrençti, çalışanların pisliklerini biz temizledik, tuvaletleri. Camları biz sildik ta ki bu seneye kadar böyleydi. Sendika gelene kadar. Kendi soyunma odamızı biz siliyorduk, camlarından tutun da yerleri kazımaya kadar hepsini biz yapıyorduk, artık yeter dedik, nereye kadar? Ben en sonunda dedim ki ya ben yapmak istemiyorum. Tamam küçük bir yer ama koştura koştura yetiştiriyorsun. Mesela bugün ben buraya paspas atamadım işimi yetiştireyim diye arkadaşlar bu sefer surat asıyor. O zaman çok tartışmalarımız oldu, kavgalarımız oldu. Sonra ben dedim ki ben paspas atmak istemiyorum artık yoruldu. Yani koştura koştura iş yapıyorsun, koştura koştura paspas atıyorsun. Paspası atıyorsun bir bakıyorsun içerden diğer arkadaş geliyor, press bölümündeki erkekler paldır küldür basıyor ayak izi. E bir daha alıyorsun. Bu sefer öbür taraftan geliyor, sinirleniyorsun. Bağırınca tartışma çıkıyor. Kendi bölümümüzü paspaslıyorduk bir de o press alanını gördünüz girişte, orayı da biz yapıyorduk. Erkeklerle yaptırıyorlardı. Erkekler hiç temizlik yapmıyordu. Birkaç kez söyledik biz yapmak istemiyoruz diye. Çok söyledik. Sendika gelince artık yapmadık. Gülhanım'la (sendika temsilcisi) konuşmadan önce Emrah Bey geldi (mühendis). "Kızlar" dedi "burayı paspas atmaya bırakmışsınız. Önceden ne kadar temizdi, bizim temiz olmamız gerekiyor." Ben de dedim ki "Tamam bizim temiz olmamız gerekiyor ama diğer bölümleri hiçbir bayan hiçbir erkek kendi bölümünü paspaslamıyor." "Siz" dedim "ne zaman hangi fabrikada gördünüz elemanların cam sildiğini. O zaman beni temizlikçi elemanı olarak alın" dedim. Her hafta sonu hep temizlik yapıyorduk baştan aşağıya.

<sup>96</sup> Her hafta sonu artık gerçekten illallah dedim. Ben evde dedim bu kadar cam silmiyorum, bu kadar temizlik yapmıyorum. Bir de beğenmiyordu. Sonra bizim bölümdekilerle anlaştık, biz pas pas atmayaacağız dedik. O zaman temizlik yaptırıcaksın işimi yaptırmayacaksın. E mecbur kalıyorsun yapıyorsun. Sonra kızlarla anlaştık, sendika temsilcimize, Gülhanım'a söyledik. Dedik biz artık paspas yapmak istemiyoruz, 1-2 gün atsak o paspas bize kalacak, atmadık. Aradan 1-2 gün geçti, Emrah bey dedi ki "Sizi" dedi "Pas pas işinden kurtardım" dedi. "Artık atmayacaksınız, temizlikçiler

This is a very important gain for women. As opposed to the effort of the employer to converge the housework and factory work and make the women responsible for the house works in the factory, women's fierce objection that these works were not theirs shows the relation of the conflict between employers and workers on gender disputes. Employers having full control in labor process create an atmosphere conducive to expecting women to organize their labor experiences like housework.

In the chapter above, similarly to Esra's comment that she did not call her work in the first factory in the textile as an actual work, factory work and housework converge under working conditions in which the control of the labor process by the employer is not restricted. Therefore, despite the agreement that women do not see themselves as workers, that they restrict their original responsibility with housework, we can claim that the characteristics of the work play an important role in this definition rather than women's opinion of working for a paid job. Each emphasis on the gender relations in the workplace becomes meaningful in the context of exploitation. The way that women's labor in the reproduction areas is expressed is one of the conflicts between female workers and employers. I will try to present this in the following part called *New Contract: Equality and Difference*. I believe that it is still necessary to present a few examples regarding the diverse use of gender relations by workers and employer.

In the stories of women that I interviewed with, there are a few moments when women remember, remind their reproduction responsibilities, and underline being a woman. One of them, as Meryem recalls, is when the cleaning of the workplaces was assigned to women workers to avoid hiring cleaners although women only wanted to work in units such spread, cut etc. Secondly, on the first day of the protest, the quality control unit chief reminding İlknur that she is still a single mom of one when the union still had not guaranteed majority. Thirdly, employers telling police that the

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atacak" dedi. Ben dedim ki "Siz mi kurtardınız sendika mı?" Hiç cevap vermedi. Anladım sendika olduğunu.

female workers were kept inside by force during the protest. İlknur says the following after telling what the unit chief told her:

I already knew I had a child. I was always by myself, so I got upset of being reminded of that, as if it was a threat to intimidate me. Since she knew that I was by myself why didn't she offer me a higher pay or a daycare, so that everyone would be comfortable? There are so many single women here, keeping it a secret. What would you do if you had no family to help you take care of your child? So, as I said I got very upset with her threatening me with that.<sup>97</sup>

One of the moments supervisors remember the worker's gender is during the unit reassignments I will try to point in the following section. When Gül asked for a reassignment to a different unit as it was very hard on her to work among male workers, the unit chief Deniz told her about the man and woman equality that woman can work anywhere and it is Gül's responsibility for women to continue working there. Shortly, there are moments when the workers are reminded by supervisors about their gender-based responsibilities, in other words sexist division of labor, that deepen the conditions of exploitation or when they want to prevent objections coming from women in this subject.

Women workers bring their gender responsibilities to the agenda in the form of a request that will restrict their exploitation such as removing obligatory work hours; overlapping childcare with work, claim for daycare. To sum up, supervisors want women's reproduction responsibilities to further serve deepening exploitation while workers politicize to restrict exploitation as a requirement of reproduction activities or politicize the reproduction activities reversely, as the tool

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<sup>97</sup> Ben bir çocuğum olduğunu biliyordum zaten. Hep yalnızdım, onu da bana hatırlatmasına sinirlendim yani. Tehdit eder gibi. Gibi değil, korkutmak için, şimdiye kadar neden benim yalnız olduğumu düşünmedi, madem biliyordu da, o zaman daha fazla maaş verselerdi, veya düşünüyorlardıysa kreş yapsaydılar da herkes rahat etseydi. Sadece ben değil ki, bir sürü yalnız kadın var burada, yalnız yaşadığını saklayan. Ya da baba olsa da bakmayan çocuğa, ailen yoksa ne yapacaksın? Dediğim gibi tehdit gibi onu bana söylemesine daha çok sinirlendim.

to restrict exploitation. We can say that this results from the conflict between the capital accumulation and humanity's reproduction.

One of the indicators of the restriction of control in the labor process following unionization is the improved working condition in terms of worker's health and occupational safety. Pinar from dyeing unit describes the say of workers on working conditions through the union:

Something happened recently, the place we worked got full of chemicals, and we had to work this out. Our supervisor didn't do anything. We told our shop steward, she came and said "Everyone get out now". Normally, our supervisor was supposed to do that, not letting us be exposed to that smell. She called the general manager and told him that those ladies were getting out, which was very nice. We felt like they were both equal. We feel that way. If that hadn't happened and we had left ourselves, they would have made it seem like we were leaving our job.<sup>98</sup>

One of the practices that show the control of the workers in the workplace is a feedback being provided as a result of the objections of workers. For instance, issues such as too small changing rooms, running out of tea on tea breaks, sugar tasting unsavory are not underestimated and said out loud, on top of which workers are provided with a feedback that pave the way for the workers to address their issues in the workplace as issues and say them out loud. Meral from the quality control department and one of the threeshop-stewards comments:

What changed is actually people. Our issues also increased. In the past, no one would say if tea ran out because it wouldn't make any difference. But now we say it when we are short of tea, we have confidence in ourselves, in each other.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Geçenlerde bir olay oldu, çalıştığımız yere kimyasal doldu, bunu çözmemiz lazım. Amirimiz bir şey yapmadı. Temsilcimize söyledik, geldi. "Herkes hemen dışarıya çıkıyor" dedi. Normalde onu bizim amirin yapması lazımdı, o kokunun içinde maruz bırakmaması lazım. Genel müdürü çağırdı, bu bayanlar çıkıyor dedi. Bu çok güzel bir şey. Sanki dersin iki eşit güç. Öyle hissediyoruz. Bu olmamış olsaydı, kendimiz çıkmış olsaydık işi bırakma gibi gösterirlerdi.

<sup>99</sup> Değişen şey esas insanlarda. Bizde. Sorunlarımız da arttı. Eskiden ne bileyim çayımız eksik olmuş olmamış fark etmezdi. Çünkü söylediğinde de fark etmiyordu, bunu mu söyleyeceksin gibi oluyordu. Çayımız eksik olduğunda da söylüyoruz, kendimde de arkadaşlarımızda da güven var, insanlarda bir özgüven var.



To sum up, the industrial protest in Mata Factory and the presence of the union, which earned an authority as a result of the protest, played a role in the empowerment of women workers. This is a result of the restriction of supervisor's control of labor process. In the following chapter, I will try to touch upon the effect of the new collective bargaining on regulating and restricting the reflexes and objections of the workers.

### **6.5.2 New Labour Agreement After Unionization: Difference and Equality**

Ruth Milkman, in the introduction to the article (1986) *Women's History and the Sears Case* asks which one serves the interests of women: adopting same policies for women and men in public policies or recognizing women in a different category and applying affirmative action. According to Milkman (1986), this question kept feminists busy in many areas. The Sears case in the US is one of the examples. The Sears case is a symbolic example in terms of discrimination in the workplace and feminist equality-difference debate. The reason that the Sears case got so much attention in the US is that on one side in the case there a feminist scholar was defending difference perspective on behalf of the employer and on the other side, a feminist scholar defended for equality on behalf of workers.

To sum up, in 1984 Equal Employment Opportunities Commission, EEOC in the USA filed an action against Sears Roebuck and Company on the grounds that it acted against the principle of equality in employment, applying discrimination in the workplace. The feminist Rosalind Rosenberg defended Sears and helped Sears Company to win the case. Alice Kessler Harris directed the accusations directed towards Sears by Equal Employment Opportunities Commission.<sup>100</sup> The accusation

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<sup>100</sup> For Alice-Kessler Harris's evaluation on the case, see "Equal Employment Opportunity Commission v. Sears, Roebuck and Company: A Personal Account," *Radical History Review*, 1986, p. 57-79.

directed at Sears is that while hiring men in sales jobs with high commission, they hired female workers in sales jobs with low commission so that they have a discriminatory pay policy by paying less to female employees and managers.

EEOC based the arguments on the ratio of women working in sales units generating high pay to the total number of women working in sales units. Accordingly, the ratio of women working in sales units generating high commission to all female workers from 1973 to 1980 was only 27% (Jellison, 1987: 10). Along with the indicators based on statistical data, it also laid the groundwork for qualitative data regarding discriminatory policies applied by Sears during hiring (Jellison, 1987:10). Rosenberg mainly built the argument around cultural difference between female and male workers. Rosenberg, (by also applying to studies of Alice-Kessler Harris who prepared an opinion for EEOC) claimed that women's family responsibilities and work cultures led them to prefer certain jobs, therefore, the fact that they clustered in works with low commission stemmed from women's professional preferences rather than the discriminatory policies of Sears management. Kessler-Harris stressed that what seems to be the preference of women is actually the preference of employers and unquestioned preferences lay the groundwork for discrimination (Jellison, 1987: 11). The lawsuit was finalized in 1986 in favor of Sears. The Sears case caused controversy among feminist researchers. This case also triggered arguments around subjects such as the role of feminist researchers in the feminist movement and the relation between knowledge and objectivity. While Rosenberg said that the scientists are supposed to leave their political wills and tendencies out of the research, Kessler Harris and many feminists emphasized that the feminist researchers shall definitely side with those that are struggling and the argument of objectivity is a certain position in disguise to hide the political position (Kessler Harris, 1986: 76).

The Sears case led to a question if a historian could be a party in a case along with the argument concerning the relationship between scientific knowledge and objectivity (Jellison, 1987: 14). Here, I will try to assume broader perspective for the question of whether or not a historian can take a part in lawsuits by associating the restrictiveness that could be created by translating politics into the language of law

with the restrictive impact created by the collective agreement in Mata Automotive on female workers.

As stated by Burawoy (1985) collective bargain has the power to regulate and restrict spontaneous actions. The collective bargain signed in Mata Automotive Factory after unionization can be said to create such an effect. The union settled with the employer that workers could be reassigned to different units when needed against the layoff threat at each moment of tension until the collective bargaining was signed before the industrial protest. Following the agreement, the tendency of employers was to apply the workplace practices guaranteed by the collective agreement to withdraw into limits in their favor.

The article 30 related with the changes of work and workplace of the collective agreement signed by UMU in Mata Ahşap ve Otomotiv for 01/0472016-31/03/2019 says the following:

When necessary, workers can be assigned to similar works with similar title or nature by employer temporarily or constantly without looking for consent. The written approval of a union member is sought for the employer to reassign the member to a job with different title and quality or different workplace under the same employer. In case the worker doesn't give approval, the job agreement can be terminated in a pre-notified manner. In case of a need for a worker within 6 months to replace workers who consent the reassignment, a new worker can be hired if the worker who has been assigned does not accept to go back to his/her old job. Change of work and workplace can never be within the scope of a punishment.

For women workers, this practice added to avoid layoff in Mata becomes a deterrent practice. Because, as women continue to be paid the same as before when they are reassigned to units with higher pay such as CNC from units with less pay such as dyeing shop, they end up doing the same work with less pay. On the other hand, to be sent to male-dominated units can also be taken as a punishment by female workers. All of the women workers interviewed and reassigned see reassignment as a part of the oppression applied to them as a result of unionization. Female workers see reassignment which started before the collective agreement was signed, as a practice

to make them leave work. They say that the practice following the collective agreement serves the same purpose. As presented in the first section of this chapter, for women, accepting reassignments and continuing to work in various units is an indicator of continuing solidarity among workers before and after the collective bargain. Gül, who is frequently reassigned, describes the pressure in this period:

There was a process until a collective agreement was signed during which they really pushed people's buttons so that they would leave on their own. There were too many reassignments as well. Most of my coworkers were pushed to leave against their will. I resisted a lot, because I need to stand on my own two feet as a woman with no other financial source. I have a husband who doesn't work and two children. If I had left too, they would have won. So I resisted not only for myself but also for the ones to come next. I changed my unit thinking there is nothing a woman can't do. Then they got me upstairs. I was the only woman among tons of men. It was because they knew women wouldn't be able to stand there. That was what they thought. Then they saw that I could adapt, they assigned me to the warehouse. I also resisted there. There were times that I really got sick of it, I would go and talk to my supervisor. But I still did my job. So they adopted this deterrent policy, they insisted and I resisted and I still work in the CNC unit.<sup>101</sup>

While reassignment before collective agreement serves a purpose of workers leaving the job, when an agreement was reached on reassignment, although reassignment is preferred to layoff, failure to match the pay with that of the new unit becomes a matter of complaint. Having said that, as reassignments get accepted with the collective agreement, it seems hard to continue the attitude developed around the sense of solidarity against reassignments before the collective agreement. Gül makes the following evaluation:

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<sup>101</sup> Sözleşme yapılanaya kadar bir süreç vardı. O süreçte insanların üzerine çok gidildi, kendi istekleriyle çıksınlar diye çok uğraştılar. Bu süre içinde bölüm değiştirdiler. Birçok arkadaşım gitmek istemseler de gitmeye zorlandılar. Ben o konuda çok direndim, çünkü maddi gücüm yok, yani kadın başına ayakta durmak zorundasın. Eşim var ama eşim çalışmadığı için 2 tane de çocuğum var. Bir de ben çıkarsam bunlar kazanacak. Bizden sonrakiler de aynı sürece başlayacak, direndim, sadece bana değil bize de, bizden sonrakilere de yazık. Bölümümü değiştirdim, sonuçta kadının yapamayacağı iş yok diyerek. Sonra beni yukarıya aldılar. Orada da bir sürü erkeğin içinde tek kadın bendim. Çünkü biliyorlar yani bir kadın erkeklerin içinde barınmaz. Fikirleri öyleydi yani. Orada baktılar uyum sağlıyorum, beni depoya verdiler. Orada da direndim. Bunaldığım dönemler oldu, amirimle gidip konuşuyordum. Ama işimi de yapıyordum. Beni böyle yıldırma politikasına girdiler, onlar direndi, ben direndim ve hala CNC bölümünde çalışıyorum.

Emergency state came in between the resistance and collective agreement. Due to the emergency state, we could not ask for many things. The worst thing that happened to us was the unit reassignment. After the collective agreement many co-workers left work for this reason. They could not resist that. For example some were taken off CNC and reassigned to crate transportation, which hurt people's pride. So they quit. We were 14 women in the dyeing shop. This was done to crush our solidarity. This was one side of the collective agreement.<sup>102</sup>

Only women work in the dyeing shop. Gül is one of the 12 workers who were laid off. When she was laid off, the entire unit supported Suna. The evaluation that reassignment aims to crush the solidarity in their units is shared by other women as well. At the center of the talks around reassignment lied the sense of solidarity and unity as well as the inequality between men and women and women's differences from men. Gül describes the difficulties of working in CNC:

Here we have married ones, whose husbands also work and also the other way around, those with husbands who don't want their wives to work, who don't let them work. Their attitudes are disturbing. Sometimes you get mad but it will end up in a dispute so you pull yourself back. You keep silent which makes you sad. This kind of inequality, this kind of hypocrisy makes me sad. It is more upsetting to be unable to respond to it. Because, to put it simply, "what is a woman doing in CNC?" It hurts my pride. Mine and my husband's. Also there is a lot of swearing in CNC. That is why it is easier to work with women. You understand each other.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Direnişle sözleşme arasına Ohal girdi. Ohal'den dolayı çok isteklerimizi karşılayamadık, isteyemedik yani. En kötü şey de bölüm değişikliği oldu bizim için. Birçok arkadaşımız da bu sebeple çıktı işten sözleşmeden sonra. Buna karşı koyamadılar. CNC'den mesela alıp kasa taşımaya verdiler, bu tabii insanlar için gurur kırıcı olduğu için ben bu şartlarda çalışmam deyip çıkanlar oldu. Benim de boyahanede arkadaşım ile hep birliktik, 14 kadın. Bizi kırmak amaçlı yapıldı belki de Sözleşmenin bir tarafı da böyle yani.

<sup>103</sup> Burada eşleri olup eşleri de çalışanlar var, bir de tam tersine eşleri olup da çalıştırmayanlar, çalıştırmak istemeyenler var. Tabii bunların tavırları rahatsız ediyor ister istemez. Bazen kızılıyorsun, kavgaya sonuç verecek çekiyorsun kendini geri. Susayım boş ver, bu da insanı üzüyor. Böyle eşitsizlik olması, iki yüzlülük olması üzüyor. Ona cevabını vermemiş olmak daha çok üzüyor, çünkü içinde kalıyor. En basitinden kadının ne işi var CNC'de? Bu insanın gururunu kırıyor. Beni de eşimi de zedeliyor o zaman. Ama CNC'de çalıştığında da şu da var: Çok küfür var. O yüzden kadınlarla çalışmak daha rahat, birbirinin halinden anlıyorsun.

Swearing in the workplace is ranked at the top of the issues faced in male-dominated unit for women workers. Making a warning about it leads to being constantly reminded that they are women:

*Gül:* Let me tell you what always happens: swearing. Even when I warn them they say, “You know this unit is a male unit. You came accepting this.” “There is no such thing! I had to do because I have to work but I don’t have to hear certain things. I will work, you will keep your mouth shut!”<sup>104</sup>

In the union room, women workers shared with male workers and union representatives that the hardest thing about working with men is to hear curse words or things they don’t want to hear about. As mentioned in the section above, Gül, who is the only women in a male-dominated unit, was reminded that all woman can work equally with men by her unit chief after she told her that it was difficult to work with men so she wanted to be reassigned, she became obliged to continue working in the unit. Another moment when the unit chief reminds that women and men are equal was when Gül told him that she did not want to work on the night shift.

