

**The Changing Working Class: A New Repertoire of Collective Actions and
Organizational Practices in Istanbul**

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In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy
Political Science

Academic Advisor: Associate Professor İlay Romain Örs

Submitted: 22.09.2016

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Organizational Practices in Istanbul

Değişen İşçi Sınıfı: İstanbul'da Yeni Kolektif Eylem Repertuarı ve Örgütlenme
Pratikleri

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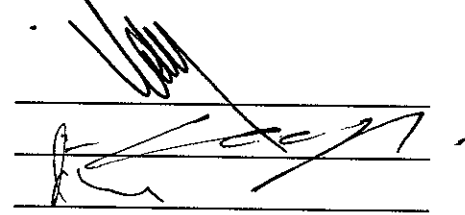
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Tezin Onaylandığı Tarih:



MURAT GÜVENÇ
Cemil
22.09.2016

Toplam Sayfa Sayısı:

339

Anahtar Kelimeler (Türkçe):

- 1) Değişen işçi sınıfı
- 2) Beyaz yakalı çalışanlar
- 3) Kolektif eylem repertuarı
- 4) Çekişmecî siyaset

Anahtar Kelimeler (İngilizce):

- 1) The changing working class
- 2) White-collar employees
- 3) Repertoire of collective actions
- 4) Contentious politics

Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the relationship between the changing working class and the changing repertoire of white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul in the neoliberal era. It seeks to answer the following questions: Is there a relationship between the changing structure of the working class and the new repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices? Can this relationship be traced by studying the socio-economic changes and the emerging new repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices in Istanbul over the past 35 years? This dissertation argues that the expansion of the white-collar employees needs to be regarded as a consequence of changes in the structure of the working class. The inability of existing class organizations to adapt themselves to the changing working class and its needs led to the creation of a new repertoire of white-collar mobilizations between 2008 and 2015 in Istanbul. The required data for demonstrating the changing working class structure was collected mostly from previous research and in-depth interviews were carried out with leading activists of white-collar mobilizations in an attempt to gain insight into their repertoire of collective actions and organizations.

Özet

Bu tez, Türkiye'nin neoliberal döneminde değişen işçi sınıfı yapısı ile beyaz yakalı çalışanların değişen eylem repertuarları arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemektedir. Şu sorulara yanıt aramaktadır: İşçi sınıfının yapısındaki değişim ile yeni kolektif eylem repertuarları ve örgütlenme pratikleri arasında bir ilişki var mıdır? Bu ilişki İstanbul'un son 35 yılındaki sosyo-ekonomik değişim ve ortaya çıkan yeni kolektif eylem repertuarı ve örgütlenme pratikleri üzerinden izlenebilir mi?" Bu tezde beyaz yakalı çalışanların artışının işçi sınıfının yapısındaki değişimlerin bir sonucu olarak algılanması gerektiği iddia edilmektedir. Sendikaların değişen işçi sınıfına ve onun ihtiyaçlarına adapte olmakta başarılı olamaması beyaz yakalı mobilizasyonunda 2008-2015 yılları arasında İstanbul'da yeni bir repertuarın ortaya çıkmasına neden olmuştur. Değişen işçi sınıfını göstermek için gereken veriler çoğunlukla daha önce bu konuda yapılan araştırmalardan elde edilmiştir ve beyaz yaka mobilizasyonlarının öncü aktivistleri ile yapılan derinlemesine görüşmeler de kolektif eylem repertuarı ve örgütlenme pratiklerine dair bilgi edinmeyi amaçlamıştır.

Abbreviations

AKP:	Justice and Development Party
BİÇDA:	IT Workers' Solidarity Network
Bil-İş:	Union of IT Workers
BİROY:	Cinema Actors' Collecting Society of Turkey
BİTDER:	Association of Information and Communication Technologies
ÇMÇ:	Association of Call Center Employees
DİSK:	Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions
Haber-İş:	Turkish Communications Union
Hava-İş:	Civil Aviation Union
KBG:	Kaç Bize Gel
KESK:	Confederation of Public Sector Unions
Koop-İş:	Cooperatives, Commerce and Office Workers Union
MÇP:	Store Employees Platform
Oyuncu-Sen:	Actors' Union
ÖDP:	Freedom and Solidarity Party
PEP:	Plaza Action Platform
Petrol-İş:	Petrol, Chemistry and Rubber Workers Union

Sine-Sen: Cinema Workers Union

SİYOP: Actors Platform for Cinema Labour Act

Sosyal İş: Union of Social Security, Education, Office, Trade and Fine Arts Workers

TEKEL: Turkish tobacco and alcoholic beverages company

Tez-Koop-İş: Union of Trade, Cooperative, Education, Office and Fine Arts Workers

TGS: Journalists Union

THY: Turkish Airlines

TİSK: Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations

Türk-İş: Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions

VÜEDA: Private University Workers' Solidarity Network

YEK: Publishing House Laborers Collective

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Introduction

In the wake of the financial crisis of 2008, strikes and demonstrations broke out in various parts of the world. First, there were mass strikes in such countries as France, Spain, and Greece. Then, civil occupations of public squares took place in Tunisia and spread to Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries in 2011¹. Following the Middle Eastern mobilizations, squares were occupied in Spain and Greece and this spread to the whole world with the “occupy” movement (encampments in city squares). The Gezi Park resistance² emerged some time after these mobilizations. As elsewhere, the Gezi resistance triggered a debate on the class content of the mobilization in Turkey. From Tahrir Square in Egypt to the “indignados” in Spain and the “occupy” movements, discussions regarding the class content of these movements have mostly been framed around concepts of the “precariat” and the “new middle class”.

A similar debate began in Turkey after the Gezi Park resistance. Çağlar Keyder, a prominent sociologist, who had already published on Istanbul’s changing socio-economic structure and life, triggered a debate with an article claiming that the masses in Gezi Park belonged to the “new middle class” (Keyder, 2013). There were several responses to Keyder, mostly from authors on the left (Boratav, 2013; Tonak, 2014). A number of left journals, such as *Birikim* and *Praksis*, devoted special issues to the question of the Gezi Park resistance and the middle class. A conference was organized by two academics from Galatasaray and Özyeğin Universities on “Between, Below and Above the Middle Class in Turkey” in May 2014 in Istanbul.

¹A development often labelled as “Arab Spring” (Anderson, 2011; Stepan & Linz, 2013).

²In June 2013, Istanbul’s most central location, Taksim Square, was occupied by masses after 24 hours of clashes between the police and protesters. Tensions rose as the government announced that a historic barracks would be rebuilt in Gezi Park, next to Taksim Square. Clashes broke out as construction work started and hundreds of thousands of protesters rallied to the square. The square was occupied for 15 days. After the encampment, public forums emerged in tens of neighborhoods in Istanbul which lasted until the autumn. This period - from June to the autumn - is referred to as the Gezi resistance in this dissertation.

In this dissertation I aim to contribute to this debate from a Marxist point of view, but instead of focusing on the Gezi resistance I shall attempt to explain the socio-economic changes in Turkey since the beginning of neoliberal era and to define how class composition has changed over the same period. There were white-collar mobilizations³ before, during, and after the Gezi resistance. While investigating the various changes in the working classes in Turkey, I aim to demonstrate how these changes are reflected in the new repertoire of collective action by white-collar employees since the 2000s.

This dissertation will thus address the following research questions: *“Is there a relationship between the changing structure of the working class and the new repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices? Can this relationship be traced by studying the socio-economic changes and the emerging new repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices in Istanbul over the past 35 years?”*

The aforementioned debate by social scientists on the class content of the Gezi resistance centered on defining the class position of white-collar employees (clerical workers, plaza workers, engineers, IT workers, managers etc.) but collective actions of white-collar employees before and after the Gezi resistance did not form a major topic of consideration. This dissertation specifically addresses this gap between labor studies that focus on the white-collar mobilizations and the theoretical debate on classes by putting them into the context of the changing socio-economic structure of Istanbul since 1980.

While this dissertation is not aimed to offer an analysis of the Gezi resistance in particular, Gezi formed the starting point of the idea of conducting research on the new repertoire of white-collar mobilizations. The Gezi resistance was primarily based in Istanbul, but it also spread to other cities, where various groups (feminists, leftist groups, students, LGBTI

³ The concept of “mobilization” is used throughout the dissertation because it covers any kind of organizations like trade unions, unionization attempts, and new platform.

groups, Kurdish and Alevi groups, and white-collar employees) were involved. In response to the class analysis of the Gezi resistance, this dissertation puts forth the argument that the expansion of the white-collar employees are best to be regarded as a consequence of changes in the structure of the working class. The inability of existing class organizations to adapt themselves to the realities of the changing working class and its needs brought about a new repertoire of white-collar mobilizations. Emergence of these mobilizations and the involvement of white-collar employees in the Gezi resistance in large numbers signal the emergence of white-collar discontent in Istanbul. This dissertation will investigate the early mobilizations and interactions of white-collar employees.

Socio-economic Context behind the Formation of the Research Question

The research question at the heart of this dissertation was formed after perceiving a gap between studies of the changing socio-economic structure of Turkey and labor studies. Labor studies either analyze changing class composition (Kiziroğlu, 2014) or recent class mobilizations (agents) in case studies (Erdayı, 2012; Nuro1, 2014a) without much regard to the relations between these mobilizations. The relationship between the changing socio-economic structure and the changing repertoire of collective actions, however, can be effectively examined by demonstrating the changing working class in Turkey in the age of neoliberalism. In doing this, the aims of this dissertation may be summarized as follows:

- 1- To contribute to the theoretical debate on the changing class composition of Turkey from the perspective of the theory of the changing working class;
- 2- To demonstrate the relationship between changes in the socio-economic structure of Istanbul and changes in white-collar employees' repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the most important topic of discussion in sociology and studies of social movements was migration and its consequences on urban life (Karpaz, 1976; Şenyapılı, 1981). This did not lose its importance in the 1990s and 2000s, since migration to Istanbul has never stopped. In the 1990s, however, new topics, beside migration and urban slums, came into the spotlight as a result of rapid socio-economic change in Istanbul. The urban poor became a political issue in the 1990s. Provincial local elections had never been particularly important prior to the 1990s in the political history of Turkey. Local politics (Erder, 1996) and urban social movements (Işık & Pınarcıoğlu, 2002; Aslan, 2004) were new fields of interest in the 1990s. The new life styles of a globalizing city and gated communities were also popular topics of research (Keyder & Öncü, 1993; 1994; Keyder, 1999; Ayata S. , 2003; Kurtuluş, 2005; Behar & İslam, 2006).

Şentürk (2014) argues that before 1980 urban studies were closely related to labor studies. Industry was centered in Istanbul, as were slums. Therefore, migration, slums and labor were closely connected with each other. Starting in the 1990s, globalization issues began to dominate urban studies. Turkey and Istanbul were undergoing rapid neoliberal transformation. It was urban studies that first began to pay attention to the rising urban new middle class (white-collar employees) in Istanbul, while studies of social or political movements concentrated on public sector workers' mobilizations, political Islam and the Kurdish issue. Therefore, the earliest theories of the "new middle class" were developed by authors studying urban politics or the issue of urbanization (Robins & Aksoy, 1996; Keyder, 1999; Ayata, 2003). In the 1990s, plazas- modern office spaces where hundreds of white-collar employees work together- private TV channels, the entertainment sector, the information and telecommunications sectors all expanded rapidly. These transformations had significant consequences on the working and living conditions of the working class.

Sociologists studying these issues (Keyder, 1999; Ayata, 2003) developed the theory of the new middle class in Turkey, concentrating on the differences between white-collar and manual workers: the new middle class consists of better off and highly educated wage earners or entrepreneurs; they share the same urban lifestyle and thus constitute a class, even though some are employers and some employees. The 1990s were years of growing numbers of white-collar employees with their distinct lifestyle different from other sections of the working class. This is possibly the reason why there were not too many white-collar mobilizations in the 1990s. Public sector workers were in mobilization for the right to join trade unions. However, white-collar employees in the private sector were hardly influenced by this movement at all, as this was their “golden age” with high incomes, scarce skills, and distinct life styles.

The debate on “changing” or “new” classes began in Turkey at the end of the 1990s as the country underwent rapid socio-economic change in the neoliberal era. The debate was mainly on defining the class position of white-collar employees. It was centered on the employees and entrepreneurs of rising sectors of the private economy, such as banking and insurance, civil aviation, information and telecommunications, entertainment, and so on. Istanbul’s socio-economic change and its changing class structure were important factors given that Istanbul is the city most affected by the neoliberal transformation. Not surprisingly, the new repertoire and organizational practices of white-collar employees emerged in Istanbul. Therefore, this dissertation focuses on the changing socio-economic structure of Istanbul and new white-collar mobilizations there.

The neoliberal transformation of Turkey entered a new stage with the economic crisis of 2001. All sections of the working class were badly affected by the crisis, especially the blue-collar workers. However, the crisis also marked the beginning of a decline in the conditions of white-collar employees. The significant increase in the number of university graduates, the

expansion of precarious and flexible jobs, the process of deskilling as a result of changing labor processes and the weakness of existing class organizations were the main reasons behind the deterioration of white-collar jobs in the 2000s.

Students of labor in Turkey began in this period to analyze structural changes in the country and in class composition. The first “white-collar” thesis -a masters thesis- was written in 2002 (Hoşadam, 2002) . Between 2002 and 2011 only six theses were written on the issue. In 2005, TÜSAM (the Class Research Center of Turkey) organized a symposium and published a book titled “*The Changing Structure of the Working Class and New Tendencies and Experiences in the Class Movement*”. Between 2011 and 2015 fifteen more theses were submitted. Eleven of these based on sociological research, and they were mostly case studies of working conditions in the banking sector, industrial employees in Kocaeli, training course teachers in Nazilli and so on. The rest were in the fields of economics, psychology, and business administration. Only four of them were about white-collar employees’ organizations. One PhD thesis (Erdayı, 2012) focused on the relations of the white-collar employees and trade unions in the banking sector. Nurol (2014a) wrote about labor processes in the banking sector and included the collective and individual resistance practices of white-collar employees. Yılmaz’s (2012) masters thesis was about workplace resistance by white-collar employees. Only Tatari’s (2014) thesis was directly about the organization of white-collar employees in new platforms. He examined the emergence of the Plaza Action Platform.

The deterioration in white-collar jobs was a general trend in the 2000s in Turkey, but white-collar employees were still growing in numbers. The processes of deterioration and loss of their prestigious status⁴ paved the way for white-collar mobilizations. This was a time when traditional class organizations were weak. Historically, trade unions in Turkey were organized in the larger production facilities and the public sector. As of the 1980s, trade unions failed to

⁴ These processes will be examined in Chapter Two.

create a strategy to organize white-collar employees in the newly rising services sector. A new repertoire emerged as a result of these changes and the inability of traditional class organizations to organize white-collar employees. In some cases, white-collar employees strove for change within the traditional class organizations and founded new trade unions as a result of the existing unions' inability to adapt to changing conditions in the workplaces.

Istanbul began to witness new white-collar mobilizations in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008. Economic factors played an important role in this first period of mobilizations.

In 2013, the Gezi Park resistance, where white-collar participation was quite high, broke out. Although masses took to the streets for political reasons, a new period of white-collar mobilizations began right after the resistance in Istanbul. This dissertation will therefore focus on changing working class structure and the new repertoire of white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul in order to show how structural changes led to changes in the repertoire of collective action.

Istanbul began to witness new white-collar mobilizations for the first time in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008. Economic factors played an important role in this first period of mobilization. In 2013, the Gezi Park resistance broke out with the active participation of white-collar employees in large numbers and new white-collar mobilizations emerged following the resistance. These white-collar mobilizations in the two periods are the harbingers of a white-collar movement likely to come in the near future. These two periods are examined in this dissertation in the hope that it will provide useful information on the early periods of an emerging white-collar movement for future research.

Methodology

There are two empirical parts in this dissertation: Chapter II (Socio-Economic Change and the Change in the Class Composition in Turkey and in Istanbul) and Chapter III (A New Repertoire of Collective Actions and Organizational Practices of White-collar Employees).

Chapter II will provide data showing how Turkey and Istanbul have undergone socio-economic change and how this change influenced class composition since 1980. The required statistical data was collected from TÜİK (Turkish Statistical Institute) and previous research on the issue. The collected data shows that there has been an increase in the total number of the white-collar employees in Istanbul over the past 35 years. This increase is measured by the percentage of wage earners in the services and finance sectors as compared with those in production sectors. White-collar employees are not only employed in the services sector. Production sectors also employ clerical workers, engineers, managers, accountants and so on, but the great majority of workers in the services sector are employed in office jobs. Thus, white-collar employees are usually regarded as services sector employees. Statistics specifically of clerical workers or employees working in offices are not collected by national institutions. Therefore, looking at the services and finance sectors in proportion to production sectors is the closest measure we have of white-collar employees.

In Chapter II, statistics on trade union membership, strikes, university graduates and women in employment are given, in order to provide a picture of changes in working class organizations and changes in class composition.

A qualitative method for the analysis of white-collar employees' repertoire of collective actions and their organizational practices is employed in Chapter III. In-depth interviews were carried out with leading activists of white-collar mobilizations in an attempt to gain insight into their collective actions and organizations.

The cases in Chapter III cover only the years between 2008 and 2015. Almost all activists interviewed mentioned very clearly that the global crisis was a cornerstone for their mobilization. It was the first time that hundreds of white-collar employees were being laid off by banks, media groups, and plazas. While discontent rose among them, the IBM resistance began in 2008 and triggered a wave of white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul. Thus, 2008 is taken as the beginning in this dissertation. There are two main reasons for this. One is the external factor of the global crisis, and the other the internal factor of the IT workers' resistance at IBM Turkey. 2008 is the starting year of white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul. While the white-collar mobilizations began with a new repertoire in 2008 it is not going with a steady progress. There are two periods of these mobilizations. While white-collar mobilizations began with a new repertoire in 2008, it has not progressed at a steady pace. There are two periods. Mobilizations began in 2008, and continued to expand in Istanbul until 2010. Then there was a period of decline due to the record economic growth of the economy. In 2013, however, the Gezi resistance broke out. This was the first political event in Turkey in which white-collar employees participated in large numbers. During and after the resistance several new mobilizations emerged and previously established ones were reactivated as a result of rising political confidence. This second period of white-collar mobilizations ended in 2015 due to major political developments in Turkey⁵.

Therefore, interviewees were divided into two clusters. The first cluster consisted of 10 white-collar employees from different sectors and levels. In the second cluster, 16 leading activists of white-collar mobilizations were interviewed. Different sets of questions were prepared for each cluster of interviewees. All interviews were recorded and transcribed for analysis. The real names of all interviewees were concealed due to privacy concerns. The coded names are given in the table below.

⁵ Briefly; national elections, resurgence of the war between the army and the Kurdish liberation movement, and Turkey's intervention in the Syrian war.

The first cluster of interviews was planned as preparation for the second. An important requirement for studying white-collar employees was to understand their living and working conditions and also to have an idea of their reasons for taking part in collective actions. Thus, ten in-depth interviews with white-collar employees from different sectors and positions were conducted with a semi-structured set of questions. These interviews provided insightful information on working and living conditions, on how they define their class position, on what makes them participate in collective actions or the reasons for their inaction.

Table-1 Interviewees in cluster-1

	Interviewee	Sex	University Degree	Age	Sector	Position
1	Önder	Male	Law	23	Law	Lawyer assistant
2	Ezgi	Female	Physics	32	Telecommunication	Technical Client Management
3	Selda	Female	Advertising	32	Logistics	Marketing Manager
4	Mehmet	Male	Computer Engineering	30	Banking	Manager
5	Berrin	Female	Public Administration	32	Private company	Accountant
6	Demet	Female	Public Relations	37	Digitürk	Advertisement planning manager
7	Menekşe	Female	Information Management	28	NGO	Coordinator
8	Sevda	Female	Industrial Design	26	Aqua park designing	Designer
9	Mert	Male	Masters degree in Electric and Electronics	31	Teknopark	Software developer
10	Yaren	Female	Law	27	NGO	Project assistant

Three of these ten interviewees were managers and one was a coordinator, which means they had some degree of control over the labor process. The remaining six were white-collar workers. Four of these (Önder, Mehmet, Menekşe and Mert) were activists of the Park Forums which were active for several months following the Gezi resistance. As was explained above, white-collar participation in the Gezi resistance started a debate on the class composition of the resistance and changing class composition in Turkey. The white-collar forum activists interviewed provided significant information about the impact of the Gezi resistance in their workplaces. Their personal history of political activism or the absence thereof prior to Gezi, their experiences of collective action in the workplaces during Gezi, their relationship with their colleagues during the resistance provided significant information on how Gezi triggered several workplace mobilizations of white-collar employees.

The second cluster of interviewees consisted of leading activists of white-collar mobilizations. Sixteen leading activists from twelve white-collar mobilizations were interviewed for this dissertation. Seven of these were new white-collar platforms: The Plaza Action Platform (PEP), the IT Workers Solidarity Network, Kaç Bize Gel, Dazayn, the Association of Call Center Employees, the Store Employees' Platform, and the Publishing House Laborers Collective. One was a mobilization within a trade union: The Rainbow Movement. Two of them were mobilizations for unionization: The Bilgi University unionization attempt and the unionization at the Istanbul Development Agency. One was a mobilization for a new trade union: the Actors' Union. Lastly, a hybrid mobilization of white- and blue-collar workers was investigated: The Precarity Movement.

There were five more white-collar mobilizations that were come across during the interviews: the Association of Information and Communication Technologies (BİTDER), the Law Office Employees Solidarity Network, the Initiative of Lawyers Union, the Private University Workers' Solidarity Network (VÜEDA), and the Cinema and Television Union (Cinema-TV Union). While three of these emerged between 2008-2010 (BİTDER and the lawyers' organization), they no longer exist. Thus it was not possible to interview the activists of these three mobilizations. However, two of the interviewed activists were members of BİTDER when it was founded and they spoke about the relationship between BİTDER and the IBM resistance. Similarly, the interviewed activist of Kaç Bize Gel was previously involved in the lawyers' organization and gave information about it. VÜEDA was founded after the unionization attempt at Bilgi University, but it remained inactive. The Bilgi unionization activist interviewed was at the same time a founder of VÜEDA and spoke about how and why VÜEDA was established. Lastly, the Cinema-TV Union was founded in February 2015. It was a new independent union which shared offices with the Actors' Union during my field research. Interviewees from the Actors' Union provided much information on the cinema and

television sectors as well as the mobilizations in these sectors. The Actors' Union can be regarded as the predecessor of the Cinema-TV Union. Their difference is that while the Actors' Union organizes actors and performers, the Cinema-TV Union organizes workers behind the camera.

Among twelve white-collar mobilizations one activist was interviewed from each of the following eight mobilizations: the Store Employees' Platform, the Publishing House Laborers Collective, Kaç Bize Gel, the IT Workers Solidarity Network, the Precarity Movement, Dazayn, the Bilgi University unionization attempt, and the Rainbow Movement. Three of the white-collar mobilizations sent two activists to be interviewed: the Association of Call Center Employees, the Actors' Union, and the unionization activists at the Istanbul Development Agency. Two leading activists were also interviewed from the Plaza Action Platform because during the first interview with the leading activist of PEP (code named Gül) it was realized that she was not involved in the early stages of the platform. Therefore, it was necessary to conduct an interview with another PEP activist who could talk about how PEP was founded. The second interviewee from PEP (code named Ozan) was interviewed for this reason.

Semi-structured questions were prepared for the second cluster of interviewees too. Interviewees were encouraged to talk about their education, their working lives, their experiences of collective action, the reasons behind their activism and their relations with other class organizations and mobilizations through open ended questions.

The initial questions were designed to find out more about the personal histories of activists. The personal information on the activists' families, education, and careers provided the information on how they experienced the changes in Turkey since 1980 in their personal lives. Nine of the interviewees were university students during the 1990s and began their careers in the 2000s. They could only speak about their career expectations while they were

graduates and the realities they faced, together with changes in the working conditions in the 2000s. Five of them were already employees in the 1990s, and could make comparisons between changing working conditions in the 1990s and 2000s. Only two of them were too young to make any comparison in changing working conditions. This background information was important to grasp the reasons why they became activists.

After these initial questions, interviewees were asked about their mobilizations: When and how was your organization founded? What are the objectives of your organization? How did you meet with and get involved in your organization? Who are the activists of your organization? (IT employees, call center employees, etc.) How are decision-making and communication processes functioning among activists in your organization? Which collective actions were organized by your organization? What are the factors that make white-collar employees participate in the actions or events of your organizations? What are the factors that make white-collar employees get organized in trade unions or other types of organization? What are the reasons for the inaction of your colleagues in workplaces? The interviewees' responses provided information on the history of their organizations, the repertoire of collective actions, organizational structures, and factors causing the action and inaction of white-collar employees.

In the next group of questions interviewees were asked about their experience, either personal or organizational, in the Gezi resistance: How they participated in the Gezi resistance, how was the involvement of their organizations, how their organizations were affected by Gezi, what kind of debates they had with their colleagues at work during the Gezi resistance; and whether they ever discussed union membership during or after Gezi. Except for the Store Employees Platform and the Publishing House Laborers Collective, all the mobilizations emerged before the Gezi resistance. However, Gezi had a significant impact on these mobilizations. Several white-collar and workplace forums emerged after Gezi. Interviewees

explained their experiences in these white-collar forums and how their mobilizations and their relations with their colleagues in workplaces were affected by the Gezi resistance.

The aim of the second cluster of interviews was to understand how, when and why these mobilizations emerged, the differences between these mobilizations, their objectives and organizational structures, and their repertoire of collective actions.

During the interviews, it was found that most of these platforms had certain relations with each other and there had some debates among them concerning organizational strategies. Therefore, additional questions were asked when necessary or some of the interviewees were asked for further information after the interviews were conducted.

Before the interviews, the Gezi resistance and the subsequent emergence of white-collar and workplace forums, and new platforms marked the beginning point of the research. Therefore, interviews were planned to be conducted with leading activists of eight new white-collar platforms. However, during the interviews it was realized that the IBM Turkey employees' unionization attempt in 2008 played a crucial role in the emergence of new platforms. Interviewees said that there were other mobilizations which coincided with the IBM resistance between 2008 and 2010, such as the ATV/Sabah employees' strike, the Bilgi University unionization attempt, the Actors' Union, and the mobilization of the Rainbow Movement within Hava-İş (the civil aviation union). Once it was realized during the interviews that the new repertoire and new organizational practices emerged not only because of the difficulties of the existing class organizations to organize white-collar employees but also as a result of internal debates among the activists, some new questions, specific to the mobilizations, were added. In this way, it became possible to learn more about the relations and the organizational differences between the mobilizations.

Information gathered through the interviews was not the only source material for Chapter III. Interviews were supported by secondary sources on the issues and by daily newspapers when necessary. Secondary sources were helpful especially in showing the changes in the sector in which the mobilizations took place and gathering detailed information on the collective actions. Publications of the mobilizations were another source of information. These publications provided information on their strategies for organizing in workplaces, their differences from the traditional class organizations, and differences between these mobilizations.

The repertoire used by white-collar employees will be examined in two periods of white-collar mobilizations in Chapter III. However, this will not follow a chronological order. This dissertation studies the changes in the repertoire used by white-collar employees, therefore, priority will be given to the repertoire of collective actions. A chronological ordering would be an inefficient method of presentation because some of the mobilizations emerged in the first period but changed form in the second. For instance, call center employees mobilized around an association in the first period and formed a new trade union in the second, while Kaç Bize Gel was just a new platform before the Gezi resistance but became active after it. Thus, instead of a chronological presentation, the chapter presents the collective actions of white-collar employees according to their repertoire forms; a new repertoire with new organizational practices in two periods, and new mobilizations within the old repertoire.

Table-2 Interviewees in cluster-2

	Interviewee	Sex	Age	Sector	Position	Mobilization
1	Şenol	Male	32	Food Industry	Graphic designer	Store Employees Platform
2	Yıldız	Female	25	Publishing Sector	Freelance interpreter	Publishing House Laborers Collective
3	Selim	Male	38	Lawyer	Lawyer	Kaç Bize Gel
4	Gül	Female	38	Research Company	Researcher	Plaza Action Platform
5	Çağla	Female	41	Software Development	Software developer	IT Workers Solidarity Network
6	Canan	Female	35	Publication Company	Editor	Association of Call Center Employees
7	Özden	Female	34	NGO	Coordinator	Association of Call Center Employees
8	Ozan	Male	38	Insurance	Insurer	Plaza Action Platform
9	Esra	Female	36	University	Researcher	Precurity Movement
10	Onur	Male	40	Information and Telecommunication	Software developer	Dazayn
11	Meltem	Female	41	University	Professor	Bilgi University Union
12	Anıl	Male	55	Airlines	Pilot	Rainbow Movement
13	İdil	Female	30	Development Agency	Planning Expert	Istanbul Development Agency strike
14	Elçin	Female	38	Development Agency	Planning Expert	Istanbul Development Agency
15	Nuran	Female	54		Actrist/Head of Union	Oyuncu-Sen (Actors Union)
16	Ayşe	Female	27	Trade Union	Union professional	Oyuncu-Sen (Actors Union)

In sum, this dissertation examines the relationship between the changing socio-economic structure of Istanbul over the past 35 years and new collective action repertoires and organizational practices, by outlining the structural changes and showing how white-collar employees are mobilized within this structure. It is not claimed that white-collar employees only use a new repertoire in their collective actions. Instead, their initial mobilizations (the IBM resistance and the Rainbow Movement) were unionization attempts. White-collar employees employed a new repertoire as a result of the inability of trade unions to adapt themselves to their problems and expectations. However, the new repertoire (such as forming horizontal organizations like solidarity networks and platforms) co-exists with the old (forming trade unions, organizing strikes). Even if they employ the old repertoire too, their direct mobilizations without union professionals exhibit significant changes in the old repertoire.

Before we proceed, it is important to note an empirical difficulty in the analysis of the changing working class repertoire. A changing working class should lead to significant changes in class organizations. However, traditional class organizations often cannot cope with this change because of the rapid transformation of the structure of production⁶. A new repertoire of working class mobilizations has been observed in the newly rising sectors in Istanbul. Chapter II explains the changing working class composition of Turkey and Istanbul since 1980. However, the concept of the changing working class refers to a change in the structure of the working class. Analysis of this change within a given period of time provides information on which sections of the working class increased in numbers, which sectors employ more workers, and demographic changes within the working class (such as increasing women in labor force). As industries were replaced by the newly rising services sector in Istanbul, there was a change towards a highly-educated working class mostly employed in

⁶ Chapter III will examine these changes.

modern offices. Such change is to be observed most strongly in sectors like telecommunications, information, call centers, TV channels and so on. This change in the composition of the working class, together with the problems faced by traditional trade unions in organizing them, generated new mobilizations with a new repertoire and organizational practices in Istanbul after 2008.

Although they are part of the changing working class these workers and activists call themselves white-collar employees because they believe that they are sociologically and culturally different from blue-collar workers. It is a pragmatic strategy for these mobilizations as well. By calling themselves employees rather than workers, they include a broader group of white-collar employees, like managers, in their mobilizations. They use this concept sometimes in the name of their organizations, in their websites and social media accounts, and more frequently in their publications. All of the interviewees used this concept in their answers, but some were critical of this concept. The term white-collar employees is very broadly used in Turkish labor studies and it is used to describe employees working in all non-manual jobs, including the cabin crew of airlines, call center workers, plaza workers and so on. Since it is widely accepted, the term "white-collar employees" will be used in this dissertation.

Organization of Chapters

The first chapter provides the theoretical framework of the dissertation. The theory of the changing working class will be explained in this chapter. It will begin with a section on "Placing the New into the Change". This section is a short introduction to the debate on classes, and attempts to explain how new classes should be analyzed in relation to changing social relations.

The second section will examine the debate on classes in the West. This section will explain the “new class” theories of participants in the debate because the debate on classes that began in Turkey in the wake of the 1968 movements has some similarities with that of the West.

The third section will elaborate on changing working class theory. This will be analyzed by examining three features leading to change in class structure; class composition, skill degradation, and precarious work.

The final section of Chapter I will define the theory of collective actions. The repertoire of working class collective actions is being affected by structural changes in the economic system and changes in class structure. Therefore, in this section, the repertoire of the working class and factors leading to the innovation of a new repertoire will be analyzed.

The second chapter of this dissertation is titled “Socio-economic Change and the Change in the Class Composition in Turkey and Istanbul”. Istanbul was chosen as it is the most developed city in Turkey and because almost all white-collar mobilizations took place in Istanbul. Nevertheless, a city does not develop independently of national and global economies. Istanbul’s rise as a global city corresponded to the neoliberal era. Therefore, the chapter opens with a section on neoliberal policies and their consequences in Turkey.

After the section on the neoliberal era, the two following sections (“Public sector, Privatizations and Classes” and “Changes in Trade Union Membership”) will examine the impact of these structural changes on labor and labor organizations. Section four of Chapter II will summarize the debate on classes in Turkey, which is predominantly centered on the theory of the “new middle class”. And the final section of Chapter II will focus on the changes in Istanbul and the changing working class in Istanbul.

In Chapter III, the new repertoire used by white-collar employees will be examined in two periods. The section following the introduction will examine the completely new repertoire of

white-collar employees in the first period of the white-collar mobilizations. This period will cover the initial mobilization of IBM resistance in 2008 and examine the new white-collar mobilizations respectively until the Gezi resistance. In the last sub-section (3.2.3) a new internet based repertoire of leaking will be examined because leaking appeared as an individual tool of revenge for white-collar employees and was then copied by new white-collar mobilizations in their struggles.

The third section will examine white-collar involvement in the Gezi resistance. It has already been mentioned that Gezi triggered a debate on classes in Turkey, and white-collar employees were the main subject of the debate. Therefore, the third section will examine the Gezi resistance not in all its aspects but through the lens of white-collar employees. Following that, the new white-collar mobilizations that appeared during and after the Gezi resistance will be analyzed.

In the fourth section of chapter III white-collar mobilization within the trade union confederations and their new trade unions will be examined. This section will demonstrate how changes in working class structure lead to changes in the traditional union structures.

The final section of chapter III will draw a general picture of white-collar employees' organization practices. Five distinguishing features in white-collar mobilizations will be examined: (1) White-collar activists are pushing traditional unions to change their bureaucratic structures and adopt more democratic and horizontal structures; (2) They are gaining experience through their new repertoire and increasing their organizational capacities; (3) They use their capabilities in the service of blue-collar workers and have an influence on the collective actions of blue-collar workers; (4) They are building international networks by by-passing the bureaucratic national trade unions; and, last but not least, (5) There is an over-representation of women in white-collar activism.

1. Chapter I: Theories of Classes and the Repertoire of Collective Actions

1.1 Placing the “New” into the “Change”

The issue of classes under capitalism has always been the subject of significant debate because capitalism, as a dynamic socio-economic system, permanently transforms society. Changing production techniques, labor processes and the rise and fall of industries through the decades constitute the roots of the debate on classes, together with their political conclusions on the working class. Changes in social relations under capitalism lead to the emergence of new sectors and new professions. However, the dichotomy of old and new lacks relational analysis when it is not placed into the context of changing social relations. Therefore, this chapter begins with a short introduction on how the relationship between the old and the new needs to be analyzed.

Theories of new classes began to be developed in the 18th century by authors such as Ricardo, Smith and Feuerbach. However, none saw the new classes -the bourgeoisie and the proletariat- as the source of social change. Capitalism was still a work in progress and these classes were about to develop. Before Karl Marx, classes and the class struggle were not seen as the source of social change. Feuerbach, for instance, was interested in the essence of humans in his analysis of classes. Marx accused him of not seeing history as a human activity. When Feuerbach looked at Manchester, emphasized Marx, he saw only factories and machines and, a hundred years ago, spinning-wheels and weaving-rooms. (Marx, 2010a, p. 40). Marx saw how dynamic capitalism is but also how it changed social relations:

“The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honoured and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its paid wage-laborers.” (Marx, 2010b, p. 487)

Marx writes, in the *Poverty of Philosophy*, that “Social relations are closely bound up with productive forces. In acquiring new productive forces men change their mode of product and in changing their mode of production, in changing the way of earning their living, they change all their social relations. The hand-mill gives you society with the feudal lord; the steam-mill, society with the industrial capitalist” (Marx, 2010c, p. 166). The hand-mill was a new technological development and it generated new classes. The steam-mill was a further development in production relations which generated new classes and a new society. However, Marx did, of course, not mean that every single technological development generates new classes and new social systems. It was important, for Marx, to understand how ownership of the means of production and the relations between classes function within an ongoing process of history in order to grasp the change from one social structure to another.

Since the 19th century, capitalism underwent significant changes. From the emergence of monopoly capital⁷ to the golden age of capitalism⁸ changes in class structure showed hardly any similarities with class structure in the 19th century. Meanwhile, at the end of the golden age of capitalism the movement of 1968⁹ broke out. This generated a new repertoire of collective action. Masses were not marching behind a vanguard party and their demands included class, gender, environment, and liberty rights. It was then that the debate on classes began because these “new masses” and the “new movements” needed to be explained.

As early as 1951, C. Wright Mills wrote *White Collar: The American Middle Classes* in which he examines changes in American class structure. He showed that the number of white-collar employees in the service industries exceeded that of manual manual in America and he

⁷ In his introduction of Braverman’s *Labor and Monopol Capital* John Bellamy Foster defines monopoly capital as a system in which the whole economic and social regime is dominated by giant corporations.

⁸ The golden age of capitalism is a periodisation of the global economic boom in the post-WWII era. Economic historians generally agree on 1950 as the start of this age, and it ends with the oil crisis of 1973 (Middleton, 2000, p.3).

⁹ In May 1968 thousands of students took to the streets of Paris. Their protests triggered a wave of social movements around the world.

categorized all white-collar employees as middle class. But for many others, it was 1968 that opened their eyes to changes in class structure. Defining the “new” became an important topic and many authors joined the debate on classes: the “new lower middle class” (Mayer, 1975), the “professional and managerial class” (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979), the “new class” (Gouldner, 1979), the “new middle class” (Wright, 1978), the “new working class” (Mallet, 1975) were some of the most debated theories on classes. These new class theories mostly considered professionals and managers as a new class or a new middle class, while the old middle class was seen to consist of independent producers.

In *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century* (1974) Harry Braverman made a significant contribution with his analysis of changing labor processes. Braverman was aware that the driving force of change were the inherent contradictions of capitalism and this change could only be defined by understanding it as part of the history of social relations. Changing labor processes in the age of monopoly capitalism led to changes in class relations and in class structure. Regarding the “new working class” theories, Braverman made an important critique:

“I cannot accept the arbitrary conception of a "new working class" that has been developed by some writers during the past decade. According to this conception, the "new working class" embraces those occupations which serve as the repositories for specialized knowledge in production and administration: engineers, technicians, scientists, lower managerial and administrative aides and experts, teachers, etc. Rather than examine the entire working population and learn how it has been altered, which portions have grown and which have declined or stagnated, these analysts have selected one portion of employment as the sole focus of their analysis. What saves this procedure from being completely arbitrary in the eyes of its practitioners is that they use the word new in a double sense: it refers to occupations that are new in

the sense of having been recently created or enlarged, and also in the sense of their gloss, presumed advancement, and to the old.” (Braverman, 1998, p. 18)

Braverman argued that the "new working class" was considered as educated labor, better paid, somewhat privileged, etc. According to these theories, manual labor was the "old working class". A new class refers to a difference from an old one and this difference can only be analyzed through examining the changes in the processes of production. Stressing the new without showing how this “new” appeared and which processes led to its emergence, leaves the concept vulnerable.

Throughout history new industries, new trades, new technologies, new lifestyles appear and disappear. Where the consequences of these changes are not considered within the changes of a totality of social relations, they remain hanging on air. Harman argues that theories such as “farewell to the working class” (Gorz, 1982) mostly analyze a frozen picture of a moving film (Harman, 1989, p. 81). Harman’s analogy also fits the theories of new classes.

The “new classes” theories of the most influential authors will be elaborated in the next section in order to demonstrate how this productive debate evolved from new classes to theories stressing the change in labor processes and class structure.

1.2 Debate on Classes

The post-World War II period, up to the early 1970s, is regarded as the golden age of capitalism (Middleton, 2000, p.3). Capitalism grew rapidly in this period. Class structures were reshaped by technological improvements in production, the increasing dominance of finance in world markets, and the expansion of services sector. The movement of 1968 emerged during a downturn in the golden age. Socio-economic changes, together with this movement, became the main sources of the debate on classes in the 1970s. Hyman emphasizes that authors involved in the debate on classes discuss the potentially vanguard role of these occupational groups by focusing on 1968 in France (Hyman, 198, p. 29). 1968 generated new political fields, new struggles, and a new repertoire of collective action. These changes in labor processes, class formations, and collective action required explanation.

Focusing on changes in class structure and social movements gave rise to some early conclusions, such as the claim that class antagonisms were disappearing with the expansion of the middle class (Bell, 1973), farewell to the working class (Gorz, 1982) or even "the end of history" with the collapse of the Soviet Union (Fukuyama, 1992). No less enthusiastically, the centrality of the "working class" was replaced -though not always positively- by the "new petty bourgeoisie" (Poulantzas, 1975), the "new lower middle class" (Mayer, 1975), the "professional and managerial class" (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979), the "new class" (Gouldner, 1979), the "new working class" (Mallet, 1975), the "service class" (Goldthorpe, 1982) and the "new middle class" (Wright, 1978; Carchedi, 1977). With the expansion of information and communication techniques the term "knowledge workers" began to be used by authors such as Drucker (1999) and Castells (2005). These new "knowledge workers" were labelled the "gold-collar workers" by others (Kelley, 1985; Roe, 2001). The changing structure of the working class was elaborated by Braverman (1998) and Callinicos (1989a) in response to these new class theories.

None of these analyses were free from the political attitudes of their authors. This productive debate was at the same time a debate on the sources of radical change and of left politics. The authors involved indicated not only their explanation of changing social classes but also their political predictions on the future of society.

Poulantzas was one of the most influential contributors to this debate. His starting point is the analysis of monopoly capital and imperialism and the impact of these periods on social formations. Such sectors as banking, marketing, and advertising expanded rapidly during this period of capitalism. Only workers engaged in commodity production are productive labor according to Poulantzas. All other sectors employ non-productive wage-earners (Poulantzas, 1975, p. 212).

Poulantzas considered the majority of white-collar employees to be 'supervisory' and 'mental' labor, and placed them into the class of a "new petty bourgeoisie". The new petty bourgeoisie (non-productive wage earners) and the old petty bourgeoisie (small-scale production and ownership, independent craftsmen and traders) occupied different places in economic relations, however they had the same effect at the political and ideological level (Poulantzas, 1975, p. 205). The new petty bourgeoisie enjoys no ownership of the means of production, but it is ideologically hostile to the working class. Its members are individualistic. Poulantzas argued that the new petty bourgeoisie is situated between the two polarized classes in the class struggle (Wright, 1985, p. 40). He claimed that his analysis aimed to know the class enemy well and to establish correct class alliances for a revolutionary strategy (Poulantzas, 1975, p. 9), by which he meant that workers must avoid any alliance with this new class.

Contrary to Poulantzas, Gouldner (1979) claimed that a "new class" which was a rival to the bourgeoisie with its cultural capital was emerging after the 1960s. He argued that the alliance of the technical intelligentsia (technical reason) and intellectuals (critical mind) would

generate a new class against the bourgeoisie. As the source of radical politics, this new class could have a universal claim for power through its theoretical knowledge of society (Szelenyi & Martin, 1988). Gouldner's new class was rising especially with the increasing number of university students in the West.

Barbara and John Ehrenreich (1979) also developed a new class theory. They claimed that a separate "professional-managerial class" (PMC) emerged in the Western world. The Ehrenreichs' theory of classes was based on four basic classes: workers, capitalists, petty bourgeoisie, and the professional-managerial class. Professional and managerial employees (engineers, managers, school teachers, professors, journalists, entertainers, social workers, doctors, lawyers, scientists, experts in child rearing, etc.) are a distinct class by themselves because of their role in the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations within everyday life (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 25). For instance, the proliferation of professions like teaching, social work, and journalism was necessary for preserving the ideological hegemony of the ruling class over the rest of society, for the depoliticization of class antagonisms, and for the fragmentation of working class culture, solidarity, and consciousness (Burris, 1980). Therefore, this class functions as a zone between workers and the bourgeoisie.

Mallet (1975) defined the technically qualified labor of the blue-collar and white-collar employees as a "new working class". He argued that unskilled labor is declining even in the factories. The number of trained technicians, who exercise some managerial functions due to automation, is expanding. It is an overall trend that a skilled working class is expanding but still the white-collar employees are numerically a much greater proportion than technically qualified industrial workers among the new working class. He aimed to explain the changes in the labor force, but while labeling them as new working class he underestimated the processes of deterioration and deskilling. He found a radical potential for social change in his new working class.

Carchedi contributes to the debate with his theory of the new middle class. He argues that the old middle class has legal and economic ownership of the means of production, whereas the new middle class has neither legal nor economic ownership. Their place is contradictory, taking on the functions of the capitalist class and the working class at same time. Carchedi argues that the new middle class had been undergoing proletarianization through the 1970s as a result of two processes: the devaluation of labor power (from skilled to average labor), and the shortening of the time devoted to capital's global functions. The former meant deskilling, prestige loss, shrinking wages, and the latter meant reduction in time spent on supervision and control. More and more middle class members were joining the collective production process instead of the management process (Carchedi, 1977).

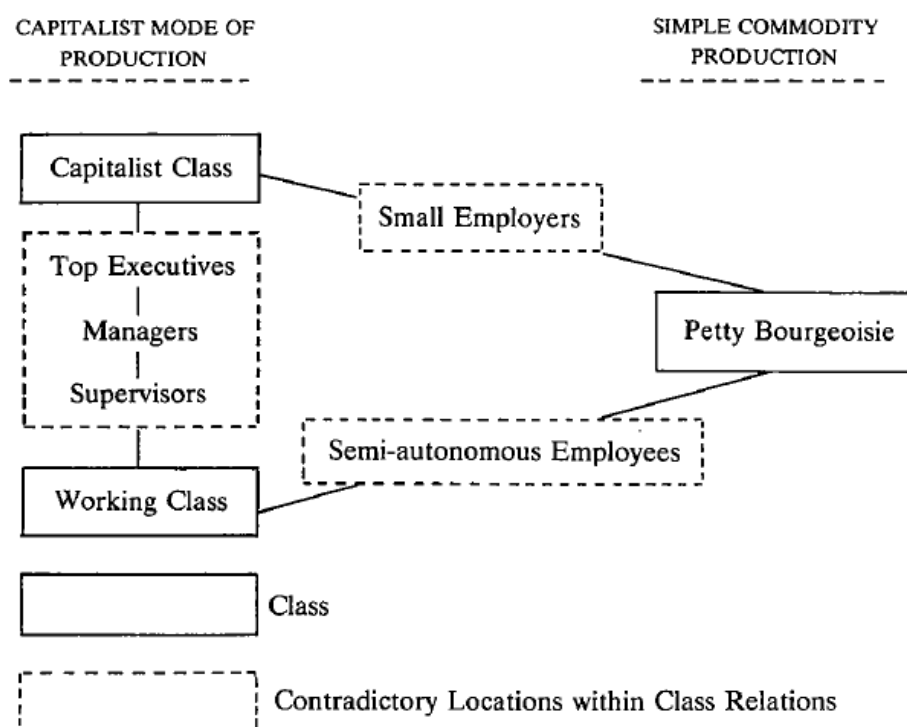
Erik Olin Wright, following Carchedi, makes an analytical investigation of class positions and provides a more concrete definition of the new middle class. He argues that Marx's main focus was the abstract polarization of classes in history, like masters and slaves, lords and serfs, bourgeoisie and proletariat. Non-polarized class locations, on the other hand, were given peripheral importance. Wright emphasized that while Marx mentioned several class locations such as the lumpen proletariat, the industrial bourgeoisie, the middle classes, he did not develop a sustained theoretical analysis of these categories (Wright, 1985, p. 7). Capitalism would divide society into two opposite sides for Marx, but monopoly capitalism enlarged sections of managers, administrators, engineers and some other professions which have some degree of domination over other workers. These sections of wage earners were mostly regarded as white-collar employees.

Wright figured out that some of these employees occupy a "contradictory class location" by possessing the characteristics of two different classes. Contradictory class locations emerge from the capital-labor relationship: "It is possible to isolate three central processes underlying the basic capital-labor relationship: control over the physical means of production; control

over labor-power; control over investments and resource-allocation” (Wright, 1978, p. 73). These processes do not coincide perfectly and this non-coincidence is the source of contradictory class relations. Capitalists have control over the three processes whereas workers are completely excluded from them. Top executives, managers, and supervisors, however, have the characteristics of capitalists through their domination of workers in the production process. They have some degree of hire and fire competence. They are owners of capitalist assets and can be fired and hired too. As wage earners who have no full control over the production process, some ranks of managers show the characteristics of workers against capitalists (Wright, 1985, p. 45).

Wright’s analysis of contradictory class locations did not only consist of the category of top executives, managers, and supervisors between capitalists and workers. There were other contradictory locations between the three main social classes. His category of small employees represents a contradictory class location between the petty bourgeoisie and the capitalists. His last contradictory location is that of semi-autonomous employees between the petty bourgeoisie and the workers. All of these contradictory class locations constitute the new middle class.

Table 3- Wright’s Basic Class Map of Capitalist Society



Source: Wright, *Classes*, 1985, p. 48.

Wright changed his theory several times, taking critiques into account¹⁰. He was convinced that his theory centered on relations of domination -which the contradictory locations argument relies on- does not provide the objective interests of classes, “exploitation, unlike domination, intrinsically implies a set of opposing material interests” (Wright, 1989, p. 5). Even though he changed his categorization of class locations, he mentioned in *Debate on Classes* (1989) that the new middle class -by new middle class he still meant managers, supervisors, and bureaucrats- is subjected to deterioration as a result of “deskilling, proletarianization, and routinization of authority” and therefore a class alliance between the new middle class and the proletariat became possible (Wright, 1989, p. 31).

