THE INFORMAL WASTE COLLECTION SECTOR AND THE WASTE PICKERS: A CASE STUDY IN ANKARA

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This thesis, departing from the current concerns for the dissolving of the informal waste collection sector under the disturbance of neoliberal urban restructuring, focuses on the organization of the informal waste sector and its inner dynamics. The thesis elaborates on the formation of that sector, the history of that formation, how it operates, the specific ways and reasons people are recruited and stay in this sector, for the reason that the author of this thesis believes only the exploration of those dynamics can shed light on the possible future projections about waste pickers. Another motivation of this thesis is the urge to change the perceptions about waste picking and waste pickers, that can be summarized as, waste picking is a marginal, disorganized and stable activity, performed by independent individuals which soon be dissolved as more modern systems of waste collection is implemented.

The findings of this study shows that, the power relations that the informal waste collection sector is built upon both among networks tied to each other with "bounded solidarity" and among workers in the sector who are tied to each other by "moral obligations" reveal that the informal waste collection sector in Ankara is an established and a very well organized sector. Another finding of this study is that the waste picking is like a protection shield of the poor to avoid more harsh conditions of poverty, yet regardless of the waste pickers' position in the hierarchical scheme, it has a magnet affect on altering the social exclusion of waste pickers as it articulates the experiences of forced migration and poverty. Moreover, the ways which they are threated as the "threatening other," decreases the possibilities of incorporation and creates mistrust relations among the parties.

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Başlık: Enformel Atık Toplama Sektörü ve Çöp Toplayıcılar: Ankara'da Örnek Olay İncelemesi

Bu tez Ankara'da enformel atık toplayıcılığı sektörünün işleyişini ele almaktadır. Bu çabanın sebebi 2005 yılından beri değiştirilerek yürürlüğe konmuş ve 2008'de son halini almış olan Ambalaj Atıklarının Yönetimi yönetmeliğinin enformel olarak işleyen bu sektörü ve bu sektörün büyük bir çoğunluğunu oluşturan çöp toplayıcılarının/atık kağıt işçilerinin geçimini elinden alacağına dair bir endişeden kaynaklanmaktadır. Yeni sistem, ambalaj atıklarının kaynaklarından ayrı toplanmasını lisansı Çevre Bakanlığı tarafından verilen büyük şirketler tarafından gerçekleştirilmesini, büyük şirketlerin çevre derneği olan ÇEVKO'nun denetleyiciliğe bırakılmasını ve tüm ambalaj atıklarının kayıt altına alınmasını hedeflenmektedir. Bu çerçevede, çöp toplayıcılarına sunulan seçenekler, sadece çöp toplayıcılığı yapan kişilerin küçük bir kısmını hedefleyerek büyük şirketlerde alt sözleşme ile istihdam edilmeleri yoluyla sisteme dahil olmak veyahut da kendi örgütlenmelerini güçlendirerek dünyanın çeşitli yerlerinde olduğu gibi kooperatifler kurarak belediye atık yönetimi sistemlerine kendilerini dahil etmektir.

Bu tez görünürde olan seçeneklerin mümkünlüğünü sorgulamak amacıyla Ankara'daki enformel atık toplayıcılığı sektörünün iç dinamiklerine bakmaktadır. Ancak bu dinamikler anlaşılırsa önlerindeki seçeneklerin tartışılabileceği öne sürülmektedir. Çalışmanın bir başka amacı ise, hakkında çok az şey bilinen çöp toplayıcılığı hakkındaki marjinal, durağan, organize olmamış, her an çözülebilir, ve yoksulluğa bireysel bir çözüm olduğuna dair ön yargıların sorgulanmasıdır.

Araştırmanın bulguları, gerek enformel örgütlenmedeki etnik kökene dayalı kapalı grupların "sınırlı dayanışma"ya dayanan ağları arasındaki hiyerarşi, gerek depo temelinde "ahlaki zorunluluk"lara dayanan değişim ilişkileri, gerekse de çöp işinde olmaktan ve bu işe başlamanın sebeplerinin tümünden kaynaklanan ve yoksullukla birleşerek artan sosyal dışlanma mekanizmalarının belediye atık sistemine çöp toplayıcılarının katılımına dair her iki seçeneğinin de mümkün olmadığını göstermektedir. Ayrıca, bahsi geçen iç dinamiklerin yönetmelikte tanımlanan aktörler ve çöp toplayıcıları arasında yarattığı güven eksikliği de bu mümkünsüzlüğe bir sebep olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır.

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Were they really disgusted of garbage? I think not. As they passed by on the street, they secretly envied those people who mingle the garbage. Garbage was full of uncertainties and oppurtunities. Who know what treasures were hidden in between milions of garbage bags?[1]

[1] Murat Menteş, *Dublörün Dilemması* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2010), pp.64-65. *Tr. Çöplük'ten sahiden iğreniyorlar mıydı? Bence hayır. Yolda yürürken rastladıkları çöp karıştıran kimselere gizliden gizliye imreniyorlardı. Çöpler belirsizlikler ve imkanlarla doluydu. Milyonlarca çöp torbasının arasında kim bilir ne defineler vardı?.*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis focuses on the collection of package wastes and how it is informally organized. I examine how the recent neoliberal transformation of the package waste management system has affected the informal sector of package waste collection in Ankara. I especially focus on waste pickers, providing a short discussion on their incorporation into the municipal waste management system.

Due to the novel legislation of the Control of Package and Package Waste Management Law implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 2005 and revised in both 2007 and 2008, the collection, storage, separation and recycling of package wastes were handed over to urban entrepreneurs under the monitoring of municipalities. Most relevant to the concerns of this thesis is the fact that the legislation on the Control of Package Waste Management appears to be a threat to the already existing informal recycling system and to the waste pickers as a broad category who are being deprived of their source of income. However, before delving into this question, I first discuss the broader dynamics within which the new legislation on package waste management is to be understood.

Waste as it is conceptualized today is not only about clearing away, but about defining, elaborating, and finding resolutions to an urban problem. Moreover, it has become a commodity in relation to spheres of health, social life, politics, ecology and

security[2] as well as economy. Today waste picking and reusing organic and inorganic wastes are connected to environmentalist concerns realizing themselves in urban restructuring policies as phenomena of "actually existing neoliberalism."[3]The new Turkish legislation on waste management also emerged more specifically to the concepts of "ecological modernization" and "integrated and sustainable waste management."

The Idea of Ecological Modernization and Its Reflection on Municipal Waste Management in Turkey

The Control of Package Waste Management was implemented first in 2005 as a part of the European Union accession period that foresees ecological modernization in the framework of integrated sustainable waste management. The idea of ecological modernization first was introduced by Martin Janicke in the 1970s in a Municipal Council where Berlin's environmental modernization was discussed.[4] Modernization of urban waste systems was defined within five primary processes[5] by Janicke. The first process mentioned the change in the roles of technology and science that is science and technology are used not for repairing the damage that it caused, but in

[2] Neşe Özgen, "Kentte Yeni Yoksulluk ve Çöp İnsanları," *Toplum ve Bilim*, no.89 (Summer 2001), p.91.

[3] Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore, "Cities and the Geographies of 'Actually Existing Neoliberalism'," *Antipode* 34, no.3 (July 2002), pp. 356-386.

[4] Anne Scheinberg and Justine Anschtütz, "Slim Pickin's: Supporting Waste Pickers in the Ecolocial Modernization of Urban Waste Management Systems," *International Journal of Technology Management and Sustainable Development* 5, no. 3 (2006), p. 258.

[5] A.P.J. Mol and S. David, "Introduction" in *Ecological Modernisation around the World*, ed. Mol and Sonnenfeld (London and Portland, Oregon: Frank Case Publishers, n.d), p.3-10 cited in ibid.

preventing it in the first stage of design by socio-technical approaches with environmental considerations.

Secondly, he stated that there was an increasing importance of economic agents and market dynamics as carriers of ecological modernization. The reason was that the socio-technical approaches of technology and sciences implemented for land- filling for example had very high costs. Third, Janicke mentioned the declining role of nation-state which in turn gives more opportunities to non-state actors to operate the managerial, regulatory, administrative functions of the state. As a result, fourthly, social movements became involved in public and private decision making processes and made political and social pressures. Civil society also can mobilize stakeholders in waste management. Lastly, Janicke draws attention to the change in how the issue of waste is problematized in ecological modernization. It is not about how to get rid of the waste, but about how to reduce its impact on the environment.

The framework that is provided for the functioning of such ecological modernization is the so-called integrated and sustainable waste management. It brings together stakeholders such as local authorities, non-governmental organizations, community-based organizations, service users, the private informal and formal sector and donor agencies to harmoniously operate in the technical, environmental, health, economic, socio-cultural, institutional and political aspects of generation, separation, collection, transfer, transport, disposal, reduction, re-use, recycling and recovery of wastes in process and time.[6]

[6] Scheinberg and Anschtütz, p. 260.

The idea of ecological modernization contains the risks of the isolation or even elimination of weaker actors by the stronger stakeholders.[7] Another problem with the idea of ecological modernization is it proposes a market-oriented solution that assumes that civil society will start to operate instead of the state as the state withdraws from economic relations. This idea, as compatible as it is with the neoliberal ideology, ignores the economic and environmental contribution of waste pickers to recycling for centuries and assumes the market forces will take care of both waste and the people who deal with it. However, ecological modernization has to produce a community-based formula rather than a market-oriented solution. As Lidskog states, "Even in those extreme cases when it seems as if nature itself reacts against the human degradation of it- a kind of basic 'reality-kicks-back realism- environmental destruction does not force upon us one single interpretation of its origins, essence and consequences, nor one possible way of dealing with it."[8] Ecological modernization in the framework of integrated and sustainable waste management seems and is presented as embracing the nature and as humanity paying its debt to nature for the destruction that it has caused over centuries; however, the ways it is governmentalized and put into action is as not merely technical but also political.

In Turkey, a decade before the implementation of the Legislation on Package Waste Management in 2005 there were some ecology-friendly attempts to deal with waste as the need was acknowledged. The turning point was the devastating

[7] Ibid., p.259.

[8] Rolf Lidskog, "Re-naturalization of Society? Environmental Challenges for Sociology," *Current Sociology* 49, no.119 (January 2001), p. 129.

explosion in April, 28 1993 in Ümraniye, İstanbul, which caused the death of 39 *gecekondu* (shanty town) dwellers near the area. According to a study[9] by Turkish Municipal Association- Konrad Adenauer Charity on the collection, destruction and assessment of solid wastes in local governments, 448 of the 676 municipalities interviewed removed their wastes by dumping it into open-space until 1994, which actually was the reason of the explosion. The study also notes how reducing, recycling and regular storage of wastes increased in 1994. However, this was only a slight change in terms of recycling; rather, it was an intervention to the collection of household waste in a less environmentally hazardous way. Although the Regulation of Solid Waste Management was implemented by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in 1991, it was not taken seriously by the local governments and of course the social, economic and technical resources were missing for governing a sustainable environment project.

Back in the 1990s the issue of waste management was brought up in the media in Turkey as a result of the privatization attempts in the municipal sector. As the municipal services started to become privatized, the tendency for subcontract work increased and the municipal waste workers of both İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Adana and Eskişehir went on strike against temporary contracts and for better income and social security. The strike was held in August, 1991 and lasted for 14 days. That means under the hot summer sun, the municipal waste lay for 14 days which caused public reaction and was discussed for all the 1992 summer by the columnists in the newspapers. The center of the discussion was how much a person

[9] Türk Belediyecilik Derneği- Konrad Adenauer Vakfı Mahalli İdareler Eğitim ve Geliştirme Merkezi, *Yerel Yönetimlerde Katı Atıkların Toplanması ve İmhası* (Ankara: 1994).

with no professional skills, here municipal waste workers were meant, could demand a salary that was equivalent to that of the highest degree civil servant. Another topic was about whether workers could continue strike even if they were creating a situation that threatens public health. In the booklet Mess (*Türkiye Metal Sanayicileri Sendikası*) published about the strike, advocated the need for privatization in the municipal waste services for both better services and better ecology.[10] So, legislation of Control of Package Waste Management (2008) is an enlarged version of the Regulation of Solid Waste Management (1991) that also covered recycling additional to collection and disposal of wastes by taking it away from municipalities' managerialism and giving it to private "entrepreneurialism."[11] It also is an extension of similar mentality that does not privilege ecological and societal needs over profit; on the contrary, they pave the way for the commercialization of ecological needs for profit.

The New Legislation: An Example of Creative Destruction

The legislation Control of Package and Package Waste Management (Ambalaj ve Ambalaj Atıkların Kontrolü Yönetmeliği 2008), to explain briefly, determines targets for the increase in package waste recycling, gives definitions of the necessary concepts, and assigns duties and obligations to its addressees. However, the main objective of the legislation is actually to formalize and regulate the ongoing and already established informal waste sector, and re-distribute the

[10] MESS, *Belediye Çöp Grevi* (İstanbul: Tuğrul Basınevi, 1992).

[11] I use the concept 'entrepreneurialism' as David Harvey uses it to point the changes in urban restructuring in late capitalism.

sector share of package waste recycling among the addressees it defines. The aim to formalize here refers to the exact calculation of package wastes that are produced, distributed, collected, and sent back to production, and how revenue is shared among the determined actors. It definitely does not refer to the formalization of the labor relations.

For a better understanding of how the Control of Package and Package Waste Management is designed to restructure the urban problem of wastes and recycling, it is useful to take a closer look at what regulation brings (See Fig 1). The novelty of legislation comes from the transition from what is called savage storage and the annihilation of wastes to "sustainable and integrated solid waste management."[12] By the new regulation, separate collection of packaging wastes from the source is the primary principle and any other way of separating or collecting is forbidden as stated in the fifth article.[13] The implications of this principle affect nearly all parts of the process. Especially the activities of waste pickers are forbidden by the article that enables "coercive disciplinary forms of state intervention in order to impose market rule upon all social aspects of social life."[14] The regulation is based on how collection from the source will be organized and consequently how the waste pickers will be eliminated from the waste management scheme. Nevertheless, in the organization of source collection, battling with waste pickers on the street goes simultaneously with mobilizing source collection among households.

[12] Sandra Cointreau, Declaration of Principles for Sustainable and Integrated Solid Waste Management, March 7, 2001 (PDF version of document downloaded February, 2010, from http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTUSWM/Resources/siswm.pdf)

[13] Ambalaj ve Ambalaj Atıklarının Kontrolü Yönetmeliği, (2008)

[14] Brenner and Theodore, p. 352.

What is secondarily important is the role given to the producer firms. With the sixth article, producer firms which release their packaged products to the market are in charge of collecting the package waste separately from the source, recycling and recovering it and covering all the expenditure necessary to this end. Just as important, these firms also are obliged to report the kind and amount of the package they released to the market to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. The reason for that is the quota that the Ministry puts on the amount of packaging that the producer firm has to recycle and document periodically. This principle drives from the principle of the "Polluter pays" of sustainable development, which is also defined the in Declaration in Principles for Sustainable Solid Waste Management by the World Bank.

Municipalities, on the other hand, are responsible for the collection of package wastes separately from the source and recycling or assigning it to someone else, which is a licensed firm, to do it. Yet, all municipalities have to design a comprehensive plan to meet the principles of the Regulation. The licensed firms make protocols both with a municipality for the accomplishment of the management of package wastes' plan and with producer firm to collect the package wastes they released to the market and meet the quota determined by the ministry. In the meantime, the metropolitan municipality gives assistance and coordinates the triple contract between the municipality, the licensed separation or recycling firm and the authorized body which is *Çevre Koruma ve Ambalajları Değerlendirme Vakfı*[15] (Foundation for Protection of Environment and Assessment of Package Wastes,

[15] Foundation for Protection of Environment and Assessment of Package Wastes is established by 14 pioneering industrial enterprise of Turkey in November 1, 1991.

ÇEVKO) in this case. The place ÇEVKO has in the process is very central to understanding the "entrepreneurialism" in question. Because no matter if its mission as is stated as to protect the environment, to participate in social and economic development,[16] ÇEVKO profits from the recorded amount of package waste sent to recycling in the legally defined ways. After all, ÇEVKO determines the prices of all raw materials per ton each year.[17]

Keeping tracks of the package wastes is crucial for two reasons. One is because it is necessary to document the amount of package waste recycled to meet the targets mentioned in the Regulation which is 60% by 2020, to balance ÇEVKO's and licensed firms' investments. The other is to formalize the sector because even though the Regulation describes the ideal, the ongoing system is a mixture of both new and old procedures with many contradictions and problems. Those contradictions flourish within the process of exercising the law.

Yet, the legislation of Control of Packages and Package Waste Management is not solely a law implemented to better the severe consequences of environmental degradation. Despite the neoliberal ideology which assumes market forces set free of all kinds of state interference will operate for the best utility of economic development, Brenner and Theodore emphasize "the contextual *embeddedness* of neoliberal restructuring projects insofar as they have been produced within national, regional, and local contexts defined by legacies of inherited institutional frameworks,

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[16] ÇEVKO, 1 November 1991, Retrieved on 25 January 2010 from http://www.cevko.org.tr/cevko/Ic-Sayfa/Cevko/Cevko-Vakfi/Vizyon-ve-Misyon.aspx

[17] See the prices for 2010 online at http://www.cevko.org.tr/cevko/Ic-Sayfa/Ekonomik-Isletmeler/Yesil-Nokta-Ucretleri.aspx

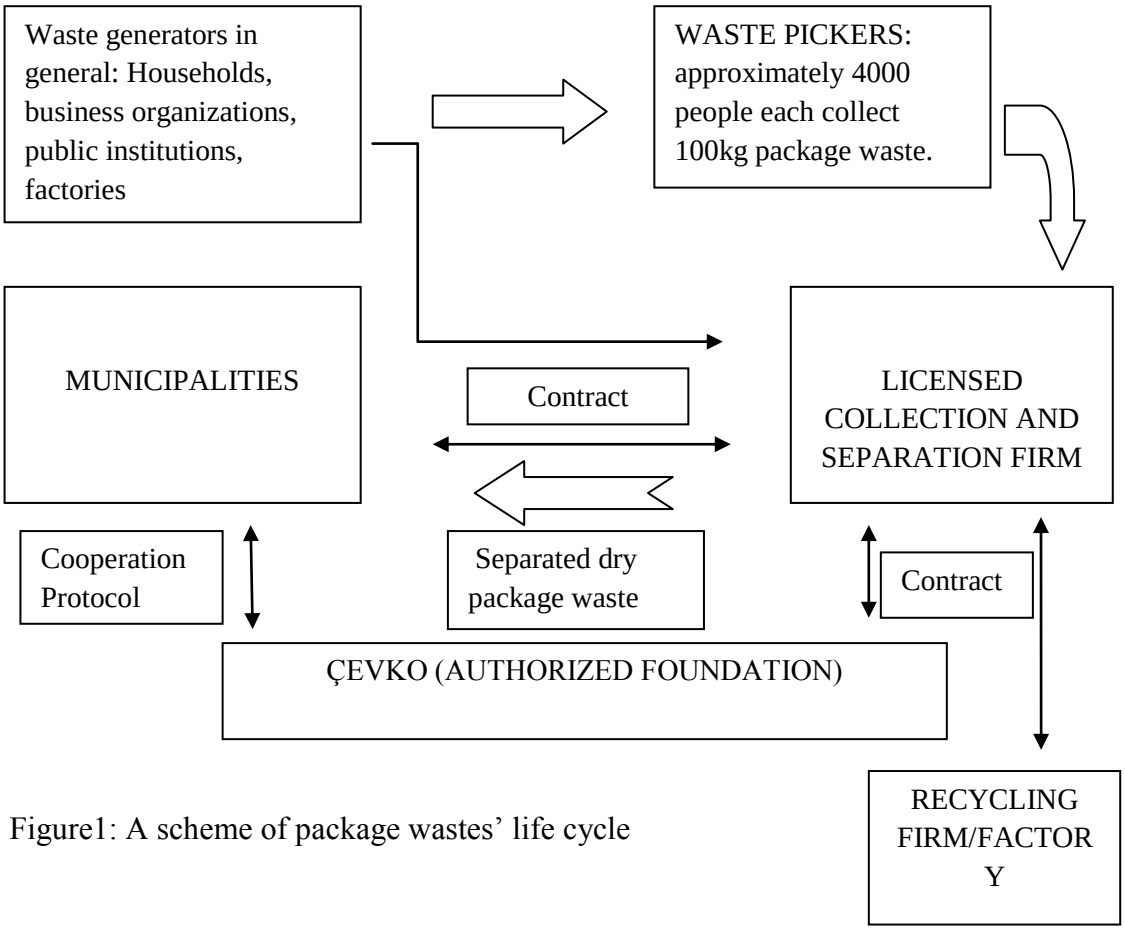


Figure1: A scheme of package wastes' life cycle

policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles"[18]. In this sense, Package Waste Management is an example of how neoliberal restructuring takes place in institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices and political struggles. However, it cannot be stated that neoliberalization is truly realized by those regulatory policies it actually is a process of "historically specific, on going, and internally contradictory process of market-driven socio-spatial transformation."[19] From this perspective, its analysis deserves an understanding of the various

[18] Brenner and Theodore, p. 349.

[19] Ibid., p.353.

institutional forms, tendencies, socio-political effects and contradictions which are manifested in the process of implementing the regulation in practice. In this case, I seek to analyze how these are manifested in the lives of waste pickers and how waste pickers react to this change.

David Harvey describes the urban governance trend as a change from managerialism to entrepreneurialism from the 1970s onwards, meaning that the important role of the rise of urban entrepreneurialism may have had "in a general transition in the dynamics of capitalism from a Fordist-Keynesian regime of capital accumulation to a regime of 'flexible accumulation'."[20] Harvey's description of transition from managerialism to entrepreneurialism coincides with what Brenner and Theodore calls "creative destruction."[21] At the site of regulation, actually existing neoliberalism "reworks with institutional infrastructures upon which Fordist Keynesian capitalism was grounded" and partially destructs those by market-oriented reforms and at the same time create "a new infrastructure for market-oriented economic growth, commodification, and the rule of capital".[22]

For example, when the site of regulation is the state and other forms of governance- since this example is more relevant to what is going on in waste management- the moment of destruction can be the elimination of welfare transfer through service provision has in the opposite building public-private partnerships and

[20] David Harvey, "From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism,' *Geografiska Annaler* 71 (1989), pp. 3-17.