*Gül:* When I started here there weren’t any women upstairs [CNC and press are in the same place] when men normally go back to night shift in raw sandpaper, women would not, so there were three shifts. Since there were three shifts in CNC, I alternated on 2 shifts at the beginning. Then the male coworkers told the chief “What’s her difference? Why doesn’t she do the shifts like us?” The chief then told me “Gül, you will do the shifts aswell, you work in the same place, women and men are equal”.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Bir olay anlatayım hep olan: küfür mesela. Uyardığım halde diyorlar ki mesela “Abla sen de biliyorsun burası erkek bölümü. Bazı şeyleri kabul ederek geldin.” “Ben kabul ederek geldim diye bir şey yok! Ben mecburum, çalışmak zorundayım ama bazı şeyleri duymak zorunda değilim. Ben çalışacağım, sen ağzını tutacaksın!”

<sup>105</sup> Ben girdiğimde hiç kadın yoktu, yukarıda (CNC’de ve press aynı yerde). Ham zımparada normalde erkekler gece vardiyasına döndüğünde kadınlar dönmüyordu, iki vardiya oluyordu. CNC üç vardiya döndüğü için başta ben 2 vardiya döndüm başta. Ama erkek arkadaşlar “O’nun bizden ne farkı var?” “Neden bizimle birlikte dönmüyor?” diye amire söylemiş. Amir de bu sefer “Suna, sen de döneceksin, aynı yerde çalışıyorsunuz, kadın erkek eşitsiniz” dedi.

Gül says that she doesn't want to work on the night shift. Since there is no women worker on the night shift, she thinks she will have difficulty. She wants to go with women while going for dinner at night or she doesn't want to stay in the factory when there are no other women workers around. The administration writes a shift but Suna doesn't go. Then she talks to the shop stewards and it gets decided that Gül will not stay for the night shift, from then on the administration writes two shifts. After a while male workers start working 2 shifts in CNC unit.

While women workers emphasize that women and men are equal and they should be paid the same they stress that the equality cannot be ensured with the same treatment. Selma describes her opinions on reassignment and equality of women and men:

Constant reassignment is not a good thing. You become like a joker staff in the factory. You get reassigned to whichever unit that is short of staff. It is better to have a fixed work. Otherwise it means that the employers need matter more. But there should be a limit. Women and men do the same job. It isn't just for here, it applies to everywhere. But somehow women and men don't get paid the same. There is inequality in pay. However sometimes the saying that women and men are equal upsets me. They are equal in terms of rights but there is no physical equality. While reassigning, they mention equality. But sometimes men do some things better as they are more muscular, women also do everything but even if I was the strongest women I couldn't have resisted against the weakest men. It is purely physical strength. Women also work around the house. Can they do this while being reassigned? They don't think if it is appropriate. Women can be anywhere, do anything. Alright but when it comes to workplaces it shouldn't mean further exploitation for women. They want equality but when the conditions are not suitable, it is harder on women. The reason they play on us is to exploit us more. The employer has also rights but we have to minimize it as a union.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> Sürekli bölüm değiştirilmesi iyi bir şey değil. Fabrikada joker eleman oluyorsun. Nerede kim eksik olursa senin yerin artık belirsiz oluyor, sabit belirli bir işin olması iyi. Diğer türlü işverenin ihtiyaçları ön planda demektir. Ama bir sınırı olmalı. Kadın erkek aynı işi yapıyor, sadece burası için geçerli değil her yer için geçerli bu, nedense kadın erkekle aynı parayı almıyor. Ücrette eşitsizlik var. Fakat bazen kadın erkek eşittir lafı benim kızdığım bir laftır. Kadın erkek hakta eşittir, beden eşitliği olmaması lazım. Burada da işyerleri değişirken eşitlik deniyor ama hem kas olarak erkek bazı şeyleri daha iyi yapabiliyor, kadın da her işi yapıyor ama ben en güçlü kadın olayım en güçsüz erkeğe direnmem yine zor, fiziksel güçle ilgili bir şey bu. Bir de kadınlar bakıyorsun evde de çalışıyor zaten. Burada iş yerlerini değiştirirken bunu yapabilir mi? Uygun mu diye bakmıyorlar. Kadınlar da her yerde olabilir, her şeyi yapabilir bunu demek lazım zaten ama işyerlerine gelince bu kadının daha fazla sömürülmesi anlamına gelmemeli yani. Eşit olsun diyorsun ama uygun koşullar olmayınca kadın

It was emphasized that the equality between men and women shall be considered an equality of rights, there are difference between men and women in terms of physical strength, muscular strength by all women I interviewed with. This distinction is important. It is because the employer tries to pave the way for regulations that will deepen exploitation and increase the control in the workplace by claiming that there should be equality between men and women every time female workers raise an objection. In this respect, women consider equality together with creating conditions that will restrict exploitation and employer's control. Just like the fact that female workers and supervisors using sexual-based division of labor in two diverse ways and there is a conflict with two different ways of use, as mentioned in the previous section, the way female workers and supervisors emphasize equality between men and women also have a conflict. While the supervisors use the principle of equality in a way to deepen the exploitation of female workers, women workers object to the formal equality argument and ask for the acknowledgment of the women-specific issues.

I that it is necessary to underline the relation between equality-difference debate with solidarity as well as exploitation as women workers stress that they felt as if they “were equal”<sup>107</sup> to men during the workplace occupation. Gülay describes it as follows:

We were like sisters and brothers, like equals, like one. There was no men, no women left. The protest started from the press and dyeing shop. The unity founded there spread across the entire factory, shift by shift. We felt very strong. I wish it happened again.<sup>108</sup>

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için daha zor, uygun koşullar olmalı o zaman. Bizim üzerimizde oynamalarının sebebi bizi daha fazla sömürüye mahkum etmek. İşverenin de hakları vardır ama bizim sendika olarak yapabileceğimiz minimuma düşürmek.

<sup>107</sup> *Sanki Eşittik* (As if Equal) is the name of the study prepared by Gülfer Akkaya, featuring stories of 10 women involved in the socialist movement in 1960s and 1970s and questioning organizations where they carried out revolutionary activities.

<sup>108</sup> Hani kadını erkeği kalmamıştı sanki kardeş gibiydik, sanki eşit gibiydik. Bir gibiydik. Erkeği kadını kalmamıştı. Press ve boyahaneden başlamıştı eylem orda bölümlerde kurulan bütünlük sanki tüm fabrikaya yayılmıştı, vardiya vardiya. Çok güçlü hissetmiştik. Keşke bir daha olsa.



Pınar notes:

On that night, there was not a distinction between men and women. The goodness within people came out, as if you carved it out and the good came out. We chanted, danced, distressed together. We ofcourse suffered the consequences together as well. We have to keep that up.<sup>109</sup>

As a result, women workers consider the equality versus difference tension between men and women around the relations of exploitation and solidarity with regards to the collective agreement signed in Mata Automotive and the workplace reassignment settled in the agreement. This evaluation mostly conflicts with the way supervisors express equality (in each example told by women in Mata). While female workers publicize their responsibilities ofsexual-based division of labor and express it as a claim for rights, most of the supervisors, like the unit chief reminding İLknur that she is a single mother so that she would not become a union member on the day of protest in the factory, have developed the reflexes to privatize women's reproduction responsibilities as a personal matter. These two tendencies can be said to have two different results. Within the tendency of supervisors unionization, as it is a highly political matter, is positioned at the opposite side of care activities. Based on the same example, women workers tend to politicize the care and domestic labor to overcome the conflict between being a single mother and working for a paid job. This time the care labor becomes one of the foundations of the need for a union. Gains such as avoiding obligatory work hours, the pay rise, holidays, annual leaves are related with reproduction activities as they are with the workplace. The protests of female workers who have participated in the industrial protest lie at the center of feminist politics as they restrict the personalization and privatization of the labor of care and reinforcement of sexism and exploitation in the workplace. Although the fact that female workers stay away from unionized organization is commonly

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<sup>109</sup> O gece kadını erkeği yok gibiydi. İnsanların içindeki iyilik açığa çıkmıştı, kazırsın ya derinde kalan bir şeyi, sanki kazımışsın da iyi olan şeyler çıkmış gibi. Birlikte slogan attık, birlikte dans ettik, stres attık. Cefasını da birlikte çektik tabii. Bunu sürdürmemiz lazım.

associated with docility of female workers, in the following chapter this presupposition regarding the docility of women workers will be questioned.

## **6.6 Are Women Workers Really Docile?**

One of the evaluations used to account for the increased women employment especially after 1980s is that women are considered nimble and docile, therefore, hired in routine works and the works labeled as women's (Yaman-Öztürk, 2010: 119). It is emphasized that the labor-intensive aspect of production render women suitable candidates for repetitive jobs that requires patience; production for export leads to the rise of employment areas for women which could be seen as the extension of their domestic tasks, therefore women's participation in employment in certain sectors has increased (Pearson, 1994). Another reason increasing the women's participation in employment is that they are cheap workforce as they are mainly responsible for reproduction activities before being a worker (Pearson, 1981; 1994; Berik, 2000; Seguino, 2000; Eisenstein, 2005). While these characteristics are considered given for women in some studies, it is stressed in others that the limited capacities of resistance of women workers (domestic responsibilities, patriarchal reasons) make them a candidates of a cheap workforce.

Women's low union participation and low rates of representation in union is associated with the structure of employment and organization structures of unions. Since 1970s, especially in Southern countries, there has been an increase in women's participation in employment as paid workers. The period when women were invited to workforce is also the period when the union organization weakened. This became possible especially with reorganization of workplace such as when some of the production was taken over by sub-contractors. In brief, the increase in female employment coincided with the decreased unionization rates in general. There is still a significant difference between female workers and male workers in terms of

unionization rates. For instance, according to a July 2016 report<sup>110</sup> prepared by Revolutionary Worker Unions Confederation Research Institute (in Turkish Disk-Ar) based on 2016 data published by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security in Turkey, while the unionization ratio of male workers is 13,1%, it is 7,6% for female workers. This ratio is 13% for male workers and 8% for female workers for July 2017.<sup>111</sup>

There is a considerable difference between the unionization ratios of female and male workers. This difference is explained by the concentration of women in smaller scale sectors where unionization is harder and women's domestic responsibilities as well as unions not adopting a policy that aims at organizing female workers and observes women's needs. Having said that, the thesis that the unions play a role in the exclusion of female workers from various sectors is at the center of feminist patriarchal analysis, as elaborated in the Chapter 4 of the thesis. As stressed in the Chapter 4, one needs to be cautious against the opinion that places the patriarchal attitudes of unions at the center of the women workers' position in employment during the capital accumulation process. An assessment in tandem with this opinion is that the values such as "militancy," "bravery" aggrandized by the union struggle are based on masculine values.<sup>112</sup>

It is obvious that while calling women to factories, the international capital makes use of sexual based division of labor and reproduces sexist relations in the workplace (Elson and Pearson, 1981; Berik, 2000; Seguino, 2000); unions do not evaluate the women-specific issues and carry out an organization based on the needs and claims of female workers. It is also a fact that the female workers' bargaining power at the workplaces and market are low.<sup>113</sup> Yet, I believe that one needs to be cautious against

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<sup>110</sup> <http://disk.org.tr/2016/08/sendikalasma-ve-toplu-is-sozlesmesi-raporu/>

<sup>111</sup> <http://disk.org.tr/2017/08/disk-ar-sendikalasma-ve-toplu-is-sozlesmesi-raporu/>

<sup>112</sup> An example to this opinion see Fevziye Sayılan (2008).

<sup>113</sup> Erik Olin Wright (2000: 962 in Silver, 2009: 5) makes a distinction between organized and structural power. "Organized power," comprises of various forms of power arising from collective organizations [most important of them being unions and political parties]; whereas structural power

the argument that has different variations including the following: female workers are preferred by the capital as they are docile, they have low tendency to militancy due to the workplaces and sectors that female workers work at or the worker's militancy has a culture based on male values, therefore women stay away from the militant forms of union struggle. It is because the fact that women have low bargaining power can result in the failure of their efforts to unionize and organize rather than the lack of their unionization efforts. Majority of women I interviewed in Mata Automotive including those with previous experience in textile factories have a considerable amount of unionization efforts, which they have witnessed or heard about and resulted in layoff. Making an evaluation based on statistical data, it is clear that their organization efforts cannot be followed up, however, an evaluation on the cases where unionization became successful as in Mata Automotive can be made. In addition to the restriction to be created by evaluations to be made in the light of quantitative data (expressed in various ways), we can say that the opinions that women make up a docile workforce or workplace militancy is a synonym of manhood reflects a word vision envisaged by employers.

In the previous section of the thesis, I touched upon the moments when the supervisors in charge of the control of labor remembered the gender of workers and the way workers and supervisors formulated women's reproduction responsibilities clashed with each other. It seems important to show how women make sense of being a women worker and what kind of connection there is between being women and taking part in workplace struggle.<sup>114</sup>

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refers to the power resulting from "the positions of workers within the economic system simply". The first subtype of structural power (which we call "*market negotiation power*"), "results directly from the tight labor market". The second subtype of the structural power (which we call "*workplace negotiation power*") is power "resulting from the strategic position of a group of workers working in an industrial sector of critical importance (Silver, 2009: 5).

<sup>114</sup> There is an agreement that the current organization form of production and transformations experienced in labor process lead to a general shrinkage in worker movements (Silver, 2009:5). The transformation experienced in production and labor process specific to female workers is compared with the USA in 1930s. For a negative evaluation that a similar increase in women's participation in employment would not lead to similar positive results in terms of empowerment of women and development of feminist consciousness, see Hester Eisenstein, (2005).

In women's stories, the distinctive features of being a female worker can be gathered under three headings. Firstly, the pay inequality has an important place in women's stories. The pay inequality that became visible due to workplace reassignments especially after the collective agreement signed in Mata is one of the main issues that women workers concentrate on. The main reason behind the industrial protest in Mata is the pay inequality. Here what causes rage among workers is the fact that the pay differences between senior workers and beginners is sometimes in favor of the beginners.

In the Fordist-based labor organization, one of the tools to ensure in-factory control is to promise a job promotion to a beginner and senior worker a pay higher than the beginner. These workers working in the same factory for a long time has led to the assimilation of factory interests with the interests of the workers. One aspect of this strategy is related with the presence of the welfare capitalism in most of the Northern countries (Reich, Gordon, Edwards, 1973).

Putting aside the question how common the practice of education for the children of workers and accommodation and high pay in Turkey has become, the fact that the senior workers are paid similar to the beginners is the most important reason of industrial protest. While the working period has not provided any gain for the worker, in other words, the liquidation of the past control strategy causes rage among workers on one hand while it also encourages the participation of unionization and industrial protest as workers have nothing to lose when they leave their job on the other. When workers couldn't decide whether or not to become a part of the union, the fact that workers would work in many factories under the same conditions (minimum pay and non-unionized) when laid off due to becoming a member to the union played a role in the decision. This aspect, the lack of distinction between non-unionized factories, created one of the conditions of the worker protests after Fordist period.

The sex-based pay inequality, as discussed in the chapter above, became the agenda during the signing of the collective agreement. This issue continues to pose a

problem among women workers despite the agreement and is at the top of the list of issues discussed with the shop stewards. The second issue women's rise is sexual harassment at the work place.

### **6.6.1 Sexual Harrassment in the Workplace and Reaction of Women Workers**

The sexual harrasment in the workplace has become one of the undeniable part of the women's workplace experience in workshops that make small-scale production or in factories in the Free Trade Zone and in the current studies, the workplace harassment has been related with the control of the labor process.<sup>115</sup> Leslie Salzinger (2000), in a more general sense, relates the working manner of sexuality in the workplace with the control of the labor process. As an outcome of an ethnographic study that she carried out on a factory located in a Free Trade Zone in Mexico, Salzinger (2000) stresses that sexuality plays a central role in the transformation of woman into 'docile and dextrous' workers while converting labor into laborforce during the labor process.

When sexuality is associated with the control of labor process, the sexual harrasment that women are exposed to be not evaluated as an individual events led by male workers, by supervisors rather, they are associated with a broader workplace control. The feminist politics already revealed that the harresment is one of the tools to oppress women. Sexual harrasment in the workplace refers to both men's effort to create control on women and turning women into a docile labor force.

In the stories of women I interviewed in Mata Automotive, the sexuality was present in two ways. Firstly, as a negative example that hurts solidarity in the stories of women workers, women workers being romantically involved with foremen or supervisors were emphasized. Secondly, the harrassment experiences their coworkers exposed them to.

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<sup>115</sup> For example, Leslie Salzinger, (2000); Caroline Bank-Munoz, (2016); Lindsey Joyce Chamberlein et. al. (2008).

According to the women I interviewed, the romantic relationship with their foremen or supervisors and the sexual harrassment in the work place serves to strip women of power and remind them that the workplace is not for them. Men's attitude on women workers is related with social positions they see fit for women (Cleveland ve Kerst, 1993; Chamberlain et al., 2008). The way women react to men's harrassment is related with their opinions on sexual based division of labor (Chamberlain et al., 2008: 265). Therefore the reaction against is to let the men know that they have a right to work in a factory just like male workers.

İlknur from quality control unit says that she gets upset with her coworkers who become romantically involved with their foremen:

There is this thing. Sometimes our female coworkers may get into relationships with foremen as they think that may be the way they will take a day off more easily or become tolerated if they arrive late to work and so on. Maybe this happens in Mata but I don't think so. I don't think there is a need for that. It used to happen in my former workplaces. Love is something else but this is not for that. When that happens foremen think women are within their reach. Actually we do this to ourselves in a way. That competition is not nice I think. When it is found out, women end up becoming laid off.<sup>116</sup>

Esra who previously worked in textile talks about her own view on relationship women get into with foremen:

Let me ask you so we think about it together. In that previous factory [CPS] a woman and foreman were together and everybody knew about it, including the wife of the foremen. One second he was good, another second they are fighting, no one said anything. If that is the case you are supposed to keep it a secret, right? When it gets heard foremen get confident that it is the normal way for women who work. Your wife doesn't say anything; no one says anything in the workplace. Then when it became too obvious, they

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<sup>116</sup> Bir de şöyle bir şey var. Bazen kadın arkadaşlarımız da belki izin almam kolaylaşır veya ne bileyim işe geç gelsem biraz daha hoş görülürüm, kollarım diye ustabaşılarda bir ilişki içinde de olabiliyor yani. Burada Mata'da belki olmuş olabilir ama sanmıyorum, ihtiyaç yok yani böyle şeylere. Eski çalıştığım yerlerde olurdu ama... Hani aşk sevgi başka bir şeydir ama belli yani onun için değil. Ustabaşılarda da öyle olunca diğer kadınlara da ulaşabilirim gibi görüyor. Biraz da biz yapmış oluyoruz o zaman. Öyle rekabet hoş değil bence. Bir de olan kadına oluyor. Öğreniliyor, işten atılan gene kendisi oluyor.

sent off the women to another workplace. That would confuse me a lot.<sup>117</sup>

Harrassment is one of the tools to restrict women in workplaces. Gülay tells how she responded to the worker who dissed at her in the artificial leather factory in Tuzla that she worked previously:

I asked him, “Who did you say it to?” He said “To you”. He came and we were almost face-to-face. I banged my head against his. He started swearing. There was an iron rod on the floor. I took it. I was about to hit his neck with it. They were trying to hold me. But I beat him around. They called an ambulance, took him to the hospital. He filed a complaint. But nothing happened. The witnesses supported me in their statement. I said in the police station how dare he filed a complaint. He told the police that I abused him to be together then he didn’t accept me and that’s why I attacked him. Isn’t it such a cheap statement? If a woman beats a man, he must have done something really nasty. How dare you? You think all women who work are there to sleep with you. Right? Why would you think that? If a women works, is she supposed to be okay with the disses? I work the same way you do. Women protect themselves. What he did was a verbal abuse. No one talked to him for a month so he had to leave. I defended both women and me. I made him not diss any women again.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Bak sana da sorayım belki birlikte düşünürüz. O daha önceki fabrikada [CPS’de] bir kadınla ustabaşı birliktelerdi mesela, herkes bilirdi. Ustabaşının eşi de biliyordu, bir bakıyordun çok iyi davranıyordu bir bakıyordun kavgalar olmuş, kimse de bir şey demiyordu, böyle bir durum varsa gizli tutarsın değil mi? Duyurulunca şöyle de oluyor, kadın olunca sanki öyle yaparak çalışman gerekiyor gibi, diğer ustabaşlarına da güven verir öyle değil mi? Karın bir şey demiyor, işyerinde kimse bir şey demiyor. Sonra iyice kavga gürültü ayyuka çıkınca kadını başka bir yere gönderdiler. O durum benim çok aklıma karıştırıyordu.

