TWO CASES OF GARMENT SWEATSHOPS IN ISTANBUL:

FAMILIALISM AND ETHNICITY IN THE SWEATSHOP

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to look at the issue of labor control in the two garment sweatshops of İstanbul from a perspective that takes into account and makes sense of gender and ethnicity. I conducted interviews with female workers and sweatshop owners in two sweatshops and did participant observation. I offer explanations for different labor control strategies, mechanisms and practices - ranging from 'familial' to traditional labor control mechanisms. I argue that familialism is a core ideology in the first sweatshop - and a purely gendered one – which ensures consensual control of the female workers. This study draws on Michael Burawoy's notion of ideological structure of the workplace and emphasizes the necessity of taking other ideologies into account as that are not only produced in the workplace, but rather originate in societal and traditional relationships produced in families and communities (such as gender and ethnicity). Whereas gendered relationships and practices can be seen more easily in the sweatshops, ethnicity is generally more hidden and requires a careful reading and analysis.

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1. Introduction

There is life going on in the sweatshops everyday all around the world. It is a world of colorful t-shirts. Workers constantly produce for some huge amounts of people who are ready to consume. The rhythm of the life in the sweatshops is different, it is intertwined with the rhythm of the sewing machines. But, someone has to ensure that rhythm which is critical for production. Labor control has been an important issue for social sciences and constantly updated in relation to the changes in labor processes in the late twentieth century. Yet, there has not been enough attempts to focus on different strategies, mechanisms and practices of labor control which are gendered. It is the aim of this thesis to analyze the gendered aspects of labor control in two garment sweatshops in Gazi District[1] of İstanbul as two different cases. Specifically, my research questions are how is labor control sustained through various strategies in the shop-floor, what could be the reasons for and consequences of employing these strategies and what is the impact of gender relationships, gender stereotypes, gendered assumptions and prejudices in this process?

In order to answer my research questions, I conducted interviews with female workers and sweatshop owners in two sweatshops and did participant observation. Whereas my main data source is the interviews, I also made use of our casual talks during the breaks, and my field notes about my observations in the sweatshops helped me further to support my insights from the interviews. My analysis is different from the existing literature on female workers in the sweatshops as my focus is on the gendered labor control practices as opposed to the general focus on feminization of labor in small-scale, informal production units in Turkey.

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[1] See section 2.5 in this paper for information about the demographic profile of Gazi District.

Furthermore, I have included an analysis of ethnicity and how the fact that the ethnicity of the workers and the owners affected the shop-floor regime.

On the basis of my findings, I argue that labor control through consensual relations between the owners and the workers leads to a more internalized control and closer identification for the workers. A certain degree of autonomy together with the consensual relationships is the factor that reinforces workers' self regulation and identification with their work. However, it is crucial to point out that not all the interactions are production oriented or aimed at efficiency which can be neglected in favor of a pleasant workplace atmosphere. Consensual relationships were sustained through familialism in the shop floor. This point is crucial for my research since familialism was obviously a gendered ideology, which came out through various practices within the sweatshops such as gender division of labor, owners' families' daily visits to the sweatshop and talks about families during the talks, which constantly reinforced and reminded the gendered identities of the workers.

I also claim that women's perspectives for the work they do are heavily influenced by their thoughts and feelings about their living spaces and more generally about İstanbul. This in turn is closely related to their age when they came to İstanbul, their ethnicity and their experiences in İstanbul. My contention is the fact that the regime of the second sweatshop was stricter and more coercive than the first one was linked to the ethnic origin of the workers. The more hostile treatment of the sweatshop owners coupled with the factors that I have mentioned above has resulted with various pessimistic ideas about the work and about their lives in general from the side of the women in this sweatshop compared to the other.

I will proceed with a chapter on background information about gender and work and the involvement of women in small-scale production in Turkey. Then, I will introduce my theoretical framework which sets my analysis of labor control within Foucault's theory of disciplinary power. I will also situate my research in relation to the existing literature on labor control including the ones which introduced gender analysis into this field. Next, I will provide a short summary of the methodology. It will be followed by two chapters of my data analysis from my interviews supported by my observations and fieldnotes. One of these chapters will be focusing on the implications of familial setting in the sweatshop based more on the first sweatshop whereas in the second chapter, I will focus on the role of ethnicity as a reason for the stricter regime of the second sweatshop. Finally, I will have concluding remarks.

2. Background

2.1. Turkish Context in Relation to the Global Shift Towards Flexible Accumulation

Turkey implemented import substituting industrialization (ISI) from the beginning of 1960s which "was characterized by medium-term planning, protectionism, significant involvement of the state in the industrial sector and populist politics, which allowed trade unions to flourish and become an important factor in determining the distribution of urban income."[2] In 1977, Turkey went into an economic crisis and had negative growth rates at the end of the decade.

The restructuring process of the capitalist world economy started to be reflected in Turkey at the end of the 1970s. As a solution for the deepening effects of the economic crisis, Turkey started to implement structural adjustment policies (SAPs) lead by IMF and the World Bank and shifted from ISI to export-led industrialization (ELI).[3] SAPs covered "a general lowering of labor standards, severe restrictions in union activity, significant deterioration of real wages, persistent unemployment and moves towards privatization of public manufacturing enterprises."[4] The economic transformation process starting from the 1980s and the new flexible capital accumulation strategies required that Turkey be specialized in labor-intensive export-led industries. More flexibilization in the labor markets has accelerated the process of setting new control mechanisms on labor. New organization of production techniques and increased subcontraction have been at the core changes of this process.

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[2] Gunseli Berik and Nilufer Cagatay, "Transition to Export-Led Growth in Turkey: Is There a Feminization of Employment", *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 22:1, (1990), 121.
[3] Semsa Ozar and Fuat Ercan, "Emek Piyasalari: Uyumsuzluk mu Butunlesme mi?" ("Labor Markets: Dissonance or Integration?") in Nesecan Balkan and Sungur Savran (eds.), *Neoliberalizmin Tahribati (Ravages of Neoliberalism),* (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2004), 192.
[4] Berik and Cagatay, 116.

The attempt to integrate to global markets has resulted in cutback of labor costs within the framework of flexible accumulation. According to Yıldız Ecevit, "the growth model adopted after 1980 is a model that has taken globalization as the impulsive force, embraced competition as the implementation arena for this force, put growth on the axis of technological innovation, counteracted the core organization of the labor, withdrawn the state from the market, turned education and health services into commercial goods and commercialized social security."[5] Full-time and secure jobs have been displaced by part-time or temporary jobs with no social security provision. Traditional gender roles and the flexible relations of women with the labor markets have facilitated the employment of women in these flexible processes in most "developing" countries which has been named the "feminization of labor".

2.2. The Situation of Women's Labor in Contemporary Turkey

According to the formal statistics, female labor force participation (FLFP) in Turkey has been decreasing since the 1980s.[6] The population census data indicate that "women's share of the economically active population continued its slow secular decline in the first half of the 1980s, declining from 36.1% to 35.4% of the total economically active population between 1980 and 1985. This is the outcome of the rural-to-urban structural shift in the economy, since women's labor force participation rates in rural areas (and in agricultural activities) are much

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[5] Yildiz Ecevit, "Küreselleşme, Yapisal Uyum ve Kadin Emeginin Kullaniminda Degismeler" ("Structural Adjustment and Changes in the Usage of Women's Labor") in Ferhunde Ozbay (ed), *Kuresel Pazar Acisindan Kadin Emegi ve Istihdamindaki Degismeler*, (Istanbul: İnsan Kaynağını Geliştirme Vakfı Yayını, 1998), 34.
[6] Ozar and Ercan, 202.

higher than in the urban areas (and in non-agricultural activities)."[7] FLFP kept on decreasing after 90s as well, and measured as 35.3% in 1990, 31% in 1995, 26.6% in 2000, 24.8% in 2005 and 22.6% for the first two of months of 2008.[8]

These numbers signal that the non-agricultural sector in Turkey has not created enough employment opportunities for women to cause "feminization" in the labor markets.[9] Furthermore, research show that there is strict gender segregation, which sustains traditional gender roles and restricts the employment choices of women.[10] Social and cultural factors coupled with economic ones together cause the decrease in FLFP as a whole.

Saniye Dedeoglu claims that there are two main reasons behind the decrease of FLFP in Turkey.[11] First is the mechanization in agriculture which, in turn, led to a decrease in agricultural employment and caused a huge migration to cities. The second related reason is the inability of the industrial sector to absorb the surplus labor that detached from agricultural sector. Since the majority of the female labor force was employed as unpaid family workers in family farms, after the migration to the cities most of them became housewives and withdrew from the labor force as they did not have the necessary skills for industrial work. This phenomenon suggests that ideological and social factors were to the disadvantage of women in both rural and urban places, since agricultural labor was not paid because it was regarded as a part of the housework within the family, which then prevented women to work in urban

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[7] Gunseli Berik and Nilufer Cagatay, "What Has Export-Oriented Manufacturing Meant for Turkish Women?" in Pamela Sparr (ed.) *Mortgaging Women's Lives: Feminist Critiques of Structural Adjustment*, (London and New Jersey: Zed Books, 1994), 83.
[8] Turkiye Istatistik Kurumu (Statistics Institiution of Turkey), http://www.tuik.gov.tr, last accessed 30 May, 2008
[9] Berik and Cagatay, "What Has Export-Oriented Manufacturing Meant for Turkish Women?", 83.
[10] Ozar and Ercan, 202.
[11] Saniye Dedeoglu, " 'Sindrella'nin Pazara Yolculugu' Toplumsal Cinsiyet Rolleri, Aile ve Kadinin Isgucune Katilimi Uzerine Bir Deneme" (" 'Sindrella Goes to the Market' An Essay on Gender Roles, Family and Women's Labor Force Participation"), in Nesecan Balkan and Sungur Savran (eds.), *Neoliberalizmin Tahribati (Ravages of Neoliberalism)*, (Istanbul: Metis Yayınları, 2004), 262-263.

sectors such as manufacturing or services due to lack of certain skills. As a result, statistics shows that FLFP has been decreasing partly because they take all women in rural areas as participating in the labor force and do not include women who are engaged in informal labor in workshops or at home in urban areas.

Deniz Kandiyoti also lists the reasons of low FLFP in Turkey as follows: blue-collar male workers have regular income, women get married and have children at young ages, there is lack of child-care provision and support from female relatives.[12] However, after the 1980s, the regular income of blue-collar workers were severely hit by real wage decreases and inflationary policies brought by structural adjustment packages. This incidence led to the involvement of many women in income generating activities like home-based work as a "survival strategy" for low-income families.

According to the Household Labor Force Survey (HLFS), women constituted 89.9% of all manufacturing homeworkers in 1988.[13] The majority of the homeworkers consist of married, migrant women who have little chance to be employed in formal sector due to their burden within the household, lack of child-care facilities provided by the state and imposed social constraints. Mine Cinar's survey in Bursa (a capital city of Turkey) also revealed that "married, unskilled women who want to reenter work could only find jobs in the informal sector as seamstresses, knitters or embroiderers where merchants or shop owners subcontract the work out."[14]

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[12] Deniz Kandiyoti, "Urban Change and Women's Roles in Turkey: An Overview and Evaluation", in Cigdem Kagitcibasi (ed.), *Sex Roles, Family and Community in Turkey*, (Indiana, Indiana University Press, 1982), 190.
[13] Berik and Cagatay, 1994, 84.
[14] E. Mine Cinar, "Unkilled Urban Migrant Women and Disguised Employment: Home-working Women in İstanbul, Turkey", *World Development*, 22:3, (1994), 372.

Homework has become a widespread activity among migrant women in the peripheries of capital cities especially for those of them whose husbands did not give them permission to work outside who were already situated in a disadvantaged position by the demands of flexible and long working hours of available manufacturing work in factories and workshops. However, this type of work was invisible for not only the national economy, but also for the families and even for the women themselves. They were inclined to see their work as transitory and devalued their earnings as "pocket money" although they contributed to family income or sometimes even became the sole earner of the family. The temporary nature of homework and perception of it as a part of the housework are the reasons that reinforce the invisibility of it. Moreover, in some cases it is seen as a damage to the authority of the husband as the "breadwinner" and women prefer to hide their work from their husbands.