[21] Brenner and Theodore, p.362.

[22] Ibid., p.349; 362.

forms of network governance as the moment of creation.[23] In the moments of creation, the entrepreneurial power to organize urban spaces comes from a diversity of social agents mobilized through the complexity of forces which has a social density that is conflictual and colorful containing all sorts of coalition politics and class alliances.[24] Therefore, Brenner and Theodore states that in order to analyze this system the researcher has to be skeptical about "who is being entrepreneurial and about what."[25] This framework directly corresponds to what the Legislation on the Control of Package Waste Management proposes to its addressees.

Arguments of the Thesis

The story of the waste pickers, who are the indirectly addressed by the Regulation, is not about how the process of the actually existing neoliberalism operates through institutions and policies, but the drastic consequences of this process, such as "intensifying inequality, destructive interplace competition, and generalized social insecurity."[26] In the process of the enactment of the Legislation on the Control of Package Waste Management from 2005 to the present, major conflict has been with the informal waste sector in general and with the waste pickers, who are mostly affected by the application of the novel regulations during an ordinary day of work. These regulations offer waste pickers either to move to another area of

[23] Ibid., p.365.

[24] Harvey, p.5.

[25] Ibid., p.6.

[26] Brenner and Theodore, p. 352.

occupation or to integrate them into municipal waste management systems through subcontracting relations. One of the major aims that the Regulation puts forwards is clearly illustrated in the Management Plan of Package Wastes for İstanbul 2005 by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and *İSTAÇ A.Ş.* (İstanbul Environment Management, Industry and Trade Co.) that as the recycling rates of İstanbul increase from 30 percent to 60 percent, the amount of package wastes collected by waste pickers will be gradually decreased.[27] Indeed, until the enactment of the legislation waste pickers were the major suppliers of reuse materials back to production in many of the cities of Turkey, as can be observed in the table below, an estimated 30 percent for İstanbul. However, they are not regarded as a direct part in the Regulation.

There are many problems in the isolation of the waste pickers from the waste management system. The most important ones derive from the misconceptions about waste pickers and their economic activities. Waste picking is assumed to be a static, disorganized, marginal and a recent economic activity that will dissolve in time. The waste pickers are seen as a single category of poor. The attitudes towards waste pickers shape with these misconceptions. Even though these assumptions are conditionally true for some specific cases, waste picking is an activity that saves millions of migrants, elderly, children, women, disabled and unemployed from poverty and starvation. For better life and work conditions for these people, waste pickers must be acknowledged as active participants in waste management systems. This would only be possible if these misconceptions are proven to be wrong. This

[27] See Table 2. I thank to Eylem Akçay who has enabled me to reach such information which actually was not available through my channels.

thesis attempts to do so by firstly trying to understand the processing of waste picking as a profession and waste pickers as rational actors in the case of Ankara.

Table 1. Projections of the Management Plan of Package Wastes for İstanbul (2005)

	Waste Pickers	Licensed Firm	Recycling Rate	Regulation
Year	Ton/year	Ton/year	%	%
2006	50,000	213,525	30	32
2007	30,000	277,000	37	37
2010	10,000	389,165	46	45
2015	0	632,400	61	60

Source: İSTAÇ *İstanbul için Ambalaj Atıkları Yönetim Planı* (2005) (unpublished draft), p.55.

Consequently, I give special attention to the "work" and the "workers" independent of the legislations mentioned above. The main reason for this is that I think this kind of approach will supply a better understanding of how things changed in the process of urban restructuring in terms of waste management and how waste pickers respond to those changes.

Urban restructuring policies aiming at the municipal waste management and threatening the informal sector are not unique to Turkey. There are waste pickers all around the world who organize in response both to their life conditions independent of novel legislations and to the impact those legislations create their economic activities. Indeed, as the waste pickers' voices are raised, especially by the assistance of global informal labor networks such as WIEGO,[28] SEWA,[29] LAPWN[30] and

[28] Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing

[29] Self Employed Women's Association

[30] Latin American Waste Picker Network

AVINA.[31] The need for social policies that would solve the problems of waste pickers are acknowledged by global institutions that are the pioneers of such transformation at the first place such as the World Bank and also discussed both by academic and activist curiosity. Activists are more engaged in the organization of waste pickers. The limited amount of academic interest is mostly focused on conceptualizing waste picking, its impact to industry, elucidating how waste picking is organized, and exploring its dynamics mainly from perspectives of marginality, Marxism and political economy.

What has been studied about the waste pickers of Turkey until now has focused mainly on the living and work conditions of waste pickers in Ankara, İstanbul, Denizli, İzmir, Isparta and Diyarbakır in the context of urban poverty, social exclusion and informal labor. This thesis takes those previous studies as a guide to understand waste pickers' living and work condition and develops additional conceptual tools. In the specific case of Ankara, I discuss the possibilities of incorporation of waste pickers in the municipal waste management system considering what is proposed and how the actors respond to the legislation targets, especially the waste pickers themselves.

For a discussion of incorporation in the case of Ankara, I find the exploration of the informal waste sector and waste pickers position in it very useful. I do not assume that whatever policy or model proposed in the global literature is going to fit my case. I think that the inner dynamics of the already existing sector; what keeps it working, how newcomers are recruited, how the vertical or horizontal hierarchies are

[31] A Latin American network that encourages productive alliances for taking action in sustainable development.

created and how those hierarchies can be a source of exploitative relations. Therefore, examining the exchange relations between the parties at different levels of the hierarchical scheme is very important.

Waste picking, even though it seems like a temporary survival activity performed by individuals, it is actually a very well operating organization of work. Therefore, even though waste picking activities at first glance seem like a form of labor that is independently performed, it is a network-based organization of work which is intrinsic to power relations. I assume that the waste pickers' entrance and survival in the informal waste sector depends on the place of their origin and the personal relations they developed with warehouse owners. However, these contacts conceal the exploitative character of the economic relations they create.

What is primarily important for this thesis is the formation of market relations within the informal waste sector and the social relations that are embedded and hidden under the market relations. The main argument of the thesis is built upon the assumption that the core obstacle in front of the waste pickers to incorporate to the waste management system either through the organizational tools they create or subcontract relations through firms is the hierarchical and heterogeneous structure of the informal waste sector organization itself.

Another obstacle emerges from how the social exclusion mechanisms are reproduced and articulated to urban poverty that is not necessarily correlated with the income of waste pickers. Especially in an environment in which forced migration and seasonal migration are central to waste pickers' lives in Ankara, those social exclusion mechanisms affect the ways they are politicized and, of course, their incorporation to both waste management systems and urban life.

In the light of these assumptions, I will try to capture a picture of how waste picking activity is placed in the hierarchical structure of the informal waste sector and through which social relations waste pickers are channeled and stay in this sector. In my perspective, understanding those interwoven relationships will provide a basis for a discussion on how incorporation is possible and an evaluation of the demands of waste pickers.

Methodology

The research was conducted in two neighborhoods of Ankara, İskitler and Türközü, where waste pickers live and organize in associations: *Kooperatif Yolunda Geri Kazanım Derneği* (Association of Recycling on the Way to Cooperative, ANGEKADER) and *Atık Kağıt İşçileri* (Waste Paper Workers, AKİD). In these two neighborhoods, I conducted semi-structured and unstructured interviews with 20 waste pickers, four per diem employees in warehouses, three warehouse owners, three pickup truck drivers, two leaders of the waste picker associations as well as representatives from the Çankaya and Yenimahalle Municipalities, the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, the Çankaya City Police and a licensed firm Invest Trading and Consulting AG (ITC). The interviews and the data acquired are only a partial reflection of the whole reality of the waste pickers of Ankara and have no claim of representativeness.

This thesis, since it focuses on the collection of package wastes, how it is informally organized, and the implications of the neoliberal transformation of package waste management in Ankara has on the informal sector of package waste

collection, it leaves out the annihilation and recycling of other solid wastes such as domestic wastes, construction wastes, medical wastes and dangerous wastes. The thesis is only concerned with the informal "collection" part of the recycling sector in a broad sense.

The research is split into two parts: the inner dynamics of informal waste picking and the labor processes of waste pickers are one part, and the implications of the novel regulations on the waste pickers and their reaction to this threat is the second part.

The first part of the research is designed to understand the inner dynamics of informal waste picking and the labor processes of waste pickers in two of Ankara's districts, Türközü and İskitler. These two districts were chosen because both of them are places where waste pickers live and store the collected wastes in the warehouses or in their *gecekondu*s' garden and both were demolished by municipal forces in 2004 and 2009, respectively. In both places, although most waste pickers moved to other districts to live, some warehouses remain or other ways to store the package wastes have been found. Another commonality of the two districts is that ANGEKADER in Türközü and AKİD continue to organize. Nevertheless they have different political standpoints concerning the waste pickers' problems and position in the recycling chain.

In operationalizing the labor processes of waste pickers, I kept in mind that waste pickers' relations with the warehouse owners is not defined by wage labor, nor do they fit into an informal contracting relation. I try to sort out the power relations among the people involved in the collection of package wastes. The hierarchies and asymmetrical relations between the waste pickers and the warehouse owners is one

of the important things Iexamine in the research. The reasons behind starting waste picking and the push and pull factors are other useful knowledge I aimed to gather. For example, the impact of former waste pickers who later owned warehouses in persuading the newly arrived migrants to start waste picking gives a clue about the labor processes of waste pickers. It also defines their bargaining power.

Making sense of the waste pickers' bargaining power requires making a scheme of the hands the collected package wastes change from the moment they are sorted from the garbage by the waste pickers to the moment they are sold to the licensed recycling factory. So, I designed some questions to reach this specific information.

The method I used for this part of the research was semi-structured or unstructured in-depth interviews with individual waste pickers or focus groups with a group of waste pickers. The reason for this is the fact that these people work mobile, individually and in flexible working hours. It is very time consuming and hard to do tape records with all of the interviews one by one on the streets, whereas it is more beneficial to find waste pickers in their associations on the weekends or in the warehouses in weekdays. However, it should be noted that the reliability of the interviews in the warehouses is negatively affected by the presence of the warehouse owner. The warehouses' physical conditions were a hindering factor throughout the interviews. People going in and out of the room disrupted the flow of any on-going conversations and caused some gaps and deficiency in the information gathered. Also, I did not benefit from a structured questionnaire because I wanted the waste pickers to tell their stories in their own words and structuring of events rather than me formulizing the issues. They also were disturbed by being the subjects of research

and preferred to create a trust relationship with me before they spoke more deeply of the issues. They did not want to be photographed and tape recording was free only because they were convinced that without tape recording I would forget their stories. I used the snowball technique to reach some of the interviewees. I contacted the representatives of the two associations mentioned above and asked them to introduce me to other waste pickers. However, contact through the associations limited the diversity of knowledge I could gather. In some cases, I randomly formed a conversation with a waste picker on the street and walked with him until we come to the warehouse as a last stop.

During the interviews with the waste pickers I asked them their demographic information, education level, migration stories, daily routine of a work day, some interesting memories of a work day, working hours/days, social security (green card), if they receive any subsidies from the government, reasons for starting waste picking, the people who made the contacts for starting this job, the number of people they support, the number of bread winners in the house, the number of kids going to school in the house and their genders, who sells to whom, the possibilities of bargaining, the prices of package wastes and in what conditions they change, advance loans from the warehouse owners, daily- monthly income, relationships with other waste pickers according to their place of migration, political views, thoughts and feelings about the demolition of their *gecekondu*s, thoughts about organizing, and tensions with the city police.

On the other hand, I designed other questions for the warehouse owners and asked them to whom they sold, daily routine, advance loans, tensions with the city police, their income, relations with the package waste collection and separation

licensed firms and recycling factories, the determination of the prices, the physical conditions of the warehouses and enforcements from the package waste management regulations.

The second part of the research aims to understand the problems in the implementation of the package waste management regulations by the related apparatuses defined by the regulation regarding the issue of informal package waste collection, again limited to the "collection" of the processes. This part includes interviews with Çankaya and Yenimahalle Municipalities because these areas are where the waste pickers mostly work. It also includes interviews with the licensed firm ITC and the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality which are organically related. Indeed, the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality sent me to the ITC when I insistently wanted to arrange a meeting with an authority from the Metropolitan Municipality. Additionally, I conducted an interview with the Çankaya City Police Administration.

In all interviews, I basically asked what duties the novel regulations assigned to their part of the process and the problems they faced in accomplishing those duties. Moreover, what were more important than the difficulties they faced were the class alliances and coalition politics since it is an important aspect of entrepreneurialism. However, I did not directly ask about the waste pickers because I did not want to seem biased as if I was interrogating them. Since one of the main problems of the system functioning is waste pickers, we were able to talk about their thoughts and projections about waste pickers anyway. The incorporation of waste pickers in the system was another main theme of these interviews.

However, since the waste pickers themselves were the objects of the issue of incorporation I conducted interviews also with the spokesman of the associations of

waste pickers. The interviews also covered their reaction to the formalization attempts, their organizational problems and the political differentiations among the waste pickers. ANGEKADER's participation in the First World Waste Pickers' Conference in Colombia, Bogota in 2008, their experiences and thoughts about the other waste pickers' organizations from around the world was also a dominant issue that the members of the association discussed in the focus group.

In addition to the interviews, the monthly publication of waste pickers of Ankara *kAtık*[32] and nearly all news and articles published in media were taken into consideration for the purposes of the research.

Organization of the Thesis

This thesis contains four more chapters. The second chapter firstly gives a brief overview of the studies focusing on waste pickers with academic and policy-oriented purposes and then delves more deeply into the theoretical perspectives on both the waste pickers in world and in Turkey. I scrutinize how the work of waste picking has been defined as well as bringing up some basic concepts such as, power relations, bargaining, networks in the context of urban poverty and informal sector.

The third chapter is designed to give a background about the profile of waste pickers in a global context. Since waste picking is a global phenomena, the living and working conditions of waste pickers have a lot in common all over the world.

[32] *kAtık* means bread or something you eat with the main food in Turkish. When you remove the letter "k" in front of the word, then, it becomes *Atık* which means waste. The name of the periodical offers the reader a two-fold meaning by mentioning bread and waste in the same word.

This chapter brings together things we know about waste pickers living conditions and by doing so, aims to give a more realistic view of their lives to weaken the preconceptions about waste picking.

The fourth chapter starts with my impressions of the first encounter and restates the research questions. After placing those questions in a discussion of globalization, informality, migration and new urban poverty, I move forward by telling briefly about the history of waste picker communities and associations in Ankara. And then, I represent my field research findings and discuss the findings in the framework of concepts such as "social capital", "social network", "ethnic enclaves" and "social exclusion." Finally, I elaborate on the responses of waste pickers to the transforming sector and what the transformation offers to them. I endeavor to shed light on a relationship between the waste pickers' responses and the inner dynamics of the informal waste collection system.

Lastly, I conclude by summarizing my findings and pointing out some areas for further research on the subject.

CHAPTER 2

WASTE PICKING: A THEORETICAL REVIEW

The role of the informal sector in waste management systems is incontestable but mostly unrecognized by many scholars and illegitimate under the law. Even though there is a common belief that informal sector will be absorbed in the formal sector because the formal sector is seen as a modern solution to low productivity and bad working conditions,[33] the recycling rates of countries where there is ahighly organized informal waste sector compete with the the recycling rates of countries where there is already formalized waste management system. It is also very contradictory that recycling rates of a country is an indicator of development levels since countries with high recycling rates may also have high levels of poverty. Particularly in developing world, the wastes of urban areas are an income source for many poor people.

The aim of this chapter is to give an overview of the theoretical perspectives that focus on waste pickers both in Turkey and other parts of the world. The first part of the review differentiates between the academic and non-academic research regarding waste pickers and then draws generalizations about who waste pickers are and the job they do relying on both types of studies. Secondly, I aim to address the ways which waste pickers are conceptualized by different perspectives. Thirdly, the

[33] International Labour Organization, *Employment, Incomes and Equality: Strategy for Increasing Productive Employment in Kenya*, (Geneva: 1972), cited in Lourdes Beneria, "Changing Employment Patterns and Informalization of Jobs: General Trends and Gender Dimensions,", Geneva: International Labour Office, (August 2001), p. 5

major differences and commonalities of the Turkish literature on waste pickers from the global literature and its findings will be eluciaded.

Differentiating Waste Picker Studies

Non-Academic Research on Waste Pickers

Although environmental issues and solid waste management are widely recognized on the global agenda, the waste pickers' situation in the broader picture is often neglected. International organizations and public agencies have given attention to waste pickers' living and working conditions to gather the necessary information for the formulation of plans regarding poverty reduction, management of ecological modernization, public health, and urban employment. For those purposes, they usually employ quantitative methodology, namely survey research to acquire data such as the number of waste pickers, their earnings and the types of materials they collect. Accordingly, these studies are atheoretical and descriptive.

Apart from international organizations and public agencies action oriented policy networks have acknowledged the impact of waste pickers both for economics and environment and have initiated a number of studies and conferences "to help[ing] strengthen democratic, member-based organizations of informal workers-especially women- and in particular helping to build solidarity and organization at an international level."[34]

[34] Chris Bonner, Preface, *Refusing to be Cast Aside: Waste Pickers Organising Around the World*, ed. Melanie Samson (WIEGO, Cambridge, USA, 2009), p. iii.

In 2006, Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) realized they knew little about the waste pickers and their only contact was through the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and the Trade Union of Waste Pickers in Pune (KKPKP) in India. Later, with the assistance of the AVINA Foundation[35] and Collaborative Working Group on Solid Waste Management in Middle and Low Income Countries (CWG), WIEGO formed relations with waste pickers in Asia and Latin America. As a part of a five-year global Project on Inclusive Cities, in 2008, SEWA, the Latin American Movement of Waste Pickers, KKPKP, StreetNet International, AVINA and WIEGO have initiated a Project for the better organization of waste pickers in Africa, Asia, Latin America.[36]

By these efforts, these associations have managed to reach waste pickers around the world and organized two Latin American Conferences of Waste Pickers in 2005 and 2007, respectively, as well as a World Conference of Waste Pickers in 2008. It is impossible to summarize here the representations in these conferences and the reports that are produced as results of these activists' efforts. However, the general idea is to support waste pickers' work to gain political and social recognition as an economically, environmentally and socially important occupation. Moreover, they seek to change the public opinion and policy makers' view of waste pickers to advocate supportive laws and regulations in favor of waste pickers. In their

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[35] AVINA Foundation is an organization that aims to contribute to sustainable economic development and management of natural resources by forming international bridges among social and business leaders on agendas for action in Latin America. [See www.avina-foundation.org]

[36] Bonner, p.iii.

perspective, WIEGO member Melanie Samsun argues that waste pickers' organizations must be strengthened.[37]

The studies by activists are very useful in terms of strengthening waste pickers all around the world and generate applicable politics that has direct and indirect effects on waste pickers' lives, particularly in Latin America and Asia. On the other hand, even though action-oriented policy networks' studies rely more on qualitative techniques to reveal waste pickers' standpoint, these studies are also descriptive and not theoretical.

An example of this is the report *Scavenging, Solid Waste and the Future of Trash Disposal in the City of Matamoros,* prepared by Karen Chapman and Oralia de los Reyes as a part of a non-profit organization called Environmental Defense, which is "dedicated to protecting the environmental rights of all people, including future generations... clean air, clean water, healthy food and flourishing ecosystems."[38] The report came about because the open–air dump has transformed into a new landfill so that the serious air quality issues would be resolved. Paradoxically, even though the open air dump represents a threat to environment and to the *pepenadores* (scavengers), *pepenadores* will be deprived of their income which is not available to them otherwise. This threat is also acknowledged by the mayor of the City of

[37] Melanie Samson, ed., *Refusing to be Cast Aside: Waste Pickers Organizing Around the World* (WIEGO, Cambridge, USA, 2009)
[38] Karen Chapman and Oralia de los Reyes, *Scavenging, Solid Waste and the Future of Trash Disposal in the City of Matamoros* (6 April 2007), (Pdf version of document downloaded on 13 November 2009 from http://www.texascenter.org/publications/basurero.pdf)

Matamoros, as stated in the *Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Project for Matamoros*[39] and moving to other occupations is proposed:

> With regard to the impact that closure of the existing dumpsite will have on *pepenadores*, who will not be allowed to enter the sanitary landfill, the Social Development strategy proposes programs focused on seeking alternative income sources for pepenadores and integrating them to different work groups.[40]

The report by Chapman and Reyes lists the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the city and the living and working conditions of the scavengers relying on the statistical results of the interviews they conducted with scavengers. They reach the conclusion that:

> In of comparison different social variables between the pepenadores and Matamoros' general population, there is clearly a gap in educational percentages, weekly income, and literacy. These gaps show the overall living conditions of the pepenadores and the disadvantages they must overcome in order to compete for jobs in an open market and a global economy[41].

What I derive from this conclusion is the social development strategy proposed by the municipality of Matamoros would leave the penenadores to the mercy of the open market and global economy. Even though the report reveals the current situation, it does not make an analytical analysis of the work the *pepenadores* do or their relations regarding to that profession.

[39] n.a.,*Comprehensive Solid Waste Management Project for Matamoros,* (Pdf version of document downloaded on 21 April 2010 from http://www.cocef.org/aproyectos /Matamoros_StepII_final.pdf).

[40] Ibid., p.51.
[41] Chapman and Reyes, p. 20.

Academic Research on Waste Pickers

Descriptiveness is a general trend in waste picker studies. The informal waste sector is an area of research for a wide spectrum of disciplines such as environmental engineering, urban and regional planning, development studies and sociology. Among the studies by environmental engineers on the problems of waste management in developing countries, there is more weight on the technical problems than the social realm since waste management is considered a technical issue which requires expertise in the chemicals the wastes contain, ways to eliminate them and to contribute to ecological modernization by designing models, defining the composition and the characterization of wastes. Therefore, these studies[42] do not mention the role of the informal sector. Of course, not all the environmental engineers who are specifically interested in waste management take waste pickers as their focus, but still there are few studies made by environmental engineers that touch the social realm. But their studies although accomplished with good intentions lack a theoretical structure for a social scientific analysis.