<sup>118</sup> Sen dedim kime söyledin? “Sana söyledim” dedi. Geldi, iyice geldi burun burunayız. Bunu tuttum dibimde zaten kafamı kafasına vurdum, küfretmeye başladı. Yerde şöyle bir demir vardı. Aldım. Boyuna çalışıyorum. Beni tutmaya çalışıyorlar, evire çevire dövdüm orada. Bir ambulans çağırdılar, hastaneye götürdüler. Şikayetçi olmuş ama bir şey çıkmadı, diğer orada olayı görenler de benden yana ifade verdi. Karakolda dedim ne için şikayetçi olmuş, ne yüzle. İşte ben gitmişim de onu taciz etmişim de, beraber olalım demişim de o kabul etmemiş ben onun öfkesiyle buna saldırmışım. Ne kadar ucuz bir ifade değil mi? Bir erkek bir kadından dayak yiyorsa o mutlaka kötü bir şey yapmıştır. Benim ne eksğim var? Sen kimsin? Çalışan her kadına sen yatılacak, laf atılacak kadın gözüyle bakıyorsun. Değil mi? Niye öyle düşünüyorsun ki yani? Kadın çalışıyorsa laf atacaksın sineye çeker diye bir şey mi var yani? Sen nasıl çalışıyorsan, ben de öyle çalışıyorum. Kadın kendini korur. Bu yaptığı sözlü taciz demektir. Hiçbir hak elde edemedi, kimse arasına almadı, kimse konuşmadı onunla 1 ay sonra mecburen gitmek zorunda kaldı. Ben kendimi de bence kadınları da savundum. Bir daha laf atamaz hale getirdim.



One of the counterreactions against foreman's sexual harrassment in the workplace took place in Rimaks textile factory. The incident becomes an agenda when the worker in Rimaks, Nuray Bayraklı who had filed a complaint against the foremen who insulted, abused and threatened many women was beaten on the way to work at night so that she would withdraw her complaint. Women including Nuray Bayraklı in Rimaks factory located in Tuzla Organized Industrial Zone filed a complaint to Teksif union where they were organized and to the factory management about the foremen who insulted, abused and threatened women. When nothing came out of these complaints about 80 women in the workplace made slowed down strike, left work and as a result the disciplinary action was taken against the foremen and then he was laid off.<sup>119</sup> Nuray Bayraklı, although beaten, does not give up on her case.

“Sexist but non-sexual remarks”, (Chamberlain et. al, 2008: 265) is the case women constantly experience and get tired of. Sexist but non-sexual remarks including male workers saying curse words among each other, making hand gestures, sexual innuendos, looking down of women's work, spreading their legs in smoking areas, saying that they would never let their wives work around female workers, talking about women they sleep with in the factory etc. cause an alienating workplace culture for women. Women in Mata Automotive show a reflex against the sexist behaviors. This reflex, although not collective, is in the form of reminding the male worker that their remark is sexist or conveying it to the shop steward. Selma describes a situation she experienced in Mata:

After unionization in Mata, I was subject to a nasty verbal abuse. And everyone did what she/he were supposed to do. The verbal abuse was that: The foreman changed his [one of the co-workers] shift. But he blamed it on me. When the guy in that shift was on leave, I switched to that shift. I was subject to verbal abuse on shift. He was talking to his friend about how he could keep on the relationship with anUkrainian women he was meeting. The person he was talking to me came over to my side and I told him “Please, just drop this subject, it makes me uncomfortable, this is a nasty

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<sup>119</sup> See <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/264433/fabrikada-tacize-direnen-kadin-isciye-davayi-geri-cek-saldirisi>; for a television Show where Nuray Bayraklı talks about her experiences, see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HECw1MtiMJo&t=687s>.

chat, I don't want to hear". And then he said "What is she saying?" His friend answered "She does not want us to have this conversation as she feels uncomfortable. He said "Okay then. We reached our goal". They carried on with the conversation, of course. When they did, I told the personnel manager and the union about it. I said "I don't want him in my own unit". They were presented with two options: layoff or unit reassignment. They did not want the reassignment, they agreed to being laid off.<sup>120</sup>

Selma describes the sorrow she had about that day:

When I go back to that day, I feel a little sorry. What I went through and heard that day was disgusting. I was at his mom's age. Motherhood, sisterhood is somewhat a shield. The way they call you makes you think they respect you, you think they see you like their sister; you feel comfortable a little. Then you get old and you get respected for your age but I never experienced this disrespect before. I still have the fear if something happens to me. I only gave their full name, phone numbers, and the place they stay to two of myfamily members so they would know whatever happens. The risk is always there for us women.<sup>121</sup>

The first complaint female workers make to the shop steward about their coworkers is the way male workers behave. These issues may damage the solidarity of workers after collective agreement. As in the practice of reassigning work units, women

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<sup>120</sup> Mata'da ben sendikalaştıktan sonra kötü bir sözlü tacize maruz kaldım, herkes de gerekeni yaptı. Kendi işbölümümde. Sözlü taciz de şöyle, bunun vardiyası değiştirilmişti, amir değiştirmişti, benden bildi. O vardiyadaki eleman izinli olunca o vardiyaya geçiş yapınca ben, vardiyada sözlü tacize maruz kaldım. Bir arkadaşıyla konuşuyor, Ukrayna'dan gelen görüştüğü kadımla ilişkinin nasıl devam edebileceğini anlatıyor, o da resmen uygulama neredeyse. Anlattığı kişi benim tarafıma geldi, kasa almak için, ben ona dedim ki "Senden rica ediyorum dedim, bu konuyu kapatın, rahatsız oluyorum, iğrenç bir sohbet" dedim, "Bu sohbetin yapılmasını istemiyorum". Bizimle konuşmayan, vardiyasını değiştirdiğimizi sanan, sohbeti yapan "Ne diyor?" dedi. O da dedi ki abla diyor ki "Bu tür sohbetleri yapmayın, ben rahatsız oluyorum." "İyi o zaman" dedi. "Amacımıza ulaştık." Sohbeti devam ediyorlar tabii. Devam edince ben personel müdürüne, sendikaya anlattım. Ben "Kendi bölümümde asla istemiyorum" dedim. İki seçenek sunuldu onlara, ya işten çıkarılma ya bölüm değişikliği. Bölüm değiştirmeyi istemediler, işten çıkarılmayı kabul ettiler.

<sup>121</sup> O güne döndüğüm zaman biraz üzülüyorum, o gün yaşadığım, duyduğum şey çok iğrenç bir şeydi. Ben onun annesi yaşıyordum, annelik ablalık bir yerde koruma kalkanı. Sana hitap şekliyle bana saygı duyuyor diyorsun, beni ablası görüyor diyorsun; biraz rahat ediyorsun. Sonra yaşın ilerliyor, gerçekten yaşından dolayı sana saygı duyuluyor ama ben bu saygısızlığı daha önce yaşamamıştım, gerçekten yaşamamıştım. Başıma bir şey gelir mi korkusunu hala yaşıyorum. Ben onların isimlerini, soy isimlerini, telefon numaralarını, oturdukları yerleri ailemden sadece 2 kişiye verdim yani ne şekilde olursa olsun bilsinler. Risk biz kadınlar için her zaman var.

working in male-dominated units cause them to be more exposed to sexist jokes and innuendos. During the labor process, the meaning of the restriction of employer control through unionization for male workers, the relation between masculinity and workplace culture are the top issues that require questioning.

We can say that the labor process can change the form of sexual abuse and sexism in the workplace. For instance, in an unsecured workplace where layoff and arbitrary punishment are the norm, the possibility for women to become subject to sexual harassment increases (Chamberlain et. al., 2008: 267). In factories where the employer control is restricted during the labor process, we can say that the sexist forms of verbal abuses are experienced more often than the physical harassment. As in the incident Selma experienced, when the mechanisms and possibilities of complaint exist in the workplace, deterrent measures can be taken in case of sexual abuse through applying non-personal ways of punishment (Chamberlain et al. 2008: 267).

While it is not easy to call an incident an abuse, women getting the abuse incidents recorded, identifying sexist orientations and raising an objection to those are the indicators that sexism and abuse in the workplace are not acceptable. The women I interviewed with see the abuse incidents in Mata or the factories they previously worked at as a protest against the working rights of women, answering the abuse protests with this reflex. Along with considering the act of harassment and sexism a protest against women working, they also think of it as an act that hurts solidarity between workers. For example, Gül, in her complaint that she mentioned in the union room, after saying that the sexist innuendos by male workers in the unit she works at have to stop, she stresses that they hurt the solidarity among workers.

It is clear that sexual abuse incidents are more abundant in factories with less security and labor process under the full control of employer. Arbitrary behaviors of foremen or supervisors become more conceivably in workplace where the control of employer in the labor process is not restricted. As the women I spoke with in Mata said about their female coworkers, female workers sometimes may try to prevent

layoffs or compulsory works etc by building a personal relationship with foremen or chiefs in workplace where taking a leave is arbitrarily regulated. This method is more common in competitive workplaces.

It is clear that there is a need for further studies on the attitudes developed by women against different forms of control, different forms of sexual harassment abuse concerning sexual in the workplace. Still, although sexuality, sexism and harassment are a part of the control of labor process, it does not mean that women workers can be considered docile workers. Harassment can also be a subject of militant protests realized by women individually, such as Gülay beating up her coworker who verbally abused her, or collectively, such as Nuray Bayraklı and her friends staging a slowdown strike and work stoppage protests against the protection of the abusive foremen in Rimaks textile factory.

The argument that women make up a more docile workforce is associated with features deemed as gender roles such as being more meticulous at work, more patient and less bored in repetitive tasks, responsible. For instance, increase in women's participation in workforce in the new international division labor is thought to be related with sexual based division of labor. Or even if they are not directly related with gender roles, the fact that the sectors that employ women workers are not unionized, are unsecured and small scale factories and workshops, the vagueness of the line between the house and workplace are deemed to be the reasons why women workers are hired as cheaper workforce.

As mentioned above, it is clear that women waged less than men's or women workers participate less in the unions. Still, even if it is associated with gender roles of women or the distinctive features of female-dominated sectors, behind women seemingly giving in to the current working conditions lie many failed attempts at unionization. Mata is an example where unionization was successful. In the following chapter, I will point out to the stories of women workers regarding values such as responsibility, reliability and dexterity during the labor process.

### **6.6.2 Responsibility, Reliability and Dexterity**

As I touched upon in the introductory part of this chapter, as women workers are found more nimble-fingered, responsible and reliable than male workers, employers call women to the factories, workshops, and regions producing especially for export. In studies stressing women's features as cheap labor, either women are claimed to be naturally dexterious, responsible and more reliable, or this is attributed to the features of factories and sectors female workers work at (Elson and Pearson, 1981).

In parallel with the search for cheap labor, in Mata Automotive, while the automotive sector is barely frequented by women, women workers account for almost the half of the total number of workers in the factory. The idea to relocate the factory where car parts are produced to Turkey stems from the search for cheap labor. One of the partners of Mata Automotive, Erce Kaşlıoğlu quotes the same price as China to car companies for which they produce parts but boast about shorter delivery periods, which reveals the deeper exploitation in Mata Automotive, for sure. One of the 4 partners of Mata Automotive, Kaşlıoğlu, in one of his interviews says that: "Most of our workers are women. Women are better at manual labor with their small hands. Their hands are more prone to these tasks."

However, we need to think about women being considered dexterious, responsible, reliable and docile by employers and supervisors. In their early article on women labour force in the organization of production in Southern countries, Diana Elson and Ruth Pierson (1981: 95) state that women are called into factories as a cheap labor in the least developed regions of the world, as docile and nimble-fingered worker, and then they draw a similarity between women presenting themselves as docile and the way people of the colonized nations present themselves to the colonialists:

In the conditions of their subordination as a gender, this is the appearance that women often present to men, particularly men in some definite relation of authority to them, such as fathers, husband, and boss. A similar appearance, presented by colonized peoples to their colonizers, was brilliantly dissected by Franz Fanon, who showed how the public passivity and fatalism which the colonized peoples displayed towards the colonizers for long

periods concealed an inner, private, rebellion and subversion. But this passivity is not a natural and original state: to achieve it requires enormous efforts of self-repression. The 'native' is in a state of permanent tension, so that when he does resist, it tends to be with a spontaneity and intensity all the stronger for having been so long pent-up and hidden: action not negotiation is the characteristic response (Fanon, 1969: 48 in Elson and Pierson, 1981: 95).

Different from many ventures in the Free Trade Zone, the industrial action resulted in unionization in Mata. Although it applies to all workers, we can say that women workers being seen as docile had an effect on the success of this unionization attempt. Women workers explain that as they are more reliable and responsible than male workers, this had a positive impact on unionization, establishing a link between docility, responsibility and organization capacity. On the hand, not being scolded by their supervisors, not knowing what to do when they are scolded show that women determine their reflexes by observing the power relations.

Derya associated the responsibility and meticulous asset of the women workers with domestic responsibilities:

What they say about women being more meticulous, doing finer jobs, that is actually true. Women say it if there is something wrong, they don't want to hide their mistakes. They directly claim it. Maybe it is because there is too much family pressure and there is a sense of relief when they come to work. For example, when they make a spread, they do it to the smallest detail. Employers actually say that women do a better job. Now that there are reassignments across units, they end up paying less.

*Burcu:* Being nimble-fingered, meticulous are things to be proud of, I guess.

*Derya:* Otherwise, male workers do not let themselves become subject to oppression, but we do. And women don't say anything about it.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>122</sup> Kadınlar ciddi anlamda daha titiz, incelikli işleri yapar derler ya gerçekten öyle. Diyelim ki bir şey yanlış olduysa onu söyleyen, diğer işçiler gibi ben kırdım bunun saklayayım gizleyeyim gibi yapmıyor. Doğrudan ben bunu yaptım diyor. Aile baskısı da belki çok olduğu için ve işe gelince rahatlama olduğu için belki o yüzden. Bir serim yapıyor diyelim onu en ince ayrıntısına kadar yapıyor. Hatta kadınlar daha iyi iş yapıyor filan diye de konuşuyor patronlar filan. Bir de bölüm değişiklikleri olduğu için artık, daha az da ücret vermiş oluyorlar. *Burcu:* Titiz çalışmak, becerikli olmak gurur

Meryem from spread department says:

Being respectable, being reliable. When a male worker feels like they are being unfair to him, he goes onto them, but a female worker doesn't want to be scolded. Therefore, I do my job meticulously. I don't know if it is frustration but when necessary, you do something, and you get listened to, and where there is an unjust situation, you can say something about it. You become reliable.<sup>123</sup>

Gül from quality control stresses that female workers are more reliable:

Women are more direct, for instance, something happens in the workplace, for instance, you mislabeled a product. I don't do it generally, but when it happens, I don't hide it, you are a human after all. When something wrong happens, women say it out loud, directly. Men are a little bit liars. They can lie. Isn't it the same everywhere?<sup>124</sup>

Since the women I interviewed with made public their reliability, meticulousness, sense of responsibility to convince their female friends working in the same unit, we can claim that they emphasized their meticulousness and reliability in the way they performed their work during the interviews. Along with that, as revealed by Meryem's words, women who consider the relation between themselves and supervisors/foremans a power relation prefer to avoid any obvious dispute and display a meticulous, docile image, fond of work in cases where they think that

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duyulacak şeylerdir herhalde. *Derya*: Aksine, erkek işçiler gidiyorlar höt zöt yapıp kendilerini çok ezdirmiyorlar ama biz ezdirip böyle yapıyoruz gibi de oluyor. Biraz da höt zöt ihtimali olmasın diye de aslında kadınlar gidip bir şey demiyor bazen de.

<sup>123</sup> Saygın olmak sözüne güvenilir olmak. Bir erkek işçi yapar onunla konuşacak olan gene erkek, höd zöt yapar bir şey yapar hakkı yeniliyorsa üstüne yürür, sana bir ey dese duymak istemiyorsun, laf işitmek, söz söylensin istemiyorsun. O yüzden işimi çok titiz yaparım. Eziklik mi bilmiyorum ama şu da var gerektiğinde bir şey yapıyorsun, sözün de dinleniyor yani, gerektiği yerde bir vicdansızlık olduğunda da sözünü söyleyebiliyorsun. Güvenilir oluyorsun.

<sup>124</sup> Kadınlar daha doğrudan, mesela iş yerinde bir şey oluyor, hani birinin bir şeyi değil de etiketi yanlış basmışsın, ben yapmam genelde yanlışım çıkmaz ama saklamıyorsun, demiyorsun ki ben bunu yapmadım, insansın olur, ama bir şey olduğunda da dosdoğru karşı çıkıyor bence kadınlar, daha doğrudan, ne bileyim erkekler biraz yalancı ya. Yalan söyleyebiliyorlar. Her yerde de öyle değil mi?

cannot counteract or they want but avoid to counteract in cases when they have limited possibility to change.

In summary, in this part of the thesis, I tried to underline that one needs to be cautious against the capital envisage which considers the women workers a docile workforce. The argument that women workers are more docile than male workers is attributed to high profitability ratios and low union participation. First of all, even though it is clear that the union participation of female workers is low, there is a restriction with quantitative data to account for the low participation of women. Recently, as can be derived from the interviews in Mata, an increase took place in industrial protests such as work slowdown, strike action, illegal strike in workplaces. These protests have not always resulted in unionization; therefore, following up the failed unionization attempts is important in order to reveal womes' shopfloor struggles. Male and female workers slowed down the work mainly for a pay increase in Mata Automotive and then occupied the factory. Different from male workers, the pay inequalities experienced by female workers became visible after the collective agreement was signed. The pay inequalities due to reassignment across units are still on the agenda for women workers and may be one of the most critical issues expressed in the factory.

In addition to the fight against pay inequality, one of the issues where we can study the reflexes of women against being considered a docile workforce is their acts against sexist attitudes and sexual harassment. Finally, I tried to present the notions of responsibility, meticulousness and relieability in women's stories against the opinion that women are the docile workforce, fed by the argument that women workers are more responsible, nimble fingered, meticulous and therefore more productive. One consequence of the interviews held is that women used their labor, and the aspects they have that they find distinctive during the labor process in favor of the unionization process. In the following chapter of the thesis, I aim to discuss the relationship between the labor process and solidarity bonds among workers.



## 6.7 Labor Process, Solidarity, Sisterhood

Sisterhood, once showed the belief in the power of unity, seems to have lost its premise and no longer evoke the once widely held upon belief on the common project uniting women. As far as bell hooks (1986: 127) mentions “some feminists now seem to feel that unity between women is impossible given our differences.” In feminist writings, sisterhood rested on the notion of common oppression and accordingly some critics of the concept asserted that “the basis for bonding was shared victimization” (hooks, 1986: 128). hooks (1986: 128) repudiates equation of bonding among women with shared victimization and defines sisterly bonds among women “on the basis of shared strengths and resources.” The point is, once essence of sisterhood lies on shared strengths and resources among women, then sisterhood turns out to be a unity to be worked and struggled for to obtain (hooks, 1986: 127).