The irregularity and temporariness of home-based work makes the organization very difficult. Added to this, the low pay in this sector causes women to withdraw from this type of work and to prefer working in sweatshops.[15] This type of work is generally conceived as a beneficial usage of the spare time, to earn pocket money and is not regarded as work even for the women who do it. Thus, women accept the limits of the economic sphere that is reserved for them.[16]

Since the 1980s, the informalization of labor has become a widespread phenomenon in Turkey because of the inadequate growth in formal sector. The only reason for the increasing rates of informal labor is not the labor supply of urban population which suffers from

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[15] Aydan Eraydin and Asuman Erendil, "Konfeksiyon Sanayiinde Yeniden Yapilanma Sureci, Degisen Kosullar ve Kadin Emegi: Ne Kazandilar, Ne Kaybettiler?" ("The Restructuring Process, Changing Conditions and Women's Labor in Garment Industry: What Have They Gained and Lost?"), *Iktisat Dergisi (Review of Economics)*, 430, (2002).

[16] Dilek Hattatoglu„ *"Ev Eksenli Calisma Stratejileri" ("Strategies of Home-based Work"),* in Aynur Ilyasoglu and Necla Akgokce (eds.), *Yerli Bir Feminizme Doğru (Towards a Indigenous Feminism)*, (Istanbul, Sel Yayincilik, 2001), 176.

unemployment or decreasing real wages. Informal sector also grows in response to the changes and needs in the formal sector.[17] The two sectors feed each other through the changes in the formal sector such as the decentralization of the corporations and the increasing subcontracted production relations. Furthermore, the informal sector gains more importance as the income gained from informal labor increased it has compensated the decreased real wages gained from the formal sector. Yet, as this process works in both ways, it creates a vicious circle which in turn decreases the incentives of the formal workers to demand higher wages. Real wages keep decreasing without facing serious opposition and informal labor keeps increasing as a life preserver within this framework.

2.3. Situating Garment Industry and Gender in Labor

Working of women, especially in lower socio-economic classes and undereducated segments, is assessed on the basis of its economic aspects. Since the working conditions are usually poor for undereducated women, getting married with a man who has enough earning is offered as a good opportunity for young, single women. Also, women see this opportunity as a delivery because of the harsh conditions of the work they can find. The statistics reveal that illiterate women participate in the labor force at the rate of 15.7%, whereas the ratio goes up to 70.4% among university graduate women.[18] Low pay and bad working conditions have an adverse effect for FLFP among undereducated women. Unemployment rates also decrease as the education level goes up.[19]

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[17] Ecevit, 21.

[18] Turkiye Istatistik Kurumu (Statistics Institiution of Turkey), http://www.tuik.gov.tr, last accessed 30 May, 2008

[19] Ayse Eyuboglu, Semsa Ozar and Huyla Tufan Tanriover, *Kentlerde Kadinlarin Is Yasamina Katilim Sorunlarinin Sosyo-Ekonomik ve Kulturel Boyutlari (The Socio-economic and Cultural Aspects of the Problems of Female Labor Force Participation in the Cities)*, (Ankara, Basbakanlik Kadinin Statusu ve Sorunlari Genel Mudurlugu, 2000), 153.

According to the statistics of 2007, among the women who participate in the labor force, 47.3% is employed in agriculture; 37.9% in services and 14.2% in industry.[20] The general profile of the women who are working in the garment industry reveals that 53.5% of them are under the age of 25, 51.3% are single and 63.5% are primary school graduates.[21] These women are generally coming from low income families and they are the second generation of migrant people from rural regions of Turkey. The main source of the workforce for the garment industry in the peripheries of capital cities is this group.[22] This young, single and undereducated labor force is preferred by the employers for various reasons.

The production of goods that have low added value, that are standard, cheap and competitive determines the type of labor it employs. Young and unskilled female labor is the most suitable type of labor for the demands of this industry since it requires long working hours, quick and changing production in response to changing demands of the market and flexible production which leads to overtime and home production. Cultural norms also reinforce the intensive utilization of young female labor from many aspects. Since women are primarily seen as wives and mothers, they are generally seen as temporary workers and the working period for them is seen as transitory. Furthermore, since they are not seen as the "breadwinners"[23] of their families, their earnings are not of primary importance both for themselves and for the employers. This perspective causes further devaluation of female labor and makes it cheaper as compared to male workers. Dedeoglu also claims that

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[20] Turkiye Istatistik Kurumu (Statistics Institiution of Turkey), http://www.tuik.gov.tr, last accessed 30 May, 2008
[21] Eraydin and Erendil, 119.
[22] Eraydin and Erendil, 119.
[23] Here, I mean they are not seen as the main earners in the family both by themselves and by the employers, but stil their earnings are necessary for survival.

in garment ateliers labor is acquired through informal channels of familial, kinship, and neighborhood relations. In these circumstances, female labor is crucial for the maintenance and survival of businesses. Not only are women easily available, flexible and a cheap source of labor, their labor also perpetuates the social relations on which the business depends. By mediating familial relations, women also signal to society that their workplace is a secure, family environment for women to work.[24]

On the basis of her research in the family-owned garment ateliers in İstanbul, she further argues that "families that are structured around patriarchal relations, survive better in the garment business than others because they are able to access obedient and cheap laborers who devote their time and energy to maintaining the family business." Aydan Eraydin and Asuman Erendil also point out the patriarchal structures of the familial settings of the small firms in İstanbul as follows:

> Although the restructuring of production has brought about changes in gender relations within workplaces, patriarchal forms still exist, especially in small firms. Indeed factory owners and managers often emphasize this, arguing that they consider their employees to be part of a 'family' and claiming to regard women workers as their own sisters or daughters. This kind of discourse supports deeply ingrained ideas about women's social roles and is used to reassure men that their control over women extends into workplaces: it has served as a means of overcoming resistance to the employment of women outside the home, especially where they work side by side with men.

Evidence from my previous fieldwork in garment workshops in Istanbul also supports the temporariness of women's work in this sector.[25] We asked questions about their plans after marriage and having children in order to learn whether this working life was a continuous and improving process or was it going to come to an end after marriage. The answers were very close to our expectations in the sense that most of the women did not plan to work after marriage (if not necessary because of financial problems). They added that they would not insist on working if their husbands want them not to work. And almost none of them planned to work after having a child. Another finding was that the traditional gender division of labor

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[24] Saniye Dedeoglu, *Working for Family: The Role of Women's Informal Labor in the Survival of Family-Owned Garment Ateliers in Istanbul, Turkey*, Working Paper, 2004, 15.

[25] Arioglu, Meltem Onur Aygunes and Harun Ulgen, "*A Field Study on Female Garment Workers in District of Gazi, Istanbul*", (Unpublished paper, Bogazici University, 2006), 11.

has not changed at home and also women did not expect this kind of a change. In fact, working outside did not mean that the women's burden in the household would diminish.

Another aspect of the cheap labor supply of women in this industry is the low bargaining power. Patriarchal structure of the society makes it harder for the female workers to ask for higher pay who are already disadvantaged by being employed in a labor-intensive, export-led industry. Employers see women as more submissive and less confident regarding the economic value of their work, which becomes an advantage for getting the highly monotonous work done. In some surveys, they have claimed that women can work more focused for longer periods.

2.4. Gains for Women from Work and Social Change

As opposed to the adverse conditions of the employment, working life brings about certain gains for women in their family lives and social relationships as well as the material gains. The most obvious consequence is the increase in the decision-making power of the women regardless of the type of work they engage. Research from Istanbul has shown that women have become the one to decide themselves to work rather than their family members.[26] However, as Ipek Ilkkaracan's field research in Umraniye district of Istanbul reveals, it would be far too optimistic to claim that working outside makes a radical change in the decision-making processes within the family.[27] Working is increasingly becoming a matter of life style for women and it becomes more common among young women to plan to work after marriage as compared to the previous generation. This makes work not only a necessity for women, but

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[26] Eraydin and Erendil, 171.
[27] Ipek Ilkkaracan, *Kentli Kadınlar ve Calisma Yasami (Urban Women and Working Life)*, (Istanbul: Ayrı Basım, 2003), 28.

an empowering process which contributes to their status both within the family and in the society in general. Naila Kabeer has also emphasized that female garment workers in Bangladesh have gained greater voice in "household decision-making because of the value of their economic contribution; their enhanced sense of self-worth; and, in some cases greater personal freedom and autonomy."[28]

There is also evidence that women use their first employment as a step for better employment opportunities by attending to secretarial and computer courses. This picture gives hope for a shift to services sector which has more decent conditions as an urban sector for lower income women. There is also a trend of increasing education levels among the next generation as women has a great desire to educate their daughters to live in better conditions than they have. The majority of the women complain about the working conditions in the garment sector despite their eagerness to work. This makes clear that their discontent stems from the conditions rather than working itself, which signals that their motivation would be increased if they had better conditions in the workplace or better jobs in other sectors.

2.5. Demographic Profile of Gazi District

Most inhabitants of Gazi are Alevis who have migrated from eastern Turkey. The Alevi community is "a heterodox Islamic group in modern Turkey, have no church, no established doctrine and no shared liturgy. Instead, their religion has developed in rural Anatolia through hereditary holy figures who transmitted esoteric religious thought through music, poetry and

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[28] Naila Kabeer, "Globalization, Labor Standards, and Women's Rights: Dilemmas of Collective (In)action in an Interdependent World", *Feminist Economics*, 10:1, 2004, 18.

collective rituals."[29] Alevi identity has been characterized not only as a religious/Islamic identity, but also an ideology as a "modern" identity. The intersection of Alevi political and religious affiliations in the migrant ghettoes of Istanbul form a dimension of communitarian identity which has been largely neglected in Turkish sociology and history.

As a philosophy, Aleviness takes human love, egalitarianism and justice as its basic principles. Contrary to Sunni Muslims, they do not separate women and men in their religious rituals which is called *cem.*[30] In Alevi culture, *cem* (gathering) is not only a religious practice but has also deep meanings attributed to it such as regeneration, purification and individual and communial interrogation. The distinguishing feature of cem from other religious practices is that one has to give an account to the society if one participates in it.

The other group which also constitutes a major part of the Gazi district population is Kurds who have mostly migrated to İstanbul in the 1980s and 1990s either because of economic reasons or of forced migration. As Mesut Yeğen states, Kurds have been rejected by Turkish state from mid 1920s, which corresponds to the foundation of Turkish Republic, till the end of 1980s.[31] This was one of the reasons that the state did not prefer to invest in the southeastern part of Turkey which is known as the Kurdish region in Turkey.

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[29] David Shankland, The Alevis in Turkey, The emergence of a secular Islamic tradition,(UK: Routledge), 2003,1.

[30] Karin Vorhoff, "Soylemde ve Hayatta Alevi Kadinina Kisa Bir Bakis" (A Brief Overview of Alevi Woman in Discourse and Life), in *Tarihi ve Kulturel Boyutlariyla Turkiye'de Aleviler, Bektasiler, Nusayriler (Alevis, Bektashis and Nusayris in Turkey from Historical and Cultural Aspects),* 2004, 256.
[31] Mesut Yegen, "The Kurdish Question in Turkish State Discourse", *Journal of Contemporary History*, (London: Sage Publications), 1999, 555.

3. Theoretical and conceptual framework

My aim in this chapter is setting the theoretical framework for my analysis of gendered labor control in the sweatshops of İstanbul by applying Foucault's theory of disciplinary power and further supporting my main argument, my empirical evidence and theoretical suggestions of the scholars who have taken the issue of labor control so far. I will focus more in detail on gendered practices among the strategies of labor control to make my point clearer in the following chapter and I will point out the different perspectives and answers to my research questions which are as follows. How is labor control sustained through various strategies in the shop-floor, what could be the reasons and consequences of employing these strategies and how do assumptions and prejudices about women and relationships between men and women shape the mechanisms of labor control?

In order to answer my research questions, first it is important to define discipline and how it operates within workplaces. I will make use of Michael Burawoy's notions of ideological effects of labor process and differing shop-floor regimes such as hegemonic versus despotic regimes. I will also draw from North American management literature on the analysis of workplace/corporate/organizational culture, which I think can be expanded to sweatshops as well. Then, I will take culture of familialism and construction of skill as a gendered category within the framework of workplace culture and identity as a form of gendered labor control.

The organization of labor processes have changed since 1970s, with a shift from Fordist mass production to flexible accumulation. These changes have concrete implications for work spaces as factories are no longer the only and most important places of production, but small-

scale production in sweatshops has become a widespread phenomenon that leads to transfer

from "rational rules and bureaucratic hierarchy to the coordinated participation of worker."[32]

Labor has become disintegrated and decentralized which in turn made it obligatory to rethink

the notion of 'labor control'.