Social scientific studies on the subject mostly apply to qualitative methodology, namely participant observation and in-depth interviews to obtain knowledge about demographic characteristics, job history, living conditions, reasons to start and stay in waste picking, perceptions of themselves and society of them, the relations of waste pickers with dealers, the relations of the informal waste sector with

[42] For examples of such research see Alixis M Troschinetz and James R. Mihelcic, "Sustainable Recycling of Municipal Solid Waste in Developing Countries," *Waste Management* 29 (2009), p. 915-923; Gürdal Kanat, "Municipal Solid-Waste Management in İstanbul," *Waste Management* xxx (2010), p. xxx-xxx.

state authority and the relationship of the formal sector with the informal waste sector. There are few studies which overcome the boundaries of description.

One of the scholars who has focused on waste pickers is Martin Medina. Medina's studies on many aspects the issue is one of the broadest and most innovative which has inspired many of his colleagues. There is not a single study that does not make reference to Martin Medina. Indeed, most studies are based on the comprehensive knowledge he brought together both in his thesis "Scavenging on the Border: A Study of the Informal Recycling Sector in Laredo, Texas, and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico" and his book *The World's Scavengers: Salvaging for Sustainable Consumption and Production*,which unfortunately is not available in Turkey. Since Medina provides the most comprehensive review on the subject, I utilize his studies in my discussion of the literature.

Theoretical Perspectives on Waste Picking

The Marginality Perspective

In the 1960s and 1970s, marginality theory gained popularity. This theory focused on "marginal" groups in urban areas who were seen as a corruption in society or as a deviation from society that had to be rehabilitated. In several studies waste pickers are presented as a marginal group as well. Martin Medina exemplifies those studies in his thesis,[43] which describes waste pickers as marginal, as does

[43]Medina, "Scavenging on the Border…".

Mexican scholar Larissa Lomnitz's book *Como Sobreviven los Marginados* (*How the Marginalized Survive*) in 1975, Brazilian scholar Souza's *Emprego, Salario e Pobreza* (*Employment, Salary and Poverty*) in 1980; and Senegalese scholar Gerry's work in 1979. Lomnitz indicates that there are no ties between scavengers and the formal sector and refers to waste pickers as "the hunter and gatherers of the urban jungle." Further, Gerry portrays the recycling activities in Dakar as "marginal fringe of production."

It also should be kept in mind that the reflection of marginality theory is still relevant in daily life, in the attitude of people and social policies towards the poor. I must also point that "marginality" as it is used here in the mentioned studies is not the same "marginality" of the condition of being excluded from the general norms of a society; rather it is an attribute that stigmatizes the group intrinsic to a societal norm.

Waste Picking As a Way of Life

Most studies about waste picking are on Latin America and Asia and those studies use the term "Third World" to generalize their findings. Further, there are not many studies on waste pickers in Europe. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, people who suffered from unemployment started waste picking. A study that conceptualizes waste picking as a way of life is from "Second World" by Donata Petružytė called "Waste Pickers' Way of Life: Case Study of the Dump of

Kariotiškės" which was conducted as a Ph.D. Dissertation in Vilnius University in 2009[44].

Petružytė's dissertation is based upon her visual ethnography in the Dump of Kariotiškės in Lithuania. For her, the waste pickers' way of living does not fit society's norms and causes stigma and disgust, so that they are hidden from society and live an isolated life. Petružytė argues "that waste pickers' way of living is the characteristic that differentiates them most from other groups of the society."[45] Moreover, she complains that "waste pickers are treated as homeless, without paying attention to the specifics and complexity of this group of the society, reducing this phenomenon to a social problem, and without seeing hidden resources of such an activity[46]" and "therefore it is exactly the way of living of waste pickers that is worth the attention.[47]" For those purposes Petružytė looks at work and earnings, everyday life and household organization, leisure time, social organization, health and mortality, adjustment to the closing of the dump of waste pickers. Her main purpose is to get to know the marginal groups[48] in which she places waste pickers.

In the conclusion, Petružytė lists her findings on waste pickers' lives in Dump of Kariotiškės. Some of which draw more attention are:

> -The characteristics of waste pickers' labor were unhealthy and dangerous work conditions; relatively simple and free, however, physically difficult, *disgusting, and illegal work* (my emphasis)[49].

[44] Donata Petružytė, "Waste Pickers' Way of Life: Case Study of the Dump of Kariotiškės," (Ph.D. diss., Vilnius University, 2009).

[45] Ibid., p.9.
[46] Ibid., p.12.
[47] Ibid., p.9.
[48] Ibid., p.14.
[49] Ibid., p.31.

> -Relatively good possibilities to earn. *The main factors influencing the earnings were the intensity of the work and abilities to work, social status in the community of waste pickers, and luck* (my emphasis)[50].
> - The social life of the community of the Kariotiškės dump was marked by its own social organization (by a collective way of living in a weakly united community, by grouping, *by hierarchic relationships* (my emphasis), and by quite abundant manifestations of violence in the relationships). Buyers-up played an exceptional and a diverse role in this community: *from "employer" and guardian to an exploiter* (my emphasis)[51].
> - The life of waste pickers was full of risk. *High level of mortality and health problems* (my emphasis) is characteristic to the life in the dump. People addressed physicians about their health problems extremely rarely[52].

As easily can be seen, the depiction of waste pickers' work as disgusting and illegal reproduces and reinforces the mainstream ideas about marginality. Moreover, the conceptualization as a way of life puts all economic matters into a category of "culture." Even though Petružytė recognizes the hierarchic relations in the social organization of the work, she sees the intensity of work, the abilities to work, social status and luck as the determinant of earnings. She disregards the economic organization of the work and its implications in waste pickers' life. Additionally, her analysis does not take into consideration the macro economic and social changes that affect the emergence of waste picking as an urban occupation such as most basically neoliberalization, unemployment, and migration. Lastly, I want to add that the high level of mortality in the waste picker community is definitely not a way of life but clear indicator of violation of right to live that has to be protected by both law and social policy. It is needless to say that I do not embrace Petružytė's approach.

[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid., p.32
[52] Ibid.

Marxist Perspective

Two studies are classified in this category, Chris Birkbeck's *Self-Employed Proleterians in an Informal Factory: The Case of Cali's Garbage Dump*[53] and Daniel Sicular's[54] *Scavengers, Recyclers, and Solutions for Solid Waste Management in Indonesia.* Unfortunately, Sicular's book was not available; so all of my knowledge regarding his work is limited to Medina's account expressed in both his book and his thesis.

Birkbeck asserts that the urban employment problem particularly in terms of informal labor is an area of academic interest, but he claims that we still do not know much about its organization. Therefore, in his article, he explores the organization of waste pickers in the garbage dump in Colombia, Cali. His main argument relies upon his description of waste pickers as proletarians and the garbage dump as a factory. He claims:

> Because of the nature of their relation with the industrial market for recuperated materials garbage pickers in effect work for the factories but not employed by them. They are little more than casual industrial out workers, yet with the illusion of being self employed. They may be in a position to decide when not to, but the critical factor is control over the prices of recuperated materials, and that control very definitely lies with the industrial consumers. It is for that reason that I call the garbage pickers 'self employed proletarians' thereby underlining the essentially contradictory notion of their class location. They are self- employed yet in reality sell their labor power.[55]

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[53] Chris Birkbeck, "Self-Employed Proletarians in an Informal Factory: The Case of Cali's Garbage Dump," *World Development* 6 (1978), pp.1173-1185

[54] Daniel Sicular, Scavengers, *Recyclers, and Solutions for Solid Waste Management in Indonesia* (Berkeley, CA, USA, 1992).

[55] Birkbeck, p.1174.

Secondly, Birkbeck criticizes the definition of waste picking as irregular, infertile, and non-entrepreneurial. According to his observation at a Cali dump, waste pickers' "work [is] complex which is far more ordered than first impressions would warrant- and ordered in somewhat complicated way."[56] The workers at the Cali dump worked independently, yet in fixed working hours. Since the pay was determined according to the weight or the volume of the material, waste picking is a piece work.

Birkbeck discovered that the prices of materials varied with the waste pickers' personal characteristics and with the degree of competition between the buyers.[57] He pointed out that the prices decreased as the materials passed through the intermediaries. Another factor that caused an increase in the prices of the materials was the increase in the number of people working in the dump.[58] Even if becoming a monopoly was a dream for most buyers in the dump,[59] the proliferation of the buyers was an opportunity for pickers to bargain on prices and fragment the exploitative relationship between them. Still, the forms of the exploitive relationship between the buyers and the pickers are concealed under "moral obligations."[60] The pickers could not risk advance loans or cash money they took from the buyers at the time of need, even if the buyers, for example, discounted some of the weight of the material when calculating the payment.

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[56] Ibid., p. 1175.
[57] Ibid., p. 1176.
[58] Ibid., p. 1178.
[59] Ibid., p. 1177.
[60] Ibid.

Birkbeck defined waste pickers as "relatively skillful entrepreneurs"[61] because waste pickers created various ways of increasing their income or becoming buyers themselves. Examples of such entrepreneurialism were collecting the things that no one else collects like collecting the shoe glues and melting them over fire or hiring a truck and other pickers to sort and protect the collected materials with loans to become a bigger seller. Birkbeck also underlined that he may have pictured the garbage dump as a dynamic informal factory, however it was limited being entrepreneurial because the relations in the garbage dump coincided with large-scale stagnation in a factory.[62]

On the other hand, as Medina conveys, "Sicular based his arguments on field research conducted in Indonesia in the mid-1980s, claiming that scavenging is not part of capitalism, but is dependent on it."[63] He argues that the production relationship among waste pickers, their forms of reciprocity, and the extraction of surplus constitute a peasant form of production.[64] According to Sicular, waste picking is a pre-capitalist form of production and waste pickers should be characterized as 'pockets of peasants engaged in hunting and gathering'[65].

Medina criticizes Birkbeck because self-employed people are not proletarians because they are not employed by capitalists and criticized Sicular because, while using a Marxist perspective, he does not differentiate between foraging and agrarian

[61] Ibid., p.1179.
[62] Ibid., p.1180.

[63] Medina, "Scavenging on the Border…", p. 295.

[64] Martin Medina, *World's Scavengers, Salvaging for Sustainable Consumption and Production* (USA:Altamira Press, 2007), p. 15.

[65] Medina, "Scavenging on the Border…", p. 295.

mode of production. I agree with Medina in his criticism of Sicular. On the other hand, Medina's criticism of Birkbeck fails because his criticism defines proletariat only within a formal contract with the capitalist, yet the waste pickers are bounded to verbal and moral contract with the middlemen. I criticize Birkbeck for the reason that his definition of proletariat is limited to factory that he feels the need to make the factory metaphor to define waste pickers as proletariats. Despite all the criticism, I find it useful to utilize Birkbeck's concepts of "relatively skillful entrepreneurs" in terms of waste pickers' ability to enhance their conditions in limited opportunities and "moral obligations" in terms of their relationship with middlemen. Moreover, Birkbeck's findings on how the prices are determined and how waste pickers can gain bargaining power are also important for my research.

Political Economy Perspective

Kaveri Gill's article "Interlinked Contracts and Social Power: Patronage and Exploitation in India's Waste Recovery Market" investigates the nature of exchange relations between two groups of informal labor waste workers, "that is waste pickers and itinerant buyers and their respective dealers -called *panni* and *kabadi*-, in the context of interlinked transactions across a number of urban markets, predominantly those of labor, output (in this case waste), land and finance"[66] based on 'economic ethnography'[67] in City of Delhi. Gill points out that the surprisingly long-term and

[66] Kaveri Gill, "Interlinked Contracts and Social Power: Patronage and Exploitation in India's Waste Recovery Market," *Journal of Development Studies* 43, no. 8 (November 2007), p.1448.

personalized transactions between the parties would easily be interpreted by the New Institutional Economics (NIE) approach as substitutes for lacking market institutions in exchange situations at times of risk and at agency problems,"[68] on the other hand, she also admits that the NIE fails to explain the remarkable difference in exploitation levels between the two sets of relationships, namely the transactions between the waste pickers and *panni* dealers and between itinerant buyers and *kabadi* dealers. So, Gill asks: "why, given the disparate nature of contractual links between the two groups, waste pickers do not undertake the work of itinerant buyers and, by choosing to do so, not only raise their incomes but, more importantly escape the punitive exchange relationships entered into with *panni* dealers?"[69] She suggests only a political economy approach, which favors the social context in these transactions and deals with the power notion intrinsic to those relationships, can answer this question.

The nature of exchange relationships are handled by Gill in three major axes, respectively the domain of goods and services exchanged, the length and exclusivity of exchange relationship and terminal rights and asymmetry in power. The domain of goods and services exchanged are wastes, credit, free working hours and protection and influence. In other words, waste pickers and itinerant buyers' position in the waste market are determined and differentiated by those indicators. For example, an itinerant buyer can borrow cash money from *kabadi* dealers and is free to pay the

[67] The ethnography shows that the differences between the itinerant buyers and waste pickers are: the itinerant buyers has a mobility of covering 25 km on bicycles, income three times higher than the pickers and reach to segregated wastes by collecting from households; whereas the latter has mobility of 5 km on foot, income one thirds of the former and reach only to mixed wastes from the containers. Moreover, in the cast hierarchy waste pickers are on lower status than itinerant buyers.

[68] Gill, p. 1449.

[69] Ibid.

amount back any time, as long as he continues to sell to the same dealer; whereas the waste pickers can only take money for immediate expenditure in turn for wet, unsegregated waste or pay their debt for collecting or sorting waste for free. Moreover, panni dealers provide the land for pickers to live whereas itinerant buyers are independent of the dealer on this subject. Yet, *kabadi* dealers have more influence on the police in the case of harassment when they bribe the police or securities via itinerant buyers. On the other hand, *panni* dealers have even less influence. As expected, waste pickers maintain their relationship with usually single *panni* dealer in longer time than itinerant buyers who can sell to more than one *kabadi* dealer. Consequently, waste pickers are not free to terminate their relationship with their dealer whereas itinerant buyers are.

As compatible as it is with Gill's approach, she emphasizes on the economic and social basis of exchange relationship. According to her findings, the need to preserve stability in times of income fluctuations and the credits from the dealer form the economic basis of exchange relationship. Even so, the economic basis overlaps with social ties that are "social embeddedness of the exchange relationship."[70] Gill describes those ties as: "Of iterant buyers, 72 percent belong to the same caste; 20 percent have migrated from the same village and 10.66 percent share consanguine or alliance kinship ties with their dealer… [whereas]…Of pickers, 73.33 percent belong to the same caste; 13.33 percent have migrated from the same village and 10 percent share consanguine or alliance kinship ties with their dealer."[71] Even though waste pickers state that there is no need for any capital to start this job, they need the *panni*

[70] Ibid., p. 1463.
[71] Ibid., p. 1464.

dealer. It is important to note that the waste pickers feel gratitude towards their dealers that unlike itinerant buyers "it is not a case of improving their income-earning opportunity, instead it gives them a choice to have an income."[72] That is only because *panni* dealers supply pickers the land, the credit and the work. In this case, waste pickers do not tend to become itinerant pickers. Yet, Gill furthers the argument and states it is "overtly self-policed but covertly socially regulated behavior"[73] and the reasons waste pickers are stuck in a vicious cycle "lies in institutionalized discrimination in the larger social sphere."[74]

The framework of exchange relations Gill offers is very useful tool for an analysis of my research in Ankara. There are no itinerant buyers in Ankara, so a comparison is not possible. However, the question Gill tries to answer in her research coincides with the questions I have in mind such as why the waste pickers of Ankara seem less likely to form cooperative, union or micro-enterprises to operate instead of urban entrepreneurs and why their attempts for organizing is loose or only active when there is major crisis. The concepts of nature of exchange relationships, the social embeddedness of exchange relations and institutionalized discrimination open a window for the discussion of these questions.

[72] Ibid., p. 1465.
[73] Ibid., p. 1466.
[74] Ibid.

Waste Picker Literature in Turkey

There are two major trends in the literature on the waste pickers of Turkey that differentiate it from the literature which mostly focuses on South America and Asia. Firstly, the studies on Turkey avoid the emphasis of "Third World," especially the emphasis of informal organization of waste picking as peculiar to the Third World. Instead, Hakan Acar and Yüksel Baykara Acar in their research on the waste pickers of Ankara state that, "The point we have arrived at does not allow us to relate the emergence of informal economy directly to the poverty of underdevelopment. Today, the informal economy appears as a problem regardless of the development levels of the countries. This situation leads us to serious questioning of global capitalism… accordingly informal economy can be interpreted as a result of transforming global economic system."[75] This view is also embraced by Betül Altuntaş: "The fact that informalization has gained speed in both periphery and semi-periphery countries in the same era show that it cannot be explained by inner factors, rather it has a common origin and has its source from economic restructuring processes."[76]

Another trend is that the literature in Turkey conceptualizes waste pickers as a category of urban poor or utilizes the analysis of waste picking as a tool to understand urban poverty. For example, Neşe Özgen "argue(s) if a category of urban poverty as 'waste picking' can be considered as a category of a job or an occupation;

[75] Hakan Acar and Yüksel Baykara Acar, *Başkentin Karıncaları Atık Madde İşçileri* (Ankara, Maya Akademi, 2008), p. 15.

[76] Betül Altuntaş, "Enformel bir Emek Biçimi Olarak Sokak Toplayıcılığı," *Toplum ve Bilim* 102 (2008), p. 33.

this way the study of waste people will be used as a tool to discuss the concept of 'new poverty'."[77] Özgen furthers her argument by asking if waste picking is a means for the urban poor for incorporation to the urban life or way of the consolidation of isolation. Acquiring status and incorporation to urban life are discussed in terms of waste picking's place in its occupational organizations and networks.[78] Yet, relying on her comparison between Denizli and Samsun she finds out that waste pickers in both cities earn more than the urban cost of living index of both cities and still cannot incorporate to urban life. The findings of this research refute the old sociological assumption that there are strong connection between the time spent in the city and the increase in income and incorporation to urban life and urbanization of immigrants.[79]

Similarly, Sibel Yardımcı and Ali Saltan in their article "Sokak Toplayıcılarının İş ve Yaşam Koşulları Üzerine" (On the Work and Life Conditions of Street Pickers),[80] examine the concept of "new urban poverty" in the case of waste pickers in Beyoğlu, İstanbul. They discuss whether the channels of "poverty in turn" (nöbetleşe yoksulluk), which is a way for the urban poor to generate life strategies by networks of local sources and transfer their poverty to latter migrants while they prosper,[81] are still open to waste pickers of Beyoğlu or they are bound to make up the

[77] Özgen, p.90.

[78] Ibid., p. 92.

[79] Ibid., p. 98.

[80] Sibel Yardımcı and Ali Saltan, "Sokak Toplayıcılarının İş ve Yaşam Koşulları Üzerine," *Toplum ve Bilim* 108 (2007).

[81] Oğuz Işık and Melih Pınarcıoğlu, *Nöbetleşe Yoksulluk* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları: 2001), p.49.

underclass bereft of their capacity to transform and become chronic victims of poverty.

The academic interest on exploring the life and work of waste pickers of Turkey has been triggered by the increase in the appearance of news about them on broadcast channels. The news has been mostly about police attacks towards waste pickers' on the streets and their warehouses. Among all other news on waste pickers, the police attack to demolish the waste pickers' warehouses and *gecekondus* in Türközü, Ankara, has come forth.[82] The year 2004 coincided with the implementation of the earlier version of the Legislation of Control of Package and Package Wastes. The sequence of events had an impact on how scholars approach the issue and which matters they emphasize in their analysis.

On the one hand, Yardımcı and Saltan's research in Beyoğlu urges the reader to "rethink(ing) waste picking in terms of urban economics and social isolation mechanisms"[83] in terms of globalizing and gentrifying İstanbul. Moreover, they claim, the "waste picking sector does not flourish as a result of a flaw in the processing of neoliberal politics, on the contrary it flourishes as *a result of the neoliberal politics itself*"(my emphasis).[84] This approach is shaped mostly by the idea that the implementation of the aforementioned legislation caused the confrontation of the state and the poor which manifests itself in the violence acts of city police on waste pickers, the displacement of the poor from their living and

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[82] *Hürriyet*, 7 April 2004.

[83] Yardımcı and Saltan, p.209.

[84] Ibid., p.210.

working places. The "social embeddedness" in the informal waste sector has secondary importance in this approach. Eylem Akçay in his representation relying on his research about waste pickers in Ankara, evaluated the implementation of the aforementioned legislation as neoliberal for the reasons that while commercializing the area of recycling, the legislation also re-regulates the relations of formal and informal and public and private in the guise of economic intervention whereas it also defines the daily politics.[85] While defining the waste pickers as politically active actors in the process of neoliberalization in the recycling sector, he ignores that waste pickers are a heterogeneous group of economic actors with different levels powers in the work hierarchy and different motives and interests regarding to their work. Akçay also disregards that these motives are effective in waste pickers' role as political actors.

On the other hand, Özgen and Altuntaş in their studies highlight that generating income from the waste reflects all the effects and results of globalization revealing itself as an area of relations of power and interests.[86] These scholars give primary importance to the macroeconomic changes that triggered the emergence of a such sector and urban poor gravitating towards it, rather than the recent transformation it is going through by neoliberal restructuring policies. Therefore, the implementation of the aforementioned legislation can be seen as a new phase of global capitalism that emerged in the 1980s, yet the conditions that have led the emergence of informal waste sector are a result of a longer time period of

[85] Eylem Akçay, "Geri Dönüşümün Görünen ve Görünmeyen Yüzleri: Ankara'da Neoliberal Politikalar Kapsamında Geri Dönüşüm Sektörü," Paper presented at Boğaziçi University Ataturk Institute Graduate Conference, 2009.

[86] Özgen, p. 92.; Altuntaş, p. 33.

globalization. Altuntaş, while admitting waste picking is a way to deal with the harsh consequences of poverty for many people, acknowledges that the recycling sector is a huge industry and therefore the issue cannot be read only as a new urban poverty or new kind income generating activities in urban area. Consequently, the dynamics of getting into the job, ethnic structures, political understandings, thoughts about organizing become important indicators to analyze the process of heterogeneous group of waste pickers becoming proletarians.[87]

Among these perspectives, I will utilize the findings of all the studies I mentioned above, yet I am closer to the arguments of Özgen and Altuntaş. I want to further their arguments by forming a connection between the power relations in the informal waste sector and the waste pickers' attempts to organize and their political acts.

[87] Altuntaş, p. 32.