This part of the thesis shares understanding of sisterhood in the way hooks (1986) puts forward. Following the notion of solidarity as Maurizio Atzeni (2010) suggests, it can be claimed that sisterhood as a form of solidarity among women can also be conceptualised in its passive and active forms. Atzeni emphasizes that, solidarity exists among workers within the labour process due to the shared circumstances and is “generated by cooperation in the labour process” but is mystified like the appropriation of the surplus value. Atzeni (2010: 26-27) underlines:

[T]he capitalist labour process, (...) intended as creative human activity, is not just the site of exploitation per se, but also the site of cooperation. In fact, despite the tendency to divide workers, to segment work and to separate mental from manual work, the production process imposes at least a minimum level of cooperation. If on the one hand this cooperation becomes functional to capital's valorization, on the other it represents a first associational moment among the collective workers upon which solidarity links may be created. (...) For the collective labourer, while cooperation at work is the material condition, creating room for communication and exchange among workers, solidarity is the social relation that expresses the collective nature of the labour process.

Through cooperation at the labour process, workers define themselves as members of the group of collective worker “who share similar working conditions, who demand better salaries and job protection and whose interests are overall opposed to those of the employer” (Atzeni, 2010: 27). Atzeni (2010: 28-29) calls this pre-existing solidarity, whose foundation lies at the cooperative character of the labor process, as embryonic, passive form of solidarity, “solidarity not yet activated.”

Without the consideration of solidarity, already existing in the cooperative and conflicting character of the labor process, the need for union activity, the spontaneous mobilization of the workers, “the need to be organized” can not be understood (Atzeni, 2010: 28). In Mata Automotive, workers’ spontaneous action of slowdown strike right after they realized there is no wage increase as promised, shows one of the moments of the flashing of the collective character of the labor process. How Mata worker Derya narrates the moment of slowdown strike can make us feel the collective character of the labor process:

When the wages seemed too little all workers stopped working at once out of rage. Some of them even went to say if they should blow off the work they did or get reclamation on purpose? (...) Meanwhile, work slowdowns started at once. If there were 100 parts produced in the past, now it is 20, on their own.<sup>125</sup>

Esra emphasizes that, anger was the strong emotion that can be felt at the factory:

Workers, especially the senior ones, had expectations. When they saw how much the raise was, they felt humiliated. When asked, they would put the blame on the former managers giving promises. It means as the managers changes, promises would not be held. Everyone worked hard for it. Work slowdown started all of a sudden. There was a vibe in the factory; they had to kill me to work for that money. No one had to say anything (...) People were in this together.<sup>126</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Bir anda ücretler az gelince tüm işçiler bir anda o öfkeyle kimse iş yapmadı çünkü yani hatta birkaçı dedi yaptığımız işleri mi parçalasak, hatta red filan mı çıkarsak? (...)Bu arada bir anda iş yavaşlatmalar başladı. Diyelim eskiden 100 yapıyorsa 20 yapıyor, kendi kendine.

<sup>126</sup> İnsanlar, özellikle eski işçiler beklenti içindeydi. Zammı görünce fabrikada öfke vardı böyle dalga geçilmiş gibi. Soruyorsun, eski yönetici söz vermiş deniliyor. Yönetici değiştikçe verilen sözler tutulmayacak o zaman. Herkes çalışmıştı bir de. Birden iş yavaşlatma başladı. Nasıl diyeyim fabrikada

Individual worker's feeling as the same body of workers represents what Atzeni (2010) calls, the collective and cooperative character of the labor process. While individual workers who gathered together in the labor process represent the highly routinized and divided work tasks, in the narrative of Esra, bonded to each other with the feeling of anger in the air and feeling of being *us* against the supervisors and managers denote to the collective character of the labour process that resulted in the slowdown strike without any prior decision. It can be further argued that, collective character of the labor process is not limited to the individual shop-floor but experienced as the knowledge of the working class. The point is manifested in Derya's thoughts on how they decided to make slow-down strike:

It seems like we keep experiencing our own reality all over again. It is not told. Who did what in the history and how they earned which rights; it seems to be repeating itself in each factory...On the other hand, you know that a work slowdown is staged in that case you come up with solution. It was resolved before and after us in many factories. Even if you do not know that, you still come up with the same method.<sup>127</sup>

Another moment, cooperative character of the labor process takes place is on the disputes regarding the work rhythm. As far as it is stated in the first part of the chapter, number of the products produced is among the foremost disputes between workers and supervisors. While supervisors tend to increase the number of products on a daily basis, workers tend to keep up the number with the same level or at worst increase the numbers at a minimum rate. As workers has informed, it was always a matter of disagreement between workers and supervisors and there was a shared concern on keeping the number at the same level among workers. A far as Derya

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o paraya beni öldürseler ben çalışmam gibi bir hava vardı, o hava dolaşıyordu, kimsenin bir şey demesine gerek kalmadı.(...) Herkes bir gibi, ortak gibi oldu.

<sup>127</sup> Biz kendi gerçekliğimizi sürekli yeniden deneyimliyoruz gibi geliyor. Anlatılmıyor. Tarihte kim neler yapmış hangi haklar nasıl kazanılmış; her fabrikada yeni baştan yaşanıyor gibi... Fakat bir yandan da biliyorsun bu durumda iş yavaşlatma yapılır, o çözümü buluyorsun. Bizden önce bizden sonra birçok fabrikada bu çözüm bulunmuş, bunu bilmesen de aynı yolu buluyorsun.

mentions, when a worker, for several reasons, rises the number, he/she was to be informed, challenged or left out.

In the time period between the industrial action and the signing of the collective agreement, number of products produced in a given time had been used as a tool by the employers to force workers to withdraw voluntarily. Henceforth, workers appealed to limiting the numbers and insisting on not to withdraw voluntarily. The point is, in the time period between the industrial action and signing of the collective agreement, not speeding up the work rhythm and withdraw from the work became one of the most distinct indicators of ongoing solidarity which Atzeni (2010) calls “active solidarity.” Female workers at Mata called their tendency to insist on working without speeding up the rhythm as a struggle to maintain solidarity among workers that is crystallized with the unionization at the workplace. As an example, Pınar notes:

The boss made a lot pressure on us after the union so that we would be sick of it and get out voluntarily. But we resisted, because they actually targeted our unity. They thought some unionized workers would leave so they could take those without the union or we would get into fights with each other. Therefore we always reminded them. No! We would not let our solidarity get hurt. So it was not done with getting the union in. We are the union, we have to stand by it!<sup>128</sup>

As quoted from Gül in the previous sections, in spite of employers efforts to force workers to leave work voluntarily, workers’ insistence on working at Mata is not limited to maintaining solidarity among existing workers. To recall, Gül says:

There was a process until the agreement was signed during which people were pushed to the limits so that they would leave voluntarily. (...) The ones to come after us will also start the same

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<sup>128</sup> Patron bize çok baskı yaptı sendikadan sonra. Bunalıp çikalım diye, ama direndik çünkü bizim birliğimizi aslında hedef aldı. Bazıları ayrılır sendikalı işçilerin, sendikasızları alırsız diye. Ya da biz birbirimizle kavga ederiz diye. O yüzden biz hep hatırlattık. Hayır! Dayanışmamıza zarar verdimmeyeceğiz diye. Sendikayı sokmakla bitmedi yani. Sendika biziz, arkasında durmak da gerekiyor!

process. I resisted, not only for us but it would be so bad for the next ones.<sup>129</sup>

Whereas, similar to Gül's emphasis on the past and future organizations of working class, we can underline that Gül feels like as a member of the working class not limited to her own life time, but she also feels responsible for the working conditions of the potential workers of the factory, which may be interpreted as the bond formed between different members of the working class without knowing each other personally. It can be concluded that, the existence of solidarity among workers due to the cooperative character of the labour process is not the question at stake. For the workers who directly involve in conflict with various actors at the shop-floor, the question at stake is "about the possibility of creating and consolidating it [solidarity] in presence of employer's, management's, government's or trade union bureaucracy's attempts to break it" (Atzeni, 2010: 30).

Slow down strikes and strikes, manifest the struggle of power at the frontier of shop-floor. Besides they represents remarkable signs of workers solidarity (Atzeni, 2010). According to Mary Garcia Castro (1998: 82), "The strikes are experienced as the power of many, as a moment of gathering and sharing for others, and also a time of enjoyment." In the third section of this chapter titled *Routine, Unionization and Empowerment*, I elaborated how the feeling of being part of the collective, "gathering and sharing for others," "enjoyment" and feeling of being powerfull against the managers empowers women. Unionization has been the sign of collectivity in Mata and union also operated for empowerment of women. Due to the fact that, while worker's change their material conditions, they also change themselves (Atzeni, 2010: 26), we can say that industrial actions resulted in a gain empowers workers, particulary women. While empowerment of women at the workplace is especially important, gender specificity of an industrial act is not

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<sup>129</sup> Sözleşme yapılana kadar bir süreç vardı. O süreçte insanların üzerine çok gidildi, kendi istekleriyle çıksınlar diye çok uğraşılar.(...)Bizden sonrakiler de aynı sürece başlayacak, direndim, sadece bana değil bize de, bizden sonrakilere de yazık.

limited to the outcome of empowerment. Here, I will argue that gender specificity of the solidarity becomes important for several reasons.

First and foremost, while existing gender segregation at work signs inequality and unequal sex-based division of labor, it may also lead to specific forms of solidarity among workers of the same sex. In this sense, cooperative character of the labor process takes gendered form particularly when there is strict segregation at the shop-floor. Second, collective experience of the reproductive tasks may also be at the foundation of cooperation among women workers. Lastly, among multiple forms of control in reorganization of work, gender plays an important part. In the third part of the chapter I have tried to imply contradictions between two different interpretations and use of sexual division of labour between women workers and supervisors. In different zones of the world factories, sexual division of labour is used to deepen exploitation and work control. For example, in *Made in China*, Pun Ngai elaborates, on mobilization of Chinese young women peasants towards world factories as cheap workers. In spite of poor working conditions, Chinese *dagongmei* (working-girls) encounter new organization of work in factories in which reproduction costs is minimized via dormitory type of housing. Accordingly “gendered form of labor use” paves way for the global production in newly industrialized regions of the world population. Despite new work organizations’ reliance on deepening exploitation and control at production and reproduction sites, it also “opens up space for struggle and resistance” (Ngai, 2012: 180). As far as “gender is central to the formation of the working class in global context” within the confines of sexual division of labour organizing along the gender lines becomes important in newly industrialized countries. Ngai puts sisterhood solidarity among workers as one of the alternative ways of struggles in new organization of work.

In Mata Automotive, solidarity among women workers can be elaborated under two headings: exchange of information about job opportunities, bedrock as a tool for unionization. In a similar vein with how Atzeni (2010) conceptualized pre-active form of solidarity as a mystified relation, as social bond among workers is not apparent but “hidden by the legitimacy of the command of capital in the workplace

and workers' dependency on their salaries to live" we can also formulate sisterhood as a bond between women hidden if not politically searched for.

### 6.7.1 Information Exchange About Job Opportunies

Segregated workplaces led women to work in more similar workplaces and sectors. Information exchange about external job opportunies in and out of the factory usually takes place among women workers. This point becomes important in the decision of leaving the factory or insisting to keep working there. Besides, women's community and workplace networks work well when searching for the job. Here, how Mata worker Özlem tells how she started to work for a paid job:

My first job was at the textile workshop. Girls from my neighborhood were working there. When they told me about it and told me not to sit around in the house, I went there. We took a shuttle and went together. The next job is Mata. My neighbor told her father that I was looking for a job. He worked in Mata then so he referred me there. I waited for 2-2.5 hours for an interview after filling in the form. We had the interview. They handed me a list of documents to submit. I started working there 1 week after.<sup>130</sup>

Hâyâl explains how workers gain information about the working conditions in other factories:

You don't know when you first start a job. You assume this is how it is done. But when you speak to others and asking them about their job, their salary, their work environment, if they are under pressure or not, you find out about the factories around. The first jobs you take generally tend to be female-dominated workplaces or the other fellow females invite you to the places they work so you would not be alone. Then it gets to your head, you keep saying it to whomever in the neighborhood. Or for instance a friend you trust

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<sup>130</sup>İlk işe tekstil atölyesi vardı, mahalledeki kızlar gidiyordu, onlar söyleyince gittim. Evde boş oturma, gel dediler. Mahalleden servisle birlikte gittik geldik. Sonraki iş de Mata, işte mahalleden arkadaşım babasına söylemiş iş aradığımı, o da Mata'da çalışıyordu, o yönlendirdi. Tamam dedim arkadaşım ile geldim, 2 saat 2.5 saat bekledim görüşme için form doldurduktan sonra. Görüşmeyi yaptık uygun buldular evrak listesini verdiler, 1 hafta sonra başladım.

starts a job and tells you about it. So that you would not be a foreigner.<sup>131</sup>

As Özlem and Hâyâl explain, women's community networks become important while searching for a job and in learning about the general working conditions at the near factories. Women's bonds within the factory also played as a bedrock for unionization.

### **6.7.2 Women's Networks as a Bedrock for Unionization**

In the time before and during the strike, women workers used their bonds with their co-workers to convince them to be unionized. Dressing rooms, toilettes, and telephone calls out of the work-time became the spaces and the tools to communicate. As far as Derya mentions, because of experiencing the same conditions for being women, they had been more capable to convince their co-workers. Besides, women narrate that, as they are more responsible, more meticulous and trustworthy at work, it had contributed much to their unionization struggle. Derya argues that when a woman is convinced to become a member of the union, she convinces her co-workers to become a member. Sevgi tells how she became convinced to be a union member and how she convinced her co-workers:

I wanted to think about it at first. I worked once in a unionized workplace, but that was Türk-Metal. I was laid off there which Türk-Metal had a share. More than a share actually, they threatened me, laid me off for no reason. If you file a complaint against the factory, you would be blacklisted and not get a job in any workplace we are in, they threatened. Naturally I wanted to think about the union situation. I had friends I trusted in the

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<sup>131</sup> İlk işe girdiğinde bilmiyorsun, bu işin düzeni bu işin töresi budur zannediyorsun. Ama gide gele duraklarda konuşuyorsun mesela sizin orası nasıl? İşte iş zor mu? Kaç lira veriyor? Ortamı nasıl filan? Ortamı dediğim baskı var mı? Öğreniyorsun etraftaki fabrikaları, ne bileyim mahallede başka fabrikada çalışanlar varsa ya kendileri anlatıyor bulduğunda veya eşi çalışıyorsa onu anlatıyor birbirine gittiğinde veya iş arıyorsan da soruyorsan. Diyorsun haberin olsun, ben evdeyim. Genelde kadın işleri, ilk çalıştığım yerler kadın arkadaşlarla gidiyor geliyorsun veyahut onlar diyor benim çalıştığım yere gel hem yalnız olmazsın diye... Zamanla işte senin de aklında oluyor, mahallede kim varsa aklına geliyor söylüyorsun. Eski çalıştığım işyerlerinden de oluyor, güvendiğin arkadaşın işe giriyor mesela sana da diyor burada iş var diye. Yabancılık da çekme diye.



previous workplace. I asked them about Birleşik-Metal. They told me to go ahead. At that time everyone was calling me from the unit that I called a group I worked at. I told them to wait and not to hurry. I was waiting for an answer. When that friend told me to go ahead, I told the girls the same. So that is how we all became members.<sup>132</sup>

Selma underlines that as women are more responsible, meticulous and trustworthy, it has affected other women's decision on taking part at the the unionization attempt:

As the conditions of women are the same everywhere, they understand each other better than men. If you know that the husband is unemployed or the domestic situation at home is not good, you speak accordingly. For instant you tell each other some things and then you are careful if what you tell goes around among others. When you become trustworthy, I don't know, everyone knows how you do the job, women are more meticulous, why? So that they would not do wrong. That is why you depend on each other more. There are groups in the factory. In the unit you work at, there are generally small divisions of group. Once a woman in the group is convinced, she always convinces the others too.<sup>133</sup>

To sum up, based on the narratives of women workers at Mata, we can say that most of the women at workplaces "know about the availability of jobs through their social networks" (Gluksmann, 2009: xviii). As far as Özlem mentions, women enter to work at a paid job upon the suggestions of their friends or they seek work via informing their friends and sisters. Besides, similarity among women workers, bonds

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<sup>132</sup> Ben başta düşünmek istedim, eskiden de sendikalı işyerinde çalışmışım ama Türk-Metal'di, ben işten atılmışım orada, Türk-Metal'in de payı vardı; paydan da öte beni tehdit etmişlerdi, haksız yere işten atmışlardı, fabrikayı şikâyet edersen, kara listeye yazılırsın, bizim olduğumuz hiçbir işyerinde işe giremezsin diye tehdit aslında, tehdit etmişlerdi. Haliyle, sendika var sendika var ben düşünmek istedim. Daha önceki işyerinde güvendiğim arkadaşlarım vardı, onlara sordum, dedim Birleşik-Metal nasıldır? Ol dediler. O sırada herkes de beni arıyor, bizim gruptan, gruptan dediğim çalıştığım bölümden, ben dedim bekleyelim, acele etmeyelim, cevap bekliyorum. O deyince bana ol, ben de dedim bizim kızlara oluyoruz. Sonra işte hepimiz olduk neredeyse.

<sup>133</sup> Biraz da kadınlar şöyle, herkesin durumu aynı, hani erkek olsa dese ki böyle böyle bazısı gene olur ama kadınların koşulları aynı olduğu için birbirinin halinden daha iyi anlıyor. Eşi işsizse mesela veyahut eşiyle durumlarını, evdeki durumları daha iyi biliyorsun ona göre konuşuyorsun. Bazen de mesela ilk sendikalaşma sözünü açacağın var sonra açacağın var, hemen duyulmasın diye. Birbirine birşeyler anlatıyorsun o anlattığın gidiyor mu gitmiyor mu? Güvenilir olduğunda, ne bileyim iş yapma biçimini de biliyor herkes, kadınlar daha özenli, titiz, neden? Yanlış yapmayayım diye. O yüzden birbirine de daha çok güveniyorsun. Gruplar olur fabrikada. Çalıştığım bölüm genelde bölüm bölüm gruplar olur, bir kadın ikna olunca diğerlerini de mutlaka ikna ediyor yani.

formed within the labour process and responsibility, trustworthy and meticulousness which are the traits women workers define how they fulfill their tasks, operated as the bedrocks for women to convince their friends to become unionized. It can be said that, “the shared experience and interdependence of the women assembly workers gave them more in common with each other than with any other group, providing a strong basis for their solidarity” (Glucksmann, 2009: xix) which we can call sisterhood.

However, as far as solidarity on the axis of the cooperative character of the labor process is hidden from the direct experience of workers (Atzeni, 2010), sisterhood among women is also hidden from the direct experience of working women both because of the hidden character of solidarity in general and because of the ideology that situates women competing with their fellows. Sometimes women may also internalize sexist labels attached to them such as being competitive which is difficult to eliminate. Being a gossip was among one of the said labels women workers both internalized and questioned at Mata. Women workers at Mata defined gossip in two respects. One use connotes to having a talk; second one connoting being so much interested with others’ lives and talking nonsense. In the following pages I will try to show how women workers at Mata framed gossip in relation to solidarity and sisterly bonds.

### **6.7.3 Gossip, Solidarity and Sisterhood**

As far as sexist ideology makes women to see themselves with the way how men see themselves, “their ideas about themselves as workers are dominated by what they think men think of them as workers” says Anna Pollert (1981: 78) and she adds that there is a growing body of research that nails the point. Male workers at Mata (as far as I witnessed at the union’s room) usually blamed women for being gossip. And when I asked a woman that I wanted to talk with her especially on the industrial act took place at Mata, a male worker who witness this conversation usually disrupted by saying “Women! What they did? We did everything, they are only gossiping”.

Another men saying: “Wwll! We would not have done anything, if it had been up to women”.