Wright aimed to include relations of exploitation in his new middle classes theory in *Debate on Classes*, however he was accused of damaging his theory by Callinicos (1989b). Callinicos

¹⁰ As the 1980s were years of many post-Marxist theories, different types of domination relations like racial, sexual, national, religious, etc., were important subjects of theoretical and political debates. Wright’s initial aim was to fill an important gap in the Marxist class analysis; he did not intend to provide new ground for post-Marxists.

emphasized that exploitation cannot be separated from domination in the labor process. Without domination it is not possible to extract surplus. In order to categorize exploitation relations Wright divided the assets of the means of production into two groups: organizational and skill assets. However, changing the direction of class analysis from domination to organizational and skill assets and abandoning contradictory class locations made Wright's theory even weaker (Callinicos, 1989b, p. 93).

Callinicos argued that Wright's earlier contradictory class locations theory suffers from some weaknesses. He found Wright's class categories formal and static. Wright was "concerned to plot out a 'class map' of contemporary capitalism, without raising the question of the historical transformations which created, and sustain this class-structure" (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 29).

Based on this critique, Callinicos improved on Wright's contradictory class location concept in his theory of the new middle class. His starting point was white-collar employees. He separated them into two sections: managerial, professional, and administrative employees on the one hand, and clerical workers on the other. He argued that these groups of employees embraced three distinctive class positions. The first is the capitalist class. Contrary to Wright's new middle class theory, Callinicos placed senior managers and administrators into the capitalist class even though they are wage earners. Legally they are not owners of any means of production, but in practice they have almost full control over the means of production. The second class position is the working class. A majority of white-collar employees -mass of clerical workers, the "lower professions" like teachers, nurses, draughtsmen, lab technicians- belong to the working class. And the third class position is the "new middle class" based on Wright's contradictory class position concept. The new middle class consists of professional, managerial, and administrative employees. The new middle

class consists of wage earners who perform functions on behalf of capital in the process of production (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 18).

The new middle class is distinguished from the capitalist class in two respects: control of the labor process and access to the upper classes. Capitalists have “strategic control” over the means of production and the labor process. The new middle class employs “operational control” over the labor process, controlling the day-to-day use of resources within the limits laid down by those who have strategic control. As for the issue of access, the capitalist class usually inherits its strategic control and wealth. Through entrepreneurship abilities other classes may jump into the capitalist class as well. The new middle class gains its operational control within the career-structure through their skills. This control is given from above. The new middle class owe their contradictory location to the capitalists (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 32).

Regarding the, Callinicos agrees with Wright that semi-autonomous employees constitute another contradictory class location. He gives the example of university lecturers. He argues that university lecturers are wage-laborers without being subject to continuous surveillance and control at work. They decide what to teach and how to teach it. Short teaching hours give them plenty of time to pursue their own research (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 33). This semi-autonomy from their employers makes them members of the new middle class.

In sum, the new classes debate mostly centered on the class location of white-collar employees. This was a consequence of the expansion of the services sector and university graduates since the 1950s. White-collar employees were initially classified as the “new middle class” by Mills (1951), and then Poulantzas (1975) defined them as the “new petty bourgeoisie” based on the claim that the services sector employs non-productive labor. Mallet (1975) called them a new class due to their technical qualifications. The Ehrenreichs’ (1979) separated professionals and managers out of white-collar employees from clerical workers

and defined them as the professional-managerial class. Gouldner (1979), with a similar analysis, claimed that professionals constitute a “new class” with their cultural capital. Carchedi (1977) found contradictory processes and positions within white-collar employees. Based on this, he called those in contradictory positions the new middle class. Wright (1978) also analysed contradictory positions and categorized them as contradictory class locations between three core classes (the bourgeoisie, workers, and the petty bourgeoisie). Finally, Callinicos (1989a) categorized white-collar employees into three groups: capitalists, workers, and those in a contradictory class location (the new middle class).

1.3 The Changing Working Class

The working class has always been changing throughout the history of capitalism because capitalism is a very dynamic socio-economic system. In 1844, the majority of the working class was textile workers in Britain; in the early years of the 20th century, the core of the working class was in heavy industry; in the 1930s, it was motors and light-engineering (Harman, 1989, p. 80). Since the 1960s, a majority of the working class consists of white-collar workers in the services sector. Far from white-collar employees constituting a new class, their subordination to capital increasingly pushes them towards manual labor.

Since the 1950s, there has been an enormous expansion in the number of "white-collar employees" in the West. While the number of industrial workers was in decline, the productivity of industrial labor was growing thanks to technological improvements in production.

Throughout the debate on classes there were some agreements among the authors concerning what was changing in the working class. First of all, class composition was changing. It has been moving from an industrial-labor-intensive working class to a white-collar-intensive working class since. This composition has also changed from a hardly literate labor force in manual jobs towards a highly educated labor force in white-collar jobs, mostly in services. Secondly, labor processes were changing. Privileged positions and scarce skills were becoming the subject of degradation. These structural changes had a significant impact on relations between employees, and between employees and employers. The following section will examine these changes respectively.

1.3.1 Changing Composition of the Working Class

All authors participating in the debate on classes agreed that the share of white-collar employees in services has been increasing in the labor force since the 1950s, and that higher-education among white-collar employees has also been increasing rapidly. The central role of students in the anti-Vietnam war and 1968 movements led authors to pay more attention to the importance of higher education in class formations. However, while all authors agreed on the changing structure of the working class -towards highly-educated white-collar employees in the services sector- white-collar employees were analyzed in two different categories: Clerical workers and other routine non-manual, on one hand, and professionals and managers, on the other. Therefore, these two categories will be analysed separately in the following pages.

Callinicos showed that the percentage of clerks in 1851 in Britain was only 0.8% of the total labor force, while in 1951 it was 10.5%. Another striking statistic was the percentage of female clerks. It was only 0.1% of total clerks in 1851 but had risen to 59% of the female labor force by 1951 (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 21). In 1979, the share of clerks in the labor force increased to 16% (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 14). A similar situation exists for other countries. As a result of their rapid expansion clerical workers became the subject of the debate on classes. However, there are relatively less discussions on this group of white-collar employees in the debate on classes. Only Poulantzas place them into the “new petty bourgeoisie” and Mallet place them into the “new class” as long as they are qualified laborers. Many others (Wright, 1978; Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979; Callinicos, 1989a) consider clerical workers as working class.¹¹

¹¹ Turkey’s great economic transformation occurred in the neoliberal era (1980-2015). While Istanbul was rising as a trade, finance, and services center, the number of clerical workers with university degrees rapidly expanded. Therefore, in the debate on class in Turkey, which will be taken up in Chapter II, clerical workers were mostly included in the new middle class.

It is important to compare the transformation of clerks in history with present white-collar employees with university degrees¹². Callinicos examines clerical workers in Britain between the 1850s and the 1970s in order to demonstrate the changes in this group of workers qualitatively and quantitatively as an example of the changing working class. He explains that nineteenth century clerical workers were predominantly male and working in small units. Their work was book-keeping, correspondence and the like. They had close contact with their employers. This is called “proximity to authority” by Hyman (1983, p. 4). They were comparatively educated employees who had some degree of knowledge in arithmetic, book-keeping, and foreign languages. As they were better off they had different consumption habits, like living in better neighborhoods, wearing good clothes, going to the opera, in comparison to blue-collar workers (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 21). Their privileged conditions were largely undermined with the introduction of compulsory education in 1870 because the education level of the labor force increased thereafter. Clerical workers were mostly in a contradictory class location with their degree of discretion and close relationship with employers. However, in the 20th century the rapid expansion of clerical work led to skill degradation and loss of their discretion at work (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 36).

Explaining the change in professionals and managers, the second group of white-collar employees, is more complicated than clerks, because theoretical debate about this group of employees is much bigger. The Ehrenreichs show that the share of professional and managerial positions in the American labor force rose from 1% at the end of the 1930s to 24% in 1972. In a recent article, they claimed that this share rose to 35% in 2006 (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 2013, p. 4). The Ehrenreichs’ broad definition of professionals is the main reason for this picture. They do not limit themselves to contradictory class locations as defined by

¹² The transformation of clerical workers from privileged workers to routine clerical workers in the West has important similarities with the transformation of white-collar employees in Turkey in the newly rising services sector since 1980. This transformation will be examined in Chapter II.

Wright and Callinicos. Therefore, almost all college graduates fall into the category of professionals. Callinicos shows that in Britain 30% of the labor force were professional, administrative, and managerial employees in 1979. However, he shows, through another source, that 70% of all professionals were actually lower professionals and more than half of them were women in 1971 in Britain¹³ (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 36). By giving these statistics he aims to show that a significant majority of PMC in fact belongs to the working class.

In their recent writings the Ehrenreichs' accepted that since the neoliberal era the PMC has changed significantly in the USA. Liberal professions, especially medicine and law, have largely been taken into a corporate framework since the 1980s. For instance, new technologies were too expensive for physicians, thus a growing number of physicians were employed by hospitals. In 1983, only 24% of physicians were salaried, whereas by 2010 the percentage exceeded 50% (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 2013, p. 7). Universities were still small and elite in the 1930s - about one million students (10% of the college-aged population) were enrolled in colleges and universities- and the vast majority of them were still not-for-profit universities (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 2013, p. 5). Large corporations began to employ large numbers of professionals after the 1960s. There were fewer than 40 law firms employing 50 or more lawyers in 1960, today it is counted in the hundreds. There are currently 21 law firms employing more than a thousand lawyers (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 2013, p. 7).

As was mentioned in the previous section, the Ehrenreichs' point of departure for defining the PMC as a separate class was its role in the reproduction of capitalist culture and capitalist class relations within everyday life (Callinicos, 1989a, p. 25). The Ehrenreichs' claimed that while PMC was the main source of new social movements like the anti-Vietnam war movement and the black rights movement, they also supported the Reagan government and

¹³ Callinicos mentions that it is very hard to find statistics for Marxist categories. Therefore, he uses data from different surveys. The same difficulty exists for the empirical chapters of this dissertation.

his neoliberal policies which ruined labor rights in the 1980s (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 2013, p. 6). The reason behind this contradictory political behavior was that it is a class advocating rational management of the workplace and society due their high education and position in production relations. The Ehrenreichs argued that PMC was previously a class with a distinct role in society; but they are now mostly employees who have lost the capability to act in their own interest (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 2013, p. 11) The Ehrenreichs explain the change in professionals in the following words:

“The debt-ridden unemployed and underemployed college graduates, the revenue-starved teachers, the overworked and underpaid service professionals, even the occasional whistle-blowing scientist or engineer- all face the same kind of situation that confronted skilled craft-workers in the early 20th century and all American industrial workers in the late 20th century. In the coming years, we expect to see the remnants of the PMC increasingly making common cause with the remnants of the traditional working class for, at a minimum, representation in the political process. This is the project that the Occupy movement initiated and spread, for a time anyway, worldwide.” (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 2013, p. 11)

Level of education is another important indicator of the changing working class because in the debate on classes knowledge or skill issues were related to higher education. Almost all the "new class" (Gouldner, 1979; Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979; Mallet, 1975) or "new middle class" (Carchedi, 1977) theoreticians based their theories on the expansion of higher education among white-collar employees. These have better wages, live in better conditions and thus, exhibit different political behaviour. Since some of the most influential authors in the debate on class (Mills, 1951; Braverman, 1974; Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979) were American and based their theories on American statistics, it would be best to take the

statistics¹⁴ of people with college diplomas in the USA as an example. In 1940, 5.5% of the male and 3.8% of the female population had a college diploma. In 1980, these numbers were 20.9% and 13.6%, respectively. However, since 1980, not only have the numbers continued to grow, but the gap between male and female graduates has also rapidly closed. In 2015, the figures were 32.3% of the male and 32.7% of the female population (Statista, 2016). While it is possible to find similar statistics for other countries, drawing a conclusion that a new class is rising was an over-ambitious claim.

Education alone is not considered to be sufficient in the creation of a new class, but only leading to a change in class composition. For instance, in a study published in the 1970s about electronic data processing in New York, it was demonstrated that companies increasingly required high school diplomas for their employees, not because such qualification provided them with necessary skills but with a discipline to go to work every Monday (Braverman, 1998, p. 232). It can be similarly argued that today university diploma rarely guarantees any skills. A university diploma instead prepares students for a competitive labor market so that they adapt themselves more easily to career making. Having changed their position on PMC in 2013, the Ehrenreichs now claim that college education is preferred by employers not because it gives students any specialized knowledge or skills but because it provides the discipline employers require, such as following instructions, meeting deadlines, and mastering a bureaucratic mode of communication (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 2013, p. 10). Business values like competitiveness and hard work are also taught in universities. As a result, a new category of jobs emerge, which can be named “jobs that graduates do” rather than “graduate jobs” (Purcell et al, 2003 cited Özdemir, 2014, p. 117). This means that the distinction between clerical and professional labor of the 1970s gets blurred with the expansion of university graduates since the 1980s.

¹⁴ The data shows the percentage of the U.S. population who have completed four years of college or more from 1940 to 2015, by gender.

Besides its usefulness for capitalists -providing discipline and reducing the costs of labor- higher education also creates a cultural division between blue and white-collar workers. This cultural division has a serious impact on workers' collective action. Regarding the differences between blue and white-collar workers, Gorz stressed that white-collar workers "rebel not as proletarians, but against being treated as proletarians"¹⁵ (Gorz, 1976 cited Hyman, 1983, p. 40).

To conclude, differences in income, job content, education, and lifestyle give white-collar employees the appearance of a separate class. Indeed, they are the transitory effects of a temporary phase of capitalism (Hyman, 1983, p.18). As the transformation of labor processes and production techniques continue to change capitalism, such phases will continue to appear and disappear¹⁶. The structure of the working class has been changing since the 1950s towards a highly educated white-collar working class. However, this structural change was also a consequence of changes in the labor process. Changes in labor processes have a significant impact on workers' status in the workplaces and in society. Eventually, prestige loss becomes one of the most important reasons for white-collar mobilization.

1.3.2 Skill Degradation and Prestige Loss of White-collar Employees

The reorganization of labor processes¹⁷ in workplaces through technological advancements like the computerization of office work and management techniques generate two outcomes: skill degradation and prestige loss. An analysis of labor processes includes the analysis of the division of labor in workplaces. In the debate on classes, the most important difference among

¹⁵ This is a valid definition for most white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul since 2008. It will be explained in Chapter III that white-collar employees have a "negotiationist" tendency rather than militancy in their collective actions. The main reason for this is that they consider themselves the equals of their managers at least in terms of knowledge and skills. When they are not taken seriously by management they take militant collective action.

¹⁶ It is important to note that these phases vary from country to country. Not all countries follow the same path. The deindustrialization phase in some countries corresponds to rapid industrialization in some others. Turkey, for instance, is an industrializing country, whereas Istanbul has more similarities with the West. This will be explained in detail in Chapter II.

¹⁷ Labor processes mean organization of the factors of production (land, labor, capital) for surplus extraction. This process includes relations of domination, like management of labor in workplaces.

authors of contradictory class locations (Wright, 1978; Callinicos, 1989a, Braverman, 1998) is their analysis of labor processes. By looking at labor processes they point out the domination relations in workplaces. Changing domination relations cause subordination of some of the employees to others (supervisors, coordinators, managers, etc.). Management control and deskilling becomes the source of discontent among workers.

Since the emergence of mass production and the domination of national markets by giant corporations (monopoly capital), the division of labor in large workplaces has become a field of scientific management. This is called Taylorist management. Before Taylor, management was only for keeping workers at work during working hours, which Taylor called ordinary management. Taylor calculated every action of labor, divided tasks among them and calculated the most efficient ways of production (Braverman, 1998, p. 70). Taylor's achievement was not only in controlling the work but also controlling the decisions that are made during work. Capitalists first took control of labor power and then of every other action by labor. Labor was now transformed into an objective element of the labor process controlled by management. This management technique is called scientific management (Braverman, 1998, p. 119).

At first, blue-collar labor fell into the hands of Taylorist management. Every move by workers began to be calculated and managed by clerical workers. In order to make calculations for large numbers of workers, the number of clerical workers whose work is to make such calculations for managers increased rapidly through the 20th century. Engineering took control of the design and content of products from the hands of the worker. Manual and intellectual labor were separated from each other.

Following blue-collar labor, white-collar labor was also subjected to Taylorist management. As the number of clerical workers, managers and engineers multiplied in workplaces,

especially in the services sector, the management of offices became a necessity. This brought in the process of “scientific management” of office labor. As had happened in production processes, office work was also were divided into separate parts. Every action by office workers began to be recorded, calculated, subdivided, and simplified by managers in the office. As a result, clerks lost their independent judgment and control over their work and became the subjects of management.

Similarly to the factory, the technical division of labor within offices and the mechanization of offices changed the labor processes of office work. As production techniques changed with the introduction of machines, so did office work with the introduction of office machines like typewriters, computers, communication tools and so on. It might be possible to make an analogy between the introduction of the assembly line into factory and the introduction of computers and communication tools into offices. Assembly lines changed even the shape of factories. Industrial infrastructure was reshaped to allow thousands of workers to work collectively in large facilities. Similarly, computers and telecommunication facilities required modernization of offices. The emergence of plazas¹⁸ was one result of this change.

Once Taylorist management entered offices, the division between mental and manual labor began to lose its contrast. The functions of thought and planning were concentrated in the hands of a smaller number of managers. The rest of office work, be it clerical labor or other forms of office labor, was reduced to standardized, routine, simple tasks (Braverman, 1998, p. 218). Braverman calls this process the “industrialization of office work¹⁹”. Wright shares the same idea and adds that many skilled manual workers use more mental labor than routinized clerical workers (Wright, 1985, p. 154).

¹⁸ Plazas are workplaces with a modernized infrastructure for hundreds or even thousands of office workers to work simultaneously in single facility. A major difference is that many firms operate in a single plaza.

¹⁹ Braverman was analysing offices in the USA during the 1970s. In Turkey such big offices appeared in the era of neoliberalism, during the 1990s. But it became a widespread phenomena in the 2000s. Clerical factories appeared with the emergence of plazas and the expansion of large service companies such as law, insurance, banking, call center companies and so on.

Braverman emphasized that skill degradation is a regular process in the capitalist organization of workplaces. Creative skills and authority of labor have been stolen by management techniques. Developments in labor processes lead to a deterioration in working conditions. Skill degradation goes hand in hand with shrinking wages. While office labor increasingly employs routinized manual works; shrinking wages gradually takes white-collar employees closer to blue-collar workers. This degradation creates the feeling of loss of prestigious status in white-collar employees. Mills calls this “status panic” (Mills, 1951, p. 239). This process, according to Crampton (1976), was the main factor behind the unionization wave of white-collar employees in the 1970s in Britain. In the era of neoliberalism labor processes accelerated the prestige loss in white-collar employees²⁰.

1.3.3 Changing Forms of Work in the Neoliberal Era: Precarity

Capitalism constantly creates new sectors and skills and destroys others. Scarce skills and education provide some privileges and prestigious status to workers in these positions. Not so ago, they began to lose their prestigious status as a result of the expansion of education and the growing number of workers possessing the same skills. Capitalism has never provided job security to workers, but there are some periods when social security systems favor labor.

In the wake of World War II, welfare states were established in a small part of the world. It was the golden age of capitalism, but also a period when labor organizations were strong in the West. The political struggles of the working class and competition with the “communist world” resulted in welfare states. Labor movements managed to push up wages and their social rights. The expansion of white-collar employees corresponded to such conditions in the

²⁰ In the case of Turkey the prestige loss of white-collar employees happened much faster than in the West. Working in the newly rising services sector in Istanbul in the 1990s was a golden age for white-collar employees. This was followed by a period of status fall in the economic crisis of 2001. This is presented as one of the determinant factors in the emergence of white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul starting in 2008.

West. In the neoliberal era, as welfare states were being whittled away, a new debate on the changing forms of employment appeared: the debate on precarity²¹.

In Kalleberg's words, precarity means "employment that is uncertain, unpredictable, and risky from the point of view of the worker" (Kalleberg, 2009). Bourdieu (1998) regards *précarité* as the root of problematic social issues in the 21st century and Beck (2000) announces the emergence of a "risk society" and a "new political economy of insecurity" (Kalleberg, 2009). With the global financial crisis of 2008, the Western world witnessed a wave of riots, demonstrations, and strikes in which a young population of students, migrants, and white-collar workers participated. Standing announced these groups as a new dangerous class: the precariat²² (Standing, 2011).

Kalleberg defines two fundamental differences between precarious work in the neoliberal era and precarity in the pre-World War II period. First, this is an era of global mobility of labor, commodities, production, and capital. Second, the services sector has placed itself at the center of economic relations, which leads to an expansion of white-collar occupations. Third, layoffs have become a strategy of restructuring the labor process for reducing labor costs and undermining workers' collective power. Fourth, by discrediting Marxist theories, new market values remained unchallenged. Finally, precarious work has now spread to every sector and occupation, including professional and managerial jobs (Kalleberg, 2004).

²¹ Turkey followed a completely different path. While Turkey has never been a real welfare state, the public sector employed a great majority of white-collar workers, especially those with higher education, with job security until the neoliberal era. Since the 1980s, privatization, the expansion of the public sector, and the growth of foreign firms in Turkey has changed this employment situation. The private sector never guarantees positions, however the 1990s were golden years for white-collar employees. Therefore, precarity was not the main concern of labor studies until the 2000s.

²² Guy Standing, in his book of *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, wrote that the precariat "is a class-in-the-making, if not yet a class-for-itself" (Standing, 2011, p. 7). It is not the old working class, the precariat is young and suffering from indecent jobs and status loss in the society. Standing divided the precariat into three social groups; the ones coming from working class origin, the ones coming from universities, and the immigrants. Although they have different social consciousness they share the same precariousness, they were united in fears and insecurities. This new class is below the proletariat which has been shrinking since the last few decades (Standing, 2013).

Kalleberg's conclusion is that precarity contributes to greater economic inequality, insecurity and instability. For white-collar employees, precarious work pushed skilled workers to maintain themselves as employable in a "fast-changing economic environment in which skills become rapidly obsolete," and they "are more likely to return to school again and again to retool their skills as they shift careers" (Kalleberg, 2004).

There are seven types of precarity according to Özdemir: job insecurity (no employment guarantee); precarity in forms of employment (outsourcing, subcontracting, contracted employment, home-office work, temporary employment, etc.); social insecurity (informal employment without social security); income precarity (unemployment or being unable to work without social security payments); trade union precarity (prevention of unionization); democratic precarity (non-existence of workers' own democratic representative organizations); and confidence precarity (processes causing loss of confidence) (Özdemir, 2014, p. 40).

Blue- and white-collar workers all work under precarious conditions in the age of neoliberalism. What makes white-collar mobilizations put more stress on precarity²³ is their expectation of better conditions due to their higher education. The contradiction between career opportunities and precarity is the most important factor in white-collar action or inaction. It is possible to be a team leader and a manager after years of hard work. This increases a worker's wage and provides some degree of job security in the higher positions. On the other hand, only a limited percentage of workers can rise to these levels. The price of a career path is the submission of workers to precarious conditions.

Precarity in forms of employment carries special importance, with the new concept of flexibility. The basis of neoliberal employment is the flexibilisation of laws regulating

²³ Cases examined in this dissertation demonstrate that precarity and loss of prestige play a significant role in white-collar mobilizations.

employment conditions and the liberation of employers' use of labor in workplaces (Mütevellioglu & Işık, 2009, p. 182). One aspect of flexibility is the increasing freedom of employers to change employees and their skills in line with changes in the market. Another aspect is the increasing freedom of employers to change employees' job descriptions and responsibilities according to the needs of the company. A third is the increasing freedom of employers to determine wages according to changes in the labor market (Mütevellioglu & Işık, 2009, p. 183). Flexible working hours are the most important tools of flexible employment. As a result, flexible work reveals itself in forms of part-time employment, temporary employment through contract work or sub-contracting, outsourced employment, and unfixed working hours/working days.

Özüğurlu argues that flexibility and precarity have opposite effects on workers. Part-time, temporary, freelance or contract labour, going under the name of flexibility, play a dividing and heterogenizing role on workers, whereas precarity -job insecurity and permanent uncertainty- is a unifying condition for all (Özüğurlu, 2011). Based on Özüğurlu's explanation, Ercan and Oğuz (2015) argue that this unity can be obtained only through experience and struggle: a united struggle through social interaction between different sections of workers and also their interaction with broader sections of society (Ercan & Oğuz, 2015).

In short, changes in lifestyle and education levels are the consequences of changes in class structure. Class as a social relation is influenced deeply by this change. New positions emerge in the labor process, new sectors rise or decline, production techniques lead to changes in the labor process, mass production intensifies the competition in sales, marketing, transportation, finance, insurance and so on, but the core of capitalism does not change: "Accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake" (Marx, 2010d, p. 591).

We have so far covered a number of issues. First, “new class” theories -developed mostly in the 1970s and 1980s- were explored. The new middle class was given special importance because in Turkey’s debate on classes - to which a section will be devoted in Chapter II- it is the theory most referred to. Among the new class theories, Wright's (1983) and Callinicos' (1989a) views on the new middle classes distinguish themselves by looking at the emergence of contradictory class locations as a consequence of changes in the relations of production. While classes have always been changing, new classes emerge rarely. The section on the changing working class aims to place the working class into the context of ongoing processes of relations of production. While white-collar workers with higher education growing, this changing working class structure is far from creating a new class. Instead, the higher level education corresponds to the needs of capital and, together with office management techniques, white-collar employees experience degradation of skill and loss of prestige. With the introduction of neoliberal policies precarity leads to further deterioration in working conditions.

Changes in class structure and labor conditions pave the way for new collective actions. The next section will explain the theoretical background for collective action as a means of class struggle and give some examples from the West.

1.4 Repertoire of Collective Actions of the Working Class

One of the most important characteristics of the working class is their ability to act collectively. There are many types of collective action, including riots, strikes, demonstrations, boycotts, petitions, public meetings, social movements, and forming trade unions which can be employed by the working class. A collective action “consists of any goal-directed activity engaged in jointly by two or more individuals. It entails the pursuit of a common objective through joint action – that is, people working together in some fashion for a variety of reasons, often including the belief that doing so enhances the prospect of achieving the objective.” (Snow, Soule & Kriesi, 2004, p. 6).

Collective actions can be divided into two broad categories in general: institutional and non-institutional forms. Election campaigns by political parties are an example of an institutional collective action and social movements of non-institutional action (Snow, Soule & Kriesi, 2004, p. 7). Such a division fails to cover all collective actions, according to Tarrow. For instance, non-institutional forms of collective action overlap to some degree with interest groups or vice versa (Tarrow, 2011, p. 7). In order to include all forms of collective action, Tarrow developed the theory of contentious collective action. He defines it as follows:

“Collective action becomes contentious when it is used by people who lack regular access to representative institutions, who act in the name of new or unaccepted claims, and who behave in ways that fundamentally challenge others or authorities.” (Tarrow, 2011, p. 7)

In way, it became possible to analyse institutional and non-institutional forms of collective action in a broader concept of contention. Contentious collective actions provide an opportunity to see relations of many forms of collective actions, such public gatherings -as Tilly examines (2005)-, strikes, and revolutions during an episode or cycle of contention.

However, contentious collective actions occur between ordinary people and elites, not workplace struggles between employers and employees²⁴.

A repertoire of collective action includes any form of collective action experiences as mentioned above. Changes in repertoire occur rarely, because once a repertoire is learned it continues to be used for a long time. For it to change, either social relations in society need to change significantly or the old repertoire needs to become completely unfunctional. Only then does the need for a new repertoire emerge. For instance, once working class was concentrated in cities and factories, it created strikes. Currently workers know how to strike because generations of workers have struck before them. The strike is still one of the most important forms of collective action used by trade unions against employers or political power. Tilly defines a repertoire as:

“[A] limited set of routines that are learned, shared, and acted out through a relatively deliberate process of choice. Repertoires are learned cultural creations, but they do not descend from abstract philosophy or take shape as a result of political propaganda; they emerge from struggle.” (Tilly, 2005, p. 42)

Collective actions usually invent a new repertoire when they are challenged by their opponents²⁵. A new repertoire of working class actions, on the other hand, emerges not only due to policing actions of the political power (repression, new legislation, bans, criminalization of the participants, etc.), but also changes in working class composition. For instance, the growing industrial working class formed trade unions in the 19th century. After

²⁴ In this dissertation I examine white-collar mobilizations and collective actions against employers and sometimes against union bureaucracies. While they are also workplace and intra-union contentions, it is not possible to analyse them under contentious politics yet. When their collective actions target the government or authorities it will be possible to make an analysis of white-collar contentions.

²⁵ An example of this situation is the public sector workers' repertoire during the Spring Actions. It is argued in Chapter II that legal prohibitions on the unionization of public sector workers and government repression of workers' actions led to a new repertoire. But in the end this new repertoire concluded with a new trade union. The Spring Actions and their new union changed the whole union structure in Turkey.

that, strikes and collective bargaining became institutionalized forms of collective action. Beginning in the 1960s, the number of white-collar employees exceeded that of manual workers in the West and organization of white-collar employees came onto the agenda of trade unions. It was a period when the traditional repertoire was still valid and trade unions were still strong.

Vogel (1971) argues that the organization of clerical workers in the USA began with the end of management responsiveness to their problems. The aim of unionization was to be able to take part in managerial decisions on labor problems and to improve working conditions. The main reason behind unionization was a professional malaise rather than monetary considerations²⁶. Similarly, NASA engineers unionized in 1973 due to their problems with managers. Their wages were quite high, about \$20,000. Wages were not the main issue for engineers, their problem was the organizational structure of management, and unions provided them an institutionalized negotiation structure with managers (Chamot, 1976).

In Sweden, white-collar workers organized in associations or other forms of organization first, and then joined trade unions. The Bank Employees Association, for instance, had existed since 1887 as a trade organization which became The Financial Sector Union of Sweden (Finansförbundet) after several decades. It was the same in the USA. Members of the American Nurses Association and the National Education Association either joined trade unions after a while or these associations began to be considered as trade unions by employers as a result of their growing power (Adams, 1974).

These examples show that white-collar employees began to organize not only for wage problems but also for finding the opportunity to negotiate with and participate in management

²⁶ Similarly, in most of the cases studied in this dissertation, the main reasons for white-collar mobilizations were not wages but working conditions and being able to negotiate with management.

in the workplaces. They usually began to mobilize in associations and guilds instead of trade unions, and then formed new trade unions.

To conclude, working class mobilizations employ institutional or non-institutional forms of collective action. Institutional forms provide legal means like collective bargaining to improve their conditions while reducing the costs of non-institutional forms such as layoffs. However, in the age of neoliberalism, power relations between labor and capital, and class structure have both changed. Before the 1980s trade unions were still strong and effective in the West and in Turkey. Therefore, the question was how to include white-collar workers in trade unions. However, in the 1990s labor organizations in welfare states were losing their power. This situation was much worse in the case of Turkey. The traditional repertoire of the working class was no longer very effective enough. New working conditions forced working class organizations to change but their inability to adapt themselves to the changing conditions resulted in loss of power. This situation paved the way for the emergence of a new repertoire. In Chapter III this new repertoire will be examined by looking at white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul.

1.5 Summary

This chapter began with a discussion of the problems of “new” and “change” and continued with the new classes debate began in the 1960s in the West, especially after the movements of 1968. These were completely new movements. People marching on the streets were not walking behind a vanguard party. Their demands included class, gender, environment, and liberty rights. These “new masses” and the “new movements” needed to be explained. Thus, new class or new social movement theories appeared.

The new class theories, in the section 2 of this chapter, mostly took dependent professionals and managers as a new class or a new middle class. The debate was mostly centered on the issues of technology, knowledge, and services. Professionals and managers were growing in numbers as a result of changing labor processes in big corporations and competition among them. However, the “new” theories were mostly analyzing a frozen picture of a moving film (Harman, 1989, p. 81). The “new” can only be understood by looking at its place within the process of change.

The 1970s were years after the golden age of capitalism. The structure of the working class had been changing as a result of technological improvements in production, the increasing domination of finance in the world markets, and the expansion of services sectors. With the 1968 movements, new political fields, new struggles, and a new repertoire of collective actions emerged. These structural and political changes triggered a debate on classes. Authors involved in the debate replaced the working class as the source of social change with the “new petty bourgeoisie” (Poulantzas, 1975), the “new lower middle class” (Mayer, 1975), the “professional and managerial class” (Ehrenreich & Ehrenreich, 1979), the “new class” (Gouldner, 1979), the “new working class” (Mallet, 1975), the “service class” (Goldthorpe, 1982) and the “new middle class” (Wright, 1978; Carchedi, 1977). Among these theories, the

new middle class theories of Wright and Callinicos (1989a) was given a special place their special emphasis of contradictory class locations.

Section 3 defined the concept of the changing working class. I examined how the working class has changed since the 1970s. In order to explain the changing working class three changes were elaborated. First, the changing composition of the class was explained. The change has been towards an expansion of the number of white-collar workers with higher education. Secondly, these white-collar employees were subject to skill degradation and losing their prestigious positions at work and in society. Thirdly, in the neoliberal period, precarious work spread to all sectors and almost every country in the world. The theory of the changing working class, in section 3, aims to place the working class in the ongoing processes of relations of production.

The last section of this chapter explained the theoretical background of collective actions. Collective actions were taken as means of class struggle. Collective actions of the working class may emerge out of spontaneous disagreements between employers and employees in a single workplace, but when this disagreement is shared by a significant amount of workers and makes them mobilize in relation with each other, then mobilizations begin. As the working class structure and working conditions so does the class mobilizations. It was demonstrated in this section that historically white-collar mobilizations began to get organized out of trade unions relying on their privileged conditions in workplaces. However, as soon as they feel the loss of prestige they become more inclined to unionization. In the neoliberal era, however, changing working conditions force labor organizations to adopt themselves to the changing class structure and changing condition. When they are not able to adopt themselves to the new condition a new repertoire emerges.

2. Chapter II- Socio-Economic Change and the Change in the Class Composition in Turkey and Istanbul

2.1 Introduction

This dissertation covers the period between 1980 and 2015. Neoliberal policies began to be implemented in Turkey in 1980 (initially with the January 24 Decrees) and they remain hegemonic. These policies have changed the economic structures of global, national, and local systems. Structural changes always have an impact on social and political systems. In the neoliberal era, Turkey underwent a great transformation. This chapter will explain this structural transformation and how it changed class composition in Turkey and Istanbul. The national changes will be explained first, and then the impact on Istanbul. First, however, a short introduction to global neoliberalism will be given because what has been happening in Turkey is not independent of the global transformation of economic structures and class composition.

Neoliberalism is the theory of political and economic practices based on the idea that human well-being can be best advanced through market forces and entrepreneurial freedoms and skills. These practices are backed by the IMF with loans and credits, by the World Bank with support for infrastructures, and by the WTO through international trade policies. As a result of these policies, financial speculation increased as the major form of profit maximization in the whole world. This was what Strange (1986) calls ‘casino capitalism’. As a result, the global economic system has become even more prone to various fiscal crises. Neoliberalism’s main difference was that it takes market freedom as the main source not only of economic organizations, but also the organization of state and society. Neoliberalism aims to reorganize the economy, the state, and society in a way consistent with the interests of capital. In order to do this, economic, legal, and organizational restructuring is necessary (Mütevellioglu & Işık, 2009, p. 162).

Neoliberalism is also a theory of governing people through the new daily practices of changing institutions. Its cultural industry, fashion, careerism, public space politics, pushing up conservative values and individualization, and market oriented education creates a strong hegemony over society with the idea of “there is no alternative” to capitalism. However, economic crises also lead to crises of this hegemony. An economic crisis carries the potential to undermine the foundations of states. It may take the form of an implicit or explicit questioning of fundamental political institutions. The global financial crisis of 2008 was the latest and biggest crisis of the age of neoliberalism. Hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs. Billions of dollars were spent on bailouts. Strict austerity measures have been implemented by governments since the crisis. Increasing living costs and melting salaries have led to precarious situations for the middle classes and workers.

The most significant event of the neoliberal era was the collapse of the Soviet Union. Western capital entered these new markets (ex-Soviet countries) very quickly and the global capitalist economy expanded into previously closed economies. The flow of capital, goods, and services across the whole world got faster and easier through international laws and organizations. This process of capitalist expansion since 1990 has been called globalization. In 1990, the share of developing countries in total world exports was 28 per cent. In 2007, it was 42 per cent (Ünsal, 2013). Several global companies changed hands. Big automobile companies Jaguar and Land Rover, were bought by India's Tata. Volvo was bought by a Chinese company, Geely. Turkish company Ülker bought famous Belgium chocolate-maker Godiva. In 2011, the world's richest person was a Mexican, Carlos Slim Helu. Within the global economy, Turkey found a new place. Turkey's exports were only 2.9 billion dollars in 1980. In 2010, the figure was 113.9 billion dollars (Ünsal, 2013).

In the 1990s, analysis of changes in the global economy shifted from production to circulation -finance, trade and services: the circulation of money across borders; the increasing share of

finance in national economies; the rise of global cities as the central meeting points of international capital, information, and goods; the growing share of employees in the service sector; and new consumption-based life styles of the changing working class and the middle class. In the 2000s, a new scholarly shift occurred from production and services to the changing subjectivities of individuals and groups. New subjectivities were generated by the neoliberal management of states. States began to be governed by the management techniques of corporations. Thus, neoliberal urban politics became an important field of study in the 2000s (Kolluoğlu, 2014, s. 22). The city was placed at the core of debates on production relations before the 1980s, on circulation relations in the 1980s-90s, and on management relations in the 2000s, according to Kolluoğlu.

Neoliberal policies in times of economic crisis and recession are confronted by the collective actions of the unemployed, precarious workers, bankrupted middle classes, and public sector workers. Since 2008 we have been witnessing many repertoires of collective action, such as riots, strikes, square occupations, and so on. As the crisis deepened, the whole world was shook by the massive urban mobilizations and square occupations of 2011. When Turkey's economic growth rates were falling and unemployment rates were not getting better, the Gezi resistance occurred in 2013.

The whole world was experiencing a significant change with the introduction of neoliberal policies. Economic structures and political structures were changing. These structural changes inevitably led to changes in class composition. In the age of neoliberalism, Turkey experienced some radical changes. In the first section of this chapter, changes in economic structure and in class composition will be examined. The second section will examine the role of privatization in the structural changes of the national economy and in class composition. It will also explain how public sector workers mobilized against privatization and economic conditions by using old and new repertoires of collective action. The third section will explain

how economic changes and privatization influenced trade unions. The fourth section will examine how working conditions have changed in Turkey in the age of neoliberalism. Neoliberal labor processes together with privatization and weakened trade unions have led to changes in working conditions in favor of capital since the 1980s. The changing labor processes was one of the reasons for the inability of trade unions to organize white-collar employees. The fourth section will elaborate on theories of class in Turkey. As Turkey's economic structure was changing, its class structure was also changing. In the neoliberal era these changes led to a debate on classes among authors studying urbanization and labor mobilizations. Finally, in the last section, the neoliberal era of Istanbul and changes in working class composition in Istanbul will be explained.

2.2 Turkey in the Age of Neoliberalism

Turkey had been a predominantly agrarian country until the introduction of neoliberal policies in 1980. In the post World War II era, which was the golden era of global capitalism, Turkey's economic structure gradually changed from agriculture-based production to industrial production. However, industrial production was predominantly for internal consumption. Beginning in 1950, with the election of the Democratic Party -a political party founded mostly by landowners- technological improvements in agriculture and industry accelerated. Between 1940-1962 the number of tractors increased from 1,066 to 43,747 (Göle, 2012, p. 107). Changes in the social composition of classes accelerated accordingly. Landless peasants' and farmers' migration to cities to find jobs was the initial stage of proletarianization. A World Bank publication in 1951 described how technological improvements in agriculture were seen as a precondition for “the release of men for industrial work” and creation of “additional economic resources, which provide the basis for [...] industrial development” in Turkey (World Bank, 1951, p. 2; Karataşlı, 2015). Karpat estimated that “about one million farmers were dislocated by some 40,000 tractors introduced in this period” (Marguiles & Yıldızoğlu, 1984). Small family production decreased and unemployment rose especially among women who were predominantly unpaid family workers. As a result of uneven development, population grew rapidly in several cities, whereas it fell significantly in many others. The import substitution strategy led to rising income inequalities and the concentration of capital in the hands of the industrial bourgeoisie, mostly in Istanbul. The economy became more vulnerable to global economic fluctuations.

In 1927, only 24 per cent of the population was living in cities (Murat, 2007, p. 194). In 1980, the figure was 44 per cent. It was in the 1985 national census that the population living in cities exceeded the rural population for the first time (TÜİK, 2015). It reached 77.3% in 2012

(Aydınlı & Çiftçi, 2015). According to Hazır, urbanization developed with the expansion of services at the expense of agriculture where the middle ranks becoming overwhelmingly occupied by white-collar workers and professionals (Hazır, 2014).

In the 20 years following 1950, the number of manufacturing workplaces more than doubled. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, the working class was increasingly concentrated in large factories. Industrialization occurred mainly in three geographical areas: Istanbul, Kocaeli-Sakarya and Bursa in the Marmara region; Izmir on the Aegean coast; and the Mersin, Adana, Iskenderun line on the Mediterranean coast (Marguiles & Yıldızoğlu, 1984). Some of the domestic productive capital groups began to control commercial and money-capital through the ownership of private banks. These capital groups became “holding companies” from the 1960s on (Ercan & Oğuz, 2015). Almost all of these holding companies were in Istanbul and they would establish the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen’s Association (TÜSİAD) in 1971.

The introduction of neoliberal policies in Turkey began with the January 24 Decrees, implemented by the military regime. The Turkish economy and industry developed rapidly thereafter. Turkey was integrated into the global economy in this era. It joined the European Customs Union in 1996, became a founding member of the Group of 20 (G20) in 1999, applied IMF policies strictly after the economic crisis of 2001, and accession negotiations began with the European Union in 2005.

One concrete result of the neoliberal economic growth of Turkey is the acceleration of the process of urbanization. Istanbul, the biggest and most developed city of Turkey, has undergone significant changes since 1980. It became a global city of finance and as a result of increasing industrial output, the trading and services center of Turkey. The -increasing number of university graduates, banks, plazas, shopping malls, technological industries, and

TV channels led to the expansion of white-collar jobs. The 1990s, the golden years of white-collar employees, ended with structural problems. The disappointments of a labor force with higher-education and the frustrations of the older generation due to the new precarity have increased exponentially as a result of the global financial crisis and global recession. Turkey's first plaza workers action at IBM was just one result of this situation in 2008. The IBM employees' resistance gave birth to new organizations and a new repertoire of collective action by white-collar employees.

A very brief summary of Turkey's economic history has been given above. The following sections will focus on the period between 1980 and 2015. First, the overall changes in the economy since 1980 will be examined and then the structural changes in Istanbul during the neoliberal era.

2.2.1 Period between 1980 and 2002

The introduction of neo-liberal policies by the military government of 1980 was a response to the economic crisis of 1977-79 and also to the political crisis of the same years. Turkey was suffering from a lack of foreign exchange and capital. Production was unsustainable as a result of this shortage, but also because of class conflicts. Frequently changing coalition governments were also a result of this economic and political instability. A shortage of basic goods, black markets, government debt, and inflation resulted in the announcement of an austerity program on 24 January 1980 (Kaya, 2008).

The "January 24 Decrees" were guided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The aim was to stabilize the economy by increasing foreign trade and exports, and encouraging foreign investments (Eralp, Tunay, & Yesilada, 1993; Kaya, 2008). Decrees included a program of privatization and a shift to a flexible exchange rate (Kaya, 2008). Due to political instability, it was not possible to apply the Decrees. The austerity program was applied by the military

regime which came to power with the coup of September 12, 1980. A new era began in Turkey.

The military regime enforced a new constitution in 1982 which abolished the social chapters of the constitution of 1961 and abolished the trade union act. In the neoliberal era the objectives were to change the system from import-substitution industrialization to export-oriented industrialization; integration with global markets and capital; and liberalization of the economy. In order to increase profit rates it was necessary to weaken labor organizations and reduce wages. During the preparation process of the new constitution, the Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations (TİSK) submitted a report to the Privy Council that the new constitution should be prepared “according to criteria which favor the country, not the worker” (Çelik, 2015). The new labor act was welcomed by TİSK. Its president, Halit Narin, said, “They [the unions] have been laughing for 20 years, we have been crying. Now it’s our turn to laugh” (Akar, 2008). Çelik argues that precarious and flexible labor policies began with the military coup of 1980, but these policies were institutionalized by the AKP government in the 2000s (Çelik, 2015).

In 1989, the government further liberalized the economy by allowing foreign investment flows. Even though the economy grew and international trade increased; inflation, the foreign debt, and depreciation of the national currency paved the way for new political mobilizations. The new urban poor -victims of inflation, migration, and diminishing labor rights- mobilized under the banner of political Islam; the Kurdish liberation movement -victims of nationalism and militarism- began to wage a war against the army; public sector workers -victims of privatization and inflation- mobilized to establish a trade union; and finally, students -victims of economic and political instability- mobilized for student rights.

The Turkish economy suffered from a number of economic crises in this period. The 1990s were years of permanent crisis as a result of economic failures, labor mobilizations, and a costly war against the PKK (armed forces of the Kurdish liberation movement). 1994 and 2001 were years of the most serious crises in Turkey. In 2001, the financial system nearly collapsed. Turkey signed a new agreement with the IMF as a response to this crisis. The IMF program included further liberalization and privatization. Once again, the application of this program was in conflict with political instability. But this time the result of the national elections in 2002 provided the necessary conditions for the application of the new economic program with the establishment of a strong one-party AKP government (Justice and Development Party).

In 1980, Turkey had total exports of 3.6 billion US dollars. This rose to 10 billion in 1985, and it reached 87 billion in 2004. The technological composition of exports is an important indicator of Turkey's industrial change. In 1980, 65% of Turkey's exports were primary products such as agricultural products and mineral resources; whereas these accounted for only 8% in 2003. Labor-intensive and low-technology products like apparel and footwear increased their share most. They accounted for 18% in 1980 and over 50% in the 1990s. Medium technology products like auto parts increased from 2-3% to 30%. High technology products like electronics and computer products increased from almost zero in 1980 to 7% in 2003 (Kaya, 2008).

Karataşlı argues that Turkey's neoliberal era demonstrated a paradoxical development. In the Western world neoliberalism was the direct response by the bourgeoisie to falling rates of profit. However, according to Karataşlı, the Özal decade (1983-1993) was not primarily related to the profitability issue or to reconstituting class power in favor of the national bourgeoisie. He argues that the neoliberal project in Turkey was concerned with establishing a political-economic environment for reasserting the political hegemony of political society

over civil society. Another aspect of the neoliberal project in Turkey was its relation to the changing interests of the world-hegemonic power in the region. Because of social and geopolitical concerns, Turkey's neoliberal reforms “(1) contribute to the development of alternative/rival segments of a national bourgeoisie, (2) aim at creating a large middle class society (instead of shrinking it), (3) coexist with populist attempts of redistribution to lower segments of society to co-opt the grievances and anger of the masses, and (4) at the most extreme cases, they may even paradoxically reduce income inequality.” (Karataşlı, 2015)

Karataşlı's starting point was the uneven development of capitalism in space and time. Although theories of neoliberalism in general consider it to be a global counter-attack by capital against developmentalist regimes, the working class, and welfare states in an attempt to restore the class power (Duménil & Lévy, 2011; Harvey, 2005), these do not take uneven development into account, argues Karataşlı. This literature sees some common consequences of neoliberal policies such as the rapid increase in income inequality, the shrinking middle class, and the strengthening of the capitalist class (Steger & Roy, 2011; Hanieh, 2013). Indeed, particular crises at the national level and geopolitical, economic, and social crises of the US-led world-hegemony have different results in different parts of the world (Karataşlı, 2015). Unlike Western societies, Turkey did not develop as a welfare state and her crisis was different from the global economic crisis of the 1970s. In Turkey, the political crisis of hegemony was much more significant than the crisis of rates of profit. An anti-US discourse was very strong among the radical left and radical right social movements of the 1970s. In order to overcome this crisis of governability or hegemony, it was necessary to restore economic stability together with political hegemony. Therefore, neoliberal policies favored previously excluded sections of the bourgeoisie, the so-called Anatolian bourgeoisie, and aimed to enlarge the middle class²⁷ and raise their consumption level with the aid of the

²⁷ Here the middle class mean the people with decent jobs and regular income.

World Bank, the OECD, and the IMF, which would also restore US hegemony over Turkey (Karataşlı, 2015).

Small entrepreneurs and the Anatolian bourgeoisie were supported by the government in order to expand the middle class, “Orta Direk” in Özal’s wording. Even privatization aimed to incorporate the middle class into the privatization processes. For instance, in 1988, the shares of TELETAŞ (a telecommunications company) were sold to 41,695 shareholders (Karataşlı, 2015). According to an OECD study (2011), since 1985, Turkey and Greece were the only countries where inequality decreased until 2007 as a result of increasing middle classes.

Regional and local developments were important indicators of the neoliberal era in Turkey. First, cities around the most developed cities industrialized rapidly. For instance, Bursa, Kocaeli, Tekirdağ around Istanbul, Manisa around İzmir and then cities like Konya, Gaziantep, Kayseri, Denizli industrialized especially through the introduction of Organized Industry Regions (Organize Sanayi Bölgesi, OSB) (Gündoğdu, 2009). The development of these cities began in the 1960s, but their real period of growth was post-1980. For instance, the first OSB was established in 1962, in Bursa. Until the 1980s, only three more OSBs were established in the country. In 2007, the number of OSBs was 235 (Müftüoğlu, 2005; Gündoğdu, 2009) and in 2013 it was 276 (İstanbulhaber, 2013). There is only one city, Artvin, which remains without an OSB. Rapid industrial development in Anatolian cities did not change the condition of uneven development. Almost all of these industries were bound to Istanbul based finance and holding companies. Just as giant global corporations separated their production lines and shifted their labor-intensive production to less developed countries, holding companies in Turkey either did the same to the less developed or underdeveloped cities or outsourced some of their services, like call centers, or intermediate product industries to these cities. Uneven development could also be seen in the number of OSBs in various cities. Bursa, İzmir, and Kocaeli, with 13 OSBs each, had the highest number, Ankara with

11, and Tekirdağ with 10 followed them (İstanbulhaber, 2013). Istanbul had only two OSBs before 2000, in only three years this number increased to eight (OSBBS, 2015). Regional development became a structured government policy in 2005 with the establishment of the Development Agencies.

Neoliberal policies in the 1980s and 1990s managed to enlarge the better off consumer population and decreased inequalities, but managed to prevent neither the rise in inflation nor the economic crises of 1994 and 2001. Once again, political stability was weakened by the urban poor under political Islam and the workers movement, together with radical left and student mobilizations in the 1990s.