CHAPTER 3

WASTE PICKING: A GLOBAL PHENOMENA COMING TO THE SURFACE

What Do We Know Falsely about Waste Pickers?

In this chapter, I will to introduce general knowledge about waste picking and waste pickers. The reason I choose to do so is because there are several beliefs about waste pickers that have become widely held among people, governments and policy-makers. Martin Medina in his book *World's Scavengers: Salvaging for Sustainable Consumption and Production*[88] lists those myths as:

> Myth1: Informal recycling is a recent phenomenon.
> Myth2: All scavengers are the poorest of the poor.
> Myth3: Scavenging is a marginal activity.
> Myth4: Scavenging is a disorganized activity.
> Myth5: Scavenging has minimal impact on economy.
> Myth6: Scavenging is a static activity.
> Myth7: Scavengers are a nuisance that must be eliminated.
> Myth8: Scavenging has no place in waste management systems[89].

These misconceptions can be refuted as I go along with this informative chapter and learn more about waste pickers, their economic activities, lives and impact on many other things. According to the World Bank, 1 percent of the urban population in developing countries survives by scavenging.[90] Moreover, 2 percent of the

[88] Medina, *World's Scavengers...*

[89] Ibid., p.viii.
[90] Ibid.

population in Asia and Latin American cities depends on waste picking to supply their livelihood.[91]

The Politics of Naming

Waste pickers collect materials to sell for reuse or recycling, as well as various items for their own consumption. These people generally are known as scavengers, waste pickers or rag pickers in English-speaking areas, but they also have different alias, depending on the local language, on the place they work, and on the material(s) they collect. In Mexico, for example, dumpsite scavengers are known as *pepenadores*, while the term *cartoneros* applies to the cardboard collectors, *buscabotes* to the aluminum can collectors, and *traperos* to rag collectors. Colombians use the generic term *basuriegos*, while scrap metal collectors are known as *chatarreros*, glass bottle collectors as *frasqueros*, and so on.[92] In Turkish, waste pickers are known as *çöp karıştırıcılar* (garbage stirrer) and *çöp/kağıt toplayıcılar* (garbage/paper collector) if they are specialized in paper and plastics, and *hurdacı* (scrap dealer) if they are specialized on metals. However waste pickers themselves do not prefer the term "çöp karıştırıcılar". Instead, they call themselves, *toplayıcı* (collector), *kağıtçı* (the one who deals with paper) or *atık kağıt işçisi* (waste paper

[91] Martin Medina, "Scavenger Cooperatives in Asia and Latin America," *Resources, Conservation and Recycling* 31, no. 1, pp. 51-69 cited in David C. Wilson et. al., "Role of Informal Sector Recycling in Waste Management in Developing Countries," *Habitat International* 30 (2006), p. 787.

[92] Jaramillo, J. "Relleno Sanitario Manual El Chagüalo, Colombia." In J. Guibbert , ed. *Saneamiento Alternativo o Alternativas al Saneamiento* (Bogota: ENDA-America Latina, 1988), pp. 279-298; Bartone, C. The Value in Wastes (n.p: Decade Watch. 1988; September), p. 3-4 cited in Martin Medina, n.d. , "Scavenger Cooperatives in Asia and Latin America," (pdf version of document downloaded on 15 January 2010 from http://www.wiego.org/occupational_groups /waste_collectors/Medina%20Scavenger%20Cooperatives%20in%20Asia%20and%20LAC.pdf), p.9.

worker) and *hurdacı*. I preferably use the term waste picker instead of scavenger since the former emphasizes the agency of the person engaged in this business whereas the latter has a degrading meaning. Also, I use the term "waste picker" excluding the category of *hurdacı* because I only cover package wastes in this thesis.

Risks of Waste Picking: Discrimination and Diseases

Even though waste pickers do not always constitute the very bottom of the income pyramid, their occupation is generally ascribed the lowest status in society. Historically, outcasts and marginal groups, such as slaves, gypsies and migrants have performed waste collection and recycling activities in developing countries. In India, the *harijans*, formerly untouchables play an important role in garbage collection and recovery of recyclables from waste. In Muslim countries, non-Muslims minorities usually perform refuse collection and recycling activities since contact with waste materials is considered impure.[93] The best example of this is the *zabbaleen* in Egypt, who are Coptic gypsies migrated to the skirts of Cairo centuries ago. They supply their lives by recycling organic wastes, feeding pigs and selling the inorganic wastes.

In addition to this, due to their daily encounter with garbage, waste pickers are usually associated with dirt, disease, squalor, and perceived as a disturbance, a sign of backwardness, and even as criminals. This kind of perception creates hostility

[93] M. Blincow, "Scavengers and Recycling: A Neglected Domain of Production," *Labour, Capital and Society* 19 (1986), pp. 94-115; Furedy, "Socio-political Aspects of the Recovery and Recycling of Urban Wastes in Asia," *Conservation & Recycling* 7 (1984), pp. 167-173 cited in Medina, "Scavenger Cooperatives…", p.11.

towards waste pickers in their physical and social environment.[94] The social cleansing campaign in Colombia some civilian militants in 1994 harassed, kidnapped waste pickers, sex workers and beggars and expelled them from certain neighborhoods because they see the target groups as "disposable." Colombian police were also involved in these attacks. One of the most shocking events in this campaign occurred in 1992, when 40 corpses of scavengers were found at a local university, located in the Colombian town of the same name. The scavengers had been killed, their organs recovered and sold for transplants. The rest of their bodies were sold to the university to be dissected by medical students[95]. Approximately 2,000 "disposable" individuals had been killed from 1988 to1994 as a result of the "social cleansing" campaign in Colombia[96].

Waste pickers' encounter with garbage stigmatizes them as disposable in the eyes of others, yet there are also under great health risks. For example, in Mexico City dumpsite scavengers have a life expectancy of 39 years, whereas the general population's is 67 years. Moreover, in Egypt the scavenger community one out of every three infants die before they reach their first year, whereas in Cairo, one in four babies born in the scavenger communities dies before reaching their first year.[97] The prevalence of parasitic diseases was also higher in the scavenger community than in

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[94] Medina, "Scavenger Cooperatives…", p.9.

[95] Ibid.

[96] N.a, "Vigilantes in Colombia Kill Hundreds in a 'Social Cleansing'". New York Times, 31 October 1994.http://www.nytimes.com/1994/10/31/world/vigilantes-in-colombia-kill-hundreds-in-a-social-cleansing.html?pagewanted=1.

[97] H. Castillo, *La Sociedad de la Basura: Caciquismo Urbano en la Ciudad de México* (Mexico City: UNAM, 1990); G. Meyer, "Waste Recycling as a Livelihood in the Informal Sector- The Example of Refuse Collectors in Cairo," *Applied Geography and Development* 30 (1987), pp. 78-94 cited in Medina, "Scavenger Cooperatives…", p.10.

the region. In Manila, more than 35 diseases have been identified in scavenger communities and areas that lack refuse collection and sanitation, including diarrhea, typhoid fever, cholera, dysentery, tuberculosis, anthrax, poliomyelitis, skin disorders, pneumonia and malaria.[98]

How and Where Waste Picking Becomes an Alternative

Waste picking activity quickly emerges in places where there is chronic poverty prevalent. However, waste picking also appears during particularly during extraordinary circumstances and scarcity, such as war and severe economic crises. For example, after the collapse in 1989 due to economic problems and unemployment, people started street and dumpsite waste picking in Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, Yugoslavia, and Romania.[99] The waste picking activity is mostly dependent on the number of people that are inclined to pick waste,[100] which actually reveals the number of people who see no exit from chronic poverty, who have no alternative of finding a formal job or who do not receive any state subsidy.

Additionally, "the willingness of industry and other branches of economy to diminish the costs of production by buying secondary raw materials"[101] is an important factor for the emergence of waste picking activity. The amount of trash

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[98] B. Adan, V. Cruz and M. Palaypay, "Scavenging in Metro Manila," (Report Prepared for Task 11 Manila, Philippines,1982) cited in Medina, "Scavenger Cooperatives…", p.10.

[99] Medina, "Scavenging on the Border…", p. 134.

[100] Petružytė, p. 29.

[101] Ibid.

thrown out and the exchange value of the waste is also a determining factor.[102] What makes the exchange value of secondary raw materials increase is the ratio of organic and inorganic materials in the garbage thrown out. Due to consumption patterns, in rural areas the amount of inorganic materials in the garbage is higher whereas in urban areas particularly in city centers and in industrial districts, the amount of inorganic materials is higher in ratio to organic materials.

The Work

Waste picker activities as a whole can be described as "labor- intensive, low-technology, low-paid, unrecorded and unregulated work, often completed by individuals or family groups."[103] Other than individuals or family groups, waste pickers form other kinds of organizations such as micro and small enterprises composed of 10 (micro), or 20 (small) people with low capital investment. The features that determine the ways waste picking is organized in individual or family groups of micro or macro enterprises differ in many factors.

According to Donata Petružytė those factors are the place of picking waste that either it is a town, city or a dump; the order of accumulation that is either accumulation in first hands as households, or intermediate warehouses, or transporting trucks; the purpose of waste picking that is either for selling or personal

[102] Ibid.

[103] Wilson et. al., p.797.

usage; the type of waste collected such as secondary raw materials and/or organic waste; the degree of independence; and the nature and the amount of pay.[104]

The literature also offers categorizations of informal waste collection. In these categorizations the factors listed above are realized. Four main categories of informal waste collection are defined by D.C. Wilson et al. The first category is itinerant buyers which refers to the waste collectors who go door to door and buy or barter sorted dry recyclables from the inhabitants or servants of the houses and sell to some kind of recycling shops. Apart from their labor, they invest in three-wheel vehicles. This type of collection is common in Bangkok.[105] The second category is street waste picking, which means that the waste collector sorts the secondary raw material from the waste thrown on the streets of from the waste containers before collection. The third is a municipal waste collection crew who sort the secondary raw materials from vehicles transporting municipal solid wastes to disposal sites. This practice is common in Mexico, Colombia, Thailand and Philippines.[106] The fourth way for informal recycling is waste picking from dumps. Communities which live in the shacks built from waste construction materials on or near the dump usually do waste picking from the dumps. This category is seen in the economically developing world including Manila, Mexico City, Cape Town, Bangalore, Guadelajara, Rio de Janerio, Dar es Salaam, Guatemala City and many others.[107] In Turkey, among those

[104] Petružytė, p. 29.

[105] S. Li, "Junk-buyers as linkage between waste sources and redemption depots in urban China: The case of Wuhan," *Resources, Conservation and Recycling* 36, no.3,(2002), p. 319-335 cited in Wilson et. al., p. 798.

[106] Wilson et. al., p. 798.

[107] Ibid., p.798

categories street waste picking and waste picking from dumps is more common than others, whereas there are no iterant buyers. Only there are intermediaries who operate informally and buy materials from waste pickers who usually use two-wheel pushcarts. Also, waste picking from dumps is rare.

Medina suggests that in many cities of the Third World, informal waste pickers are collecting the garbage from the indigent areas that have insufficient service of waste collection. By collecting wastes from these areas, waste pickers charge a fee from the dwellers of the district in exchange for their service. In various Latin American and Asian cities, waste pickers collect the garbage using pushcarts, tricycles, donkey carts, horse carts, or pickup trucks. To illustrate, 37 percent of the population in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, is served by informal waste pickers. Moreover, in the Mexico City suburbs of Ciudad Nezahualcoyotl, Chalco and Iztapaluca, numerous informal waste pickers provide the service of garbage collecting instead of municipal services.[108] For these low-income districts the waste pickers have some advantages due to the conditions of hilly, unpaved or tight streets that do not allow to collect wastes by sanitation trucks.

It is also accepted in the literature that generally, the low income of waste pickers is a result of low prices paid by the middleman. In some instances, waste pickers are exploited tremendously in monopsonistic markets. A monopsonistic market prevails where there is only one purchaser contrary to monopoly, where there is only one seller. Notably dumpsite scavenging is receptive to the circumstances of

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[108] J. Herrera, *Pepenadores de todo en la Basura*. (Excelsior: May 22, 1995): 4-A, 28; P. Phatak "Urbanisation, Poverty and Environmental Considerations: A Micro-Level Perspective," in V. Agnihotri ed. *Environment and Development* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing Co:1993), pp. 449-467 cited in Medina, "Scavenger Cooperatives…p.7.

monopsonistic markets because of the relative isolation of many dumps, which makes it almost impossible for scavengers to freight materials to the nearest town. In addition, the awarding of concession to the recovery of recyclables fosters the formation of monopsonistic markets. Mexican cities commonly call for concession for those willing to recover materials from dumps/landfills. Middlemen and scavenger leaders working with middlemen can get concessions, which in practice validate monopsonistic markets at the disposal sites, and in some cases, exploitation of scavengers. For instance, scavenger can only gain 5 percent of the price of recyclables, while middlemen make considerable profits in some Colombian, Indian and Mexican cities.

Table 2. Prices Paid for Cardboard in Recycling Stations for India, Colombia and Mexico

		Price per ton at which		
Country	Currency	Waste picker to small merchant	Small merchant to large merchant	Large merchant to Industry
India	Rupes	100-200	900	1800
Colombia	Pesos (Colombian)	1000	3000	5500
Mexico	Pesos (Mexican)	900	1100	4000

Source: Holmes, J. "Solid Waste Management Decisions in Developing Countries." In *Managing Solid Wastes in Developing Countries*, ed. J. Holmes (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984) cited in Medina, "Scavenger Cooperatives…," p. 41.

Approaches to the Incorporation of Waste Pickers to Municipal Waste Management Schemes

The attitude of the state towards waste picking activity and its general policy towards implementation of ecological modernization is also critical. How much the policies of the state allow or prohibit waste picking activity and provide the conditions appropriate for it is very determining in waste pickers' organization of work and their living conditions.[109] The public policies towards waste pickers are classified by Medina as repression, neglect, collusion and stimulation.[110] Repression is realized through the hostile and restrictive attitude of local police. What lies behind repression is the idea that waste picking represents dirt and embarrassment so that they have to be kept away from the sight of other people.[111] In Turkey, waste pickers' pushcarts are taken away with the package wastes inside and waste pickers are beaten in the middle of the streets. Moreover, they are also kept under surveillance by the city police and accused of many thefts even if the criminal event is irrelevant to waste pickers.

Secondly, the policy of neglect is simply the indifference of the state towards such a group by ignoring them. The authorities do not prevent their activities nor do they encourage it.[112] This was the case before ecological modernization became a core issue for the Ministry of the Environment and Forestry in Turkey. Yet, the implementation of the legislation of Control of Package and Package Waste Management in 2005 has given rise to policy of repression. This policy of repression

[109] Petružytė, "Waste Pickers' Way of Life…".

[110] Martin Medina, "Scavenger Cooperatives…", p.10.

[111] Ibid., p.19.

[112] Ibid.

is also a way to push waste pickers to work in the industry with subcontracting relations.

Thirdly, the policy of collusion refers to "mutual profit and mutual assistance; that is, relationships of political clientelism"[113] between the waste picker leaders or middlemen and the authorities. Usually, the middleman or the warehouse owner bribes the local police to stay away; in return the police collude to waste picker activities. In my case, collusion and repression went hand in hand depending on the hierarchical place of the waste picker group in the collection chain. Lastly, sometimes governments apply to a policy of stimulation which is the active support of waste picker activities and encouraging them to form cooperatives and public-private partnerships.[114]

Three ways of incorporation are possible: microenterprises, cooperatives and public-private partnerships (PPPs). Yet, states do not pursue stimulation policy spontaneously. Rather, waste pickers get organized to defend their right to continue doing this job and to better their living and working conditions with the support from a variety of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and community-based organizations (CBOs). Later, they decide which model is appropriate for their inner dynamics. In this process, the support waste pickers receive from NGOs and CBOs is crucial.

Getting organized in any one of these models enables waste pickers to gain bargaining power and enter into contracts with other parties. As the waste pickers become one of the legitimate actors of municipal waste management, likewise, the

[113] Ibid., p. 20.
[114] Ibid.

government and the industry, then unfriendly laws and regulations towards waste pickers also change.[115] Moreover, they gain easier access to recyclables which means not having to walk with push-carts. Also, when the separate collection of dry recyclables is promoted by municipalities and by other actors in addition to incorporation, then the mixed waste waste pickers encounter is decreased to minimum decreasing health risks. It can be said that when two conditions, namely waste pickers' organization and policy of stimulation come together, waste pickers can become itinerant buyers who share the profit in a non-hierarchical economic organization.

However, these projections mostly carried out by development projects seem to me too optimistic because it is assumed that the private sector- which is now responsible for building infrastructure under the state's monitoring- is willing to share its power with the poor and the state. It is also assumed that community enablement will ease the damages of the neoliberal policies of privatization. For example, in the case of PPPs, the ground that makes the partnership possible is the reciprocal interest exchange and equity of the sides.[116] Miraftab points out three issues related to equity in PPPs. Firstly, if "public sector", "private sector" and "community" are ambiguously defined then "it permits the interest of the greatest partner to be served under the guise of serving the weak."[117] Secondly, she draws attention to the risk that the ways partners fill the needs of the other may be

[115] Martin Medina, "The Informal Recycling Sector in Developing Countries," *Gridlines* 44, (October, 2008) (pdf version of document downloaded on 22 November 2009 from http://www.ppiaf.org/ppiaf/sites/ppiaf.org/files/publication/Gridlines-44-Informal%20Recycling%20-%20MMedina.pdf)

[116] Faranak Miraftab, "Public- Private Partnership Trojan Horses of Neoliberal Development?," *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 24, (2004), p. 91.

[117] Ibid., p.92.

determined by the vertical power relations.[118] In this regard, "in particular the strength of grassroots and its allied organizations"[119] are very important. For example, PPPs can occur in a way that communities may supply cheap labor to the private sector, as in the case of waste pickers in Turkey becoming workers in licensed firms authorized by the state for the collection and separation of package wastes. Here, the state intervention to the organization of how package wastes will be collected and how it is going to be coordinated is designed to favor the private firms. Allowing the grassroots and its allies to balance the inequity between the parts, its strength is questionable.

Thirdly, Miraftab asserts that it "requires a strong and democratic state using its financial, institutional, or legislative muscle to level the playing field for all partners by regulating unequal power relationships between partners who have uneven socioinstitutional capacities."[120] However, the design of the legislation of the Control of Package Wastes Management and how it has been realized from the date it was initiated until now shows clearly that the state is not using its power to regulate the unequal power relationships among the parties. Yet it would not be wrong to assert that the legislation rather enables "coercive disciplinary forms of state intervention in order to impose market rule upon all social aspects of social life."[121] Nevertheless, the efforts of international organizations to support and organize waste pickers cannot be underestimated. Moreover, waste pickers have the capacity to transform their living and working conditions and push the limits that are

[118] Ibid.
[119] Ibid.
[120] Ibid., p.93.

[121] Brenner and Theodore, p.352.

given to them. My field research in Ankara is an effort to reveal how those transformative capacities operate.

CHAPTER 4

WHO IS THE ROOSTER OF ANKARA GARBAGE?[122]

"Gökçek said that refuse paper workers are garbage thieves.
We said, are you the rooster of the garbage?"[123]

The First Encounter

My field work does not "study the poor", focus on how poverty is experienced or make an analysis of cultural representations of poverty. I, rather, elucidate an informally organized occupation by the poor to avoid more severe implications of poverty. Still, my field research is based on "studying with the poor" and therefore contains some methodological and theoretical risks that a poverty study would contain. That is, specifically, "the gap between abstract concepts and empirical findings"[124] and reflections of differentiating class positions between the "researcher" and the "researched" on the scientific activity.[125] With all these risks in my mind and partly confessing to myself that I cannot totally avoid falling into these traps, I went to Ankara to attend the street theatre demonstration by the *Atık Kağıt*

[122] "Her horoz kendi çöplüğünde öter" is a saying in Turkish which is in exact translation of "Each rooster crows in its garbage" and its meaning corresponds to "beard the lion in his den" in English. I prefer to use the metaphor of rooster since it is a refers to the owner of the garbage.

[123] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, Kızılay, Ankara, Turkey, December 2009, "Gökçek demiş ki, atık kağıt işçileri çöp hırsızlarıdır. Biz de dedik ki, çöpün horozu mu oluyorsun sen?".

[124] Sevilay Kayalak, "Yeni Kentsel Yoksulluk, Göç ve Yoksulluğun Mekansal Yoğunlaşması: Mersin/Demirtaş Mahallesi Örneği," *Praksis* 2, (2001), p. 124.

[125] Ibid.

İşçileri Derneği (Association of Waste Paper Workers, AKİD) to support their cause and make some contacts. When I went to Ankara, to overcome the obstacles I mentioned above, I had an urge to form solidarity with the waste pickers because, firstly, I really supported their cause and, secondly, I believe forming solidarity with the objects of my research would avoid "objectifying" them to some extent.[126] Yet, I have to admit that my position as "researcher" and their as "researched" is repeatedly produced throughout the fieldwork for the reason that I am an inexperienced researcher who had to gather information regarding their lives and work in a limited time.

The theatre demonstration written and performed by waste pickers illustrates how they evaluate their current situation and what they build their struggle upon:

> Surely, a person lives in these garbage piles only with hoping, but that is not enough sometimes. The ones who attacked our job, took away our bread and freedom. We are defeated and stood up again for the things we lost. Our only weapon was our labor, our elbow grease, our garbage. As reckless as they are, they stole our garbage with their tanks and guns... People pass by on the streets with masks on their faces: joyful, nervous, sour, indifferent. Yes, there are masks and the walls that those masks build. We will break those walls. We will bring the sun, pull it down. The sunlight will come with us. We will give shoulder to shoulder and believe that the sunlight will be the poor's[127].

The demonstration ended with one waste picker announcing that the reason they

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[126] Necmi Erdoğan, "Garibanların Dünyası Türkiye'de Yoksulların Kültürel Temsilleri Üzerine İlk Notlar," in Yoksulluk Halleri, ed. Necmi Erdoğan (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p. 44.