Women workers at Mata agree with men in defining women as gossipiers but it should be emphasized that they remain at a distance to men’s ideas and how they define what women do. When I asked if she feels solidarity among women, Meralpoints out that:

There is always solidarity even while finding a job. Because women get some things better. They know about the working conditions and the jobs better and evaluate the work environment there better. But there are a lot of gossips as well which sometimes get ahead of things which can lead to problems among women.

Burcu: How, for instance?

For instance, it could be about anything, about numbers. You produced too much and she says no she did not. No one knows who spread it in the first place. So it came to the attention of the shop stewards.<sup>134</sup>

Meryemtalks about her quarrel with her friends on increasing the number of products produced:

The other day, a friend came along and said, “Meryem I will ask you something. If you ever told anyone that I was producing 30 products because that is what they are talking about?” she said. “I will believe in whatever you say. I answered “Who said that? Whom did I say that?” I did not say that. “They must have made it up.” I don’t know the word got around. There are too many gossips, sometimes in the woman-dominated units. But there is no such thing. Maybe the supervisors I think spread it. Someone comes, keeps the time I see that. They take you for stupid I guess. When he checks the time I cut a place five times which is supposed

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<sup>134</sup> There is always solidarity even while finding a job. Because women get some things better. They know about the working conditions and the jobs better and evaluate the work environment there better. But there are a lot of gossips as well which sometimes get ahead of things which can lead to problems among women.

Burcu: How, for instance?

For instance, it could be about anything, about numbers. You produced too much and she says no she did not. No one knows who spread it in the first place. So it came to the attention of the representative.

to be only one; so there was a time I finished a work in half an hour. Normally, it does not take that long. I don't know how someone was able to watch me but said "Meryem did it in 15 minutes". Someone else said "Meryem did it in 10 minutes". They are the supervisors. They compete us against each other to increase the production I assume. However my maximum number is 23-24. You are a human after all, you need to have a WC break, there are times you feel at your best, and other times the opposite. You might get sick or tired. I don't know, I guess they were trying to up the production over me.<sup>135</sup>

As far as Meryem mentions the point, at times when gossip is defined as the attribute of women workers it can cause disputes among women, the subject in question is actually posed by the supervisors to make workers compete with each other and to rise the number of products produced at the factory.

When I was conducting interviews at the factory, workers frequently asked shop steward that if the factory will start downsizing. This was the question circulating around and the first person who raised the issue was still uncertain. One day, a young girl started to work, at the department of quality control. When we were having an interview, the door had been locked several times and group of women workers came, so we started to talk altogether. They asked me some questions because they were wondering if I was the one who started to work at the quality control department and if there is any worker recruitment going on at the factory. The questions were not hostile. It was like aiming to get some information through small talk and learn if I was her and how I was recruited at a time when the supervisors

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<sup>135</sup> Geçen gün bir arkadaşım geldi, "Hatice" dedi "Sana bir şey soracağım." "Sor abla" dedim. "Sen hiç dedin mi" dedi "ben 30 tane seriyorum diye?" Öyle dediler. "Ben sana inanacağım" dedi. Dedim "Kim dedi?" "Kime demişim?" Demedim. "Kendi aralarında çıkartmışlar." Nasıl yayıldıysa bilmiyorum. Çok dedikodu oluyor, biraz da kadınların çalıştığı yerde de oluyor. Halbuki böyle birşey yok. Belki de amirlerden yayılıyor, amirlerden çıktı diye de düşünüyorum. Biri geliyor, böyle dakika tutuyor, ben görüyorum. Karşılarındaki insanı aptal sanıyorlar galiba. Ben de o saatine bakınca 1 kez keseceğim yeri 5 kez kesiyorum; yani yarım saatte bir iş bitirdiğim oldu. Normalde o kadar sürmüyor açıkçası. Birisi de artık beni nasıl izledi bilmiyorum ama Hatice dedi "15 dakikada serdi." Birisi dedi ki "Hatice 10 dakikada serdi". Amirler bunlar. Herhalde serimde sayıyı yükseltmek için rekabet ettiriyorlar. Halbuki en fazla 23-24 seriyorum. Sonuçta sen insansın sen de tuvalete gideceksin, kendini dinç hissettiğin zamanlar olur, yorgun hissettiğin zamanlar olur daha fazla yaparsın ama yorgun olduğun, hasta olduğun zaman olur bunu yapamazsın. Ne bileyim benim üstümden bayanların iş sayılarını yükselteceklerdi herhalde.

were talking about downsizing at the factory. When we were talking, shop-steward came the room and he joined in. When women left the room, male shop-steward turned to me and said, “A girl in need has started to work and almost everybody has been acknowledged that someone is started to work at the factory. As you can see, they gossiping a lot, especially women” however the information was correct. Here what is termed as gossip seems an important thing to think about.

Both in Hatice’s conflict with her friends and in the above case of a new worker starting work at the factory, women’s responses seem to be the outcome of supervisors’ attempt to control workers and to make them compete with each other. So, women’s responses, which are called gossip, operates to publicize supervisors tools to deepen control at the workplace. In other words, what is called gossip at Mata seems to be publicizing the information concealed by the employer aiming to rise control. For example, when I asked if there was any differences in wages among workers at their department before unionization, Pınar answered:

The employer told us not to say our wages, that everyone should “keep it to themselves”. You know we women like gossip a little, we cannot keep such things to ourselves. Of course we asked this to each other and found about it.<sup>136</sup>

Pınar’s case further perpetuates that, while employers attempt to privatize public issues such as wage, women workers attempt to publicize what is concealed and it may be termed as gossip both by male employers, supervisors and workers and by women themselves. However, women not necessarily use the term in a negative way. They also use the term in a way meaning to talk with. For example Gül says that men wrongly labels women’s daily talk as gossip:

There is gossip in our factory which naturally pit people against each other. They call women gossipier but actually it is more like a chat. For example that tea room is always occupied by men. We wanted a second space for us. Because they sit so comfortably there you cannot sit with them. What they talk about is also

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<sup>136</sup> İşveren maaşlarınızı “söylemeyin” diyordu, “herkesinki özeldir”. Biz kadınlar biliyorsun biraz dedikoducuyuzdur, tutamayız, böyle şeyleri söylemeden olmaz. Tabii ki soruyorduk birbirimize, güzelce öğreniyorduk.

different which you do not want to be involved in. They had a football match or played petty gambles. Sometimes men misunderstand everything and they think you are weird. You don't talk and you again are weird. I work with men and once you turn around, there is giggling behind you. They attribute gossip to women but I think men gossip more. They call women gossiper to look down on them.<sup>137</sup>

The subjects that employers and foreman call gossip are how women communicate with each other about working conditions, labor process and employment conditions. Rather than sharing of confidential information about private life, these topics involve sharing information and discussing on the collective experience of working conditions and employment. In most of the cases, this interclass communication includes topics that employers hide, try to exclude from collective regulation and utilize to build a wall between workers.

It seems that supervisors make gossip to break solidarity among workers and make work environment more competitive. While women workers mostly agree with the view that they gossip, supervisors seem to be raising certain issues such as the factory downsizing on one hand, women workers seem to be publicizing what is concealed to further exploit and dominate the workers on the other. Otherwise, women's daily talks about wages or about the number of products produced by a worker would be more ordinary talks of the shop-floor accessible to all. In that case, supervisors' attempt to make workplace more competitive and break solidarity among workers also perpetuate sexist ideology by labelling women not trustworthy and devaluing women's talks. Then, it can be posed that supervisors' attempt to break solidarity among workers is also an attempt to break sisterly bonds formed

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<sup>137</sup>Bizim fabrikada dedikodu var. Bu da biraz insanları tabi birbirine düşürüyor. Kadınlar dedikoducu diyorlar mesela, kadınların yaptığı biraz da sohbet gibi. Şurada mesela çay alanı var, görmüşündür, orada hep erkekler oturuyor. İkinci bir alan istedik, bize de yer olsun diye çünkü hani geniş geniş oturuyorlar aralarına oturamıyorsun, konuşulan konular daha farklı. O konulara dahil de olmak istemiyorsun. Maç yapmışlardır veya iddia. Bir de bazen erkekler herşeyi yanlış anlıyor. Konuşuyorsun bir tuhaf gözüyle bakıyor, konuşmuyorsun gene tuhaf oluyorsun. Ben erkeklerle birlikte çalışıyorum ya arkamı dönüyorsun bir kıkırdama, kadınlara yakıştırıyorlar ama dedikoduyu erkekler daha da çok yapıyorlar bence. Biraz da kadınları küçük düşürmek için dedikoducu diyorlar.

among women, by shaking their self-confidence and their confidence on the bonds they form.

While women workers may also internalize the view that they gossip so much, still being labelled by men's spark off their anger. As far as Gül mentioned, though men gossip more among themselves resulting in excluding women from particular collective spaces, they label talks among women as gossip, devalue and ridicule women's daily talks. To conclude, the same way Atzeni (2010) conceptualizes solidarity as a pre-active and active-solidarity, we can think of sisterhood as pre-active and active bonds of solidarity among women and insist on to remain "on the basis of shared strengths and resources" (hooks, 1986: 128) among women. As far as, sexism teaches women competition and hating from fellows sisterly bonds formed among women workers is at the hearth of feminist politics. When we think of sex segregated work-places, use of sexual based division of labor as a tool to control labour process and to break solidarity among working class men and women, at the shop-floor struggles, feminist politics of sisterhood relying on "shared strengths and resources"(hooks, 1986: 128) among women workers seem to be at the hearth not only of feminist politics but also of working class struggle in general.

## CHAPTER 7

### CONCLUSION

This thesis aims to make the presence of women workers in industrial actions apparent and to reveal the contributions of women workers' industrial action practices to feminist struggle and class politics. The fact that women workers' participation rate to the actions in the workplaces is higher than the women labor force participation rate renders the issue of itself appealing.

The meaning of being a female worker and its liberating potential derives from questions such as the place of industrial actions in women's lives, women's positions in organizing and maintaining collective action, the ways in which new work organizations uses sexist relations and how women politicize sex-based segregation in their workplaces. 16 women workers of Mata Automotive were interviewed using in-depth interview techniques to cover these problem areas. The curiosity towards the actions of working women is closely linked to the visibility of women in social actions in recent years.

In recent years, women have come to the forefront in many actions; from environmental struggle to advocacy of secular education, from Gezi to anti-government protests. Women, even in the minority among the activists, are beyond their quantitative impact on the actions they create. How can we explain if women's actions are broader than their quantitative involvement, if we are not to explain that women are essentially required to transform all social relations? One of the feminist theories interested in this question is the Black Feminism and Standpoint Theory. In particular, in Black Feminism, Standpoint Theory argues that women's, especially



black poor women's marginal position in power relations make them the subject of change. Their positions in power relations, which makes them the subject of change, place them at an advantageous position as a source and subject of scientific knowledge at the same time. In particular for black feminism, the way the Standpoint Theory relates to this question is closely linked to the feminist theory of Sojourner Truth's relationship with life.

For black feminism, Sojourner Truth is the representative of the common struggle, the common oppression and the desire for truth. Angela Davis (2011: 120) explains how to remember Truth: "New places I hope to explore with journey, new experiences eventuates in the same old experiences, in the same old places. With the ordinary message to struggle!" bell hooks (1990) in her book entitled "Ain't I a Woman?" Sojourner Truth points to a joint experience of a history built with struggle that links racism and sexism to apartheid and slavery. The biography of Sojourner Truth also points to the importance of the claim of truth. According to Patricia Hill Collins (1998: 237-38), "Publicly speaking or witnessing the truth for the black women in the United States - which often do not come to the fore - does not just remind us of human dignity, but it creates a tremendous act of resistance." The claim of the truth and the effort to make the remainder of social power relations precious of the Standpoint Theory has been subjected to criticism of essentialism with the rise of poststructuralist theory. Denise Riley (1988) emphasizes Sojourner Truth's question "Ain't I a Woman?" both includes the rejection and the acceptance of the category of women.

Based on the question of Sojourner Truth, Denise Riley (1988) discusses the history of feminist history as a history of a dilemma between equality and difference. According to Riley, femininity was built in a certain historical period and is identical to the rise of social space. In this period, the cult of womanhood stands in a central place in the promotion of social space as moral responsibility of middle class philanthropists and poor households. According to Xiomari Santamarina, who advocated the historical materialist view, Sojourner Truth opposed the commodification at a time when slavery was replaced by free wage labor and the

feminine culture was tried to be generalized to black women with the end of slavery, and settled her labor at the center of her struggle of recognition. This study also aims to follow the feminist historical approach. In this context, it suggests that women have a unique position within social struggles. Because of these unique positions, women struggle against capitalism in their workplaces while at the same time fighting against sexism, which is a part of capital accumulation. Every struggle to limit the domination and the control of the capital's production and reproduction also targets sexism in this regard. These unique positions make women the subject of social change at the same time.

The main argument of the thesis that departs from Denise Riley and Nancy Fraser's works can be summarized as follows. Although the social realization takes place with the construction of a certain understanding of femininity - the understanding of bourgeois femininity - many women have opposed the individualization of reproduction activities and being the moral actors of the poverty question. Thus, they politicized so-called social problems that are deemed as non-political and opposed the understanding of middle-class womanhood. In particular, the closeness between the question of how to organize social relations in the field of reproduction and the new cult of womanhood makes women the foremost actors in the construction of alternate social relations. Working class women also enable a sense of freedom based on the limitation of commodity relations, not based on the duality of authority and market, by placing exploitation relations and reorganization of needs at the center of equality and difference tension – in Nancy Fraser's terms, tension between redistribution and recognition.

This study is driven by the transformative potential of industrial actions in this framework. Various industrial actions such as slowdown strike, protest marches, and strikes are moments when they discover their collective strengths in terms of all male and female workers and feel themselves strong as a part of a collective (Garcia Castro, 1998: 82). Action moments that are sometimes part of the institutionalization of the given industrial relations, and sometimes completely outside of these organizational structures, are special moments that are often redefined, queried and

questioned over established hierarchical relationships at the point of production. In this respect, actions as strike, occupation, work slowdown etc., carry a meaning of interference for the establishment, form and the content of the relations at the point of production.

Actions as moments when women face with the employer and the managers who control the labor process, have the potential and possibilities in terms of women as follows. First, as women take part in actions, they oppose the dominant opinion on femininity, which is rather oppressive (Garcia Castro, 1998: 79). Secondly, the improvement of the material conditions in the workplace changes both the belief in the changing power and the workers themselves by changing their material conditions (Atzeni, 2010: 26). This constitutes a condition for the struggle with sexism in the workplaces. Third, the belief in the power of collective transformation of women workers, who have become apparent as a member of a collective group through action, increases their belief in their transformative power in their individual lives (Garcia Castro, 1998: 83). The objection raised by women in their workplaces through actions that can take different forms allows them to settle in sexist views, which see women as dependent, submissive, distant to public debates and unions. Limiting the employer's control in the labor process and improving the employment conditions by this way means to limit the sexist practices in most cases.

Believing in the power of women to convert both individually and collectively, points to a new horizon of experience for women and affects their way of assessing their lives. Being a woman worker is not limited to the empowering effect of women in the meaning of industrial actions; in general, sex-based division of labor and oppression of women, and in particular the various sectors and places of employment are divided by sex, so the solidarity relations between the workers take the form of sisterhood ties between women.

Within the context of this study, interviews with semi-structured techniques with women workers who succeeded in unionization by breaking the resistance of the employer in the Mata Automotive Factory, established in Istanbul are conducted. In

these interviews, women workers critically evaluated their work experiences in previous workplaces, their relationships with their families, their workplace activities, and the experience of unionization as feminist historians of their own lives. This evaluation demonstrates the transforming character of narrative in qualitative research technique. Remembering, of course, is an act of the past; calling events in the past, yet this does not change the fact that it shapes our present relationships. In Mata, the stories of women are also in the form of re-evaluating the past from the experience of the actions in the workplace. We can argue that the action in the workplace is this much influential on women's emphasis on individual and collective power of change. The narrative based on the "transformative memory" is also a transformative action itself. Qualitative technique is an empowering method because it collectively contributes to the accumulation of knowledge about women and workers and the socialization of women and workers' experiences.

The process of unionization starting with the dissatisfaction about wage and working conditions in Mata Automotive, employer's resistance to unionization and firing workers who pioneered the unionization as soon as being aware of it shows significant similarities with large and small unionization initiatives in Turkey. What is unique to Mata is that it has forced the employer to recognize the union by actions such as job slowdown and actual strike that pushes the limits of the legislation governing the working life of workers. The dissatisfaction about wage and working conditions in Mata and the actions that erupt from employer's firing workers that unionized present an example of the transformation of collusive character of labor process into a collective action. The collective mood that arises from being members of the same class that emerged during the actions has led to the shaking of hierarchical relationships and authority in the workplace. Actions have brought a special experience to empower women and men workers in their lives, turning the hierarchical relationships upside down in the workplace and replacing the usual line with a new one even for a short period.

The moments when they go out of the routine and face directly with the managers through the actions are a new encounter with the authority figure in the workplace

for women workers. This form of an encounter, which takes place on a very different plane than all else, is expressed commonly in almost all women's words: "very exciting!" As actions make workers part of the collective, it creates lucrative and transformative consequences to the loneliness against the employer. Especially a successful action that breaks the resistance of the employer and puts the union at work against his will is an empowering experience for all workers. What might be more exciting about the action in terms of women workers? The answer to this question is closely related to the changes that the action creates at the point of production.

First of all, in terms of women, what determines the character of "job" and whether it is a "work" or not is having a voice on the labor process. Women workers have shown this in the distinction they have established between factory work, domestic work and agricultural work. In defining the job as a work, security stands at the center. Security is associated with workers' transformative capacities. The distinctions that women's workers make, especially in the housework and textile sectors, indicate that working means working in a manner that suits human dignity. In this respect, one of the important findings of the study is that the factual foundations of the assumption suggesting that when women perceive housework as their main work, this prevents them from defining themselves as 'workers' are very weak. Based on the accounts of female workers working at Mata, we can say that women don't define themselves as 'workers' not because they see housework as their main responsibility, but because their working conditions do not overlap with the ideal working conditions they desire.

Secondly, the restriction of employer control at the point of production following the success of the action has significant results in limiting gendered practices at the workplace. Preventing foremen's arbitrary implementations and subjective attitudes towards the workers come to the fore among the achievements. It is also a very significant achievement of the unionization in the Mata Factory for women to stop cleaning the work places, toilets and locker rooms in addition to their usual responsibilities. This example reveals that when the employer takes whole control of

the labor process, it enables them to organize the working experience of women as to reflect housework practices and deepens sexist implementations at the shopfloors, while women themselves are resistant to traditionally gendered roles imposed upon them in the factory as an extension of the housework in domestic life.

Thirdly, we must mention here that any emphasis on gender relations in the workplace becomes meaningful in the context of exploitation. There are a couple of accounts in interviews about employers remembering women's responsibilities in reproduction, reminding them about it and emphasizing their gender. In the first one, as mentioned above, the employer gives the task of cleaning the work places to female workers and despite women's objections, insists not to hire a cleaning worker. In the second account, in the first day of the action, around when the union was yet to reach majority, the supervisor of the quality control department reminds Esra that she is a single mother to one child. In the third account, as the action continues, the employers announced to call the police and tell them that female workers are kept inside against their will. And in one last account, Gül says that it is hard for her to be the only female among male workers and to receive a lower wage than them. When she demands to change departments, her supervisor defends the situation by speaking of equality between men and women. In all these accounts, two conflicting trends emerge. The moments where gendered division of labor is reminded to women by their supervisors either deepens the conditions of exploitation or aims at resisting the objections of women with respect to these conditions. On the other hand, the women workers speak about their burdens based on sexual division of labor with respect to the demands like removing compulsory working hours and providing child care support, all of which potentially lead to the limitation of the conditions of exploitation. Thus, female worker's perception of and demand for equality is different from the perception and expectation of the representatives of the employers in the workplace.

