

HYPER-PRECARITY AND ORGANIZATION:
THE CASE OF WASTE PICKERS IN ISTANBUL

GÜLEN NAZ TERZİ

BOĞAZIÇI UNIVERSITY

2023

HYPER-PRECARITY AND ORGANIZATION:
THE CASE OF WASTE PICKERS IN ISTANBUL

Thesis submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
Political Science and International Relations

by
Gülen Naz Terzi

Boğaziçi University

2023

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Gülen Naz Terzi, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

Signature.....

Date

ABSTRACT

Hyper-Precarity and Organization: The Case of Waste Pickers in Istanbul

This thesis discusses the waste pickers' working and living conditions as well as their organizational experiences in Istanbul. In order to understand the organizational experiences, first of all, the living and working conditions of the waste pickers are discussed with the concept of hyper-precarity. Hyper-precarity has emerged as a result of the combination of the precarities created by the socio-legal status of waste pickers and their place in the labor market. The causes of hyper-precarity are the informalization created by the neoliberal capitalist system, the dispossession of peasants, forced displacement, transnational migration movements, and social and ethnic discrimination. People who live under hyper-precarity have to do jobs in informal sectors such as waste picking since they do not have any acceptable alternative.

The commodification of garbage and the expansion of the recycling industry in Turkey has also increased the number of waste pickers. However, the commodification of garbage means a profit opportunity for international capitalists. Private companies, seeing the profitability in the recycling sector, want to monopolize waste management by cooperating with the state. This situation causes the waste pickers to be deprived of their job opportunities through state intervention and their hyper-precarity to deepen. Eliminating hyper-precarity has been the impetus for waste pickers' organization which aim to be treated as equal citizens and regain their livelihoods.

ÖZET

"Hiper-Prekaryalık" ve Örgütlenme:

İstanbul'daki Kağıt Atık İşçileri Örneği

Bu tezde kağıt atık toplayıcılarının çalışma ve yaşam koşulları ile İstanbul'daki örgütlenme deneyimlerinin nasıl gerçekleştiği ele alınmıştır. Örgütlenme deneyimlerinin anlaşılabilmesi için öncelikle kağıt atık toplayıcılarının yaşama ve çalışma koşulları hiper-prekarya kavramıyla ele alınmıştır. Hiper-prekarite, atık toplayıcıların sosyo-yasal statüleri ile istihdam piyasasındaki yerlerinin yarattığı güvencesizliklerin bileşkesinin bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Hiper-prekaryalığın temel sebebi, devletin benimsediği neoliberal politikalar yüzünden esnekleştirilen istihdam koşulları ve mülksüzleşen köylülerin formel sektörde iş bulamayıp enformel sektörde çöp toplamak zorunda kalmasıdır. Bunların yanı sıra sosyal ve etnik ayrımcılık, zorla yerinden edilme ve uluslararası göç hareketleri de kitlelerin büyük şehirlere göç etmesine ve vasıfsız işçi olarak enformel sektörde çalışmak zorunda kalmalarına sebep olmuştur.

Çöpün metalaşması da geri dönüşüm sektörünün gelişmesine katkı sağlamış ve birçok kişi kağıt atık toplayıcılığı yaparak hayatını kazanmaya başlamıştır. Ancak çöpün metalaşması, uluslararası sermaye için bir kar imkanı anlamına gelmekte ve geri dönüşüm sektöründeki karlılığı gören özel şirketler, devlet ile işbirliğine girerek atık yönetimini tekelleri altına almak istemektedir. Bu durum, kağıt atık toplayıcılarının devlet müdahalesi yoluyla iş imkanlarının ellerinden alınmasına ve hiper-prekarya koşullarının derinleşmesine sebep olmaktadır. Hiper-prekaryalıklarını ortadan kaldırmak, kağıt atık toplayıcılarının eşit vatandaş olarak muamele görmek ve geçim kaynaklarını geri kazanmak için verdikleri direnişin itici gücü olmuştur.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Zeynep Kadirbeyođlu for her support and understanding throughout my academic writing journey. I would like to thank Volkan ıdam and Pinar Uyan-Semerci for accepting to be a part of my thesis committee and for the valuable information they have given me throughout my education life.