In order to apply Foucault's concept of discipline to the labor process and labor control, first it

is important to understand Foucault's definition of discipline.

> Discipline may be identified neither with an institution nor with an apparatus; it is a type of power, a modality for its exercise, comprising a whole set of instruments, techniques, procedures, levels of application, targets; it is a physics or an 'anatomy' of power, a technology.[33]

In contrast to Marxist theories of power which emphasize the power of the state and its

determination of the labor process from top down, Foucault handles power as a dispersed

phenomenon and rather focuses on the effects of power resulting from power relationships

and what kind of subject positions (such as docile bodies) are created by these unequal power

relationships instead of focusing on power itself. Docility per se means being ready and

willing to be taught, yielding to supervision, direction or management. For my research, I

prefer to employ Foucault's notion of docility which is a broader concept and has lost its

meaning in gender and work literature as it has been used for female workers together with

nimble fingers.[34] For Foucault, "a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed and

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[32] Pei-Chia Lan, "The body as a Contested Terrain for Labor Control: Cosmetic Retailers in Departmant Stores and and Direct Selling", in Rick Baldoz, Charles Koeber and Philip Kraft (eds.), *The Critical Study of Work: Labor, Technology and Global Production*, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press), 2001, 84.

[33] Michel Foucault, "Panopticism", in Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, (Penguin Books), 1977, 215.

[34] See Diane Elson and Ruth Pearson, "Nimble Fingers Make Cheap Workers: An Analysis of Women's Employment in Third World Export Manufacturing", *Feminist Review*, 7, 1981, 87-107; Maria Patricia Fernandez-Kelly, *For We Are Sold, I and My People, Women and Industry in Mexico's Frontier*, (Albany: State University of New York Press), 1983; Annette Fuentes and Barbara Ehrenreich, *Women in the Global Factory*, (New York: South End Press), 1983; Lourdes Beneria and Shelley Feldman, *Unequal Burden: Economic Crises, Persistent Poverty and Women's Work*, (Boulder: Westview Press), 1992; Lourdes Beneria, *Gender, Development, and Globalization: Economics as if all people mattered*, (New York: Routledge), 2003.

improved."[35] This definition challenges the implication of uniformity of docile female workers in the literature. I argue that although efficiency is a concern for owners, there are relations in the sweatshop which cannot be linked to efficiency.

Taking Foucault's theory of power, capitalism can be analyzed as a "power/knowledge regime" as a "site but not the source of power".[36] This approach enables one to analyze capitalism as a system which exercises power through its various spaces and institutions. Furthermore, evaluating power as not only repressive but also conducive and productive gives room for an analysis of control and management practices and the strategies of maintaining disciplinary power at the micro level of the workplace as a space of capitalist control. Therefore, as opposed to orthodox Marxist tendency to take the mode of production as the main determinant of the labor process, Foucault's concept of disciplinary power opens up a sphere for analyzing disciplinary techniques of the sweatshops as the spaces of debureaucratized control.

Richard Edwards is one of the first scholars who work on "systems of labor control" at three different levels: simple, technical and bureaucratic control.[37] This categorization is based on technological transformation and fails to include an analysis of social forces which have an impact on the constitution of workers' agency and subjectivity in daily practices. This type of analysis overlooks the workers' experiences of labor control and the "disciplinary power" in the workplace. An analysis of disciplinary power is rather concerned with creation and construction of obedient workers than merely focusing on capitalist exploitative labor processes. The construction of a specific type of worker is not only done on the basis of

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[35] Michel Foucault, "Docile Bodies", in Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, (Penguin Books), 1977, 136.
[36] Marike Finlay, *Powermatics*, (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 1987, 203.
[37] Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the Workplace in the Twentieth Century*, (New York: Basic Books), 1979.

'efficiency' but it is also reinforced by symbolic domination or "micro-physics of power" in which "the power exercised on the body is conceived not as a property, but as a strategy, that its effects of domination are attributed not to 'appropriation', but to dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings."[38]

One of the main points when analyzing the disciplinary mechanisms of any kind of production process is to acknowledge non-repressive forms of power as well as repressive ones. This point is crucial for my research since the personal relationships and familial settings are core issues in the sweatshops to operationalize control mechanisms or simply to create a supportive environment. As Ron Sakolosky points out, "management and labor are not simply pitted against one another in shaping the labor process, but also have a reciprocal relationship of cooperation and mutual dependence that complicates the picture."[39] Following from this argument, it is important to pay attention to normalization of control mechanisms through various strategies.

Michael Burawoy examines the political and ideological effects of the labor process shaped by what he calls as production apparatuses. Drawing from Marx's insistence on the aspect of producing social relations and ideas about those relations, a lived experience or ideology of those relations as well as producing commodities, Burawoy focuses on an explanation of the ideological structures of capitalist control. Moreover, he emphasizes the centrality of the ideological structure of control as a framework which shapes and organizes our relationship to

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[38] Michel Foucault, "The Body of The Condemned", in Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of The Prison*, (Penguin Books), 1977, 26.
[39] Ron Sakolosky, "'Disciplinary Power' and The Labor Process" in Andrew Sturdy, David Knights and Hugh Willmott (eds.), *Skill & Consent: Contemporary Studies in the Labor Process*, (London and New York: Rutledge), 1992, 244-5.

the world and our interests.[40] In this sense, he takes one step further from Edwards by introducing the relationships and mechanisms of ideological control. However, Burawoy fails to acknowledge that the social relations are produced by the workers whose subjectivities are gendered, which in turn implies that the ideological structure of production is gendered. Furthermore, the ideological structure of the workplace is not only shaped the ideology of the workplace, but also the ideology of the families, communities and societies that the workers are coming from.

Burawoy explains the ideological structure as "games". The simple fact that workers accept taking part in the game implies that they already accept "the conditions that define its rules and objectives".[41] Furthermore, shop management encourages games especially if they would contribute to amount of output. This structure brings the interests of workers and management together and coordination between the workers and employers is secured through these consent games and shows how the "day-to-day adaptations of workers create their own ideological effects that become focal elements in the operation of capitalist control".[42] In my research, the active involvement of sweatshop workers in the familialization of the sweatshop and further reinforcing this process is an example of Burawoy's "games" in the shop-floor. Sturdy, further interprets the games that Burawoy suggests as an explanation of

> how a form of self-disciplinary and cooperative involvement in work is produced, not from ideological inculnation or socialization (value consensus), but through participation in workplace practices or 'games' such as 'making out'. These practices reflect an adaptation to, or 'escape' from, workers' experience of subordination, yet involve a willing engagement in work effort and thereby, paradoxically, actively reproduce the conditions of that subordination.[43]

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[40] Michael Burawoy, "The Labor Process in Capitalist Society" , in *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes Under Capitalism and Socialism*, (Verso: New Left Books), 1985, 36.
[41] Burawoy, 38.
[42] Burawoy, 39.
[43] Andrew Sturdy, "Clerical Consent: 'Shifting Work in the Insurance Office", in Andrew Sturdy, David Knights and Hugh Willmott (eds.), *Skill & Consent: Contemporary Studies in the Labor Process*, (London and New York: Rutledge), 1992, 117.

For Burawoy, any work context involves three dimensions: economic, political and ideological. Social relations are produced within the political dimension which are in turn interpreted as experiences within the ideological dimension. These are the inseparable components of work which are designed to manufacture the consent of the worker through commitment and loyalty. This point comes in my research as the ideological dimensions correspond to sweatshop workers' own construction of the workplace as a familial space, which in turn makes changes in their perception of the work they perform -especially for women, since their identification with the family makes them feel more responsible towards their work.

Guillermo Grenier conceptualizes Burawoy's notion of consent games as "debureaucratizing control" by taking the participation process as a form of control per se. According to Grenier,

> Depending more on the managers' skills than on bureaucratic regulations, more on the call to volunteerism than on the appeal of authority, the trick is to make the workers feel that their ideas count and their originality is valued while disguising the expansion managerial prerogatives in to the manipulation area of pop psychology. By depending less on impersonal rules and more on personality characteristics, today's manager effectively debureucratizes the control mechanism of the firm.[44]

Therefore, as Sakolovsky acknowledges, debureaucratization of control is far from being a departure from Taylorism[45] as opposed to the general assumption in the management literature. Moreover, it is an extension of Taylorism through deeper mechanisms which are concerned with the personal characteristics of the workers and the relationships among them

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[44] Guillermo Grenier, *Inhuman Relations: Quality Circlesand Anti-Unionism in American Industry*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press), 1988, 131.

[45] Taylorism is a set of principles named after the book The Principles of Scientific Management (1911) which included "maximum fragmentation" in the production process, the "divorce of planning and doing" and the separation of "direct and indirect labor" which meant the suppression of worker's own ability of "preparing and organizing the work in his own way." Craig R. Littler, "Understanding Taylorism", *The British Journal of Sociology*, 29:2, 1978, 188.

which Burawoy refers to as ideological structure of capitalist control. In Donald Wells' terms, "worker self-regulation" is the key here to ensure control embedded in the workers' psyche.[46]

Burawoy's categorization of two different factory regimes as despotic and hegemonic helps to analyze the strategies of ideological control. Drawing from Marxian analysis of labor power which basically claims that labor is exploited through coercion, Burawoy takes one step further and claims this rather despotic model is a rare practice among factory regimes. Instead, "workers must be persuaded to cooperate with management. Their interests must be coordinated with those of capital. The despotic regimes of early capitalism, in which coercion prevails over consent, must be replaced with hegemonic regimes, in which consent prevails (although never to the exclusion of coercion)."[47] This is indeed what I observed in the sweatshops. In the first one control was rather invisible and not very contested by the workers because of the consensual relationship between the workers and owners. In the second one, more traditional forms of control were clearly seen by the workers which made them feel more reactive towards the owners. Andrew Sturdy, David Knights and Hugh Willmott suggest the concept of "consensual control" through ideology and self-discipline or consent for the workers' need of "securing self in social identity".[48] Also, Etzioni refers to a similar mechanism as "normative control" which Gideon Kunda explains as follows:

> Normative control is the attempt to elicit and direct the required efforts of members by controlling the underlying experiences, thoughts, and feelings that guide their actions. Under normative control, members act in the best interest of the company not because they are physically coerced, nor purely from an instrumental concern with economic rewards and sanctions. It is not just their behaviors and activities that are specified, evaluated, and rewarded or punished. Rather, they are driven by internal commitment, strong identification with company goals, intrinsic satisfaction from work. These are elicited by a variety of managerial appeals, exhortations, and actions. Thus, under normative control, membership is founded not only on the behavioral or economic transaction traditionally associated with work

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[46] Donald Wells, *Empty Promises: Quality of Working life Programs and the Labor Movement*, (New York: Monthly Review Press), 1987, 23.

[47] Michael Burawoy, "The Changing Face of Factory Regimes Under Advanced Capitalism", in *The Politics of Production: Factory Regimes Under Capitalism and Socialism*, (Verso: New Left Books), 1985, 126.

[48] Andrew Sturdy, David Knights and Hugh Willmott , *Skill & Consent: Contemporary Studies in the Labor Process*, (London and New York: Rutledge), 1992, 9-10.

organizations, but, more crucially, on an experiential transaction, one in which symbolic rewards are exchanged for a moral orientation to the organization. … In short, under normative control it is the employee's self – that ineffable source of subjective experience-that is claimed in the name of corporate interest.[49]

Normative control is based on a strong workplace culture which is generally referred to as corporate culture or organizational culture in management literature. Edgar Schein views corporate culture as deeply held – often unconscious – beliefs shared by employees.[50] He further argues that "the central beliefs include equation of the company with a family where members take care of each other, and the view of members as both strongly motivated and capable of governing themselves."[51] This management strategy is not specific to white-collar jobs as culture is a crucial factor for the owners of sweatshops in İstanbul who play on existing cultures of familialism in order to secure group loyalties and production standards.