Finally, we should emphasize that there is sisterhood solidarity among women workers based on reasons like the sexual division of labor and the concentration of women in certain sectors. But in the workplaces, various attempts are made to break

the sisterhood bonds that empower women. One example of this in Mata is the labeling of women as the “gossipers” by male workers and supervisors. What the employers, managers and male workers regard as “gossip” is the conversation topics like working conditions, labor process and conditions of employment through which women communicate with each other. These consist of the discussion of collectively experienced working conditions and sharing of information about their conditions of employment. These conversations mostly include issues about labor process or employment conditions that are hidden from the workers by the employers so that they cannot become a subject of the collective regulation used for the construction of a division among workers. Male workers adopt the ‘gossiper’ label as well and use it as an accusation against women workers to the point of making them lose their confidence. One of the claims of this study is that the use of sexist expressions, such as the ‘gossiper’, are as much the subject of class movement as it is the subject of women’s movement.

Based on these conclusions, the study argues that the demand for better working conditions is related to women’s struggle to be recognized as ‘women workers’ and that any action against the exploitation relations at the workplace needs to struggle against sexism as well. This is the basic claim of the studies about working class feminism, which is also shared by this study. This is made visible sometimes in feminists’ approaches to social policy implementations like family wage or protectionism, and sometimes by referring to the stories of women in the industrial action in a certain workplace.

Thinking about the struggle against sexism and sexual based division of labor together with the struggle for the limitation of exploitation and raising a demand involving the both should change our approach to history of feminism and feminist demands as well as class struggle and the demands raised at the workplaces.

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## APPENDICES

### A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tez, kadın işçilerin fabrikalarda yaşanan çeşitli biçimlerdeki endüstriyel eylemlerdeki varlıklarını görünürleştirmeyi ve kadın işçilerin endüstriyel eylem pratiklerinin feminist mücadele ve sınıf siyasetine katkılarını ortaya koymayı amaçlamıştır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda, çalışmada İstanbul Serbest Ticaret Bölgesinde yer alan Mata Otomotiv Fabrikası'nda 16 kadın işçi ile yarı-yapılandırılmış bilgi toplama tekniği kullanılarak görüşmeler yapılmıştır.

Mata Otomotiv Fabrikasında iş yavaşlatma, protesto yürüyüşü ve fabrika işgali biçimlerini alan endüstriyel eylemler 2016 yılı Şubat ayında gerçekleşmiş ve toplam iki gün sürmüştür. Çalışma boyunca bu eylemlerin, kadınların güçlenmesi, sınıf dayanışması ve kadın dayanışması ile ilişkisi işçi sınıfı feminizmi perspektifi ile sorgulanmıştır. Kuramsal düzeyde Duruş Okulu'nun tarihsel maddeci yönelimi takip edilmiş kadın işçilerin toplumsal konumlarının feminist siyaset ve sınıf siyaseti açısından anlamı, işçi sınıfı feministlerinin feminist düşünceye katkıları sorgulanmıştır. Bu bölümde öncelikle tezin alan çalışmasının gerçekleştiği Mata Otomotiv Fabrikası'nı belirlerken göz önünde bulundurduğum özelliklere değinmek istiyorum. Alan çalışmasının yürütüleceği fabrikanın belirlenmesi aşamasında işyeri eylemlerinin ana özellikleri belirleyici olmuştur.

Türkiye'de 2013-2017 yılları arasında gerçekleşen eylemlere bakıldığında çeşitli değerlendirmeler<sup>138</sup> yapmak mümkündür. Yasal grevler Türkiye'deki işyeri

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<sup>138</sup> Bu değerlendirmelere İrfan Kaygısız'ın (2014, 2015) çalışmaları, Emek Çalışmaları Topluluğu'nun (2016, 2017a, 2017b) raporları ile Evrensel Gazetesi'nin işçi haberleri taraması kaynaklık etmektedir.

eylemlerinin çok küçük bir bölümünü oluşturmaktadır. Eylemler, beklenebileceği gibi, nüfusun fazla ve ücretli çalışmanın yaygın olduğu kentlerde yoğunlaşmaktadır. İşçi nüfusunun yoğunlaştığı Marmara Bölgesi, eylemlerin en fazla yaşandığı bölgedir. İşyeri temelli eylemlerin en yaygın olarak görüldüğü iş kolları metal, inşaat, tekstil (dokuma, hazır giyim ve deri), petrokimya ve gıda sektörleridir.

İşçi eylemlerinin bir kısmı, 2017 yılının ilk 6 ayında gerçekleşen eylemlerin %36'sı, sendikalar tarafından yapılmıştır, kendiliğinden işçi eylemlerinin tüm eylemler içindeki payı ise %34'tür. Kurumsuz eylemlerde inşaat, metal ve tekstil işkolları öne çıkmaktadır. Evrensel Gazetesi'nde yer alan haberleri temel aldığımızda bu türden eylemlerin ağırlıklı fiili grev, işyerini terk etmeme gibi radikal eylem formları aldığını ve diğer işçi eylemlerine göre daha hızlı sonuç alındığını göstermektedir. Eylem türleri itibariyle incelendiğinde basın açıklaması yürüyüş gibi eylemlerin en yaygın eylem biçimi olduğu görülmektedir. Bu eylem türünü fiili grev, kalıcı direniş, oturma eylemi gibi eylem türleri izlemektedir. Yasal grevin tüm eylemler içindeki oranı son derece düşüktür. Dikkat çeken bir unsur, fiili grevlerdeki yavaş ancak istikrarlı artıştır. Fiili grevler çoğu durumda işyerini terk etmeme/işgal gibi formlar da alabilen, işyerindeki işçilerin önemli bir bölümünün katılımıyla gerçekleştirilen eylemlerdir. Bu eylemlerde işçiler hem çalışma yaşamını düzenleyen mevzuatın sınırlarını aşmakta, hem işyerindeki hiyerarşik düzeni bozmaktadırlar. Bu yönüyle bu eylemlerin sınıf oluşumunun kritik uğrakları olduğu söylenebilir. Bu nedenle alan araştırması için, fiili grev deneyimi olan bir işyeri seçilmiştir.

Sıralaması yıllar itibariyle önemli farklılaşmalar gösterebilmekle birlikte işten atma, sendikalaşma, işteyken ücret gasbı işçi eylemlerinin başlıca nedenleri arasında öne çıkmaktadır. İşverenlerin sendikalaşmaya ciddi direnç gösterdikleri ve sendikalaşmayı önlemek için çok farklı yöntemlere başvurdukları bilinmektedir (Bakır ve Akdoğan, 2009). Sendikalaşan işçilerin işten atılması bunun en bilinen örnekleridir. Mevcut sendikalaşma oranı işverenlerin istihdam koşullarının kolektif düzenlemelerin konusu olmasını engelleme noktasındaki başarılarının bir ürünü olarak görülebilir. Bir taraftan da özellikle ücretli çalışan sayısının fazla olduğu sanayi bölgelerinde irili ufaklı çok sayıda sendikalaşma girişimi vardır. Bu

çalabalardan bir kısmı da işverenlerin tüm direncine rağmen, sendikanın meşru muhatap olarak kabul edilmesi, sendikanın işyerine girmesi ile sonuçlanmaktadır. Özellikle çatışmalı süreç sonucunda elde edilen sendikalaşma, işverenin üretim noktasındaki yetkilerinin sınırlandırılması anlamında önemli sonuçlar doğurabilmektedir. Mata'da çalışma koşullarından rahatsız olan işçilerin, istihdam koşullarını kolektif düzenlemelerin konusu yapmak için giriştikleri sendikalaşma çalışmalarına işverenin doğrudan tepkisi, bir grup işçinin işten atılması olmuştur. Arkadaşlarına ve sendika haklarına sahip çıkan işçiler fiili grev gerçekleştirince işveren sendikayı tanımak zorunda kalmıştır. Bu yönüyle Mata, zaferle sonuçlanan bir işçi eyleminin işçiler üzerindeki dönüştürücü etkilerinin görülebileceği bir örnektir. Mata fabrikası, işkolu sınıflandırmasında metal sektöründe yer almaktadır. Bu sektörde sendikalaşma oranı, bakanlığın resmi sendikalaşma oranı dikkate alınırca, 2017 Temmuz ayı itibariyle %18'dir ve Türkiye ortalamasının (%12) 6 puan kadar üzerindedir. 2013-2017 dönemi dikkate alınırca sendikalaşma oranında küçük ama istikrarlı bir artış gözlenmektedir. İşkolunda Türk-İş'e bağlı Türk-Metal Sendikası en büyük sendika konumundadır. Hak-İş'e bağlı Çelik-İş ve ve Disk'e bağlı Birleşik Metal-İş, işkolundaki diğer önemli sendikalardır. Mata, Birleşik Metal-İş Sendikası'nın işverenin sendikasızlaştırma girişimine karşı mevzuatı zorlayarak gerçekleştirdiği bir fiili grevi içermesi yönünden önemlidir.

İşçi eylemlerinin belki de üzerinde en az durulan boyutlarından biri katılımcıların cinsiyetidir. Eylemlere ilişkin haberlerde eylemci işçilerin cinsiyetine ilişkin bilgiler çoğunlukla yer almamaktadır. O nedenle eylemci işçilerin cinsiyetine ilişkin tespitte bulunmak bazı durumlarda mümkün olamayabilmektedir. EÇT, 2016 ve 2017 raporlarında eylemcilerin cinsiyeti sorununu özel olarak gündemine almış ve bu alana ilişkin son derece önemli bir veri üretmiştir. Buna göre, işçi eylemlerinin 2016 yılında %57'sinde, 2017'de %59'unda kadınların katılımı kesin olarak mevcuttur. Bu oranlar son derece önemlidir. Çünkü SGK resmi istatistiklerini temel aldığımızda kadınlar ücretli çalışanların yalnızca %27'sini oluşturmaktadır ve kadınların işçilerin sendikalaşma oranı yalnızca %19'dur. Kadınların işçi eylemlerinin %33'ünde (2016 için %32) görünür bir biçimde yer alıyor olması, kadınların sendikalara ve

endüstriyel eylemlere katılımı konusundaki yerleşik önyargıların tutarsızlığını göstermesi bakımından da önemlidir. Bu nokta kadınların işyerlerindeki eylemlerini konu edinecek çalışmalara da ihtiyaç olduğunu göstermektedir. Kadın işçilerin işyerlerindeki eylemlere katılım oranlarının istihdama katılım oranlarından yüksek olması bile başlı başına bu konuyu ilgiye değer kılmaktadır. Mata Otomotiv Fabrikasında da endüstriyel eyleme katılanların önemli bir bölümü kadın işçilerdir.

Mata fabrikasındaki emek sürecinin göz önüne serilmesi bu çalışma bakımından önem taşımaktadır. Hangi işin kim tarafından yapıldığı, ne kadar ürünün ne kadar sürede üretileceğine kimin karar verdiği, kimlerin hangi bölümlerde çalıştıkları ve ne kadar ücret aldıkları eylemin, fabrikadaki dayanışma ilişkilerinin ve kadınlar arasındaki dayanışma bağlarının ve kadın işçi olmanın anlamının tartışabilmek için merkezi bir yerde durmaktadır. Bu sebeple izleyen sayfalarda Mata'da emek sürecini kısaca aktardıktan sonra tezin kuramsal çerçevesini çizecek ve araştırma sonuçlarını aktaracağım.

Yukarıda da belirtmiş olduğum gibi Mata İstanbul Serbest Ticaret Bölgesi'nde yer almaktadır. Mata'da Aston Martin, Jaguar, Corvette, Tesla, Land Rover, Cadillac gibi lüks araba markalarının dış ve iç tasarım parçalarını üretilmektedir. 2 gün süren, iş yavaşlatma ve işyeri işgalinin yaşandığı dönemde fabrikada 650 işçi çalışmaktadır. 11-12 Şubat 2016'da gerçekleştirilen eylemlerin ardından fabrikada Birleşik Metal-İş yetkili sendika haline gelmiştir. Fabrika 11 üretim bölümünden oluşmaktadır. Mata Otomotiv Fabrikası'nda araba tasarım parçaları ahşap ya da karbon fiberden malzeme ile üretilmektedir. Karbon fiber malzeme, kolay işlenebilir, hafif ve dayanıklı bir malzeme. Arabanın parçasının üretiminde, eğer karbon fiber malzeme kullanılacaksa öncelikle malzemenin kesimi yapılmaktadır. Plakanın kesimi yapıldıktan sonra malzeme serime gitmekte, serimi yapılmaktadır. Serimler yapıldıktan sonra malzeme soğutulmakta, ardından hidrolik presse şekline göre kalıplara basılmaktadır. Hidrolik presste kalıplara basılan malzeme üretilecek parçaya göre ya kumlama bölümüne ya da robotta kesime gönderilmektedir. Robotta kesim yapıldıktan sonra parça yeniden presse götürülmekte, presste üzerine sürülen parçalarla birlikte yeniden preslenmektedir. Ardından ham zımpara bölümüne

gitmekte, malzeme zımparalandıktan sonra üzerine boyahanede polyester atılmakta, boyalar atılmakta ve kalite kontrole gönderilmektedir. Bu en genel itibariyle karbon malzemenin kesiminden son haline kadar yapılan işlerdir. Eğer malzeme ahşap ise doğrudan zımparaya gönderilmekte, presste basılmakta ve boyaları yapıldıktan sonra nihai ürün üretilmiş olmaktadır. Hangi ürünün üretildiğine göre bu süreç ve iş sırası da değişmektedir.

Fabrikanın boyahane ve karbon serimde bölümlerinde tümüyle kadınlar; press ve polyester zımparada sadece erkekler çalışmaktadırlar. Diğer bölümlerde hem kadın hem erkek işçiler birlikte çalışmaktadır fakat CNC bölümünde sadece 1 kadın çalışmaktadır. Sendikalaştıktan sonraki ilk toplu sözleşmede işten atmaların önüne geçmek için sendika, ihtiyaç duyulduğunda bölümler arasında işçilerin yerlerinin değiştirilmesi maddesini onaylamış, bu madde de işveren tarafından işçiler üzerinde baskı uygulamak için kullanılmıştır. Ne üretileceği ve ne kadar üretileceği siparişe göre, haftalık belirlenmekte, hangi malzemedeyen neyin ne kadar üretileceğini üretim müdürleri belirlemektedir. Fabrikada Araştırma Geliştirme Bölümü'nde çalışan mühendisler, özellikle robot gibi makine hızının üretimi sayısını belirlediği bölümlerde, çeşitli aralıklarla işin hızını artırmaya yönelik denemeler yapmaktadırlar. İşçiler arasında üretim hızının artırılmaması üzerine güçlü bir uzlaşma vardır. Bu uzlaşmanın da işçiler arasındaki dayanışmanın önemli göstergelerinden biri olduğunu söylemek mümkündür.

Mata'da endüstriyel eylem yol açan ana neden 2016 yılında hükümetin yaptığı asgari ücret zammının ardından Mata'da söz verilen ücret artışının sağlanmamış olması ve kıdemli işçilerle işe yeni başlayan işçiler arasındaki ücretlerin eşitlenmiş olması. Endüstriyel eylem ücret eşitsizliğine karşı ortaya çıkmakla birlikte, işçilerin söz verilmesine rağmen beklentilerinin karşılanmamış olmasının yol açtığı ahlaki öfke eylemin gerçekleşmesinde önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Eylem yol açan bir diğer sebep ücret artışlarının sağlanmamasının ardından sendikalaşma faaliyetlerinin hız kazanması ve bu sırada 12 işçinin işten atılmasıdır. Eylem kazanımla sonuçlanmış, işyerinde Birleşik Metal-İş Sendikası çoğunluğu kazanmış, 12 işçi işlerine dönmüştür. Eylemin önemli bir kazanımı da işçiler arasında pekişen güven

duygusudur. Tüm işçiler açısından geçerli olan bu olgunun kadın işçiler için özgün anlamı üzerine düşünmek gerekmektedir. Eylemin sonuçlarına ve kadın işçiler açısından etkilerine geçmeden önce kısaca araştırmanın yönelimini belirleyen kuramsal çerçevesini ve işçi sınıfı feminizmine yönelik canlanan ilginin kaynaklarına değinmek gerektiğini düşünüyorum.

Yukarıda belirtmiş olduğum gibi tezin konusu işçi sınıfı feminizmidir. Kadın işçilerin deneyimleri işçi sınıfı feminizmi kavramı ekseninde değerlendirilmiştir. İşçi sınıfı feminizmi, feminist araştırma gündeminin merkezindeki konu başlıkları arasında yer almamakla birlikte feminist tarihçilerin ortaya koymuş oldukları üzere köklü bir gelenektir; işçi sınıfı feminizminin tarihi ücretli işçiliğin tarihi ile paralel bir seyir izlemiştir. Bu geleneğe yönelik ilgi özellikle 1990'lı yılların sonu ile 2000'li yılların başlarından canlanmıştır. Bu dönemden itibaren işçi sınıfı feministlerinin biyografilerini gündeme getiren, sendikalardaki, sol örgütlerdeki ve çeşitli toplumsal hareketlerdeki varlıklarını ikincil kaynakları tarayarak açığa çıkaran çalışmalar yaygınlaşmıştır (Örneğin, Mary Garcia Castro, 1999; Meg Luxton, 2001; Denise A. Deslippee, 2000; Dorothy Sue Cobble, 2004; 2010c).

İşçi sınıfı feministlerine yönelik canlanan ilgiye üretimin uluslararası ölçekte yeniden-organizasyonu ile feminist düşüncenin ve hareketin içinde bulunduğu durumun kaynaklık ettiğini söylemek mümkündür. 1970'li yıllardan itibaren sanayi üretiminin tekstil, giyim, elektronik, otomotiv gibi temel sektörlerinde üretim merkez ülkelerinden ihracat için üretim yapan, üretimin ucuz emeğe dayandığı, emeği koruyucu düzenlemelerinin oldukça sınırlı olduğu Güney ülkelerine kaymaktadır (Pearson, 2000). Buna göre sanayi sektöründe görece korunaklı çekirdek işgücü yerini güvencesiz ve korumasız ucuz işgücüne bırakmaktadır.

Üretimin uluslararası ölçekte yeniden örgütlenmesinin kadınlar açısından etkileri çeşitlidir. Öncelikle, üretimin yeni örgütlenmesi ve Güney ülkelerinde yaşanan proleterleşme dalgası ile kolektif yaşam alanları daralmış, yeniden üretim faaliyetlerindeki metalaşma düzeyi derinleşmiş ve birçok kadın ucuz emek gücü olarak fabrika ve atölyelerde çalışmaya başlamışlardır. Bunun sonucu olarak kadınlar

retim ve yeniden retim alanlarındaki mcadelelerde yeniden grnrlemilerdir. Kadınlar Meksika’da meraları yok etmeyi amalayan dzenlemelere, Hindistan’da, Filipinler’de baraj inaatlarına ve suyun zelletirilmesine karı mcadelelerin n saflarında yer almılardır (Shiva, 1989; 1991; Federici, 2010). Trkiye’de de kadınlar HES mcadelelerinde, Tekel’de ve Smerbank’ta zelletirme karıtı mcadelelerde yer almılardır. Yani genel olarak dnya leęinde metalamanın ve smrnn derinlemesinin sonularından biri kadınların retim ve yeniden retim noktalarındaki mcadelelerin grnr zneleri haline gelmesidir. Bunun yanı sıra, muhafazakrleme ile ilikili olan ve birlikte gelien emeęin deęersizlemesi sonucunda “emeęin varolu koulları ve mcadele zeminleri giderek feminist”lemitir (zuęurlu, 2013). cretli ii olarak alıan kadın sayısının artmasının doęrudan etkilerinden biri iyeri mcadelelerinde yer alan kadınların dagrnrlklerinin artmı olmasıdır. Emeęin varolu koulları ile mcadele zeminlerinin feministlemesinin bir yanı da deęersizletirilmi kadın emeęinin emek piyasasının ana prensibi haline gelmesi, kadınların cretli alımalarına atfedilen zelliklerin emeęin koulları haline dntrlmesidir (Pearson, 2000: 177). Yani kadınların alıtıkları iyerlerinin zellięi olarak ne ıkan sendikasız, gvencesiz alıma biimlerinin kadınların ya da erkeklerin alıtıęı tm iler iin genellemesidir.

retimin yeniden organizasyonunun yarattıęı bir dięer etki emek srecinin denetimine ilikindir. Refah devleti dnemlerine zg, sendikalı, gvenceli ve toplumsal rızaya dayalı denetim iilerin temsilcisi olarak sendikalar, devletin retim ve yeniden retim alanlarındaki sorumluluęunu kabul eden politikalar ile iverenler arasındaki bir uzlaıyı yansıtılmaktadır (Burawoy,1985). Bu uzlaının bozulması ve iyerlerinde etkili sendikalamanın engellenmesi iverenin emek srecinin denetiminde artan kontroln getirmitir. Iverenin retim noktasındaki sınırsız denetimi eitli biimlerde nitelenmitir; feminist aratırmacılar iyeri etnografyaları yoluyla emek srecinin kontrolnn iveren lehine artmasının cinsiyetilik ile i ie olduęunu sergilemilerdir (rneęin, Pearson, 1998; Lee, 1998; Ngai, 2005; 2012).