[127] AKİD Theatre Demonstration, tape recorded by the author, November 2009. Beşevler Metro Station, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Tabi bu çöp yığınlarını içinde insan sadece umut ederek yaşıyor ama yetmiyor bazen. Önce işimize saldıranlar sonra ekmeğimizi ve özgürlüğümüzü aldılar, yenildik ve tekrar ayağa kalktık. Kaybettiklerimiz için. Tek silahımız kalmıştı elimizde; emeğimiz, alınterimiz, çöpümüz. O kadar pervasızlar ki toplarıyla tanklarıyla çöpümüzü de çaldılar....İnsanlar geçer sokakta biz çöp toplarken yüzlerinde maskeler vardır; neşeli, asabi, somurtkan, ilgisiz. Evet maskeler vardır ve çevremizde o maskelerin yaptığı duvarlar. Biz o duvarları yıkacağız, güneşi getireceğiz. Çekeceğiz güneşi. Aydınlık bizimle gelecek aydınlık yoksulların olacak omuz omuza vererek inanarak.*

put on this performance was to remind the audience that waste pickers were the same as them. By then, I was very happy to be called to give any solidarity in this way as a response to my urge for it.

The revolutionary tone in the demonstration is what grabbed my notice in the first place. Moreover, they attribute that revolutionary role to the poor as a class category which is defined as those who have nothing to lose but their labor. They, openly blame two things for their poverty, the state, which brought the new regulations to their work and those regulations primarily targeted the evadication of their picking and collecting activities through disciplinary devices without considering to include them in the regulations. The second is the society as a whole, which hides its hatred behind masks yet cannot hide that they are afraid, disgusted or indifferent. "Gazing", as one of the major relation that poor and rich can form a social relationship, defines the social hierarchy[128] between the waste pickers and others. When the state's attitude and people's gazes are considered together, it can be said that there exists an "institutionalized discrimination,"[129] which is AKİD's struggle aims to destroy. After all, as AKID also emphasizes in its demonstration and I have also been emphasizing from the start, revolutionary or not, there is an obvious need for a change for the improvement of waste pickers' living and working conditions.

Leaving the theatre demonstration with enthusiasm and the feeling of amazement at the waste pickers' strength and determination as if the revolution was soon to come, I also was bothered by questions like if AKİD and their thoughts is

[128] Erdoğan, p. 52.

[129] Gill, p. 1466.

representative of all waste pickers, if all waste pickers were free of all their attachments as a single category of "poor", if only their problems were discrimination and the state's attitude, then what was it about the whole sector of warehouses and their owners and all the kinship ties which brought nearly all of their relatives to Ankara to do the same job for two generations and lastly who were those "workers" as they refer to themselves, yet with no formal employer or contract.[130]

The raising of all these questions enabled me to distance myself from my enthusiasm for a while and allowed me to think about how and in what conditions waste pickers migrate to Ankara, how and through which channels they started waste picking and how this sector emerged and was organized as well as how these conditions shaped different political standpoints regarding the responses of waste pickers to the recent changes in the regulations.

Before elaborating on the field work findings, it is important to place these questions within a macro framework shaped by themes of globalization, neoliberal capitalism, urban poverty and informality at first. Then I will go on with a general description of the field, the waste pickers and the work. After that, I will elaborate on some major findings of field research.

[130] I thank to Prof. Dr. Ayşe Buğra who has dragged my notice to these questions and helped me to put my foot back on the ground.

Globalization, Urban Poverty and Migration

The increase in the visibility of waste picking, which is mostly referred as a practice reflecting the income inequality in Latin American context- elaborated also in the previous chapter-, as a new occupation in Ankara is very much related to the changes that took place in the world order after the 1980s. Those changes have been a chain of complex but unitary phenomena[131] that is characterized by the theme of globalization and a change in the logic of production.

The trends that dominate the new world order are the transnational organization of firms on a global scale incorporating all of the regions of the world, the formation of industrial districts, capital accumulation driven by not production but financing, open market economies, flexible work relations, decreasing the significance of the nation-state, the liberalization of the market economy from state intervention, the formation of international finance institutions and so on. The influence of the new economy politics and globalization can be observed in the increasing vulnerability of mass populations to market conditions and facing poverty. Moreover, the experience of this new poverty comes along with harsh conditions of social exclusion.

The dynamics that fostered the emergence of informality as an undeniable part of the economy are not peculiar to the inner dynamics of societies because it has

[131] Çağlar Keyder, "Globalization and Social Exclusion in Istanbul," *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 29 (March 2005, 1). P. 127.

spread both through high and low income countries.[132] Rather the dynamics are built up by processes of global economic restructuring. By the end of the 1970s, the global economic crisis as a result of political decisions caused debt crises in developing countries. While the public sector was privatized and the labor market was deregulated as structural adjustment strategies by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to overcome debt crisis, it led to a global crisis and destroyed millions of modern industrial jobs.[133] Export-oriented strategies to overcome recession in developing countries accelerated the informalization process by increasing the labor supply.[134] This trend was also related to the shift of manufacturing at low costs to underdeveloped or developing countries as a result of labor market deregulation and decentralization on a global-scale.

As discussed by both Gallin and Beneria, major indicators of micro changes in the firm level are characterized by decentralization, downsizing, subcontracting, management deregulation and changes in work organization.[135] These characteristics lead to unstable forms of labor in an invisible world of micro enterprises and home-based workers who experience stressful consequences of unemployment and the absence of rights and social protection.[136] The deregulation of the market as Beneria

[132] Manuel Castells and Alejandro Portes, "World Underneath: The Origins, Dynamics, and The Effects of the Informal Economy," in *The Informal Economy Studies in Advanced and Less Developed Countries*, ed. Alejandro Portes, Manuel Castells, Lauren A. Benton (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1989), p. 15.

[133] Dan Gallin, "Propositions on Trade Unions and Informal Employment," *Antipode* (2001), p. 533.

[134] Portes and Sassen, "Making it Underground: Comperative Material on the Informal Sector in Western Market Economies," *American Journal of Sociology* 93, (1987) p. 55 cited in Altuntaş, p. 33.

[135] Gallin, p. 533.; Beneria, p. 5.

[136] Beneria, p. 5.

writes, is "not only to reduce labor costs but to shift responsibility for income, benefits and conditions onto the individual worker."[137]

Deregulation also has played a role in the weakening of the labor union movement and subcontracting has become a tool for neglecting legal responsibilities. Inevitably, the labor market became fragmented and informality became a dominant feature or work life, what Portes and Castells call detoriating the "the power of organized labor in all spheres; economic bargaining, social organization, and political influence."[138]

These structural changes have been accompanied with the decline in the share of agriculture in the whole economy[139] caused massive immigration, which in turn has created the problem of enough urban employment and creation of new sectors. In this regard, generating income from the wastes is very much compatible with these global and institutional changes.[140] The shift from priority of full employment to competition, initiation of privatization, liberalization, irregularity and flexibility force the masses to marginalize and informalize due to social polarity in relation to those who benefit from the application of post- Fordist relations.[141]

The result of the increasing trend of informalization and dissolution of the rural life accompanied with urbanization is that the poverty of the industrial worker

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[137] Ibid.

[138] Castells and Portes, p.31.

[139] Altuntaş, p. 33.; According to TURKSTAT share of agriculture in Turkey has declined from 52,7 % to 29,5 % in 25 years as cited in Fikret Adaman et. al., " Societal context of Labor Union Strategy: The Case of Turkey," *Labor Studies Journal*, (2008), p.4.

[140] Özgen, p.92.

[141] Altuntaş, p. 33.

of the nineteenth century have been replaced by the non-worker urban poor who get in and out of informal jobs irregularly and whose stable social security coverage is not possible under traditional welfare regimes.[142]

The migrants who came to the cities in the 1960s and 1970s as a result of industrialization and urbanization articulated to urban life via informal jobs and evaluated job and real estate market as an opportunity for mobility. Despite all the limitations in import-substitution, migrants managed to achieve employment. Those migrants believed that their poverty was temporary. Yet, in the neoliberal urban restructuring after the 1980s, the increase in unemployment, the decline in the wages of workers, weakening of their organizations and the replacement of social justice by individualism and completion and the impoverishment of the middle classes, diminished migrant's hope and expectations of urban life. In these conditions, their ability to achieve employment is not just delayed but unemployment and exclusion from the opportunities urban life serves have become permanent.[143]

In the light of all these developments, the concept of new urban poverty has become a useful concept which refers to the expansion and increasingly chronic nature of relative poverty in a sense that the housing, employment and social security opportunities of a wider range of a social group has faded away. Furthermore, the rupture of reciprocity networks between the migrants and their kinship ties, which had an undeniable role in the survival of the migrant poor under the conditions of

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[142] Ayşe Buğra and Çağlar Keyder, "The Turkish Welfare Regime in Transformation," *Journal of European Social Policy* 16, no. 3, (2006), p. 216.

[143] Sevilay Kayalak, pp. 132-133.

traditional welfare regime,[144] has contributed to the inextricable condition of a new phase of urban poverty, namely the new urban poverty.

A Short History of the Waste Picker Community and Organizations in Ankara

There is not much knowledge about the history of waste picking in Ankara. It is assumed that people have been collecting a variety of secondary raw materials for a long time, either to for selling or reusing in an unorganized way. In urban life, we are more familiar with "*hurdacı*" (scrap-dealer) or "*eskici*" (the person who sells second hand materials) with four-wheel pushcarts collecting old furniture, old white appliances, metal pieces, wires and old newspapers as they walk along the streets. Yet, waste pickers as we have started to notice today, are a phenomena of last few decades in Ankara.

In my field research, during an interview with a warehouse owner, I learned that the informal organization of the recycling sector started to flourish between the 1980s and 1990s by some local entrepreneurs who had migrated from Diyarbakır via Adana to Ankara. They firstly came to Balgat, then moved to İskitler in the northwest of Ankara where there was an automotive supply-industry and opened warehouses there because İskitler was close to the paper industry in Macunköy. As the years passed, immigrants from Ağrı, Siirt, Van and Diyarbakır arrived to İskitler mostly passing through Adana first. Later, immigrants from Urfa arrived in İskitler. They mostly specialized in collecting scraps and pieces of old white appliances whereas the former arrivals are more interested in collecting paper, plastics,

[144] Buğra and Keyder, p. 219.

cardboards and softer metals namely package wastes. For several reasons, waste pickers from Urfa live an isolated life from the rest of the waste pickers.

The warehouses in İskitler are places where waste pickers both live and store the package wastes. The waste pickers who live in warehouses are only single men who are secondary relatives of each other like nephews and cousins; one of which is the owner of the warehouse, who travel back and forth between Ankara and their hometowns several months of the year for other jobs; mainly working in construction. The waste pickers sell the package wastes they collected mainly and live either in the warehouses or live in places which the warehouse owner pays the rent.

Per diem workers, on the other hand, are responsible for the separation of the package wastes brought to the warehouse and loading the package wastes to the pickup trucks to be transferred to the factories. Yet, İskitler was gradually demolished by the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality in 2005[145] and 2009[146]. Now there are few waste pickers' shanty houses and warehouses left and the automotive sub-industry is also under threat. After the demolition, some waste pickers returned to their hometowns. The community inhabitants were told that demolition would be completed after the schools were closed in June, 2010. The residents said that there would be a "*Merkezi İş Alanları*" which is a huge complex of business centers,

[145] Kent Haber, "İskitler Yıkım," (22.02. 2005) Retrieved on 12 May 2010 from http://www.kenthaber.com/ic-anadolu/ankara/Haber/Genel/Normal/iskitlerde-yikim/f61df974-6462-4db6-aca0-69a4e95d9fe4

[146] Ankara Gündemi, "İskitler Sanayi yıkıldı, işçiler dışarda kaldı" (04.10.2009) Retrieved on 12 May 2010 from http://ankaragundemi.com/haber_detay.php?haber_id=17764

hotels, malls, house settlements and conference halls in İskitler, instead of the current structures.

Another spot where waste pickers have gathered from 1993 onwards by forced migration as a result of the armed conflict between the Turkish army and Kurdish guerillas is Türközü, which is in the east of Ankara and close to Mamak dump. Those who have settled in Türközü are specifically from the *Ördekli* village of Hakkari, who have come there by chain migration,which means that as the newcomers built their *gecekondu*s and started waste picking, others joined them in time. The Hakkari community in Ankara continued to receive new migrants. The most recent immigrants I came across had migrated in 2006. This community maintains their traditions (i.e. feasts, weddings and circumcision ceremonies in open space) that they have from their place of origin. However, Türközü was also demolished by the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality accompanied by the City Police and Police Forces of Ankara in 2004.[147] The inhabitants of Türközü have moved to other settlements near the area, like Mamak and İncesu. There were other waste pickers who were local residents in Ankara or migrated from other Anatolian cities (e.g., Çankırı and Konya) to Ankara before the Kurdish forced migration, living and working before that time in İncesu district, which is very close to Türközü. Therefore, in İncesu there are also warehouses.

The third area is Yahyalar, where mostly Roma waste pickers and migrants from Anatolia live. There is no comprehensive information gathered about the Roma waste pickers. Yet, it is stated by another study on waste pickers of Ankara that the

[147] Hürriyet, 02.04.2004.

Roma waste pickers are stigmatized by the other waste pickers as "thieves and pesky."[148] The last spot is Dikmen-Öveçler, where ten or fifteen family enterprises are involved in waste picking. This group also migrated from Van and Hakkari but it has found out by Acar and Acar's study that they are not related to the Türközü group.[149]

The waste pickers of Ankara have been organizing from 2000 and onwards by attending 1st of May celebrations and other meetings affiliated with leftist and Kurdish politics as the "*Atık Kağıt İşçileri*" (Refuse Paper Workers) under their own picket signs (Fig 2). The organization became more active in 2004 after the demolition in Türközü and in response to violent acts against the waste pickers in the following years. It can be said that the waste picker's organization is a result of the demolition and a response to the changing regulation in the area of municipal waste management.

In June 2005, Ankara Geri Kazanım Derneği (Ankara Waste Pickers' Association, ANGEKADER) "was founded in order to strengthen Ankara's street waste pickers, to work for their recognition, the improvement of their working and living conditions; it also intends to bring solutions for their inclusion in the city's solid waste management system."[150] The foundation of ANGEKADER was initiated by the financial support supplied from World Bank Market Place Contest Project by two volunteer activists.

[148] Acar and Acar, p. 50.

[149] Ibid.

[150] ANGEKADER, http://angekader.blogspot.com.



Figure 2. Waste Pickers of Ankara marching in Kızılay at a demonstration Source: Facebook, "Atık Kağıt İşçileri Grubu", Available at http://www.facebook.com/#!/group. php?gid=39363658935&ref=ts accessed on 20 May 2010.

In the mean time, Refuse Paper Workers has started to publish a journal called *kATIK:Journal of Recycling Workers* and 'Do not throw capitalism to history's garbage, it is not worth a penny' is their slogan. In this journal, the waste pickers of Ankara publish short writings, articles and poems on poverty, working conditions, living conditions, problems of their work; they report as violent acts against them on the streets which are not reflected in the mainstream media; described the value of their work and their place within it as well as how the municipal waste management can be programmed in an inclusionary way; and published news about the waste pickers' in other cities and their juridical rights.

As the waste pickers' movement has spread, their struggle has gained notice and a waste working group is constituted by the support and attendance of the

Ankara Tabipler Odası (Ankara Chamber of Doctors, ATO); *Kimya Mühendisleri Odası* (The Chamber of Chemical Engineers), *Çevre Mühendisleri Odası* (The Chamber of Environmental Engineers), *Şehir Plancıları Odası* (The Chamber of Urban Planners) from *Türk Mühendis ve Mimar Odaları Birliği* (The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects ,TMMOB); Sociology and Public Health Departments of Universities; Municipal Unions affiliated with *Kamu Emekçileri Sendikası Konfederasyonu* (The Confederation od Civil Servants' Union, KESK) and *Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (The Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey, DİSK); and *Türkiye Petrol Kimya Lastik İşçileri Sendikası* (The Petroleum, Chemistry and Tire Workers' Union, Petrol-İş) affiliated with *Türkiye İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu* (The Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions, TÜRK-İŞ) in 2007. The main argument of the working group was that recycling must be carried out in healthy conditions with coordination of local governments and waste pickers[151].

In 2008, a representative of ANGEKADER attended the First World and Third Latin American Waste Pickers' Conference in Colombia, Bogota. He described his observations about the Bogota streets and the waste pickers' organization in Latin America as follows:

> First, all of Latin America's countries, how many there are, those formed their national associations in 1986, three or four floor buildings, I saw it myself, they opened three-four floored at first. It is like our association today, so it was like that at that time, later they formed the cooperatives like we have called our association "on the way to cooperative." And there were twenty-one cooperatives, and their struggle is very important; they have pressured the state, they have pressured the ministry of environment, they went through the state's door. And those, in these twenty-one cooperatives, many people work, it has a manager, it has this and that. They do the same work, I mean, they go

[151] *kATIK* 1, "Çöp Çalışma Grubu Değerlendirmesi," (2007), p. 8-9.

> to work in the morning and come back in the evening, they can work three days a week, I mean, because of the cooperative's work, because it is supported by the state. They have wages and insurance, social insurance, there is all kinds of things whatever are needed. So, we wandered the streets for two days, you cannot see any individual waste pickers in the street. There are some but they are a minority, like homeless people, people living on the street. So, you cannot see anyone on the street. There is separation at the houses, then they call firms, everything is in order. We say, it should be like this in Turkey. We are in Ankara; it should be like this in Ankara. Separation at the houses, our association comes into prominence in firms.[152]

However, the World Bank project has been an unresolved issue for the waste pickers of Ankara because most of the waste pickers I interviewed mentioned that they did not believe the grant was spent for the benefit of waste pickers. They rather expressed that they believed it was spent for the personal needs of the leaders. This ambiguity about the World Bank grant caused the first crack in the organization causing mistrust between the leaders and the waste pickers.

In the meantime, there has been a dispute between some people in ANGEKADER about how to focus the potential of the organization. There were several standpoints regarding the issue. Some argued that the waste pickers' organization was only meaningful within a socialist movement and that they could

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[152] The Representative of ANGEKADER in Bogota, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Şimdi bi kere o Latin Amerika'nın bütün ülkeleri, kaç ülkeyse,bunlar 1986 da ullusal derneklerini kurmuşlar, üçdört katlı kendim de gördüm, üç dört katlı açmışlar ilk etapta. bizim şu anda kumuş olduğumuz dernek gibi demek ki öyleymiş o dönemde, daha sonra biz nasıl kooperatif yolunda ankara geri kazanım derneği demişsek onlarda demek öyle, daha sonra bunlar kooperatifleşmişler yani. Ve orada şeyse 21 tane kooperatif vardı, ve onların orada yaptığı mücadele çok önemli devleti zorlamışlar, çevre bakanlığını zorlamışlar, devlet kapısına girmişler. Ve bunlar, bu 21 kooperatifte kaç kişi çalışıyor, işte müdürü var, şusu var busu var. Aynen bu işi yapıyolar, yani sanki, sabah işine gidip akşma evine dönüyor, haftada üç günü çalışabiliyor yani,işinden dolayı, kooperatifin işlerinden dolayı, çünkü devlet destekli sonuçta. onlar maaşlı sigortalı, sosyal sigorta var her türlü ne gerekiyorsa var yani. Ha yani iki gün dolaştık sokakta seyyar kağıtçı göremiyon. Ha var çok azınlıkta var onlar da kim desek sokakta yaşayanlar var yani, evsiz barksız, sokakta yaşayanlar insanlar var yani. Sokakta birşeyler göremiyon. Evde ayrışmalar oluyor işte şirketlerde , telefon ediyorlar, o kadar düzene girmiş yani, ha bizde diyoruzki türkiyede de öyle olsun, ha biz ankadaradayız ankarada da öyle olsun. Evlerde ayrışma ,işyerlerinde dernek ön plana çıksın.*

attend the meetings of a socialist faction. Even though most of the waste pickers were influenced by the ideas of *Demokratik Toplum Partisi* (Democratic Society Party, DTP) or *Ezilenlerin Sosyolist Platformu* (Socialist Platform of the Oppressed, ESP) because they are these parties' supporters, the problem mostly was that the leaders used their initiative to convince the waste pickers attend to those meetings. Others argued that ANGEKADER should only be composed of waste pickers, treat their problems first regardless of ideological positions and approach waste picking not as a problem of poverty and exclusion, but as an occupational category. As a result of all these problems, the collectivity of waste pickers in ANGEKADER was ruptured. ANGEKADER has never been a stable and consistent body of waste pickers except during the times of crises, yet it was groupings of waste pickers around some leaders mostly. This time, the issues I mentioned above caused divisions between waste pickers in ANGEKADER.

As a result of the division in ANGEKADER, a few waste pickers formed AKİD, which has not been formally constituted yet. AKİD has influence in İskitler and the most famous street of Kızılay, namely Yüksel Street. It acts in solidarity with the peddlers in Yüksel Street against the city police and defends the rights of waste pickers and peddlers to work in Kızılay. Their main struggle is to fight for the streets which AKİD claims are the source of freedom, contrary to the official view of streets as criminal, deviational and dangerous. AKİD is very much influenced by the ESP and the members of AKİD are mostly supporters of the DTP.

The history of the waste picker community and associations in Ankara is brought together departing from my encounters with waste pickers in Ankara. Yet, my fieldwork was limited to İskitler and Türközü and exclude Yahyalar and Dikmen.

The reason for that was that my initial contacts were in AKİD and ANGEKADER which, were composed of mostly Kurdish waste pickers who introduced me frequently to their contacts. Consequently, another limitation was that my sample was composed of Kurdish waste pickers with rare exceptions. The fact that these associations of waste pickers are dominated by Kurds is related to their former political orientations, the authorities' attitudes towards them and external factors that initiated waste pickers' organization. Another limitation was that the interviews are mostly male dominated, I managed to interview only four waste picker women since in the Hakkari community in Ankara only men work at this job, and in the İskitler region nearly only single men live in warehouses. The women working in waste picking are mostly among the Roma community, yet that issue was not covered in my fieldwork.