When looking at the issue of culture in the sweatshops, management literature provides insights as organizational/corporate culture has been a point of discussion for several scholars. Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman claim that "management is the art of creating strong corporate cultures by shaping norms, instilling beliefs, inculcating values, generating emotions. Strong cultures are based on intense emotional attachment and the internalization of clearly enunciated company values that replace formal structures."[52] Following from this, Kunda argues that "productive work is the result of a combination of self-direction initiative, and emotional attachment, and ultimately combines the organizational interest in productivity with the employees' personal interest in growth and maturity."[53] Therefore, by promoting strong organizational cultures within the management strategy, companies and more generally

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[49] Gideon Kunda, *Engineering Culture: Control and Commitment in a High-Tech Corporation*, (Philadelphia, Temple University Press), 1992, 11.
[50] Edgar Schein, "The Concept of Organizational Culture: Why Bother?", in *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), 1985.
[51] Schein cited in Kunda, 9.
[52] Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman, *In Search of Excellence*, (New York: Harper and Row), 1982, 81.
[53] Kunda, 10.

workplaces create 'embedded' forms of control inside the workers, which in turn decreases the necessity for traditional control mechanisms. Similarly, by promoting culture of familialism in the sweatshop, emotional attachment to work is increased, which ensures workers' self control. Control is thus mediated through models that are seemingly neither 'top-down' nor 'bottom-up', but operate through neutral or neutralizing/depoliticizing strategies of communication.

A benign and supportive work environment is the *sine qua non* for the internalization of the rules and identification with the workplace. In this sense, "what one thinks, or feels, indeed, who one is – is not just a matter of private concern but the legitimate domain of control structures armed with increasingly sophisticated techniques of influence."[54] The extent of the identification with the workplace widens so as to blur the demarcation line between the work and other spheres of life. In her research on İstanbul sweatshops, Ergul Ergun also argues that "the borders around the domestic space and the workspace –socially and geographically are blurred in workshop production. Moreover, the moral values around gender relations are actively reformulated. While some existing forms of gender relations are still strictly followed, some others are pushed aside."[55] As Edwards argues, "workers owe not only a hard day's work to the corporation but also their demeanor and effections."[56] That is to say, "control tends to be a much more totalitarian system – totalitarian in the sense of involving the total behavior of the worker. Hard work and deference are no longer enough; now the 'soulful' corporation demands the worker's soul, or at least the worker's identity."[57] Kondo describes the family company in her research as "an organized, hierarchically structured entity which involves many aspects of its employees' lives" and futher suggests that "it provides an

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[54] Kunda, 13-14.
[55] Ergul Ergun, "Understanding the Integration of Istanbul's Peripheral Neighborhoods into the World Market: A Disclosure of Women's Labor in Secure Places", *Bogazici Journal*, 16:1, 2002, 26.
[56] Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain*, (New York: Basic Books), 1979, 148.
[57] Edwards, 148.

internally differentiated structure of power and authority, and it serves as a circle of emotional attachment."[58] However, as Goffman stresses "members are never passive objects of control; they are free to react: if conceptions are imposed, they are also systematically dealt with."[59] Also, Kunda argues that "workers may accept, deny, react, reshape, rethink, acquiesce, rebel, conform, and define and redefine the demands and their responses".[60]

However, the extent of conformity or rebellion is closely related to the gender ideology within the dominant culture of the sweatshop for my case. Ergul claims that "female workers employ different strategies against the power of the employers operating through traditional forms of gender relations. In some cases, the solidarity between the workers is mixed with solidarity around ethnic, kinship relations or local origin."[61] As the perceptions of male and female workers differ about the family, the results of familial culture in the sweatshop for men and women differ as well. It becomes more demanding for women as their work and family identities come together in the sweatshop. According to Kathleen Canning

> the term 'work identity' signifies the ways male and female textile workers viewed and used their jobs, the multiple meanings they derived from and imparted to their work, the ways it 'got under the skin of their lives. 'Work identity also denotes the ways men and women related to their work sphere, encompassing their machines, the products of their labor, and their ethics of work, the social networks that divided or united the shop floor, and even the physical space of the mill.[62]

Within the context of factory workers at the turn of twentieth century, Canning further suggests that "work identities encompass workers' individual and collective self-definitions as they both resisted and sought accommodation with the factory regime and the dominant

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[58] Dorinne K. Kondo, *Crafting Selves: Power, Gender and Discourses of Identity in a Japanese Workplace*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1990, 175.
[59] Erving Goffman, *Asylums*, (Garden City, N.Y. : Anchor), 1961, cited in Kunda, 21.
[60] Kunda, 21.
[61] Ergul, 29.
[62] Kathleen Canning, *Languages of Labor and Gender: Female Factory Work in Germany, 1850-1914*, (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press), 1996, 219.

ideology of gender underlying it."[63] However, Canning makes it clear that the term work identity does not have to be limited to shop-floor experience and that it transgresses the boundary between the work and the family or community.[64]

The implication of Canning's suggestion about work identity is that it is a gendered identity. This brings up the questions like "if workers' subjectivities are gendered, how can we formulate a theory of their interests and consent, and from there a theory of gendered labor control?"[65] as Ching Kwan Lee puts it. Her contention on the basis her ethnographic research in two factories in China is that "worker's gender and localistic origin explain workplace behavior as well, if not better than her position in the organization of the work."[66] She provides empirical evidence on Burawoy's claim that "state apparatuses also reproduce relations in production and relations of exploitation, just as production apparatuses can reproduce relations of domination, such as gender and race relations, originating outside production."[67] In her groundbreaking work, she questions gender and "how it matters in the workplace".[68] She takes gender "as a means of control and an organizing principle for class relations at the point of production, and workplace as a site for gender construction, formation and reproduction." Therefore, Kwan Lee elaborates on gender and its centrality in shaping the ideological structure of the workplace fills a crucial gap in Burawoy's study. She extends the new definition gender as a power process in identity politics and formation and claiming of collective subjectivities from social movements and popular culture to the point of production.[69]

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[63] Canning, 220.
[64] Canning, 222.
[65] Ching Kwan Lee, *Gender and the South China Miracle: Two Worlds of Factory Women*, (California, University of California Press), 1998, 20.
[66] Kwan Lee, 20.
[67] Burawoy, 14.
[68] Kwan Lee, 23.
[69] Kwan Lee, 23.

Drawing from Joan Scott's definition of gender Kwan Lee theorizes gendered labor control as a tripartite mechanism. Gender symbolism and ideology (dominant cultural interpretations of sexual differences inscribed in gender symbols), gender organization (constitutive role of gender in the ongoing functioning of social institutions, such as household division of labor or job segregation) and gender identity (multiple and often contradictory experiences of femininity and masculinity, which may differ from the hegemonic images offered by gender ideology). In addition to this tripartite mechanism, she specifies that there are material roots of this regime in the shop-floor organization which are supported by the institutions outside of the shop-floor such as labor market, the family, kin networks and even the state.[70]

She points out that "control was achieved through internalized discipline of subordinates, who experienced a certain degree of autonomy and legitimacy in their subjection to domination." She states that although there are rules in the shop-floor, they applied to the extent that they were internalized through the behaviors of the workers. This degree of autonomy creates a terrain what Burawoy calls ideological control of capital or consensual control based on consent of the workers.

Culture of familialism is another point in her study, where she makes a clear point about gendered labor control as she explains:

> pervasive use of familial relations as metaphors for shop-floor relations, discourses that were organized around themes of family life and that constructed women as matron workers, and institutionalized practices that recognized and facilitated women's familial responsibilities. Familialism, like localism, as a shop-floor ethos was not purely ideational, but was embedded in practices and social relations. Whereas maiden workers constituted women as young, quiescent, docile, temporary workers, matron workers were assertive, outspoken, experienced, and domineering at work, bearing the heavy burden of combining full-time work and motherhood.[71]

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[70] Kwan Lee, 28.
[71] Kwan Lee, 143.

Familialism is one of core points of my research since it was a quite prevalent shop-floor ideology in one of the sweatshops where I conducted the interviews. Lynne Haney uses familialism as a gendered ideology in the context of welfare state in state-socialist Hungary. She argues "this gender regime was most clearly articulated through the state's targeting of the family both as a model for state building and as an institution to be rebuilt."[72] Family was the basic unit of welfare state in Hungary which was tied to the state through work institutions and needed the help and protection of the state.[73] I use familialism as an ideology which takes the family as a model institution to regulate the relationships in the workplace. This ideology came out in different occasions and was embedded in practices and social relations within the sweatshop as Kwan Lee suggests. It was in the gender division of labor within the sweatshop, in the talks of women about their husbands and their family lives, in their relationships among each other and overall in the setting of the shop floor which I will go further in detail in the following chapter.

The construction of skill as a gendered category is another important point in my research in the sweatshops within the familial setting for sustaining gendered labor control through applying household gender division of labor to the sweatshop. As Sturdy, Knights and Willmott points out "the preoccupation with dominant (male, inspired) 'feminine' and 'masculine' identities informs the choice and allocation of jobs, and shapes the nature of skill

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[72] See Lynne Haney, "Familial Welfare: Building the Hungarian Welfare Society", 1948-1968, *Social Politics*, 7:1, 2000, 104-5.

[73] Although not using the term familialism, this issue has also been discussed within the context of gender and nation building. See Carole Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*, (Cambridge: Polity Press), 1988; Nira Yuval-Davis, "Gender and Nation", in Rick Wilford and Robert L. Miller (eds.), *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism: The Politics of Transition*, (London: Routledge), 1998; Ursula Vogel, "The State and the Making of Gender: Some Historical Legacies, in Vicky Randall and Georgina Waylen (eds.), *Gender, Politics and The State*, (London and New York: Routledge), 1998; Anne Mc Clintock, "Family Feuds: Gender, Nationalism and the Family", *Feminist Review*, 44, 1993, 61-80; Dipesh Chahrabarty, "Family, Fraternity and Salaried Labor", in Chahrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*, (Princeton/Oxford: Princeton University Press), 2000, 214-236.

and consent for both men and women."[74] They argue that "management's exploitation of gendered skills serves not only to secure worker consent. The low value given to women's work because of an assumed natural suitability (e.g. dexterity) and lesser material need for it ('pin money') may be used to further cheapen deskilled labour, such as in the feminization of clerical work."[75] Also, Anne Phillips and Barbara Taylor point out that skill is a gendered category, constructed by male employers and in the related struggles of male workers to retain their own, relatively powerful position."[76] Familial setting of the sweatshop helps to legitimize the construction of skill as a gendered category as it makes use of women's familial 'duties' and gender division of labor within the domestic sphere.

Drawing from Burawoy, my research supports that ideological structure of the workplace is a crucial point which necessitates a deep analysis. Although operating in different contexts and causing different consequences my findings also solidifies Kwan Lee's notion of familialism in the workplace. In addition to these, ethnicity becomes an important issue in the construction of workplace ideology which is an overlooked issue in both Burawoy and Kwan Lee. In my research, the difference in the ethnic origin of the workers and the owners seems to be a reason of the construction of a more oppressive labor control mechanism in the sweatshop.

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[74] Sturdy, Knights and Willmott, 8.
[75] Sturdy, Knights and Willmott, 8-9.
[76] Anne Phillips and Barbara Taylor, "Sex and Skill: Notes Towards a Feminist Economics", *Feminist Review*,6, 1980, 79-88 cited in Sturdy, Knights and Willmott, 9.

4. Methodology

For my research, I have conducted interviews with female workers and sweatshop owners in two sweatshops and participant observation in Gazi district which is a shantytown in the outskirts of İstanbul. Since I knew the district and where the sweatshops were located from my previous research about women in garment sweatshops, I did not have difficulty to find the sweatshops. They are generally located in the basements of the apartments and can be recognized from their iron gates. Five sweatshops out of six accepted my request to do a research. Taking time constraints into account, I selected two sweatshops for three weeks of research period. My selection was on the basis of difference of sweatshop regimes in these two. Whereas, the first one was more based on a familial setting and supportive working environment, the second one was more strict and based more on material relations. I got these impressions from the warmer welcome of the owner of the first sweatshop at first place and from the time cards, punching machine and papers hang in the entrance of the second sweatshop which was the rules and sanctions about the arrival time. There were 14 workers in the first one 11 of which were women, whereas 30 in the second one 10 of which were women.

The relatively flexible regime of the first sweatshop also gave me the opportunity to work there for a week and have more detailed observations. Since it was important to gain the trust of the owners first, to have their permission to interview the workers and be a participant, I spent first few days on engaging in casual talks with the owners and then together with the workers to get to know each other. Lunch and tea breaks were the ideal occasions for me to take up with the workers. After a few days of getting to know each other and working there, it

was easier for me to communicate and interview women as I was already becoming to be perceived as one of them.