Bu çalışmalarla işyerlerinde toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı işbölümü ile sömürü ilişkileri arasındaki yakın ilişkinin işleyiş biçimleri açığa çıkarılmıştır. Bu da işyerlerindeki eylemlerde doğrudan toplumsal cinsiyet ile ilgili görülen konuların işyerinde çalışma koşullarının iyileştirilmesi talebiyle ortaya çıkan mücadelelerin konusu olarak politize edilmeleri sonucunu doğurmuştur. Örneğin, Antalya Serbest Ticaret Bölgesinde faaliyet gösteren Novamed GMBH firmasında çalışan kadın işçiler, sendikalaşmak için başlattıkları eylemlerde hamileliklerin sıraya koyulması, lavoboların kullanımlarının denetlenmesi gibi uygulamalara itirazlarını dillendirmişlerdir. İstanbul Organize Sanayi Bölgesinde bulunan Rimaks fabrikasında kadın işçiler ustabaşının tacizine, tacizci ustabaşının cezalandırılması ve işyerlerinde bu tür olayların önlenmesi amacıyla yavaşlatma eylemi örgütlemişlerdir.

Sömürü ilişkilerinin derinleşmesine ve muhafazakârlığın yükselmesine rağmen kadın işçiler kolektif mücadeleler içinde yer aldığı gözlemlenmektedir. Kimi durumda, Rimaks Fabrikası'nda olduğu gibi, kadınlar mücadeleler içerisinde yer almakla kalmayıp işyerinde taciz gibi konuları emeğin gündemi haline getirmeyi başarmışlardır. Kısacası, kadınların kendilerini işyerindeki mücadelelerin aktörü kılarken aynı zamanda cinsiyete dayalı işbölümü ve cinsiyetçilikle de hesaplaşmak durumunda kalmalarının, feminist emek tarihçilerin işçi kadınların mücadele tarihlerine yönelik ilgilerini canlandırdığını söyleyebiliriz.

Yeni üretim organizasyonu işçi sınıfı feministleri hakkındaki ilginin bir yanıdır. 1990'lı yıllarda feminizmin ana-akımlaştığı, yani sahip olduğu eleştirelliği yitirmekte olduğu ve neoliberal gündem ile uyumlulaştığı vurgulanmıştır. İşçi sınıfı feminizmine dönük ilgi bir yanıyla da feminizmin eleştirelliğini hatırlamayı ve yeniden hatırlatmayı amaçlamıştır. Özellikle Amerika ve Kanada gibi ülkelerde 20. yüzyıl boyunca işçi kadınların öznesi olduğu feminizm üzerine yapılmış çalışmaları böyle bir ilginin yönlendirdiğini söyleyebiliriz. Son olarak, feminist düşünsel iklimi sarsan ve belirleyen post-yapısalcı yönelim feminist hareketin tarihini, öznesini yeniden tartışmaya açmak gibi bir etkiye sahip olmuştur. İşçi sınıfı feminizmi çalışmalarının yaygınlaşmasında post-yapısalcı dalganın da etkili olduğundan söz



edebiliriz. Post-yapısalcı kuram feminizmin temelini oluşturan kadın kategorisini ve deneyim temelli ortak bir kadınlığın varlığının imkânsızlığını vurgulayarak, feminizmin öznesini ve konusunu yeniden tartışmaya açmak gibi bir etkiye sahip olmuştur.

Tüm bu gelişmelerin yönlendirmesiyle ve bu gelişmelere cevaben işçi sınıfı feminizmi çalışmaları, ‘Feminizmin ve feminist tarihin öznesi kimlerdir?’ ‘Feminist hareketin talepleri nelerdir?’ ‘Diğer sosyal mücadeleler ve hareketlerle ilişkisi nedir?’ gibi sorulara yanıt aramıştır. Feminizme çıkışından itibaren eşlik eden bu soruların yeniden gündeme gelmesi kriz zamanlarında bir düşüncenin ya da hareketin köklerine dönme ihtiyacı olarak yorumlanabilir. Feminizm için köklerine dönme ihtiyacının daha muhafazakâr bir ‘eve dönüş’ isteğinden ziyade sahip olduğu eleştirel geleneği yeniden hatırlama ve sistem karşıtı bir geleceği inşa etme arzusu ile ilişkili olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. İşçi sınıfı feministleri üzerine yapılmış çalışmalar sordukları sorulara yanıt vererek yeni bir gelecek kurma iddialarında elbette yalnız değiller. İşçi sınıfı feministleri hakkındaki çalışmalar 1960’lı ve 1970’li yıllarda Marksist ve sosyalist kadınların ortaya attıkları kadın emeği tartışmalarından beslenmiştir.

1960 ve 70’li yıllardan itibaren feminist araştırmacılar toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı işbölümünün sermaye birikimi açısından işlevini araştırma konusu haline getirmiştir. Kısaca değinmek gerekirse, erken feminist çalışmalarda toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı işbölümünün kapitalist sermaye birikimi açısından anlamı kadınların ev-içi emeklerinin ücretli emek ve sömürü ilişkileri ile ilişkisi merkezinde ortaya koyulmuş; karşılıksız ev-içi emeğinin, ücretli işçilik, metalaşma, değersizleşme, sermaye birikimi ve sömürü terimleri ile ilişkili olduğu ortaya serilmiştir (e.g. Dalla Costa, and S. James 1972; Morton, 1971; Seccombe, 1974; Luxton, 1980; Mies, 1998). Kadın emeğini feminist düşüncenin ve siyasetin merkezinde gören araştırmalar, toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı işbölümüne dayalı olarak dünyaya ilişkin farklı bir kavrayış geliştiren kadınların emeklerini feminist bilinç oluşumu ve dünyayı değiştirme kapasitesi ekseninde çözümlenmişlerdir.

Kadınların toplumsal işbölümündeki konumlarının feminist bilinç oluşumu ve dünyayı değiştirme potansiyeli taşıdığı önermesi metodolojik de bir önermedir. Bu tez feminist duruş okulunun tarihsel maddeci yönelimindeki çalışmalardan beslenmektedir. Marksist kuramdan beslenen Feminist Duruş Okulu'nun –kimi zaman ihtilafli da olan - çeşitli versiyonlarından söz etmek mümkündür. Feminist Duruş Okulu feminist metodolojinin temel önermesinden yola çıkmaktadır. Buna göre, bilimsel bilginin öznesini yansız gözlemci olarak kabul eden geleneksel bilim anlayışının kendisi, iddiasını kurduğu pozisyonu sorgu konusu yapmaması sebebiyle yanlıdır; bir kavramsal çerçeve yansızmış gibi sunuldukça baskın grupların hegemonik çıkarlarına hizmet etme ihtimali artmaktadır (Harding, 2004: 6). Feminist metodoloji bilimsel bilginin nesnelliğini kadın deneyimlerini merkeze alarak sorgulamış ve bilimsel bilginin kaynağı olarak kadınların deneyimlerine öncelik vermiştir. Duruş Okulu bu genel metodolojik önermelerden yola çıkarak bilimsel bilgi iddiası ile kadınların toplumsal yapılar içindeki konumları, duruşları ve politik yönelimleri arasındaki ilişkiyi sorgulamıştır.

Bu ortak zemine rağmen Duruş Okulu içinde, kimi zaman birbiriyle çatışan çeşitli pozisyonların varlığından söz etmek gerekir. Duruşun belirli bir toplumsal konuma mı mücadele ile erişilmiş bir pozisyona mı işaret ettiği sorulardan biri. Bu tezde kadınların cinsiyete dayalı işbölümüne belirlenen toplumsal konumlarının onları geçim mücadelelerinin ve toplumsal değişimin en öndeki özneli kıldığı vurgulanmış, fakat her ne kadar cinsiyete dayalı işbölümü ortak ezilme deneyimine kaynaklık ediyor da olsa kadınlar arasındaki ortaklığın ve dayanışmanın yeniden inşa edilmesi gerektiği iddia edilmiştir. Bu argüman tezin ana çerçevesini oluşturmuştur. Yukarıda belirtilmiş olduğu üzere işçi sınıfı feminizmi çalışmalarına yönelişin kaynaklarından biri feminizmin devrimci geleneğini takip ederek, yeni bir gelecek kurmaya yönelik umuttur (Brenner, 1989). Bu tez de, kadın işçilerin çeşitli işyerlerindeki endüstriyel eylemlerinin ve perspektiflerinin eşitsiz toplumsal ilişkilerin değiştirilmesi için olanak sunduğunu iddia etmektedir.

Çalışma kadın işçi olmanın anlamı, özgürleştirici potansiyeli, endüstriyel eylemlerin kadınların hayatlarındaki yeri, kadınların kolektif eylemin örgütlenmesi ve

sürdürülmesindeki yerleri, yeni iş öğrütlenmesinin cinsiyetçi ilişkileri kullanma biçimleri, kadınların işyerlerinde cinsiyete dayalı işbölümünü politize etme biçimleri gibisorun alanlarına odaklanmaktadır. Bu sorun alanlarını kapsayacak şekilde Mata Otomotiv’de yarı-yapılandırılmış mülakat tekniği kullanarak 16 kadın işçiyle görüşmeler yapılmıştır. İşçi kadınların eylemlerine duyulan merak, son yıllarda kadınların toplumsal eylemlerdeki görünürlükleriyle yakından ilişkilidir. Kadınlar eylemciler arasında azınlıkta bile olsa, eylemlerde yarattıkları etki nicel katılımlarının ötesindedir. Bunu eğer, kadınların tüm toplumsal ilişkileri dönüştürmeye doğaları gereği muktedir oldukları ile açıklamayacaksak nasıl açıklayabiliriz?

Bu soruyla ilginen feminist kuramların başında Siyah Feminizm ve Duruş Okulu gelmektedir. Siyah Feminizm özelinde Duruş Kuramı kadınların, özellikle siyah yoksul kadınların, toplumsal güç ilişkilerindeki marjinal konumlarının onları değişimin öznesini kıldığını ileri sürmektedir. Kadınları değişimin öznesi yapan toplumsal güç ilişkilerindeki konumları onları aynı zamanda bilimsel bilginin kaynağı ve öznesi olmak bakımından da avantajlı bir konuma yerleştirmektedir. Siyah feminizm özelinde Duruş Okulu’nun bu soruyla ilişki kurma biçimi, feminist kuramın Sojourner Truth’un hayatı ile kurduğu ilişki ile yakından bağlantılıdır.

Siyah feminizm için Sojourner Truth ortak mücadelenin, ortak ezilmenin ve hakikat arzusunun temsilcisidir. Angela Davis (2011: 120) Truth’u hatırlamayı şöyle anlatıyor: “Yolculuk ile keşfetmeyi umduğum yeni yerler, yeni deneyimler aynı eski yerlere aynı eski deneyimlere çıkıyor. Alışılmış mücadele mesajıyla!”. bell hooks (1990) “Ain’t I A Woman” başlıklı kitabında Sojourner Truth’un ırkçılığı ve cinsiyetçiliği aparteid ve köleliğe bağlayan bir tarihin mücadele ile örülü ortak deneyimine işaret ettiğini söylemektedir. Sojourner Truth’un biyografisi aynı zamanda hakikat iddiasının önemine işaret etmektedir. Patricia Hill Collins’e (1998: 237-38) göre, “Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’ndeki siyah kadınlar için –özellikle dile gelmeyen – hakikati kamusal olarak konuşmak ya da buna tanıklık etmek yalnızca insanlık onurunu hatırlatmakla kalmaz, muazzam bir direniş eylemi oluşturur.” Duruş okulunun vurguladığı hakikat iddiası ve toplumsal güç ilişkilerinin dışında

kalanların değerli kılınma çabası, post-yapısalcı kuramın yükselişi ile özcülük eleştirisine maruz kalmıştır. Denise Riley(1988) Sojourner Truth'un "Ben kadın değil miyim?" biçiminde ifade ettiği söylenen sorusunun hem kadın kategorisinin reddini hem de kabulünü içerdiğini vurgulamaktadır.

Denise Riley (1988) Sojourner Truth'un sormuş olduğu varsayılan sorudan yola çıkarak feminist tarihi eşitlik ve farklılık arasındaki bir ikilemin tarihi olarak ele alır. Riley'e göre, kadınlık belirli bir tarihsel dönemde inşa edilmiştir ve sosyal alanın yükselişiyle özdeştir. Bu dönemde bildiğimiz anlamıyla kadınlık kültü kadınları hem ortasınıf hayırseverleri hem de yoksul hanelerin ahlaki sorumluları olarak sosyal alanın yükseltilmesinde merkezi bir yere yerleştirmektedir. Tarihsel maddeci görüşü savunan Xiomari Santamarina'ya (2005) göre ise Sojourner Truth hem kölelikten ücretli işçiliğe geçildiği bir dönemde metalaşmaya hem deköleliğin sona ermesiyle birlikte siyah kadınlara da genelleştirilmeye çalışılan kadınlık kültürüne karşı çıkmış ve emeğini tanıma mücadelesinin merkezine yerleştirmiştir. Bu çalışma da feminist tarihselci yaklaşımın izinden ilerlemiş, kadınların cinsiyete dayalı işbölümündeki konumları sebebiyle işyerlerinde sermayeye karşı mücadele ederken aynı zamanda, sermaye birikiminin bir parçası olan cinsiyetçiliğe karşı da mücadele ettiklerini iddia etmiştir. Sermayenin üretim ve yeniden üretim noktasındaki tahakkümünü, sınırlandırmaya yönelik her mücadele bu nedenle bir yönüyle cinsiyetçiliği de hedef almaktadır. Bu özgün konumları kadınları aynı zamanda toplumsal değişimin öznesi yapmaktadır.

Tezin, Denise Riley ve Nancy Fraser'ın çalışmalarından yola çıkarak öne sürdüğü temel iddia şöyle özetlenebilir. Sosyal alan belirli bir kadınlık anlayışının – burjuva kadınlık anlayışının – inşası ile birlikte gerçekleşiyse de, birçok kadın yeniden üretim faaliyetlerinin bireyselleştirilmesine ve yoksulluk sorununun ahlaki aktörleri olmaya karşı çıkarak sosyal sorun olarak siyaset dışılaştırılan sorunları politize etmiş ve bu yolla orta-sınıf kadınlık anlayışına karşı çıkmıştır. Özellikle, yeniden üretim alanında toplumsal ilişkilerin nasıl organize edileceği sorusu ile yeni kadınlık anlayışı arasındaki yakınlık, kadınları farklı bir sosyal ilişkiler bütünüünün inşasının en öndeki aktörleri kılmaktadır. İşçi sınıfı kadınları da, eşitlik ve farklılık geriliminin

– Nancy Fraser’ın terimleriyle tanınma ve bölüşüm mücadelelerinin – merkezine sömürü ilişkilerini ve ihtiyaçların yeniden organizasyonunu yerleştirerek, otorite karşıtlığı ve piyasalaşma ikiliğine dayanmayan, meta ilişkilerinin sınırlandırılmasına dayalı bir özgürlük anlayışını mümkün kılmaktadır.

Tez sömürü ilişkilerinin derinleştirilmesi ile cinsiyetçilik arasındaki uzlaşma ile kadın işçilerin sömürü ilişkilerinin derinleşmesine ve cinsiyetçiliğe karşı eylemlerini endüstriyel eylemlerine odaklanarak çözümlemiştir. Çalışma bu çerçevede endüstriyel eylemlerin dönüştürücü potansiyelinden hareket etmektedir.

Yeniden endüstriyel eylemlerin işçiler açısından etkilerine dönecek olursak, iş yavaşlatma, protesto yürüyüşü, grev gibi çeşitli endüstriyel eylemler, kadın erkek tüm işçiler açısından kolektif güçlerini keşfettikleri ve kendilerini kolektifin parçası olarak güçlü hissettikleri anlardır (Garcia Castro, 1998: 82). Kimi zaman verili endüstri ilişkileri kurumsallaşması içinde kimi zaman da tümüyle bu kurumsal yapıların dışında gelişen eylemler, çoğunlukla üretim noktasındaki yerleşik hiyerarşik ilişkilerin alt-üst olduğu, sorgulandığı, yeniden tanımlandığı özel anlardır. Bu yönüyle grev, işgal, iş yavaşlatma vb. formlar alabilen eylemler, üretim noktasındaki ilişkilerin kuruluş biçim ve içeriğine yönelik bir müdahale anlamı da taşır.

İşyerlerinde işverenle, emek sürecini kontrol eden yöneticilerle karşı karşıya geldikleri anlar olarak eylemler, kadınlar açısından şu türden potansiyel ve olanaklar barındırır. Öncelikle, kadınlar eylemlerde yer aldıkça, kadınlığa dair oldukça baskıcı olan egemen görüşe karşı çıkmaktadırlar (Garcia Castro, 1998: 79). İkinci olarak, işyerindeki maddi koşulların iyileştirilmesi hem değiştirme gücüne yönelik inancı perçinlemekte hem de işçiler maddi koşullarını değiştirerek kendilerini de değiştirmektedirler (Atzeni, 2010: 26). Bu işyerlerindeki cinsiyetçilikle de mücadelenin koşulunu oluşturmaktadır. Üçüncü olarak eylem aracılığıyla kolektif bir grubun üyesi olma hissi belirginleşen kadın işçilerin kolektif dönüştürme gücüne inançları, bireysel hayatlarında sahip oldukları dönüştürme güçlerine olan inançlarını da artırmaktadır (Garcia Castro, 1998: 83). Kadınların farklı biçimler alabilen

eylemler yoluyla işyerlerinde yükselttikleri itiraz, kadınları erkeklere bağımlı, uysal, kamusal tartışmalara ve sendikalara mesafeli gören, cinsiyetçi görüşlerle de hesaplaşmalarına olanak sunmaktadır. Emek sürecinde işverenin denetiminin sınırlandırılması ve bu yolla istihdam koşullarının iyileştirilmesi, birçok durumda cinsiyetçi uygulamaların da sınırlandırılması anlamına gelmektedir.

Kadınların hem bireysel hem kolektif olarak dönüştürme güçlerine inanmaları, yeni bir deneyim ufkuna işaret etmekte, hayatlarını değerlendirme biçimlerini etkilemektedir. Kadın işçi olmanın endüstriyel eylemlerdeki anlamı eylemlerin kadınları güçlendirici etkisi ile sınırlı değildir; genel olarak cinsiyete dayalı işbölümü ve kadınlara yönelik baskı, özel olarak da çeşitli sektör ve iş yerlerinin cinsiyete göre bölünmüş olması sebebiyle işçiler arasındaki dayanışma ilişkileri kadınlar arasındaki kız kardeşlik bağları biçimine de bürünmektedir.