Neoliberalism brought significant life-style changes to urban life. Globalizing economic relations, increasing enrollment in higher education, expanding private TV and radio channels generated a new urban life. Educated/skilled workers, managers, self-employed professionals, and capitalists found themselves in a new social life, while the rapidly growing urban poor were living in miserable conditions. They could see the “pretty life” of the upper classes on television while they were struggling with poor housing, garbage hills, ill treatment in hospitals and so on. The informal sector expanded rapidly. This wild contradiction consequently led to tough political contentions.

The first private TV, Star TV, began broadcasting in 1990. Many other private channels were established in the 1990s: Show TV in 1992, Kanal D in 1993. The importance of private television was its impact on the changing life style of the urban population. Television was the major step of the entertainment industry which would become a giant economic sector in the 2000s. Fashion models, night life characters, business people, soccer players were presented as role models through the media (Emrence, 2008). Globally oriented consumption

patterns also entered urban life. US-style shopping malls, fast-food chains, stores of global brands mushroomed, specifically in Istanbul (Keyder, 2000).

The increasing demand for skilled and highly educated labor force, which was a consequence of global competition, caused governments to make investments in the higher education system. Between 1992 and 2006, 22 new private universities were founded. Not a single public university was founded in 1994-2006, but the number of private universities increased from two to 25 in the same years (Vatansever & Yalçın, 2015, p. 72). Sixteen more private universities were founded before 2000 and the total number of universities increased to 70. In 1980, 467,000 people applied for the central admissions examination and only 9% were admitted to university. In 1999, the number of applicants increased to 1.5 million, and 30% of them were admitted (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 48). The number of university students rose from 335,000 in 1983 to 1.5 million in 2000 (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 53). Between 1980 and 2000, the number of university graduates was approximately 3 million (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 55).

Rapid life style changes turned authors' interest to sociological research on understanding these changes among classes and their distinctions. New middle class theories dominated the academic agenda as a result of these rapid changes beginning in the 1990s (Keyder, 1999).

From 1980 to 2000 real wages were fluctuating as a result of rapid changes in inflation, economic crises, and social conflicts. In 1983-1984 real wages shrank by 20-25%. Beginning in 1987 and especially after the public sector workers' mobilization, real wages increased until the economic crisis of 1994. In 1993, the increases were about 50-60%, the highest between 1980 and 2015. But the economic crisis of 2001 led to 15-20% losses in real wages (Aslan & Aslan, 2008).

Wright (1997) argues that "it is important to see in which sector(s) the changes in social class positions are occurring". Kaya argued that the globalization wave of the 1990s led to two

kinds of social class transformation in the less developed countries (LCD); proletarianization and polarization (Kaya Y. , 2008). By proletarianization he means a shift in employment from agriculture and the public sector to paid private-sector employment with the growth of low-skilled labor. By polarization he means while small minorities of professional and managers benefit from globalization, a significant expansion occurs at the bottom of the labor force. Polarization occurs between the top (professional and managerial occupations) and the bottom (services and the informal sector) of the social hierarchy simultaneously.

Based on the national censuses of 1980, 1985, 1990, and 2000, Kaya categorizes the labor force of Turkey. His findings show that the most significant changes occurred in the agriculture and services sectors between 1980 and 2000. Farmers and farm workers or peasants were in rapid decline while non-skilled and skilled workers were increasing. Kaya calls this the process of proletarianization. The sharpest increase was in routine non-manual workers, from 998,538 people (5.41%) in 1980 to 3,166,012 (12.18%) in 2000. High-grade professionals almost doubled from 1.59% to 3.08%, and lower-level professionals and supervisors increased from 4.62% to 5.79% in the same period. High-grade professionals, lower-level professionals and supervisors, and routine non-manual categories can be regarded as white-collar jobs. However, except for the routine non-manual category, all categories include Callinicos's new middle class (1989a). We are not able to extract a percentage for the middle class in a contradictory class position between employers and workers, but not even half of this population can be in the middle and high managerial positions who exert control over workers. In total, the proportion of white-collar workers and managers rose from 11.62% in 1980 to 21.05% in 2000 (Kaya, 2008).

Table 4- Kaya's Table on the distribution of social classes in Turkey according to EGP class schema, 1980–2000 (all workers)

	1980		1985		1990		2000	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
High-grade professionals	294,084	1.59	384,348	1.87	527,542	2.26	800,105	3.08
Lower-level professionals and supervisors	852,533	4.62	946,287	4.60	1,195,601	5.11	1,503,284	5.79
Routine non-manual	998,538	5.41	1,250,340	6.08	1,669,933	7.14	3,166,012	12.18
Employers (excluding farmers)	169,162	0.92	184,662	0.90	302,813	1.30	610,020	2.35
Self-employed (excluding farmers)	1,420,342	7.69	1,592,206	7.75	1,841,034	7.88	1,522,622	5.86
Skilled workers	1,287,919	6.97	1,499,001	7.29	1,781,953	7.62	1,981,179	7.62
Non-skilled workers	2,392,312	12.95	2,624,836	12.77	3,528,598	15.10	3,807,691	14.65
Farmers and farm workers	11,055,218	59.85	12,069,803	58.73	12,528,080	53.59	12,593,050	48.46
Total	18,470,108	100	20,551,483	100	23,375,554	100	25,983,963	100

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, National Censuses of 1980, 1985, 1990 and 2000

Kaya makes another classification of the labor force, shown in the table 2. He categorizes the labor force in occupational groups and shows the most changing 15 occupations. At the bottom, which means a decline in the number of workers, there are transportation conductors, forestry, agriculture, farm and fishing employees. The change from a traditional and agricultural economy to industry and technology is clear. At the top of the list there are computing machine operators with a 6000% growth rate in 20 years. This is a direct result of technological developments in the production and communications sectors. Statisticians, mathematicians, and system analysts follow with growth of 1100%. The first two groups of professions, and of course many others like journalists, authors, scientists and technicians, clerical workers and so on, constitute the rising sections of the working class (white-collar employees). The significant increase in managers and administrators in the third and fourth rows mostly constitute the rising new middle class.

Kaya applies the same categories into sexes and finds important differences between men's and women's occupations. In computing machine operators, the number of men increased by 7600% and women by 4800%. This group was still at the top of the list for women and men. However, other occupation groups were listed differently from each other. Among women, after computing machine operators, the second largest increase was in administrators of cafés,

hotels, and restaurants, with 2100%, followed by managers with a 1900% increase, then authors, journalists and writers, with 1700%, and then aircraft and ship officers, with 1600%. The men's list showed little difference from the overall occupation rankings. The major difference between men's and women's occupations was that the rapid expansion in aircraft and ship officers could only be seen in women's occupation groups, but neither in the list of men nor in the general top 15 list. In the next chapter we will see that parallel to the expansion of women's employment in cabin workers, an opposition movement (the Rainbow Movement) would appear against the traditional male dominated trade union bureaucracy in Turkish Airlines.

In short, between 1980 and 2002 Turkey's economic structure underwent significant changes. The economy was transformed from import-substitution industrialization to export-oriented industrialization. Turkey integrated into global capitalism extensively. The agrarian economy began to dissolve and middle-technology production increased rapidly. Istanbul became the finance and trade center of the national economy. Technological improvements changed the formation of social classes. The information, communications, entertainment, finance, architecture and engineering, computer based services, civil aviation sectors were the sectors that grew most. The composition of workers in these sectors was changing too. The number of better off, graduate workers rose, together with new consumption habits. Therefore, "new middle class" theories became popular. The 1990s were the heyday of white-collar employees; there were therefore not many mobilizations in this section of the working class until 2008. The following section will explain the economic changes in the 2000s and analyse how white-collar employees were influenced by this structural change.

Table 5- The top 15 expanding and contracting occupations from 1980 to 2000 in Turkey

Top 15 expanding				Top 15 contracting					
ISCO code		1980 (×1000)	2000 (×1000)	% change	SITC code		1980 (×1000)	2000 (×1000)	% change
34	Computing machine operators	1.038	64.661	6129.3	36	Transport conductors	5.498	0.938	-82.9
08	Statisticians, mathematicians, systems analysts	1.545	18.779	1115.4	94	Unclassified workers	87.035	23.138	-73.4
40	Managers (wholesale and retail trade)	6.243	64.706	936.4	63	Forestry workers	50.888	14.255	-71.9
50	Administrators of hotels, cafes, restaurants, casino, pastry-shop, Cinema	2.76	25.521	824.6	78	Tobacco preparers and tobacco product makers	52.154	18.098	-65.2
15	Authors, journalists and related Writers	4.696	34.623	637.2	60	Farm managers and supervisors	0.825	0.289	-64.9
82	Stone cutters and carvers	6.039	42.456	603.0	52	Housekeeping and related service supervisors	0.578	0.307	-46.8
05	Life scientist and related technicians	0.672	4.723	602.8	71	Miners, quarrymen, well drillers and related workers	97.821	54.303	-44.4
39	Clerical and related workers	61.089	398.147	551.7	72	Metal processors	58.735	38.942	-33.6
54	Maids and related workers	30.156	188.245	524.2	30	Clerical supervisors	51.481	35.109	-31.8
88	Goldsmiths and jewelers	9.793	49.162	402.1	62	Agricultural and animal husbandry Workers	471.883	400.188	-15.1
01	Physicists, chemists and related Workers	3.504	17.41	396.8	55	Building caretakers, char workers cleaners and related workers	317.35	274.631	-13.4
96	Fixed installment machinery Operators	9.788	46.361	373.6	73	Wood preparation workers and paper Makers	27.271	23.891	-12.3
18	Athletes, sportsmen and related Workers	3.19	14.813	364.3	89	Glass and glass products, ceramic and earthen ware workers	70.983	65.723	-7.4
42	Sales supervisors and buyers	4.062	17.139	321.9	64	Fishermen, hunters and related Workers	19.597	18.604	-5.0
43	Technical salesmen, commercial travelers and manufacturer agents	148.139	530.202	257.9	74	Chemical processors and related Workers	11.801	11.613	-1.5
	All workers	19212.19	25997.14	35.3		All workers	19212.19	25997.14	35.3

Source: Turkish Statistical Institute, National Censuses of 1980 and 2000

2.2.2 A New Period in Turkey's Neoliberal Era

Turkey's most serious economic crisis broke out in 2001. A strict austerity program began to be implemented in accordance with the IMF standby agreement. In the national elections of 2002 a new political party, Justice and Development Party (AKP), came to power. AKP came from the political Islamist tradition. After a decade of unstable coalition governments Turkey now had a strong, one-party government with a strong commitment to neoliberal policies. The word "development" represented the party's commitment to neoliberal development and integration into the global economy; while "justice" represented the aim of reducing social inequality. The urban poor had an urgent expectation of social justice, and AKP promised economic growth and social justice.

In the wake of the crisis of 2001, Turkey's economy grew at 7 per cent annually until 2007. High inflation rates had always been a chronic disease of the Turkish economy. At the end of 2001 annual inflation was 54.4%, but it declined to 9.4% in 2004 and 6.16% in 2012 (Karagöl, 2013, p. 14). Although the global financial crisis had an impact on Turkey, the economy recovered fast. In 2008, the rate of growth fell to 0.7% and in 2009, the economy shrank by 4.8%. In 2010, however, there was record growth, 9.2%, and this continued with 8.5% in 2011. In 2011, Turkey was the second highest growing economy in the world after China (Karagöl, 2013, p. 28).

After 1995, the rate of unemployment was about 8% annually until the economic crisis of 2001. In 2001 and 2002 unemployment increased by more than 10%. Although the economy recovered and began to grow, unemployment remained unchanged until the crisis of 2008. It reached a peak with 14.9% in 2009. The following period of record growth led to a rapid decline in unemployment, which stabilized around 9% until 2012 (Karagöl, 2013, p. 52).

2002-2007 were the years of reforms in the state structure through accession negotiations with the EU. They were years of economic liberalization, growth, and hegemonic recovery of the political system. Turkey became active in the G20. The government pursued a new foreign policy. Economic and political relations with Middle Eastern and African countries were improved. The 19th standby agreement with the IMF finished in 2008. Turkey refused to make a new one, 47 years after the first standby agreement in 1961 and paid off the final IMF loan in 2013 (Zaman, 2013).

Inequalities have been decreasing steadily since 2002. According to official figures, the Gini coefficient (which measures income inequality) was 0.44 in 2002 and fell to 0.40 in 2011. This means that inequality in income distribution was in decline. However, Turkey still had the third highest Gini coefficient among OECD countries, after Mexico and Chile (OECD, 2013; Bahçe & Köse, 2014). Nevertheless, this decline was not because of reforms on social rights but unstructured social aid. Some of these unstructured types of aid were green cards, direct municipal help, the Social Aid and Solidarity Fund, and charity organizations supported by the government. The sharp decrease in annual inflation rates was another reason behind the decline in inequality.

The most significant change in working class composition was the rising number of employees with higher education in the labor force. In 1980, there were only 27 universities in Turkey. From 1994 to 2006 not a single public university was founded but the number of private universities increased from two to 25 in the same years. Beginning in 2007 there was a rapid growth in the number of universities. In 2007, 17 public and five private universities were founded (Vatansever & Yalçın, 2015, p. 72). In 2013, the total number of universities was 175; 104 public, 71 private universities (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 46). In 1980, 467,000 people applied to the central admissions examination system and only 9% were admitted to university. In 1999, applicants rose to 1.5 million and 30% of these were admitted. In 2013,

the number of applicants was 2 million and 40% found a place at university (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 48). The number of university students rose from 335 thousand in 1983 to 1.5 million in 2000, from 3,780 thousand in 2010 to 5.5 million in 2013 (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 53). Between 1980 and 2000, the number of university graduates was approximately 3 million. Between 2003 and 2011, 4,250,000 more graduates joined the labor force. In total, 7,220,000 diplomas were issued by universities since 1983, including master and doctorate programs (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 55).

Although the percentage of the labor force that has completed higher education is increasing in Turkey, routinization of clerical work and deskilling of professional work is another side of the coin. Seçil Bahçe and Serdal Bahçe's study shows that skill-requiring jobs rely more and more on manual workers with an increasing level of education. Based on TÜİK's annual survey of household income since 2002, Bahçe and Bahçe categorize classes according to their level of education. Their findings are striking. In 2002, 82.2% of employees with university diplomas indicated that they were using their mental labor at work. In 2009, however, this fell to 49.8%. Only 9.1% indicated in 2002 that they were using their mental and physical labor at the same time at work. This percentage increased to 45.5% in 2009. Bahçe and Bahçe argue that these findings show how education has been losing its importance for job security for workers with higher education. Now physical labor is feared not only by under-educated workers, but also by those with a higher education (Bahçe & Bahçe, 2012).

One of the consequences of the expansion of university graduates is the rising unemployment rates among them. According to a report by the Research Center of the Turkish Parliament, unemployment among the university graduates has been rising since 2000. In 2000, 7 per cent of graduates were unemployed. Despite economic growth, unemployment among graduates was 10.3% just before the global crisis of 2008. It rose to 12.9% in 2014 (Topsak, 2015).

Another significant development in the period of AKP governments was the changing forms of employment. In 1985, the number of temporary employees was half-a-million. By 1997, this figure had increased to 2.5 million (Cam, 1999). Privatizations were proceeding slowly; meanwhile workers' wages were rising during the 1990s as a result of their collective actions. Therefore, flexibilisation of work and labor applied much more strongly in the 2000s. The newly elected AKP government accelerated the introduction of flexible and precarious work. The economic crisis of 2001 gave the government the necessary justification. In 2003, Labor Code No. 4857 came into force. This new Code brought in the framework for subcontracting. All sectors shifted their employment to subcontracting. Arslan explains how this new law was welcomed by employers:

“Refik Baydur, the President of TİSK [Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations] pointed out that Labor Code No. 4857 signalled a great, positive phase of the Country’s industrial relations, contributing to the prospect of industrial peace for the next 30-50 years, and, including exceedingly modern elements, such as temporary employment, call work, temporary employment contract, compensation work, fixed- and short-term employment, tacheron employment, working time regulation, etc.” (Arslan, 2006, p. 125).

Far from creating industrial peace, this would be one of the main reasons for working class mobilizations after the global crisis of 2008. According to a DİSK-AR report, the number of subcontracted workers was 387,000 in 2002 and 1,611,000 in 2011 (Öngel, 2014). “Flexibilisation of labor markets” was part of the government program in 2011 (Resmi Gazete 27997, 2011). The Turkish Investment Support and Promotion Agency, attached to the Prime Ministry, published a short summary on its website under the heading ‘10 Reasons to Invest in Turkey’ in 2012. The Agency indicated one of the reasons for investing in Turkey as follows: “The longest working hours in Europe and the lowest rate in average sick leave per

employee (53.2 working hours per week and 4.6 days average sick leave annually per employee)” (Çelik, 2015). This sentence was removed from the site after criticism in the mass media.

The Social Insurance and General Health Insurance Law of 2008 was another serious policy of social cuts by the AKP government. The social security system was transformed in accordance with neoliberal policies. Çelik argues that AKP policies could be described as “authoritarian flexibilisation”: the government was pursuing authoritarian policies against collective labor rights and organizations, while pushing for flexible conditions in the labor market (Çelik, 2015).

The TEKEL workers’ resistance was an example of mobilization by workers against precarity and flexible employment. TEKEL (the state-owned alcohol and tobacco products company) was privatized in 2008. Around 12,000 workers at TEKEL were transferred into the category of temporary employment. In December 2009, TEKEL workers marched to Ankara and set up tents outside the offices of their trade union, Türk-İş. Ercan and Oğuz (2015) argue that this older generation of TEKEL workers entered the labor market through full-time secure jobs and had years of trade union experience. They had no experience of precarity. Unexpected solidarity from all sections of the working class was the direct result of shared conditions of precarious and flexible employment. A TEKEL worker said it all in answer to an interviewer's question: “I learned when I came here that doctors and teachers are also workers and we share the same problems” (Yıldırım, 2010; Ercan & Oğuz, 2015).

Workers of the recently rising sectors were not in political mobilization yet in the 1990s. Therefore, there was almost no research on mobilizations of the “new middle classes” or “white-collar employees”. In these years social change generated new social movements, such as the public sector workers' movement and the urban poor movement. In the mid-2000s

preliminary debates began on the changing composition of the working class. But but the debate really took off with the global financial crisis of 2008. Previous crises had not influenced the educated-skilled labor force in Turkey as strongly as the crisis of 2008 did. Emrence finished his article with the prediction that the low chances of employment with the rising number of university graduates and the lack of upward mobility may create the gravediggers of neoliberal globalization in Turkey (Emrence, 2008). The IBM resistance and the establishment of the Plaza Action Platform, the initial stages of white-collar mobilizations, received more interest from authors studying the political mobilization of white-collar employees. In fact, the Gezi resistance was the cornerstone in this regard. The power of white-collar employees and students became visible in Taksim square but their political immaturity prevented this mobilization from turning into a sustained and organized social movement.

2.3 Public Sector Workers in the Neoliberal Era of Turkey

The public sector played a very important role in the making of the Turkish working class and capital. Until the neoliberal era, public sector companies had always been leading technological and industrial developments in Turkey. Therefore, professional workers, especially engineers, were mostly employed in public companies. Netaş was the largest employer of engineers. Telecommunications companies were big public companies. Turkish Airlines (THY) was a hundred per cent state-owned. The secure and privileged position of this skilled working class was threatened by the competitive labor market of the private sector with the waves of privatization.

Central planning, beginning in the 1960s, gave public enterprises a leading role in capitalist industrialization. Meanwhile, public sector workers were always the best organized section of the working class. The privatization of public companies became the most efficient means for establishing neoliberal hegemony over the working class. However, the political instability of the 1990s due to working class mobilizations, the armed Kurdish liberation movement, and the political Islamist movement, prevented the necessary conditions for a successful privatization process to emerge. Political instability produced weak coalition governments. Ineffective, weak governments were criticized by TÜSİAD, the strongest capitalist organization in Turkey. The necessary stability was provided by the AKP governments after 2002. Between 1990 and 2011 eleven governments were established, whereas during the past thirteen years the governing party has remained the same. Not surprisingly, the privatization program was the number one priority of the newly elected AKP government (Boyras, 2012).

The impact of neoliberal policies on the public sector and public sector workers is important for this dissertation in several ways. First of all, the most important element of neoliberal structural change was the privatization of public assets. Secondly, privatization meant the

hegemony of market values on labor processes even in the public sector. This specifically affected working conditions, which was the initial stage of precarity in Turkey. Lastly, privatization had an enormous impact on the composition of the working class. The public sector was the largest employer ment of skilled labor in Turkey before 1980. This is no longer the case.

According to Türk-İş figures, between 1989 and 2006, 21,275 workers lost their jobs in 55 privatized companies. Directorate of the Privatization Administration indicate that 51,870 workers lost their jobs between 1995-2010 in privatized companies (Türk, 2014).

In the years between 1985 and 2002, the total revenue from privatization was \$8 billion. Economic and political instability prevented governments from completing their privatization programs in this period. The newly elected AKP government immediately increased the speed of privatization. In just 2005 and 2006 revenue from privatization exceeded 8 billion dollars. Between 2007-2012 total revenue was over \$20 billion (Karagöl, 2013, p. 45). Flexible work through temporary employment significantly increased in public companies. Over a million workers had fixed contracts in public companies by 1997. The ratio of subcontracted workers in the public sector increased from 5% to 14% between 1986 and 1997 (Boratav et al., 1998; Cam, 1999). In its first eight years in government, AKP managed to undertake 77.6% of total privatizations (Milliyet, 2010).

A major impact of privatization was on the composition of the working class. In 1990, the ratio of public sector workers among total wage earners under the social security system was 33%. In 2000, this declined to 20% and in 2007 it was 12% (ÇSGB, 2000; ÇSGB, 2007; Mütevellioğlu & Işık, 2009, p. 178).

Köse and Öncü (2002) stress an important issue regarding developmentalist ideology in Turkey. They argue that, especially during the planning years, the problem of development

was reduced to the issue of mobilization of national resources. This was done through measuring the quantitative increase in socio-economic indicators such as per capita income, share of industry in national income, etc. They emphasize that the development issue was detached from the dynamics and conditions of society and became a technical issue. Of course, this technical development could only be achieved by engineering. This ideological hegemony used to see engineers and architects as the bearers of development. At the beginning of the 1960s “engineers were either working in the public sector as high-ranking bureaucrats/technocrats or were members of the capitalist class, participating in the making of the private business sector as small entrepreneurs” (Köse & Öncü, 2002). In the 1970s, private industry began to diversify its operations. The proliferation of engineers and architects, as well as political confrontations between classes, gave rise to their radicalization. The Union of Turkish Chambers of Engineers and Architects (TMMOB) became an important leftist organization in this period (Köse & Öncü, 2002).

Köse and Öncü conducted research with 3783 engineers and architects in five cities (Istanbul, Kocaeli, Denizli, Gaziantep, Diyarbakır) in 1998 (Köse & Öncü, 2000). They compared their result with a profile research carried out by TMMOB in 1976. The results of the latter were published in 1978 (Köse & Öncü, 2002). In 1976, 63.1% of waged employees (engineers and architects) were in the public sector; 16.2% were in the private sector; and 20.7% were self-employed and employers. These ratios had changed significantly by 1998. The ratio of waged employees did not change, it was still 80%. The change was in their sectors of employment: 37.1% of them were now in the public sector, while 46.1% worked in the private sector (Köse & Öncü, 2000, p. 168). Employers and entrepreneurs declined to 14.7% and, interestingly, only 0.8% were self-employed. In 1998 there was a new category: unemployed engineers. The ratio of unemployed engineers and architects was 6.1%.

In 2007, TMMOB carried out a new profile research. Interestingly, the percentage of engineers working in the public sector increased from 37% in 1998 to 44.9% in 2007. The reason for this increase was not explained in the study, but it is known that even though public enterprises were privatized, some of the workers who lost their jobs were transferred to other public sector jobs. Another reason could be the growth of unemployment among engineers and architects. In 1976, 1.3% of engineers were not working, which meant they were retired. In 1998, 7.7% were not working and 6.1% were unemployed. In 2007, 17.5% of engineers and architects were not working (retired, unemployed or not looking for a job). In 1978, 85% of engineers and architects could find a new job within a year, while in 2007 this rate was 74% (Bahçe S. , 2013). Unemployment and precarity might have changed engineers' and architects' interest from the private to public sector in the 2000s.

Bahçe's class categories show that in 1978 29.1% of engineers were working in management and controlling positions. In 1998, 10.7% in the private sector and 16.2% in the public sector were in management and controlling positions. In 2007, this declined to 9.8% (Bahçe S. , 2013). Bahçe argues that wage earning engineers have been losing their privileged positions at work. As a result of privatization and the rise of private companies, proletarianization of middle class engineers is an ongoing fact.

Göle (2012) emphasizes that before 1980, engineers considered themselves to be pioneers. Göle labels engineers "left utopians". She argues that Veblen's theory of "engineers' government" symbolizes the power of science and rationalism against the power of money and individualism. Based on this theoretical background, she tries to find out the role of engineers in society according to their own understanding. She argues that due to the positivist understanding of society, engineers reduce every problem to mathematics and technical data. For this reason, they saw themselves as modernizing social engineers who should have a place in political power mechanisms (Göle, 2012, p. 26). Her study in 1982

demonstrates that this “left utopian” ideology has been undergoing a significant change among engineers. With the election of the neoliberal ANAP (Motherland Party), engineers became popular. Pragmatism, technocratic attitudes against ideological affiliations and entrepreneurship were the new characteristics of the rising “business class”. Göle’s research in 1988 on engineers in ANAP illustrates this pragmatism. She claims that engineers regarded their rising popularity as a result of their mathematical and rationalist skills in contrast to the idealistic behavior of lawyers and politicians. They considered themselves as solution oriented people. Göle argues that the revolutionary utopias of pre-1980 engineers postponed the solution to social problems into a future time. But with the expansion of the market economy, daily problems were politicized and needed immediate solutions. Therefore, daily problems like feminism, environmentalism, and the headscarf issue entered the agenda in the 1990s (Göle, 2012, p. 17).

Engineers and architects are important sections of the current white-collar employees in the private sector. They constitute a good example of changing working class theory. Engineers and architects who were mostly employed in the public sector, with many in management positions before 1980, became the first victims of privatization. However, in the 1990s the private sector was still providing good positions even if these people were losing their management positions. In the 2000s, engineers and architects experienced serious proletarianization. Engineer activists play a significant role in white-collar mobilizations. In this dissertation, four of the leading activists interviewed, out of 16, were engineers working in the private sector.

Boyras (2012), in his study on the public sector workers’ mobilization, emphasizes that there were three major effects of privatization on the working class:

“These effects may be summarized under three major headings: first, on the working conditions of workers; second, on workers’ collective organizations (pressures on unionization, decrease in union members, weakening power of unions for collective bargaining), and third, on the employment structure of the labor market (increasing number of laid off workers due to privatization).” (Boyraz, 2012)

He shows that while 700,000 workers (3.6% of the total) were employed in SEEs (State Economic Enterprises) in 1991, this decreased to 506.000 in 2000 (2.5% of the total). It was 207.000 (only (1.3% of the total) in 2005 (Boyraz, 2012).

Boyraz shows that through the privatization process hundreds of thousands of workers were either laid off or transferred to the private sector. The number of unionized workers declined rapidly in this new situation. The private sector does not provide the same job security for workers. Precarious conditions, flexible work, subcontracting, and increasing competition among workers with the pressure of the reserve army of the unemployed prevents workers from joining trade unions and organizing collective action against employers. Boyraz indicates that while Türk-İş could undertake collective bargaining for 600,000 workers at the end of the 1980s, in 20 years this number fell to 300,000 (Boyraz, 2012).

Public sector employment and privatization have very crucial places in the history of the working class movement of Turkey. Public sector workers were the section of the working class most affected by neoliberal policies. They were also the first to get organized against neoliberal policies. Skilled workers of privatized companies like Netaş (Northern Electric Telecommunications Company), PETKİM (petrochemicals), Türk Telekom (Turkish Telecommunications Company), and THY (Turkish Airlines) were the leading sections of the changing working class after the global economic crisis.

2.3.1 Spring Actions and New Repertoire of Collective Actions

The 1980s and 1990s were years of high inflation. At the same time, privatization began. The new way of life favoring consumption and entertainment, together with shrinking wages as a result of high inflation, created a feeling of status loss for public sector workers. Privatization created job insecurity especially for manual workers in the public sector.

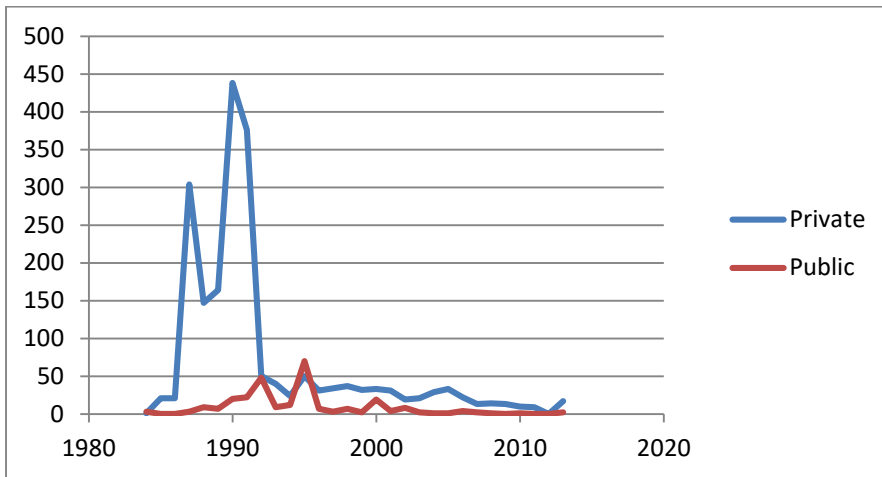
The first workers' strikes after the military coup of 1980 took place in 1985, but the most influential was the Netaş strike in 1986. Netaş was a public-and-international-enterprises partnership employing the largest number of engineers in a single workplace in Turkey. The strike ended with a collective agreement after 93 days. In 1987, Petrol-İş (the Oil, Chemicals and Rubber Workers' Union) organized a strike in 63 public workplaces of the petrochemicals sector including 11 thousand workers. In 1989, public sector workers mobilized the Spring Actions. Approximately 70% of the strikes occurred in the public sector between 1980 and 1997 (Akkaya, 1999). The February 28 military intervention in 1997 not only removed the government but also stopped workers' mobilizations. The Istanbul earthquake of 1999 and the economic crisis of 2001 were other major reasons behind the decline in working class mobilizations.

The Spring Actions of 1989 signalled the upcoming wave of working class mobilizations. Actions began with the dispute between 26 trade unions affiliated to Türk-İş (Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions) and the government during the collective bargaining process. The main reasons behind the discontent were shrinking wages and political repression. The Spring Actions were very creative in their repertoire of collective action. Public sector workers combined the traditional repertoire with a new repertoire. Strikes, marches, lunch boycotts, hunger strikes were part of the well known repertoire. Others, the new repertoire, included boycotting shuttles, growing beards, collective filing of divorce cases, barefoot marches,

selling their children symbolically, eating bread and onions in front of the workplaces and many more (Çelik, 2012).

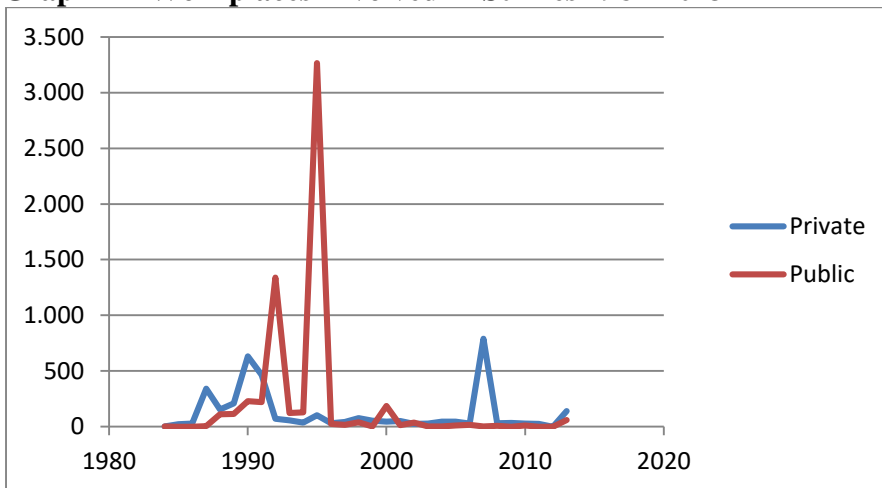
In 1990, 458 strikes (only 20 in the public sector) occurred in 861 different workplaces. In 1991, 398 strikes occurred in 686 workplaces. Then the number of strikes declined rapidly in the following years (Akkaya, 1999). The main demand of the workers was for wage increases against high inflation.

Graph 1 – Number of Strikes 1984-2013



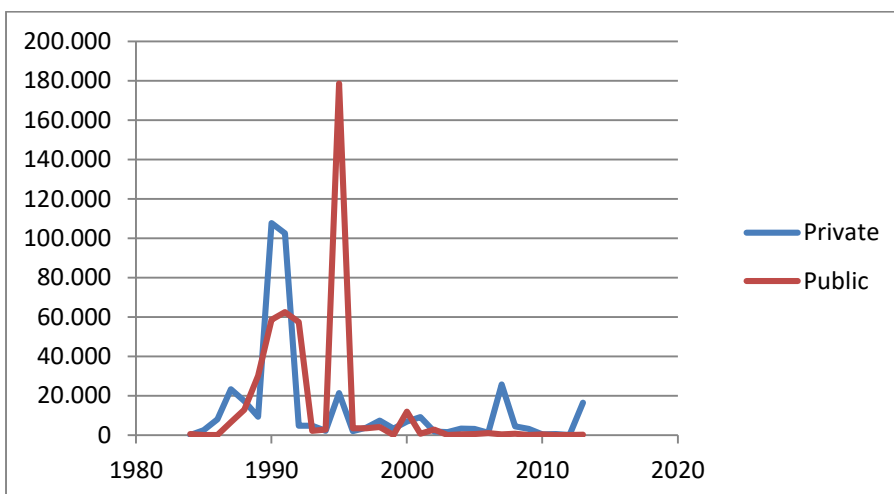
Source: ÇSGB, 2014

Graph 2 – Workplaces Involved in Strikes 1984-2013



Source: ÇSGB, 2014

Graph 3– Workers Involved in Strikes 1984-2013



Source: ÇSGB, 2014

The tables above show that from 1989 to 1995 public sector workers' mobilizations were much bigger than private sector workers'. However, beginning in 2005, striking workers and workplaces were predominantly in the private sector. The number of strikes was increasing between 1984 and 1995. The peak year was 1995, when about 200,000 workers were involved in strike action. In the 2000s, however, workers involved in strikes were only a few thousand per year. Only the Türk Telekom strike of 2007 changed this low participation. Türk Telekom was founded as a public enterprise in 1995 and 55% of its shares were privatized in 2005. In 2007, the company's 24 thousand workers went to strike. The number of striking workers in Türk Telekom was bigger than the annual number of striking workers in the whole of the 2000s (Çelik, 2012).

The Spring Actions were successful in several respects. It is possible to see from the strike and the number of striking workers that a new wave of working class mobilization had begun. The importance of the Spring Actions was that it was a winning period on the part of workers. Just a month after the beginning of the Actions, the government's vote declined from 41% to 22% in the local elections of March 1989. Workers managed to raise their wages nominally by 142% on average (Voyvoda, 2011). The working class mobilization changed the leadership of almost all the trade unions'. In Türk-İş, 17 union presidents, 99 central executives, and 373 branch presidents were changed between 1987 and 1990 (Çetik&Akkaya, 1999; Arslan, 2006). In 1992, DİSK (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions) which was banned in 1980, was reestablished (Arslan, 2006). Public sector workers managed to create their own trade union with the establishment of KESK (Confederation of Public Sector Workers' Unions) in 1995. A rising leadership of young and activist workers in other trade unions resulted in general wage increases in the private sector as well (Çelik, 2012). The years between 1989 and 1995 were a period of working class mobilization. Working class militancy triggered a resurgence of students' and left politics. In 1995-96, the Student

Coordination mobilized for education rights and in 1996 a new socialist party (ÖDP, Freedom and Solidarity Party) was founded as a united front of several left organizations and intellectuals. However, the militancy of the social movements entered a decline period as a result of political challenges. The rise of political Islam in 1995, military intervention in 1997, the Gölcük earthquake in 1999, and finally the economic crisis of 2001 were the major challenges. There was a major decline in the number of strikes in the public sector in the 2000s. The lowest working class mobilizations were recorded in Turkey in the period between 2000 and 2007. Çelik argues that this was mainly because of privatization. But subcontracting, which is a serious obstacle for workers to get organized, was also a major problem at work in these years. In 2007, strikes appeared again, but this was not a general trend. The global financial crisis of 2008 would be the real breaking point. Interestingly, layoffs and shrinking wages did not lead to strikes in and after 2008. The average number of striking workers' declined even more between 2008 and 2011. In 2011, the number of striking workers was the lowest since 1984 (Çelik, 2012). The rapid economic growth of 2009 and 2010 was a reason for this reduction. But while strikes and traditional methods of collective action were in decline, white-collar mobilizations began.

Voyvoda argues that public sector workers had been organizing small resistances since 1980, but the real wave of mobilization began in 1989. This means that tension and discontent accumulated for a long time among workers. While discontent accumulated, workers were gaining confidence through the Netaş strike and others, single workplace resistances and finally a political victory in the local elections of 1989. A similar process has been at work for white-collar employees since 2008. The period 2008-2015 has some similarities with the public sector workers' mobilizations of 1983-1989. Through small mobilizations but also with a new repertoire, white-collar employees are gathering experience and organizational capacity for another period of struggle.

Voyvoda indicates that public sector workers' discontent was also directed to their trade unions in this period. Trade unions were passive and neglecting the problems faced by workers. Voyvoda conducted interviews with activists of the Spring Actions. Activists were criticizing the trade union bureaucracy for caring only about their own positions (Voyvoda, 2011). Their mobilization changed the trade union bureaucracy in the 1990s. A similar discontent has existed among the working class since the 2000s. Beginning in 2008, white-collar mobilizations would either create new platforms and trade unions or wage an intra-union struggle because of the bureaucratic and ineffective structures of the trade unions.

The major difference between the public sector workers' mobilizations and the white-collar mobilizations was, first of all, their quantity. Even if the trade unions were ineffective, union density was still over 20% in the 1980s. 600 thousand workers were on collective bargaining in 1989. A dispute over collective bargaining was the starting point of the Spring Actions (Voyvoda, 2011). The white-collar mobilizations began with the economic crisis of 2008, but these mobilizations occurred mostly without trade unions. The IBM resistance, the Plaza Actions, new platforms, new organization attempts in private universities all covered only a few hundred activists. However, the Gezi resistance, where white-collar participation was high, was massive. But it was not a mobilization based on workplaces. Its agenda was predominantly political rather than economic. Secondly, public sector workers were quite political and socialist organizations were quiet active within the movement. The difficulty of organizing trade unions, strikes, and demonstrations due to the military's political power in the 1980s drove workers to find a new repertoire of collective action. There were no such difficulties for the workers in the 2000s. The new repertoire of the 2000s was mainly a response to the inefficient and classical structures of the working class organizations but also a consequence of white-collar employees' skills and abilities such as their great command on communication tools and knowledge on foreign languages.

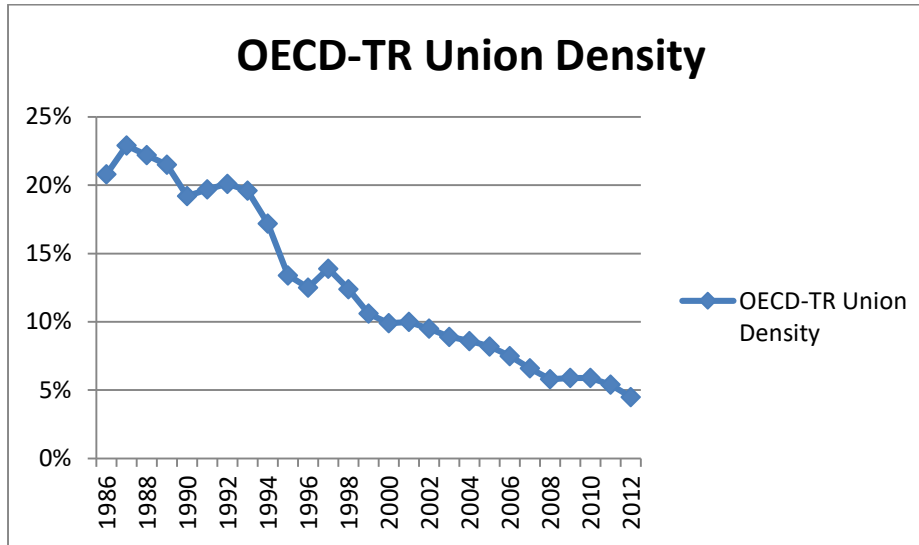
The public sector workers' struggle left a great experience behind. This experience was important for the white-collar mobilizations. Therefore, a short comparison between public sector workers and white-collar employees was made in this section. The similarities and differences among these two sections of the working class and their mobilizations need to be examined in more detail by authors. In this section, the importance of public sector workers in the composition of the working class and the impact of privatization on this composition were examined. Then, public sector workers' mobilizations were explained briefly in order to see the similarities between public sector workers and white-collar employees. Both of them are subjects of neoliberal transformation and get mobilized when they lose their prestigious status. The next section will continue with an analysis of the changes in the trade unions. This is important in order to demonstrate the weakness of the trade unions in the 2000s. This weakness is the main reason behind the new repertoire used by white-collar employees.

2.4 Changes in Trade Union Membership

According to the labor and trade unions law in Turkey, workers cannot join trade unions which are active in the area of their professions. Regardless of the work they do at their workplace, they have to join a trade union which is operating in the company's sector. This forces different professions to join the same trade union although their problems at work are completely different. This situation makes it difficult to find out trade union membership rates among white-collar employees. To give an example, at Bilgi University all workers joined Sosyal-İş, because private universities are in the services sector. However, cleaning workers, security workers, assistants, associate professors, and professors have been experiencing different problems with the university administration. Assistants, administration staff, and academics are regarded as white-collar employees, but a majority of the Sosyal-İş Bilgi University branch consists of non-academic staff. This is the same in every trade union branch. Unions in the metal sector provide a good example. Every factory employs hundreds of blue-collar workers, but also tens of white-collar employees. This situation prevents us from finding unionization rates among white-collar employees, but general membership changes in trade unions can still give us some clues.

Çelik argues that Turkey was the least unionized country among OECD members in 2001 and in 2011. Turkey's unionization level fell by 46 per cent in these years (Çelik, 2015). At the beginning of the 1980s wage earners were 33.3% of the labor force. This rose to 43.5% in 2001 (Murat, 2007, p. 274) and 60% in 2011 (İstanbul Valiliği, 2012, p. 73). This shows that while the number workers has been increasing rapidly, the number of unionized workers has been falling since 2000.

Graph 4- Union Density of Turkey in OECD Data



Source: OECD, 2013

Çelik emphasizes that the 2000s were the most peaceful years of the past 30 years in terms of number of strikes in Turkey. It may look like “peace at work”, but he argues that this period looks more like “Pax Romana”. “Pax Romana” was a period of peace in the Roman Empire, and the main reason for this peace was the strong army. Similarly, the “peace at work” of the 2000s was due not to labor satisfaction but to the authoritarian actions of governments against labor organizations and their collective actions, as well as the deunionization process (Çelik, 2012).

The military regime had a significant impact on working class organizations in the post-1980 era. Trade unions which were members of DİSK were closed down. DİSK had 500 thousand members in 1980 (Göle, 2012, p. 110). However, the number of trade union members did not significantly change in the years following 1980. Türk-İş was not closed down; its General Secretary, Sadık Şide, became Minister of Social Security in the military government. Hak-İş was allowed to be reestablished in 1981. As a result, workers from the defunct trade unions moved to these. While the military government was closing down militant trade unions, pro-government ones were allowed to exist. They continued to make collective agreements.

White-collar employees were also organized in trade unions before 1980. Erdayı (2012) argues that there were mainly two groups of organized white-collar employees at the time: public sector workers and banking-insurance workers. The largest sections of white-collar workers were public sector workers such as teachers, doctors, and civil servants. In 1971, a new law prohibited trade union membership for public sector workers. As a result, public sector workers organized in associations. The teachers' association, TÖB-DER, was the strongest, with 160 thousand members (40% of all teachers) in 1980 (Erdayı, 2012). TÖB-DER was closed down by the military regime in 1980. Teachers played a crucial role in the Spring Actions of 1989, and managed to create a new trade union, Eđitim-Sen, in 1995.

The banking and insurance sector had already been developing since 1950. There were already some private banks, together with state-owned banks. As Turkey was largely a closed economy and the private sector was weak, the banking sector did not have much power before 1980. Bank-Sen (Revolutionary Banking and Insurance Workers' Union) was the biggest trade union in the banking sector. It was closed down by the military regime. BASİSEN (Banking and Insurance Workers' Union) was established in 1983. BASİSEN was previously TİBAŞ, founded by İş Bankası branch managers in 1963 as a pro-employer trade union. They took advantage of Bank-Sen's closure and became the largest trade union in the sector.

The banking sector currently has trade unions but their bureaucratic structure and ineffectiveness has made white-collar activists look for new platforms. Nurol shows how current bank workers consider trade unions as ineffective. He indicates that trade unions do not organize collective actions and only in a few banks can they make collective bargaining. Under these conditions workers see no reason to join trade unions, and choose other forms of workplace resistance, such as applauding protests, press releases and lunch boycotts. The total number of banks reached 49, with 10,234 branches, in 2012. According to a report by the

Turkish Banks Union, 50% of employees in the banking sector were women and 80% had higher education in 2013 (Nurol, 2015).

In short, the Spring Actions represented the awakening of the working class after the military regime. However, structural changes in the economy undermined the working class organizations since the 1990s. The most important factor was privatization. Employment in public sector enterprises dropped from 750,000 to 500,000. At the same time, union density in these companies fell from 70.6% to 45.7% between 1985 and 1997 (Cam, 1999). The changing composition of the working class coincided with the lowest union density in the 2000s. New labor conditions had been putting significant pressure on the working class. White-collar employees were affected by these new conditions, losing their prestigious positions in the workplaces and in society. This was a very important reason for the mobilization of white-collar employees after 2008.

2.5 Debate on Classes in Turkey

Turkey's rapid transformation to global capitalism since the 1980s triggered a debate on classes in Turkey in the 1990s, when the consequences of this rapid transformation became more visible in the most developed cities of Turkey. The major discussion among theorists was the "new middle class." Not surprisingly, the new middle class was mainly a debate centered on the transformation of Istanbul since the 1980s because the consequences of this transformation were quite similar to the transformation of the West since the 1950s. While Turkey was rapidly industrializing in the neoliberal era, Istanbul became the trade, finance, and services center of Turkey. Industry moved to other cities or the outskirts of Istanbul²⁸ (İzmen & Daş, 2005). A major difference from the transformation of Western countries was that Turkey, and particularly Istanbul, transformed just within a few decades.

The pioneer name in this debate was Çağlar Keyder with his book *Istanbul: Between the Global and the Local*, published in 1999, in which he describes the rise of a new middle class, especially in Istanbul. According to him, Istanbul, as the globalizing city of Turkey, generated a new global middle class (Keyder, 2000). This new middle class was different from the old middle class. The old middle class was the bourgeoisie, which stood between the aristocracy and the clergy, until the last decades of the 19th century. At the end of the 19th century the middle class was largely the petty bourgeoisie, which stood between the capitalists and the proletariat. Since the second half of the 20th century a new middle class has been rising.

The distinctive feature of this new middle class is their educational qualifications and knowledge. The university diploma makes every graduate a potential member of the new middle class according to Keyder (2013). This new middle class is urban and also global. They share more or less the same life style as their counterparts in other countries. This new

²⁸In the next section this transformation will be examined more closely.

middle class emerged in the neoliberal era of Turkey. Istanbul as the globalizing city of Turkey has experienced a special mixture of casino capitalism and yuppie culture since 1980. New shopping malls, a lively entertainment sector, expanding fast food chains, the emergence of restaurants serving international cuisine, increasing festivals, and new satellite housing generated the yuppie culture (Keyder, 2000, p. 25). This new middle class is less conservative in its lifestyle because of its lively nightlife, entertainment, and sexual relations. Therefore, Keyder argued, it is a libertarian class that demands more freedom from conservative governments in Turkey. He claimed that the bourgeoisie has lost its transformative power and this new middle class has the potential power for a radical change (Keyder, 2013). This new middle class is different from the petty bourgeoisie or the old middle class in the sense that the local petty bourgeoisie and low educated merchants, producers, and managers are excluded from this new global class. Keyder argued that this new middle class has been in decline in the developed world since the 1980s but that it was the main source of the 1968 movement. Wages and working conditions have been deteriorating in the developed world whereas it is increasing in developing countries such as Turkey, Egypt, Thailand, and Brazil. The masses who occupied the squares in 2011 were this new global middle class in the Middle East and Turkey (Keyder, 2014a).

Besime Şen (2011) discussed the new middle class in Istanbul by looking at the relations between deindustrialization, gentrification, and the new middle class in Turkey. She argued that, since 1980, Istanbul has been undergoing a deindustrialization process and the value of urban land has been rapidly rising. This brought gentrification policies to the city. These two transformations- deindustrialization and gentrification- reshaped class relations in the city. Her explanations did not cover the whole country but focused on changes in Istanbul as the leading economy and the most crowded city. The changes in Istanbul have consequently influenced the whole country. The new middle class was the population with higher education

degrees, foreign language skills, and high incomes. Its expansion during this transformation era created an influence greater than its real conditions as a result of their ideological superiority. She argued that their class preferences are similar to the petty bourgeoisie but that they differ from this old middle class with their cultural behaviors (Şen, 2011).

In 2012, Keyman claimed that the “new middle classes” of Turkey are the fundamental source of social change. He argued that the new middle classes emerged only in the most developed cities of Turkey, such as Istanbul, Izmir, and Ankara, up to the 1980s. The new middle classes then emerged in peripheral cities during the neoliberal era, especially during the 1990s. Keyman’s new middle classes were the new petty entrepreneurs. He regarded small and middle sized capitalists as the “new middle classes”. Their collective action organizations were the Anatolian business organizations of TUSKON (Turkish Businessmen’s and Industrialists’ Confederation), TURKONFED (Turkish Enterprise and Business Confederation), and MÜSİAD (Independent Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association). Keyman’s middle and upper classes theory was based on the scale of their production. The new middle classes were simply challengers of Istanbul-based big business, namely TÜSİAD. Why he referred to them as “classes” rather than a class is not clear. But, according to Keyman, these new middle classes have been forcing Turkey’s economic and political structure to change since the 2000s (Keyman, 2012).