My being a young woman and a student was a delicate situation, but proved to be an advantage for me as they did not feel the need to be distant and formal towards me. Most of the time, I had to stay until the workday was over to be able to do the interviews. Most of the interviews took place in the office part of the sweatshop. Generally, women were concerned about how I was going to manage to go back to my house since it was late at night and the place where I lived was far away. One of my interviewees invited me to her flat and offered dinner. After the interview, she also offered me to stay since it was late but kindly rejected. However, I accepted her and her husband's offer to take me at least to the bus stop. I had to explain how I was planning to go and added that my father was going to pick me up from somewhere after I got off from the second bus to make them relieved.

My interviewees were mostly migrants coming from rural areas (eastern, southeastern and black sea region) of Turkey. Most of them were either primary school graduates or did not complete primary education. I was asked where I was from by most of my interviewees and I expeined that I was born and I grew up in İstanbul but my parents were from southeastern region. That was an advantage when I interviewed Kurdish women. Even though I was not Kurdish, they felt closer to me as I was originally from the same region with them. During the interviews, I have asked questions about their personal backgrounds, their place of origin, about the places where they lived before İstanbul, about their families, about their daily lives during the week and at weekends and their future plans and expectations.[77] Also, our casual

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[77] See Appendix I for the interview questions.

talks during the breaks and my field notes about my observations in the sweatshops helped me further to support my insights from the interviews.

After transcribing the interviews, I have analyzed the material with a special focus on general tendencies and I developed my main arguments accordingly. Then, I grouped them into smaller categories so that each category would fit into a section which is related to my main arguments. To create a better sense of my arguments, I have preferred to use direct quotes from my interviewees and do my analysis separately following the quotes. However, I do not claim to reach "objective" information (if it ever exists) by using firsthand information. As Alessandro Portelli mentions, oral sources are "artificial, variable, and partial."[78] The narrative is shaped by the interviewee, the interviewer and the relationship between the two. Therefore, the firsthand information that I will have is important not because it is objective or universal but precisely because it is partial.

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[78] Alessandro Portelli, "What Makes Oral History Different" in *The Oral History Reader*, 70.

5. Here is a family sweatshop

In this chapter, my aim is to analyze the familial setting as a gendered form of labor control within the sweatshops in İstanbul that I have conducted interviews with both the owners and the female workers. I argue that labor control through consensual relationships between the owners and the workers within the familial setting leads to a more internalized control and closer identification for the workers. A certain degree of autonomy together with the consensual relationships is the factor that reinforces workers' self regulation and identification with their work. Consensual relationships were sustained through familialism in the shop floor. This point is crucial for my research since familialism was obviously a gendered ideology, which came out through various practices within the sweatshops such as gender division of labor, construction of skill as a gendered category, owners' families' daily visits to the sweatshop and talks about families during the talks, which constantly reinforced and reminded the gendered identities of the workers. However, it is crucial to point out that not all the interactions are production oriented or aimed at efficiency which can be neglected in favor of a pleasant workplace atmosphere. Therefore, creating homogenous and docile workers is not a concern for the owners.

5.1. We try not to break anyone's heart here, I see the people here more than I see my family

In this section, I will analyze the construction of the workplace as a familial space and I will argue that setting the relations on a humane basis gives room for multiplicity in constructions of subjectivities which are not directly aimed at creating efficient workers but creates motivation for the workers to perform well. However, the ideology of familialism in the shop-floor is obviously not an innocent gender-neutral ideology. The embedded daily practices in

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the sweatshop such as gender division of labor, construction of skill as a gendered category and talking about family lives during the breaks are the components that reinforce the gendered regime of the sweatshop.

Çiçek, who has been working in garment for seven years, is one of the owners' wife's nephew. She describes the sweatshop as a family sweatshop which is a widespread phenomenon among small-scale producers.

> *Here is a family sweatshop. Generally, this is the case in small places. Of course, we cannot be like robots, sometimes we make jokes to each other. I like to make my friends laugh. If a person is downcast, I like to cheer him/her up, it is not possible to work until the evening when you are down. Çiçek, (25), overlocker[79]*

There are two dimensions of the company here. First one is the solidarity among workers based on the acknowledgement of performing a difficult task in the sweatshop for long hours. Another dimension is related to getting the work done more easily by "cheering up" one another. This dimension is also mentioned by one of the owners and the concern for sustaining the production becomes clearer in his words below. Here, what he is trying to ensure – either consciously or unconsciously- is not merely a guarantee of the work to be done, but rather workers' friendship. By taking hold of their friendship, he creates a kind of responsibility for the worker which is actually transcends a worker-employer relationship, which is more demanding and difficult to fulfill on the part of the worker. It is a mechanism of consensual control that makes use of the responsibility created through benevolence which no longer necessitating the employer's control in a traditional sense by handing that control over to the worker. Consensual control is operated through internalization of the rules by using supportive personal relationships in the sweatshop.

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[79] Overlock is a type of task in which the sleeves of the clothes are sewed. For further explanation see the last paragraph of p.32 in this paper.

> *We try not to break anyone's heart here, I see the people here more than I see my family. If someone is downcast, I go up to him/her and ask. We make jokes. Cevat, (30), owner*

His emphasis on the hours spent in the workshop and seeing his workers "more than his family" implies that his way of seeing people here cannot be very different from how he sees his family. He is like an elder brother for the workers who keeps an eye on his siblings. Hülya has been working there for almost one year together with her husband. She is pregnant and will give birth in July. She points out the two sided relationship of Cevat (one of the owners) which is being a friend but also having influence over the workers at the same time. She explains the leaving of a woman as having been due to his lack of influence over her. This implies a power relationship between the female workers and the sweatshop owner. The owner has either a consensual control over the female workers and is recognized as an elder brother or he is rejected like in this case which not only terminates the personal relationship but also worker-employer relationship. However, this type of power relationship is not present between the male workers and the owners which implies that there is a different power dynamic caused by gender between female workers and owners.

> *The owners are nice. They treat us well. Everyone is like friends with the foreman. As if he is not the boss but a worker. But, he has influence at the same time. That woman left because he could not influence her. Hülya, (27), overlocker*

The fact that the owner himself also works no different than a worker is a tricky point. It is tricky because he is seen as closer to the workers as compared to the other owner who is older and more distant, but at the same time this closeness enables him to control workers more easily. He maintains the thin line between being authoritarian and being completely friendly. At the end of the day, he has to have authority to a certain extent, which ensures that workers will respect him and take his orders seriously. His position among the workers also gives him

the opportunity to tease workers, especially in the breaks, which makes him a perfect example of a subject of consensual or invisible control.

One day, the owner was teasing two young boys in the lunch break, claiming that they were eating too much and making up stories like the waiter wanted them to pay for the bread instead of the meal.[80] In another conversation later he told me that he knows which worker could tolerate what kind of jokes and he explained that he behaved accordingly. The personal characteristics of the workers are important from the owners' side as they need to know them both for the personal relationships and for distributing the work. The other owner, Mahmut explains this in terms of "knowing the capacity of the worker and distributing the work accordingly." However, "capacity" is a vague term which may include personal characteristics as well as gendered meanings. Çiçek and Sevgi emphasize two different points on the gendered division of labor within the sweatshop. Çiçek's point stresses the centrality of the decision of the owners in the division of labor whereas Sevgi mentions the perception of the task from worker's point of view. Both points are crucial to understand how the notions of skill and capacity are constructed in a particular way, which is gendered, by the owners as well as the workers. Attaching sleeves is a part of the overlock task usually done by women and paid less, which I will further explain how it is gendered in the following paragraphs.

> *Here each person has a specific task. My task is to attach sleeves. When a new model comes, the boss and the foreman decide who will do what. But, we help each other to keep up with the work. Çiçek*
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> *It's better to do the same task. Otherwise, it's very tiring. You get used to it. No matter how enjoyable the task you are doing, your eyes are always on the clock. Sometimes, you become absorbed into it and think about the old days, nice memoirs, or what you are going to do when you get home. Or, you concentrate on the music. Sevgi, (25), overlocker and plain machine operator*

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[80] In Turkey, generally, bread is free of charge in the restaurants when ordered with the meal.

The fact that female workers are assumed to more easily manage to focus on the same task for a longer period as compared to male workers is one example of the ways that gendered characteristics are exploited by the owners. Male workers also admit that they sometimes feel the need to walk around or to jib during the work whereas women stay put for a longer time, but this is not a problem for both workers and owners, since it is a normalized fact and they are accepted for what they are. Workers acknowledge the decision of the owners. Yet, they do not feel the need to question it. The division of labor within the sweatshop is simple for both workers and owners.

> *Men generally choose plain machines, they don't do overlock. Plain machines are straight forward, you press and it goes. Overlock is not like that, it is intermittent. Çiçek*

> *There are machines on which women can work and others on which men can work. Even if men work on those machines, their hands are not as quick. None of the men could do the work that I do. Even I have difficulties doing it. Their hands are a bit abrupt. Hülya*

The contradictory point is the different claims of the female workers as opposed to the owners regarding the *plain machine* vs *overlock*. Overlock is a type of task which is usually done by women. Basically, an overlock machine sews over the edge of one or two pieces of cloth for edging, hemming or seaming. For instance, the edges of t-shirts and their sleeves are sewn in the overlock machine. The difficulty of it compared to plain machine is that one has to stop after sewing each small piece of cloth and take the new one which makes it time-consuming. Whereas female workers claim that *overlock* is a more difficult task and women are better at it, the owners claim that the plain machine is more difficult. Yet, women do not claim that this task requires more skill as they say that their hands are more suitable and faster for doing *overlock*. But, after all, *plain machine operators* are paid more than *overlockers* in this schema. For the owners, this of course, has nothing to do with gender.

We pay according to the work one does. It does not matter whether it's a man or a woman. If one has developed him/herself, he/she can perform any kind of task, can work on any kind of machine. Everyone gets what he/she deserves. Mahmut, (38), owner

However, the fact that women are more likely to end up with being *overlockers* confirms that the division of labor in the sweatshop is not arbitrary. It is rather shaped according to certain criteria that are closely related with the idea of skill in owners' minds. Skill is obviously a gendered category here. It is constructed in such a way that both the owners and female workers do not qualify the tasks which are generally performed by women as skilled. Phillips and Taylor have argued that "skill is a gendered category, constructed by male employers and in the related struggles of male workers to retain their own, relatively powerful position."[81] Owners' exploitation of gendered skills becomes visible in the fact of their paying less to *overlockers*.

The division of labor on the basis of gendered skills can be related to the division of labor within the family. As is the case in a patriarchal family structure[82], owners direct female workers to the tasks which they think can be done by women more easily because of their 'natural' endowments. Female workers also take their dexterity in certain tasks as given and do not claim that these are learned skills rather than natural ones. Moreover, they reinforce their identities as wives, mothers or daughters during the casual talks making it easier for the owners to make use of these identities when treating them as workers.

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[81] Sturdy, Knights and Willmott, 9.

[82] A patriarchal family structure can be defined in the Turkish context as one "in which all members of are tied to a senior male head of the, who shapes their labor and other acitivities. Although it may vary in shape and form, the classical patriarchal family is the site where control over the labor and resources of the family and subordination of women plays out. It is this patriarchal family in this context that is taken as a model for familialism and reflected on the sweatshop regime." Saniye Dedeoglu, *Working for Family: The Role of Women's Informal Labor in the Survival of Family-Owned Garment Ateliers in Istanbul, Turkey*, Working Paper, 2004, 6.

These talks were usually jokes about one's incapability or slowness during working hours and husbands or family life during the breaks. Elder women are usually more vocal and relaxed during these talks sometimes making fun of their husbands' incapability in housework or cooking whereas some others stress that their husbands help them with everything in the house since they are working and do not have enough time to arrange everything. Young girls were either silently listening to these conversations or giggling or making use of their single status to joke about marriage and husbands.

Intimacy and familialism was maintained through several practices in the first sweatshop. For instance, lunch was cooked in the kitchen of the sweatshop by a woman who was employed for that whereas in the second one it was ordered from outside. Workers had their lunch together in the first one and enjoyed the jokes during the lunch break whereas in the second one most of the workers were complaining about the low quality food and mentioned that they had to spend most of their money to get something to eat for lunch from the shops nearby. Lunch and tea breaks were getting together, making jokes, sometimes telling stories to each other and relaxing in the first one.