Power Relations in Waste: From Least Vulnerable to Most

Following the argument of Özgen, that waste picking, as a direct consequence of globalization, reveals itself as an area of power relations and profit calculation, I elaborate on the power relations in Ankara informal waste collection sector. The share that a waste picker receives from the whole pie differs depending on his place in collection chain and determines his vulnerability; that is, I refer to the waste pickers' access to capital and advance his position in the waste collection sector. These power relations come forward at two levels in the Ankara informal waste collection sector. At the first level, the power relation is formed between networks of waste pickers, mostly formed by kinship ties, and those who are either left out of

those networks or deprived of the sources of information and capital in a vertical clique that is descending power and centrality within a network.[153] At the second level, the power relation appears as the exploitative relationship between the waste pickers and their buyers, namely the warehouse owners. The distinctive feature of both levels is that the economic action is embedded in the social relations especially on the "concrete personal relations and structures (or "networks") of such relations in generating trust and discouraging malfeasance."[154]

The First Level: Networks of Waste Pickers

Regarding the first level, the networks are composed of migrants who came to Ankara by either forced migration of by economic push factors. "Migration is defined as a network-creating process because it develops and increasingly dense web of contacts between places of origin and destination. Once established, such networks allow the migration process to become self-sustaining and impervious to short-term changes in economic incentives."[155] Moreover, the growth of an ethnic enclave which is "spatially clustered networks of business owned by members of the same minority"[156] depends on the size of their population, level of entrepreneurial

[153] Alejandro Portes, "Economic Sociology and the Sociology of Immigration: A Conceptual Overview," in *The Economic Sociology of Immigration: Essays on Networks, Ethnicity, and Entrepreneurship*, ed. Alejandro Portes (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1998), p. 9-10.

[154] Mark Granovetter, "Economic Action and Social Structure," in *The Sociology of Economic Life*, ed. Mark Granovetter and Richard Swedberg (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2001), p. 57.

[155] Portes, p.22.

[156] Ibid, p. 27.

skills among immigrants and availability of capital resources.[157] The ethnic minorities together with women and urban poor constitute the secondary labor market in which the income of the worker is not correlated with her status.[158] In the secondary labor market, the status of the worker is determined by persistence and characteristic of the job, the personal features of the worker doing the job, the ways of getting the job.[159]

The power relations that are manifested in the networks, depending on the size and entrepreneurialism of immigrants as well as the characteristics of the job and the labor and the ways to get in, directly reflect on how the sector operates (Table 3). The specific characteristics of waste picking requires a strong and healthy body to be able to walk with fifty to hundred kilograms of weight for approximately ten hours, a free space or a vehicle to gather the collected package wastes for bargaining opportunities, the specific knowledge of where and when to pick more valuable package wastes and to be part of a network which has conquered a specific district of such qualities or which can transfer this occupational knowledge, that is the social capital[160] of "bounded solidarity"[161] in that network.

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[157] Ibid.

[158]Mark Granovetter, "Toward a Sociological Theory of Income Differences," (2000), available at http://www.spc/www.spc.uchicago.edu/ssr1/PRELIMS/Strat/stmisc2.html cited in Özgen, p.89-90.

[159] Ibid.

[160] Here I use the concept 'social capital' as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources that are linked to possesion of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquintance and recognition...which provides each of its memberswith the backing of the collectively owned capital" by Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," in *The Sociology of Economic Life*, ed. Mark Granovetter and Richard Swedberg (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2001), p. 102-103.

[161] Portes, p.15.; Alejandro Portes and Julia Sensenbrenner, "Embeddedness and Immigration: Notes on the Social Determinants of Economic Action," in *The Sociology of Economic Life*, ed. Mark Granovetter and Richard Swedberg (Cambridge: Westview Press, 2001), p. 112-135. Portes and

The networks of waste pickers in Ankara are the groups of Türközü, İskitler, Yahyalar, Central Anatolian migrants and Urfa group as a distinct network in İskitler. The largest group of waste pickers composed of nearly three hundred to four hundred related families from Hakkari, can be placed at the top of the hierarchical scheme of waste pickers. Since the time the Türközü group has started to settle in Ankara, as the second destination after the Hakkari city center or Adana, due to forced migration in 1993, they have been engaged in waste picking. The Olağanüstü Hal (State of Emergency) ended in 2002; the first migration wave in 1993 was followed by many others. One of the waste pickers from the Türközü network tells the memories about their migration:

> My family came to Ankara when our villages were set on fire. The villages were burned at that time. All the villages were evacuated and set on fire by the state. In Diyarbakır, Van and Hakkari Kurdish villages were set on fire. The animals… were blown ıp… When I left my village, I remember two things. One is the cemetery. The other is that time my uncle was martyred in an armed conflict. Eight or nine people from our village lost their lives. I remember that event. They brought my uncle to home covered in blood. Then, they brought him to Ankara. He died here. That's how it happened; I was so little I remember a few things. And the village was broken into, I also remember that. There was always armed conflict between the soldiers and the guerillas. We were caught in the middle.[162]

And when I asked him why they had came specifically to Ankara, he said that: "Some of our relatives came here before. They did this job. They told us there

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Sensenberger argue that Granovetter's concept of 'embeddedness' is a very useful but a vague concept and therefore they delve further into the types and sources of social capital. In this regard, bounded solidarity is a type of social capital that both enables and constrains the economic behavior.

[162] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Ben köyümden ayrıldığımda iki şeyi hatırlıyorum. Bir mezarlığı. Bir de çatışma çıkmıştı amcam şehit olmuştu o zaman. Bizim köyden 8-9 kişi hayatını kaybetmişti. O olayı hatırlıyorum. Amcamı eve getirdiler kanlar içinde. Ankara'ya getirdiler, burada hayatını kaybetti. Yani böyle oldu, çok küçüktüm 2-3 şeyi hatırlıyorum. Bir de köy basıldı, onu hatırlıyorum az az. Köyde zaten sürekli çatışma çıkıyordu askerle, gerillalar arasında. Biz ortada kalıyorduk.*

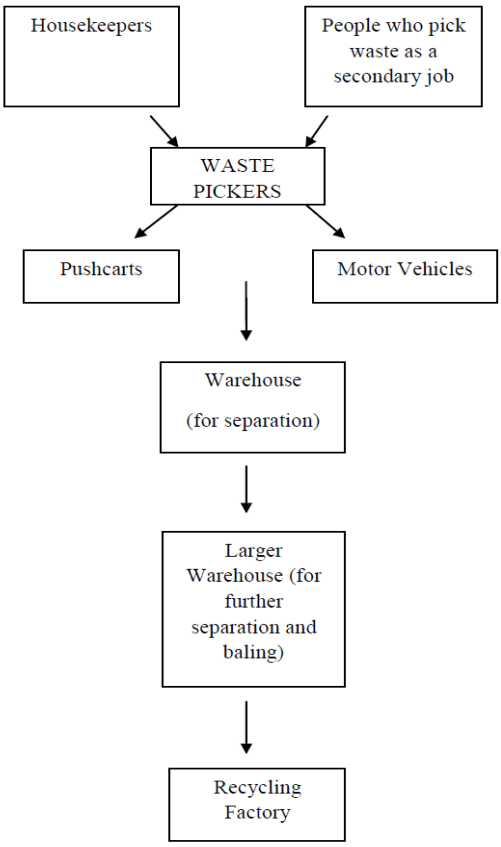


Figure 3: How informal waste collection sector operates.
Developed version of figure used by Hakan Acar, Yüksel Baykara Acar, *Başkentin Karıncaları Atık Madde İşçileri* (Ankara, Maya Akademi, 2008), p. 36.

is plenty of money in this job."[163] The Türközü group migrated to Ankara not just because they discovered there was plenty of money in waste picking, but also because throughout the years that State of Emergency was ruling, Ankara had been an opportunity of a new home and a new life for the Kurds that came in the following waves. Nonetheless, the emergence and success of the occupational niche is dependent on the social networks and social capital.[164]

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[163] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Birkaç akrabamız daha önce gelmişti. Bu işi yapmıştı. Bu işte bayağı bir para olduğunu söyledi.*

[164] Portes, p.29.

Over time, the Türközü group grew in size, formed their ethnic enclave, learned the job and became dominant in the sector, as well as in some streets. Some of the members managed to accumulate capital and owned their warehouses, press machines and motor vehicles. Owning motor vehicles also can be interpreted as a new strategy produced by this group to transfer the collected materials as well as entrepreneurialism. After the demolition of houses and warehouses in Türközü, the waste pickers could no longer accumulate the collected wastes in the gardens of the *gecekondu*s. They found a new way involving meetings in a common place with some other waste pickers and to transfer the package wastes by loading them to motor vehicles. This type of organization fostered by their entrepreneurialism is also a factor that gives the Türközü group privilege among others as illustrated in the conversation below:

> Ceren: So, how do you transfer the collected wastes to the warehouses? By pushcarts or motor vehicles?
> Waste Picker: Everyone has their own truck.
> C: All families?
> W.P.: All of us have trucks. But there are others who do not. They bring with pushcarts. By pushing.
> C: Why don't you take others' atom[165] to your trucks?
> W.P.: Sometimes we take, but they also buy their own trucks in time.[166]

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[165] Atom is what waste pickers' call a single sack behind the pushcart.

[166] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Ceren: Peki siz şimdi toplayıp buraya nasıl getiriyorsunuz? Çekerek mi, kamyona mı dolduruyorsunuz?*
Toplayıcı: Genelde kamyona yüklüyoruz malları. 6-7 tane atom dolduğu zaman. Herkesinkiler.
C: Onlar dolduğu zaman bir yerde toplanıyorsunuz. Kamyona yükleniyor. O kamyonu kim getiriyor?
T: Herkesin kendine ait bir kamyonu var.
C: Her ailenin mi?
T: Bizim hepimizin de var. Ama olmayanlar da var yani. Onlar el arabasıyla getiriyorlar. İterek.
C: Niye siz onların atomunu kamyonunuza almıyorsunuz?
T: Aldığımız oluyor aslında. Zamanla onlar da alıyorlar kendilerine.

The amount of waste brought to the warehouse increases the pickers' opportunity to bargain; the larger the amount, the better price you may get and less you are affected by the fluctuations in prices. Moreover, the "others" that the waste picker is talking about is not necessarily the İskitler group, which is mostly composed of waste pickers from Ağrı, Siirt, Van and Diyarbakır, but the waste pickers from the western side of Şırnak, in his own words: "The waste pickers from the eastern of Şırnak are from us."[167] Rather he refers to the waste pickers from Central Anatolia. This attitude reflects where waste pickers can or cannot collect wastes:

> Ceren : Do you collect in Çankaya?
> Waste Picker: Yes, we do.
> C: So, what factors determine the ways areas are segregated?
> W.P. : Not of origin on migration, but, how can I say, for example, there are three streets in Tunalı. If all of us work there then nobody can collect anything. That is how it is segregated.
> C: So, you say the segregation of areas happened spontaneously?
> W.P.: Yes.
> C: But, what if someone else comes, for example a waste picker from Çankırı, would it be a problem?
> W.P.: We certainly would not accept it. For years, we fought and struggled in spite of everything. We tangled with the city police. We beat them, they beat us. They saw us out, we beat them. That's the way.
> C: So, you do not accept them.
> W.P.: No, we don't. Because we paid a price for those areas.
> C: Is it because they did not fight with you against the city police?
> W.P.: Yes, indeed. But now, we also do not enter their areas. For example, Ulus. In Ulus and İskitler, we cannot work there. Other men take care of that place. But, they cannot work in our areas.[168]

[167] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Şırnak'tan sonrası bizden.*

[168] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Ceren: Çankaya bölgesinde mi topluyorsunuz?*
Toplayıcı: Evet çankaya'dayız biz.
C: Peki bu bölgeler neye göre ayrılıyor? Hemşeriliğe göre mi?
T:Hemşerilik değil de yani, nasıl diyeyim mesela Tunalı'da üç tane sokak var. Hepimiz orada çalışırsak kimse bir şey toplayamaz.O şekilde ayrılmışız.
C: Bu kendiliğinden olmuş bir şey yani.
T: Evet.
C: Başka biri gelse peki, mesela Çankırı'lı biri gelse, olur mu?

Even though I specifically manipulated the conversation by mentioning the waste pickers from Çankırı because waste pickers are not much willing to talk about the benefits of their networks, the segregation of districts between the Kurdish waste pickers of İskitler and the Türközü group is more spatial than malfeasance as it is with Central Anatolians. The size, entrepreneurialism and dominance of the Türközü group also reflect to their opportunities in bargaining in the process of selling, as illustrated in the quotation: "We can bargain because they are our relatives, too, and even so we have gathered the largest community in Ankara I mean our relatives… They are worried for, you know, if they lose us all. Losing one means to lose us all."[169]

As can be derived from the passages, the ethnic enclaves are dependent, what Portes and Castells calls, "on social networks and their social capital for their emergence and success."[170] Also, "bounded solidarity underlies the common preference that immigrants manifest for their fellows in business transactions"[171] and

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T: Kesinlikle kabul etmeyiz. Yıllardan beri her şeye rağmen savaştık, mücadele ettik. Zabıtayla birbirimize girdik. Zabıtayı vurduk. Onlar bizi vurdu. Kestiler biçtiler biz vurduk. O şekilde.
C: Dolayısıyla onları kabul etmiyorsunuz yani?
T: Kesinlikle kabul etmiyoruz. Çünkü biz oralara bedel ödedik.
C: Onlar sizinle birlikte savaşmadılar diye.
T: Evet aynen. Şimdi ama biz de onların bölgelerine giremiyoruz. Mesela Ulus'ta . Ulus İskitler var ya, o taraflar da biz çalışamıyoruz. Başka adamlar bakıyor. O şekilde. Onlar da bizim tarafta çalışamıyor.

[169] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Pazarlık yapabiliyoruz çünkü onlar da bizim akrabalar ve gene de Ankara'da en çok kitleyi biz topladık. Hani bizim akrabalar he. Kitle derken topluluk demek istiyorum. Bizden endişeliler hani kaybedersek bunları diye. Bir kişiyi kaybetmeleri hepsini kaybetmeleri demek.*

[170] Portes, p.29.

[171] Ibid.

"altruistic support of community members and goals."[172] However, the İskitler group is not attached to each other as the Türközü group that I hesitate to conceptualize them as an "ethnic enclave" because even though their emergence is closely related to their social capital and a large part of them are also relatives, it would not be correct to say the same thing for their success. The Türközü group does share some of its benefits with İskitler group, which is dominantly composed of Kurdish waste pickers and the Urfa enclave. Yet, as I have already mentioned the Urfa group[173] is mostly isolated from the other groups and more specialized in the collection of metals. The places of other groups such as the İskitler group, family enterprises and independent pickers can best be understood by a comparison with the analysis of Türközü group above. The indicators of such a comparison are the segregation of districts among those groups, their daily or monthly incomes and their relations with warehouse owners (See Table 3).

The segregation of the districts among the waste picker groups are spatial to some extent. Each group collects from the closest most valuable waste producing district. However, which group is more dominant in which district conditions the income and consequently the place of waste pickers in sectoral hierarchy, especially if we try to see the features of the districts form the eyes of the waste pickers.

[172] Portes and Sensenbrenner, p. 130.

[173] Another limitation of my fieldwork was my contacts were not willing to get me introduced to Urfa group that they mostly avoided the questions I asked about them.

Table 3. Hierarchy in Informal Waste Collection

Least Vulnerable 	Large-scale Intermediaries
	Warehouse Owners
	Networks of Waste Pickers (Türközü Group, İskitler Group)
Most Vulnerable	Per diem workers and motor vehicle owners
	Independent waste pickers-monthly/weekly sell
	Independent waste pickers-daily sell

Developed version of figure used by Hakan Acar, Yüksel Baykara Acar, *Başkentin Karıncaları Atık Madde İşçileri*, (Ankara, Maya Akademi, 2008), p. 19.

In Ankara, the areas waste pickers frequently work are Yeni Mahalle, Kızılay, Ulus, Bahçeli, Çankaya and Dikmen. Waste pickers identify these areas from what the people in these neighborhoods throw out. In fact observing the content of the garbage gives waste pickers an opportunity to classify the neighborhoods according to their consumption patterns as well as approximate income levels. So indeed, the quality of package wastes differs depending on the consumption patterns of specific districts as well as on the season. Bahçeli, Çankaya and Dikmen are composed of inhabitants with higher incomes; therefore their garbage constitutes mostly inorganic package wastes and therefore are more valuable. Ulus, Kızılay and Çankaya are the city centers. They are the core of entertainment and leisure that there are parks, hotels, pubs, cafes, restaurants, shops, bazaars and bookstores. These places intensively produce package wastes especially in spring and summer time. Yenimahalle, on the other hand, is composed of lower and middle income inhabitants

living in mostly building complexes. Moreover, there is the center of stationery and office supplies in Yenimahalle, which produce refuse papers and cardboard.

Even though, in some occasions waste pickers state that all streets and wastes belong to waste pickers without any segregation according to place of origin, the waste pickers from Hakkari and Urfa collect waste from Kızılay and Çankaya mainly; the waste pickers from Van, Ağrı, Diyarbakır and Central Anatolia collect from Ulus, Yenimahalle and Bahçeli; and Roma waste pickers collect from Yenimahalle only. Also, only waste pickers from Hakkari and Urfa use pickup trucks to transfer all the collected materials to the warehouses collectively. That is because after the demolition of both İskitler and Türközü, they can no longer store in their *gecekondu* garden for monthly sale. Yet, the advantage is that they do not have to walk back with their pushcarts full. On the contrary, the rest of the waste pickers carry their collected materials back to their warehouses, which are also their homes.

The incomes of the waste pickers among the groups do not differ as much as it differs between the waste pickers' and warehouse owners' income. Even so, it is also an important indicator. A waste picker from the Türközü group earns an average 150 Turkish Liras per day and works three to six days of a week, which makes the approximate income of a single male waste picker 1000 TL at minimum and 3600 TL at maximum.[174] On the other hand, throughout my interviews in İskitler, I found that a waste pickers' earning per month varies between 300 TL and 1500 TL; a per diem worker gets 25TL to 40 TL per day, which makes 1200 TL per month and a

[174] This is 2 to 5 times the gross minimum wage of 2010; that is 729 TL per month.

motor vehicle driver gets closer to what a per diem workers gets or they work for advance payments for each transport.

Given the advantages of the Türközü group in durability to changes in economic situations, entrepreneurialism, size of the community, technical superiority and a chance to elevate within the sector, the enormous difference between waste pickers' earnings in Türközü and İskitler is not a surprise. The conditions under which the İskitler group migrated, its way of getting organized, and the composition of İskitler group obviously differ.

Until now, all the quotations I utilized for my arguments belonged to the male waste pickers between the ages of 17 to 22. Actually, the waste pickers of the Türközü group are dominantly from that age interval and sex. Yet, İskitler group consists of a wider range of age interval composed of both women and men and people from variety of origin of migration. A woman waste picker from Sivas who sells all she collects to a warehouse in İskitler has a more limited area of collection, less physical power and additional family responsibilities, explains her situation as:

> I take the waste from certain places. I take from printing houses. They know me, so if there is some, they give it to me. Otherwise, I return home. I brought 60 kilograms now, it makes 6 liras. If I get 10 liras per day, I barely make 300 liras per month. What would that make per person in the household? I have two daughters in high school; I have this (pointing her little boy) and a two-year old at home.[175]

This women waste picker has been waste picking since her husband had an operation on his spinal cord and could not find a job afterwards. Their *gecekondu* in İskitler

[175] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. Storage area of a Warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Ben belli yerlerden alıyorum. Matbaalardan alıyorum. Beni bilip tanıyorlar, varsa alıyorum, yoksa geri dönüyorum. 60 kilo getirdik işte. 6 milyon ediyor. Günlük 10 milyon olsa ayda 300 milyon anca kazanıyorum. O da kişi başına ne edecek? Benim de lisede kızım var okuyor. Lise ikide bir tane var. Bu var (yanındaki küçük erkek çocuğu gösteriyor), bir de iki yaşında var.*

was demolished and they had to move to a flat, which also adds rent to their expenditures. She is not articulated to an ethnic enclave; moreover, her being from Central Anatolia is a disadvantage. Plus, she is also overwhelmed by the responsibilities of her children. Her only life ambition is to send her children to school and that is also why she does this job. She is solely independent in the sector and is a member of the lowest level of the collection echelon.

Another independent waste picker is a couple who live together out of wedlock, a 56-year old man and a 36-year old woman. They live in one of the shanties left alone in the middle of debris left over from the demolition. They are desperately waiting for the last demolition which will occur at the end of June 2010 as informed before. They have no access to any kind of municipal service and all their belongings are the things they found from the garbage. In waste picker's own words: "All the things you see here are from the garbage."[176] They make at most 15 liras a day. He describes the uncertainty and instability of their life as: "I go out with my pushcart whenever I want. You never know what will come out. Sometimes lots of plastics, less paper sometimes vice versa. Our life is never certain, in a sense, our life our faith is on a knife edge, that we do not know which side we'll fall"[177].

The male waste picker of the couple is actually related to a tribe from Ağrı which is dominant in İskitler and this tribe is also somehow related to the Türközü group, yet he has been dismissed from the group because of his political past- that is

[176] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A shanty, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Burda gördüğünüz herşey çöpten gelme.*

[177] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A shanty, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Canım istediği zaman alıyorum el arabasını çıkıyorum. Ne çıkar ne çıkmaz belli olmaz. Bazen plastik çok kağıt az bazen tam tersi. Hiç belli değildir yani bizim yaşamımız kaderimiz pamuk ipliğine bağlı koptu kopacak hesabına gidiyoruz.*

he supported the socialist wing of PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) and was to jail after the 1980s- and because of his personal life- that is, of his rejection of all of his family and legitimate wife and living out of wedlock with another woman who has also left her family because of violence. These people are as free as possible from all social networks and property relations and have nothing to lose. Yet, these features also place them on the lower levels of the informal waste collection echelon.

The incomes of waste pickers in İskitler between 300 liras and 1500 liras also relates to the ways they became waste pickers and the ways they organize waste collection via warehouse owners. This story constitutes the second level of power relations in the informal waste collection hierarchy built upon the exchange relations between the waste pickers and warehouse owners as also shown by Kaveri Gill, whose study was mentioned in the second chapter of this thesis.

The Second Level: Waste Pickers and Warehouse Owners

To refresh our memories, Gill's approach to the relation between buyers and sellers in informal waste collection sector is that she favors the social context in these transactions and deals with the power notion intrinsic to those relationships. The nature of exchange relationships are handled by her along three major axes, respectively, the domain of goods and services exchanged, the length and exclusivity of exchange relationship and, terminal rights and asymmetry in power. The domain of goods and services exchanged are wastes, credit, free working hours and,

protection and influence. In other words, sellers' and buyers' position in the waste market are determined and differentiated by those indicators.[178]

The formation of a Kurdish enclave in İskitler is via a family from Diyarbakır who started the informal waste collection business back in 1990s. Nowadays, only the remainders after the demolition run their warehouses. In the Kurdish enclave in İskitler, partnership in the warehouses is passed over to new generations of nephews and cousins who are obliged to work there, for the reasons that there are no work opportunities in their hometowns and there is an already established job in Ankara. Others' migration is arranged by the dominant families in Ankara who started this job, by guaranteeing their accommodation and work. Adana is a transit destination for some Kurdish migrants from eastern parts of Turkey; therefore there are also waste pickers from Adana who work in these warehouses.