In 2013, the biggest uprising in the history of the country broke out in Istanbul. Tens of thousands of people occupied Gezi Park. Hundreds of thousands of people filled the streets of almost all cities of the country in solidarity with the Gezi resistance. Not surprisingly, the question that was immediately asked was who were these masses. The hegemonic concept was the “middle class”. Another concept was the “white-collars”. Keyder triggered the debate with his theory of the new middle classes of the global city of Istanbul. Keyder pointed out that the number of university graduates had risen to 4 million in Turkey. 2.5 million of them

had graduated since 2008. He described the features of this class in his article with the following phrase:

“These figures portend a new middle class in formation, whose members work in relatively modern workplaces, with leisure time and consumption habits much like their global counterparts. But they also look for new guarantees for their way of life, for their environment, for their right to the city; and they resent violations of their personal and social space.” (Keyder, 2013).

Keyder’s article received objections and criticisms from left-wing authors. Boratav, for instance, claimed a totally opposite class analysis of the Gezi resistance. Both of the authors agreed that students were the significant component of the resistance. Keyder argued that students were the potential new middle classes whereas Boratav saw them as “potential” working class and as “potential” reserve army of labor. He argued that white-collar employees, who were perceived as middle class, actually belong to the working class. According to Boratav, only independent professionals constitute a separate class that we can call the “new middle class”. His conclusion was that the Gezi resistance was a “matured class reaction” of skilled workers together with their future class comrades (students) against the bourgeoisie and the political power (Boratav, 2013).

Birikim journal devoted a whole issue to the Gezi resistance in 2013. In this issue, Laçiner argued that the first major wave of the Gezi incidents consisted of the “middle and the upper clusters of society” (Laçiner, 2013). Tanıl Bora gave an analysis of the “urban middle class” with a similar approach to Keyder (Bora, 2014).

Concerning the class analysis of the Gezi resistance, Tuğal argued that the core of the masses in the resistance was professionals. He differentiated white-collar workers from professionals and argued that these professionals gave the resistance its middle-class character:

“Professionals not only led the movement, but also constituted the core of the participants. Despite analyses to the contrary, the Gezi Resistance appears to be an occasionally multi-class, but predominantly middle-class movement... Generously paid professionals who have some control over production and services (even though they may not have ownership), rather than white-collar proletarians (such as waitresses, sales-clerks, subordinate office clerks, etc.) seem to predominate.” (Tuğal, 2013).

Tuğal argued that the target of the Gezi resistance was the “commodification of nature and space, and authoritarianism”, which made the resistance a middle-class resistance. He claimed that professionals- the middle class- “have experienced upward mobility through their lives”. They have “lucrative jobs, luxurious vacations, fancy cars” he claimed, so that their revolt was against the “impoverishment of social life” rather than economic conditions.

Balaban (2013) developed a unique theory of his own on the classes debate after the Gezi resistance. He argued that the rise of the political Islamist movement was a consequence of emerging new classes in the slums of Istanbul. A class analysis of political Islam had failed, according to Balaban, because of the weaknesses of middle class theories. Meanwhile, Marxist middle class theories failed to recognize intermediate classes between the two core classes, he claimed. Marxists mostly made a vertical class analysis and grouped others between these two as a middle strata. The Weberian class analysis overcomes this deficiency with its horizontal class analysis.

Balaban argued that in the realm of circulation²⁹ there is not only the petty bourgeoisie but also two other classes, namely the technocracy and the faubourgeoisie. All of these classes play a role in the extraction of surplus. The technocracy consists of business administrators,

²⁹ Realm of circulation means the realm of buying and selling of commodities and, lending money out of the realm of production in Marxist terminology.

finance experts, engineers working within the labor process, and human resources strategists. While representing the interests of the employers, at the same time they are aware of the fact that they represent an independent class outside of the bourgeoisie because they do not work for the same employer, and they change their jobs so often. They are able to prevent deskilling in their positions. As a result of globalization of corporation activities, the technocracy is clearly the most international class among the three classes of the circulation process. However, urbanization and population growth requires more labor to integrate into the labor process. This cannot be achieved by the technocracy. Here, the second new class, faubourgeoisie³⁰, emerges. He claimed that without understanding the role of this class within the development of Turkey's capitalism, the rise of political Islam cannot be understood (Balaban, 2013). For this study the faubourgeoisie is not one of our concerns. His technocracy definition, on the other hand, was not developed in his article because this was not his main interest. As almost all contributors to the class debate developed their class struggle perspective, Balaban's expectation of this three middle strata theory was that an alliance of the technocracy and the proletarianized white-collar employees could be an alternative to the current regime. The Gezi resistance was a signal for such a development.

The debate on class began as a result of the changing class structure in Turkey. However, it gained more interest when new collective actions appeared. Each contributor to the debate agrees that the class structure is changing. But theorizing the new was the discussion point. Theorists explained the differences between the old and the new but not the changes in the economic structure and changes in the working class. For this reason, their definition of middle class consists of contradictory class locations. Keyder's "new middle class" consists

³⁰ Faubourgeoisie means out of bourgs. Bourgeoisie is historically used for the property owners inside the bourgs. The term faubourgeoisie was founded by Pirenne (2005). Pirenne claimed that increasing migration and trade forced new comers to live outside the bourgs during the middle period of the Roman Empire. They settled around the bourgs. While the bourgeoisie controlled money-capital circulation, another class- the faubourgeoisie- controlled productive-capital circulation. Balaban argued that a similar development occurred during the 1990s in Istanbul between the bourgeoisie and the faubourgeoisie of the slum dwellers.

of waged, educated professionals including managers but at the same time educated independent professions, and also white-collar employees. Different classes of workers, employers, petty bourgeoisie, and managers (the real new middle class in contradictory location) are put into the same box. Şen's "new middle class" is the people working in creative jobs like finance, advertising, information technology, and the like. However, the majority of jobs in these sectors require no creativity. Keyman's "new middle class", on the other hand, is the Anatolian entrepreneurs.

It has already been mentioned that the debate on classes in Turkey is in general centered on the changes in Istanbul. Istanbul is the only city that has been experiencing deindustrialization in Turkey since 1980 and is meanwhile becoming the largest economy of the country with its giant services and finance sector. Almost all of the major political mobilizations occur or at least begin in Istanbul. Not surprisingly, white-collar mobilizations have been emerging in Istanbul since 2008 as well. Therefore, it is necessary to give a special section to explaining the changing economic and class structure of Istanbul.

2.6 Istanbul: Changes in the City and Its Class Structure

Historically major social movements and political events occur in capital cities. “La Commune” in 1871; revolutions in Paris in 1830, 1848 and 1968; the soviet revolution in St. Petersburg; working class mobilizations in Berlin (1918-1923), London, and other capitals are significant examples. This is not only because political power rests there, but also because capital cities are usually the most developed cities in the country in question. Social tensions and contradictions are most strongly felt under the economic, political, and cultural leadership of capital cities. Not surprisingly, Istanbul was a city of social and political incidents too, as the capital of Ottoman Empire, and it did not lose its economic, political, and cultural leadership to Ankara after the foundation of Turkish Republic, except for the period 1923-1950. While political power and the bureaucracy moved to Ankara, the most important social and political developments continued to occur in Istanbul and then spread to other cities. This is because Istanbul is the biggest city in the country in terms of population, production, economy, history and culture. It is the finance, transportation, trade, industry and telecommunications center of Turkey. In 2011, 18.2% of the country's population was living in Istanbul, and the city accounted for 50% of Turkey's total foreign trade. Istanbul is the most finance-dense city of Turkey: the headquarters of 86% of banking companies are located there (İstanbul Valiliği, 2012, p. 68), and 44.8% of Turkey’s total information, communications and technology workers are employed there. There are 5 technoparks, 2 free trade zones and 8 organized industry regions in the city (İSKA, 2014).

The years between 1935 and 2000 Turkey’s population rose from 16,157,450 to 67,803,927. In the same period, Istanbul’s population rose from 883,599 to 10,018,735. While the general population increased 4.2 times, Istanbul’s did so 11.2 times. The main reason behind this rapid increase was not birth rates but migration. In 1935, only 5.4 per cent of the whole

population was living in Istanbul, whereas in 2000, 14.8 per cent did so (Murat, 2007, p. 57). The city's population reached 14,160,467 in 2013, which was 18.5% of the country's total population (TÜİK, 2014).

In 1973, 44 per cent of manufacturing companies employing more than 10 workers were based in Istanbul. The share of these companies in the total employment of national industry was 51% (Özmucur, 1976, cited in Keyder, 2000, p. 20). Before the neoliberal era, Istanbul was already the largest industrialized city in Turkey. However, Istanbul's relation with the global economy was limited as a result of import-substitution development, which was a form of closed economy. Beginning in 1980, Turkey has been going through a process of integration into the global economy. Istanbul thus became a global city; a gateway into Turkey for foreign capital and a gateway to the global economy for domestic capital. It also became a meeting point for the capital of "emerging states", between the ex- Soviet states and Western capital (Keyder, 2000, p. 23).

Istanbul-based industry benefited the most from the import substitution industrialization regime of the 1960s and 70s (Karataşlı, 2015). As a consequence of the rise of national productive capital, the Turkish Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (Türkiye Sanayici ve İşadamları Derneği, TÜSİAD) was founded in 1971 by 12 businessmen. By the end of 2007 TÜSİAD had 576 members (Öniş & Bayer, 2010), and in 2012 it had 600 members. In 2012, TÜSİAD employed 50% of the labor force (agricultural and public sector workers excluded), producing 65% of industrial production, and accounting for 80% of Turkey's total foreign trade (TÜSİAD, 2013). Even though TÜSİAD members have factories and companies in different cities, almost all of its members are Istanbul-based holding companies.

Harvey argues that in the neoliberal era capital has turned its attention to urban investments for speculative rents in a short time (Harvey, 2004 cited in Yalçıntaş, Çalışkan, Çılgın, & Dündar, 2014). This creates competition among global cities. Istanbul had been a candidate to become a global city since 1980. Giant projects, “crazy” projects, world symbols, marketing strategies, competition over big international activities, and gentrification in favor of the rich were all designed to restructure Istanbul as a global city and to attract foreign capital. In all global cities industry has moved out of the city center. While industrial production has been moving to the outskirts of Istanbul or even further to Gebze and Tekirdağ, creative industries (information, telecommunications, advertising, production, etc.), productive services, finance, and real estate sectors have been growing in the center of Istanbul (Yalçıntaş, Çalışkan, Çılgın, & Dündar, 2014). The construction sector has been regarded as the engine of economic growth since 2002. Turkey was third -after the USA and China- in the list of countries with the largest construction companies in the world, with 22 companies in 2007 (Milliyet, 2007). Gentrification, restructuring, mass housing, highways and giant construction projects created a very big construction sector. In this growing sector, not only construction companies but also architecture and advertising companies have been growing. Restructuring also aimed to attract more tourists to Istanbul. The number of hotels, shopping malls, international fairs and festivals increased rapidly. The Turkish Airlines fleet expanded, and new private airlines entered the sector. These growing sectors generated a rapidly growing section of the working class with higher education.

The first globally integrated sector was the finance sector. Istanbul was the center of this expansion. Foreign banks began to establish branches in Istanbul. Exchange offices, insurance and leasing companies, and the stock exchange have been expanding rapidly in the city (Öncü and Gökçe, 1991, cited in Keyder, 2000, p. 23). Then plazas, the new generation of workplaces, began to rise.

Keyder argues that Istanbul in the 1980s was a special mixture of casino capitalism and yuppi culture. New shopping malls, a lively entertainment sector, the arrival of fast food chains, the emergence of restaurants serving international cuisine, an increasing number of festivals, and new satellite housing generated the yuppi culture (Keyder, 2000, p. 25) for white-collar employees and the middle and, upper classes in the 1990s.

The Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts (İKSV) was founded in 1973 by seventeen businessmen and art enthusiasts. İKSV became the main organizer of international cultural events in the city. In 1983, "International Istanbul Filmdays" was initiated by İKSV and this became the International Istanbul Film Festival in 1989. İKSV began to organize the Istanbul Biennial in 1987, the International Istanbul Theatre Festival in 1989 and the International Istanbul Jazz Festival in 1994 (İKSV, 2015). The Habitat II Conference was held in Istanbul in 1996. This Conference was very important for the rise of NGOs in Turkey. Istanbul was a candidate for the 2000 Olympic Games with the slogan "Let's meet where the continents meet" (Robins & Aksoy, 1996). In 2010, Istanbul was chosen as the European Capital of Culture. All of these international events aimed to make Istanbul a famous global city.

Istanbul has always had special importance for the AKP governments. Giant construction projects were important for Istanbul's publicity. Istanbul would be the city of "the biggest"; the biggest thematic aquarium of the world (İstanbul Akvaryum, 2016), the biggest fisheries marketplace in Europe (Akşam, 2016), the second and third tallest buildings in Europe, except Russia (Skyland and Istanbul Sapphire) (Milliyet Emlak, 2014), the biggest court house in Europe (NTV, 2011), the biggest shopping mall in Europe (Forum İstanbul, 2016), the largest park in the world (Hürriyet, 2012), the third largest congress center in Europe (Efes Congress Center) (İnternet Haber, 2013).

Keyder calls the 1980s and 1990s a period of “informal globalization”, meaning globalization without adequate planning. Aksoy argues that this period ended with the AKP government. AKP led Turkey into the global economy and Istanbul was the headquarters of this development (Aksoy, 2014). This was the main driving force behind the mega projects of the AKP government in Istanbul. These projects were decided directly by the central government. The Metro, the Marmaray project (a railway system under the bosphorus), the third airport, Galataport and Haydarpaşa port, the gentrification of Beyoğlu and other neighborhoods, Canal Istanbul (building of a canal from the Black Sea to the Marmara that will turn Istanbul into a massive island) were some of the most famous central government projects for Istanbul.

After this short overview of changing Istanbul, the next section will take a closer look at these changes especially from the perspective of the new and/or rising sectors which are employing large numbers of white-collar workers. The socio-economic consequences of this rapid change will also be examined. Then, in the final section, we shall look at the changing class composition of Istanbul.

2.6.1 Socio-Economic Transformation of Istanbul

Turkey’s uneven capitalist development revealed its most important consequences through migration. Istanbul was affected the most from migration. Migration had a significant impact on the debate on classes in Turkey.

Migration generated new neighborhoods in the migrant receiving cities. In the case of Istanbul, the city grew from the center towards its geographical borders. The center and countryside structures began to change. Then the economic structures of neighborhoods and finally their class composition changed. We shall not examine the change in neighborhoods, but its importance must not be underestimated. We will see in the chapter III that white-collar mobilizations occurred in the changing central areas of the city.

Urbanization was a general trend in Turkey after 1950 and Istanbul was the city with the largest inflow of domestic migrants. This process changed society and the class composition of the city permanently. The most significant change occurred in family life. Rural-urban migration changed land-dependent life into wage earning life. Migration made people unskilled in the city. The secret unemployment in peasant or farmer families turned into real unemployment in urban settings. The new unskilled labor force usually found manual or unskilled services jobs (Kızıroğlu, 2014). This migrant labor force was frequently employed in unrecorded and marginal work. Bringing up children was very difficult for these low-income families. Women began to support the family by joining working life.. The urban poor lived in miserable housing conditions in the 1980s and 1990s. The expansion of the unrecorded labor brought problems of social security and healthcare. The conservative values of the countryside run into contradictions with the culture of urban life.

The socio-economic structure of spatial urban spaces in Istanbul was changed by the growing urban population, increasing employment in the services sector, the rise of the professionals and white-collar jobs. Industry and manufacturing facilities moved to the outskirts of Istanbul or to neighboring cities of. The industrial development of Gebze, Tuzla, Tekirdağ are examples of this change. The pre-1980 industrial areas of Haliç, Bakırköy, Karaköy, Şişli turned into areas of gentrification and symbols of the new urban culture. New sectors began to operate in these neighborhoods like fashion, the culture industry, media, communications, and advertising (Şen, 2011). Urban centers became the new working areas.

The gentrification policies in the 1990s in Istanbul became a significant social issue. The rent economy became one of the most important profit making tools. However, gentrification was not possible without victims and the resistance of victims. Most of these areas consisted of factories and smaller manufacturing industries such as textiles, shoe making, and leather. Immigrants from Anatolian cities settled around these areas and created urban slums.

Gentrification meant removing the urban poor out of the central areas and replacing them with better off workers (white-collar employees) and the middle and upper classes.

Keyder argues that in order to understand the commanding center of Istanbul's economic activities and to analyze the points of intersection of global networks we need to look at the regions where the headquarters of finance, services, news and information production, and urban planning companies are concentrated. These areas are also the areas where cultural events, festivals, tourism and diplomacy facilities are concentrated. According to this definition, the center of Istanbul is the historical peninsula, Beyoğlu, Şişli, Beşiktaş, Kadıköy, and Üsküdar. Here, globally borrowed credits are delivered to companies through finance centers. This is where production for world markets and their trade takes place (Keyder, 2014b).

Karaköy, the historical peninsula, and Haliç are the old manufacturing and industrial regions of Istanbul. These industries moved to the outskirts of the city. Workers' neighborhoods and slums were included in gentrification projects. The urban poor were forced to move to the outer regions especially through the mass housing facilities of TOKİ (Housing Development Administration). New plazas, shopping malls, hotels, gated communities, residences were constructed in their place (Keyder, 2014b).

The plaza is the symbol of the changing workplace. Plazas include hundreds of offices with high quality infrastructure. They are modern factories where thousands of workers work together in the same building. However, there is a crucial difference between factories and plazas: a plaza is fragmented into tens or even hundreds of companies (if it does not belong to a single company). With the rise of plazas, the plaza culture of the white-collar employees became an area of social research. The first plaza was Yapı Kredi Plaza, built in 1989. In 2003 there were 70 plazas just in the Maslak-Levent area, and 319 companies were operating

in these plazas. Türkiye İş Bankası employed approximately 6000 workers and Sabancı Center 5000 in their plazas (Capitol, 2003). As for the number of skyscrapers, Istanbul became the sixth largest city in the world with 2093 skyscrapers in 2013 (Önür, 2013). However, this number includes hotels, luxury housing, shopping towers and plazas all together. According to Türkiye Bilgi Bankası there are, currently, 712 plazas in Istanbul (TUBİBA, 2015).

The table below shows the share of some service sectors in the central neighborhoods of Istanbul in 2006. The old industry and small manufacturing neighborhoods are now finance, services, and media centers. In 2010, there were 364 finance and insurance companies operating in Istanbul: 65 of these were located in Levent and 43 in Maslak (İSKA, 2013, p. 202). In 2010, 49 banks were operating in Istanbul and their headquarters were located mostly in Şişli (Nurol, 2015). We will see in the next chapter that these regions were to become the places of white-collar organization and the Gezi Park occupation.

Table 5 – The spatial share of services sectors in Istanbul (2006)

Sector	Companies	Neighborhoods with the largest share		Sector	Companies	Neighborhoods with the largest share		Sector	Companies	Neighborhoods with the largest share	
		European Side	Anatolian Side			European Side	Anatolian Side			European Side	Anatolian Side
Finance services	Finance and investment companies	Şişli (42%)	Üsküdar (26%)	Specialized agency services	Company headquarters	Şişli (46%) Beşiktaş (29%)	Üsküdar (30%) Kartal (15%)	Advertising, media services	Architecture offices	Şişli (36%), Büyükdere (12%), Bakırköy (11%)	Ümraniye(14%), Üsküdar (12%)
	Bank branches	Şişli (18%)	Üsküdar (12%) Maltepe (9%)		Bank headquarters	Şişli (54%), Beyoğlu(19%) Beşiktaş (16%)	-		Media offices	Eminönü (47%), Beyoğlu (25%), Fatih (14%)	Üsküdar (26%), Pendik (9%)
	Insurance agencies and fund management	Şişli (14%)	Üsküdar (13%) Ümraniye (11%)		Newspaper and Television centers	Şişli (26%) Beyoğlu (11%)	-		Film studios	Beyoğlu(40%), Şişli (30%), Kağıthane(20%)	-
Insurance services	Insurance agencies and fund management	Şişli (14%)	Üsküdar (13%) Ümraniye (11%)	Public accountant, law, architecture, and engineering services	Lawyer and law offices	Beyoğlu (21%), Eminönü (20%) Şişli (16%)	Üsküdar (12%) Kartal (10%)		Film companies	Beyoğlu (72%)	Üsküdar (40%)
Software and hardware services	Software companies	Şişli (49%)	Üsküdar (14%)		Consultancy companies	Şişli (33%) Beyoğlu (28%) Beşiktaş (11%)	Üsküdar (12%) Ümraniye (10%)		Organization companies	Şişli (48%)	Beykoz (10%)
Specialized agency services	Insurance company headquarters	Şişli (100%)	-		Public accountant offices	Şişli (21%) Fatih (16%) Eminönü (13%)	Üsküdar (14%), Kartal (13%)		Advertising agencies	Şişli (30%), Beyoğlu (19%)	Üsküdar (23%), Pendik (13%)
									Graphic design and design offices	Şişli (26%)	Üsküdar (24%), Ümraniye (21%)

Source: Istanbul Development Agency (2013)

Regarding these locational changes, which were bound with the socio-economic transformation of the city through neoliberal policies, Robins and Aksoy (1996) pinpoint the following situation in the 1990s:

“Istanbul has seen the growth of a number of large business centre development projects, aimed at bringing together small and specialized businesses and taking them away from their traditional locations within the city. For example, Perpa, reportedly Europe's largest small business centre, has sought to attract the small manufacturers, traders and dealers that are scattered around the district of Perşembe Pazarı (though to date it remains half empty as businesses are declining to move in). Print and publishing businesses, which again used to be located within the city, are being moved out of Istanbul to the satellite district of İkitelli. İkitelli is projected to be the destination for over 25,000 businesses from Istanbul's old districts of Fatih, Beyoğlu and Eminönü, becoming Turkey's largest industrial estate. The new financial district that has come into being around the Büyükdere Caddesi offers another example of such a development. It has attracted twenty five bank headquarters, as well as the headquarters of big companies like Sabancı Holding and IBM, and is now dubbed the Manhattan of Turkey.”

The rise of Istanbul as a global city was a result of several developments according to Robins and Aksoy. Since the 1980s Istanbul had become the champion of Turkey's integration into global markets. It became the reconnection point of Turkey with the Caucasus, the Balkans, the Black Sea countries and the Middle East, especially after the collapse of Soviet Union. Internal and external migration together with increasing international trade relations made Istanbul a cosmopolitan city.

In the 1990s, the first plaza centers appeared in Istanbul. The information and telecommunications sectors developed rapidly. GSM companies Telsim and Turkcell began to operate in 1994. In 2000, İş-Tim (Aria) and Aycell (Türk Telekom) entered the market. These were the golden years for telecommunications companies in Turkey. The first private TV channels were established in Istanbul. Star TV began broadcasting in 1990, Show TV in 1992, Kanal D in 1993, and these were followed by many others. The relocation of industry, on the one hand, and the emergence of modern workplaces on the other happened simultaneously. Imported TV programs, pop music, Western life styles were countered by religious, local and conservative life styles. Western pop music, disco, rock'n roll and jazz all co-existed with arabesque -defined as “a disillusioned and deprecatory response to the increasingly alienating conditions of urban life, providing images and scenarios which elaborate a world turned on its head” (Stokes, 1992, p.225 cited in Robins & Aksoy, 1996). Big and luxury satellite housing was accompanied by the massive expansion of squatter settlements and slums. It has been estimated that 65% of Istanbul's housing stock was illegal in the 1990s (Robins & Aksoy, 1996). Modern workplaces like plazas and luxury offices co-existed with informal and illegal workplaces with miserable working conditions. The political consequence of these contradictions was a social conflict between a coalition of the urban poor (migrants), the petty bourgeoisie of slums, and weak Anatolian capitalists on the one hand, and the white-collar employees of service sectors, the middle classes, the petty-bourgeoisie, and Western (Aegean) capitalists on the other. The political Islamist Refah Party's slogan in the local elections of 1994, “to conquer Istanbul a second time,” could only be understood in terms of these class coalitions and conflicts. Keyder calls Istanbul in this period a “divided city” (Keyder, 2000, p. 36). He emphasizes that Istanbul lost its predominantly middle class and relatively homogeneous character as a result of a polarization of classes in terms of income and life styles in the 1990s (2005).

The changing class composition leads to changes in the social movements. The rise of a radical left and the militant working class mobilization of public sector workers and the rise of an urban poor mobilization under the leadership of political Islam occurred simultaneously in the 1990s. Until the 2000s, the social and political mobilization of the urban poor dominated the agenda. Urban poor mobilizations showed a variety of tendencies. Alevi slums were dominated by radical left movements, Kurdish slums were generally politicized around the Kurdish liberation movement and the rest were under the impact of political Islamist movements.

Beginning in the 2000s, social movements shifted gradually from the urban poor to the urban “middle class” (Erder, 2014). The social movements of the 2000s were predominantly student and white-collar, and included the urban rights movement, environmental movements, the anti-war movement, the LGBTI movement and so on. The global crisis of 2008 led to the emergence of new platforms among IT workers, plaza workers, academics in private universities, civil aviation workers and so on. In 2013, Taksim square and Gezi Park were occupied by hundreds of thousands of people. It was regarded as a middle class riot, although white-collar participation was very high. Following the occupation, park forums, neighborhood solidarities, and urban rights movements were largely dominated by white-collar employees and students. However, these movements were not organized under one mass organization as previous movements had. Their impact on macro politics remained limited.

2.6.2 The Changing Working Class in Istanbul

Istanbul has been regarded as the star of the Turkish economy in the neoliberal era with its expanding “middle class” population, to use Keyder’s (1999) terminology. The expansion of the “middle class” raised expectations of social peace and stability; however, this did not

happen. First of all, it was not the middle class but white-collar employees who were on the rise. The significant expansion of white-collar employees generated new collective actions. Secondly, there were other sections of the working class, concentrated in slums, informal and irregular jobs.

The consequences of the uneven development of Turkish capitalism can be seen in the data on shares of sectors and employment. Countrywide wage earners were 60% of the labor force in 2011, whereas the figure was 80% in Istanbul. Another significant difference was in the weight of the agricultural sector. Istanbul has historically been the least agricultural part of the country. However, even agriculture showed capitalist relations of production in Istanbul. Countrywide, wage earners in agriculture were only 9% in 2011, but the figure was 30% in Istanbul. The ratio of self-employed in agriculture, which usually means small land owners, was 45% in the country generally, but 63% in Istanbul. This shows that unpaid family labor was very small in Istanbul, while in the rest of the country almost half the people working in agriculture were unpaid family workers (İstanbul Valiliği, 2012, p. 73).

The Istanbul Commerce Chamber published a report in 2007m on the changing employment statistics of Istanbul. The report covers the years between 1980 and 2007, and the data was taken from TÜİK population census results and household interview surveys. The report shows that, from 1955 to 2006, the labor force (economically active population) in Turkey doubled from 12,205,000 to 24,776,000. In Istanbul, the labor force was multiplied by 6.2, from 670,000 to 4,143,000 (Murat, 2007, p. 168).

The report shows the labor force change for men and women since 1955. Men and women in the labor force were much more equal in 1955 than 2006 in the country as a whole. In 1955, among an active labor force of 12 million, 56.9% were men and 43.1% women. In 1980, 63.9% were men, 36.1% for women. In the neoliberal era these numbers changed even more

rapidly. In 2006, it was 73.8% men and 26.2% women. The main reason for this significant fall in the female labor force was rural-urban migration. Women were active in the agricultural economy, but they usually became housewives in the cities. The change in the labor force of Istanbul was radically different from the general change in Turkey. In 1955, 86.5% of the labor force was men and only 13.5% women in Istanbul. In 1980, it was 85.1% men and 14.9% women. The change was so small because migration rates were not as big as the post-1980 era. In 2006, 77.8% of labor force were men whereas 22.2% were women in Istanbul. In the country as a whole women's labor force participation was decreasing but in Istanbul it doubled (Murat, 2007, p. 169). In 2013, women's labor force participation in Istanbul reached to 28.1% (Kiziroğlu, 2014). This means that second generation migrant women began to join the labor force.

In 1970, the ratio of wage earners in the country was 27.6%, employers and self-employed were 27.4%, and family workers 45%. At the beginning of the neoliberal era, in 1980, there was a small change: wage earners were 33.3%, employers and self-employed 24%, and family workers 42.4%. Just before the economic crisis of 2001 wage earners were 43.5%, employers and self-employed 22.7%, and family workers 33.8%. While underdeveloped cities were losing their population and laborforce to comparatively developed cities, industrializing cities were witnessing a contradictory development with a growing number of urban poor. Istanbul in 1970 showed clearly a different picture in comparison with general country rates on work status. With wage earners at 71.2%, which was higher than any other city in Turkey, Istanbul already looked like a developed city in terms of capitalist relations of production. Employers and self-employed were 22.5% of the city's population. This was lower than the country average. Unpaid family workers were only 6.3% in Istanbul. In 1980, wage earners were 70.7%, employers and self-employed were 23.9%, and family workers were 4.9%. In ten years there was a slight increase in the number of employers and self-employed and a

reduction in wage earners. This means that second generation immigrants began to open up small businesses in Istanbul. However, neoliberal policies changed this situation. In 2000, wage earners increased to 75.9%, employers and self-employed fell to 16.5%, and family workers were 7.6% (Murat, 2007, p. 274).

Table 6, provided by Kiziroğlu (2014), shows the rapid development of the economy from 1980 to 2013. Turkey was still an agrarian society in 1980. Almost 60% of the employed were working in agriculture. Rapid economic changes had reduced this number to 23.6% by 2013. Employment in industry increased gradually from 15.7% in 1980 to 24% in 2013. The most significant change occurred in services. Every one of four employed worked in the services sector in 1980. In 2013, every one of two was employed in this sector. The economic transformation of Istanbul in this period was significantly different from the general transformation of the country. Istanbul was already an industrialized city in 1980. Only 5.5% of the employed were in agriculture. 41.6% of the employed were in industry. Even in 2013, national employment in industry (24%) could not reach the level of Istanbul's industrial employment density of 1980 (41.6%). While the share of industrial employment gradually increased in the country, in Istanbul it only increased by 1% between 1980 and 1990. Since 1990 the share of industrial employment has been declining and employment in the service sector reached 64.3% in 2013.

Table 6- Sectoral distribution of the employed (% , 1980-2013)

YEAR		TURKEY				ISTANBUL			
		TOTAL	AGRICULTURE	INDUSTRY	SERVICES	TOTAL	AGRICULTURE	INDUSTRY	SERVICES
1980(1)	TOTAL	100	59,9	15,7	24,4	100	5,5	41,6	52,9
	MEN	100	44,0	22,2	33,8	100	3,8	43,2	53,1
	WOMEN	100	87,3	4,6	8,1	100	15,4	32,4	52,2
1990(2)	TOTAL	100	46,9	20,2	33,0	100	5,1	42,4	52,4
	MEN	100	33,9	25,1	41,0	100	3,3	43,7	53,0
	WOMEN	100	76,6	8,8	14,6	100	13,4	36,8	49,8
2000(2)	TOTAL	100	36,0	24,0	40,0	100	8,1	38,4	53,5
	MEN	100	27,0	28,0	45,0	100	3,9	41,6	54,5
	WOMEN	100	60,4	13,2	26,4	100	20,3	29,2	50,5
2012(3)	TOTAL	100	23,6	24,0	50,0	100	0,6	35,1	64,3
	MEN	100	17,8	31,1	51,0	100	0,6	38,5	61,0
	WOMEN	100	37,0	15,3	47,7	100	0,6	26,5	72,9

Sources: (1) Sedat Murat; **Dünden Bugüne İstanbul'un İşgücü ve İstihdam Yapısı**, İTO Yayın No: 2007-73, İstanbul: İTO, 2007, s. 248.,

(2) TÜİK; İstatistikler, **İstihdam, İşsizlik ve Ücret, İşgücü İstatistikleri**,

<http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/isgucuapp/isgucu.zul>, Access: 02.December.2013., DİE; **2000 Genel Nüfus Sayımı Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri, İl/ 34-İstanbul**, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, Yayın No: 2732, Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, November 2002, p. 200-201.,

(3) TÜİK; İstatistikler, **İstihdam, İşsizlik ve Ücret, İşgücü İstatistikleri**, <http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/isgucuapp/isgucu.zul>, Access: 15.March.2014

Table 7, also from Kızıroğlu (2014), shows the profession groups of the employed since 1980 in Turkey and in Istanbul. It is important to point out that the years up to 2000 and after 2000 are completely different groups. This difference occurred as a result of changes in TÜİK's data categorization in 2000.

In this table, profession group 2, until 2000, represents scientific and technical employees, the self-employed, and other trades related to these. This category includes the skilled working class (wage earners without managerial positions), the petty bourgeoisie (self-employed) and the new middle class (wage earning managers) in technological industries. Group 3 represents entrepreneurs, directors, and higher managers, which mean the capitalist class. Group 4 represents administrative personnel and like, which includes white-collar workers and the new middle class. Group 5 is trade and sales personnel, and group 6 is people working in services, mostly white-collar workers. (Köse & Öncü, 2000)

The major changes between 1980 and 2000 occurred in white-collar jobs. After 1980, group 2 (scientific and technical employees, the self-employed, and other trades related to these) expanded slowly from 4.5% (1980) to 7.9% (2000). However, women's employment in this group went up much faster than men's. Within the group, women's share increased from 20.9% in 1980 to 34.7% in 2000 (Kiziroğlu, 2014). In Istanbul the same group's share increased from 8.2% in 1980 to 11.4% in 2000. Women's share within the group increased from 31% to 38.2%, but among employed women the share of group 2 declined by around one per cent as a result of increasing women's employment in other sectors (Kiziroğlu, 2014).

Group 4 (administrative personnel and like), group 5 (trade and sales personnel) and group 6 (people working in services) can be evaluated together. All of these categories consist of white-collar employees mostly working in services and administration as office, plaza or store employees. In 1980, their share within the employed population was 12.7%. This increased to 26% in 2000. In Istanbul 32.5% of the employed population was already working in these white-collar jobs in 1980. It increased to 36.3% in 2000.

For the profession groups of 2012, categories were changed. Group 2 represents law makers, higher managers and directors, which mean the capitalist class. Group 3 consists of people in professional trades, and represents the skilled working class including the new middle class and the petty bourgeoisie. People in assistant professional trades in group 4, personnel in offices and guest relations services in group 5, and trade and sales personnel in group 6 also consist of white-collar workers. Group 3 in 2012 is more or less the same as group 2 in the 2000 dataset.

Table 7- Distribution of the employed according to profession groups (% , 1980-2012)

YEAR	TURKEY										
	PROFESSION GROUPS										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1980(1)	TOTAL	100	4,5	0,9	3,5	4,3	4,9	59,7	22	0,2	-
	MEN	100	5	1,3	3,7	6,5	7,2	43,8	32,3	0,,3	-
	WOMEN	100	3,7	0,1	3,1	0,5	1	87,1	4,5	0	-
1990(2)	TOTAL	100	6	2,2	4,8	8,1	7,8	46,8	24,1	0,3	-
	MEN	100	6	2,2	4,8	8,1	7,8	46,8	24,1	0,3	-
	WOMEN	100	5,9	0,3	5,3	1,8	2,6	76,6	7,3	0,3	-
2000(2)	TOTAL	100	7,9	2,3	6,1	10,6	9,3	35,9	27,1	0,7	-
	MEN	100	7,1	2,9	5,1	13	10,8	26,9	33,5	0,7	-
	WOMEN	100	10,2	0,8	8,8	4,1	5,2	60,4	9,9	0,6	-
2012(3)	TOTAL	100	7,7	7,8	6,3	7	12,8	19,6	12,9	10,2	15,6
	MEN	100	9,7	6,6	5,9	5,5	13,2	15,8	16,5	13,1	13,8
	WOMEN	100	3	10,7	7,3	10,6	11,9	28,7	4,4	3,4	20
YEAR	ISTANBUL										
	PROFESSION GROUPS										
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1980(1)	TOTAL	100	8,2	2,8	8,4	13,3	10,8	5,5	50,4	0,5	-
	MEN	100	6,6	3,1	5,7	14,6	11,2	3,8	54,3	0,6	-
	WOMEN	100	17,4	1,1	24,2	5,7	8,3	15,3	27,8	0,1	-
1990(2)	TOTAL	100	9,4	3,1	8,1	14,4	10,5	5,2	49,3	0,1	-
	MEN	100	7,6	3,5	5,6	15,9	10,9	3,4	53,1	0,1	-
	WOMEN	100	17,5	1,5	19,6	7,3	8,4	13,4	32,3	0	-
2000(2)	TOTAL	100	11,4	2,7	12	13,1	11,2	8,3	41,3	0,1	-
	MEN	100	9,5	3,1	8,5	14,6	12,1	4,1	48	0,1	-
	WOMEN	100	16,8	1,3	22,3	8,6	8,6	20,3	22,2	0	-
2012(3)	TOTAL	100	11,7	9,9	10,8	10,7	14,3	0,7	14,1	15,4	12,4
	MEN	100	13,5	7,3	9,3	7,1	14,8	0,8	17,6	18,3	11,2
	WOMEN	100	6,8	16,9	14,6	20,4	12,9	0,4	4,7	7,7	15,7

Sources: (1) Sedat Murat; **Dünden Bugüne İstanbul'un İşgücü ve İstihdam Yapısı**, İTO Yayın No: 2007-73, İstanbul: İTO, 2007, p. 250.,

(2) DİE; **2000 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri, Türkiye**, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Yayın No: 2759, Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, March 2003, p. 56., DİE; **2000 Genel Nüfus Sayımı, Nüfusun Sosyal ve Ekonomik Nitelikleri, İl, 34-İstanbul**, T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, Yayın No: 2732, Ankara: Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü Matbaası, November 2002, p. 198-199,

(3) TÜİK; **İstatistikler, İstihdam, İşsizlik ve Ücret, İşgücü İstatistikleri**, <http://tuikapp.tuik.gov.tr/isgucuapp/isgucu.zul>, Access: 17.April.2014

Note:

(1) Until 2000; 1. Total, 2. Scientific and technical employee, self-employed person, and other trades related to these, 3. Entrepreneurs, directors, and higher managers, 4. Administrative personnel and like, 5. Trade and sales personnel, 6. People working in services, 7. People working in agriculture, live stock, forestry, fishing and hunting, 8. People working in production except agriculture and using transportation vehicles, 9. Others,

(2) After 2000 according to ISCO 88; 1. Total, 2. Law makers, higher managers and directors, 3. People in professional trades, 4. People in assistant professional trades, 5. Personnel in offices and guest relations services, 6. Trade and sales personnel, 7. People working in working in agriculture, live stock, forestry, hunting, and water products, 8. Artists and people in related works, 9. Facility and mechanics operators and fitters, 10. People working in jobs requiring no skill.

In 2012, people in professional trades (group 3) were 7.8% of the working population. In 2000, scientific and technical employees, self-employed people, and other trades related to these (group 2) were 7.9%. This means that from 2000 to 2012 there was no significant change in the share of professionals in the working population. The share of white-collar workers (groups 4, 5 and 6) did not change either. It was 26% in 2000 and 26.1% in 2012. The 2000s show significant change only regarding women's employment. The share of women in white-collar jobs was 4.6% of all employed women in 1980, it was 18.1% in 2000, and 29.8% in 2012. In Istanbul 38.2% of employed women were white-collar workers in 1980, 39.5% in 2000, and 47.9% in 2012.

In short, Istanbul, the most developed city in Turkey, was affected the most by rural-urban migration. The number of wage earners was 6,162,000 in 1980, and increased to 16,353,000 in 2012 in Turkey. For Istanbul, it was 1,105,000 in 1980 and 3,857,000 in 2012 (Kiziroğlu, 2014). About 80 per cent of the labor force of Istanbul were wage earners in 2012. Kiziroğlu's tables show that while agriculture in the city was declining, industry was expanding. But the largest growth was in the services sector after 1980. From 1980 to 2000 class composition changed significantly, but there are no big changes from 2000 on. However, beginning in 2000, working conditions have been changing. Murat takes working hours as an indicator of working conditions in 2006, based on TÜİK statistics. According to this, 50% of the workers in the country were working longer than 50 hours per week. Legal weekly working hours were restricted to 45 hours. In Istanbul, it was even worse: 64.9% of workers were working longer than 50 hours per week (Murat, 2007, p. 244). TÜİK statistics show that working hours per week have been falling since 2003. This may seem to contradict Murat's findings, but the main reason for the fall in hours was the sharp increase in temporary and part-time jobs. White-collar jobs have been expanding in Istanbul. A significant part of these jobs employ

university graduates. Women's share has been expanding in white-collar jobs too. These changes in Istanbul pave the way for mobilizations of white-collar employees.

2.7 Summary

Turkey's neoliberal era began with the announcement of the January 24 Decrees in 1980. This was a program for switching the economy from import-substitution to export-oriented industrialization. The Decrees aimed to liberalize the economy and promote its integration into the global economy, and included an austerity program with severe anti-labor measures. The Decrees were impossible to implement due to the political struggles of the time. The country experienced the third military coup in its history in September 1980. The military government implemented the Decrees immediately and strictly. The economy has been growing constantly since. Until 2002 the growth rate was small and fluctuating due to economic crises and political instability. Urbanization accelerated in this period. Turkey's class composition changed rapidly due to rural-urban migration. The share of agriculture in the economy diminished considerably. More and more people joined the labor force as wage earners in the cities.

While neoliberal policies were gradually integrating Turkey into the global economy, the economic and political order could not be sustained by the 2000s. New social movements emerged as a result of rising inflation and foreign debt, and depreciation of the national currency. In this period, the new urban poor -the victims of inflation, migration, and diminishing labor rights- mobilized under the flag of political Islam; the Kurdish liberation movement -the victims of nationalism, racism and militarism- took up armed struggle; and public sector workers -the victims of privatization and inflation- fought to establish a trade union.

The 1980s and 1990s revealed two kinds of social class transformation in Turkey: proletarianization and polarization. Proletarianization meant the shift in employment from agriculture and the public sector to the private sector with a growth in low-skilled labor. Polarization meant the expansion in the number of professionals and managers as the beneficiaries of globalization and the expansion of the informal and unskilled lower reaches of the labor force simultaneously. In section 2.2.1 (the period between 1980 and 2002), Kaya's tables show proletarianization and polarization in Turkey between 1980 and 2000. The sharpest increase was in the number of routine non-manual employees from 998,538 (5.41%) in 1980 to 3,166,012 (12.18%) in 2000. The number of high-grade professionals almost doubled from 1.59% to 3.08%, and lower-level professionals and supervisors rose from 4.62% to 5.79% in the same period. Clearly, the number of both skilled and unskilled jobs increased simultaneously (Kaya, 2008). This two-sided development led to contradictory processes: yuppie and arabesque culture, gated housing and slums, plazas and illegal workplaces, left-oriented public sector mobilization and political Islamist urban poor mobilization. The global and national socio-economic transformations were the accelerating factor behind these contradictory processes. Therefore, the 1990s were years of marginal turbulence for Turkey. Consequently, the political and economic stability necessary for economic development was absent.

In 2001, Turkey experienced a very serious economic crisis. In 2002, a new political party, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), came to power. After a decade of unstable coalition governments Turkey now had a strong and stable government with a strong commitment to neoliberal policies. 2002-2007 were years of reform in the structure of the state driven by accession negotiations with the EU. These were years of economic liberalization and growth, and hegemonic recovery of the political system. Turkey became an active member of the G20. The AKP government pursued a new foreign policy which went

against the country's traditional policy. Economic and political relations with Middle Eastern and African countries improved.

The economy grew between 2002 and 2008. Although the global crisis of 2008 influenced the national economy, Turkey broke growth rate records in the years following the crisis. Inequalities were declining since 2002, but unemployment rates were not falling in line with the rate of economic growth. These years were referred to as “growth without job creation”. Financial liberalization led to an inflow of foreign capital. This enabled entrepreneurs in developing cities, so-called Anatolian capital, to get cheap credit for investment. The government pursued regional development strategies. The construction sector became the locomotive of these development policies.

The most significant change from 2002 on was the rapid growth in the number of universities and graduates. In 1980, there were only 27 universities in Turkey. By 2013, the number was up to 175: 104 public and 71 private universities (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 46). A total of 7,220,000 diplomas were awarded by the universities after 1983, including masters and doctorate programs (Çetinsaya, 2014, p. 55).

While Turkey's economic structure and class composition had been changing, preliminary debates on changing working class composition began in the mid-2000s. Until the global crisis of 2008, scholarly debate was dominated by theories of the “new middle class”. In this period, the relationship between economic growth and growing employment weakened, the number of wage earners increased sharply as a result of urbanization, informal employment grew rapidly, trade unions were weakened and precarious employment became widespread. The changes in the economy did not mean a change from industry to services. As has already been shown, the services sector has always employed more workers than industry in Turkey. The sectoral change was from agriculture to both industry and services. The most important

structural change, however, was in the services sector. Until the neoliberal era, services meant small enterprises. Starting in the 1990s, banks, plazas, call centers, big shopping malls, and trade companies began to employ thousands of white-collar employees in single workplaces. This was something new for Turkey.

The government managed to restore political hegemony by means of integration into the world economy and political reforms. Therefore, it has been the most successful neoliberal government in Turkey.

Neoliberal policies have targeted public enterprises the most since the January 24 Decrees. However, economic and political instability prevented governments from completing their privatization programs. The AKP government managed to carry out 77.6% of total privatizations in just 7.5 years (Milliyet, 2010). The impact of neoliberal policies on the public sector and on public sector workers was important in several ways. First of all, the most important element of neoliberal restructuring was the privatization of public assets. According to Türk-İş, 21,275 workers lost their jobs in 55 privatized companies between 1989 and 2006. A report by the Directorate of the Privatization Administration indicates that 51,870 workers lost their jobs between 1995-2010 in privatized companies (Türk, 2014). Secondly, privatization meant the victory of market values over labor processes. Public sector work provided secure jobs for workers. Working hours were fixed. Temporary and flexible work was not common until the 2000s. At first, public sector workers met with precarity, which then spread to the private sector. Lastly, privatization had an enormous impact on the composition of the working class. The public sector was the largest employer of skilled labor and white-collar employees in Turkey. This was no longer true by 2010. In 1976, 63.1% of wage earning engineers and architects worked in the public sector, for instance. The figure was down to 44.9% in 2007, and the decline is probably ongoing. Engineers have always had an important role in the working class movement in Turkey. The growing number of

entrepreneur engineers changed this situation after 1980. Engineers began to be regarded as the pioneers of neoliberal development. However, worker engineers continued to play an important role in public sector workers' mobilizations. Privatized companies such as Netaş, PETKİM, Türk Telekom, Turkish Airlines, and so on were also the most technological enterprises of the economy. The skilled workers of these companies would be the leading activists of white-collar mobilizations after the global crisis.

The 1980s and 1990s were years of high inflation. This was also the time privatization began. Shrinking wages as a result of high inflation led to a loss of status for public sector workers. The new way of life favoring consumption and entertainment contributed to this feeling of status loss for these workers. Working in an informal second job and bribery were common in the sector. Temporary work was a new strategy used by the government in public companies.

The most influential strike after 1980 was the Netaş strike in 1986. In 1987, Petrol-İş organized the first general strike in the petrochemicals sector, covering 63 public sector workplaces and 11 thousand workers (Akkaya, 1999). In 1989, public sector workers began to get mobilized in the so-called Spring Actions. During the strike waves from 1989 to 1995, public sector workers created a new repertoire of collective action as well. Some of this new repertoire took the form of boycotting shuttles, growing beards, collective filings of divorce cases, barefoot marches, and eating onion and bread in front of the workplaces. The number of strikes increased between 1984 and 1995. The peak was 1995. About 200 thousand workers were involved in strike action. In the 2000s, however, the number of workers involved in strikes was only a few thousand per year.

The Spring Actions were successful in several aspects. It is possible to see from the strikes and the number of strikers that a new wave of working class and left mobilization had begun. The importance of the Spring Actions was that it was a period of wins for workers who

managed to raise their wages nominally by 142% on average (Voyvoda, 2011). Rising working class mobilization changed the trade union leaderships. 17 union presidents, 99 central executives, and 373 branch presidents of Türk-İş were changed between 1987 and 1990 (Çetik&Akkaya, 1999, cited in Arslan, 2006). In 1992, DİSK (the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions) was reestablished. Public sector workers managed to create their own trade union confederation, KESK (Confederation of Public sector workers' Unions), in 1995. Rising young and activist leaderships in other trade unions resulted in general wage increases in the private sector as well (Çelik, 2012). The years 1989-1995 were years of working class mobilization. Working class militancy affected students' and left politics. In 1995-96, the Student Coordination mobilized for education rights and in 1996 a new socialist party, ÖDP (Freedom and Solidarity Party), was founded as a united front of a significant number of left organizations and intellectuals. However, the militancy of the social movements entered a period of decline as a result of political challenges. The rise of political Islam in 1995, military intervention in 1997, the Gölcük earthquake in 1999, and finally the economic crisis of 2001 were the major challenges of this period that eventually resulted in the dissolution of working class mobilization.

Trade union membership has been rapidly declining since the mid-1990s. The military coup of 1980 did not affect union membership much at the beginning. Even though several trade unions were closed, workers joined others. As a result of the Spring Actions, trade union membership rates fluctuated but never fell below 20% until 1993. After 1994, membership rates fell rapidly. In 2012, it was 5%. While the number of wage earners increased from 6,162,000 in 1980 to 16,353,000 in 2012 (Kiziroğlu, 2014), the decline in trade union membership demonstrated changing power relations between labor and capital. More and more people were joining the labor force in the cities. Çelik argues that the AKP period can be regarded as the “Pax Romana” of labor life in Turkey. Trade unions lost their power and

membership in this period. 506 strikes and planned strikes were postponed by the government between 1984 and 2010 (Çelik, 2015). The AKP governments have been strict in postponing strikes since 2002. As a result, while class composition has been changing, trade unions have been in decline and unable to adapt to the changes in class composition. They became bureaucratic, anti-democratic, and inefficient for the workers. It was for this reason that white-collar employees would either strive for a change within the unions or look for new ways to organize, starting in 2008.