Furthermore, the visits of the wives of the sweatshops with their small children were the times that reinforced the role of the owners as fathers and husbands. They were seen as the 'good' husbands who were the breadwinners of their family and were trying to provide a good life for their families whereas their wives stayed at home and ensured the welfare as the family by looking after their children and dealing with the housework. The visits served to reinforce an atmosphere in which 'happy families' provided the model for the happy familialism of the workplace and constantly tried to be reflected on the practices in the shop-floor.

The other members of the sweatshop family had also their own roles as elder sisters and brothers, aunts, daughters and sons. For instance, there was a woman who was in her fifties in the first sweatshop and her coworkers called her *teyze* (aunt) and another woman in her forties who was called *Sultan Abla* (elder sister Sultan). These were not only at the level of the language but also reflected in relationships as Sultan Abla was seen as a wise woman who was liked and respected by the younger workers. She was also a model with her happy marriage and her two children going to school as she said *life is about mutual cooperation*, and stated that her husband and she was working for a long time and he always supported her.

All those were the signs of what Kwan Lee refers to as the "culture of familialism" that is the "use of familial relations as metaphors for shop-floor relations" and the "discourses that were organized around themes of family life."[83] Also, inexperienced and usually more docile young girls are exploited by the owners as they are the little daughters of the family and learners of the sweatshop. Being a learner is a quite internalized position by the young girls that they are ready to do any work in the sweatshop regardless of the contribution of the work to their learning how to operate a machine. For instance, whenever owners ask workers to clean the floor, it is always one of the young girls who do it even if it is not a clearly assigned work to anybody. Serap was a newcomer in the sweatshop with her two sisters. She had come to Istanbul four months ago and it had just been two weeks that she started working there.

> *You get up, come to work, rush from one task to another, that's it. Take from one and carry to another, and take from the other to another. I cut the residual threads of the t-shirts, I bring bobbins to people, I do the cleaning, I spool the bobbins, I rush all day here. I come here to learn. You cannot expect to operate a machine as soon as you arrive. Serap, (18), middler*

Yet, there are limits to the familialism in the sweatshop from two perspectives. One is that as one of the interviewees has mentioned, after all it is a workplace and is separated from

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[83] Kwan Lee, 143.

familial discussions. Even if the workers claim that they are like a family within the sweatshop, as one of the interviewees has pointed out that one always has to bear in mind that he/she is in the workplace and family is separate entity which cannot be completely shared in this context. The family is discussed in terms of sharing pleasant events or feelings about it whereas familial discussions are regarded as private matters of the family which should be kept inside.

> *We cannot tell everything to each other, work is work after all. We cannot talk about family things, we tell each other if something good happens. Çiçek*

The second limit to familialism is not embracing all the workers to the workshop family or embracing after a time period. Burawoy points out that "each worker is sucked into the distinctive set of activities and language" which he calls "shop-floor culture".[84] The adaptation to the shop-floor culture is more of an obligation for the newcomers than a choice as there is simply no other way to be recognized by the other workers and to set up relationships with them. There may emerge tensions among workers if there is a rejection to conform into the existing shop-floor culture or there is exclusion from the older members of the shop-floor. As Hülya points out, Sometimes a strong familial culture in the sweatshop may turn out to be a difficult structure to enter into for newcomers.

> *The atmosphere in the sweatshop is nice. But, there was a woman when I first came, Sevgi's sister-in-law. They were like a family. Most of them were relatives, they mistreated me and tried to overload me. They were all sitting around the same table but we were sitting at the corner. There was a woman and she was always creating tension. She was the type of person who humiliates the newcomers. She would not appreciate our work, she would degrade the machine that we adjusted. She was an expert and she said that they would feel her absence when she is gone. It's better now after she has gone. Hülya*

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[84] Michael Burawoy, *Manufacturing Consent: Changes in the Labor Process Under Monopoly Capitalism*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press), 1979, 64.

Even in the second workshop which is not based on a familial setting, there are traces of close friendships which take the place of the familial relationships that existed in the first sweatshop. This confirms that even the sweatshop regime is coercive and based on material relationships, there are still emotional bonds with which workers identify themselves with the workplace. Berna has been working in the second sweatshop for two years and she complains about the vulgar treatment of the owners. However, even one person whom she calls as an elder sister *(abla)* makes things easier for her within the unsupportive environment of the sweatshop.

> *I am sick and tired of them (the bosses). Actually, they are okay but I just cannot stand when they shout. I just like one person here, she is Canan Abla. I like her unduly. I like her so much that I may quit when she leaves a few months later because we will be so lonely then. She behaved very warmly to me when I first came here. We could not get along with a few people. Cana Abla lent a hand to me, she supported me. She listens t everyone's worries, she makes those hers. I sometimes get angry with her. She is too good, I can't be like her. Berna, (14), drawer and middler[85]*

However, the workers' perception of the owners and how they treat their workers depend on the relationship and other ties between the workers and the owners. Although four of the interviewees were complaining about the owners and their mistreatment in the second sweatshop, one of the interviewees had a completely different comment. That makes sense when one looks at the ties between the worker and the owner outside of the workplace. Seval and her family, as she mentioned were neighbors with the sweatshop owner for a long time. Her ideas about the owners were completely different than the other fur interviewees. She was also more optimistic about the friendships in the sweatshop and the picture she drew about the sweatshop was quite a positive one with an emphasis on a supportive setting.

> *It is quite boring to stay at home. Time goes by here. Friendships were really nice here. Everyone was supporting each other. Bosses are also really nice people. They are 21 year old neighbors of us. They value their workers. Seval, (21), has quitted working*

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[85] Drawer marks the parts of the clothes where additional work will be required, such as attaching a pocket. Middlers are the young, unskilled workers in the sweatshops who cuts the residual threads od the clothes after they are sewed, they carry the clothes from one worker to another and bring bobbins to machine operators.

This relates to the issue of what Kondo refers to as the necessity of embracing all the workers to secure "workers' loyalty" and to promote "identification" with the workplace.[86] In this case, owners have a double standard towards the workers and treat well some of them while being more hostile towards others. In other words, they draw a border through which they can exclude some of the workers from the sweatshop family. The ones who are included are selected on the basis of personal relationships outside of the work. Here, a long period of intimate living conditions as neighbors serves as a reason to privileged situation in the workplace.

5.2. Docile worker or a bit further?

In this section, I will elaborate on the notion of docility and I will argue that owners are not very interested in creating docility among workers to achieve efficient production since it is also for their advantage to let workers perform their identities in the workplace to make them feel a certain degree of autonomy. This autonomy together with the gendered familial setting gives room for consensual control. However, there are times that personal relationships overweigh production oriented concerns. As Kondo suggests, on the basis of her research in a Japanese company, the workplace "provides an internally differentiated structure of power and authority, and it serves as a circle of emotional attachment and a nodal point of identity."[87] Therefore, workplace is not only a point of production for the workers, but also a place with where they have emotional bonds with and where they perform their gendered identities.

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[86] Kondo, 203-4.
[87] Kondo, 175.

The important point here is that workers do not have only neutral worker identities but their identities are gendered. The way they identify themselves with their workplace is closely linked to both the gender regime of the workplace and outside. Familialism and intimate relationships within the sweatshop is a good strategy for the female workers as they feel more comfortable within this setting without challenging the gender regime.

Every single worker/individual has his/her own role within the sweatshop. There are elder sisters and brothers, younger ones whose behaviors are more tolerated as 'naughty' children, married ones and single ones, new-comers to the sweatshop who have joined just a couple of days before and older ones who have been working there for a few years. For instance, there was a single woman who was twenty five and whenever there was a joke about her remaining a spinster, she would reply that she could not entertain the others that much if she was a married woman. Then, they would reply that they would not give her anyone.

Yet, at the same time this heterogeneity has its own harmony within itself. Productivity is sustained through these rather emotional and humane relations and there is an informal contract among people in this structure. Behavioral codifications are not always set from upper levels of the hierarchy as different individuals choose or construct their own role in this production oriented space which has different orientations during the process. This fits to a definition of "modality: it implies an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising processes of the activity rather than its result."[88] Here, I mean, the only focus point is not production and the results of it, but interpersonal relationships are also subject to supervision by the owners and the workers. However, the aim of this supervision is not production oriented and owners

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[88] Foucault, 137.

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do not strive for creating a single type of worker which is like an assembly worker who is taken out of his/her humane characteristics and turned into a robot-like creature with the repetitive nature of the work. The aim is to secure a pleasant relationship among the workers and between the owners to have a strong basis of company which motivates people and makes the work bearable.

This picture adds up another dimension to the relation of "docility-utility"[89] by introducing other roles than the 'docile worker' without a total rejection or deviation from the disciplinary mechanisms in the workplace. Taking Foucault's claim that "discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies"[90] discipline produces not only "docile" bodies but various bodies as long as the produced bodies do not contest the principle of utility or efficiency. Any kind of worker is tolerable provided that its deviation from docility does not completely prevent him/her from working and producing. Even efficiency concerns can be compromised at the expense of maintaining good relations between workers and owners. All kinds of jokes and teases are acceptable and even welcomed during the work. Furthermore, little deviations from the standard behaviors or practices are the things that make the difficult, mostly repetitive, tiring and boring work in the sweatshops bearable.

Each individual has both solitude and cooperation simultaneously. It is far from the late eighteenth century idea of "individualizing partition" in the factories in which individuals were distributed in order to be isolated and mapped.[91] According to Foucault, these are "disciplinary tactics" which links the individual to a multiplicity to provide the necessary basis for "cellular power" to operate.[92] This is partly true for the sweatshop, since the

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[89] Foucault, 137.
[90] Foucault, 138.
[91] Foucault, 144.
[92] Foucault, 149.

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employer can easily follow each worker during the production as once the assembly line is set, everyone should focus and work at a minimum to get the work done. But it is not very foregrounded as the sweatshop regime is not that strict and gives room for the workers to move around during the work unlike the regimes generally seen in factories.

> *I used to say that I would definitely not work here, crowded, noisy ...We were not allowed to talk there during the work, it was a big sweatshop. You cannot stand up, you have to work constantly. That type of work is more tiring. I would not be able work at such a place with my current circumstances. Hülya*

Therefore, "control is achieved through internalized discipline of subordinates, who experience a certain degree of autonomy and legitimacy in their subjection to domination"[93] as is the case in South China factories observed by Kwan Lee. This certain degree of autonomy is necessary to gain the consent of the workers for their subjection to the disciplinary power in the sweatshop. Autonomy coupled with the familial relations reinforces the internalization to do well in the work and also makes it possible for personal characteristics like stubbornness to contribute to the production.

> *I am quite stubborn when it comes to my work. When someone shows me how to do something, I get frustrated if I cannot manage to do it. I strive to do it. I do it anyway, and I succeed in the end. I wish everyone was like me, struggles, I kept on by struggling. Most of the friends do not care. He/she would say 'what of it?' and flings off. At the end of the day, you have to do it well if you earn money out of it. You have to struggle for your livelihood, you have to do your best if you do not have enough. Çiçek*

As this interviewee emphasizes, the identification of the worker with the work goes sometimes beyond an extent that an employer can dictate. This is achieved through consensual relationships which produces a sense of self-regulation and self-management of the worker. The extent of the identification with the workplace widens so as to blur the demarcation line between the work and other spheres of life. As Edwards argues, "workers owe not only a hard day's work to the corporation but also their demeanor and effections."

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[93] Kwan Lee, 138.

That is to say, "control tends to be a much more totalitarian system – totalitarian in the sense of involving the total behavior of the worker. Hard work and deference are no longer enough; now the 'soulful' corporation demands the worker's soul, or at least the worker's identity."[94]

Thinking in Burawoy's terms, by accepting to participate in the game in the sweatshop, workers are already accepting a degree of subordination. Yet, my analysis of the familial and more generally personal relationships within the sweatshops as a gendered form of labor control offers an explanation for the need to deconstruct the category of the docile worker and rethink the dualism of worker and employer. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge not only the ideological structure of the workplace, but also the places where these ideological structures come from such as family. I claim that familial setting creates a more consensual relationship between the worker and the employer as opposed to a coercive one which is not necessarily efficient. Workers and owners think that it is important to establish humane relationships in order to create a healthy workplace.

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[94] Kunda, 15.