Sendikalaşma ile sonuçlanan eylemlere katılan 16 kadınla gerçekleştirdiğim görüşmelerde işçiler eski işyerlerindeki çalışma deneyimlerini, aileleri ile ilişkilerini, işyerindeki eylemi, sendikalaşma deneyimini, kendi hayatlarının feminist tarihçileri olarak eleştirel bir değerlendirmeye tabii tuttular. Mata'da kadınların anlattıkları öyküler işyerindeki eylemin yaratmış olduğu deneyim ufkundan geçmişi yeniden değerlendirmek biçiminde olmuştur.

Rutin dışına çıktıkları ve yöneticilerle eylem aracılığıyla açıktan karşı karşıya geldikleri anlar, kadın işçiler açısından işyerindeki otorite figürüyle yeni bir karşılaşma biçimidir. Öncekinden çok farklı bir düzlemde gerçekleşen bu karşılaşma biçimi tüm kadınların anlatılarında neredeyse ortak sözcüklerle ifade ediliyor: “çok heyecan verici!” Eylemler işçileri kolektivitenin parçası kılarak işveren karşısındaki yalnızlaşmayı, bireyselleşmeyi ortadan kaldırdığı ölçüde güçlendirici ve dönüştürücü sonuçlar doğurabilmektedir. Hele de işverenin direncini kıran, onun isteği halefine sendikayı işyerine sokan başarılı bir eylem tüm işçiler için güçlendirici bir deneyimdir. Eylemin üretim noktasında yarattığı değişim de kadınların güçlenmesinde pay sahibidir.

Derinlemesine görüşmelerin analizinde şöyle bir yol izledim: Tüm görüşmelerde kadınların heyecanlandıkları, coşku duydukları ve sinirlendikleri anları takip etmeye çalıştım. Kadın işçilerin hayat öykülerinde, anneler, müdürler/amirler, cinsiyetçi iş arkadaşları (erkek işçiler) özellikle kızgınlık duydukları figürler olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Kadınların annelerine olan kızgınlıkları, çocukluklarında ve yetişkinliklerinde aile içinde yaşanan eşitsizliklere ve baskıya ses çıkarmamış olmalarında, düzeni değiştirmek yönünde bir refleks geliştirmemiş olmalarında yatmaktadır. Annelerine olan kızgınlıklarını ifade ettikleri genel çerçeveye ise kadınların ev-işi, tarla işi ve fabrika işi arasında yaptıkları ayırmda gizlidir. Güvence terimi çeşitli işlerin tasnif edilmesinde merkezi bir yerde durmaktadır.

Öncelikle, kadınlar açısından bir “iş”in karakterini, “çalışma”nın çalışma olup olmadığını belirleyen şey, emek süreci üzerinde söz sahibi olmaktır. Kadın işçiler bunu fabrika işi, ev işi ve tarımsal iş arasında kurdukları ayırmda ortaya koymuşlardır. Çalışmanın çalışma olarak tanımlanmasında güvence merkezi bir yerde durmaktadır. Kadın işçilerin özellikle ev işi ve tekstil sektöründeki işler arasında yaptıkları ayrımlar, çalışmak ile kastedilenin insan onuruna yakışır bir biçimde çalışma olduğunu göstermektedir. Örneğin, ücretli işçi olarak çalışmaya başladığı işyeri bir tekstil atölyesi olan Özlem tekstildeki çalışmasını şöyle değerlendirmektedir:

Tekstil ortamı, merdiven altı küçük bir atölye, buraya nazaran çok daha farklı davranılıyordu yani, kötü davranılıyordu... Küçük bir yer, insanları da sadece iş çıksın derdinde. Asgari ücret 850-900 lira mı vardı öyle bir şeydi, ablam çalışıyordu çünkü oradan biliyorum. Asgari ücretin yarı yarıya altında bir ücret veriyorsun, çalışanına kıymet veren bir yer olsa asgari ücret verirsin. Atölyenin sahibi vardı. Cahit bey, patronumuz. Zaten 20-22 kişi filandık. O onun böyle ofisinin önünden atölyenin sonuna kadar ince bir yolu vardı o şekilde gider gider gelirdi... Başımızda öyle dururdu yani. En ufak bir boş durmamızda bile hemen dikilir bakardı. Bir kere ben işi bıraktım gittim öyle. Sevkiyatı yetiştiriyoruz... Kadın atletleri ve erkek atletleri yapıyorduk, biz. Akşamına oğlu götürüyordu. Sevkiyatı gönderdik biz, koltuk altı dikim yerleri var, orda patlaklar çıkmış. Sonrasında akşam oğlu geri geldi, ağzına geleni saydı: “yapamıyorsanız bırakın gidin!” “sizinle uğraşamayız!” falan hakaretler. Ben o sıra 5-6 aydır çalışıyordum, ortacılık yapıyordum, makina başında çıkan ürünü topluyordum.

Sinirlendim. Elimde makas vardı. Makası attım, çıktım gittim. Aradan 1 hafta geçti geçmedi babamı aramış, evin numarası vardı patronda aramış gelsin konuşalım anlaşalım falan demiş gittim, ondan sonra makinayı falan öğrendim bir süre daha çalıştım sonra çıktım. O da çok geçmemiş kapatmış fabrikayı, atölyeyi. Fakat ne diyeyim, çalışmak gibi de değildi! İlk iş diye mi, az kişi çalışıyoruz diye mi, yoksa insanlıklarından mı ama çalışmak denemez ona yani.

Çalışmanın ortaya koyduğu önemli noktalardan birisi, kadınların ev işlerini esas işleri olarak görmelerinin kendilerini işçi olarak tanımlamalarını sekteye uğrattığı görüşünün olgusal dayanaklarının son derece zayıf olduğudur. Mata'da çalışan kadın işçilerin anlatılarına dayanarak kadınların ev işini kendi sorumlulukları olarak gördükleri için değil çalışma koşullarının hayallerindeki çalışma fikriyle örtüşmemesinden kaynaklandığını söyleyebiliriz. Güvence terimi kadın işçiler açısından emek sürecinin denetiminde işveren kontrolünün sınırlandırılmasına yönelik olarak dönüştürme kapasitesi ile ilişkilendirilmektedir. Pınar ev işi ve fabrika işi ayrımında dönüştürme kapasitesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır:

Ben kadınlar mutlaka çalışmalı diyorum. Çalışmalı ayakları üzerinde durmalılar. Bazen evliliklerde yapılan bir hata bir adam değişir diye bakmak. Değişir düzeler diye... Kimse değişmiyor, değiştirmek de kolay değil, kendinden gidiyor. Burada tek kişi bir şeylere itiraz eden olunca kapıyı gösteriyorlardı. Bir ömür bir adamı değiştirmeye çalışıyorsun, zor, olmuyor da. Burada kalabalık olunca 3 günde değiştirdik. Her şey çok mu iyi? Hayır ama zamanla olacak bir şeyler var. Değiştiremiyorsun çünkü güçsüzsün. Gerçi buradaki bir düzen belki daha zor diyeceksin ama oradaki de bir düzen, ataerkil düzende yaşıyoruz sonuçta. Değiştirmeye kalktığında kendin de yoruluyorsun, annenle savaşıyorsun, babanla, abilerinle yeri geliyor çocuklarınla bile savaşıyorsun (kendim için demiyorum benim çocuklarımla çok güzel bir iletişimim vardır). Burada birlik olunca değiştirdik ama fabrikadaki düzeni.

Güvence, iş ilişkileri bakımından ikili bir anlam taşımaktadır. Bir yandan emek sürecindeki işveren denetiminin sınırlandırılması anlamına gelirken bir yandan da işçilerin işyerindeki kimi uygulamalara verecekleri spontan eylemlerin disipline edilmesi ve düzenlenmesi anlamına gelmektedir. Mata Otomotiv Fabrikası'nda sendikalaşma sonrasında imzalanan sözleşmenin böylesi bir etki yarattığı söylenebilir. Sendika, endüstriyel eylem öncesinden toplu sözleşme imzalanana kadar her gerilim anında öne sürülen işten işçi çıkarma tehdidine karşı, ihtiyaç duyulduğunda bölümler arasında işçi değiştirilebileceği konusunda işverenle



uzlaşmıştır. Sözleşmenin ardından işverenlerin yönelimi sözleşme ile garanti altına alınmış işyeri uygulamalarını kendi yararına olacak biçimde sınırlara çekerek uygulamak olmuştur. Fabrikada ihtiyaç duyulduğu durumda bölüm değişikliklerinin kabul edilmesiyle birlikte aynı işi yapan kadın ve erkek işçiler arasında ücret farkı oluşmuştur. Bunun yanısıra, bölüm değişikliklerinin kabul edilmesi işçiler arasında dayanışma ilişkilerinin zedelenmesi sonucunu da doğurmaya adaydır. Selma bölüm değişiklikleri özelinde kadın erkek eşitliğini yorumlamaktadır:

Sürekli bölüm değiştirilmesi iyi bir şey değil. Fabrikada joker eleman oluyorsun. Nerede kim eksik olursa senin yerin artık belirsiz oluyor, sabit belirli bir işin olması iyi. Diğer türlü işverenin ihtiyaçları ön planda demektir. (...) Kadın erkek aynı işi yapıyor, sadece burası için geçerli değil her yer için geçerli bu, nedense kadın erkekle aynı parayı almıyor. Ücrette eşitsizlik var. Fakat bazen kadın erkek eşittir lafı benim kızdığım bir laftır. Kadın erkek hakta eşittir, beden eşitliği olmaması lazım. Burada da işyerleri değişirken eşitlik deniyor ama hem kas olarak erkek bazı şeyleri daha iyi yapabiliyor (...) fiziksel güçle ilgili bir şey bu. Bir de kadınlar bakıyorsun evde de çalışıyor zaten. Burada iş yerlerini değiştirirken bunu yapabilir mi? Uygun mu diye bakmıyorlar. Kadınlar da her yerde olabilir, her şeyi yapabilir bunu demek lazım zaten ama işyerlerine gelince bu kadının daha fazla sömürülmesi anlamına gelmemeli yani. Eşit olsun diyorsun ama uygun koşullar olmayınca kadın için daha zor (...) Bizim üzerimizde oynamalarının sebebi bizi daha fazla sömürüye mahkûm etmek. İşverenin de hakları vardır ama bizim sendika olarak yapabileceğimiz minimuma düşürmek.

Eylemin kazanımla sonuçlanmasının ardından üretim noktasındaki işveren denetiminin sınırlandırılmasının işyerindeki cinsiyetçi uygulamaları sınırlandırmak bakımından önemli sonuçları vardır. Ustabaşların, yöneticilerin keyfi uygulamalarını, kişiye göre tavırlarını engellemek kazanımlar arasındadır. Mata Fabrikasında sendikalaşmanın ardından kadın işçilerin aynı zamanda çalıştıkları yerleri, tuvaletleri ve soyunma odalarını temizlemelerine son verilmesi kadınlar için oldukça önemli bir kazanımdır. Bu örnek, emek sürecindeki denetimin tümüyle işverende olması durumunda, kadınların işçilik deneyimlerini ev işi gibi organize etmelerini olanaklı kılacak ve bu beklentiyi besleyecek bir ortamın yaratıldığını; kadınların ise ev işinin uzantısı olarak fabrikada kendilerine dayatılan geleneksel cinsiyetçi rollere direndiklerini göstermektedir. Bu konuda Meryem'in anlattıkları anlamlı bir örnektir:

Biz buraya ilkgeldiğimizde bizim bölümümüzün oraya paspas atardık. Biz atıyorduk. İlk geldik burası inşaat halindeydi, tuvaletler çok iğrençti, çalışanların pisliklerini biz temizledik, tuvaletleri. Camları biz sildik ta ki bu seneye kadar böyleydi. Sendika gelene kadar. Kendi soyunma odamızı biz siliyorduk, camlarından tutun da yerleri kazımaya kadar hepsini biz yapıyorduk, artık yeter dedik, nereye kadar? (...) O zaman temizlik yaptırıcaksın işimi yaptırmayacaksın.

İşyerinde cinsiyet ilişkilerine dair her vurgunun sömürü bağlamında anlam kazandığını söylemeliyiz. Görüşme yaptığım kadınların anlatılarında, işverenlerin kadınların yeniden üretim sorumluluklarını hatırladıkları, hatırlattıkları ve kadın olmalarına vurgu yaptıkları birkaç an var. Bunlardan ilki, yukarıda bahsedildiği gibi, işyerlerini temizleme görevinin kadın işçilere verilmesi ve kadınların itirazlarına rağmen, temizlik elemanı almamakta ısrar edilmesidir. İkincisi, eylemin ilk günü, sendikanın henüz çoğunluk sağlamadığı koşullarda, kalite kontrol bölümü amirinin Esra'ya tek çocuk sahibi, yalnız bir anne olduğunu hatırlatmasıdır. Üçüncüsü ise, yine eylem sırasında işverenlerin polisleri arayarak kadın işçilerin içeride zorla tutulduğunu söylemesidir. Son olarak da daha düşük ücret alarak erkek işçiler arasında çalışan tek kadın olan Gül'ün çalışmanın kendisini zorladığını söyleyerek bölümünün değiştirilmesini istediğinde amirin dile getirdiği kadın erkek eşitliği söylemi. Tüm bu anlarda çatışan iki eğilim açığa çıkmaktadır. Kadınlara cinsiyetçi işbölümünün amirler tarafından hatırlatıldığı anlar ya sömürü koşullarını derinleştiren ya da bu koşullara dönük olarak kadınlardan gelen itirazların önünü kesmek istedikleri anlardır. İşçiler ise toplumsal cinsiyete dayalı yüklerini sömürü ilişkilerini sınırlandıracak içerikle gündeme getirmektedirler. Bu yönüyle kadın işçilerin eşitlik kavrayışı ve talebiyle, işverenlerin işyerlerindeki temsilcilerinin eşitlik kavrayışı ve beklentileri çatışmaktadır.

Son olarak, işlerin cinsiyete göre bölünmüş olması, kadınların belirli sektörlerde yoğunlaşmış olmaları gibi sebeplerle kadın işçiler arasında kızkardeşlik dayanışmasının var olduğunu vurgulamalıyız. Maurizi Atzeni (2010) emek sürecinin kolektif karakteri gereği işyerlerinde dayanışmanın verili olduğunu vurgulamaktadır. İşçiler arasında dayanışma ilişkisi mevcuttur fakat tıpkı sömürü ilişkileri gibi dayanışma da apaçık değildir. Örneğin, üretilen ürünün sayısını yükseltmemek

yönünde işçiler arasında uzlaşma vardır. Mata'da da hem sendikalaşma öncesinde hem de ardından ürün miktarını artırmamak yönünde gösterilen tavır işçilerin biz olma duygusunu hissettikleri anlardan biridir. Ya da sendikalaşma öncesinde, vaad edilen ücret zammı gerçekleşmeyince işçiler iş yavaşlatma eylemi yapmışlardır. Bu eylemin spontanlığı ve gücü, emek sürecinin kolektif karakterinin hissedildiği anlardan biridir. yine de mevcut düzenlemeler sebebiyle bu dayanışma görünür kılmak her zaman mümkün değildir. Bu sebeple de işçiler için esas soru dayanışmanın nasıl inşa edileceğinden ziyade nasıl korunacağı ve somutlaştırılacağıdır. Kadın işçiler arasında da hem cinsiyetçi işbölümü hem de emek sürecinin kolektif karakteri gereği dayanışmanın verili olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Kadın işçiler de iş bulmadan sendikalaşmaya kadar birçok konuda birlikte hareket etmekte birbirlerine destek olmaktadır. Fakat işyerlerinde, çeşitli biçimlerde, kadınları güçlendiren kız-kardeşlik bağları kırılmaya çalışılmaktadır. Mata'da bu durumu gösteren örneklerden biri erkek işçiler ve amirler tarafından kadınlara yöneltilen “dedikoducu” yakıştırmasıdır.

İşverenlerin, yöneticilerin ve erkek işçilerin dedikodu olarak nitelendikleri esas olarak kadınların çalışma koşulları, emek süreci, istihdam koşulları hakkında karşılıklı iletişim kurdukları konulardır. Bunlar kolektif olarak deneyimlenen çalışma koşullarının, istihdam bilgilerinin paylaşılması, tartışılmasını kapsamaktadır. Bu iletişim çoğu durumda işverenlerin emek süreci ya da istihdam koşullarına ilişkin olarak gizlediği, işçiler arasındaki bölünmeyi inşa da kullandığı kolektif düzenlemeye konu olmamasını sağlamaya çalıştığı konuları içermektedir. Kadın işçilere yöneltilen dedikoducu yakıştırmasını erkek işçiler de paylaşmakta, çoğu zaman kadınlara dair güveni kırarak bir biçimde bu suçlamayı yöneltmektedirler. Bu çalışmanın iddialarından biri dedikoducu gibi kadınlara yakıştırılan cinsiyetçi ifadelerin kadın hareketinin olduğu kadar sınıf hareketinin de konusunu oluşturduğudur.

Çalışma bu sonuçlardan yola çıkarak işçiler için daha iyi çalışma koşulları talebinin kadın işçi olarak tanınma mücadelesi ile ilgili olduğunu; işyerlerinde sömürü ilişkilerini hedef alan her eylemin aynı zamanda cinsiyetçilikte de mücadele etmek durumunda olduğunu öne sürmektedir. Bu iddia, bu çalışmanın da paylaştığı, işçi

sınıfı feminizmi hakkında yapılmış çalışmaların temel iddiasıdır. Bu kimi zaman feministlerin, aile ücreti, korumacılık gibi sosyal politika uygulamalarına yönelik yaklaşımlarında kimi zaman da belirli bir işyerindeki endüstriyel eylemde kadınların hikayelerine başvurularak görünürleştirilmiştir.

Cinsiyetçiliğe/cinsiyete dayalı işbölümüne karşı mücadele ile sömürünün sınırlandırılması mücadelesinin bir arada ele alınması ve bir talep olarak yükseltilmesi feminizmin tarihine ve feminist taleplere olduğu kadar sınıf mücadelesine ve işyerlerinde yükseltilen taleplere bakışımızı da değiştirmek durumundadır. Bu çalışma sömürü ilişkileri ile kadın işçilerin tanınma mücadeleleri arasındaki bağı belirli bir fabrika örneğinde ele alarak cinsiyetçi ilişkiler ile sömürü ilişkiler arasındaki ilişkiyi kadın işçilerin endüstriyel eylemi merkezinde ortaya koymuştur. Mata'da çalışan ve endüstriyel eyleme katılmış kadın işçilerin deneyimlerini genelleştirmek mümkün olmasa da Mata'daki kadın işçilerin deneyimi bir eğilimi göstermektedir.

## B. CURRICULUM VITAE

### PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Saka, Burcu  
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### EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	Ankara University, Faculty of Political Science, Labor Economics and Industrial Relations	2009
BS	Middle East Technical University, Sociology	2006
High School	Ankara Atatürk Anatolian High School	2000

### WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2008-2010	Sociology Department, ÇOMU	Research Assistant
2010- Present	Sociology Department, METU	Research Assistant

### FOREIGN LANGUAGE

Advanced English

### PUBLICATIONS

1.Saka B. 2014. "Petty commodity production in the neoliberal phase of global capitalism: The case of grape production in Çanakkale." *Labor Relations in Globalized Food*. Emerald Group Publishing Limited, 93-113.

2.Saka B. 2017. "Bir kadın farklı feminizmler: Sojourner Truth'un hayatının feminist yazında içerilme biçimleri." *Akademide Yolculuk Mehmet Ecevit'e Armağan*. Nota Bene.

## C. TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

### YAZARIN

Soyadı : SAKA

Adı : BURCU

Bölümü : Sosyoloji

**TEZİN ADI** : Working class feminism: Solidarity and experience in a factory strike in Turkey

**TEZİN TÜRÜ** : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

**TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ:**