Turkey was changing its import-substitution system to an export orientation. Telecommunications, electronics, information, technology, and finance sectors were the leading sectors of the new era and the workers of these rising sectors were the most prestigious workers among the working class. They had better education, better wages, were working in modern plazas or new workplaces, and had a new consumption and entertainment culture. The 1990s were a golden era for white-collar employees. Beginning with the economic crisis of 2001, their prestigious jobs and new life styles went into decline.

The debate on classes in Turkey began as a side-effect of urbanization and Turkey's integration into the global economy and culture in the 1990s. The debate mostly centered on the new middle classes in Istanbul, Turkey's globalizing city, generated the concept of a new global middle class (Keyder, 2000). While the debate on classes, especially about the class position of white-collar employees, was attracting more attention, the Gezi resistance broke out. The class content of the Gezi protests became a popular subject among authors but this time it was not only the abstract classes that were the subject of the debate, but also their collective actions.

Istanbul was at the heart of this structural transformation and also at the core of the debate on classes because it has always been the most populous and economically most developed city in

Turkey. The first plazas, private universities and private TV channels appeared in Istanbul in the 1990s. Public sector workers' mobilizations, political Islamist mobilizations, and student mobilizations in the 1990s were strongly led by activists and movements in Istanbul. The AKP's founding leader, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, became a popular political figure after serving as Mayor of Istanbul in 1994-1998, for instance. New social movements in the 2000s, such as the anti-war, feminist, LGBTI, and environmentalist movements, were also strongly Istanbul-based movements. Not surprisingly, white-collar mobilizations also emerged in Istanbul after the global crisis of 2008.

The number of wage earners in Istanbul was 1,105,000 in 1980 and 3,857,000 in 2012 (Kiziroğlu, 2014). About 80% of the labor force of Istanbul was wage earners in 2012. Kiziroğlu's tables show that while agriculture was declining in the city, industry was expanding. But the largest growth was in the services sector after 1980. While 24.4% of employment was in the services sector countrywide, the figure rose to 50% in 2012. In Istanbul, 52.9% of employment was already in the services sector in 1980. This increased to 64.3% in 2012 (Kiziroğlu, 2014).

Prior to the millennium, Istanbul was already becoming the finance, trade, and services center of Turkey. The old manufacturing and industrial centers of the city turned into modern services areas with a sharp rise in the number of banks, plazas, media centers, shopping malls, hotels, cafes and restaurants. This structural change led to changes in the class composition of the city. While neoliberalism meant dissolution of the welfare state in the developed world, it had a completely different meaning in Turkey due to the uneven development of capitalism. Turkey was neither a strong and developed economy nor a welfare state. Neoliberal policies aimed to create a "middle class" instead of decreasing wages and increasing income inequalities.

Technological improvements changed the formation of social classes in Turkey. Istanbul witnessed the biggest changes in this regard. Information, communications, entertainment, finance, architecture and engineering, computer-based services, and civil aviation were the fastest growing sectors mostly in Istanbul. Better off university graduate workers rose together with new consumption habits. Therefore, “new middle class” theories became popular. However, this was not a one-sided process. Rather, it was a contradictory transformation. While industrial production was moving towards the outskirts of Istanbul or even further to Gebze and Tekirdağ, creative industries (information, telecommunications, advertising, production etc.), productive services, the finance and real estate sectors were growing in the center of Istanbul (Yalçıntaş, Çalışkan, Çılgın, & Dündar, 2014). The construction sector has been regarded as the engine of economic growth since 2002. A very big sector was created with gentrification, restructuring, and mass housing projects, together with highways and giant construction projects. With the help of a growing construction sector, architecture and advertising companies have also been expanding. Hotels, shopping malls, international fairs and festivals rapidly increased in Istanbul as a result of integration into the global economy.

The relocation of industry resulted in the emergence of the modern workplaces (plazas and shopping malls) in the central areas of Istanbul. Imported TV programs, pop music, and “Western” lifestyles encountered religious, local, and conservative lifestyles, with Western pop music, disco, rock’n roll, and jazz on the one side, and arabesque on the other. Satellite housing and gated communities were on the one side, and slums on the other. Modern workplaces like plazas and luxury offices on the one side, informal and illegal work with miserable working conditions on the other. Keyder has called Istanbul in this period “a divided city”.

Chapter II dwelt on the structural changes in the national economy and in Istanbul. In the next chapter the collective actions of white-collar employees will be examined. However, the collective actions and organizational practices of white-collar employees are still premature. It would be an over-generalization to label these collective action experiences as a class movement as such. Chapter II showed that while in the 1990s white-collar jobs were rising, blue-collar and informal jobs were expanding too. However, when it comes to working conditions, the former were getting better and the latter worse. Since 2002 the two have been getting closer to each other. Material inequalities in society and the working conditions of white-collar employees have both been getting worse. Thus, Köse and Öncü (2000) argue that the difference between white- and blue-collar workers has been disappearing. In the next chapter, the collective actions of white-collar employees will be examined by placing them within the context of the socio-economic transformation of Turkey.

3. Chapter III- A New Repertoire of Collective Actions and New Organizational Practices of the White-collar Employees in Istanbul

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter demonstrated that neoliberalism brought significant changes to the economic structure of Turkey. The most important transformation in this period took place in the working class structure. The number of white-collar jobs increased rapidly. The boundaries between white and the blue-collar employees, production and service workers, mental and manual labour have become blurred since the 1990s. White-collar employees with higher-education are usually regarded as a non-manual section of the working class. Among white-collar activists and even union activists, any worker who is not regarded as blue-collar is included in the cluster of white-collar employees. Theoretically this is a weak categorization of the working class. However, this dissertation has already showed that the working class has been undergoing change. While the white and blue-collar dichotomy is a theoretical weakness, it provides a shared understanding among the activists of the recently growing sectors. A categorization of the different sections of working class is not the aim of this dissertation. Rather, this dissertation aims to explain the relationship between changing working class and the emergence of a new repertoire of collective actions.

In this chapter, white-collar mobilizations between the years of 2008 and 2015 will be investigated in two periods in Istanbul. White-collar mobilizations began with the IBM resistance in 2008 and a new repertoire emerged beginning with this initial moment. The Gezi resistance was another corner stone of the white-collar mobilizations. It was the first mass protest that white-collar employees took part in in great numbers and which generated new mobilizations following the resistance. While these mobilizations have not yet developed into a broad movement, white-collar employees are gathering experience through these mobilizations for a future collective struggle.

The following sections will demonstrate that all the new platforms (PEP, BİÇDA, KBG, Dazayn, YEK, ÇMÇ) emerged against the traditional trade union bureaucracy and its inefficiency, although they never had an anti-trade union tendency. THY workers organized a new opposition movement (the Rainbow Movement) against the union bureaucracy. The IBM resistance and the Bilgi University unionization attempts failed as a result of mistakes made by trade unions. The two successful mobilizations, call center workers and performers, managed to create new trade unions. The traditional class leadership in these cases played a reactionary role.

The following sections will show that recently white-collar employees created a new repertoire of collective action during their mobilizations. They formed platforms, solidarity networks, collectives and forums to organize themselves against the traditional and ineffective repertoire of the trade unions and against their employers. The IBM resistance in 2008 innovated a new repertoire which was further developed by the subsequent mobilizations. The Gezi resistance, in 2013, also innovated a new repertoire -occupation and park forums.

The milestone of the white-collar mobilizations was the global financial crisis of 2008, although precarity had been rising among white-collar employees prior to the crisis. The IBM resistance triggered a new mobilization among white-collar employees. The Gezi resistance, in the spring of 2013, was the beginning of a new period, but it did not create a new social movement as did the Spring Actions of 1989. All of the previous class mobilizations had enjoyed strong and experienced leadership in Turkey. However, the IBM resistance and the subsequent white-collar mobilizations did not have a political leadership. The growing discontent of white-collar workers and students, who could not see a bright future, exploded in the Gezi resistance. The major structural forces driving white-collar employees to mobilization were precarity and skill degradation which led to a loss of prestige.

Chapter III constitutes the empirical part of this dissertation. In this chapter we shall look at the new organizations and the new repertoire of collective actions by white-collar employees. This chapter will explain how white-collar mobilizations emerged, how they organized themselves, and the relationship between these mobilizations in Istanbul. It aims to show the changes in the white-collar employees' mobilizations. For this reason, in the first section, the emergence of the new white-collar platforms; in the second, the changes in traditional trade unions as a result of white-collar mobilizations; and in the third, the five distinguishing features of the white-collar mobilizations will be explained.

3.2 Changes in the Repertoire of Collective Actions

Working class composition in Turkey has been going through significant changes as a result of neoliberal policies, reforms of the state structure, and fast economic growth after the economic crisis of 2001. The global financial crisis of 2008 did not have a direct impact on Turkey. However, global companies like IBM and Vodafone operating in Turkey and several national companies, like Akbank and the ATV/Sabah media group, began to lay off white-collar employees. In response to the sackings, these workers began to organize themselves by employing a new repertoire. The unionization attempt by skilled and well paid IBM Turkey IT workers was a milestone for the new repertoire of white-collar mobilizations.

3.2.1 IBM Resistance: Initial Stage of New Platforms

In the neoliberal era one of the fastest developing industries is the high-tech sector. The computerization of all industries has been the most significant improvement in the means of production. In Turkey, with neo-liberal development, the high-tech and information industries expanded their share in the economy. Before 1980, it was almost impossible to find more than 50 engineers in a private company, but such numbers became quite normal in the 2000s. Before 1980, the private-public partnership company Netaş was the biggest employer of engineers. Netaş produced telephones, cables and many other communication products. Its workers enjoyed much better conditions than the rest of the working class. However, in 1986 the first strike after the military regime was organized by the Netaş workers. The strike triggered a new workers' movement. In 2008, another group of high technology workers once again triggered a workers' mobilization. In 1986, the striking workers were not engineers but blue-collar workers. In 2008, however, the workers' resistance was directly organized by IT workers, including engineers.

2008 was an important year for workers in the information and technology industries. There were serious attempts to unionize in the leading companies of these sectors. In October 2007, Türk Telekom and Türkiye Haber-İş (a communications union) could not agree on wage increases during the collective bargaining. Haber-İş took strike action: 25 thousand workers struck for 44 days in 768 workplaces. It was the strongest strike of the post-1980 era. 1 million 100 thousand days were lost in the strike (CNN Türk, 2007). It was also the first strike in the history of Türk Telekom. The strike ended with an agreement between the union and management in November 2007. While this was a victory for the workers, Türk Telekom laid off 2000 workers in 2008 (Evrensel, 2008).

The importance of the strike lay not only in its strength but also its demands. Türk Telekom was privatized in 2005, with 23,500 workers. 10 thousand of them chose to exercise their right to work in another public company. 13,500 remained at the privatized Türk Telekom. According to the law, trade unions and employers can decide on groups of workers which will be kept out of the scope of collective bargaining. In 2007 Türk Telekom had 40 thousand workers and 25,400 were members of the union. The company increased the number of “out of scope” (kapsam dışı) workers to 40% of the total. As an anti-union strategy the company paid these workers a salary 20% above the average wage. This was the most important topic of the collective bargaining agreement (Göveren, 2007). The trade union demanded an end to this discrimination and “equal pay for equal work” in order to protect the right to be a member of a trade union. In the end, the union managed to stop anti-union discrimination and to raise the wages of all workers. In the agreed contract, only the managers remained out of the collective agreement scope.

Victorious strikes have always had a tendency to spread. It increases the confidence of workers who are working under similar conditions and it also increases the confidence of

trade union activists. Only six months after the Türk Telekom strike, IBM Turkey workers organized in Tez-Koop-İş. This was the first unionization in the information sector.

Most international information companies came to Turkey in the 1990s. But IBM Turkey was much older. There was a trade union at IBM Turkey since the 1970s. After 1980, workers lost their right to collective bargaining but a small, independent union (Bil-İş) continued to exist. They managed to stop IBM's subcontracting attempts after the crisis of 2001. The Supreme Court decided in favor of the workers in 2005. Growing problems with management, especially on wages, the workers' prior experience of being unionized, and the successful strike in Türk Telekom encouraged workers to join Tez-Koop-İş (an office workers' union) in June 2008, in order to negotiate collectively (Nebil, 2008a). Bil-İş was a “company tradition” at IBM Turkey. They had even had a union room in the building. Almost every worker was a member of this union. When workers decided to join Tez-Koop-İş it was easy for them to change their union collectively.

IBM, with its competitive advantages, was able to pay better wages than others in Turkey. However, after the crisis of 2001, IBM had almost ceased wage increases. The company justified this by arguing that during the crisis they had not laid off any workers or even cut wages. So wages had remained above the market average during and after the crisis (Nebil, 2008a). Based on this argument, any demand for higher wages was refused by the company. As a result, workers joined Tez-Koop-İş. This initial collective action by IBM Turkey employees was part of the traditional repertoire.

It is important to mention that workers joined Tez-Koop-İş because management did not take them seriously. We will see that in almost all cases studied in this dissertation, workers usually preferred to negotiate with the employer but felt humiliated as management ignored them. This feeling of humiliation is a very significant factor in the mobilization of white-

collar employees. Nurol describes the same reason for the personal or collective action practices of bank workers. He argues that perceived injustices against their honour and reputation were at the center of their working life experiences (Nurol, 2015). This humiliation makes it clear to workers that they are not only losing their income but also their status in the workplace and in society. IBM Turkey employees tried to communicate with management for a long time, but the feeling of humiliation finally forced them to take action against the company.

In June 2008, 209 workers out of 400 joined Tez-Koop-İş. IBM Turkey refused to recognize the union and took the case before the Supreme Court by arguing that Tez-Koop-İş did not have enough members for collective bargaining. The company argued its position by claiming that IBM employees were not office workers and that, therefore, Tez-Koop-İş could not organize them. During the trial, members of the union rose to 300. The Supreme Court ruled in favor of the union. After the court's ruling, workers made a declaration that some of the managers who supporting the union had been fired and that the company had recruited a "union buster" who was paid \$70.000 a month (Nebil, 2008b). The trial lasted for about two years. Collective bargaining began in 2010. In these years, leading activists were laid off by the company, many workers were transferred to another IBM Turkey company.

In the early months of the unionization, IBM workers started to organize weekly Plaza meetings and actions in front of Yapı Kredi Plaza where IBM Turkey was located. They managed to find new ways of collective action. They organized the first virtual strike in Turkey, for instance, following the IBM Italy workers' virtual strike in the online platform Second Life. Another famous element of the repertoire was the "yellow ox" action. After several Plaza actions, the workers decided to hold an attractive demonstration. About 250 people from Tez-Koop-İş, EMO (Chamber of Electrical Engineers) and 17 companies met in front of the Plaza with their "yellow ox" masks. The yellow ox is a well-known story in which

lions eat oxes one by one, beginning with the yellow ox. Workers explained that they knew the story and would not give the yellow ox to IBM Turkey (Kaya, 2008).

The workers continued to organize and resisted the offensive measures of the company in these two years. One of the most important leaders of the IBM resistance was Nedim Akay. Akay explained that the main reason a trade union was needed in the IT sector was outsourcing and offshoring. Each passing day IT workers had been losing their jobs or experiencing a deterioration in working conditions due to this double sided pressure. Akay said, “Maybe 10-15 years ago the issue of wages was not the main problem in our sector, but it is the fundamental issue now. There was no flexible work, but, new technology which is also changing working conditions, with its limitless and unpaid overwork, is the main problem of our day. To sum up, the main problems are wage injustices, flexible working, the erosion or complete absence of social rights, outsourcing, professional diseases, and job security.” (Salman, 2009).

An IBM worker explained that their experience in Bil-İş had made them understand that having a trade union in all other information companies is crucial. Therefore, workers left some members in Bil-İş in order to ensure its continued existence, while the majority joined Tez-Koop-İş. IBM workers organized also workers in four other information companies and said that their aim was to create a solidarity network with 5000 workers by the end of the year (Kadın Mühendisler, 2008). This was a very conscious strategy carried out by the workers themselves. Their knowledge and experience of organizational practices provided a vision of united actions with other workers from other information companies and also with other IBM unions around the world.

In order to unite with other workers, IBM workers established several new platforms. Solidarity gatherings and plaza actions started in front of the IBM building. New platforms

emerged as a result of these actions and internal discussions among activists. The Plaza Action Platform (PEP) and the Information Technology Workers' Solidarity Network (BİÇDA) were the first platforms founded by activists. Solidarity gatherings in front of IBM Plaza continued with a series of conferences on the unionization of IT workers. In the heyday of the IBM resistance Tez-Koop-İş decided to set up an internal division for the information, communication and telecommunications (ITC) sector.

For international solidarity, the workers got in touch directly with IBM unions around the world. Inspired by the virtual strike by IBM Italy workers in 2007, they decided to organize a virtual strike in the Second Life online platform. To that end, the workers created a network which included the Global Union, Tez-Koop-İş and the Chamber of Electrical Engineers. IBM Italy workers provided technical support based on their own experience.

The two-year-long trial concluded with victory to the union. The collective bargaining process began in 2010. IBM Turkey did not accept the union's demands and called for a strike ballot. The strategy of IBM management was to force the union into a strike and then prevent them from implementing it. In this way the union would lose authority. According to the law, every absence in the ballot means "yes" to a strike. The union called for a "no" vote. IBM succeeded in its strategy, the result was a "yes" vote against the will of the union at the end of June. The union announced September 27 as the day of strike but could not manage to organize the strike due to the lack of workers' participation and the union's internal problems. As a result, the first unionization attempt by information workers ended in failure.

The union representative Rabia Özkaraca gave an interview after the failed strike and described the differences between white-collar and the blue-collar employees, and their relation to the class struggle and unions. Özkaraca said that it is much easier for information workers to investigate any issue. During collective bargaining, for instance, when the process

was heading towards a disagreement, the union's inclination was to strike. However, workers made their own investigation into the bargaining process and found out that there was another option. Instead of going on strike, they could appeal to the Supreme Board of Arbitration (Yüksek Hakem Kurulu- YHK). IBM, instead, forced the union into a strike ballot. The only option was to say "no" to a strike and then appeal to the YHK. Özkaraca said, "We telling blue-collar workers what their rights are, but white-collar employees investigate, learn, and come to us saying "I know". They even say "no, it will not be like this but like that". However, they just read the law as it is, they do not know what we encounter in practice" (Özkaraca, 2010).

Özkaraca's account is a brief summary of relations between trade unions and white-collar employees. The latter have better access to information and communication techniques. Instead of leaving the decision to the union they investigate the law, the company and share the information with their colleagues. Instead of militancy, they have a tendency to make collective decisions among themselves and negotiate with the company. This collective decision-making and negotiationist behavior are quite different from what trade unions are used to. Wage increases and the deterioration of working conditions are not reasons for militant action for white-collar employees. In almost all unionization attempts (IBM, İstanbul Development Agency, Bilgi University) the employees looked for solutions with the company management. When management ignores employees, this forces them to join trade unions for collective bargaining. It is the emotion of being insulted/humiliated or fooled by management makes these employees go on strikes or organize more militant collective actions.

The IBM experience was very important for IT workers. It was a chance for information sector workers to get organized, for the first time in Turkey, in a trade union and make a difference even inside the union. This would pave the way for a wave of white-collar unionization. Hundreds of workers from different companies joined the Plaza actions for IBM

workers. They knew that if IBM workers won, it would be an encouraging example for all other white-collar employees. It did not happen. The tension between the trade union and the workers, and the harsh anti-union policies of IBM Turkey prevented a very possible victory for workers. The rise of new platforms should be interpreted as a result of this failure. Plaza Action Platform (PEP) activist Serdar said, “PEP exists because there is no trade union.”

IT sector workers played a crucial role in creating the new repertoire of white-collar mobilizations. E. O. Wright (2000) emphasizes that the working class has two types of bargaining power; associational power and structural power. The associational power of the working class is trade unions and labor parties, while the structural power is the power that arises from its location in the economic system. White-collar workers are overwhelmingly unorganized in comparison to blue-collar workers. Thus they have no associational power. But white-collar workers, especially IT workers, have significant structural power. The structural power of the working class is divided into two by Wright; the first type results directly from tight labor markets which means scarce skills, and the second type from the strategic location of a particular group of workers within a key industrial sector. IT workers have this structural power. They are subjected to deskilling with the increase of reserve labor and changes in the labor processes, however, their importance within industries gives them a significant location. Lacking associational power but having structural power makes them the initiators of the new white-collar platforms.

3.2.2 New Platforms

The global financial crisis hit the Turkish economy in the second half of 2008. At the end of 2009, 24.9% of the unemployed were university graduates (Bora, 2013). During the unionization process at IBM Turkey and the plaza gatherings of IT and plaza workers, mass layoffs were announced by Vodafone, ATV/Sabah and several other companies. The Türk

Telekom, IBM, ATV/Sabah and Vodafone layoffs started a wave of white-collar mobilizations. These mobilizations led to the emergence of new platforms. The Plaza Action Platform (PEP) was the first one of them. It was followed by the IT Workers Solidarity Network (BİÇDA). BİÇDA was founded as a result of internal disagreements and debates within IBM resistance activists and also within PEP activists. While the IBM resistance was ongoing and PEP was organizing plaza actions, call center workers established their own platform: the Association of Call Center Employees. Dazayn and Kaç Bize Gel were founded after these initial platforms. The latter two platforms were more critical of the aims and actions of these new platforms (except the call center employees' platform). While the first platforms were aimed at uniting white-collar employees under these platforms, the latter platforms had more concrete programs on new white-collar unionization.

3.2.2.1. Plaza Action Platform

The IBM workers' plaza actions managed to win significant support from other plaza workers and the gatherings evolved into meetings. They called these weekly meetings and protests "Plaza actions". Growing meetings resulted in a new platform called the Plaza Action Platform (PEP). As people were gathering for collective actions in front of Yapı Kredi Plaza they decided to call this platform the Plaza Action Platform. Plaza actions played an important role in creating shared understandings between white-collar employees.

PEP was founded by leading activists of the IBM resistance and supporting white-collar activists from other companies. It was established as a solidarity platform. White-collar employees needed a platform separate from the trade union to organize their own network and collective actions. This was regarded as an opportunity to gather around a loose and horizontal structure of a white-collar platform. Had the IBM workers won their resistance, the PEP meetings would probably have evolved into unionization meetings. But its failure and significant problems between employees and the trade union changed the direction of PEP

meetings from unionization to organizing themselves in new platforms. PEP activists organized weekly plaza actions during the IBM resistance. Some of these actions, like the “yellow ox”, were reported in the mass media. The employees organized solidarity actions with other workplace resistances and organized meetings on the problems of white-collar employees.

In September 2008, Haber-İş declared their right to represent workers at Türk Telekom’s sub-company Assistt A.Ş. The union managed to recruit 468 members in the company and demanded bargaining for collective agreement. Its members increased to 800 after a few weeks. Nevertheless, Türk Telekom refused the unions’ demand. Haber-İş, in the meantime, declared that they had started to recruit new members in Avea and working for a unionization campaign in Turkcell, Vodafone and Türksat A.Ş. (Akcan, 2008).

In November 2008, Ak Bank announced that 1100 workers were laid off. Ak Bank informed IMKB (the İstanbul Stock Exchange) that the workers laid off as a result of the company’s “performance criteria calculations.” A laid off worker called it “crisis opportunism” (Sol Haber, 2008). Interestingly, the workers who lost their jobs did not carry out any protest actions. The main reason for their silence was a mutual agreement between the workers and the company on compensation payments.

At the end of 2008 layoffs began in the media sector. The Media Turk Group laid off 500 workers in October, and 2008 were laid off at Digiturk, Turkmax, Sky Türk televisions and the daily Akşam. In November, the Ciner and Doğuş Media Groups laid off more than 200 workers. In the same period, TV8, Fox TV, CNN Türk laid off approximately 300 workers (Kara, 2009). The ATV/Sabah Group also announced layoffs, but there workers tried to organize resistance against the layoffs. Laid off workers, who were mostly members of TGS (Journalists Union of Turkey), called for a strike in February, 2009. This strike was very

similar to the strike during the IBM unionization process. Two years before the strike, 500 ATV/Sabah workers, out of 900, had joined TGS. The company refused to recognize the union and the resulting trial took two years. At the end, the workers won and collective bargaining began. But the company laid off some workers and collective bargaining ended in disagreement. Then the strike began. This was the first strike in the media sector after 1980 (Önderoğlu, 2009). Plaza gatherings in front of IBM Turkey for solidarity with the IBM resistance continued with a solidarity campaign for the ATV/Sabah strike. The strike was very weak, only 10 workers struck, and eventually the union lost. But the solidarity network around the strike was strong. IBM workers and PEP organized press releases in front of Yapı Kredi Plaza and visited workers at the ATV/Sabah building.

In March 2009, Vodafone Turkey announced 260 layoffs for budget constraints. The way Vodafone announced the layoffs was shocking for all white-collar employees. On Thursday morning tens of workers could not get into the building because their card readers were not working at the entrance to the company. Security told them that they should wait in the hall. A company representative came and made a speech about future opportunities, a new beginning and so on. Some pills (Passiflora) were handed out and ambulances were invited to the building by the management. When the workers understood that they were being laid off, they started to protest and informed the media of the layoffs. PEP immediately called for action and organized a press release in front of Vodafone Maslak Plaza, the next day. The Association of Call Center Employees also joined the protest.

PEP activist Selim said on a radio program: “We started a resistance at IBM against the existing attacks in 2009. We understood during the IBM process that our problems are not individual but general. Therefore, we said we should find common solutions to common problems.” (Emeğin Gündemi, 2012). That was why PEP was established in the last months of 2008, during the mass layoffs and increasing discontent among white-collar employees.

PEP was the first separate organization of white-collar employees. The emergence of this first platform, together with the defeat of the IBM resistance, generated debates on new ways of organization. During the IBM resistance AK Bank laid off 1100 workers. Bank and insurance workers started to participate in PEP meetings. The majority of PEP members are still from the banking, insurance, and research sectors.

PEP could not organize mass collective actions, but it represented an initial stage of white-collar mobilizations. During the plaza actions and meetings, founding a new platform began to be discussed by the workers present.

IBM employees were neither leftist nor committed to any ideological position. Their aim was to protect their rights and increase their wages. Angry at being ignored by IBM Turkey management, they joined a trade union, but not a leftist one. They chose Tez-Koop-İş for utilitarian reasons. It was the only union over the 10% threshold in the information sector, so that only Tez-Koop-İş had the right to collective bargaining. IBM workers wanted to negotiate with management. But IBM Turkey responded to this unionization by taking offensive action; layoffs, pressure and continuing to ignore the workers. IBM employees looked for tools to gain support from the media and from other white-collar employees. Weekly plaza actions started for this reason. Although tens of workers from different companies participated in these actions, this was not enough. Even unionized IBM employees were not giving full support to the actions. Fear of losing their jobs and not finding a new job were the main reasons for the weak attendance of workers at the actions.

Therefore, the leading activists found new ideas to attract workers and the media. IBM Turkey workers directly got in touch with IBM Italy workers. They knew that in 2007 IBM Italy workers organized the first virtual strike in the world on the online platform Second Life. Those workers were member of Uni Global Union (An international confederation of trade

unions). Activists got support from Uni Global and other IBM workers for a virtual strike against IBM Turkey. The idea of a virtual strike circulated rapidly in the media. They managed to attract the media's interest. In order to increase workers' attendance at actions they found a new repertoire. They called for an action with "yellow ox" masks. More than 200 workers participated. In this way, nobody's face would be in the media and the photos.

These successful collective actions increased support, but also led to debates among the PEP activists. Some activists, being members of a leftist political party, put forward more militant actions and terminology in the leaflets. Others, including IBM resistance leaders, did not agree with this. Another debate was about the structure of a new IT sector organization. Debates would lead to splits after a while. BİÇDA was founded as a result of these debates.

PEP remained as a platform seeking solutions to workplace problems after the splits. PEP activists realized that plaza actions or visiting other workers' actions and strikes was not enough. In order to find solutions, it was necessary to define the problems. They decided to hold a series of meetings where white-collar employees from various companies and sectors could talk about their own problems. They called these meetings "Experience Workshops". Between 2011 and 2014 PEP organized six thematic workshops: Secrecy; Anxiety; Performance; Job Interviews; the Banking, Insurance and Finance Employees' Working Conditions; and Discrimination.

PEP intended to get organized in the workplaces but never managed to do this. This was another reason for the splits. The Experience Workshops and meetings without direct collective action was a risk for PEP: "Some workers come here because they are really alone. Some others are laid off and come here with this pain. But the greatest danger was for us to turn into a means of socialization. We didn't want this to happen because PEP would then not be a place for struggle any more" says PEP activist Ozan.

PEP chose to organize in plazas. The Maslak-Levent line has always been its main target. The Plaza is one of the most important symbols of the changing working class. The density of workers in plazas can be as high as factories, but with an important difference. A factory belongs to one company; however, in a plaza there are usually tens of different companies operating on each floor: Different employers, different managers and different workers. Even the sectors of the companies vary within the same plaza. Organizing workers in such places is a very difficult task for trade unions.

The failure of the IBM unionization, the loss of the ATV/Sabah strike, the inaction of Ak Bank and Vodafone workers, together with the changing national political agenda, made everything more difficult for PEP activists. PEP was initiated by IBM employees but after their failure PEP remained in the hands of white-collar activists who were not members of any trade union and did not even have any unionization experience. Discontent in the workplaces paves the way for alternative platforms in the absence of efficient and democratic trade unions. There was an obvious need for a new organization and even a trade union for white-collar employees, but the IBM resistance did not win and PEP did not become this alternative organization.

PEP was significant in the sense that it created a group of new activists in the IT sector and in plazas. Its meetings generated initial knowledge on workplace problems for the activists. Internal debates on how to organize white-collar employees led to new attempts at organizing them. PEP, at least, changed the well known white-collar strategy of ‘finding a better job’ or ‘waiting until retirement’, which leads to inaction, into an organization for establishing relations of solidarity among co-workers (Tatari, 2014).

3.2.2.2. *IT Workers Solidarity Network*

Beginning with the crisis of 2001, but more strongly after the global financial crisis, the working conditions of white-collar employees deteriorated. IBM was the first attempt by white-collar employees to get organized in a trade union and then they attempted to create an association. The Labour Act favored the employers during the unionization processes. Therefore, union leaders could be fired by companies. This was what happened at IBM. One of the leading activists of the resistance, Nedim Akay, who was also a founding member of PEP and the union representative of Tez-Koop-İş at IBM Turkey, shared his idea of founding an association just after he had lost his job. An association could also be a first stage to gather IT sector employees before getting unionized. With the support of other activists an initiative to found the information and communication employees' platform (BİTDER- Association of Information and Communication Technologies) was established.

The first split from PEP occurred after discussions on founding BİTDER for information workers. Between 2008 and 2010 PEP was active because the unionization process was not over yet. 2008 and 2009 were years of white-collar layoffs. PEP activists were busy with plaza actions and meetings. On 15 December 2009 the TEKEL resistance began in Ankara. TEKEL was the former state-owned alcohol, cigarettes and tobacco monopoly, of which the cigarette and tobacco sections were privatized in 2008. The workers' resistance, with tents in front of Türk-İş (the largest trade union confederation) headquarters in Ankara, lasted for 78 days. PEP actively organized solidarity with TEKEL workers. But the loss of the IBM strike ballot and the failure of the strike had a discouraging effect on activists from 2010 onwards.

During the first months of the trial between IBM employees and IBM Turkey, IBM employees began to look for alternative platforms for all information employees. PEP was active, but its aim was to organize all white-collar employees. IBM workers, together with IT workers at other companies, decided to initiate another platform which would organize only

IT workers in the information sector. BİTDER was founded in April 2009 with almost 500 members. A serious debate began among the members: who would be the members of the association? There were three groups. The first group, including Akay, argued that there should be no restrictions on membership. The second group argued that employers should not be members. And the third group argued that employers should be allowed, but should not be members of Executive Board. The general conference of the association met on 31 June 2010. Debates on membership and on the demands for working conditions ended in disagreement. In the end, the association was dissolved by its founders (Gözükeleş, 2010). This was a debate between activists who wanted to establish an IT worker's organization and those who wanted an inter-class platform like a profession organization.

Some of the IT employees involved in this debate established another platform, the Information Technology Workers Solidarity Network (BİÇDA). One of the leading BİÇDA activists, Çağla, said at a conference that the IT sector does not only employ engineers and that engineers' chambers could not meet their needs. She said that due to the cumbersome structure of the unions and chambers they chose to get organized under a solidarity network (Sol Defter, 2011).

Çağla described how the IT sector has changed and how IT employees began to organize against the deterioration in their working conditions. She used to work at NETAŞ. As explained above, Netaş was the largest IT company in Turkey in the 1980s. It was half-public owned. The first strike after 1980 was organized at Netaş in 1986. The older generation of Netaş workers and managers had union experience. Çağla said that wages and working conditions at Netaş were much better than any other company in Turkey when she started to work there. However, the crisis of 2001 led to significant changes in the company and Netaş laid off about 200 engineers. Çağla said the crisis made her think about this question for the first time in her life: "How will I find a job if there is going to be another crisis?" Job

insecurity created the need for an organization in order to be able to act against the employers collectively. Çağla explained that due to this feeling of insecurity she joined the Chamber of Electrical Engineers (EMO). She was not alone in her decision. The need for an organization among IT workers directed their interest to EMO as it was the only organization for IT workers. However, they were not satisfied with the chamber. The need for a separate IT workers' organization gave birth to a new chamber, the Chamber of Computer Engineers (BİMO), in 2012. The IBM resistance and the unsuccessful BİTDER experience had an important impact on the emergence of this new chamber. A chamber, however, is not a workers' organization. Chambers organize workers, managers and even employers of the same profession under the same organization. Chambers do not intervene in workplace problems.

Çağla's dissatisfaction with EMO directed her interest to trade unions. She started to go to meetings of Birleşik Metal-İş, and found it too bureaucratic. These experiences were the driving force behind her active support for the IBM resistance. She joined PEP, was involved in the BİTDER debates, and eventually became a leading activist in setting up BİÇDA.

When a structural change intersects with the agent's need for change, a new organization arises from their intersection. Structural adaptation to the neoliberal economy led to rapid developments in the information and telecommunications sectors. This structural change generated a new type of working class in these sectors. Beginning with the crisis of 2001 the deterioration of working conditions created the need for an organization to protect conditions. Traditional forms of organization, such as chambers and trade unions, could not meet the needs of IT employees. They tried to form new platforms, even though these were not big and effective enough. But at least they gained some organizational capacities that would be helpful in future organizations.

BİÇDA was established in August 2010, just after the closure of BİTDER. In the first meetings the discussion was once more about the structure of the platform, whether it should be a trade union or a foundation. Activists' previous experiences made them decide on establishing a solidarity network instead of any traditional form of organization. A solidarity network was, indeed, a consequence of the uncertainty about what to do. Lack of organizational experience and the need for a new organization led to this result. IT workers do not have to be engineers, they do not even have to be graduates. Programming can be learned through courses. They do not all work in just one sector; very single industry employs IT workers. A united organization for IT workers had not been established yet. A solidarity network aimed to fill this gap. Like PEP, BİÇDA did not organize any collective action. Instead, its activists strived at organizing a network through the social media among IT workers and gaining support from other sections of the working class.

BİÇDA managed to gain significant support from IT employees who felt the need for an organization in their sector. However, it did not become a mass organization. There are some structural contradictions in this situation. The IT industry is at the top of technology use. Skilled IT employees have an idea of a “good life” in the future. Young employees dream of becoming managers or setting up their own businesses some day. The individual success stories of Bill Gates with Microsoft, Steve Jobs with Apple, Mark Zuckerberg with Facebook, and Larry Page and Sergey Brin with Google always haunt them like ghosts. A good idea, a laptop and knowledge of programming is enough to become successful. This is not the case for other industries. Individualistic expectations and the real conditions of the industry create a contradiction for IT employees.

In short, BİÇDA was founded as a result of increasing discontent among IT employees after the crisis and the failure of the IBM Turkey unionization attempt. White-collar activists first founded PEP and internal debates led to the emergence of BİÇDA. Solidarity-based platforms

constituted a new repertoire of white-collar collective actions. While PEP was able to organize some collective action (plaza actions and gatherings) in front of Yapı Kredi Plaza, BİÇDA remained more of a network of IT employees.

3.2.2.3. *Kaç Bize Gel*

Kaç Bize Gel (KBG) was founded in 2013, just a few months before the Gezi resistance. Instead of using the term white-collar workers, KBG prefers to use “office workers”. It aims to make a concrete program for the unionization of office workers. KBG is trying to cover all office workers, including plaza workers, IT workers, lawyers, engineers, call center workers and so on.

The personal experiences of leading activists are crucial in the making of any organization. Just like Çağla’s Netaş and engineers' chamber experiences played an important role in her active participation in the establishment of PEP and BİÇDA, the personal organizational experiences of KBG’s founding members were also crucial. Selim is the founding and leading member of KBG. He had some organization experiences as a lawyer and these experiences significantly influenced KBG’s structure and aims. During the first period of white-collar mobilization two new lawyers’ platforms were established in Istanbul. These platforms were the Law Office Employees Solidarity Network in 2009 and the Initiative of Lawyers Union in 2010. These platforms did not last long. In the 1980s, there were not many large law firms. The majority of lawyers worked either in small firms or for themselves. In the 2000s, this changed. It was a period when large law firms emerged and expanded in Istanbul. Shrinking wages, long working hours, and precarity were the main reasons for the emergence of the Solidarity Network. An internal debate began among the activists about the term “worker lawyer”. Some argued that not even the majority of the lawyers were workers, and therefore an organization for lawyers should cover all lawyers. It was at more or less the same time that IT employees were having a debate on whether to create an association for the IT sector or a

platform only for IT workers. Their debate ended with the creation of a solidarity network (BİÇDA). The lawyers' debate ended with another solidarity network. However, neither the solidarity network nor the initiative of a lawyers union managed to be as popular as PEP or BİÇDA.

In 2011, some lawyer activists and some PEP activists started to organize meetings about a new platform for white-collar employees. They had three questions on the table. First, how can we explain that white-collar employees are workers? Second, how can we solve the organizational problems between white-collar workers and trade unions? And third, how can we create coherence between the cultural language of white-collar workers and the classical organizations? The first question was common to all new platforms; PEP, BİÇDA, and the lawyers' organizations. Their answer to the second question would be the beginning of Kaç Bize Gel. KBG offers itself as an intermediate platform between workplace organizations and trade unions.

KBG activist Irmak defined the aim of the platform in a radio program:

“This platform was born with the question of how do white-collar workers get organized? There is a big gap between office workers and trade unions. There are three dimensions to this; firstly, this group of people has no class consciousness; secondly, the unions have no program on how to organize them; and lastly, they have no organizational experience as a class. On this basis, we concluded that there is a need for an intermediate platform. We have seen the need of a platform which will bring class consciousness to white-collar workers, will call white-collar workers into trade unions, will sustain an organizational network before unionization, and will also be a veil for the secrecy of the workers.” (Kırbaş, 2015)

Their main goal was to assist the establishment of a united office workers' union. As an intermediate platform, KBG aims to support trade unions to launch recruitment campaigns for office workers. Their written documents provide them with the necessary program and methodology, though not perfect, they believe.

Existing trade unions are very distant to the white-collar cultural language. This becomes a barrier between them. That is not the only problem for white-collar unionization. The Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining Act does not allow office workers from different sectors to organize in the same trade union. Another problem is the need for workers to maintain anonymity during the unionization process. When the leading union activists are known to management, they lose their jobs. Therefore, KBG activists present themselves as an intermediate platform where workers can get together initially outside the workplace. The organization of office workers should be different from blue-collar workers because of their cultural differences, argues KBG. It should be a flexible organization and should use the humor and language of white-collar workers.

Selim spoke about the importance of the successful and failed experiences of other organizations. He said lawyers' platforms did not go beyond the classical form of organization. PEP did not have a clear aim and a concrete program about how to organize workers. However, PEP's successful attempts in using white-collar language became a starting point for the new platforms. A former PEP activist proposed a catchy name in the debates of 2011. She proposed the name "Kaç Bize Gel". PEP was the first organization using white-collar language instead of the classical and militant language of the inexperienced white-collar employees. Other new platforms improved the use of such tools as humor, the social media, and the new language in their organizations. The call center workers' successful organization was an inspiration for KBG activists. Call center workers first set up a webpage, than established an association and finally created a new trade union. Selim said that they

learned a lot from the Precarity Movement as well. The Precarity Movement put the agenda of precarious work onto their forums and meetings. Relying on these discussions, Kaç Bize Gel defined precarity in its own way. KBG emphasizes that “all work without the right to collective bargaining is precarious work.” Directly or indirectly from 2008 to 2011 each new organizational attempt had some kind of relationship with each other and learned from each other.

KBG activists mostly work in telecommunications companies, call centers and plazas. If there is a trade union or another platform organized in their workplaces they prefer to back these organizations instead of creating a separate group. If not, they try to build KBG branches in the workplaces. This attempt has been weak so far, although they had some minor workplace actions. For instance, KBG activists in a telecommunications company organized a collective action on the issue of discrimination against subcontracted workers who did not have the right to use company shuttles. After the workers’ collective action the company changed this rule and all workers were able to use the shuttles.

As a result of their organizational weakness, KBG activists have focused more on producing documents on a concrete program and a methodology for organization in the offices. In this way, they hoped, all debates in the new platforms, such as the definition of white-collar workers, who to organize, and how to organize would find answers and the same debates would not be repeated. This would enable activists to take steps forward in their organizations.

KBG activists argued that for a workplace organization, workers need to have concrete demands on the problems of working conditions. Activists should not lose their jobs when they are building an organization in workplaces. The language of the activists should be parallel to the cultural language of the workers as well. Office workers’ whole life, according

to KBG, is work. They work when they are out of their offices and longer than legal office hours. They work on holiday, on weekends, and at home. Lack of leisure time is a significant barrier to their organization in trade unions or other forms of organizations. Thus, the new platforms try to attract workers through different strategies. KBG organizes Sunday breakfasts with a small discussion meeting afterwards. Sometimes they invite speakers from other organizations or workplace resistances.

KBG believes that trade unions need to have a concrete methodology around concrete demands to organize office workers. Through written documents KBG aims to influence trade unions to organize big conferences for the organization of office workers. These documents provide information on organizational practices.

It is possible to see the influence of recent white-collar workers' mobilizations in the documents. For instance, it is said in a brochure that performance criteria cannot be an excuse for layoffs and the phrase "charlatans saying an opportunity for a new life" is a direct reference to the Ak Bank, Vodafone and IBM layoffs.

The KBG program has 10 concrete demands for the working life. Very briefly, this program demands abolishment of the performance system, flexible working hours, taxation of labour, subcontracting, precarious conditions, and discrimination against women in company structures. It demands the rights to join a trade union, to make collective bargaining, to have paternal leave, to absolute wage increases, and to a decent minimum wage. This was probably the first attempt at creating a concrete program for white-collar employees.

KBG is the only organization with a concrete written program. However, these demands are not new. PEP's Experience workshops, and BİÇDA's meetings included discussions on workplace problems and how to fight against them. But they did not create a program out of

these debates. KBG differs from the other platforms especially in having produced written documents on these issues.

After publishing their first brochure, the program of KBG, they tried to spread the word by using white-collar language through the help of humor and caricatures. In this way, the program and the organization would attract more office workers. The second brochure was a comic book telling the story of an office worker beginning with his/her graduation from university. This document explained how people graduate with high hopes and how their life then becomes a nightmare. Such a depressing office worker story told in a comic book format constructs an attractive text easily read to the end.

To sum up, KBG was founded as a result of the previous experience of several white-collar organizations during the first period of white-collar mobilizations. The lawyers' solidarity network and unionization initiative, PEP, call center employees platforms, and BİÇDA experiences had influence on KBG. They were founded in consequence of these white-collar organizational practices, collective actions and debates. Since they were established in the downturn period of the white-collar mobilizations in 2013, they did not organize any collective actions until the Gezi resistance. It was for this reason KBG published several documents providing information on the disputes among white-collar employees and the platforms.

3.2.2.4. *Dazayn*

Dazayn was another new white-collar platform which was founded after the debates within PEP but more specifically among BİÇDA on how to organize white-collar employees. Against the idea of creating a solidarity network among IT employees, some activists argued about workplace based organizations. Disagreements among them caused a split.

Dazayn comes from the word “dasein” in German, meaning “being there”. It was a small group of activists working in a few communication and information companies. Dazayn was getting organized in workplaces. This was their main difference from PEP and BİÇDA. In this regard it had some similarities with KBG. However, instead of a concrete program for unionization their focus was on direct workplace struggles. Its activists believed that without breaking the hierarchical relations in the workplaces, white-collar workers would never be able to wage the class struggle in the workplaces. Thus, its aim was to organize workers' control in the workplaces. This control does not mean workers' control of the means of production. It means the participation of workers in the management of the company and intervention in management policies. Dazayn's leading activist, Onur, said other platforms organize outside the workplaces and wait for a mass mobilization like the Gezi resistance. For Dazayn, the working class should be organized in the workplaces and activists should hold workplace meetings in order to intervene in workplace problems.

The IBM resistance was a cornerstone for Dazayn activists. Onur says that when the IBM resistance and plaza actions were at their peak it was possible to show IT employees in other companies that unionization is possible. It was possible for Dazayn activists to hold workplace meetings with about 10 employees there during the IBM resistance. But after the defeat of IBM employees, especially after the exhausting debates in BİTDER, it was no longer possible to hold such big meetings in the workplaces.

Dazayn's largest activist group was at Netaş because Onur was working there and also because Netaş has a tradition of workers' struggles since the strike of 1986. Onur had participated in several actions during the layoffs at Netaş in 2009, together with Çağla from BİÇDA. Nortel, the main foreign shareholder of Netaş, went bankrupt in the global financial crisis. In 2009 a rumor began to circulate at Netaş: the company would lay off 250 employees. Employees, including Onur and Çağla, set up a web page called "Netaş leaks". They

published this information and Netaş shares lost some value on the stock exchange. The human resources department then announced that there would be no layoffs. But the website continued to exist. Mass layoffs never happened again at Netaş.

After the resistance some employees started to hold meetings on their problems. Debates were again similar to those in BİTDER and previously in PEP. BİÇDA was just established and Onur and some other employees were against a solidarity network as a class organization. Their argument was that a solidarity network is not a workplace organization. It is an outsider platform for employees from different companies. After the debates they chose the name Dazayn in 2011 and launched a website for publicity. Dazayn activists worked mostly in Netaş but after the website they managed to win a few more activists in other companies.

In one of their articles, Dazayn clearly distinguished itself from the other white-collar employees' platforms:

“Creating a workplace struggles network! Not one of the left-oriented solidarity networks you can find everywhere. Not one of the initiatives established by using capitalist advertising techniques for creating hope in people. Not one of the platforms established for somebody else’s struggles, established by people telling everyone around them that assisting strikes – completely correct and necessary work- is the only thing to do. But a committed network of workers, able to organize every kind of struggle, from minor workplace struggles to strikes, who has chosen to work modestly as a methodology, and has made anonymity and collectivity their principles.”

(IWW, 2015)

This passage shows their critique of solidarity networks like BİÇDA and platforms like PEP. The most significant difference between Dazayn and other platforms was its hard critique of

workplace hierarchy. Hierarchy creates an illusion for workers in the name of career-building. Employees do not resist managers because they expect to become managers in the future. IT employees believe that they start from the middle position in a company. However, they usually start from the bottom. And few of them climb to the top. Loneliness and future expectations are the roots of their inaction. Submission to hierarchy diminishes their solidarity and tears them apart. When a skilled white-collar employee faces with a problem, he/she considers the problem personally. They usually do not consider the problem as a systemic problem. Bad managers are usually seen as the source of the problem in a workplace. So he/she usually prefers to leave for a new job. Working conditions may differ from company to company but capitalist hierarchy remains the same. Flexible hours, precarious conditions, and having no union are all the same. For those reasons Dazayn aims to get organized directly in the workplaces and fight there for better conditions. New effective production strategies creates more participatory relations between managers and white-collar employees. This is especially true for the high technology sector. Four of the interviewees who are IT employees reported the same situation.

Dazayn's focus on "hierarchy" is based on this illusion of "participatory management" among IT employees. Activists see that this illusion makes them inactive. New management systems like Scrum and Agile are the most common ones in IT sector. In Agile, every team holds a meeting every working day and divides the work into minor parts. Than everyone decides which part to do by himself/herself. Team members share the workload voluntarily. Sometimes one prefers to choose the easiest part, the other day they get the harder part. All interviewees indicated that this creates an illusion that there is no hierarchy in the workplace. Managers seem like just one of them. However, they report the workers' performance to top management. At the end of the year this performance determines their wages and even their employment for the following year. The illusion of democratic and horizontal management

together with career opportunities are some of the reasons for the inaction of white-collar employees in the information sector.

In order to break this “illusion” Dazayn activists organized some collective actions at Netaş. As every manager aims to encourage workers to work as much as possible, Netaş managers push every IT team to work longer as well. Dazayn activists organized a collective slowdown against long working hours. They won their demands. Employees who joined the slowdown got wage rises, they set their teams by themselves, and in their teams they chose their team leader and decide on the working conditions by themselves. There were about 25 IT teams at Netaş. Each of them consisted of 20-30 employees. The successful experience of Dazayn activists’ team did not spread to other teams but they managed to create an example.

During the Gezi resistance Dazayn activists organized workplace forums at Netaş and Alcatel. Their agenda concentrated on how to support the Gezi Park occupation. In the wake of the Gezi resistance workplace forums continued to be held for a while. This time the agenda was workplace problems. However, the retreat of the movement had a discouraging impact on employees. Forums did not continue or evolve into any kind of workplace resistance. But these workplace forums created a network and a feeling of solidarity among employees as well as leaving a small organizational experience behind.

Dazayn changed its name to IWW İstanbul in 2012. IWW, Industrial Workers of the World, is an international anarco-syndicalist trade union. IWW organizes blue-collar workers in general. However, Dazayn activists found that IWW's organizational structure fits Dazayn’s goals perfectly; workplace organization, direct action, and an anti-bureaucratic trade unionism.

Dazayn, or IWW İstanbul, is a small experience of white-collar workplace-based organization. Their critique of other new platforms and their anti-hierarchy focus (both in the

workplaces and in the trade unions) comes from the difficulty of organizing white-collar employees in the information sector because of “horizontal” or “participatory” management techniques. They are striving to find new ways to encourage their colleagues to organize in the workplaces and to join collective actions against employers. However, they did not manage to expand their activist group to more than a few workplaces.