The major difference between the Kurdish enclave in İskitler and Türközü groups is that the İskitler group is not as large as the Türközü group and they have not developed entrepreneurial attempts. For example, the İskitler group does not use motor vehicles and the waste pickers working in their relatives' warehouses do not have a chance to own their own warehouse, rather they can only be partners in their relatives' warehouses more like being appointed. Since they have a limited area of dominance both in size and among districts, the bounded solidarity among the İskitler group offers disadvantage more than it offers elevation within the sector. Rather, "moral obligations" [179] come forth in their relationships. The nephew of one of the warehouse owners' describes the situation as such: "My uncle built this place.

[178] Gill, "Interlinked Contracts…".

[179] Birkbeck, "Self-Employed Proletarians…".

We worked for him when we were little. My grandfather started this place; here we work for him now. This warehouse temporarily belongs to him."[180] His uncle said: "I was a worker of my uncle. Now, I have become his partner. Now, they are gone and left the business to me."[181] The moral obligation here derives from the responsibility of running the business and for sending money to their families composed of at least ten members.

Moreover, a 17-year old waste picker, who is one of the nephews of the owner of the warehouse, said that he had been working here for 12 years. The length of the relationship strengthens the moral obligation. Further, working as a waste picker since the age of five compels the child to work in garbage for the rest of his life, given that he has never received any subsidies for housing, nutrition, education and health except for his "green card" and has experiencing the traumatic consequences of being replaced from one place to another as a result of the family's decision to migrate. The terminal rights of waste pickers are prevented not only by the moral obligations ethnic enclaves surround the migrants, but the social exclusion the poor experiences, which will be discussed in the next part of this chapter.

The exchange relationships can be seen more obviously in relationships between warehouse owners and waste pickers/per diem workers/motor vehicle drivers who are not related by kinship ties. Warehouse owners who are at the top of

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[180] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Dayım yapmış burayı. Küçükken yanında çalıştık. Burda dedem açtı, onla çalışıyoruz işte. Bu depo geçici olarak onun.*

[181] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Ben dayımın işçisiydim.şimdi onun ortağı oldum. Şimdi onlar gitti ... de bana verdiler işi.*

ethnic enclaves in the informal waste collection sector, are very well described by an independently working waste picker:

> I bring what I collect to the warehouse owner on daily basis. The warehouse owners' conditions are very good. The warehouse owner sells four or five stocks in his hometown, his uncle give him some loans, opens a warehouse. He buys paper from people like us, a year later he has raised a building, bought a car. He buys stuff from me for 120 kuruş and sells it to 220 kuruş to the factory which is owned by his kin. These warehouse owners, the big bugs, come together and decide on the daily price of the paper and say we will buy at this price. The municipalities get their kick-back, say nothing to them. Municipality evacuated industry in İskitler. When the city police comes, they also get kick-backs and go because city police threatens the warehouse owner that they won't let them do this job here, so the warehouse owner gets anxious and bribes them.[182]

The warehouse owner explicitly appropriates the surplus value that has been produced by the waste picker using the upper hand of his social networks. Yet, this is not probed as it is by most waste pickers. Its distinctive feature derives from the fact that it is concealed or, better to say, negotiated by some of the advantages the warehouse owner gives to the waste pickers; such as advance loans, credits, protection in the sector in turn for wastes, free working hours and inflexibility of termination rights.

A waste picker explains his relationship with warehouse owner he works with as: "Now, we cannot find a boss like brother Ahmet. He is humorous. I worked with many warehouse owners, yet there is no other like brother Ahmet. He does not yell, he is friendly in conversation. Others do not let you sit for five minutes. If it rains,

[182] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A shanty, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Ben günlük depocunu ayağına götürüyorum. Depocuların durumu çok iyi. Depocu memleketinde 4-5 hayvanın satıyo amcası dayısı 3-5 borç veriyo depo açıyo senden benden kağıtları alıyo 1 sene sonra binayı dikti, altına arabayı çekti. Benden 120 alıyo kendisi 220ye fabrikaya satıyo fabrika da onların hemşehrisi. Depocular büyükbaşlar bir araya geliyorlar günlük fiyatını belirliyorlar kağıdı şu fiyata alıcaksın. Belediyeler de avantasını alıyor. Onlara bişey demiyor. Belediye sanayiyi boşaltmış. Zabıta geliyo yolunu buluyor avantasını alıp gidiyor. Bak diyo sana burda iş yaptırmam diyo adam da korkuyo veriyo.*

for example, brother Ahmet lets us wait until the rain stops."[183] On the other hand, Ahmet describes his relationship with the workers as: "I am an employer, a tradesman. I sit with the workers, I say everyone is human. Others ask me how can you eat with those workers? You see in what conditions and what we are eating here."[184] Even though the warehouse owner has a little bit of mercy in his voice, he is as brother to the workers who eat, chat and make jokes with him. In fact, he also lends them money and makes them work for free for their debt.

A per diem worker in that warehouse said: "We can borrow money from our boss whenever we want. When we want he gives us extra money. I mean, he helps us… He substracts the debt from our salary. When you work, he cuts the debt."[185] It is not like a boss lends money and you pay it in cash when you have money, but you pay your debt, as you work. Yet, the per diem worker feels gratitude for such arrangements. On the other hand, a motor vehicle driver working for a warehouse works in return for a place to sleep and daily food: "I have no place to sleep. So I sleep here. Our friend (refers to the boss) gives me food, covers my cigarette expenditures, so, I give public service here. The vehicle does not belong to me."[186]

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[183] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Şimdi Orhan abi gibi patron bulamayız. Şakacıdır. Birçok ardiyecinin yanında çalıştım ben Orhan abi gibisi yok yani. Ne bağırır ne şey yapar. Orhan abi iyidir. Muhabbeti iyidir. Diğerleri 5 dakika oturtturmaz bizi. Mesela yağmur yağıyor adam oturtur yağmur durana kadar.*

[184] A Warehouse owner, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Ben de bir işverenim. Esnafım. Ben oturdum işçilerle herkes insandır dedim. Başkaları soruyor, sen nasıl bu işçilerle yemek yersin. Görüyosun ne koşullarda ne yediğimizi.*

[185] A Per diem Worker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Biz patronumuzdan istediğimiz zaman paramızı alıyoruz. istediğimiz zaman fazla para alıyoruz. İstediğimiz zaman yardımcı oluyor yani....Borç nasıl maaşında kesiyor işte. Çalıştın mı kesiyor.*

People who work in waste see warehouse owners as their saviors, yet warehouse owners also see themselves as the workers' saviors, too. One of the warehouse owners I interviewed told me that he had hired an ex-inmate and saved him from a life of crime. I also had a chance to speak to the ex-inmate who is a per diem worker and makes 750 liras per month. He said that he is always indebted.

Another important thing is, warehouse owners can guarantee protection to the workers affiliated with his business. The aim is to guarantee his business at the first place by bribing the city police: "The city police come with a demolition order in his hand. At that point, whatever you have in your pocket, 100 liras, you don't know. You are obliged to give away money."[187] The advantage here for the waste pickers affiliated with that warehouse owner is that they no longer come face to face with city police interrogation or violence. However, this kind of protection is not necessarily valid for Kurdish waste pickers because they are categorically a target for the city police.

As I have illustrated, the domain of goods and services exchanged between the warehouse owners and the workers of waste are on the basis of waste, credit, free working hours and protection. The exchange relationship occurs within a social context and produces 'moral obligations' in which powers of the parties are asymmetrical. Most basically, a waste picker cannot sell the things she has collected

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[186] Motor vehicle driver, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Benim yatacak kalkacak yerim yok, burada yatıp kalkıyorum. Arkadaş da benim yemeğimi veriyor, sigara masrafımı çekiyor, ben de buna amme hizmeti yapıyorum. Araba benim değil.*

[187] A Warehouse owner, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Elinde bir kağıt yıkım kağıdı artık 100 lira mı çıkar cepten elli lira mı çıkar cepten bilmiyorsun. Sen de para vermek zorunda kalıyorsun.*

to a warehouse which gives a better price, as long as she is indebted to another, yet she may not want to sell to another buyer because she feels morally attached to that buyer for the help he provided in time of crises. Also, in the Kurdish enclave in İskitler, it is less likely the waste pickers and warehouse owners will detach their bonds with their enclave based on the altruistic behavior and moral obligations. The elevation of this enclave could be possible only if they started investing in technical devices, yet such capital do not accumulate because they send most of their earnings to their families in their hometowns.

The last point I want to make is about a negative effect of bounded solidarity that it, along with its advantages of survival in an informally organized economical niche, has "restrictions on individual freedom and outside contacts."[188] Even if waste picking can supply in average twice of the minimum income and some of the waste pickers make unexpected amounts of money at this job, as I already mentioned at the beginning, their status in society and their income are not correlated. In fact, an increase in their income does not guarantee their incorporation to urban life.

Also concluded by Özgen, this finding refutes the old sociological assumption that there is strong connection between the time spent in the city and the increase in income and incorporation to urban life and urbanization of immigrants.[189] In a case that a waste picker attempts to move to another area of occupation –because of the possible disadvantages of being associated with wastes and the risks related to it-, then because he is involved in too tight ties, he is deprived of the "weak ties [which] are an important resource in making possible mobility opportunity…[and]

[188] Portes and Sensenbrenner, p. 130.

[189] Özgen, p.98.

establishing a link…within professional and technical specialties which are well defined and limited in size."[190]

Until now, I have made an analysis of the inner dynamics of the informal waste collection sector and how it operates and how people are recruited in İskitler and Türközü by elaborating on the power relations at two levels; namely networks and exchange relations. Yet, my analysis would be inadequate without mentioning the social exclusion and its implications in waste pickers' lives and political orientations.

Poverty, Forced Migration and Social Exclusion

Throughout my field research in Ankara, waste pickers were more willing to talk about how they experience social exclusion and the Kurdish question more than they wanted to talk about the nature and organization of waste picking as an economic activity. In a way, that was an obstacle for me that I had to overcome. Yet, now I face the hardship of choosing among the stories of social exclusion I heard from the waste pickers of Ankara. For these purposes, I utilize the conceptualization of social exclusion as it is used by Fikret Adaman and Çağlar Keyder's in the report, "Poverty and Social Exclusion in the Slum Areas of Large Cities in Turkey."[191]

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[190] Mark Granovetter, "Strenght of Weak Ties," *American Journal of Sociology* 48, no.6 (May 1973), p. 1373.

[191] Fikret Adaman and Çağlar Keyder, "Türkiye'de Büyük Kentlerin Gecekondu ve Çöküntü Mahallelerinde Yaşanan Yoksulluk ve Sosyal Dışlanma," 2006, (pdf version of the document downloaded in 20 November 2010 from http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_inclusion /docs/2006/study_turkey_tr.pdf)

Social exclusion is, as defined by Adaman and Keyder, a process of people being isolated from social life or the prevention of these people's participation to social life due to poverty, deprivation of basic education and abilities or discrimination.[192] Social exclusion is a concept that is defined in four dimensions. First is economic exclusion, which refers to the condition of unemployment and lack of access to reach credits as a result of exclusion from the labor market for a while, which it may gain urgency in the absence of reciprocal networks of kinship. Spatial exclusion is the second dimension by which a person is discriminated either due to the geography or place he/she lives or there are inadequate public services to the specific place the person accommodates so that he/she is out of reach to social life. The third dimension is cultural exclusion that a person is excluded from cultural and social life independent of his/her economic conditions. Being a member of an ethnic or religious minority, not being able to speak the language of the majority or having an accent, way of dressing and sexual orientation may be a cause for being disregarded and prevented from social interactions. Cultural exclusion materializes in identity differences and social status among people. The last dimension is political exclusion that is the condition of not or partly being able to practice the juridical and citizenship rights and not being able to participate in political life. These dimensions are interwoven and each dimension triggers the possibility of another.[193]

In addition to the dimensions as described below, the impacts of forced migration in waste pickers' lives is also a factor that increases the levels at which

[192] Ibid., p. iii.

[193] Ibid., pp. 11-12.

social exclusion is experienced. The Türközü enclave in Ankara is a very small portion of nearly one million of people displaced between 1987 and 2002 from the area of the State of Emergency as a result of armed conflict between the Turkish army and PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party) guerillas.[194] The displacement of the Kurds has caused a rupture from their traditional economic and cultural activities and left them to the mercy of market conditions in urban areas. Moreover, forced migration has prevented the Kurdish population from education opportunities. The adult men have very low education levels and women are mostly illiterate and could not speak Turkish. They do even not receive any subsidies to settle to their destination of migration. The victims of forced migration make up a cheap labor power in cities and economically, spatially and culturally pushed out of the society. The experience of forced migration is a factor that increases the affects of social exclusion.[195]

The waste pickers of Ankara, to a general extent, suffer from social exclusion. The reasons why waste pickers engage in this business, regardless of their networks, reciprocal relations and the benefits deriving from these factors, are actually similar on the basis. In both İskitler and Türközü, by both Kurdish and Turkish waste pickers, the answer to the question "why did you start this job?" was unhesitantly "obligation." A waste picker tells about his obligation:

> All of us are obliged, I, too, am starving. I have no money. I wander around the buildings of the rich. The lady has put stale bread that would not go down her throat. I take it, bring it here and eat it. Is this not obligation? Is there any

[194] Deniz Yükseker, "Yurtlarından ve Yaşamlarından Koparılmış İnsanlar: Bir Sosyal Dışlanma Süreci Olarak Kürtlerin Yerlerinden Edilmesi," in Keyder and Adaman ed. "Türkiye'de Büyük Kentlerin …".

[195] Ibid.

> obligation other than this? Is not mixing the garbage an obligation as if I am too enthusiastic about the dirt of the garbage? As if the old shoe or the old plastic I find are too valuable. No, but I sell them and make a living.[196]

And again, even those factors determining the position in the hierarchical scheme of informal collection can cause slight differences, the exit options are limited to all waste pickers. Yet, the network relations are only influential determining the position of a waste picker within the sector, not outside. These "obligations" and their manifestations reveal themselves in all dimensions of social exclusion.

Waste picking is an organized solution to the most severe implication of economic exclusion that is hunger and exclusion from life. In a waste picker's own words:

> There is nothing else we can do other than picking. Is there any job in the country? It is because I did not go to school. I came here when I was 16. My father did not have the opportunity to send me to school. We have a quick mind but no pen and pencil… This is the easiest job for an unemployed person in Turkey, I mean, the one with no capital, if he knows printer then he takes a pushcart and works. In society, they see this job as shameful and impure but the best part of this job is it makes a good income for a picker.[197]

"Good money," as mentioned in the above quotation, sometimes barely makes the month of an independent waste picker, sometimes shared by the waste pickers' family members and sent to the hometown by the Kurdish enclave in İskitler, spent

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[196] A Warehouse owner, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A shanty, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Hepimiz mecburuk, ben de aç kalıyorum mecbur kalıyorum param yok gidiyorum zenginlerin binalarının önünde dolaşıyorum balkona bayat ekmeği asmış boğazından geçmez hanımefendi alıp getirip yiyorum bu mecburiyet değil mi. Bundan başka mecburiyet var mı çöp karıştırmak mecburiyet değil mi ben çöpün pisliğine mi hevesliyim. Çok mu değerli şeyler çıkıyor ki ya eski bi plastik ya eski bi ayakkabı atmıştır. Satıyom değerlendiriyom ekmek paramı kazanıyorum. Günlük geçiniyorum. Ama yetmiyor.*

[197] A Warehouse owner, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Bundan başka yapacağımız bir şey yok ki. Memlekette iş mi var? Orda okumadığım için. 16 yaşında geldim buraya amma. Babamın imkânları beni okutmaya yetmedi. Kafamız çalışıyor ama kalem defterimiz yok... En kolay iş bu Türkiye'de bir işsiz için. Yani sermayesi olmayan el arabası alıp çıkacaksın işte biliyosan matbaayı biliyosan. Toplumda bazen bu işi ayıp pis görürler ama bu işin şeyi güzel yani, toplayanlar için çok güzel bir kazanç var.*

for the children's' daily school expenditures or traditional feasts and weddings; yet the "good money" is not spent for leisure activities, participation to social life, health expenses or advancement of skills and abilities of individual waste pickers or their family members.

Moreover, I came across only one waste picker in Türközü who was waste picking to cover his university examination preparation expenses. The rest of the waste pickers have hardly made it to high school and mostly dropped out. It would not be wrong to generalize that their reach for educational possibilities is limited or none. In a waste picker's own words: "In the paper business, one can neither study at open high school, nor at any other."[198] However, since only young males are engaged in this business, their earnings helping the girls in their families go to school, especially in the Türközü enclave.

Most waste pickers suffer from asthma, respiratory allergies and dermatological diseases, yet these cannot be treated as long as their encounter with garbage continues. After the last demolition in 2009 in İskitler, I mentioned that the warehouses and *gecekondu*s were left in the middle of the ruins of the site; ruined roads and streets, mud, wires and debris was all over the place. When I was in the field, one of the waste picker's foot was injured because she had stepped on a piece of wood with a rusty nail on it. They had to heal the wound on their own, because they could not afford the hospital and did not have a "green card." Most of the waste pickers' have to choose between owning a motor vehicle and having a "green card" because any kind of ownership cancels the benefits of the green card. Yet, most of

[198] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Kağıt işinde ne açık okunur, ne kapalı.*

them either do not go to hospital at all or pay hospital expenses with bill credits. The İskitler district was already a place socially excluded before the demolition. Even though it is very close to the Beşevler Metro station that supplies transport nearly everywhere in Ankara, the district was deprived of legal electricity, water, sewerage systems. Now, with the demolition, the social exclusion has altered and causes more severe experiences of poverty.

Cultural exclusion, on the other hand, materializes in the ethnic identity of waste pickers who are the majority in the informal waste collection sector and this is one of the major factors of the violence they come across in the streets and cannot get alternative jobs. The negative meanings attached to being associated with garbage also reinforce the cultural exclusion.

One of the hardships waste pickers face is the attitude towards their accent, especially in search of other occupation alternatives: "Other job? We did not learn any other job. When we go to other place, they turn us down with excuses like your Turkish sounds like slang. This is the job we do best and feel good while doing."[199] This attitude reinforces the limitedness of exit options for the waste pickers and discourages them for such pursuit.

The waste pickers of Türközü evaluate the demolition of their warehouses and *gecekondu*s and the violent confrontations on the street as an action towards their ethnic character: "That is only because we are Kurds. We were despised by the state when we firstly came. Really. That time we were despised by the people and the city

[199] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, December 2009, A Warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Başka iş? Biz başka iş ögrenmedik. Başka yere gitsek, yok sizin türkçeniz argo gibi kelimelerle bizi geri itiyolar. En güzel yaptıgımız kendimizi iyi hissettiğimiz iş budur.*

police for we are from Hakkari and Kurdish and PKK. We did not give up, fought against it."[200] Similar to what this waste picker has expressed, a Roma waste picker from İzmit who is also face to face with displacement as a result of the urban transformation project by the İzmit Metropolitan Municipality indicates that: "We are despised by everyone because we are kağıtçı. The state does not care, it ignores us. I think that the reason they force us to move away from here and take our houses is because we are Roman and we are *kağıtçı* (the person who sells paper). I do not trust this state."[201] Regardless of the ethnicity of the waste pickers, the life of a waste picker is always at stake. She/he may be hit by a car and die in the middle of the night as happened to two waste pickers in Ankara in 2007,[202] or have a cerebral hemorrhage because the city police beat them to death as happened to the Ankara waste picker Evliya Çelebi.[203]

It is also very common among public opinion and also reflects the city police's attitude towards waste pickers that are labelled thieves. For example, a waste picker from İskitler says that, "They found a stolen mobile phone. When it comes out, they think that we stole it."[204] I have also witnessed this attitude during

[200] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. Tr. *Yok, sadece Kürt olduğumuz için. Biz Kürt olduğumuz için ilk geldiğimiz zaman devlet tarafından hor görülüyorduk. Gerçekten de öyle. O zaman insanlar tarafından, yani zabıta tarafından Hakkarilisin, Kürtsünüz, PKK'lisiniz söylemleriyle bizi hor görüyorlardı. Biz de yılmadık ve mücadele ettik yani.*

[201] N.A., kATIK, no. 2, (2007), p. 12.

[202] N.A., "Arkadaşını Kurtardı ama Kendini Kurtaramadı", kATIK, no. 3, (2007), p. 12.

[203] "Zabıta Tarafından Arkadaşları Dövülen Kağıtçılar Eylem Yaptı," kATIK, no. 4, (2007), p. 6.

[204] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A Warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Çalınmış telefon bulmuşlar. Ortaya çıkınca biz çaldık sanılıyor.*

fieldwork. I met a waste picker in Kızılay and then we walked to İskitler together. On the way, my waste picker friend told me that he noticed a car following us. Later, when we came to a warehouse and started our focus group, suddenly a plain clothes policeman pushed the door of the warehouse with his foot to open it with a walky talky in his hand and asked for our identity cards. The waste pickers in the room told him that he could not step in with his shoes on because this was their home. Then, they went out and resolved the issue.

Later, waste pickers told me that he had come here to interrogate them about a piece of metal that had been stolen from the neighborhood, yet they had not stolen. These kinds of events happen very frequently in İskitler warehouses. The plain clothes policemen disturb the warehouses, even though a plain clothes policemen has nothing to do with theft. The aim of their frequent visits is to make waste pickers feel that they are under surveillance. Yet, my existence in that area as a stranger must have bothered them. The disturbances of civil police in the warehouses or the attacks by city police on the streets can also be evidence that the gecekondu dwellers-in this case waste pickers who are also people engaged in an illegal business in the eyes of public authorities- make up the social construction of the "threatening other."[205]

Among all the dimensions of social exclusion only the political dimension does not hold true for most of the Ankara waste pickers. Especially the Kurdish enclaves participate many political activities and demonstrations, most of them are engaged in Kurdish left politics. Yet, nearly waste pickers are very reactionary to

[205] Tahire Erman, "Gecekondu Çalışmalarında 'Öteki' Olarak Gecekondulu Kurguları," *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, no. 1 (2004), (pdf version of document downloaded 1 June 2010 from http://ejts.revues.org/index85.html#ftn2), p. 9.