6. To tell the truth, I do not like this sweatshop at all. No one understands each other here.

In this chapter, I will argue that women's understanding of the work they do is heavily influenced by their thoughts and feelings about their living spaces and more generally about İstanbul. The more they identified themselves with İstanbul, the more optimistic ideas they had about their work. This, in turn, is closely related to their age when they came to İstanbul, their ethnicity and their experiences in İstanbul. My contention is, the fact that the regime of the second sweatshop was stricter and more coercive than the first one was linked to the conflict stemming from the ethnic difference (Turkish owner vs. Kurdish workers) between the owners and the workers (four of five women that I interviewed in the second sweatshop were of Kurdish origin). The more hostile treatment of the sweatshop owners coupled with the factors that I have mentioned above resulted in many pessimistic ideas about the work and about their lives in general on the part of the women in this sweatshop compared to the other. I will focus on ethnic differences between the workers and the owners which I think explain the reasons for a more coercive regime in the second workshop. Such differences are not explicit but one can discern traces of them in the narratives of the women. The more obvious finding is that ethnicity matters in women's perceptions of their workplace since it is the main place where they socialize. Either consciously or unconsciously, women's perceptions reflect their experiences related to their ethnicity, their workplace and their social life in general.

6.1. People there were really different than the ones in İstanbul

I interviewed five women in the second sweatshop, four of whom were of Kurdish origin. Unlike the first sweatshop they were more distant from the work they were doing, had negative ideas about the owners and the workplace and openly stressed their dislike of the

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owners and their treatment. They held in common the fact that they had spent their childhood in other cities and come to İstanbul as teenagers in the second sweatshop, whereas most of the women were either İstanbul born or had come to İstanbul in their childhood in the first one. They all uttered their negative feelings about İstanbul and their desire to go back to the cities in which they had lived previously

The expression of distrust was quite clear in their narratives. Mostly, they accused Istanbul and its people of being evil and insincere. Actually, they had various reasons to be offensive because of their unfortunate experiences in Istanbul. The quotes below belong to two Kurdish women - sisters both working in the second sweatshop. They quite clearly mention their hatred towards İstanbul. The words of the first woman points out that she had negative feelings even before coming to İstanbul. That was partly because of her desire to study more and she knew that she had to work in İstanbul. In both of the narratives, there is an emphasis of their longing to the warmth of the people in Manisa[95], where they had lived before İstanbul. The first woman's bad experiences in İstanbul are connected to "seeing the real faces of the people". The second woman complains about the skepticism of the people in İstanbul and declares her discomfort about people's rudeness.

I ran away from home, I did not want to come to İstanbul. I wanted to study and have a profession. I hate İstanbul, I do not like it at all. I like Manisa, the place where I grew up, very much. The warmth of the people there… I discovered it more after I came here and saw the real faces of the people. I would love to stay there. Here, because İstanbul is so big, people get lost. Manisa was so pure, the people were safe. I experienced lots of things in İstanbul … I experienced bad things. I used drugs for two months. Then, I was treated. From the friends in the workplace. Whatever has happened, happened in Karayolları. They gave them to me as painkillers. Then, I was addicted. Şule (17), drawer and middler

I did not like Istanbul at all. I could not get used to it. I didn't see anywhere else than Gazi. I would like to go back to Manisa. Its people, its air, its water… People take an immediate liking to each other there. People there were really different than the ones in İstanbul. If you

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[95] Manisa is a small city in the Aegean region of Turkey.

look at someone now, he/she would get angry and ask 'why are you looking?'. If I had the chance, I would not even think for a second, I would immediately go back. Berna (14), drawer and middler

There were quite clear reflections of the dislike of the city and the people to their feelings about their work and the sweatshop. Also, the female workers in the first sweatshop had mentioned their reason to work as *obligation*. However, here, it was more than obligation, it was rather a heavy burden on their shoulders that they were ready to get rid of in the first instance. The fact that they had little or no interpersonal relationships in the sweatshop unlike in the other one, added another reason for their complaints about their work. Şule openly says that she does not like the sweatshop at all and she adds that no one understands anyone else there. She and her sisters had to work harder, especially after their father had a work accident and became permanently incapacitated. Her wish is to pay off her father's debts and start living in the flat that they are paying for as a new beginning.

Actually, I am not very talkative to my family. I like silence a lot. To tell the truth, I do not like this sweatshop at all. No one understands anyone else here. Indeed, I do not want to work at all but there is no other way. The only thing that I want is to finish my father's debts. Work and work, they do not end. Shall we pay it or my uncle's debts. We get 500 lira from here, the rent of the house is 250 lira, shopping, it narrowly covers. Maybe it would be a new beginning when we enter that house. Because, we have experienced lots of bad things. Şule

The mechanisms of solidarity and cheering up each other when one is downcast were hardly ever mentioned by the female workers in the second sweatshop as opposed to the first one. The heavy burden of the work and the discontents about the workplace were left to the women so that they had to find other ways to keep going. The affiliation with their previous cities was mentioned by the women as a way of escape in some cases. Aysel was a young Kurdish woman who was born in southeastern region of Turkey and then migrated to Bursa with her family. They have lived in a tent in Bursa for ten years and she has six siblings. Then, they came to İstanbul six years ago and since then she has been working in the sweatshops. She is a secondary school graduate and she explains their reason for coming to

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İstanbul as having more job opportunities there. Even though their living conditions were not better in Bursa, she misses Bursa because as she explains she was able to spend time on the things that she enjoyed and was going to school there. Bursa is still a place to escape for her whenever she feels overwhelmed.

> *I feel overwhelmed here. I was in a situation that I could not even talk to anybody. I went to Bursa for a few days and it helped. We had a garden in Bursa. I like to work with the garden, to plant flowers. I wasn't working at that time. I was spending all my time in the garden. If I had the chance, I would like to go back to Bursa. We came to İstanbul because there are more job opportunities here. Aysel (20), drawer and middler*

Yet, no matter how the sweatshop is far from being based on good personal relationships, the interviewees point out the necessity of having good company at least with some of their coworkers. Even if they do not claim that company or good relationships among each other and between workers and owners is something which is promoted and reinforced by the owners or the workers, women still regard these things as considerable mechanisms to cope with the coercive workplace regime. Aysel points out the mistreatment of the owners in case of faulty work. In contrast to the first sweatshop, workers stress this as an offensive and disturbing situation. However, there is much less emphasis on this in the first sweatshop which is considered as small discussions as it ever happens. Apparently, the tolerance of the owners is much less in the second one as it comes out from each interview. One more point is as Aysel mentions, the company in the sweatshop is not strong enough to make them feel secure and they can easily become down in case of discussions with the owners. Still, there are a few people for everyone to prevent them from feeling completely alone. Whereas in the first sweatshop, company was at the heart of the relationships in the shop-floor and the extent of company was spread through all the workers, friendship networks in the second one was much more partial and fewer.

There are discussions about money at home. And they get angry with you if you do something wrong at work, you feel offended. I don't have intimate relationships with the people here. There are just 3-4 people that I get on well with. I would probably go nuts if they were not here. It is really difficult to work in the sweatshop. But, you dally with something here, it's better than slumbering at home. Aysel

The discourse of missing the 'good old days' was also prevalent in the narratives of the women in the first sweatshop but it was different from the ones in the second one in the sense that they did not speak of suffering from their current situation. The extent of missing was limited by a rather nostalgic understanding of the past and the less demanding nature of the work they were doing then. Hülya from the first sweatshop recalls her rather childish enthusiasm about İstanbul when she was living in the village and confesses admiring the lives of the people in İstanbul. However, after coming to İstanbul and starting to work, her ideas have completely changed. She misses every single detail about her village, even the work she had to do in the village which made her cry with exhaustion then.

We were working in the farm when we lived in the village and we were crying because of exhaustion. We were saying that the ones in İstanbul were enjoying their lives, going out, having fun but now I feel very bored. Even if taking out the animals there, fresh air, your own work ... I miss everything, sitting with the neighbors, having tea, cleaning the gardens, everything ... Hülya (27), overlocker

Furthermore, in the first sweatshop, the missing narrative was more focused on the natural beauty of the place they lived in before as opposed to the emphasis on the purity and warmness of the people in the second one. In the first one, they tend to evaluate their life in İstanbul as fine and even better for themselves as they get used interacting with more people and become more open to their environment even though they acknowledge the fact that their move to İstanbul was rather an obligation for them emerging from financial difficulties. However, as one of the interviewees have mentioned, the obligation to come to İstanbul can turn out to be an opportunity.

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I miss the village. A person would always miss the place that he/she was born and grew up. Everything was alright there. Working on the garden, green places, its air is somehow different. We were dealing with the garden, digging, planting, hoeing. We had animals, feeding, milking. I prefer the sweatshop. Because, you cannot earn much there. I would still like to come to İstanbul even if there was not a money problem. You open up, I was very shy, I didn't use to talk to strangers. Serap (18), middler

The identification with Istanbul and the assessment of the self within the city becomes more optimistic when I asked the opinions of the workers who were İstanbul born. The personal relationships within the neighborhood, the tradition of close relationships as it is a shantytown and familiarity with the environment as a whole are the factors which were all counted as the sources of positive opinions about İstanbul. Seval was a young woman who was born in İstanbul and has lived there since then. She has worked in the second sweatshop for one and a half year and then quitted because of long working hours and because she wanted to prepare for the university entrance exams. She has known one of the owners for a long time as he is their close neighbor. She identifies a lot with Gazi district (where the sweatshops are located - she also lives there) and she regards it as a huge family.

Maybe it is a weird thing, but I like Gazi. At least there is neighborliness. You go somewhere else, and there is none, I mean it's all over. Here, since it's a shantytown, it's like a family. You can go up to your neighbor and get something. I go out of the house and I know everyone and talk to them until the place I am going. Seval (21), has quitted working

These are all of great importance for the women's attitude towards their work. As the identification with İstanbul increases because of several reasons that I have mentioned above and as the opinions towards the city become more positive, the opinions towards the work and the workplace become more optimistic as well. However, this evaluation process does not work only with relation to women's opinions about the city. The way they are treated by their coworkers and owners is substantial in the analysis of their attitude towards their work. I see the difference between the regional origin or ethnicity of the workers and employers as the

basis for mistreatment of the owners or their preference of a more repressive sweatshop regime.

The fact that most of the workers were originally from the same city and were Alevi as the owners in the first sweatshop facilitated the preference of the owners to set up the workshop as a familial space. This may also be related to the egalitarian philosophy of Aleviness and their emphasis on equality of men and women. Although it is difficult to argue that Alevi culture is a perfectly gender equal one (if there ever exists such a culture), it is more egalitarian at least in the religious rituals as men and women participate together.

However, Turkish owners of the second sweatshop did not prefer to have a sweatshop family with their Kurdish workers. My insights on this issue were reinforced when I went to interview women in the second sweatshop in the weekend and owner's wife told me that the ones who were there could not really answer my questions properly and that they were all "stupid". The preoccupation of the Turkish stereotype against Kurdish women as uneducated and suppressed pop up in the conversation with the wife of the owner of the sweatshop. It was after I started the interviews that I realized all the women present there were Kurdish. At that point, The fact that Kurdish region is the poorest and discourses about the 'underdevelopment' of the region, comes out here as an assumption that Kurds are 'undereducated' and 'underdeveloped' as well. The people who come from Kurdish region are perceived as 'backward' through the discourses of 'underdevelopment. Owner's wife's comments about the Kurdish women in the second sweatshop should be evaluated within this context.

Below quotes belong to three different women working in the second sweatshop. The first one is an İstanbul born woman whose family has been neighbors with the owner of the sweatshop since she was born. The second and third women are of Kurdish origin and have been working there for two years. The narrative of the first women dramatically differs from the other two women obviously because of the double standard of the sweatshop owners' treatment of workers. Apparently, the first woman has a privileged situation within the sweatshop because of her family's close relationship with the owner. In other words, her being the daughter of the neighbor situates her inside the workshop family which is more restricted in this sweatshop as compared to the other one. This goes back to my point about the limits of familialism in the previous chapter.

It is quite boring to stay at home. Time goes by here. Friendships were really nice here. Everyone supports each other. The bosses are also really nice people. They are 21 year old neighbors of ours. They value their workers. Seval

I am sick and tired of them (the bosses). Actually, they are okay but I just cannot stand when they shout. I just like one person here, she is Canan Abla. I like her unduly. I like her so much that I may quit when she leaves a few months later because we will be so lonely then. She behaved very warmly to me when I first came here. We could not get on well with a few people. Cana Abla lent a hand to me, she supported me. Berna

To tell the truth, I do not like this sweatshop at all. No one understands anyone else here. Indeed, I do not want to work at all but there is no other way. The only thing that I want is to finish my father's debts. Work and work, they do not end. Şule

6.2. Not everything comes true by just wanting

In this section, I will focus on the traces of pessimism in the narratives of the women who are working in the second sweatshop. Because of their bad experiences of İstanbul and their dislike towards its people that I have discussed in the previous section, their pessimism does

not remain within the borders of the sweatshop but is reflected in their expectations and future plans.