3.2.2.5. Association of Call Center Employees

The final experience of new white-collar platforms studied in this section is the Association of Call Center Employees (ÇMÇ), although this is not chronologically the last one. It is actually one of the first ones, organized in more or less the same period as the IBM resistance, PEP and BİÇDA. However, this platform and activists were not directly in relation to the other new platforms. Still each mobilization in some ways followed and influenced each other.

Call center employees initially set up a website, www.gercegecagrimerkezi.com (the call for truth center), in 2006. They managed to reach call center employees with their new repertoire of actions. Activists of the movement founded the Association of Call Center Employees in 2008. The call center employees’ struggle for an organization to actively defend their rights eventually concluded with a new trade union in 2013: Dev-İletişim İş. The mobilization of the call center workers is the clearest story of how a class organization emerges when structural changes coincide with the conscious action of agents.

Engineers, IT employees, skilled office employees, architects all work in career oriented jobs. Team work, flexible conditions, less hierarchic decision making and promotions for creativity are parts of their jobs. In an era of so called “post-industrial production,” “creative labour,” or “information workers”, recently developed call centers are more similar to the Taylorist labor process. Özdemir (2014, p. 19) calls the labor process in call centers a “destructive labour regime” because of strict central control over the labor of employees.

The call center sector appeared at the beginning of the 1990s, first in the banking and telecommunications sectors. It spread very rapidly to all other sectors. In 2013, there were more than 70 thousand employees in call centers (ÇMD, 2013). The employees' average age was between 26 to 28, and 70 per cent were women (ÇMÇ Derneği, 2013). Turkey is among the highest ranked in rates of educated call center employees. 46 per cent were either students at or graduates of a university in 2010 (Avdan, 2010). This kind of job is regarded as a “job that graduates do” however, not “graduate jobs” (Purcell et al, 2003 cited Özdemir, 2014, p. 117). Only India and France have higher education rates than Turkey. The educated labor force at call centers has been falling since the global financial crisis. This means that before 2008 the number of university graduates working at call centers was higher than today.

The distinctive feature of the call center employees’ mobilization is that it was one of the least skill-requiring jobs among white-collar jobs. Bain et al define the laboring process in call centers as a new stage of the Taylorism of white-collar employees (Bain, Watson, Mulvey, Taylor, & Gall, 2002). Taylorism means the simplification, standardization and deskilling of work. This is also the case for store workers. These jobs, however, were mostly preferred by new university graduates or by students as part-time jobs. The alienation of call center employees' at work is very similar to that of blue-collar workers. That is why activists say “we think of ourselves as light blue-collar workers.” They make hundreds of calls each day and repeat the same sentences thousands of time a week. Although deskilling is a common phenomenon for all white-collar employees (engineers, IT workers, lawyers and others), there is at least some creative part in other white-collar jobs, but not in call centers.

Call centers are a very new sector. Managers' controlling strategies over employees are more advanced than in any other sector. This is called the “electronic panopticon” (Metcalf & Fernie, 1998). Employees are controlled permanently by a team leader through a program. Every second of each call is recorded by this program and the team leader can see it.

Advanced management techniques can make perfect calculations for the employer. The number of calls each employee makes and how many seconds they spend per call can be calculated. In this way, their performance can be measured. This control and pressure over employees has an enormously discouraging impact on collective action. On the other hand, the intolerable working conditions leave no option but to get organized.

Two leading call center activists, Canan and Özden, explained the changes in the sector over the years and their organizational experience. They found a job in the call center department of a national bank right after they graduated from university. It was just a few years after the crisis of 2001. There were not many job opportunities for new graduates. Call centers were new and subcontracting would begin soon. Working in a plaza office where women's employment is relatively high was a good option when urgently looking for a job. However, working conditions were getting worse by the day. With the Labour Act 4857 subcontracting was enacted in 2003. Banks immediately adapted themselves to this new opportunity. Not only banks but almost all companies shifted their employment to subcontractors. One of the reasons for IBM workers' unionization was also the subcontracting issue. IBM decided to outsource some of its operations in 2005 and workers' discontent began as a result.

Workplace problems in call centers generated the need for an organization to protect employees' rights. First, two activists visited trade unions, but the unions had no experience at all of call centers. They decided to find their own way and set up a web page, "gercegecagrimerkezi.org". Call centers are separate sections of the companies. Therefore, call center employees and other workers have a degree of distance from each other. The growing number of outsourced call centers has been changing this situation but now employees work for different companies in the same workplaces. The segregation of young and educated office employees' from other employees within the companies (not a call center company) and also the segregation of different operations within a call center company, make

traditional trade unions not touch these groups of employees. The web page became a very efficient tool for call center employees to find and communicate with each other.

In order to make their web page better known, activists organized a campaign. First, they put up stickers of the web page in the toilets of the call center offices without being seen by the managers. The stickers said “A spectre is haunting call centers”. Secondly, they called the call centers and invited them to visit the web page. This was a very specific repertoire of collective action though no more than 10 employees participated in it. The activists knew that employees have no right to hang up the phone before the client. They also knew that the employees could surf the internet while at work.

Their campaign was successful and managed to reach an audience. They took a step forward and founded an Association in 2008. As a result of the global financial crisis there were layoffs in many companies that year. New platforms of white-collar employees were emerging in several sectors. Two leading activists were unemployed that year and had enough time for building the association. The most important impact of the crisis on the call centers was not mass layoffs but the deterioration in working conditions. Subcontracting sharply increased in the sector and wages were shrinking. The performance system rewarded hard working employees with extra payments. But it also created huge pressure on employees and caused health problems.

Founding an association provided activists the organizational capacity to intervene workplaces. They provided legal consultancy to call center employees in their problems against the companies. In several trials the association was heard by the court as experts. Their legal personality allowed them to directly negotiate with the companies on their members' behalf. In 2009, some employers confronted the association by forming the Call Centers Association against the rising influence of the employees' association. Employees'

suspicion of trade unions and the fear of losing their jobs when getting organized were broken by the association. An association was more flexible than a trade union and for the employees it was less risky to join an association than a trade union. However, the leading activists were afraid that the association would be seen as a consultancy agency for employees. They had to find other tools to break this idea and make workers mobilize for collective action.

The first collective action organized by the association was during the Call Center Fair 2008 in İstanbul. In this annual fair call center companies advertise how effective call centers are for companies. At the end of the fair “The Best Call Center Award” is given to the most productive company. Employees protested against the fair and the awards in 2008. In their press release they mentioned that the awards did not take working conditions into account. “Kariyer yalanlarınızı külahımıza anlatın” (tell your career lies to the marines) was written on the banner the employees carried. The Association protested the awards by giving a counter award to Türk Telekom. This was the first appearance of the association on the scene. Activists said “We were ghosts before that, but became visible with this protest”.

In 2009, the association enriched its repertoire by assisting the scenario of a movie about working life at call centers: *Başka Dilde Aşk* (Love in another Language). One of the heroes of the movie was a call center employee. Some activists played in the movie. In the film, call center employees mobilized around a website. After the movie, their web page visitors significantly increased. In order to use this publicity in their favor, activists organized a meeting in Yalova where they wanted to organize call center employees and invited the actress who played the call center employee in the movie to the meeting.

Besides these new repertoires the association continued to use “calling actions”. This time they just informed employees on the phone about their rights. For instance, the association learned that when employees got sick and did not go to work they were forced by a particular

company to work extra hours in compensation. Association activists called this call center and told every employee “your company is breaching the law. You do not have to work extra hours in this situation. Please contact us.” These “calling actions” became an efficient tool for trade unions as well. For instance, Burger King call center employees attempted to join Tez-Koop-İş in 2011. When trade union activists were laid off the trade union organized a calling action.

Direct intervention in workplace problems through a legal association increased the membership rapidly. For instance, the association organized workers during a disagreement between employees and Turkcell Global Bilgi, one of the biggest subcontracting companies in Turkey. The association’s intervention resulted in the victory of the employees. After this victory the association increased its membership to 500 employees in just this company. Concrete solutions to concrete problems brought confidence to employees to organize in workplaces. The association has some advantages in the organization of call center employees. Under the conditions of rapid mobility it is important to organize not only full time employees, as trade unions do, but also part-time employees, employees who change their companies or even their sectors, and unemployed ex-employees.

Another important achievement of the association was its cooperation with the Ministry of Labour on the Ministry’s call centers audit. The association presented a report on workplace problems and employees’ health issues to the Ministry. The Ministry published its auditing results in 2013 and changed the status of call centers from a “less dangerous” to a “dangerous” sector (Çağrı Merkezleri Artık Tehlikeli, 2013). Several companies tried to change their job title from communications to services in order not to face the required obligations of being a “dangerous” sector. By doing that they could also prevent call center employees from joining their new trade union which was also established in 2013. The

association followed these cases and reported them to the Ministry. In this way they managed to protect their members' rights against the companies.

The association has been facing a difficulty since 2010. In the beginning of the 2000s, call centers were new and spread quickly to many different sectors. The largest group of call center employees was in the banking sector. Subcontracting of call centers increased the discontent of call center employees after 2005. But subcontracting companies were still mostly in İstanbul. Since 2010, subcontracting call center companies have been moving to cities like Diyarbakır, Erzurum, Sivas, Yalova, Samsun, because labor is cheaper outside İstanbul. A workers' mobilization centered in İstanbul faces difficulties in reaching workers in other cities. In 2008, a majority of the members of the association were working in banks. But now, says Canan, a majority of the members are working for subcontracting companies.

Another major difficulty in organizing call center employees is the level of mobility. It is regarded as a temporary job for university graduates or a part-time job for students. After a few years of work employees usually change their sector. Very few of the employees see call centers as a lifelong career. Therefore, a workplace based struggle for better working conditions is not easy to organize. This is the complete opposite of IT employees, engineers or other white-collar employees. The reason of the inaction of these employees is usually the risk of undermining their career. However, for call center employees the reason for their inaction is having no expectation of a long career in this sector.

The leading activists started their organization after their disappointment with trade unions in 2004. They found their own way by setting up a web page and - founding an association. With the new Trade Unions Act, in 2012, the trades were redefined and the collective bargaining threshold was reduced from 10% to 3%. According to the new definition, call centers were defined under the communications sector. There was no trade union in this new

sector. The association decided to fill this gap by creating a new trade union. After a year of preparations Dev-İletişim İş was registered in 2013, just one month before the Gezi resistance.

The association was not disbanded after the establishment of the trade union for two main reasons. First of all, the idea of being a member of a trade union continues to be an obstacle for employees. The threshold for collective bargaining was reduced but not removed. The trade union does not have enough members to exceed the threshold so far. Secondly, various trade unions are organizing the call centers and Dev-İletişim İş is organizing all employees in telecommunications sector, not only call center employees. For instance, employees in the call centers of banks join Bank-Sen not Dev-İletişim İş. Post and telegraph employees, on the other hand, have to join Dev-İletişim İş. The new law on trade unions did not change the organizational structure of the trades but just redefined them. As a result, the association continues to organize call center employees from all sectors.

In summary, call center workers organized around a web page, and then formed an association, and finally created a new trade union. In comparison to other new platforms, the call center activists managed to reach their target group and increased their level of organization parallel to their increasing number of activists and members.

3.2.3 A New Repertoire: Leaking

There were new white-collar platforms, strikes, and unionization attempts with lively debates between the years of 2007 and 2011. From the second half of 2010 the political agenda changed significantly in Turkey. First of all, recovery started from the impacts of the global financial crisis. Secondly, the constitutional referendum of September 2010 changed the political agenda rapidly. After the referendum the war between the military and the Kurdish liberation movement started, together with the trials of KCK (Kurdistan Communities Union).

In 2011, national elections occupied the political agenda. As a result of these economic and political changes, white-collar mobilizations declined. The activism of the new platforms calmed down, though it did not stop until the Gezi resistance. This situation caused a new repertoire of action, although this time it was not a collective action but an individual one. Several websites were set up for leaking company information. Employees could freely share their working conditions, company secrets and their experience of job interviews by using nicknames. These pages were specifically established for white-collar employees.

In 2010, www.firmafaresi.com was set up but it was banned in 2012. This page was built by an IT worker himself. His anger against the companies probably coincided with a feeling of loneliness. This drove him to give a personal reaction. We can even consider it a revenge attempt or an internet-age sabotage by a white-collar employee. An ekşi sözlük³¹ writer had copied the manifesto of the web page before it was shut down. It is possible to see the anger of the founder of the page. The heading of the page was “demonstrate/scream /cry out/rebellion/make a statement/”. Under this heading a paragraph of hateful passages appeared. All white-collar problems were listed together with some swearwords. Every employee could give the name of their companies and reveal their secrets in the page. The web page was banned but social media accounts were still functioning. In the final message, the founder of the web page mentioned that many firms had been threatening him and the page had been prosecuted. He declared that he was not able to resist these pressures individually and he shut the page down.

A similar web page; <http://www.mimarazzi.com/> began broadcasting in 2011. It was only for architecture employees and companies. Indeed, the first web pages for the architects were “Sinirli Mimarlar” (Angry Architects) and “Mimarlar Anlatıyor” (Architects Explain). Both of them were set up in 2010. In these pages, problems of working conditions and abuses of

³¹ Ekşi sözlük is a popular website where registered authors make comment on any issue.

rights were published. These initial pages showed the need for architects to share their problems. The creators of “Sinirli Mimarlar” decided to develop their page. They set up “Mimarazzi” in 2011. Different from the previous one, this page was interactive. Sections of the page consisted of the names of architectural firms. Architects could comment on the behavior of the firms to their employees and share their working life experiences in the page. In the first days of the web page Cüneyt Özdemir announced it as the “architects’ wikileaks”. One famous architects company, for instance, got the most entry in the sections. In order to save its damaged reputation, the firm publicly declared employees would have five days off (including weekends) after long overtimes (Mekanar, 2011). The web page broadcast for only three weeks but managed to reach 500.000 clicks in just three weeks. Once more, similarly to Firmafaresi the page was threatened by a firm. If its name was not removed, the firm would prosecute the page and the commentators. The page managers decided that the firm had very strong lawyers. Removing the company would mean censorship. For these reasons, the managers of the page released a farewell message and shut the page down (Kırbaç, 2015).

White-collar employees have a tendency to change their jobs instead of taking collective action when they have trouble with their companies. This tendency is based on the expectation that workplace problems are not the same in other companies. In their minds, it is always possible to find a better job. The new platforms tried to undermine this expectation at their meetings, workshops, bulletins, brochures, web pages, and booklets. None of them managed to reach the success of the “leaking” pages in this regard. These pages demonstrated very clearly that working conditions were more less the same in every company. Any employee could easily make this comparison on the page.

These two successful web pages were imitated by the Association of Call Center Employees (ÇMÇ) and the Plaza Action Platform. Their aim was to attract more employees to their web page and organize them if possible. So a revenge repertoire by white-collar employees

became a tool for organization by the new platforms. ÇMÇ's "GCMLeaks" was set up in 2013 and is still broadcasting. It is the forum page of the Association of Call Center Employees' website. Plaza Action Platform set up "istenatildim.org" in 2014. "GCMLeaks" is only for call centers but "istenatildim.org" is the only one of its kind. It does not focus on any specific sector but covers them all. Anyone who loses her/his job can share her/his comments. PEP supported this page with a section where employees who lose their jobs can get legal help in defending their rights. This was an interactive page where workers usually ask questions about what they can do after being laid off and the official PEP account replies with suggestions. These two pages have not managed to emulate the success of their predecessors. Platforms did not recruit any new activists through these pages. The reasons for this are speculative. Their old fashion pages in comparison to previous ones could be one reason. The Gezi resistance could be another reason. Just a few months after the launching of "GCMLeaks", the Gezi resistance began. Leaking became a backward repertoire at a time of mass collective action on the streets and parks. "Istenatildim.org" tried to do something new after the Gezi resistance but the new collective actions of white-collar platforms, solidarities, collectives, and highly politicized society with the national elections probably prevented white-collar employees from getting involved in such individual actions.

3.3 The Gezi Resistance and the White-Collar Employees

After 2008, in conjunction with the economic downturn, social tension was increasing in Turkey until the Gezi resistance. This tension was not only on economic issues but also on political liberties, lifestyle issues, women rights and so on. The Gezi Park resistance was the explosion of this accumulated social tension. White-collar employees became publicly visible with their mass participation in uprisings, clashes, occupations and the subsequent public forums.

The Gezi resistance was the second milestone of the white-collar mobilizations. Spontaneous and direct collective action by the masses revealed the power of plaza and office employees for the first time in Turkey. White-collar employees together with students and with limited participation by blue-collar workers suddenly appeared on the streets of Istanbul with their political demands.

The location of Gezi Park can be regarded as one of the most important features of the mobilization. The Park is surrounded by shopping malls, banks, plazas, hotels, towers and media centers from where thousands of white-collar employees joined the resistance after working hours. Therefore, one of the most famous slogans was “Work during the day, resistance in the evening!” (Sabah iş, akşam direniş!). According to the Ministry of Interior Affairs’ Gezi Incidents Report, published in September 2013, Gezi Park incidents occurred in 80 cities involving 3,545,000 people. It is estimated that 1.5 million people joined the protests in Istanbul. After police retook the square, protests retreated to park forums and neighborhood solidarities. In Istanbul there were about 40 forums which lasted for six months (Yörük & Yüksel, 2014). The biggest public forums were in Beşiktaş (Abbasğa Forum) and Kadıköy (Yoğurtçu Park Forum).

It was explained in the “Debate on classes in Turkey” section of chapter I that authors began to discuss the class content on the participants. Despite these debates there was a consensus that a majority of the participants of the Gezi resistance were students and university graduates. However, there was disagreement on which class they belong to. The Gezi resistance cannot be analyzed from the perspective of political economy without taking into account the deterioration and the white-collar mobilizations since 2008.

The Konda research company conducted a survey of 4411 Gezi participants during the occupation of the square. The results indicate that the average age of participants was 28, 42.8% were university graduates and 12.8% were either graduates or students on master’s or doctorate programs. 36.6% of them were students, while 51.8% were in work. 4% of the Gezi protesters were public sector employees, 15% were white-collar employees, 6% manual workers, 2% petty bourgeois, 5% professionals, and 17% "others" (Konda, 2014). The statistics show that the largest group of participants were students. The second largest group, with 15%, were white-collar employees. However, it is possible to claim that some of the “professionals” and the “others” groups were also white-collar employees. For instance, lawyers and architects were included in "professionals" but quite likely a significant number of them were employees.

Regarding the class composition of the Gezi resistance, Yörük and Yüksel conducted research based on three surveys. They analyzed the data by using descriptive statistical methods. The result, on the social distribution of protesters and supporters in İzmir and İstanbul was as follows:

“The largest single group of protesters was from the manual formal proletariat (36 per cent), followed by the non-manual proletariat (20 per cent), the informal proletariat (18 per cent), the petty bourgeoisie (11 per cent),

professionals (6 per cent), executives (5 per cent), and capitalists (4 per cent). In other words, more than half of the protesters—approximately 54 per cent—belonged to the formal and informal proletariat, the two lowest echelons of the class structure. Adding the non-manual formal proletarians, i.e. white-collar employees and technicians, increases the proletarian participation rate to 74 per cent. At the same time, the upper classes had a higher representation among Gezi protesters than among the population as a whole: in other words, the likelihood of an individual having participated increased if he or she was from a higher class location.” (Yörük & Yüksel, 2014)

Yörük and Yüksel emphasize that the ‘new middle classes’ referred to by many commentators would correspond to the layers of non-manual formal proletariat, professionals, and executives. Their analysis shows that the so called “new middle class” constituted 31% of Gezi protesters. They argue that middle and upper class participation in the resistance was much higher than their rates in society. More importantly, their control over the means of communications made them appear to be in greater numbers than their actual existence.

Regardless of how many per cent of the activists belonged to the working class (white or blue-collar), the impact of such a massive movement on working class mobilization was important. Participation of the new white-collar platforms in the Gezi resistance is important in the sense that such a massive mobilization creates confidence in all the participants. However, the new platforms’ participation was very weak. Only Kaç Bize Gel and Plaza Action Platform had stands at the occupation. They managed to hand out leaflets and brochures about their organizations and recruited new members. The reason for the weak participation was the resistance’s charm. Almost all the activists interviewed were actively involved in the occupation, barricades, demonstrations and forums, but not with their organizations. They explained that they were enjoying the massive demonstrations instead of

trying to organize white-collar employees. Collective action by the masses was exciting, creative and powerful. Distributing leaflets, talking about their organization and recruiting new members were the routine activism of the new platforms before the Gezi resistance. Thus, only two platforms had stands but they were not eager to intervene in the direction of the resistance.

Both PEP and KBG significantly increased their followers on their social media accounts, recruited some new members and distributed hundreds of leaflets and brochures. PEP activist Gül said that many plaza and office employees were interested in their stands. However, the stand was not a location for political discussion or a place for enlarging the organization, but a location for gathering PEP activists and their colleagues. Gül said plaza workers organized themselves in workplaces in order to come to the Gezi occupation together after working hours. She said there were small workplace actions organized by the employees. For instance, İPSOS -a research company- employees, under the leadership of PEP activists, organized a collective action in order not to work but join the Gezi resistance. They managed to leave the workplace collectively and join the resistance once.

Kaç Bize Gel was more ready than PEP. It distributed about 1 thousand brochures at Gezi Park and met new office employees who were interested in KBG meetings. When political mobility rises meetings attract people's attention more than in ordinary times, says Selim. However, the political intensity of the agenda with weekly marches, police violence, and forums had a negative impact on their meetings. They could not hold meetings regularly for six months. Consequently, there were not many new activists who remained after the Gezi resistance. For Selim, the main reason for this was that the movement was unable to change the direction of the mobilization from streets to workplaces. When the streets emptied people returned to their daily lives. Thus, KBG was not in favor of public forums; workplace forums could have had a better influence on employees' organization.

Call center workers had founded their new trade union (Dev-İletişim İş) just one month before the Gezi resistance. They had not put out any publications yet but took their place next to the PEP stand. They recruited new members. The impact of the resistance was more clearer not during the occupation of the Park but after it. Canan said, “We gained self-confidence, for instance. You know how masses applaud you in the protest and support you, we believe when we hand out leaflets for the workplaces, it would catch people's attention in the same way. Everyone was in solidarity with one another. We gained confidence. Against the employers we felt like “we will bring the masses here for a press release against you”. She said that organizing the trade union and collective actions had been organized by a small number of activists prior to Gezi. It was even radical to make a protest, but with the Gezi resistance collective actions, protests, drawing placards and chanting slogans became just ordinary. However, this militancy and confidence did not lead to a new generation of activists within the call center employees’ organizations.

During the occupation, plaza workers’ unique collective action appeared at the NTV protest. NTV and many other TV channels showed no interest in broadcasting police brutality and the demonstrations. Increasing discontent against the media turned into a social media campaign. As a result of this frustration, a mass protest broke out in front of NTV headquarters. NTV was chosen because it was one of the most prominent news channels in Turkey and its headquarters was located in the plazas center of İstanbul. A twitter message calling for a protest in front of NTV at lunchtime spread among Gezi activists. PEP announced this call to its followers. PEP’s announcement rapidly spread to thousands because PEP already had networks among plaza workers, trade unions, and other new platforms. In just a few hours thousands went out of their plazas in Maslak and marched to the NTV headquarters. This protest is still known as a PEP action. However, activists said it was not organized by PEP but the announcement spread through the PEP network.

In the wake of the Gezi Park occupation, thousands of people started to gather in public parks every night and held big public forums. There were also smaller forums and working groups. White-collar employees organized their own discussion groups at the park forums. In the white-collar forums of Beşiktaş and Yoğurtçu, working life problems and how to overcome these problems were discussed by participants. These forums established a new website to organize forums on both sides of the city and to coordinate their actions. It was called “White-collar Solidarity” (Beyaz Yakalı Dayanışması). These kinds of meetings and debates had been previously organized by PEP. PEP called these series of meetings “experience sharing workshops.” PEP, BİÇDA, and Dazayn activists participated in the forums and their previous experiences helped them gain more say and give a political dimension to the forums. Another platform which emerged directly from the forums was “White-collars Should Do Something” (Beyaz Yakalılar Bişiy Yapsa). It was a social media platform. The platform was less political in comparison to “White-collar Solidarity” and other white-collar platforms. They did not stress workplace problems. Their aim was to use white-collar skills and create social benefit projects (Beyaz Yakalılar Bişiy Yapsa, 2013). The most famous campaigns of the platform were supporting local shopkeepers and helping disabled citizens in urban life.

The forum experience spilled over to some workplaces. Activists of the new platforms mentioned two important workplace forums at Yapı Kredi and Netaş.

Yapı Kredi established its headquarters in Gebze (Kocaeli) in 1997. Gebze has been developing as a new industrial area since the 1990s. National banks have been collecting their departments in one united campus since the 1990s. Gebze is one of these locations. First, Yapı Kredi in 1997 and then Ak Bank in 2011 established their headquarters in Gebze. More than 2000 people were working at the Yapı Kredi campus 3.500 people at the Ak Bank campus (Ergin, 2011). Different departments, such as IT department, call center, insurance, and banking, are located in the same place in these campuses. The difficulties of collective action

by white-collar employees are relatively less in these campuses than plazas where employees are divided among many companies.

Mehmet was one of the leading activists at the Yapı Kredi workplace forums. He is an IT employee in Yapı Kredi and a Plaza Action Platform (PEP) activist since 2010. He said that the IT employees' attempt to join a trade union at IBM was an inspiration for him. He joined the Chamber of Electrical Engineers after the failure of the IBM unionization attempt and then became one of the founding members of the Chamber of Computer Engineers in 2012. After a while, he quit activism in the chamber. He says that the chamber bureaucracy was the main reason for this decision. He continued activism in PEP because there was no hierarchy there and it was possible to organize events and meetings with employees from different companies.

During the Gezi resistance he and some other Yapı Kredi workers organized shuttles to go to Gezi Park after working hours. From Gebze to Gezi Park it sometimes takes two hours. He says that in the shuttle he found an opportunity to meet many employees who were willing to take action. Within a big campus where only minority of employees was in a trade union, it was not easy to talk about politics and workplace problems among themselves. A group of activists emerged in the shuttle and every single employee was talking about the resistance during the breaks or even during working hours in the campus. Mehmet indicated that during these exciting days they managed to create a different relationship in the workplace. They got excited when thousands were marching to NTV headquarters. Gebze was quite far from these mobilizations and they decided to bring the "Gezi spirit" into the campus.

Mehmet and some of his colleagues organized employees via the company's inter-email system. They gathered in the dining hall during lunch and started to sing Gezi songs, revolutionary and nationalistic songs together. This was planned as a lunchtime collective

action but hundreds of employees, unexpectedly, supported them with their applause. It was not planned to chant slogans but hundreds of employees began to chant together. Then everyone returned to work. Mehmet says that he had confidence against managers because the spirit of solidarity was everywhere during the Gezi resistance. If they were fired there would be massive solidarity in everywhere. This increasing confidence and solidarity among employees encouraged the leading activists to organize workplace forums in the campus. Weekly forums lasted until December. Two days every week, during the lunch breaks, IT workers gathered in a room and discussed politics and workplace problems. Because Mehmet and other leading activists were in the IT department, workplace forums were always held in the same department. They did not spread it to other departments. Every week they organized an event off the campus, usually in Kadıköy. They also participated in the Kadıköy Yoğurtçu Forum.

Some Yapı Kredi activists wrote about their feelings on the Gezi resistance and Yapı Kredi workplace forum experience in BİÇDA's website. Some of what they wrote is worth quoting. One activist wrote "After graduating from four years of engineering education, while I was disappearing in the individuality of the business world, I realized that I was not actually alone. I am getting together with people who think like me and who are irritated by the injustices and deficiencies of our professions and society, we are working for the right of individuals and society, and for reaching justice." (Gebze'de Yaşanan Bir İş Yeri Deneyiminden, 2013)

Mehmet said that the most significant topics at the workplace forums were the Kurdish issue, careers, and the company. Since Kemalist and nationalist political views were quite widespread among the highly educated plaza employees, the Kurdish issue was at the top of their debates. Other topics included careers, the company and workplace problems. A discussion started on how to get organized in the workplaces. They even called Bank-Sen (a banking sector trade union) to join them but the union was not much interested in organizing

the IT employees of a bank. Bank-Sen had been organizing employees at the Yapı Kredi campus for a long time. They wanted to initiate a unionization campaign. However, IT employees could not join this trade union because the union agreed with management that the IT department was outside the scope of the collective bargaining.

Yapı Kredi employees -forum activists- organized a solidarity visit to the Kazova workers who had occupied their factory during the Gezi resistance. It was the first time Yapı Kredi employees visited another resistance, and more importantly, a blue-collar workers' resistance. Mehmet said, "I believe that the separation of white and blue-collar workers has disappeared. There are high earning white-collar employees but there are also some white-collar employees earning the same as blue-collar workers. Working conditions have been getting closer as well. We need a common organization I believe." These sentences explain why Yapı Kredi employees participated in the Yoğurtçu Park white-collar forums and visited a blue-collar workers' resistance. Their aim was to find a new, common and united platform for workers and these meetings and visits might have created such a network.

Another white-collar workplace forum was held at Netaş. Dazayn activists organized these forums. While they were organizing Netaş employees to go to Gezi Park and collecting aid for the Gezi occupation they decided to organize workplace forums. Netaş forums were held six times. Their main agenda was how to support the Gezi resistance. They discussed workplace problems as well. Onur said, "in the third forum, we said we are fighting against a man calling himself a dictator, but we are saying "yes" to everything in the workplace." The Gezi resistance made workplace meetings possible, he argues. Like the Yapı Kredi forums, the employees' agenda evolved from the political to workplace problems.

Dazayn activists organized two workplace forums at Alcatel as well. The Alcatel and Netaş forums came together at the Abassağa Forum (Beşiktaş). They established a new working

group there: Gezi Engineers. They held several meetings. The biggest was their meeting in Abbasğa Forum. The topic was Alcatel layoffs. They tried to build solidarity ties with the Alcatel employees. Nevertheless, these meetings did not last. Workplace forums and the Gezi Engineers do not exist anymore. They were significant minor attempts to change the direction of collective actions from forums to workplaces, from politics to economics. The challenge this time was the huge size of the Gezi occupation, demonstrations, and park forums. Holding workplace forums with 30 people and Gezi Engineers meetings with 50 was too small and building an organization is always more serious and less exciting work. Therefore, they disappeared in a few months. Yapı Kredi forums lasted longest, probably because of their distance to the Kadıköy and Beşiktaş Forums. It was still exciting for the employees when they were not able to join big public forums.

THY (Turkish Airlines) employees also organized a creative collective action during the Gezi resistance. Hava-İş was already on strike against THY ignoring the collective bargaining. On June 5, hundreds of employees gathered in front of THY headquarters. They combined their demands on collective bargaining with the demands of the Gezi resistance. About 50 employees simultaneously play-acted as if they were giving instructions during a flight. A cabin attendant read out instructions that workers need to pay attention to during a strike. All other workers put Vendetta masks on their faces and acted with instructions by moving their hands (Mynet, 2013). This collective action was inspired by the creative actions of the Gezi activists.

In many workplaces the Gezi resistance had a politicizing impact. At the İstanbul Development Agency, for instance, workers began for the first time to talk about politics every day. In 2015 these employees would organize the first successful plaza strike in Turkey.

The most important gain of the Gezi resistance was the change in the minds of the protesters. White-collar employees had already had some experiences and established small new platforms before the resistance, but they lacked a mass collective action which is necessary for creating new working class organizations. Mass collective actions are not only necessary for finding activists in each workplace and creating a network among them, but also for creating class consciousness. The 1989 Spring Actions by public sector workers was a good example of that. The spring action of the Gezi resistance created solidarity networks most strongly in İstanbul. These mass protests, square occupations, and forums created some degree of class consciousness as well. Symbols, slogans and militant actions of the radical left were legitimized and actively used by the participants. Gül explained that before the Gezi resistance using the word “action” in the name of their platform (Plaza Action Platform) was discussed for a long time because it represented militancy and sounded dangerous to some activists. After the Gezi resistance, she said, “action, barricade and so on were not radical words anymore.” Dazayn activist Onur said that “Gezi made everyone a leftist”. Before the Gezi resistance organizing white-collar forums in workplaces was impossible. He and other Dazayn activists had been regarded as marginal by their colleagues. They became founders of workplace forums with the Gezi resistance. Selim from Kaç Bize Gel explained that during his organization experience in the Law Office Employees’ Solidarity Network in 2010 his argument about “lawyer-worker” was rejected by most of his colleagues. Lawyers and office workers would not accept that they were workers but the Gezi resistance finished that debate. Nobody has been refusing to be labeled a worker since the Gezi resistance, he explained. Çağla from BİÇDA referred to the same issue. She said that during the debates on organizing a platform for the IT sector they chose to use “IT workers” in the name of BİÇDA (IT Workers’ Solidarity Network). There were many reactions to the word “IT worker” from their colleagues because "worker" meant blue-collar worker for them. With the Gezi resistance, she

emphasized, the term “IT worker” was no longer a matter for discussion. Even the term “resistance” became popular among employees. Activists’ experiences show that political consciousness and class consciousness changes within mass collective action. The radical becomes legitimate, militancy becomes ordinary in such periods.

From 2008 to 2013 not only new platforms and working class mobilizations but also political mobilizations increased. The Kurdish movement’s resistance to the army and hunger strikes forced the government to start peace negotiations. In 2010 and 2011, May Day marches were allowed in Taksim Square. Participation in the marches by young people and the new platforms was quite high. These mobilizations continued with the political protests against changes in the abortion law, massacres in Roboski and Reyhanlı, the three kids issue, the third bridge, nuclear plants, youth mobilizations against the 4+4+4 education reform and corruption in the central examination system, the anti-government mobilization on October 29 celebrations, and so on. In the year preceding the Gezi uprising, political protests were fewer than 60 in July 2012 and rose to over a hundred from September to December 2012. There were 150 protests in January 2013 and this increased to 250 in May, 2013 (Yörük & Yüksel, 2014). The Gezi resistance was the united collective action of all of these movements and thus its demand was unifying the macro political demands. However, every mass mobilization encourages its participants and improves their confidence. As a result, the Gezi resistance triggered a new period of white-collar mobilizations.

3.3.1 New Platforms after the Gezi Resistance

With the Gezi resistance, the confidence of its participants in collective actions grew. The feeling of solidarity was widespread. This was very clearly stated by the activists interviewed. After the Gezi resistance workplace occupations, barricades, clashes with the police, strikes, press conferences and demonstrations would immediately find mass support. After the Gezi

resistance several social media accounts were created to give information directly and online from the protests because the mass media was not doing so. All workplace resistance or protest immediately spread through these accounts.

This was a turning point for militant collective action. Career oriented sections of the working class experienced this militancy for the first time. Students and educated, “skilled” white-collar employees were accused of being “çapulcu,” “marginals,” and “vandals” by the government. The deterioration in the workplace coincided with disreputability in the streets. The precarity and skill degradation processes were leading to a loss prestige of for white-collar employees, meanwhile they experienced humiliation in the streets with police brutality and government assaults.

Some new white-collar workplace-based platforms emerged right after the Gezi resistance. Store Employees’ Platform, Publishing House Laborers Collective were founded, and then the first successful plaza employees’ strike was organized at the İstanbul Development Agency. The Gezi resistance had a direct encouraging impact on these mobilizations.

The Publishing House Laborers Collective (YEK) was one of the new platforms founded after the Gezi resistance. The publishing sector has been growing fast in Turkey since the beginning of the 2000s. According to the International Frankfurt Book Fair, Turkey’s publication sector was the 13th largest in the world in 2013 and became the 12th in 2014. Since the economic crisis of 2008 this sector has grown 10% annually (Karaboğa, 2014). This is a sector where employees are highly educated. Editors, translators, text editors, graphic designers are all educated and skilled white-collar employees. However, they have been experiencing deterioration in working conditions as a result of increasing competition in the sector and the growing surplus of university graduates.

Yıldız, a founding activist of YEK, said that what publishing employees have been facing was an undefined workload. The boundaries of an editor and the work of editing became blurred. Employers exploit an illusion held by employees. Activists call it the “exploitation of idealism”. Yıldız said, “Because employees think they are doing such a noble job, they do not see themselves as workers. They behave as if they are employers but in fact wages are low, you have no control over your work, you do whatever you are told. You read a text when you are told to do so. The work you used to idealize by saying “I like to read so much, I’m publishing books” becomes meaningless.”

YEK was founded in December 2013 as a reaction to an article, published in Birgün daily, criticizing the translation problems of a book. The critique was against the editor of the book. Yıldız said this article was effectively complaining about an employee to her/his employer. Although the publishing sector is so big, the number of publishing houses is not large. An editor who was publicly criticized like that might have been fired and not find a job again. Therefore, Yıldız and a few other employees wrote a letter against that article. They did not want to give their name because they were scared of being fired. They created a blog and published this letter under the name of the Publishing House Labourers’ Collective. Then, she said, they received many messages from Publishing House employees. They decided to hold meetings. The collective did not plan to organize employees initially, but during the meetings it took shape as a new platform.

In December 2013, with the Gezi resistance had finished, forums were in decline but neighborhood solidarities were on the rise. Activists who founded YEK were also activists of the Gezi resistance. During the resistance they began to talk about workplace problems. Yıldız said the problems in the workplace began during the Gezi resistance. Joining the Gezi resistance created tension in the office between the employer and employees. She said, “You go to Gezi and resist. You learn how to resist there and you show it in the workplace too.

Exactly at this point the employer gets worried. You begin not to fake a laugh any more.” Yıldız was fired after the Gezi resistance and she was a freelance worker during the establishment of YEK. Although the Gezi resistance had an encouraging impact on taking action, it had a discouraging impact as well. Yıldız’s experience was that the resistance created mass collective action, but it had some negative impact on getting organized in platforms, especially in workplace platforms. Anti-organization attitude was strong for her. Therefore, YEK meetings were held with very few participants.

The majority of YEK activists are freelance workers, editing or translating books for publishing houses. The only working life campaign that YEK organized was about job contracts for publishing sector employees. They drafted 10 kinds of contract examples where job descriptions were clearly drawn. In this way they were aiming to resolve the blurred relations between the different jobs of a publishing process such as editing, translating, designing, etc.

YEK has not organized any collective action or employees in the workplaces, but became a network for publishing employees where they can share their work problems and information about layoffs, mobbing or other kinds of employer actions.

The store employees’ organization (Store Employees’ Platform) is another new platform founded after the Gezi resistance. Turkey’s growing economy and its integration into international markets caused a drastic development of trade and services. If plazas, banks, insurance companies and companies in other services sectors is one side of this development, the other is the development of shops, cafes, and bars. Workers of the latter sectors have usually not been considered white-collar employees because they are not regarded as skilled mental labour. Nevertheless, the relationship between these sectors and other white-collar jobs or professions is important. The army of unemployed graduates is a common

phenomenon in recent years. This reserve labour power is usually absorbed by part-time or temporary jobs. University students or graduates who cannot find a decent job prefer to work there at least for a while. Call centers are very good examples of this. Store, café, restaurant and bar workers are the other side of this change. The main difference is that it is not that common to employ more than 10 or 15 workers in stores, cafes, restaurants or bars. Fragmentation of workers in small businesses makes it much harder to organize them in comparison to call centers.

The recent attempt by bar workers to establish a trade union is one example of organization attempts in these sectors. However, this organization is led by a political party and by a trade union bureaucracy. Therefore, their organization attempt is not based on a new repertoire.

The store employees' organization, on the other hand, is based on a new bottom-up repertoire. It is important to note that bookstore workers have been leading the organization. In comparison to other shops, bookstore employees consist of more university graduates. Store employees, especially graduates, are the disappointed section of the labor force from the beginning. Like call centers, mobility is rapid. Almost no one expects to retire from this sector. They are permanently looking for "proper" jobs. This mobility and vulnerability creates heavy working conditions for employees.

Şenol, one of the founding activists of the Store Employees' Platform, explained the discontent in the workplace. Flexible work, mobbing and devaluation are the main problems of store employees. Şenol said, "They always said hurry, do this or that. They constantly bring new jobs to do. You are constantly told that whatever you are doing is worthless, as if you have not done anything, and as if you have just started to work. This is what I mean by devaluation."

The Platform was founded in 2014 during the active period of the neighborhood solidarities and urban rights movements. The Gezi resistance turned into forums and had almost ended in autumn 2013. The big forums were replaced by small district solidarities, such as Caferağa and Yeldeğirmeni solidarities in Kadıköy, and issue-based solidarity movements like Kuzey Ormanları Savunması (founded in July 2013), İstanbul Kent Savunması (founded in June 2014), Kadıköy Kent Solidarity (in 2014), and so on. These solidarities actively built campaigns and mobilized people through their networks. Workers' mobilizations found significant support from these networks. This was an encouraging context for workers' actions.

Store employees began to hold their meetings in these conditions. They built a webpage when they started to hold meetings, but the platform had not yet been created. Initial meetings were among D&R workers. Meetings were held against unpaid flexible work. Some stores rejected signing an agreement on this issue. One of the activists was fired and their first collective action took place against this sacking. Workers issued a press release against D&R's action. In the press release they explained that the store employees have become the urban workers today spread all over the city. Every single store is a factory now and they regard themselves as workers of the sales departments of factories (Vardar, 2014). YEK activists joined them in solidarity. In two days employees organized a collective action in the store and closed the doors to clients.

Şenol explained that before these actions holding a meeting was difficult. But actions provided new energy to organize themselves better. But after a while he was fired by Remzi Kitapevi. The platform organized a protest again and this time it was bigger than the D&R actions. Şenol said that after the first protest in front of D&R they decided to join a trade union. They contacted Sosyal-İş but the trade union activists and bureaucracy told them that it

is hard to organize store employees. They did not even try to meet the employees. Therefore, they continued to organize themselves in their own platform.

Şenol's analysis of the relationship between the Gezi resistance and the emergence of the platform is important. He said, "The Gezi resistance had an impact on our organization. Gezi restored the confidence of most of the workers here. This refreshment of confidence created an organizational effort. But precarity, devaluation, and proletarianization processes also had an influence. This is what I call the urban poor. They are gradually developing a new form of organization." Similar to call center employees, flexible and long hours of work create a social life for store employees. Şenol stressed the fact that employees cannot find leisure time to improve themselves, to socialize, and to attend meetings. This was the main difficulty the platform faced in getting organized. These conditions cause dullness and indolence among workers, he argued. But the Gezi resistance gave them all energy and confidence. The call center employees' experience and the platform's relations with other new platforms and solidarities increase their hopes for a bigger organization.

In summary, white-collar employees were significantly involved in the Gezi resistance, though it was not a mere white-collar resistance. On the other hand, it was definitely the collective action which included most white-collar employees. Therefore, it is regarded as the beginning of the second period of white-collar mobilizations in this dissertation. All of the white-collar activists from the first period participated actively in the resistance. But only a few were there with their platforms. It was more enjoyable to join the masses instead of trying to win new members to their platforms. This mass resistance increased the confidence of activists. The emerging solidarity networks, social media accounts, and forums created a mass alternative communications web for activists. For almost two years this communications web was very useful for every single workplace and neighborhood action. During the second period, existing white-collar platforms reactivated themselves by attending forums and

organizing workplace forums, like PEP and Dazayn activists did. They organized their own meetings and the new communications webs helped them reach a much bigger audience than they had reached during the first period. Some other new platforms were founded, like the Publishing House Labourers' Collective and the Store Employees' Platform. Some Gezi activists from the Istanbul Development Agency managed to convince their colleagues to join a trade union and these white-collar employees organized the first plaza strike in Turkey in 2015. During the second period blue-collar strikes and workplace actions increased dramatically as well and white-collar platforms actively mobilized for solidarity with these blue-collar mobilizations.

There were some differences between these two periods. During the first period white-collar activists were more isolated from each other and from other sections of the working class. They were more eager to find a new repertoire to get organized in the workplaces. During the second period white-collar activists managed to reach a much bigger number of white-collar employees as a result of the communications network of the Gezi resistance. They were more active in solidarity meetings and collective actions with blue-collar mobilizations. This period came to an end in the second half of 2015, with the national elections. The national political agenda was dominated by two elections, the war with the Kurdish liberation movement, and bomb explosions in the city centers. White-collar employees managed to create new platforms, generated a new repertoire, tried to make changes in the traditional trade unions and even founded new trade unions (which will be explained in the following section), but they did not manage to form new mass organizations. Therefore, the political weight of the political agenda put significant pressure over small and disorganized white-collar mobilizations. As a result, the second period ended under this heavy pressure which spread fear and despair in society.

3.4 Change and Tradition: Unionization Attempts of White-collar Employees

The initial moment for the emergence of white-collar employees' organizations was the IBM resistance. IBM employees joined Tez-Koop-İş in 2008. The employees' collective action in front of the plaza managed to gain support from other white-collar employees. IBM was the first information company where employees joined a trade union and managed to get the right to collective bargaining. Their struggle against company management exceeded the capacities of the trade union. Employees complained about the biased behaviour of the trade union bureaucracy in the election of workplace representatives. The trade union complained about the individualistic and undisciplined behavior of the employees. The union bureaucracy's unsuccessful interventions and the failure of the strike broke the will of the employees. This failure prevented other white-collar employees, who were in solidarity with IBM employees in plaza actions, from joining trade unions. Instead, they turned their attention to alternative white-collar platforms.

PEP activists were mostly finance, banking and insurance workers. Therefore, they had a close relationship with Bank-Sen (Banking and Insurance Workers Union). PEP was founded against the ineffectiveness of Tez-Koop İş during the IBM resistance. Tez-Koop İş had enough members to make collective bargaining. But Bank-Sen was a very small and even more ineffective trade union. The relationship of Bank-Sen and PEP seems like a contradiction but in fact PEP is quite critical of Bank-Sen. Bank-Sen provides legal advice, a meeting place and training when there is a demand from PEP. It was the same for IBM workers and Tez-Koop İş. Employees organized themselves, decided to join a trade union which had the right to make collective bargaining and chose Tez-Koop İş. The bureaucracy of the trade union was not successful in leading or intervening in the decisions of the employees. It was just used as a legal necessity by the employees.

BİÇDA activists tried to cooperate with Birleşik Metal-İş but this did not last long as a result of inconsistency between the two organizations. On the other hand, BİÇDA assisted the Construction Workers' Union in managing their web page and social media account. Kaç Bize Gel's main goal was to create an office employees union but at the same time they encouraged office employees to get organized in existing trade unions. The Store Employees' Platform tried to get in touch with Sosyal-İş, but the trade union was not particularly interested in organizing store employees. YEK has a close relationship with Basın-İş.

These new white-collar platforms were founded as a result of the inefficient and bureaucratic structures of the traditional trade unions. However, none of them have ever had an anti-union tendency. Their real aim has always been to get unionized, but they want to change the existing trade unions as well. It was their conscious choice to get stronger by creating new platforms against the traditional trade unions and increase their organizational capacities in order to become a force for a change in the traditional structures of the trade unions.

While the new white-collar platforms were pushing for change in the traditional class organizations from the outside, there were also examples of new white-collar mobilizations within the trade unions during the two periods of white-collar mobilizations. The next two sections will look at these mobilizations: first, the opposition movement against union bureaucracy within civil aviation employees in the Rainbow Movement, and then two specific white-collar unionization attempts at Bilgi University and the Istanbul Development Agency. The importance of the latter two was that these mobilizations applied pressure for change from within the unions. Lastly, a new independent union of performance actors and actresses will be looked at.

3.4.1 Opposition within Hava-İş: Rainbow Movement

Civil aviation employees have traditionally been well organized in Hava-İş (Union of Civil Aviation). The Spring Actions of public sector workers generated a new workers' leadership. Hava-İş was affected by this wave of mobilization as well. In 1989, Atilay Ayçin became general secretary. He remained at the head of Hava-İş for 24 years. During this period the trade union and its bureaucracy have always been dominated by ground staff. Pilots and cabin employees were better off and better educated in comparison to ground staff, therefore, the trade union traditionally had a distance to those groups. The changing structure of civil aviation led to significant changes in the employees' composition in the sector but especially in Turkish Airlines (THY) where a majority of civil aviation employees work. The drastically rising number of cabin employees and pilots, and their increasing problems with THY management since the 2000s paved the way for an opposition platform against the traditional trade union bureaucracy. This platform was created in 2009 and named itself the Rainbow Movement.

THY was the only airline company in Turkey until the neoliberal era. Beginning with the 1990s private airline companies began to operate in Turkey. With the private airlines, flexible work began to increase. Some of the flight safety and cabotage rights were deteriorating. This led to discontent among the employees.

THY was one of the fastest growing companies in the 2000s. One of the first operations of the new AKP government was to change the structure of THY. In 2003, 51 percent of THY shares were offered to the public. Together with other financial and legal changes THY became a privately owned company without public control. However, its Executive Board would still be appointed by the government (Çelik, 2013).

Parallel to the rise of private airlines, a global trend, “low cost” flights, entered the sector. Low cost tickets for passengers means lowering the costs of flights for companies. One consequence of “lower costs” was the subcontracting of several services. In this way the trade union would lose its power as well. THY first subcontracted its technical department, then its call center and then some other ground handling services. Low cost flights are mostly provided by small companies in the world. Low services and using secondary airports allow small companies to provide cheap seats. Private small companies’ growth increased the competitive pressure in the sector and trade union struggles managed to stop wages from falling at THY. Meanwhile, the deterioration of working conditions was also prevented to some degree in the past decade. In the early years of the 2000s, private companies were offering better conditions to their employees. THY made significant investment and improved working conditions for its employees. Since 2007 conditions for employees are better at THY than at the private airlines (Öztürk, 2010).

After these changes THY began to grow rapidly. In 2007, THY had 10.453 employees (49% women, 51% men). In 2010, the figure was up to 14.206 (52% women, 48% men) (THY, 2012a). Of this total 4-5.000 thousand were cabin crew in 2010 (Öztürk, 2010). In 2014, the number of employees was 19.341 (47% women, 53% men) and 58% of them (11.203) were flight crew (cabin crew and pilots) and 73% of them were university graduates (THY, 2014). A majority of the women employed work as cabin crew in the civil aviation sector. There were only six women pilots in 2006, this increased to 45 in 2013 (Artan, 2013). In 2012, THY became the airline with the fifth largest flight network in the world (THY, 2012b). The increase in the number of ground staff did not parallel the growth of the THY fleet. The number of pilots and cabin employees outnumbered ground staff. The least organized section of the civil aviation sector became the majority.