"the state" and any resemblances of it. This attitude had gained strength by the time the Control of Package and Package Waste Management had been implemented and their strong distrust of the public authorities is reinforced by the ways used to implement the legislation. Moreover, the fact that most waste pickers grew in violence and war in their hometown and in life struggle on the streets has made them inclined to violence. Therefore, they fight for their right to work and protect their business in every way possible.

What Legislation Offers to Waste Pickers: From a Type of Informality to Another

I have already put forth how the legislation of the Control of Package and Package Waste Management operates in the first chapter of this thesis. In this part, I will scrutinize shortly on how that it is applied in the specific case of Ankara, particularly by the Çankaya and Yenimahalle Municipalities since they cover most of the area that waste pickers work and Ankara Metropolitan Municipality since the Mamak dump is counted in its territory.

Two most basic enforcements of the legislation are the separate collection of package wastes from the source and to formally register the amounts of package wastes generated, collected and sent to recycling via the triple protocol between ÇEVKO, provincial municipality and the licensed firm under the monitoring of Ministry of Environment and Forestry. In this framework, Çankaya Municipality has a contract with Simat Machine Construction Industry and Trade Limited Company and Yenimahalle Municipality with ITC Invest Trading and Consulting AG, Ankara

Waste and Machine Limited Company and Altıntaş Scrap Industry Trade Limited Company.

To make separate collection of package wastes at sources possible, each municipality chooses areas in their territories considering the population, dwelling type, social and economical structure in those neighborhoods. And then, it forms teams for catch-up work which visit each house one by one and informs the citizens about the legal responsibilities, hands out brochures and trash bags with different colors for each type of package wastes supplied by ÇEVKO, and also tells the exact spot and time table that the truck of the licensed firm will come and collect those materials on behalf of the municipality. Yenimahalle Municipality has started this application in one-third of the province and has performed two catch-up works for progress.

According to the head of the Yenimahalle Environment Control Directory, the educational visits for raising awareness are very important because people do not have the habit of separating their garbage at home and it is the basis of the system. On the other hand, Çankaya Municipality has initiated the separate collection of package waste at source in 11,000 houses for the last three years and now has extended its target by adding 33,000 more. In both municipalities, at the source collection works best at public buildings, universities and schools by indoor boxes. Yet, people throw mixed garbage in separate collection spots despite the awareness-raising efforts of municipalities.

As pointed out by both officers in the Environment Control Directories of Yenimahalle and Çankaya, waste pickers who “illegally” collect materials from the streets and the warehouses which do not meet any of the legal criteria legislation

enforces are the major reasons for the failure in this system. That is because waste pickers and the warehouses dominating the sector, cause the licensed firms to lose money, yet these licensed firms make enormous investments to get the collection and separation license from the Ministry. Even the arrangements for at the source collection of package wastes do not work to stop waste pickers' activities because waste pickers come and take the already separated wastes from the containers before the licensed firm arrives there at the scheduled time.

One of the largest licensed firms is Invest Trading and Consulting AG (ITC), which is not only licensed for the collection and separation of package wastes, but also for recycling of all sorts of wastes and transforming it to energy operating in Mamak, Sincan, and Adana dumps. The Mamak dump is the largest dump in Ankara, where, 4,400 tons of garbage were piled up each day and was famous for its smell.[206] This company rented the Mamak dump from Ankara Metropolitan Municipality for 49 years for 230 million dollars in 2002 and started operating in 2006.[207] In the public presentation of the facility, the mayor of Ankara Melih Gökçek stated to the press that: "It cost us 20 billion, now we will collect our waste at no cost. All pieces of wastes will be utilized."[208] Later in the same year, in a response to the Ankara Chamber of Doctors (ATO) Working Group for alteration of waste pickers' living and working conditions, Melih Gökçek defended the right of the ITC over the garbage of Ankara by saying that waste pickers are the thieves of the garbage. Yet, this statement also corresponded to the view of the Chairman of the Executive Board

[206] *Radikal*, 06. 07.2006.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid.

of the ITC when he claimed people has to give up picking waste from the streets because they could not reach the glass and papers so that they had to buy them from waste pickers who actually steal them.[209] The parallelism between the statements of the mayor and the executive of the ITC shows that waste collection is no longer a public service, but there is a shift from managerialism to entrepreneurialism and the new legislation is the new infrastructure that enables the entrepreneurialism. The fact that ITC is known as "Melih Gökçek's son's firm" among the public is not a coincidence.

As also has been verified by the Human Resources Manager of the ITC in my interview, the ITC and other licensed firms cannot profit because the informal waste collection sector is still alive. They are obliged to buy from waste pickers to prevent bankruptcy. So, as the triple protocol foresees, the licensed firms pressure the municipalities to control them and prevent their activities. At this point, the disciplinary forces enter the scene and start to operate the policy of repression. The city police mostly takes away waste pickers' pushcarts and beat the waste pickers if they resist. In a waste picker's own words: "Five or six people follow us. When they catch you, they take your pushcart if you resist, they beat you…the municipality has smashed my friend up, sprayed pepper gas. They beat us in Yenimahalle. So we went to hospital, they said 'why would the city police beat you?', they did not believe us."[210] The demolition of waste pickers' living and working areas are also

[209] "Türkiye'nin Çöp Kralı," Retrieved on 10 December 2009 from http://www.itcturkiye.com/haberler.php?haber=21

[210] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A Warehouse, İskitler, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Beş-altı kişi arabada bizi takip ediyolar. Yakaladılar mı arabayı alıyolar eger kaşı koyrsan dövüp gidiyolar... Belediyeler benim arkadaşımın yüzünü gözünü patlattılar. Biber gazı*

expressions of the policy of repression, a way to show that waste pickers can no longer freely continue their economic activities.

As the police violence has become a usual part of waste pickers' life, this has caused waste pickers to develop mistrust against the public authorities. The mistrust was not a new attitude among the Kurdish waste pickers due to their historical exile from their homeland and from the urban life, yet all waste pickers developed hopelessness and hesitation about how they are treated in all aspects of social policies as they have been pushed to be left homeless and jobless starting from 2004 onwards. This mistrust has caused the waste pickers to respond the violence they face on the street by violence and consequently a major break down in any possibility of communication between the parties targeted by the legislation and waste pickers. In fact, the incorporation attempts of municipalities reveal the rightfulness of mistrust among waste pickers towards public authorities.

There have been minor attempts of municipalities at the incorporation of waste pickers, but none of them are detailed and long-term written plans. The head of Yenimahalle Environment Control Directory explains the two alternatives they proposed to waste pickers as:

> We wanted to incorporate a group of waste pickers. And we did it applying the appropriate standards for two or three months. We said to them, we give you this territory; you will work in more humane conditions. We called them to incorporate to this system, we make your social security… work in behalf of our licensed firm with wage and have insurance. Other alternative was to make contract with the licensed firm, bring all you collected to the firm and in turn they make your social security arrangements. So, you can sell to the

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diyolar dimi onu sıktılar. Yenihamallede dövdüler bizi hastaneye gittik zabıta seni neden dövsün dediler. İnanmadılar.

> licensed firm and from that income the firm will cut off your social security premium.[211]

There also have been similar attempts in Çankaya, that the municipality proposed waste pickers' to give uniforms with the municipality labels on, hand gloves and provide them to collect in hygienic conditions, yet with similar arrangements of wage and social security. Yet, this offer as Yenimahalle municipality's offer was too short lived. I also want to draw attention to the fact that these offers do not break the waste pickers' encounter with mixed garbage and therefore with diseases and other risks.

On the other hand, the ITC has employed some of the waste pickers from Türközü in the assembly line. Human Resources Manager of the ITC tells how that occurred as:

> We were looking for employees to work in the assembly line to do separation. We thought why it wouldn't be the waste pickers. We went to the mukhtar of their district asked him, hung a notice there. Then some came and worked. Some of them are still working with us; some came and then later left. 30-35 people worked here, now nearly 15 of them remains. We thought they would be more inclined to this job… We paid them 650 TL plus social security, meals and transport.[212]

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[211]The Head of Yenimahalle Environment Control Directory, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. Yenimahalle Environment Control Directory office, Yenimahalle, Ankara,Turkey. *Tr. Biz bununla ilgili sokak toplayıcılarından bir grubu dahil etmek istedik, arabalarını uygun standartlara getirdik çalıştırdık da 2-3 ay dedik ki sana bu bölgeyi veriyoruz. Daha insani ölçülerde çalışacaksın, gelin sisteme dahil olun, sigortanızı yaptıralım. Lisanslı firma adına topla bir ücret al sigortan olsun. Diğer alternative olarak firmayla anlaş firmanın organizasyonunun içinde yer al, topladığını lisanslı firmaya getir, paranı ordan al eğer firma da seni sigortanı yapsın, ona sattığın miktardan senin sigortanı kessin senin sigortanı yapsın.*

[212] Human Resources Manager, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. An office in ITC, Mamak, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Bu tesiste ayırma işini yapmak üzere çalıştırılacak insanlar neden bu işi yapan insanlar olmasın dedik, gittik muhtarlıklarına sorduk ilan astık. Geldiler, çalışanlar oldu. Hala bizimle kalanlar var. Başlayıp gidenler oldu. 30-35 kişi çalıştı. Şu anda heralde 15-20 kişi vardır. Çünkü onlar bu işe daha yatkın diye düşündük. Minimum 650 artı sosyal sigortası, yemeği, servisi.*

As can be seen from the above quotations, nobody denies the existence of waste picking and the informal waste collections sector. In fact, all of the authorities I interviewed had very detailed information about how the sector operates. Yet, their offers are short-cut solutions to their problems, but not a comprehensive solution to the best functioning of integrated and sustainable waste management. The offers aim to disguise the waste pickers' contribution to the sector by subcontracting them so that they become invisible and less powerful than they are. By doing so, the share of the informal waste collection sector will be transferred to entrepreneurs and they can extract the surplus value created by the waste pickers more easily so that they can cover their expenses and eventually profit by lowering the costs of labor. In their eyes, waste pickers are occupational experts of garbage and sources of cheap labor. However, the waste pickers of Ankara do not respond positively to these offers. Moreover, even if they responded positively, the incorporation offers are incapable of handling even a minority of waste pickers.

Waste Pickers' Responses: Organizations and Limitations

First of all, the limited options proposed by municipalities and firms to the waste pickers offer a very low income compared to what most of them earns. This is how a waste picker evaluates the municipalities' offers: "Their aim is to support the factories. They tell us to wear uniforms and to work in factories. The wages they offer are equivalent to what they give to a sanitation worker. Today, 600 TL is not enough to me. If a waste picker spends 600 to his expenditures, 3 TL goes to

cigarette everyday."[213] Waste pickers reject being cheap labor for factories, and demand a better agreement from the municipalities:

> If the municipalities' conditions offer a regular job not based on contract and its salary is enough to make a living of a family, who would not want that? If they will provide health and education, we would also incorporate. But if they are going to limit our spaces, we cannot consider that. We know Çankaya Municipality has fired the 35 workers they hired before in Simat.[214]

They not only reject being the cheap labor, but they also know how unstable and unreliable subcontract working is. Despite all the hardships, limitations and obligations of their current job, still waste pickers are not hired by any one who gives them a piece of freedom to manage their own time: "I cannot work under command. I will want a day off, the boss won't let me. In this work, friends know, I stay at home three or four days a week. It depends on my own will. If I was in another job, and I took a day off, the boss would fire me."[215]

Even if this condition is prevalent for a minority of waste pickers in this business, still it illustrates why waste picking can be more desirable than a full-time job. Yet, for the Türközü enclave, the flexibility of work time is arranged according to the customs and traditions they carry on: "We are a tribe, we are crowded. We

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[213] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A Cafe, Kızılay, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Amaçları fabrikayı desteklemek. Topluyorsanız bile forma giyin, fabrikada çalışın diyorlar. Verecekleri maaş bir temizlik işçisine verdikleri kadar. Bugün 600 milyon bana yetmez. 600 milyonu giderlerine verse, sigarası var 3 TL.*

[214] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. A Cafe, Kızılay, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Belediyenin şartları buysa: Sözleşmeli değil kadrolu olsun, maaş da bir evi geçindirebilecek bir maaş olsa hangi kağıt işçisi istemez ki. Sağlık ve eğitimi sağlayacaksa biz de bunun çalışmasını yaparız. Ama bizim yaşam alanlarımızı kısıtlayacaklarsa, kesinlikle giremeyiz. 35 tane kağıt işçisini çıkarttı Çankaya Belediyesi.*

[215] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Ben emir altında çalışamıyorum. Şimdi bir gün izin isteyeceğim, adam vermeyecek. Bu işte, arkadaşlar da biliyor, haftada 3-4 gün evdeyim, boşum. Kendi isteğime bağlı, ister giderim, ister gitmem. Ama başka iş olsa, 1 gün gitmesem, izin istesem vermese ama bir gün gitmesem, kovar adam.*

have weddings. If I was in another job, I would not be able to go. Sometimes the wedding lasts for three days. I cannot take three days off in a regular job"[216] or according to political activities: "if something happens we do not go to work, for example, if there is a press statement of the party."[217]

As expressed in *kATIK* waste pickers claim for a new legislation that will secure their work, right to make a living, organizations, representation in the sector and be respectful to human and nature.[218] The waste pickers of ANGEKADER, to come up with a better alternative, have designed a model for a cooperative with the assistance of volunteer activists influenced by the experiences of global organizations of waste pickers in Bogota Conference in 2008 (See Appendix A).

The cooperative model is based on the idea of equal partnership of all waste pickers to the cooperative. By making contracts with a number of waste generators such as households, supermarkets, shops, companies, schools, and public buildings, instead of the licensed firms or in competition with them- and by collecting the package wastes that have already been separated at source, it is foreseen that the incomes of waste pickers will increase gradually where as municipal expenditures will decrease. Moreover, waste pickers will use the remainder of their incomes for the betterment of their living conditions, and creating the opportunities for their incorporation to urban life. This model requires state subsidies and regulation both at

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[216] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Aşiretiz, kalabalığız…Düğünlerimiz oluyor. Ben başka işte olsam gidemem oraya. Bazen düğünlerimiz üç gün sürüyor. Şimdi üç gün izin alamam ben bir yerden.*

[217] A Waste Picker, interview by the author, tape recording, December 2009. ANGEKADER, Türközü, Ankara, Turkey. *Tr. Bir şey olduğu zaman işe gitmiyoruz, mesela partinin bir basın açıklaması olduğu zaman.*

[218] Şanlıbey Alabay, "Yerel Seçimlere Girerken," *kATIK* 7 (2009), p. 18.

the initiation of the model and its sustainability as well as waste pickers' collectivity and resistance.

However, waste pickers' organizations are only active in times of crises. For example, when a friend is beaten up by city police, they gather for press statement in Kızılay, attend to the organization's theatre demonstration but in very limited numbers, or attend to mass demonstrations. The associations stay standing by the efforts of a few waste pickers who try to bring and hold together the spirit. The voluntary participation of waste pickers especially to the contribution fees are limited and collectivity in the organizations of associations is not that enthusiastic. Even though the journal kATIK is a tremendous effort, because of the ruptures in the organizations and among people, it had to pause for a while. Not only are these, but waste picking being a daily job also a reason for the instability. Therefore, the cooperative model seems like an ideal future plan but does not reflect the reality.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

I started this thesis with a motivation to grasp the reality of waste picking and to present a comprehensive snapshot of that reality. As the thesis came into being, from the moment it was first designed to the moment its last words were written, my perception of the reality evolved and in the course of the process it may have lost some parts of that reality, or been manipulated by the limitations of my fieldwork. Departing from the current concerns for the dissolving of informal waste collection sector under the disturbance of neoliberal urban restructuring, I directed my focus on the organization of that specific sector and explored its inner dynamics as I built my arguments. The reason for that is I believe the key to the future of waste pickers lies in the inner dynamics of the informal waste collection sector.

My motivation derives from the urge to change the perceptions about waste picking and waste pickers, which is something not much known but shaped by prejudices and general views about the poor. Yet, what differentiates waste pickers from the poor as a general category is the specific occupation in which they are engaged. In fact, the knowledge about waste picking as an occupation is also limited. People tend to think waste picking is a marginal, disorganized and stable activity, performed by independent individuals which soon be dissolved as more modern systems of waste collection is implemented.

On the other hand, I claim the opposite of these matters drawing parallelisms with the waste pickers' all over the world that waste pickers are a heterogeneous

group of socially deprived people who are hierarchically placed in the collection chain. And those positions derive from the inner dynamics of the sector.

The inner dynamics of the informal waste collection sector are closely related to the formation of that sector, the history of that formation, how it operates, the specific ways and reasons people are recruited and stay in this sector. Consequently, I claimed that the economic relations are embedded in the social relations that have fostered the formation of informal waste collection sector. Moreover, those social relations are the suppliers and inhibitors of livelihood of waste pickers in the sector. Waste picking is like a protection shield of the poor to avoid more harsh conditions of poverty, yet has a magnet affect on altering the social exclusion of waste pickers as it articulates the experiences of forced migration and poverty.

I furthered my argument by asserting that the inner dynamics of the sector and the social exclusion mechanisms shape the political views and reactions of waste pickers towards the consequences of implementation of legislation of the Control of Package and Package Waste Management. Yet, the same factors prevent them from freeing all their bonds to form a cooperative as equal partners with all other waste pickers and to engage in a formal job. Moreover, I aimed to discuss about incorporation under the light of these hypothetical assumptions.

For an exploration of all those, I conducted a field research in two districts in Ankara, namely Türközü and İskitler, and sought for the answers to the questions I posed above. I conducted semi-structured and unstructured interviews with 20 waste pickers, four per diem employee in warehouses, three warehouse owners, three pickup truck drivers, two leaders of the waste picker associations as well as Çankaya

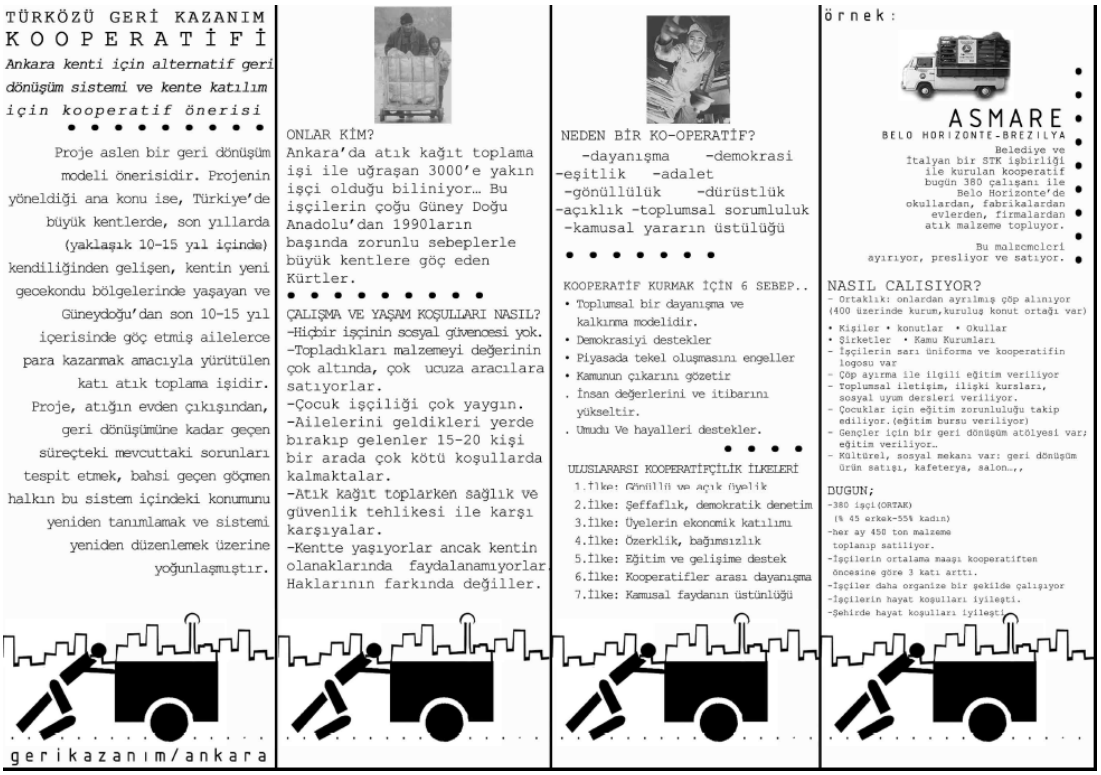
and Yenimahalle Municipalities, Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, Çankaya City Police and a licensed firm, the ITC.

My analysis on how the sector operates, the power relations that the sector is built upon both among networks tied to each other with "bounded solidarity" and among workers in the sector who are tied to each other by "moral obligations" shows that the informal waste collection sector in Ankara is an established and a very well organized sector. It is composed of heterogeneous groups of people with similar reasons to start but different levels of economic pursuits. The how and why the sector is organized as it is makes the possibility of incorporation both in cooperation or in the ways municipality's offers very hard. Yet, it is also out of context that informal waste collection sector will be dissolved under the given circumstances.

All waste pickers are caught in the middle of informality and formality. The waste pickers of Ankara are not totally free of their boundaries in spite of the so-called flexible work hours, but they also do not have much option to engage in formal jobs. In addition to limited terminal right options and consequences of social exclusion, their low possibility of engaging in formal jobs is related to the fact that there is strong distrust between the waste pickers and the other actors. The waste pickers of Ankara carry the burdens of migration, displacement, rupture, poverty and social exclusion all materialize in the physical existence of state and its resemblances. They have right to feel that way. After all that they have been pushed out of a decent life and continue to be pushed by unconvincing and unrealistic incorporation offers. As the waste pickers are beaten up on the streets, they fight back. Yet, this makes the communication among the parties almost impossible. On the other hand, fighting back is their only option, because if waste picking is

prevented by the simple decision of demolishing all the warehouses, then waste pickers will be left to starvation.

Appendix A
ANGEKADER Model of Cooperative



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