One of the Kurdish women expresses a deep enthusiasm for politics and history. However, her realistic and even pessimistic comment that sometimes having a desire for something is unfortunately not enough to get it signals her experiences of feeling strong barriers that prevent her to achieve her goals and be what she wants to be.

> *I will start school in June. Actually, I want it so much, but ... I read books about politics, about history. They are about Ecevit's life.[96] I love to read about politics. My father always wanted me to become a lawyer but I had to work when monetary situation went worse. I also wanted that. But it did not come true, not everything comes true by just wanting. I work and go to school at the same time. My grades were alright, and sometimes I was skipping classes, but I regret so much actually. Şule*

It is striking how she started to tell about a painful experience of her father and related this unpleasant experience to her distrust towards people. She revolts against the prejudice of the people towards Kurds coming from her own experience. Her distrust even to her parents is quite deep that is coming from both the ethnic violence that she has witnessed as a child and also her experience of drug addiction caused by her friends in her previous workplace. Her revolt comes out as her desire to be a *revolutionist* and *to stand up for her rights*. The extent of her distrust towards people is so great that she prefers to tell her deepest feelings only to her diary.

> *It is a good thing to be a revolutionist. To stand up for your rights, to partake in demonstrations... To partake in demonstrations is not a good thing actually. There are also fascists. They are the ones who do not keep their words and fights in sight. I know from my father. My father does pick and shovel work. He used to work in the mountains. They (the police) took him and my uncle one day while they were working claiming that they were terrorists and they beaten them. They came towards the morning with an unrecognizable face.*

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[96] She refers to Bülent Ecevit who was a Turkish politician and leader of Republican People's Party and then founded Democratic Left Party and became the Prime Minister of Turkey for the fourth time between 1999-2002.

You know, Şırnak is a Kurdish region, so everyone calls us PKK.[97] I cried a lot. Whenever I cry, I go to my room and tell my sorrow to my (mobile) phone. I do not trust anybody, neither my mother nor my father, no one. The things I experience, I do, all my things, I tell to my diary. I keep a diary since I came to İstanbul. Şule

She is also very bitter about men because of her history of drug addiction. She blames them because of making use of her purity and trust. Unlike her colleagues, she is very distant to the idea of marriage and having children. She plans a future with her family. As her sister told me during the interview she wants be a lawyer and save her sisters from the sweatshop.

I don't want children. I don't like them at all. I would like a house and a job. I hate men, I cannot get along with them at all. Whatever happened to me, they happened because of them. I do not trust them. I would like to live with my family in the future. Şule

My sister is starting to school again. She is very enthusiastic. She wants to be a lawyer. She says that she is not going to be the ones who work here and save us. I would also start if I want but it's difficult to go to school at weekends and work during the week. Berna

The emphasis on desperation is much more prevalent in the narratives of the women in the second sweatshop. They feel trapped by the work that they don't want to do and do not even attempt to look for other opportunities. The material conditions and lack of education are the main factors of their lack of confidence which prevent them to strive for better working conditions and jobs.

We come here on Saturdays. We sit and learn to operate the machines. I like my job but it takes lots of time. On one hand, I plan to quit but on the other hand, I think of my family's situation in case I quit. If I quit this job, I can work in a shop or in an office. It comes true when one wants something very much but we do want and it does not come true. There is nothing that we can do. If I go to somewhere else, they will pay even less than what I get here. I cannot tell for sure since I haven't tried. Aysel

It was striking that all the women who were in the second sweatshop on Saturday were of Kurdish origin. They do not get extra payment when they come to work on Saturdays because

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[97] PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan: Kurdistan Workers' Party) is a militant Kurdish organization founded in 1978.

they come to "learn how to operate the machines". However, while learning they also work. They hope to be promoted to more skilled tasks to earn more. Yet, the period that they have to work as unskilled workers and learn to operate machines is tied to the decision of the sweatshop owners which is arbitrary. Kurdish women in this case are the group that is most likely to accept this not very promising situation because of their relatively harder financial situation. Their being young and having to work for their families makes it easier to take the occasion from the owners' side.

In the narratives of Kurdish women, their feeling of distance towards the people around them and towards people in İstanbul generally, the feeling of exclusion and subjection to doubts and prejudice because of being identified with 'terrorists' and otherization as Kurds were prevalent features unlike the other women. Their discontents about their work and desires for themselves come out as their wishes for their children in the future. They want their children to be well-educated and actualize their interrupted goals.

> *I would not send my child to work, I would educate him/her. I would not like her/him to experience what I do here. I don't do anything, I just work but, I wouldn't let him/her to work. I would even sell my clothes should the occasion arise. I would send him/her to school even if he/she did not want to. He/she shouldn't remain ignorant. My parents wanted me to study very much. Even the teachers... The headmaster called my parents after we came here and asked them to send me back. I had promised to the headmaster that I was going to study but I couldn't keep my promise. Berna*

As the interviews point out, the extent of pessimism is huge among women in the second sweatshop. This pessimism is related to several factors including the ethnic origin of the women, the number of years they have spent in İstanbul and their personal experiences regarding İstanbul and its people. These factors have a serious impact on how they perceive their work, the workplace and the employers and their expectations for their future and for the life in general. The lack of a supportive environment in the workplace and the mistreatment of

the owners deeply effect women in a negative manner when they come together with already experienced negativities.

Unlike the first sweatshop, women in the second sweatshop widely give voice to their complaints about the owners. This was mainly because the strategies of control differed dramatically in two different workshops. Whereas in the first one, the intimate relations among the workers and the owners within a familial setting more conformed to the consensual relationship, there was a more distant, formal or even repressive regime in the second one. The complaints of the workers were covering a wide range of issues in the second sweatshop from the low quality food to owners' rejection to pay their wages in urgent situations. Some of the workers have mentioned that the owners ordered beans and rice for lunch during the whole summer the previous year which no one wanted to eat and they had to spend most of their wages to get something to eat for lunch from the shops nearby.

The strict controls of arrival and leaving times in the second one ensured by the punching of the time cards by the workers which was not present in the first one. Also, there were papers hang in the entrance of the second one strictly mentioning that if a worker did not come to work one day without informing the employer, then he/she will be fired and every informed day of not coming to work for any reason would be deducted from the wage.

In the relatively autonomous first sweatshop, workers also could speak and walk around to get something they needed whereas speaking was restricted to work related issues in the second one. The intimacy in the first sweatshop appeared also in solidarity among workers as others work more if one person wants to leave earlier or cannot come for a day. The culture of

solidarity was a crucial feature of the first sweatshop whereas it was much less in the second one.

The negative ideas of the workers and owners towards each other were far from the close relationships that were present in the first sweatshop. The words of the owner's wife was a disclosing the hostile attitude towards the workers as she referred to the women workers that were present when I went there to interview as "the stupid ones". This hostility was a clearly ethnicized one as the women she was referring to were all Kurdish. Moreover, this tension was further increased by the self-perception of Kurdish women and their expectations and prejudices that they are excluded because of their identities.

The fact that the local origins of the workers and the owners were similar in the first sweatshop but different in the second one is one of the factors that is one of the reasons that explains the setting of different sweatshop regimes in these two places. Whereas the shared local origin facilitated to set up a familial sweatshop based on trust relationships in the first one, ethnic difference in the second one reinforced a stricter regime to be chosen by the owner

7. Conclusion

This paper is an attempt to look at the issue of labor control in the sweatshops of İstanbul from a perspective that takes into account and makes sense of gender and ethnicity. I have offered explanations for different labor control strategies, mechanisms and practices - ranging from 'familial' to traditional labor control mechanisms. This study draws on Burawoy's notion of ideological structure of the workplace and emphasizes the necessity of taking other ideologies into account as that are not only produced in the workplace, but rather originate in societal and traditional relationships produced in families and communities (such as gender and ethnicity). Whereas gendered relationships and practices can be seen more easily in the sweatshops, ethnicity is generally more hidden and requires a careful reading and analysis.

Taking these into account, I argue that familialism is a core ideology in the first sweatshop - and a purely gendered one – which ensures consensual control of the female workers. In addition, the fact that the owners and most of the workers' being a part of Alevi minority community which has significant role to connect workers and owners around a shared identity in the first sweatshop may provide an explanation for the question of why a more familial approach was adopted there. The importance of participation and collective religious practices of Alevis which do not seclude women unlike Sunnis in Alevi culture may have had an impact on the creation of familialism and in turn, on the positive ideas of the female workers towards their workplace through supportive personal relationships, but this is a question deserving more research that was not possible within the scope of this study.

The hostile environment in the second sweatshop signals an obvious tension between the owners and the workers. Since there was no clear indication that owners were ethnically

discriminating against workers, and since hostility towards Kurds is widespread in Turkey, was not only about the workplace regime, my inferences came from the women's self-perceptions of their way of experiencing their Kurdish identity and from the fact that at weekends it was only young Kurdish women who came to the sweatshop without any payment.

It is crucial to acknowledge that gender, ethnicity and the subtle labor control mechanisms around which they revolve is an important issue that requires careful and detailed analysis. This study is a first step towards analyzing these subtle mechanisms. To understand the broader structures and ideologies in this process, further research is needed focusing on families, the places of socialization within Gazi district that might affect the way power relations are constructed in the workplace.

Appendices

Appendix I: Interview Questions

1) Where are you from?

2) Do you miss home?(if she is not from İstanbul) What do you miss?

3) What about your family? How big/small?

4) How does a day during the week pass? What do you do?

5) What do you think about the sweatshop environment?

6) What do you think about your coworkers here?

7) What do you think about the owners?

8) What do you do in the weekends?

9) What do you do with your family in your free time?

10) What do you like most/least about the work?

11) What would you do if you had the chance to do the work that you want to do?

12) What would you want if you had the chance to start your life again from the beginning?

13) What are your wishes, expectations for the future?

14) How about your children? (if she has)

15) What would you wish for your children in the future - options, opportunities, expectations?

Appendix II: Background Information about the Interviewees

Çiçek: She is 25 and works in the first sweatshop as an overlocker. She has been working in garment for seven years. She is one of the owners' wife's nephew. She was born in İstanbul. Her family is from Sivas and she is Alevi.

Hülya (27): She has been working as a overlocker in the first sweatshop for almost one year together with her husband. She is pregnant and will give birth in July. She is from Black Sea Region and has come to İstanbul to work five years ago.

Serap (18): Serap was a newcomer in the first sweatshop with her two sisters. She had come to Istanbul four months ago and it had just been two weeks that she started working there. She works as a middler.

Sevgi (25): She works as an overlocker in the first sweatshop. She was born in İstanbul. Her family is from Sivas and she is Alevi. She is married and her husband works in garment as well.

Aysel (20): Aysel was a young Kurdish woman who was born in southeastern region of Turkey and then migrated to Bursa with her family. They have lived in a tent in Bursa for ten years and she has six siblings. Then, they came to İstanbul six years ago and since then she has been working in the sweatshops. She is a secondary school graduate and she explained their reason for coming to İstanbul as having more job opportunities there. She has been in İstanbul for six years and has been working since then.

Seval (21): She has quitted working in the second sweatshop after she has worked for one and half year. She was born in İstanbul and she is a high school graduate. She plans to take university entrance exams and wants be a social sciences teacher. Her family has been neighbors with the sweatshop owner for 21 years.

Berna (14): She works as a drawer and middler in the second sweatshop together with her two sisters. She is from Şırnak which is a city in the southeastern part of Turkey and she is Kurdish. She has been in İstanbul for two years and working. She is a primary school graduate. Her family has lived in Manisa, an Aegean city in western Turkey for 12 years before coming to İstanbul.

Şule (17): She is Berna's elder sister. She plans to restart school this summer and work at the same time.

Cevat (30): He is one of the owners of the first sweatshop. He is married and has a daughter. He is from Sivas and Alevi.

Mahmut (38): He is the other owner of the first sweatshop. He is Cevat's brother-in-law. He is married and has two children. He is from Sivas and Alevi as well.

Aydın: He is one of the owners of the second sweatshop. He is married and has four children. He is from Black Sea Region.

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