Wages of THY workers, especially of flight workers, were comparatively much higher than any other sector in Turkey. However, the rapid growth of the THY fleet corresponded to an increase in flying hours and number of flights, and a reduction in hours of rest between flights. In 2006, there were many flight cancellations as a result of the workload of pilots and also the resistance of the changing trade union.

According to flight safety regulations, pilots have the right to cancel flights when they do not feel ready for it. Before getting organized, pilots had a tendency to fly by sacrificing from their resting hours. Anıl says this was especially the tendency of former Air Force pilots because their patriotic training was about sacrificing their own interests for the sake of the nation. Anıl had to struggle with the pilots to change this mentality. Through the trade union, he had to argue and explain that THY is a company which aims to make a profit. He also organized a campaign for the international working standards of the civil aviation sector. As a result of rising awareness, pilots began to cancel their flights, in 2006, when their resting hours were reduced by THY managers.

Pilots and cabin employees have had separated associations since 1980. In 1980, the Cabin Crew Members' Association (TASSA) and in 1997, Turkey's Airline Pilots' Association (TALPA) were founded. Anıl managed to create cooperation between these associations and the trade union. They worked together on a new directive for flight conditions. They studied flight directives and workers' rights in other countries and prepared a draft for Turkey. Their draft was radically revised by THY management and accepted in 2005. This was the first directive on flight conditions but it was far behind international standards. For instance, internationally the annual flight limit for a pilot was 900 hours but the directive set it at 1000 hours for pilots in Turkey. This has been revised six times since 2005 (Directive SHT-6A.50 , 2005).

Anıl explained the changes in THY as follows: “Since 2005, when THY started to grow rapidly and without a plan, the troubles began. In the civil aviation sector, 3-5% growth rates are regarded as big numbers. THY grew at 15-20% annually. However, the growth was unplanned. New aircraft arrived but there were not enough pilots. There was only one thing to do: working harder. But they could not plan this either. Discontent grew and this was how the interest in trade unions began.”

An important year for the organization of THY employees was 2007. It was the year for collective bargaining. No agreement was reached. As with the IBM resistance, the employer forced the workers to go on strike. Cabin employees were not expected to vote “yes” because they were well paid, and were distant from ground staff. However, the growing discontent of flight employees and the awareness campaigns of the trade union changed the conditions in favor of the union. A majority of employees voted “yes”. Anıl said that prior to strike ballot he had promised the cabin employees that every decision of the trade union would be taken in discussion with the employees. After the “yes” vote, the Minister of Labor intervened. With the Minister’s intervention THY and Hava-İş reached an agreement. Although the agreement favored the union, their promise to allow the employees to participate in the decision was not kept. This experience was the starting moment of opposition within the union, which would lead to the Rainbow Movement in two years.

Several union activists came together and prepared a model of a democratic trade union. They agreed on 10 main principles and shared it at their representatives' meeting in 2008. The next year there would be elections for the Executive Board of Hava-İş. Their aim was to create pressure for democratizing the trade union. Their principles were about democratic and participatory decision making and economic transparency for the trade union budget. But during this mobilization Anıl was laid off by THY.

The trade union gathered representatives on this issue. For the first time many pilots, about 120, participated in the meeting. The decision was not to work for one day (Çakır, 2008). This collective action was based on pilots' right to cancel flights when they do not feel ready for it. Anıl coincidentally found the press release of the trade union on the table just one day before the day of action. It said "This action does not belong to our trade union." The reason was to protect the trade union from any claims for damages. He realized that this collective action might lead to layoffs and he stopped it (Airkule, 2008). Anıl said "this was the moment when I broke my relations with the trade union bureaucracy."

Anıl began to work at Pegasus after being laid off. He is the only trade union member at the company. He continued to organize intra-union mobilization with other activists. The opposition presented its 10 principle as their demands from the trade union to the Executive Board. It was the year of trade union elections but representatives' meetings were not held for six months. In the end the opposition decided to contest the election in September 2009. They called themselves the Rainbow Movement. They contested the delegation elections but the delegations system favored the status quo of the bureaucracy. As the union was traditionally well organized among ground staff and technicians they sent more representatives than their ratio in the changing numbers of THY employees. The Rainbow Movement was mainly a movement of cabin employees and pilots. Despite the inequalities in the representation system, the two competing lists received the same number of votes (146) in the General Assembly. An invalid vote was reconsidered valid. Consequently the Rainbow Movement's list lost the election.

The main reason for the opposition's high votes was employees' discontent with THY management and also with the Hava-İş bureaucracy. With the election of the old bureaucracy's list, workers lost their trust in the union. THY increased their workers to 16 thousand in a few years (THY, 2012a). In 2012, once again collective bargaining talks

resulted in disagreement and the trade union decided to go on strike. This time the AKP government legislated a law prohibiting strikes in the civil aviation sector. This was a demand of the THY executive (Çelik, 2013). Hava-İş called for an illegal strike but THY responded with layoffs. In 2013, the Rainbow Movement was unable to put forward an alternative list for the union elections because of heavy employer pressure over the employees in the Rainbow list.

The Rainbow Movement is not active any more, but its democratic union program is still a very important experience for employees in the civil aviation sector. It differs from other white-collar platforms with its strategy of remaining inside the union and trying to make changes by establishing an opposition platform within the union. The Rainbow Movement did not organize separate collective actions but managed not only to organize cabin crew and pilots which were historically reluctant to unionize but also mobilized them for a new, anti-bureaucratic union. This is the only example among white-collar employees of activists with a new concrete unionization program putting pressure on the union bureaucracy. It was the early years of the first period of white-collar mobilizations. In 2009, if the IBM resistance could succeed and the Rainbow Movement could win the elections, a new process of white-collar unionization would have become possible in Turkey. Their loss changed the direction of white-collar employees from trade unions to alternative platforms outside the unions.

3.4.2 Unionization in Istanbul Bilgi University: The First Attempt at a Private University

In the pre-1980 era, university education was dominated by state universities in the West and in Turkey. In the UK, the USA and Canada higher education was provided by non-profit corporate or public universities whereas in continental Europe it was provided by state funded public universities (Arslan & Odman, 2011). In the 1990s, this structure changed with the neo-liberal changes. A two pillar system of higher education (non-profit corporate and public

universities) met with a new pillar; profit-making corporate universities (Robinson, 2015; Arslan & Odman, 2011). Since then the commercialization of higher education has spread all over the world. Some of the consequences of this commercialization were university-industry cooperation, performance systems for academics, competition for finding projects and sponsorship for research, and subcontracting of academic work.

Article 130 of the 1982 Constitution allowed private universities in Turkey. The first private universities were Bilkent University, established in 1984, and Koç University, founded in 1992. Istanbul Bilgi University was the third private university in Turkey, founded in 1996. Between 1980 and 1990, ten new universities were founded in Istanbul. Between 1992 and 2006, 22 new private universities were founded. (Vatansever & Yalçın, 2015, p. 69). From 1994 to 2006 no single public university was founded. Beginning in 2007 there was a rapid growth in the number of universities. In 2007, 17 public and five private universities; in 2008, nine private universities in nine different cities were founded. In 2014, the total number of private universities was 66 and 37 of these were in Istanbul (Vatansever & Yalçın, 2015, p. 28).

According to Müftüoğlu (2011), between 1981 and 2010 the total number of students in higher education increased 14 times, whereas academic staff increased only 5.2 times. In 1981, while the number of students per academician was 11.7, in 2010 it became 31.5. Çetinsaya (2014, p. 96) gives different numbers: The number of students per academic staff (academics and assistants) rose from 14 to 21 and per academician (excluding assistants) rose from 41 to 48 between 1984 and 2013. Even though the numbers are different, both authors show that the number of students per academics rose significantly after 1980. Not only did the number of universities increase in this period, but also the number of students at university, especially with the introduction of evening education in 1992 (Vatansever & Yalçın, 2015, p. 79).

Not surprisingly, before 1980, teachers' associations and trade unions were among the strongest workers' organizations in Turkey. The number of schools, training centers and universities continued to rise in the neoliberal era. Among public sector workers' organizations teachers were a strong current.

With the increasing number of private universities a new phenomenon appeared. Students with authorships doing graduate studies became a cheap labor force for the universities. Thousands of master and PhD students worked for the universities. Usually unpaid or underpaid labour was used by university administrations. Performance systems were also recently introduced. Subcontracting, part-time work, forcing academic staff to do work beyond their duty became normal conditions for academics.

Deskilling is another result of "client oriented" universities. Managerial performance systems were applied, initially, to private universities, where the aim is to make a profit. Universities expect academics to teach as many students as possible and give as many courses as possible. This is one of the indicators of academics' performance. However, academic skills is need to be permanently improved. In order to do that academics need to undertake research and publish articles and books. This is called "publish or perish" pressure by some authors (Vatansever & Yalçın, 2015). Long hours of teaching and reading exams leave very limited time for research. Besides, doing research turned into doing a project. Finding funding is more important than the scientific purpose. Moreover, private universities force academics to take part in publicity for the university. Universities become, as Marx called them, "teaching factories". Vatansever (2015, p. 49) emphasizes that the precarization of academic labour is the process of workers' suppression as a result of wild competition and precarity of work, deterioration of social rights, and internalization of exploitation. Sharff and Lessinger (1994) call it "academic sweatshop" and Kramer calls it "Taylorized academic labour" (Kramer,

2008). Increasing pressure over academy workers, precarity of work and job dissatisfaction pave the way for academic workers' mobilizations in the universities.

One of the leading activists of the trade union at Istanbul Bilgi University, Meltem, described how working conditions changed in the university. Between 2003 and 2007 it was the "golden years" of Bilgi, she said. The workload was intense but job satisfaction was compensating it for her. She explained that academics had enormous control and autonomy in the management of their department (the history department in her case). She felt exhausted sometimes, but could feel self-fulfillment and self-improvement during her work. It was also important that their workload was not because of a management strategy but the collective excitement of the academics to build a new department.

Bilgi University made an agreement with Laureate Education, Inc., in 2008, due to financial problems. Laureate Education was founded under the name of Sylvan Learning Systems in 1998. It became the world's largest private universities network and a forerunner of education for profit and it still is. After the agreement between Laureate and Bilgi, the first issue was subcontracting of some of the services in the university. Meanwhile, academic autonomy in the decisions of the departments began to be whittled away. These changes made some of the academics think about unionization. They organized some meetings. During their meetings for joining a trade union, the IBM resistance and plaza actions were already happening. One of the trade union activists at IBM started to work at Bilgi University after his layoff by IBM Turkey. IBM was an encouraging unionization attempt for the leading activists of Bilgi University. Leading activists debated which trade union to join. They hold meetings with IBM workers. Tez-Koop İş was the trade union at IBM Turkey and had some experience of working with highly educated employees. However, some of the left-oriented activists insisted on joining Sosyal-İş (a small leftist trade union) even though the number of members

of the union was below the national threshold for making collective agreements. At the end of the debates they chose to join Sosyal-İş.

In 2009, the leading activists issued a press release on the situation at the university, without mentioning unionization, by collecting signatures from the academics. It became a popular campaign at the university and about 400 out of 500 academics gave their signatures. “It became an identity to give your signature” said Meltem. Bilgi University was known as a critical university and it was the first time academics were criticizing the management of a private university in Turkey. Through the campaign they managed to create an internal network at the university and they decided to join a trade union. In 2010 about 40% of the workers joined Sosyal-İş, but they never managed to go over the 50% threshold.

Bilgi University was the first unionization attempt at a private university in Turkey. Neoliberal change in universities towards profit-oriented education came with the deterioration of working conditions. The IBM resistance, plaza actions, the ATV/Sabah resistance, the emergence of the new platforms were all encouraging examples of its time. It was a period of white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul. Even the language of the trade unions was so similar to the creative language of the new platforms. For instance, the slogan of a union pamphlet was “leave that broccoli”. Taking salad from the salad bar was not allowed for cleaning workers. The trade union reacted with a little pamphlet. There was a cartoon drawn by a trade union member and this slogan was written on it. In 2010, the trade union activists established the “bilgileaks” blog in order to give direct information about the struggles between workers and management at the university. This was also a very popular repertoire of its time among plaza and office workers. Debates and splits in the IBM resistance and PEP affected Bilgi activists as well. Similar debates on organization and methods divided the organization. The union bureaucracy was not able to deal with the organizational problems and even deepened the problems. Elçin said “trade union

professionals did not know how to deal with educated employees". The Bilgi administration laid off some of the trade union activists, as had happened in the IBM and ATV/Sabah struggles.

During the unionization attempt at Bilgi University another resistance began at Maltepe University in 2011. Maltepe University management forced academics use entrance cards as is usually done in big companies and factory entrances. Academics organized a collective action against this decision. The Private University Workers' Solidarity Network (Vakıf Üniversitesi Emekçileri Dayanışma Ağı -VÜEDA) was formed as a result of these two mobilizations. The aim was to create a network among private university employees in order to share their experiences against management. These mobilizations led to even more new platforms; Private Universities Communication and Solidarity Network (VİDA) was a students' network, Koç University Solidarity was the workers' solidarity against the layoff of subcontracted workers at the university, Yeditepe Assistants Solidarity was the assistants' organization against unpaid and/or temporary employment at the university. All of these networks came together in VÜEDA.

VÜEDA became an experience-sharing organization among university workers. Lack of organizational experience and the defeat of the Bilgi University unionization attempt once more prevented a new mass organization to emerge.

The contestation began with the deterioration of working conditions especially with the new management of Laureate Education Company. Workers' signature campaign created a network for further organization. The organization attempt came through the debates among the workers. Political attitudes, political party affiliations, and the trade union bureaucracy were the main sources of these debates. The intellectual and communicational abilities of academic staff were in contradiction with the traditional attitudes of "leftist" activists and the

trade union bureaucracy. The IBM resistance had coincided with an internal competition within Tez-Koop İş, similarly the Bilgi unionization attempt coincided with an internal competition within Sosyal-İş. Interestingly, these two are competing trade unions and both mobilizations occurred in the same years. However, both unions were unsuccessful in coping with white-collar employees and failed to organize them. Therefore, both mobilizations led to the emergence of new platforms instead of a wave of white-collar unionization.

Activists of the Bilgi unionization attempt experienced significant difficulties with the traditional trade union structure. Union professionals accused activists of being undisciplined and individualistic. They did not have enough experience with highly educated sections of white-collar employees. Activists, on the other hand, had some difficulties in uniting academics with the non-academic staff of the university. Except for plazas, this is a general phenomenon among white-collar employees. Since 2008 there have been several attempts among white-collar employees to overcome this difficulty and Bilgi University was one of these attempts. However, they did not succeed. During the unionization attempt activists employed a new repertoire like publishing brochures with cartoons and outdoor lectures. Their struggle inspired other private universities. After the failure of the unionization attempt private university employees from different universities established new platforms like VÜEDA, VIDA, and assistant solidarities. This new repertoire emerged as a necessity of common platforms to fight against the deterioration of working conditions but at the same time it was a reaction to ineffective union structures.

3.4.3 Unionization in the Istanbul Development Agency: The First Successful Plaza Strike

Development Agencies were established by a law, enacted in 2008, with the purpose of developing cooperation between the public sector, private sector and civil society organizations in the regions and providing sustainable regional development in accordance

with the national development plan (Regulation, No 2006/5449). Turkey was divided into 26 development regions. İstanbul was taken as a development region in itself.

A very highly skilled profile of employees are employed in the development agencies. They are mostly researchers from different disciplines of academy and bureaucracy. The neo-liberal terminology of “sustainable development,” “partnership,” and “progress” can be seen in the missions and visions of the development agencies. Employees of the development agencies are not likely to be left oriented.

Development agencies were established during the accession negotiations with the EU. As the negotiations slowed down, beginning in 2010, the importance of the regional development agencies lessened for the government. As a result, agencies began to employ less skilled new recruits with lower wages and began to apply more bureaucratic administration. The development issue was taken in the hands of the central planners instead of regional planning.

In 2013, there were 900 expert employees in the development agencies. Almost all of them could speak at least one foreign language and 30% of them had master’s degrees. In the same year, 250 of them returned to institutions like the Treasury and the Central Bank or changed their jobs and went to companies like Eczacıbaşı or Koç. Their reasons, according to human resources departments, were their conflicts with the Executive Board which were listed as: humiliation, irregular demands, mobbing, enriching the through agency projects, feeling despair about the future of regions and agencies, and precarious work in comparison to public sector work (Memurlar, 2013a). Between 2009 and 2011, there were 300 applications for 10 experts' positions in the agencies. In 2013, there were only 50 applications as a result of this deterioration (Memurlar, 2013b).

A former development agency worker explained the contradiction of high profile workers and their actual work in a website: “What they do as work, generally, is to check files. Therefore,

an active work environment does not exist in the Agencies. It is a strong possibility to stay away from your own field when you become an expert. It is not an institution where you develop yourself in your field of expertise” (Memurlar, 2012). Deskilling is a reality for development agency employees.

At the İstanbul Development Agency (İSTKA) there were about 50 employees as well as subcontracted employees. Interviewee İdil said that when she began working at İSTKA in 2011 the conditions were satisfactory. In the first years the wages and working conditions were better. Therefore, employees from Ministries were choosing to work at the development agencies. Assisting regional development goals was also attractive for employees in comparison to the routine work of Ministries. It was a field where employees could have direct influence on concrete goals with their skills.

“There was an unhappiness and motivation problem in the office in general when I started to work” İdil se said. The excitement of the early years was gone and most of the workers were looking for alternative jobs. At least the agency was a good step towards a better job in their career. But nobody was planning to retire from there. Their main problems were increasing wage inequalities within the office and discontent against the managers. İdil said nobody was feeling that they could use their skills at the institution. They were not treated by management as experts should be treated.

Beginning in 2013, lower wages were being paid to new recruits. Meanwhile, wage increases for the older workers were limited by a regulation. Workers’ discontent was presented to the Board in the meetings. In June 2014, the regulation on wage increases was amended. However, the Board decided to postpone this issue to 2015. There were no employee representatives at the Board meetings. Written reports were handed in by the general secretary of the agency to the Board. Employees felt that they were not being taken seriously. This was

the initial moment of the organization at the office. The employees' aim was to solve this communication problem with İSTKA management by a legal negotiation system which could be provided by the collective bargaining system.

The leading activists of the unionization attempt were İdil and Elçin. Elçin was an activist of Bilgi University's trade union branch during her work as an assistant at the university. She knew the problems of the trade union bureaucracy by experience. Besides these experiences, they were inspired by the unionization of the Ankara development agency (ANKARAKA) as well. ANKARAKA employees were organized in Koop-İş (Cooperatives, Commerce and Office Workers' Union) and made a collective agreement with the management. This previous experience was important because Elçin said that when she had proposed joining a trade union a year before but she did not find any support. For the employees without any organizational experience, the organization of their colleagues at another development agency was more encouraging than the organizational experiences of IBM or Bilgi University. Once they knew of the experience in Ankara unionization began.

Employees held meetings in the office and discussed which trade union to join. Tez-Koop-İş with its IBM experience, Sosyal-İş with its Bilgi University experience and Koop-İş with its Ankara development agency experience were on the table. The non-confrontationalist attitude of the employees predominated at the meeting. Koop-İş, with its close relations to the government, with its Ankara experience, and its history of no strikes, was the workers' choice. Elçin said that during the İSTKA workers' meeting with the Koop-İş representative, the trade union representative said "We never go on strike. It would never come to that". This promise convinced the majority of the employees to choose Koop-İş. Interestingly, employees invited the Koop-İş representative to the office because every worker wanted to listen to him. The meeting hall was permanently recorded by CCTV camera but they held the meeting there. İdil said "This was an indication of our inexperience and goodwill. It reveals our

purpose of using the trade union just as a communication channel.” In a year of mobilization in the office against management, Koop-İş would have its first strike in its history.

The general secretary of İSTKA watched the recording of the meeting and held a meeting with the heads of units. Except for the general secretary and a few more employees, all employees and heads of units joined the trade union. Mobbing, threats and pressure on the employees was confronted by the employees collectively. Their democratic way of discussions in the meetings prevented any splits among them. The IBM and Bilgi University organizations could not keep their unity. They could not stop the trade union’s intervention into employees’ discussions. But İSTKA employees managed not to make the same mistakes.

Before the collective agreement, employees studied the bargaining process themselves. They read the Trade Unions Act. They prepared a draft of the collective agreement themselves. During this learning process they were in contact with the trade union but did not leave anything to the trade union bureaucracy. The trade union representative said to the activists that “We did not organize you. You are of a completely different profile. You already know what you want. We are aware of the fact that we should work with you in a different way.” The draft was sent to the employer. Three representatives of employees were chosen for the bargaining process. After two months there was no agreement. Then the employer joined the employers’ union; Turkey’s Public Employers Union of Heavy Industry and Services Sector (TÜHİS).

Bargaining did not go anywhere. The employees had always hoped for a solution by negotiation. The disagreement went to the ombudsman. The employer harshly resisted any solution. Its aim was to force employees to go on strike and smash the trade union because it was not possible, in the employer's view, that the employees would go on strike. The IBM, ATV/Sabah and THY workers had lost in that way in recent years. After the first two

bargaining meetings they changed the meeting place from İstanbul to Ankara. This was in fact not possible to do because the trade union, the employer and the office was in İstanbul. However, both TÜHİS and Koop-İş headquarters were in Ankara. In this way they tried to keep the employees out of the bargaining process. Employees attended all of the meetings anyway. Employee representatives were keeping the others informed through a Whatsapp group. During bargaining every single article was discussed in this whatsapp group and collectively accepted, rejected or amended.

The employer refused all agreement and the employees collectively decided to go on strike without the support of their union. The strike day was decided as 16 March 2015. They chose the most important day for development agencies. March 16 was the deadline for project submissions. If they managed to go on strike that day 145 million TL worth projects would be blocked. Until the day of the strike, employees were still expecting the employer to step back and agree to a solution.

İSTKA is located at the World Trade Center. It was the second strike decision of plaza workers after IBM Turkey employees. But IBM employees failed to go on strike. İSTKA workers managed to do so. It became the first successful plaza strike and also the first strike by Koop-İş. When the strike began, TÜHİS and Koop-İş met in Ankara. Koop-İş signed the collective agreement without asking the employees. There was only one main remaining issue in the bargaining which was “equal pay for equal work”. The trade union got a “promise” directly from the Mayor of İstanbul, as employer, on wages. Although employees were not happy with the union bureaucracy’s behavior, they managed to organize a trade union in the workplace, managed to keep their unity against the employer but also against the trade union bureaucracy, managed to organize the first successful plaza strike in Turkey and the first strike by Koop-İş, and finally managed to make a collective agreement.

The Istanbul Development Agency experience was the last white-collar mobilization of the second period. White-collar platforms of such as PEP, KBG, and others organized solidarity meetings and visits to the striking İSTKA employees. The first white-collar strike was an inspiring example for all other white-collar mobilizations. The importance of the İSTKA strike was their ability to keep the union bureaucracy out of their collective decisions as much as possible. They did not invent a new repertoire, but instead used an old one (striking). However, their successful unionization is so far the only example. Their skills forced their union to change with the first strike of the union. They managed to find a different relationship with the union bureaucracy by keeping their internal unity and democratic participation in every second of the bargaining process through a whatsapp group and workplace meetings.

3.4.4 New Independent Unions in the Performance and the Television Sectors

There were 80 independent trade unions in 2015 according to the Ministry of Labour. Only two of the new independent trade unions emerged as a result of changes in their sectors and the traditional trade unions' inability to organize employees: the Actors' Union (Oyuncu-Sen) in 2011 and the Cinema and Television Union (Sinema-TV Sendikası) in 2015. The Cinema Workers' Union (Sine-Sen) bureaucracy and their inaction in employees' problems were some of the reasons for the emergence of these new unions. Another reason was Sine-Sen's scope. It was a trade union only for the cinema sector. Dubbing and theater performers were not able to join this trade union. As a result, two new independent unions were founded by performing employees and cinema-TV employees.

Performers are a very complicated section of white-collar employees. Performers are usually regarded as artists. In Marxist terms, this makes them petty bourgeois. However, structural changes in the TV, cinema, and theater sectors created a massive number of workers whose

trade is performing. Regardless of how much money they earn their performance is always under the strong control of an employer. The employer can be a director and/or a producer. They are forced to wear fixed costumes, they are dependent on a scenario and their performance is directed by directors. However, they also have limited autonomy in their moment of performing. This limited autonomy exists for pilots, IT employees, engineers and other parts of the skilled labor force as well. Again, similar to other skilled white-collar employees, performing (dubbing or acting) is part of a collective labour on the stage, in the studio or on the film set.

One of the most important industrial expansions after 1980 in Turkey, no doubt, occurred in the cinema and TV sectors. Rapid growth in the number of private TV channels, advertising companies, production companies, imported and national movie production created a giant industry. The cornerstone of this new emerging industry was the establishment of the first private TV channel, Star TV, in 1990.

Nuran, a famous dubbing, theatre and cinema actress, who would be the general secretary of Oyuncu-Sen, explained the structural change in the sector from her personal career. She entered this sector by dubbing movies and advertisements. All of these productions were for TRT (the public radio and television company) channels. Nuran said that in the dubbing sector there were some standards for workers. Wages and working conditions were good. In the 1990s, the expansion of private channels, the sharp increase in imported American TV shows and cartoons changed these conditions. Private channels initially were not able to produce their own programs. Instead, they used to buy foreign programs and dub them. Thus, the dubbing sector developed fast.

Nuran described how working conditions changed in the dubbing sector during the 1990s: “Everything was much faster than before and the quality of our work diminished sharply.

Private channels had begun to broadcast. Yet dubbing was being done so fast. Previously, dubbing a movie had been taking three or four days. This was reduced to half a day. They started to work with students to translate scenarios, it was cheaper, and then the dubbing was recorded without practice.”

In 1990, a new sector was in its heyday: the advertising business. It was possible to earn more with less work. Dubbing in the advertising sector offered much better conditions, said Nuran. This also changed in the 2000s.

The economic crisis of 2001 was an important factor in the deterioration of working conditions. Deskilling, competition, marketization of performing arts had been taking place in the sector during the 1990s, but wages were not yet falling. The economic crisis led to a sharp decrease in the wages of performers. This was mainly because of downsizing in the advertising sector, but also many production companies went bankrupt. As a result, working conditions deteriorated dramatically and wages fell.

Nuran explained that ten years ago the boundaries of the performers in different sectors were clear. There were only actors/actresses playing in the theatre or dubbing performers only for cinema and TV. Currently television channels dominate the sector. Theater actors work for TV shows as well, dubbing performers work both for TV and for advertising companies. Actors/actresses act both in TV series and in cinema. Theaters have been divided up into smaller halls, as have cinema halls. Therefore, theater groups are getting smaller. Theatrical companies, long term group theatres, could not stand this change and dissolved themselves. In the 1980s-90s actors/actresses could make a living by theater plays and TV was an extra job, said Nuran. In the 2000s, TV was the main job and theater was regarded either as a hobby or an arena to demonstrate an actors' real talents. In this sense, TV channels with their market oriented broadcasting had a deskilling impact on the art of performing.

The labour process in the performing arts has been undergoing a change similar to offices. Initially, public channels were the main investor in TV series, shows, movies and so on. This has rapidly changed in the 1990s. Private TV channels and production companies became the capitalists of this sector. Movies, series, shows, advertisements became commodities bought and sold in the market of the entertainment sector. In the 2000s, series production became a giant industry. This development has changed the labour processes and the class structure in the sector.

Konuşlu (2013) draws a table of the division of labour on the sets which can be seen below. The bold line shows the hierarchy line in sets. Above the line there are wage earners who have control over the labour process and below the line there are workers who are subject to control. The table shows the Taylorist division of labour process as well. Producers and TV channels are the employers. Time management became significantly important in highly competitive sector which diminished the autonomy of performing. Every second of the production is planned in detail. Directors and coordinators are responsible for this time and labour control. Despite being wage earners and having no ownership of the means of production, they perform control over the production process on behalf of capitalists and design the output and the production process. Therefore, they belong to the capitalist class, like the CEOs of corporations. Konuşlu categorizes those above the line as part of the capitalist class and below the line as proletarianized white-collar employees. However, it is possible to add more locations to this table. Lead roles and secondary roles, for instance, are the labour aristocracy who have a very high income and some degree of autonomy during the time of performing but no function in the control of the labour process. They are not part of the capitalist class. Several other positions, like light chief, make-up man, decorator, floor technician, belong to the new middle class because they have a contradictory position within

the labor process. They control the labour of assistants and others in their department. All the rest belong to the working class.

Table 8- Technical division of labor and hierarchy in series/film production

		Director of photography	Director	Art director			Production Coordinator			Leading role Supporting role
Assistant Focus Puller Cameraman Camera Assistant	Chief gaffer Gaffer assistant	Director's assistants (1,2,3,4)	Art director assistant	Make-up artist and assistants	Decoration and assistants	Production Assistant	Floor director and floor assistants	Floor manager Boom operator Assistants	Small role Figurants	

Konuşlu argues that precarity is the common ground of every employee in this sector. However, below the line is more vulnerable. There are four main categories which lead to precarity, specifically in the production of series, but also in the production of other TV programs and movies: job unsustainability, shrinking wages, deterioration of working conditions, and having no social security (Konuşlu, 2013).

Job unsustainability is a consequence of the expansion of production companies. TV channels do not employ people for TV shows permanently. Instead they buy the show, program, series, or movie as a finished commodity from the production companies. Before the 1990s public channels provided permanent employment for its employees and produced their programs directly with their own resources. Since the 1990s subcontracting has entered this sector too.

As for shrinking wages, the main factor is the existence of reserve labour in the sector. The attractiveness of the sector and the increasing number of graduates of cinema and TV schools provide cheap labour for the employers. The pressure of reserve labour, in addition to unsustainable jobs, increases competition among employees. Konuşlu demonstrates that the wages of employees below the line are more or less the same as the wages of other white-collar employees.

The deterioration of working conditions is mostly defined in terms of long working hours. Employees are not paid on an hourly basis. They are paid for every episode of a series, program or show. Advertising revenues force TV channels to buy programs in long hours. Long hours lead to job accidents as well.

The final precarity condition is the social security issue. Employees in this sector are usually regarded as self-employed. Therefore, they are forced to pay their insurance themselves.

The economic crisis of 2008 had a serious impact on the TV and cinema sector. 80 per cent of TV revenues come from advertising. Advertisements during the breaks in TV series constitute the biggest part of these revenues. In the final quarter of 2008, TV advertisements decreased by 17% as a result of the economic crisis. Consequently, TV channels cut costs on series and TV shows. Production companies tightened their budgets too. Either the workload increased or the production of programs decreased. The consequence was layoffs (Kara, 2009).

In 2009 and 2010, news of set accidents and illegal working in TV series and films began to appear. According to a Sine-Sen report, 70 weekly TV series were broadcast in 2009 and production companies were increasingly using more subcontracting companies. The results were 16-18 working hours per day on sets and three deaths in accidents, one death from a heart attack on set, and one actor committing suicide. There was a significant increase in the number of court cases between producers and workers, especially on payment problems (Sine-Sen, 2009). As the sector grows it becomes an attractive career opportunity for the young generation. Volunteer work, under the name of extras, is widespread (Tönel, 2010). This free labor force, similar to interns in the big companies, has expectations of good days in the future and works voluntarily on the sets to gain experience and contacts.

The number of performers is not recorded well because of their legal status problem. However, Oyuncu-Sen activists indicate that there are approximately 10.000 performers in theatre, cinema, dubbing and opera in Turkey.

Performers have had two main problems. The first is that they are regarded as self-employed, with 4/B status in their contracts. Thus, producers do not pay their full insurance. The second main problem is copyright. The Cinema Actors' Collecting Society of Turkey (BİROY) was just founded for protecting and collecting the copyrights of its members in 2009. BİROY paved the way for organizing a trade union for performers with its network. It gave performers an increased their capacity for organization. Its meetings increased further awareness on contract status and working conditions. In 2010, a new platform emerged: the Actors Platform for Cinema Labour Act (SİYOP). This platform then initiated the “Actors’ Union Initiative” (Oyuncu-Sen, 2015a).

At the end of 2010, TV workers, including performers, technicians, scriptwriters, and directors, marched against long working hours in Taksim square. The campaign was called “Yerli Dizi Yersiz Uzun”. Several associations of the sector, Sine-Sen and the newly emerging Actors’ Union Initiative were involved in the protests. The main demand was to reduce TV series from 90 minutes to international the standard of 45 minutes. Other demands were the eight hour day, a labour act for the sector and a new trade union (Hürriyet, 2010). The protest became famous, especially with the participation of famous actors and actresses, however, their demands were not met by the government. In just a few months a new trade union appeared.

Oyuncu-Sen’s leading activist Mehmet Ali Alabora and other activists began to organize performers in 2009. Alabora was famous both as an actor and an anti-war activist. His leadership provided publicity for the organization from the beginning. The leading activists

began the organization by making a list of actors and actresses around them. BİROY members and its network were actively used for this purpose. A communication network was created and donations were received. After seven months of preparations for an “Actors’ Union Initiative” a big meeting was hold at Point Hotel (İstanbul) in November 29, 2010. 553 actors and actresses gathered for the “Actors’ Great Meeting” (Oyuncu-Sen, 2015a). In this meeting the decision to found a new trade union was taken. Legal preparations took a year and in March 2011 Oyuncu-Sen was founded. It is currently an independent trade union and a member of the International Federation of Actors (FIA).

Ayşe, an Oyuncu-Sen activist, said that acting was not even regarded as a trade by the law before the trade union’s intervention. Workers with a contract should have 4/A status but acting was regarded as a private business or art, so that producers prepared contracts with 4/B status. The Social Security Institution never checked these sectors. Because of this status problem Oyuncu-Sen officially had only 31 members. Without 4/A status performers do not have the right to join a trade union. In fact, Oyuncu-Sen has 1400 members but this is not considered legal membership according to the law.

Although cinema and television have been developing sectors in the past 25 years, regulations on labour rights have always been weak and insufficient. The lack of workers' organization was the main reason for this. Oyuncu-Sen managed to force the Ministry of Labour to regulate these sectors in favor of the workers. Oyuncu-Sen has organized four campaigns for workers’ rights: the 4/A campaign, the child actors’ rights campaign, the workers’ health and safety campaign, and a campaign for the definition of performing trades.

Oyuncu-Sen does not have the right to collective bargaining. Members do not working for fixed companies. They usually work on project based jobs. Therefore, a class mobilization is

difficult for them in comparison with other trade unions and new platforms. Thus, they try to improve conditions by cooperating with the Ministries in regulating the sector.

In 2015, the Ministry of Labour enacted several laws based on Oyuncu-Sen's campaigns. Oyuncu-Sen drafted some regulations and presented them to the Ministry. On child actors' rights a new legislation was enacted in 2015 (Oyuncu-Sen, 2015b); on the health and safety issue, the status of sets was changed to "dangerous" from "less dangerous" (Hürriyet, 2015); definitions and categories of performing trades were enacted in 2013 in cooperation with Oyuncu-Sen and the Professional Competence Institution (Resmi Gazete 28863, 2013).

In conclusion, prior to Oyuncu-Sen the deterioration in the working conditions on TV series, cinemas, and other performing jobs led to the emergence of a new organization and collective actions. Against the ineffectiveness of the trade union (Sine-Sen) during the first period of white-collar mobilizations, new platforms like BİROY in 2009 and SİYOP in 2010 were founded. In 2010, the collective action of "Yerli Dizi Yersiz Uzun" was organized. This collective action became very popular in the mass media and encouraged activists to initiate a new trade union.

Finally, the new union was founded in 2011. While Oyuncu-Sen was founded during the first period of white-collar mobilizations, its campaigns influenced the sector during the second period. Instead of a militant repertoire they employed a negotiationist strategy by establishing an informal relationship with the Ministry of Labor. The concrete achievements of the trade union make them recruit more members. Oyuncu-Sen became the first example of an independent union for white-collar employees. Activists expanded their network and organizational capacity through the new platforms of BİROY and SİYOP. Then they organized a popular collective action which made them well-known among their colleagues. Finally, they created a new trade union. They kept themselves away from the bureaucratic

confederation structures by remaining an independent union. After the call center employees unionization from an association, Oyuncu-Sen is the second successful unionization story of white-collar employees. The difference is that while Dev-İletişim İş remained inactive, Oyuncu-Sen became very successful in forcing the Ministry to enact new laws on the TV and cinema sector. Their organization encouraged other workers in this sector. People working behind the camera founded the Cinema and Television Union in 2015.

3.5 A Short Summary

A short summary would be useful at this point of the new repertoire of collective actions explained in the sections above. The global financial crisis of 2008 triggered a wave of white-collar mobilizations in Turkey. The IBM resistance was the initial point of the new repertoire of white-collar collective actions. Plaza actions in solidarity with the IBM employees' struggle led to the emergence of new white-collar platforms. First, the Plaza Action Platform (PEP) was founded as a platform for all white-collar employees. With the failure of the IBM unionization attempt, new platforms proliferated. Debates among PEP activists on the formation of the new platform also contributed to this proliferation. The IT Workers Solidarity Network (BİÇDA) was founded specifically for white-collar employees in the information sector. Dazayn, another information sector platform, split from PEP and BİÇDA after disagreements on the solidarity type of repertoire. Its aim was to organize workplace circles. A similar disagreement led to the emergence of Kaç Bize Gel (KBG). KBG activists were also against solidarity networks. They were in favor, instead, of establishing a new office workers union with a concrete program on unionization and a concrete method of organizing in workplaces. During the first period of white-collar mobilizations, call center workers managed to organize by initially establishing a website, then founding an association, and finally founding a new union (Dev-İletişim İş). Their successful experience provided inspiration for other white-collar mobilizations. However, Dev-İletişim İş did not manage to become an effective union because of difficulties arising from the Trade Unions Act and problems specific to the call center sector (rapid turnover of employees).

While new platforms were emerging, a new repertoire appeared in 2010. Websites became tools of workplace struggle for white-collar employees. 2010 and 2011 were years of record-breaking economic growth in Turkey. Collective actions were in decline, while “leaking”

websites proliferated. They were not collective actions, and therefore spread among white-collar employees who had no organizational practices at all, such as architects. But new white-collar platforms like PEP used this tool to reach a wider audience, and during the unionization attempt at Bilgi University activists employed this repertoire to fight more actively against the employer.

The Gezi resistance was the beginning of the second period of white-collar mobilizations. It was the collective action attended by the largest number of white-collar employees in Turkish history. White-collar employees were not a majority at Gezi, but they participated in the resistance and then the forums and neighborhood solidarity platforms in great numbers. All activists of the new white-collar platforms actively participated in the Gezi resistance. However, only PEP and KBG were active in the occupied park. New white-collar groups, such as “White-collar employees should do something” and “White-collar forum,” were established during the park forums. As a result of the encouraging impact of the mass collective action of Gezi, all the new platforms and the new call center workers union recruited new members and held meetings with new participants. New white-collar platforms, such as the Store Employees’ Platform and the Publishing House Laborers Collective, were founded by the leadership of the Gezi resistance activists.

The IBM resistance was lost and new white-collar platforms were established as a reaction to the traditional union structures, but also as a response to the necessity of having some form of organization. White-collar employees managed to make changes within their unions and even to organize new unions thanks to their mobilizations.

In the early part of the first period of white-collar mobilizations, civil aviation employees experienced a new opposition mobilization (the Rainbow Movement) within the union. The Rainbow Movement was the first opposition movement within the union among white-collar

employees. It had a concrete program for a democratic and horizontal union structure. However, like the IBM resistance, this struggle was also unsuccessful. In 2010, the first unionization attempt at a private university began. Led by Bilgi University academics, white- and blue-collar workers of the university joined Sosyal-İş. Their mobilization did not succeed, as result of internal problems among activists and, once again, of the trade union's structure. A successful unionization attempt was organized by performing actors/actresses who set up Oyuncu-Sen during the first period of white-collar mobilizations. A significant difference between Oyuncu-Sen and Dev-İletişim İş was that the former did not join a Confederation and remained an independent union. In this way they managed to overcome some of the difficulties arising from the Trade Unions Act and the trade union bureaucracy. Their negotiations with the Ministry of Labor gave them significant gains. Concrete gains made them recruit new members in the second period of white-collar mobilizations. Oyuncu-Sen became the one successful unionization story of white-collar employees. Lastly, white-collar employees of the Istanbul Development Agency (İSTKA) organized the first successful plaza strike in Turkey at the end of the second period. The IBM Turkey unionization was the first plaza strike attempt, but failed. İSTKA employees managed to organize the first successful plaza strike, and also organized the first strike of their own conservative union, Koop-İş.

3.6 In Search for a New Organization

New collective actions, new platforms, new trade unions and new mobilizations within the trade unions all show that white-collar employees have been searching for a new organization. When we look at the mobilizations we have investigated show that the leading activists of these mobilizations have always been those with experience. They had some organizational experiences either from their student years or from other platforms. Older employees who experienced the golden years of white-collar jobs usually led the mobilizations but they are still much younger than the leadership of the labour organizations. Almost all leading activists in the white-collar mobilizations examined experienced shrinking wages and a deterioration of working conditions which caused loss of prestige in the company and in society. Younger employees have a tendency to prioritize their career. Lack of working experience makes them think twice before participating in workplace based collective actions. This is because it is easy for companies to fire young and inexperienced employees. During the field work, 16 leading activists were interviewed and their average age was 35. They mostly had experience of political activism at university but not in the initial years of their careers.

During the two periods of white-collar mobilizations new platforms were established, new trade unions were founded, and a new repertoire of collective actions was employed either in the form of organizing these new platforms or of workplace mobilizations. All of these experiences of white-collar collective actions and organizational practices show five distinctive features. First, white-collar organizations and collective actions have a democratizing effect on traditional working class organizations. Second, their attempts at creating new organizations, together with their failures and achievements, increase their organizational skills and experiences. Third, white-collar employees are building closer relations with the lower parts of the working class, mainly blue-collar workers. Fourth, the

new white-collar mobilizations are distinctively internationalist in comparison to the traditional organizations. Fifth and finally, an over-representation of women activists- not only as participants but also as leaders- in the white-collar mobilizations in comparison traditional class mobilizations. The following subsections will examine each of these features in detail.

3.6.1 Democratizing effect of the white-collar mobilizations

White-collar organizations and collective actions have a democratizing effect on traditional working class organizations. There are two main factors behind this: subjective and structural factors.

The democratization of working class organizations should not be confused with democratization theories. Democracy should not only be taken as an institutional structure. As classes are social relations, so are class organizations and their organization structure. In short, a democratic union structure is a social construction of class mobilization. This class mobilization can take the form of workplace mobilizations, unionization processes, social movements or other forms of collective action. The inefficiency and bureaucratic structures of the existing class organizations leaves white-collar employees no way other than finding a new repertoire to get organized. This is the subjective factor, as it depends on the experiences and abilities of the mobilization itself.

The new white-collar platforms -PEP, BİÇDA, KBG, ÇMÇ, Dazayn in the first period of white-collar mobilizations and MÇP and YEK in the second- were founded as a result of failed unionization attempts and problems between employees and union bureaucracies during the mobilizations. Therefore, these platforms have no institutionalized bureaucratic structures. They are also not big enough to be bureaucratic. Their existence is itself a reaction to the traditional trade unions. If the IBM resistance had won and managed to make a difference in the organizational structure of Tez-Koop-İş, PEP and other new platforms would not exist.

White-collar employees strived for change within the unions as well. The Rainbow Movement has a special place in this respect. The Rainbow Movement organized an intra-union mobilization with a concrete program for a democratic union structure. They called their proposal the “reverse pyramid” structure. In the existing union structure, the Executive Board makes all decisions and implements them. The Rainbow Movement indicated that this is a pyramid structure where the President and the Board members are at the top of the hierarchy and ordinary union members at the bottom. The reverse pyramid structure aimed at establishing a workers’ assembly at the top which would be the only decision-making organ of the union, and an Executive Board which would be responsible just for the implementation of the decisions. The Bilgi University and Istanbul Development Agency unionization processes were other examples of intra-union pressure for change in the union structure. The Bilgi University activists were openly claiming that theirs was a new concept of unionization. The trade union bureaucracy, on the other hand, was accusing them of being individualistic and undisciplined. The failed unionization attempt prevented the union from transforming itself into a democratic structure. Istanbul Development Agency employees, on the other hand, managed to make a difference, at least in their workplace, by keeping the union out of their own decision-making processes. Their direct involvement in the collective bargaining process, democratic collectivism via whatsapp group during the bargaining, and their direct decision to go on strike (for the first time in the history of the union) were successful examples of how white-collar employees can exert pressure from below for democratization within bureaucratic union structures.

The second main element of the democratizing effect of white-collar mobilizations is the structural factor. White-collar employees have been expanding in numbers since the neoliberal era. They usually have higher education in comparison to blue-collar workers. Higher education provides them the knowledge to reach information on any issue. Moreover,

their skills on technology and communications make them less dependent on traditional union leaderships during their struggle against employers.

The feeling of being skilled and educated creates confidence. Traditionally, trade union bureaucrats and professionals have had confidence in organizational practices and a monopoly of knowledge of legal procedures for labor rights and collective bargaining processes. White-collar employees are confident enough to organize themselves in the workplace (as was the case at IBM Turkey and Bilgi University) and to make collective bargaining by themselves (as was the case at the Istanbul Development Agency) without any expectations from the trade union professionals. They are even suspicious about trade union professionals' knowledge. Their ability to reach information through their education and internet tools is an important source of this confidence.

Higher-education and control of technology and communication tools become an advantage in fighting for change towards more democratic and horizontal relations in the new white-collar mobilizations. Employees working in technology sectors especially have to adapt themselves to changing technology. Thus, they cannot get organized in traditional, cumbersome and slow changing organizations. For this reason white-collar employees from the IT sector have been playing a leading role in the innovation of new platforms since 2008. The IBM resistance, for instance, was the initial struggle of the first period of white-collar mobilizations. Many of the new platforms after the IBM resistance, such as PEP, BİÇDA, and Dazayn, were founded by IT employees. During the Gezi resistance too IT employees were the most active white-collar group. They created the "Gezi Engineers" group and the workplace forums at Yapı Kredi and Netaş.

In summary, subjective factors (the specific organizational experiences of every single mobilization due to the inefficiency of unions) and structural factors (the profile of white-

collar employees) force trade union structures to change if they want to win this expanding section of the working class into the unions. When unions are not willing to do this, the deterioration of working conditions force white-collar employees to struggle against employers anyway. They form alternative platforms or found new unions by themselves in these circumstances. Internally or externally, white-collar mobilizations put pressure on traditional class organizations to change.

3.6.2 Experience Gathering by Learning from Each Other

Traditional class organizations are not successful in organizing white-collar employees. Therefore, white-collar employees have been trying to build their own organizations, especially after the global crisis of 2008. They have experienced failures and successes in their mobilizations. White-collar activists suffer from the weaknesses of existing class organizations and also from their own inexperience and small mobilizations. These weaknesses become an advantage in their creativity. They are eager to innovate a new repertoire and create new platforms. They produce their own knowledge on how to organize white-collar employees. By establishing common platforms they share their knowledge and experience with each other. Meanwhile, every mobilization develops the organizational capacities of their mobilizations by organizing forums, meetings, and workshops. They follow other mobilizations very closely and are inspired by each other.

The organizational weaknesses of white-collar mobilizations generated some attempts to build common platforms among them. These were attempts to increase their knowledge of different experiences and increase their organizational capacities. The Precarity Movement and PEP's "White-collar Workers Discussing" Workshops were attempts to establish common platforms between white-collar mobilizations. The Precarity Movement had a special place with its attempt to organize white and blue-collar mobilizations. This was not examined separately in

this dissertation because it was not a white-collar platform only and did not last long, but it was an important attempt to unite class mobilizations under the common issue of precarity.

The Precarity Movement was founded by different groups of trade union and worker activists in 2011, but did not go further than organizing a few meetings. One of the leading activists of the Precarity Movement, Esra, said that her personal experiences in a trade union, during her professional work in the UPS unionization campaign, directed her interest to alternative organizations. She used to work for a trade union to organize UPS workers and experienced first hand the problems of existing class organizations. She said that in 2010 there were many white-collar platforms and she attended their meetings. Each platform was organizing workshops, meetings and publishing documents on various aspects of white-collar working life problems but all of them were very weak and they were segmented. Esra's conclusion was the need for a stronger united platform of white and blue-collar workers around the common problem of precarity. In January 2011 some activists organized "Precarious Workers' Speaking Forum" with 26 participant organizations and mobilizations. Esra said, "Our target was to gather new workers' organizations like Plaza Action Platform, independent Textile Workers' Union, Association of Call Center Employees, the opposition movement within the Hava-İş (Rainbow Movement), political groups, independent network organizations, and the new initiatives within the trade unions in a common platform and to make them learn from each other." The Precarity Movement was established at the end of this forum.

The idea of a common platform was based on the precarity conditions which reduce the difference between white and blue-collar workers. This platform organized several workshops and training sessions. The Precarity Movement was a consequence of the need for sharing experiences, either failed or successful, among different sections of the working class. 2011 was a downturn period of the first period of white-collar mobilizations. The Precarity Movement was critical of both the traditional working class organizations and the new

platforms. Lack of organizational capacities of the new white-collar platforms was the main subjective reason behind the downturn. Esra argued that every new platform starts from the beginning. The knowledge and experience should be spread through common platforms. That was the reason for organizing the Precarity Movement. It strived for united action around concrete problems. It was the first attempt to unite the new platforms by including blue-collar mobilizations but their meetings did not last long due to the lack of coordination.

Even though the Precarity Movement was unsuccessful in uniting these platforms, it was an inspiring idea. Another attempt to unite new platforms (only white-collar platforms this time) came from the Plaza Action Platform in 2012. PEP's departure point was the need for experience sharing among white-collar mobilizations. Plaza Action Platform organized a "White-collar Workers Discussing" meeting together with the IT Workers' Solidarity Network (BİÇDA), Psychologists for Social Solidarity (TODAP), and the Association of Call Center Employees (ÇMÇ). During the meeting each organization presented their activities and the organizational obstacles they face. However, they did not continue to hold these meetings.

Common platforms did not create sustained relations between mobilizations, but they emerged as a response to the necessity of broader organization of white-collar employees. The ineffective and bureaucratic structure of trade unions forced white-collar employees to generate a new repertoire of collective actions and to establish new platforms. There was a lack of knowledge on the problems of white-collar employees and on how to organize them in workplaces. Thus, it became necessary for the new platforms to produce knowledge on these issues. PEP organized several Experience Workshops, for instance, in order to gain more knowledge of plaza and office employees' workplace problems. It is important to note that these meetings were also an escape from collective action. It is harder to organize workers but easier to produce knowledge for future mobilization. However, it also demonstrates that

white-collar employees have this ability to produce knowledge about themselves. However, there is an imbalance between the organizational practices they produce and the knowledge they produce. Creating too much information through long hours of meetings, workshops and forums, focusing of every single workplace problem and on their differences leads to information overload for the activists. The problems were too large and the organizations were too weak. This is a heavy burden to carry for small organizations. This knowledge production should have been done by academics or trade unions. However, the inability to organize collective action, especially during the downturn of the mobilization periods, makes activists keep their organization going by organizing meetings for knowledge production. By holding these meetings they aim to find concrete solutions that they can campaign for. They can organize action, find new members, and improve their organizational capacities through these meetings.

White-collar employees had to learn how to organize their colleagues by themselves and they had to learn and get inspiration from each other. During the interviews many activists referred to the inspiring experiences of other mobilizations. Call center employees' organization, from a group of activist to a new trade union (Dev-İletişim İş), was inspiring especially for Kaç Bize Gel which aims to create a new trade union for all office workers. Workplace forums at Netaş and Yapı Kredi, small workplace organizations of KBG and Dazayn all learned from each other. Kaç Bize Gel formed their program as a result of the Precarity Movement's debates. Relying on the discussions on precarity during the meetings of the Precarity Movement, KBG defined precarity in its own way.

The failure of white-collar mobilizations provided lessons as well. Unionization attempts like the IBM resistance and Bilgi University ended in failure. However, these failures led to the emergence of new platforms and white-collar employees learned from both failures and successes. During the IBM resistance, PEP and BİÇDA were founded, for instance. After the

failure of Sosyal-İş at Bilgi University, the Private University Workers' Solidarity Network (VÜEDA) was founded. A new repertoire, like leaking and organizing forums, was copied and developed by other mobilizations. Every single successful repertoire has been taken over and even developed by other organizations.

All workers' mobilizations encourage each other, but workers have a tendency to learn more from their peers. The IBM resistance was followed and watched more closely than others by plaza and IT employees. They drew inspiration from this experience and created new platforms. The development agency workers were inspired by the IBM resistance and the Bilgi unionization attempt, but they were encouraged more by the collective agreement at the Ankara development agency.

A common feature of all new platforms and collective actions was their weakness against the hegemonic neoliberal discourse in the workplaces. Careerism, individualism and management strategies can effectively prevent the new platforms from building strong organizations. These strategies divide white-collar employees and their mobilizations internally and externally. Internal divisions among the employees occur in every workplace resistance. Job divisions have a strong influence on the minds of the employees. Team leaders, supervisors and managers in IT companies and call centers; administrators, academics, assistants, and supporting unit workers in the universities; pilots, cabin employees and ground staff in aviation companies; subcontracted and contracted workers in almost all companies, and many more divisions inside the workplaces generate a segmented structure that favors the companies during the employees' discontent and mobilization. Political attitudes, personal experiences and personal relations among the employees in a workplace make collective action even more complicated. The external division of employees under neoliberal hegemony is the separation of class mobilizations from each other. White- and blue-collar workers' mobilizations are the most significant example of this division. It is a separation

rooted in the workplaces. Workers are separated as white- and blue-collar on the production lines. As already mentioned, traditional trade unions usually leave white-collar workers out of the scope of collective agreements. In the field of commodity circulation, the division of employees is even stronger. Some are regarded as unskilled, like call center and store employees. That is why Canan from Dev-İletişim İş said that call center activists regard call center workers as light-blue-collar workers. Plaza workers and some other sections of office employees, like lawyers, researchers, and architects, mostly regard themselves as “middle class”. Deskilling in the professions and the general rise of an educated labor force has been narrowing the living and working conditions of these sections of the working class. Thus, united collective actions, common platforms and discussions on the need of a change in the workers’ confederations have been growing since 2008.

3.6.3 Hybridization of collars and struggles

The third distinctive feature of white-collar mobilizations is their approach to the other sections of the working class. There is a tendency among white-collar organizations and activists to build closer ties with blue-collar workers. Two processes drive the changing working class towards blue-collar workers. One of these is the structural process. Precarious conditions have been applying hard pressure on white-collar employees since the beginning of the 2000s. The 1990s, the golden years of the white-collar employees, turned into a nightmare especially after the global financial crisis of 2008. The lifestyle gap has been narrowing day by day among the different sections of the working class. This structural process leads to search for common struggle opportunities.

Yet, the new organizations and the new repertoire of collective actions have not created influential mass organizations. The failure or limited gains of white-collar mobilizations and rising expectations with the Gezi resistance drove white-collar employees into

disappointment. A tendency to “escape from white-collar” began among the activists of these mobilizations. This is the second, the subjective, process that becomes a tendency among activists. Instead of building stronger organization among white-collar employees, some activists switched their interest to blue-collar mobilizations. They began to spend more time to support blue-collar mobilizations than organizing white-collar employees. The rhetoric of “their problems are real” can be taken as the slogan of this escape. White-collar problems are about deterioration and prestige loss. Mobilizations of the lower sections of the working class have more vital problems, according to this understanding. White-collar problems can be regarded as “middle class problems”, even by white-collar activists.

It is possible to see this escape from white-collar work especially at moments of retreat or failure of white-collar mobilizations. Bilgi University activist Meltem explained her interest in blue-collar workers’ struggles several times, though she never said that white-collar struggles are not important. Her first experience of workers’ mobilization was the Tuzla shipyard workers’ resistance in 2007. This experience with blue-collar workers was helpful for her during her attempt to organize workers at Bilgi University. It became easier for her to organize cleaning workers and security workers than academics. Since the unionization attempt did not achieve its aims she was disappointed, especially with the inaction of academics. Meltem said, “I have never liked the middle class. My family is petty-bourgeois, and I have not interested in people from my own class. I have no interest in their troubles, language, concerns, exaggeration of their problems, and their addiction to property.” She also finds it more important to provide her knowledge of health and safety issues to workers which are usually blue-collar workers in Workers’ Health and Safety Assembly (İSGM). She said that providing useful knowledge which makes a real change in workers’ lives is more important than having knowledge in theory without any purpose and only for the personal career of the middle classes.

BİÇDA activists are putting their communication expertise to the service of construction workers and other blue-collar workers in action. They are building their websites and managing their social media tools or at least teaching workers how to use them effectively. The Precarity Movement's meetings and workshops always included blue-collar activists. In 2013, the factory occupations in Greif and Kazova were visited by almost all of these organizations. During the construction workers' demonstrations in 2014 almost all white-collar mobilizations publicized the workers' calls via social media accounts. They organized solidarity campaigns with the workers. PEP was very active in organizing a public forum in front of Soma Holding headquarters in Levent after the Soma mining disaster in 2014.

Mass mobilizations of construction workers, miners, and manual workers in factories attracted the white-collar activists. An environment of permanent competition for better positions in their career makes things harder for white-collar activists to win their colleagues to collective action. Experiencing difficulties in their weak and small organizations led to some attempts to unite with the blue-collar workers' mobilizations. In this way, common platforms for common problems could be obtained. This gave birth to hybrid organizations like Direnişteyiz Platformu (We are in Resistance Platform), an organization of workers in struggle which was established during the ATV/Sabah resistance in 2009; the Precarity Movement, a hybrid organization of workers and trade unions in struggle established in 2011; and Umut-Sen, a hybrid organization for a common trade union of white and blue-collar workers established in 2012.

We are in Resistance Platform was established by blue- and the white-collar workers in resistance during the ATV/Sabah solidarity actions. Simultaneously, plaza actions were ongoing for solidarity with the IBM Turkey employees. IBM, ATV/Sabah, Tuzla shipyard and many other workers in struggle established this platform for a united front. In their declaration they openly called for a united struggle of white- and blue-collar workers.

The Precarity Movement was established after a forum of 26 workers' organizations for a common platform of workers. Precarious work was the common base for all workers. Precarity was a relatively new debate in Turkey and the Precarity Movement had a significant influence on this topic among working class organizations. Blue- or white-collar workers, production or services workers, public or private sector workers all are working in precarious conditions under the neoliberal order. Therefore, their aim was to create a common platform to unite organizations.

Umut-Sen (Precarious and Unemployed Workers' Union) was established in 2012 as an independent union with the purpose of creating an anti-bureaucratic, united trade union for all workers. In their first declaration they mentioned different sections of the working class, including plaza and call center workers (Emeğin Gündemi, 2012b). İdil and Elçin were the activists of Umut-Sen before they organized workers at the İstanbul Development Agency.

Hybrid organizations which intended to unite the white and the blue-collar workers, and the new and the traditional repertoire of collective actions have not managed to create permanent and effective platforms so far. But they still built up significant experience on building bridges between the different sections of the working class.

The first period of white-collar mobilizations witnessed a remarkable development with the TEKEL workers' resistance in Ankara in 2010. Every section of the working class showed great sympathy and solidarity, with declarations on their web pages and social media accounts, solidarity visits, and slogans and placards on May Day 2010 in Taksim. TEKEL was the resistance of an older generation of workers who had been the victims of precarious work. With privatization, they became contracted workers who had been previously working under full-time secure jobs. In the course of their struggle TEKEL workers gained a common consciousness of their own precarity. Strikers' tents in Ankara served as places of direct

encounter with different sections of the working class. Ercan and Oğuz argued that the TEKEL workers' struggle was the struggle of all workers under the same conditions of precarious work (Ercan & Oğuz, 2015). This was one explanation for students' and white-collar employees' high level of interest in the TEKEL resistance. Had the resistance occurred in İstanbul, its impact on white-collar mobilizations might have been bigger.

The second period had a similar moment as well. Birleşik-Metal-İş (metal workers' union) went on strike on 29 January 2015. Thousands of workers from 22 factories in 10 cities went on strike. A historic moment occurred during the strike ballot. Traditionally, trade unions regard white-collar employees as being on the employers' side. Consequently, there is an agreement between Birleşik Metal İş and the employers' union (MESS) that white-collar workers are excluded from the collective agreement. Just before the strike ballot, Birleşik Metal İş president Serdaroğlu said that "Our main concern is that white-collar workers (engineers) can prevent blue-collar workers' will. I mean, white-collar workers are acting in line with the employers' directives" (ETHA, 2015). The Employers' Union, MESS, collected signatures from white-collar employees, who were out of scope, for a strike ballot in eight factories. However, in every factory some white-collar employees voted in favor of the strike. At Alstom, for instance, there were ten more "yes" votes than the total number of trade union members (Özkurt, 2015). In this factory about 200 employees were out of the scope of collective agreement. Strong "yes" votes in each factory was seen as white-collar support for the strike. Birleşik Metal İş officially issued several calls to the white-collar employees for united action. They even mentioned the problems of employees' "out of scope" agreement between the union and the employer and called the white-collar employees to join the union. The heading of the trade union's press release was "Dear "Out of Scope" Class Sisters" (Birleşik Metal-İş Press Release, 2015). During the ballots, all new platforms, including PEP, BİÇDA, Kaç Bize Gel and others, declared their solidarity with the strike. In the day of the

strike, thousands gathered in Gebze, including neighborhood solidarities, forums, urban movements and white-collar organizations. This mobilization from İstanbul to Gebze was a direct result of the Gezi resistance. The Gezi resistance probably had some impact on the “yes” vote of white-collar employees as well. Collective actions of blue-collar workers found more support from white-collar employees after the mass collective action of the Gezi resistance.

In short, the neoliberal hegemony on the career-oriented life of white-collar employees imposes individualistic solutions to their workplace problems. Changing jobs, forms of personal resistance like leaking company information, anti-collectivist attitudes are difficulties faced by activists who try to organize collective action among them. However, precarity and deskilling are the conditions forcing white-collar employees to struggle. Since these structural conditions push them towards the manual workers, there have been closer relations between the organization and struggles of these sections of the class since 2008. The failures, weaknesses and retreats of the mobilizations create disappointment among the leading activists and this causes escape from their own colleagues as well. As a result of this subjective factor, blue-collar workers' struggles attract them in these periods. Some activists mentioned that white-collar problems are not as real as those of blue-collar workers. However, the attraction of blue-collar workers struggles does not come from their more real problems but their powerful collective actions. TEKEL, the metal industry, Soma, Tuzla, hotel workers are all actions of organized workers. In the memory of white-collar employees there was only the Gezi resistance as an experience of mass collective action, but this was not a workplace mobilization. So far we have not witnessed a mass united action of these sections of the working class but the growing relationship and concrete economic conditions pave the way for united actions in the future.

3.6.4 Internationalization of the White-collar Mobilizations

The internationalization of white-collar mobilizations is related to the development of the social movements in recent decades. The skills of white-collar employees, like higher education degrees, foreign languages, and the ability to use social media tools, provide them with the ability to follow and get in touch with international mobilizations and organizations much more easily than other sections of the working class.

A cornerstone of the internationalization of social movements was the Seattle protests in 1999 during the WTO summit. These protests led to the emergence of global solidarity networks. Trade unions and NGOs started to use internet facilities more actively in holding international meetings and campaigns. 9/11 and the so-called “War on Terror” were confronted by global anti-war movements. The Global Justice Movement and the World Social Forums were the peak of internationalization of collective actions. DİSK, KESK, Chambers and NGOs in Turkey actively participated in these mobilizations. Their attachment to international mobilizations had a significant impact on students and white-collar employees. Unlike traditional organizations, these international mobilizations allowed individual participation in their collective actions. Developments on horizontal and democratic organizational structures were actively followed by the skilled labor force in Turkey. That was the first step in the internationalization of white-collar employees. In 2010, the European Social Forum (ESF) was held in İstanbul. Emerging white-collar mobilizations found their place at the meetings. One of the meetings was “Organization in the Information Sector”. Nedim Akay, the leading activist of the IBM resistance and founding member of BİTDER, talked about the IBM experience with the title of “White or Light Blue-Collar?” Prof. Dr. Mutlu Binark talked about the PEP experience at the same meeting. The real purpose of the ESF organization was not only to share experiences but also to create international solidarity networks by making

direct contacts through the meetings. ESF helped new platforms and activists of plaza and IT employees make international contacts.

The Türk Telekom strike was the first international support of an international IT sector union to resisting employees in Turkey. It found international support from UNI Global Union. Gerard Rohte, head of the Industry, Business and Information Technology Services (IBITS) Department of UNI Global Union, declared the trade union's solidarity with the striking employees in Turkey. This limited relationship rose to another level with the IBM employees' unionization.

IBM and similar international companies employ thousands of employees all around the world. In the Western branches of these companies trade unions are well organized and they are actively following the companies' global actions. Therefore, it is easier for the employees of an international company to get organized in trade unions. However, these companies are careful and even merciless towards militant actions. The unionization of skilled employees embodies an important contradiction. These employees are relatively better off in terms of their wages and working conditions. But increasing job insecurity, performance management systems, flexible working hours and deskilling force them to get organized against their employers in order not to lose their conditions. As a result of this contradiction, IBM Turkey employees joined a trade union not only for wage increases but also for dignity in the workplace and freedom in their leisure time. IBM employees' actions in front of their plaza were supported by other IBM unions at the company's Western headquarters. Their virtual strike on Second Life was actively supported by UNI Global Union. They used the technical base developed by Italian IBM employees during the world's first virtual strike in 2007.

The IBM Turkey resistance was probably the first internationally organized workers' resistance in Turkey. From the beginning of the unionization attempt, employees, with their

own efforts, built international solidarity networks. In the first weeks of the unionization attempt, Tez-Koop İş and the Chamber of Electrical Engineers organized a panel discussion in September 2008. There were two international trade union members on the panel. One was from UNI Global Union, Gerhard Rohde, and the other from LBC-NVK Belgium (the largest clerical workers/managerial staff union), Koen Dries. The panel title was “Organization in the Information Sector.” The international trade union representatives related their experiences in the information sector, including the IBM experience in other countries. Rohde told of the IBM Italy employees’ virtual strike on Second Life. This strike was actively supported by Global Union. Many IT employees from other companies and even customers of IBM joined the strike in this virtual platform (Çehreli, 2008). This experience would then used by IBM Turkey employees.

The unionization leader at IBM, Nedim Akay, told in an interviewer that the chief executive in Turkey once told a meeting that “Turkey is my little China”. Akay emphasized that globalization makes them a cheap labor force like China and India. The chief executive mentioned this as if it was something good for employees (Salman, 2009). For this reason, Akay indicated, IBM did everything to prevent unionization. He said that “This prevention is not only against unionization in Turkey. Unionization is under pressure from the top because they think that if we succeed it will be a bad example for East European and Middle Eastern countries” (Küçük, 2009). His words clearly show that IBM employees were aware of the global reasons behind their workplace problems from the beginning. They regarded the anti-union attitudes of IBM Turkey as a global IBM strategy. IBM Turkey employees issued a press release against the offensive actions of the company before their own virtual strike. They stressed their international solidarity network: “We are the union of UNI Global with its 20 million members, striving for global organization and aware of its value. We are members of the IBM European Work Council which represents 26 European countries.” (Nebil, 2008a).

They saw their resistance as an international resistance for all IBM employees in other countries. The resistance, therefore, had an internationalist atmosphere from the beginning.

A similar awareness existed in the unionization of Bilgi University and the organization of the Rainbow Movement in Hava-İş. Bilgi University activists investigated Laureatte Education Company's history and published an article (Sosyal-İş, 2011) on it in the first year of their unionization. They considered Laureatte management as part of a global process of for-profit education. They had knowledge about what Laureatte Education Company did when it bought Universidad Europea de Madrid. A leading activist at Bilgi University was a former union activist in Britain. Through his relations they received a solidarity message from the largest trade union of academic-related staff (University and College Union - UCU) in Britain. The Rainbow Movement's program and campaigns were based on their awareness of global civic aviation rules. Massive airport strikes in Greece, France and Spain also had an encouraging impact on cabin workers who could personally witness these collective actions during their flights.

Another way of the internationalization of white-collar employees was the solidarity networks among the workers of international companies or trade unions. Highly educated employees have much better access to these international networks. They are better at using the internet and are usually good at foreign languages in comparison with blue-collar workers. Lack of trust in national trade unions makes them establish closer ties with international trade unions. BİÇDA is actively cooperating with Union Solidarity International (USI), Oyuncu-Sen is a member of the International Federation of Actors (FIA), although they are not members of any federation in Turkey, Dazayn officially joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) and dissolved itself.

BİÇDA launched a website in English in 2012, www.itwsn.net. They published several articles in order to establish a direct connection with the IT networks of other countries. Their internationalist perspective can be seen in the following sentences from this article:

“What happens in other countries and in other industries either here or abroad impacts us directly because what happens there will happen here to us! Our wages, our rights, our ability to hold on to our jobs are not determined in Turkey alone but are part of a worldwide attack on all workers. Corporations are multi-national, crossing all borders, workers must organize across all borders as well. We are multi-national and therefore we can only win if we fight collectively and not succumb to nationalism and jingoism. In every country in the world, in every industry, production and workers are tied to one another... As the larger IT companies do their production in various places in the world (China, Korea, Malaysia, India, Turkey, Thailand, Taiwan etc.) it is clear that the problem surpasses national boundaries, and this is the starting point that ties workers directly to other workers that work in different countries. We, IT workers that work in Turkey are tied to the world production network and what is going on somewhere else directly affects us here.” (BİÇDA, 2012)

This article, with a short analysis of IT workers’ struggles in AT&T, Sony, HP and Nokia in different countries, was a message to show BİÇDA’s support and it was also a call for united struggle. BİÇDA activists have the ability and knowledge to launch a website by themselves, to use social media accounts actively and to publish articles in English. They can establish direct relations with international networks or trade unions without having the support of national trade unions. They can skip any kind of bureaucracy with this knowledge of communication techniques. This is very important for forming organizations and spreading their words.

Dazayn was a very small group of workers mostly working at Netaş. Before the Gezi resistance they did not have any strength in workplaces. What was important about a small group of IT workers joining an international network was the feeling of international solidarity. Existing trade unions were too bureaucratic, alternative organizations were not organizing in workplaces, and Dazayn was too weak to do so. Having the support of an international organization empowered them. IWW's publications provided them with concrete tools to use for getting organized in workplaces. IWW provided materials to translate and publish in Turkey. These organizational advantages made Dazayn activists dissolve Dazayn and establish a branch of IWW in Istanbul.

Oyuncu-Sen joined the International Federation of Actors (FIA) immediately after the trade union was established. As already explained, tat Oyuncu-Sen was founded as a reaction to the inactive and ineffective Sine-Sen (Cinema Workers' Union). Oyuncu-Sen is an independent trade union, but they have been actively involved in the international meetings of FIA.

This picture shows that white-collar mobilizations are eager to be involved in international solidarity networks. White-collar employees have the ability to directly communicate with international organizations without mediation by trade union professionals. Another dimension of this picture of internationalization of white-collar mobilizations is that the so-called labour aristocracy (IT workers, pilots and cabin crew, academics, and performers) is becoming the pioneer of this internationalization. This development is undermining the trade union bureaucracy more than any other workers' mobilization. Within these groups of workers, IT sector activists have the closest direct relations with international organizations. The Türk Telekom and IBM resistances established very close links with international IT sector trade unions.

3.6.5 Over-representation of Women in White-collar Activism

The last distinctive feature of white-collar mobilizations is the density of women in their repertoire of collective actions and their activists. Women's participation in the labor force in greater numbers is irresistibly forcing traditional working class organizations to change. As already shown in chapter II, women's employment has been declining since 1950 due to rural-urban migration and to the structural change from an agricultural economy, where women's employment was very high, to an industrial economy. However, women's employment has been increasing in the cities. Between the years 2006 and 2011, women employment in professional groups exceed men's employment rates in Istanbul. From 2006 to 2011, women professionals increased from 116,000 to 145,000, whereas it increased from 161,000 to 184,000 for professional men. The largest women's employment was in the office and customer services sector both in 2006 (171,000) and in 2011 (223,000) in Istanbul (İstanbul Valiliği, 2012, p. 92).

TÜİK (Turkey's Statistics Institute) data shows that from 2005 to 2012 women's employment in cities increased by 56%, 1.5 million in real numbers. The majority of this growth was in wage earners. The largest growth occurred in the services sector (84%) in cities. Table 9 shows women's employment in services in the cities between 2005 and 2012. According to this data, the largest expansion occurred in the administrative and supporting services (5.5 times larger), followed by accommodation and food services (2.5 times) (Gürsel, Uysal, & Acar, 2014).

Table 9- Women's employment in the service sector between 2005 and 2012 (Thousand persons, cities)

	2005	2008	2012
Wholesale and retail trade	409	514	655
Accommodation and food services activities	82	126	199
Finance and insurance activities	82	104	116
Occupational, scientific, and technical activities	93	101	167
Administrative and supporting services activities	51	87	268
Public administration and defense	117	155	195
Education	301	370	527
Human health and social services activities	240	296	420
Other services activities	302	214	401

Source: TÜİK, Betam (Gürsel, Uysal, & Acar, 2014)

Table 10 shows that highly educated women's employment has the largest share of growth in women's employment. It has almost doubled in seven years. Another significant finding is that almost all of the employment growth occurred in wage earners. This means that women with higher education prefer to work in companies, mostly in services, as wage earners instead of becoming entrepreneurs.

Table 10 - Status in women's employment according to education level between 2005 and 2012 (thousand persons, cities)

	Status in Work									
					Wage earners		Employer or self-employed		Unpaid family worker	
Education	2005	2012	Change	Growth (%)	2005	2012	2005	2012	2005	2012
Higher education	752	1,477	725	96.5	699	1,395	38	65	15	17
High school	682	912	230	33.7	603	790	39	73	40	49
Under high school	1,251	1,804	553	44.2	821	1,212	215	308	215	284
Total	2,685	4,193	1,508	100	2,123	3,397	292	446	270	350

Source: TÜİK, Betam (Gürsel, Uysal, & Acar, 2014)

Traditional working class organizations are male dominated. It is rare to find women trade union activists. By contrast, women activists are actively leading the new organizations of white-collar employees. The main reason for this change is the growing rate of women

employed in white-collar jobs. Other factors forcing women to search for new platforms to raise their voices are inequalities between men and women in workplaces and the difficulty of being an active woman in traditional class organizations.

Of the 16 interviewed leading activists, 11 were women. The new white-collar trade union (Oyuncu-Sen and Dev-İletişim İş) presidents are women. There are 13 trade union confederations in Turkey. 168 trade unions are affiliated to these confederations. There are only three women trade union leaders in these confederations (ÇSGB, 2015). One of them is Dev-İletişim İş founded by call center employees. The other two are health sector unions in which employees are also regarded as white-collar workers because of their profession. Oyuncu-Sen's all professional union activists are women. This is the most significant difference between Oyuncu-Sen and other traditional unions.

The Rainbow Movement was a movement mostly of pilots and cabin employees. The majority of cabin employees are women. During the general congress of 2009 the presidential candidate of the Rainbow Movement was a woman who lost by only one vote.

In a masters thesis titled "The Organization of White-collar Workers in İstanbul", the writer says that out of 10 PEP activists he interviewed seven were women. He emphasizes that during the research he attended Experience Workshops where the majority of the participants were women. He adds that they sometimes held meetings only about sexual harassment and mobbing issues (Tatari, 2014).

As already shown in the section on the Gezi resistance, Gezi was the most white-collar-dense mobilization in Turkey. It was probably the most women-dense political event as well. One of the reasons for increasing social tension in Turkey was the women's rights issue prior to the Gezi resistance. Women were already on the streets against the attempted prohibition of abortion, Prime Minister Erdoğan's campaign for three children, and his words against

women's clothing. When the resistance began, women were always in the frontline of demonstrations. All the major symbolic pictures of the Gezi resistance were women's; the woman in the red dress, the woman opening her arms facing a water cannon, the woman jumping over a gas capsule with her high heeled shoes, and the woman walking over a barricade. Another famous moment of the resistance was feminist activists' removing of sexist writings from the walls.

In this dissertation white-collar mobilizations since 2008 were investigated and there was a clear majority of women activists in their leadership (11 out of 16). At the meetings of PEP, BİÇDA, KBG, in the unionization experiences of Bilgi University and the Istanbul Development Agency, in the opposition movement of the Rainbow Movement within Hava-İş, and finally in the new unions Oyuncu-Sen and Dev-İletişim İş, women activists enjoy a clear majority as well. However, these white-collar mobilizations were a very small part of the total number of white-collar employees. We can discuss the situation of the existing mobilizations regarding the over representation of white-collar activism and only speculate about the future of white-collar mobilizations by looking at the density of women activists and the growing rates of women's employment in all white-collar jobs.

3.7 Summary

The 1980s were the age of neoliberalism in the whole world. In 1980, neo-liberalism was introduced by the military regime in Turkey and continued to be implemented by the following governments. Neoliberal policies led to significant changes in the socio-economic system in Turkey. The most significant change occurred in the composition of the working class. Chapter II demonstrated how the number of jobs in the services sector and white-collar jobs increased rapidly after 1980. It was shown that the 1990s were golden years for white-collar employees. However, the economic crisis of 2001 and, more importantly, the global crisis of 2008 caused a deterioration in white-collar working conditions. This was a period when white-collar employees experienced deterioration together with a loss of prestige in society. In the golden years, being a white-collar employee was a privilege, with its social habits and consumption culture. In the 2000s, these privileges and prestige were about to decline with the rapid expansion of white-collar jobs and the number of university graduates. Increasing discontent among white-collar employees corresponded to the ineffectiveness of trade unions. Trade unions were losing members and power as a social force in the face of employers and governments in the 2000s. Since 1980, white-collar employees have mostly been regarded as middle class by the unions. Trade unions have even been leaving white-collar employees out of the scope of collective bargaining agreements. Educated, well off white-collar employees were showing no interest in the trade unions during the golden years of the 1990s either. The economic crises of 2001 and 2008 changed this attitude. However, trade unions were unable to organize white-collar employees because their bureaucratic structure did not allow them to cope with the demands and collective behavior of white-collar employees. Therefore, we have seen a new repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices since 2008.

Chapter III examined the white-collar mobilizations between 2008 and 2015, in two periods of white-collar mobilizations. White-collar employees experienced mass layoffs for the first time in 2008. Their first reaction was to employ the old class repertoire with strikes at Türk Telekom, ATV/Sabah and unionization attempts at IBM Turkey and Bilgi University. However, incompatibilities between white-collar employees and union bureaucracies resulted in a new repertoire of collective actions and the emergence of new platforms beginning in 2008. Throughout the chapter, white-collar mobilizations were divided into two periods. The first period was between 2008 and 2013. The IBM resistance was the initial mobilization of this first period. White-collar mobilizations proliferated after the IBM resistance. Every single mobilization was in relation with the other. This period went into a downturn after 2010 as a result of record national economic growth. The national political agenda was also a reason for this decline. In 2013, the Gezi riots broke out. This turned out to be a resistance period which continued for almost a year with park forums and neighborhood solidarity platforms. It was the first mass collective action that large numbers of white-collar employees participated in. This mass collective action with its new repertoire triggered the second period of white-collar mobilizations, which ended in 2015. This time it was not economic growth but just the national political agenda which ended the period.

Although there were two periods of white-collar mobilizations, Chapter III did not follow a chronological order. In the second section of this chapter only the new repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices (new platforms) in the first period were examined. In the third section, beginning with the Gezi resistance, the new repertoire in the second period was examined. In the fourth section, the new repertoire within the trade unions and new white-collar union experiences in both the first and second periods were examined. Finally, in the last section, five distinctive features of white-collar mobilizations were explained.

The first period of white-collar mobilizations began with the unionization attempt at IBM Turkey. Discontent among the employees of IBM Turkey led to them joining a trade union (Tez-Koop İş). IBM Turkey's refusal to listen to the demands of its employees was the main reason for this unionization attempt. IBM Turkey management's hostile response to the unionized employees caused two years of resistance. This resistance enjoyed significant support from other white-collar employees, especially those working in neighboring plazas. Weekly plaza actions showing white-collar solidarity began in front of Yapı Kredi Plaza where IBM Turkey was located. These collective actions resulted in the establishment of the Plaza Action Platform (PEP) by white-collar activists participating in plaza actions.

The Plaza Action Platform coordinated plaza actions and became a platform for white-collar employees who were not trade union members. It was an attempt to create a solidarity platform among the white-collar employees working in plazas. Its activists organized solidarity meetings with workplace resistances and held meetings on the issue of how to organize white-collar employees. PEP generated more platforms as a result of debates among the activists about organizational structure. IT workers wanted to establish a separate organization which was only for the information and technology sector. Leading activists of the IBM resistance formed an association, BİTDER, only for the IT sector. However, the class content of the association led to heated debates on the inclusion, or not, of employers. BİTDER was closed down by its founders only a year after its establishment as a result of these debates. The remaining IT workers organized themselves in the IT Workers Solidarity Network (BİÇDA). IT workers from Netaş disagreed with BİÇDA's organizational strategy and set up Dazayn. While BİÇDA was a solidarity network for IT employees, Dazayn aimed to organize itself as a workplace platform. BİÇDA and Dazayn both organized among IT workers. PEP, in contrast, was intended to cover all white-collar employees.

Kaç Bize Gel (KBG) was established as a critique of PEP in 2013. KBG, similar to Dazayn, was aiming for a workplace-based organization. Unlike PEP, it had a concrete program of demands for all office workers and a method of organizing them. Its ultimate goal was to establish an office workers union.

Another new white-collar platform was established by call center workers, in the same period as the IBM resistance and plaza actions. Call center employees innovated a new repertoire by establishing a web page and organizing calling actions. They informed their colleagues about the page during working hours by calling them. They managed to attract call center employees and established the Association of Call Center Employees in 2008. The Association organized collective actions like protesting at the Career Call Center Fair, giving alternative call center awards against the Best Call Center Award at the Fair, and acting in a film. They managed to establish a new trade union (Dev-İletişim İş) in 2013, and also kept the Association open for call center employees who do not want to join a union.

White-collar employees' ability to use internet tools helped develop their organizational experiences. Their social media accounts, websites and brochures were directly designed by the employees themselves. Workers found an individualistic repertoire of actions against the companies as well, especially during the downturn in the first period of white-collar mobilizations. Websites such as "Firmafaresi" and "Mimarazzi" reached thousands of architects. Employees commented on the violation of labor rights and working conditions of the companies through these websites. Bilgi University activists established "Bilgileaks," and Netaş workers established "Netaşleaks" which provided information about companies' actions. Subsequently, the Association of Call Center Employees launched "GCMLeaks" and PEP launched "istenatildim.org". In this way, white-collar employees demonstrated how they can copy and build on the repertoires employed by other mobilizations.

In 2013, the Gezi resistance broke out. It was the beginning of the second period of white-collar mobilizations. There was significant white-collar participation in the collective actions of the Gezi resistance. PEP, BİÇDA, Dazayn, and Kaç Bize Gel recruited new members, but none of these new activists remained active after a few months. Led by a PEP activist, Yapı Kredi Bank employees organized several workplace forums which were quite similar to the public forums at Gezi Park. Dazayn activists organized workplace meetings at NETAŞ. The Publishing House Laborers Collective (YEK) and the Store Employees Platform (MÇP) were founded soon after the Gezi resistance. The leading activists of both had taken part in the Gezi resistance. Their experience of participating in such a mass collective action with their colleagues had encouraged the founding of new organizations. Two Gezi activists managed to organize their colleagues in a trade union (Koop-İş) at the İstanbul Development Agency. This unionization drive managed to organize the first successful plaza strike in Turkey in 2015.

The fourth section of the chapter examined the new repertoire of white-collar employees within the trade unions. The opposition movement of the Rainbow Movement and unionization attempt of Bilgi University were the initial mobilizations. The former was a consequence of the rapid expansion in the number of cabin crews and pilots in the civil aviation sector. This section of the working class, with their high wages and favorable working conditions, is regarded as white-collar. The relevant trade union, Hava-İş, was traditionally more organized among ground staff than cabin crews and pilots. The increasing numbers of cabin crew among union members conflicted with the traditional structure of the union. The Rainbow Movement appeared as a reaction to this discrepancy between cabin workers and the traditional union structure. It was the first attempt where white-collar employees organized around an opposition movement within a union and tried to take the leadership. The Rainbow Movement's program of a "reverse pyramid" was a concrete

example of a new democratic unionization structure. The Bilgi University mobilization also aimed to create a new unionization practice by organizing white- and blue-collar workers in the same union. Trade unions already existed in state-owned universities, but Bilgi University was the first private university where white- and blue-collar workers got organized in one union. Workers joined Sosyal-İş. Disagreements between the trade union professionals and academics led to failure, especially on the issue of the organization of academics. This failure led employees of private universities to get organized in the Private University Workers' Solidarity Network (VÜEDA) and solidarity platforms at Koç and Yeditepe Universities after the Gezi resistance.

Another white-collar unionization attempt occurred at the Istanbul Development Agency. This was the only successful unionization attempt. Their success came from keeping union professionals out of their collective decision making as much as possible.

The final white-collar unionization practice covered here is that of actor/actresses during the first period of white-collar mobilizations. The rise of private TV channels, and the cinema and advertising sectors generated a big industry in the 1990s, when the deterioration of working conditions began to be a serious problem for actors. Sine-Sen was the union of cinema employees. It was not effective at all in the cinema sector, with performers in TV series and shows exceeding those in the cinema sector. Thus, was felt for a new trade union. Oyuncu-Sen was established as a result. Employees initially organized new platforms, the Cinema Actors' Collecting Society of Turkey (BİROY) and the Actors Platform for Cinema Labor Act (SİYOP). They then managed to establish a new active trade union. By remaining an independent union, Oyuncu-Sen managed to prevent any inconsistency between its members and traditional union structures.

White-collar mobilizations in the two periods of white-collar mobilizations had five distinctive features. The first was the democratizing effect. White-collar mobilizations had a democratizing effect on working class organizations. There were two main factors here: subjective and structural factors. Democracy is not an institutional thing but a relation, and it can only be constructed by workers' mobilization within a union. As a reaction to the ineffectiveness of the traditional trade unions, white-collar employees strove to find their own ways. IBM, Bilgi University and İstanbul Development Agency employees and also the new platforms (PEP, BİÇDA, KBG, Dazayn, ÇMÇ) built democracy through the direct actions of the workers. Internally or externally these mobilizations put pressure on the trade union bureaucracy by creating new activist networks and a new workers' leadership. As for the structural factor, changes in the working class towards highly educated employees with high command of new technologies and communication tools create pressure from below on the hierarchical structures of traditional trade unions. The Rainbow Movement is a good example of this democratizing affect within a traditional trade union.

Secondly, white-collar mobilizations increase their organizational skills and capacities by creating alternative organizations to trade unions. Since the traditional trade unions were not able to organize white-collar employees, the white-collar employees had to find their own ways. All mobilizations encourage others. The difficulty of changing the traditional structures of trade unions forces activists to establish new organizations and to use a new repertoire in their collective actions. In this way they gain organizational experience and capacities. The different practices of platforms, collectives, associations, and solidarity networks produce skills, abilities and resources for future mass mobilizations. White-collar mobilizations are closely connected with each other and often copy and even develop each other's repertoires. The new platforms hold meetings in order to increase their knowledge of the problems of life at work and the reasons behind the difficulty of white-collar unionization. But these meetings

are also an escape from collective action. It is hard to organize colleagues in the workplace, but easier to produce knowledge for further organization. White-collar employees have this ability to produce knowledge about themselves. All of these actions and organization attempts provide white-collar employees with opportunities to gather experience for future mobilizations.

Thirdly, the white-collar employees are increasingly getting closer to the “lower” sections of the working class. Historically, manual workers rarely approach the “upper” sections of the working class. However, two processes are driving white-collar employees nearer blue-collar workers. One of these is the structural process of deterioration. Precarity, flexibility, and deskilling pave the way for united struggles between white- and blue-collar workers since they have been suffering from common problems. This process led to emergence of several hybrid platforms such as the Precarity Movement and Umut-Sen (Precarious and Unemployed Workers’ Union). The second process is the subjective process of “escape from white-collar”. The weakness of white-collar mobilizations direct the interest of white-collar activists toward blue-collar workers, especially in periods of a downturn in mobilizations. Activists of the new platforms begin to spend more time on building blue-collar mobilizations rather than organizing their own colleagues.

The fourth feature of white-collar mobilizations is that they are distinctively internationalizing in comparison to traditional class organizations. Structural and subjective factors are also valid here. The integration of Turkey’s economy into the global economy brings contact with international working class networks. The IBM resistance provides a very clear example of this. IBM has operations in many different countries. IBM workers have international ties with each other. They are in solidarity with each other in their struggles because they know that their working conditions and wages depend on global labor conditions. As for the subjective factor, white-collar employees have the ability to communicate directly with

international organizations. They can build direct relations with international trade unions, bypassing the leadership of traditional class organizations.

And finally, the last distinctive feature of white-collar mobilizations is the over-representation of white-collar activism. The rise in women's employment in white-collar jobs is the structural factor behind this. Women's participation in class mobilizations is changing the traditional structures. The Rainbow Movement is a good example of this change. The subjective factor is the male-dominated trade unions. There were only three female union presidents in Turkey in 2015. All three of them were white-collar unions: Dev-İletişim İş -founded by call center employees- and two health sector unions. Since traditional structures provide little space for women activists, they are more active in the new white-collar mobilizations. This is the subjective reason why women's leadership is so high among the mobilizations investigated in this dissertation (11 of the 16 leading activists interviewed were women). Women activists find more opportunity to participate in the organization processes of these new organizations without bureaucracies.

In conclusion, Chapter III explained how white-collar mobilizations emerged, developed and disappeared in two periods of white-collar mobilizations in İstanbul. Their relations were shown in order to prove that these mobilizations were not independent, but parts of periods. This chapter aimed to show how changes in the composition of the working class led to changes in class mobilization. This change has appeared as white-collar mobilizations in İstanbul since 2008.

Conclusion

The idea of writing a dissertation on the changing working class and its new repertoire of collective actions developed as a result of witnessing scholarly debates on the class content of the Gezi resistance. Gezi resistance of 2013, which was a series of dissidence actions centered on Taksim Gezi park that gave way to one of the most widespread political movements in Turkey, was probably the first incident that the collective actions of white-collar employees attracted such attention by authors. The Gezi resistance was not only a white-collar mobilization, nor were white-collar employees a majority of the participants. However, it was the first collective action where white-collar employees participated in big numbers. Almost everyone agreed that blue-collar participation was very limited especially in the Gezi Park occupation and the park forums. Scholarly debate on the Gezi resistance conceptualized these activists either as middle class (Keyder, 2013; Bora, 2014) or as white-collar workers and part of the proletariat (Boratav, 2013). Theories of the middle class suffered from a lack of historical analysis of changes in the composition of the working class since 1980. The middle class became such a large concept that it could include everyone except for manual workers. It lost its capacity to explain social reality by relying on features of lifestyle, income, and consumption differences. It was then applied to analyses of the new social movement. On the other hand, the white-collar debate was just a theoretical debate which took the collective actions of white-collar employees before and after the Gezi resistance into account very poorly. This dissertation was written with the aim of filling the gaps in these debates by demonstrating how the working class has changed since the introduction of neoliberal policies in Turkey and how changing class composition led to white-collar discontent since the 2000s. This rising discontent resulted in a new repertoire of collective actions within two periods of white-collar mobilizations in Istanbul. Thus, it became possible to see the relationship

between structural changes and collective actions. Rising white-collar discontent could be seen in their collective actions before and after the Gezi resistance. The question posed by this dissertation was therefore designed to contribute a historical perspective to this debate: “Is there a relationship between the changing composition of the working class and the new repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices? Can this relationship be traced by studying the socio-economic changes and emerging new repertoire of collective actions and organizational practices in Istanbul over the past 35 years?”

The question was formulated after perceiving the gap between studies on the changing socio-economic structure of Turkey and labor studies. Labor studies either analyze changing class composition (Kiziroğlu, 2014) or recent class mobilizations in case studies (Erdayı, 2012; Nurol, 2014a) without providing the relations between different white-collar mobilizations.

This dissertation is a contribution to the theoretical debate on the changing class composition of Istanbul from the perspective of changing working class theory and also to the literature on labor studies by demonstrating the relationship between changes in the socio-economic structure of Istanbul and changes in the white-collar employees’ repertoire of collective actions.

The dissertation has three main chapters. The first chapter is the theoretical chapter where class theories, the changing working class, and repertoire of collective actions are explained. Static class analyses examine classes in a frozen moment rather than taking class as a changing relationship. Thus, in the first chapter, theories of the “new” are placed within historical changes in capitalist relations. Debates on classes in the Western world and in Turkey are summarized. By demonstrating some of the common weaknesses of these theories (technological classification, knowledge based classification, and common sense views) the theory of the changing working class is explained. This theory provides the dynamism that

most of the other theories lack by looking at changes in class composition within a specific period of time. This theory examines structural change in class composition but does not examine class mobilizations. Repertoire of collective action provide forms of class struggle within a changing class composition which are introduced in the final section of chapter I.

The second chapter looks at the socio-economic changes and changing working class composition in Turkey. The services sector and the number of university graduates have expanded significantly since 1980. Plazas, private TV channels, and the new entertainment industry appeared in the 1990s and they led to a rise in the number of prestigious white-collar jobs. In order to understand why the new repertoire of collective actions and the two periods of white-collar mobilizations occurred in the 2000s, it is necessary to demonstrate the decline in trade union membership and strikes. This chapter shows how trade unions became inefficient in the 2000s. Until then, movement of public sector workers, the Kurdish liberation movement and the urban poor movement under political Islam dominated the national agenda. White-collar mobilizations did not appear on the scene until the crisis of 2008. As the white-collar workers began to lose their prestigious conditions as a result of precarity and skill degradation, traditional class organizations were unable to organize this section of the working class because of their weakness and bureaucratic structures. These conditions paved the way for a new repertoire of collective actions after 2008 and the second chapter looks at these conditions.

The third chapter examines the new repertoire of collective actions which emerged as white-collar mobilizations after 2008 in Istanbul. The new repertoire revealed itself as plaza actions, virtual strikes, plaza strikes, establishing new white-collar platforms, and founding new trade unions in two periods of white-collar mobilizations. The first period began with the unionization attempt of IBM Turkey employees and ended with the Gezi resistance. Gezi triggered a new period of white-collar mobilizations which lasted until 2015. Chapter III shows

the relations between the white-collar mobilizations, their new repertoire, and finally their five distinguishing features.

The debate on classes began in the West in the wake of the 1968 movements appeared with new political demands. The 1960s was a period of radical structural changes in the West. These structural changes led to significant changes in class composition. There were some earlier theories of “new classes” prior to 1968. However, the bulk of class theory was published after 1968 as the new mobilizations triggered a debate on classes. In Turkey, a similar debate began in the wake of the Gezi resistance. There were earlier analyses of changing class composition, starting at the beginning of the 2000s, as the impact of the structural changes of the neoliberal era became apparent. However, the Gezi resistance in 2013 triggered the debate in Turkey.

There were several points missing in the Turkish debate on classes. While a significant number of authors only focused on the class content of the Gezi resistance (Tuğal, 2013; Keyder, 2013; Yörük & Yüksel, 2014), others merely analyzed the changes in the class composition of Turkey (Kızıroğlu, 2014). The former either failed to take a historical perspective on classes or, if they did, they conceptualized their class theories on the basis of income, education, and lifestyle differences (Keyder, 2013). These analyses were mostly about the new middle classes or white-collar workers. The latter did have a historical perspective, but failed to link the recent class mobilizations before, during, and after the Gezi resistance. Therefore, their analyses remained mere theoretical explanations.

The major contribution of this dissertation is that it unites the analysis of structural changes with changing class mobilizations. However, as the new repertoire of the changing working class revealed itself as white-collar mobilizations since 2008, the dissertation focuses on examining the new repertoire of white-collar mobilizations rather than analyzing all working

class mobilizations since 1980. By linking the white-collar mobilizations with each other through their internal debates, common platforms, and solidarity organizations it is shown that these mobilizations were not separate from each other. Instead, they were in relation to each other due to the rising common discontents and the lack of strong and efficient class organizations.

When class formation is changing and existing class organizations do not keep up with this change, a new repertoire inevitably emerges. The new repertoire of white-collar employees began within the traditional class organizations but the inability of these organizations to deal with the changing demands and expectations of the class made them find new ways to wage their struggle. This problem between workers and trade unions is not specific to white-collar employees. It probably exists between manual workers and their trade unions too. In 2015, manual workers organized several direct factory occupations against the will and instructions of the unions, such as the Ejot (a company in the engineering sector) factory occupation when a general strike in the sector was postponed by the government, and the Renault workers' occupation. However, these mobilizations did not lead to the establishment of new platforms or a new repertoire of collective action. This dissertation does not focus on the classical repertoire of collective action but on the new repertoire and new organizational practices. As explained in the section on "*The Changing Working Class*", when class composition changes, this happens not only one section of the class but all sections, and relations between sections. Since 2008 this change has taken the form of white-collar mobilizations and thus this dissertation examines the new repertoire and organizational practices of white-collar employees. However, it is quite possible that we may see a new repertoire or opposition mobilizations among blue collar workers in the future. Researchers will no doubt investigate these new mobilizations, but it will be important to take the contributions of this dissertation

into account, which will help them link the different sections of changing working class mobilizations with each other.

A number of the significant findings in this dissertation are of importance for labor studies. First of all, the dissertation demonstrates that changing socio-economic structure and class composition lead to changes in the formation of class mobilizations. Secondly, white-collar mobilizations appeared in the 2000s as a result of rising discontent, economic crises and the inefficiency of trade unions; thus, they employed a new repertoire of collective actions and formed new class platforms. Thirdly, these mobilizations emerged within two periods of white-collar mobilizations. Last but not least, these mobilizations have five distinguishing features when compared with traditional class organization: (1) White-collar activists are pushing traditional unions to change from bureaucratic structures to democratic and horizontal structures; (2) They are gaining experience through their new repertoire and increasing their organizational capacities; (3) They use their abilities in the service of blue-collar workers and influence the latter's collective actions; (4) They are building international networks by by-passing bureaucratic national trade unions; (5) There is an over-representation of women in white-collar activism as a result of women's active involvement in their mobilizations.

New collective actions do not appear from nowhere. Serious followers of Middle East politics, for instance, were able to make the connection between destructive neoliberal policies in the region and new collective actions prior to the Arab Spring. In Egypt, for example, the far left and Islamists came together for the first time in 2003 in anti-war protests on Tahrir square, and new independent unions emerged after the strikes of 2007 (Naguib, 2011). Similar mobilization periods took place prior to the Indignados mobilization in Spain. Before the occupation of squares in Madrid and Barcelona there were strong housing movements (V for Housing and Platform of Those Affected by Mortgages), and the Free

Culture Movement (FCM) (Morell, 2012). These mobilizations played an important role in establishing nationwide social networks through horizontal organizational structures and innovating a new repertoire in their collective actions before the Indignados.

There were also mobilizations prior to the Gezi resistance in Istanbul. The anti-war movement, urban rights movements, ecological movements, feminist and LGBTI movements were finding increasing support during the 2000s. There were other social movements, before the 2000s, such as political Islam, public sector workers' mobilizations, and the Kurdish liberation movement. Some of these previous movements are occasionally mentioned in this dissertation. However, they are not fully examined and relations between these social movements are not examined either. It is important to connect these mobilizations with each other in order to build a full picture of the relationship between structural changes and changes in social movements and social movements. Almost all of the interviewed white-collar activists had experience of activism during their student years. They were either active in the new left politics of the 1990s or in the new social movements of the 2000s. Further research is needed on the impact of each mobilization on other and the influence of these mobilizations on each other through the personal involvement of leading activists. Instead of taking each mobilization separately, a whole picture can, in this way, be drawn.

Another important investigation would be to look at the class background of participants in the new social movements in Turkey since the 2000s. Such a class analysis may also answer the question of why LGBT, feminist, ecology, and anti-war movements appeared and expanded during the 2000s. It is likely that the growing number of universities, growing urbanization, and the increasing percentage of young white-collar employees have all played a major role in the emergence of these mobilizations. The theory of the changing working class can provide the basis for a class analysis of these mobilizations.

Investigating the class content of social movements requires a dynamic theory of class. The relationship between the changing classes – including emerging new classes such as the new middle class as explained in this dissertation – and mobilizations would provide a better understanding of them. This dissertation is an initial attempt which, it is hoped, may encourage further research into holistic and historical explanations of social movements and mobilizations in Turkey.

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