I would like to thank etin, Ekrem, Veysel, and Vedat, who guided me with their friendship and brotherhood during my fieldwork and made this thesis come true, and all the waste pickers who gave me strength with their struggles and whom I had the opportunity to meet during my fieldwork. Without their help, support, and guidance, I would not have had the chance to observe the living and working conditions of waste pickers. My special and dearest thanks to Ali Mendilliođlu, who is the person who supported me the most in continuing this fieldwork. He helped me to look from different perspectives intellectually.

I am very lucky to have had the chance to meet you, my dear friend Shahzad, who translated for me during my fieldwork with Afghan refugees. I would like to thank Lara, who walked with me both during the writing phase of this thesis and during the fieldwork, for her support and guidance. Together we exchanged a lot of ideas, both theoretical and practical, and overcame many difficulties. One of the great achievements of this thesis was getting to know you. I would also like to thank Aya for our productive conversations on the recycling industry and waste pickers.

I would like to thank my friend, Umut, who worked hard to edit my thesis and therefore did not sleep until the morning. My dearest friends Berrin, Cansu,

Gizem, Tuğçe, Feyza, and Cemre give their unwavering support all the time, and also my mother and grandmother gave me moral strength in every step of my thesis. I am also grateful to my cat Azman for emotionally supporting me.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Selim, who was with me in all my mental breakdowns, and despite my desire to quit when the field conditions were too difficult for me, I found strength thanks to his presence, and who contributed to the emergence of this thesis at least as much as I did. I'm so glad to have you.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to *my Selim*. I am so grateful to be with you on this difficult journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Methodology	6
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK	9
2.1 The commodification of garbage.	10
2.2 Informal sector and emergence of the recycling industry.	14
2.3 Globalization, urbanization, migration, and waste-picking.	19
2.4 Precarity and hyper-precariety	25
2.5 Conclusion.....	33
CHAPTER 3: THE ORGANIZATION OF WASTE PICKERS	35
3.1 Different views on the organization of informal workers	35
3.2 Three examples of organizing waste workers in India, Brazil, and Colombia	39
CHAPTER 4: WASTE PICKING IN TURKEY	50
4.1 Historical background of recycling industry and waste picking in Turkey	50
4.2 Informal sector and waste picking	57
4.3 The cooperation of state and capital	77
4.4 Hyper-precariety of waste pickers	87
4.5 Resistance and organizing waste pickers	120
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION.....	127
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	131
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW INFORMATION	133
REFERENCES	136

ABBREVIATIONS

3D	Dirty, Dangerous, Demeaning
AGED	Paper Recycling Industrialists Association
ARB	Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá
ASMARE	Association of Collectors of Paper, Cardboard, and Reusable Material
ÇEVKO	Environmental Protection and Packaging Waste Assessment Foundation
DGMM	Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management
EBRD	The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EIB	The European Investment Bank
EU	European Union
GAP	South-Eastern Anatolia Project
GATS	The General Agreement on Trade in Services
GBT	Criminal Record Check
GDT	Recycling Plant
IBB	The Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
ID	Identification Number
ILO	International Labor Office
IMF	International Monetary Fund

KADOSAN	Vehicle Body, Auto Painting Repair Industrial Area
KKPKP	Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat
MNCR	National Movement of Waste Pickers
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PCMC	Pimpri–Chinchwad Municipal Corporation
PKK	Kurdistan Worker's Party
SEKA	Turkish Cellulose and Paper Mills
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
SWaCH	Solid Waste Collection and Handling
TAT	Collection Separation Plant
TOBB	Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges
TOMA	Anti-Riot Water Cannon Vehicle
TSKB	Turkish Industrial Development Bank
UK	United Kingdom
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States of America
WIEGO	Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Waste picking is an informal work based on collecting recyclable waste from landfills or streets (Medina, 2000). Waste pickers are those who collect and separate waste for low wages and live in very precarious conditions (Wilson & Velis, 2015). Waste pickers are generally despised by society and their work is underestimated and they are humiliated (Beall, 1997). Although some scholars study the precarious conditions of waste pickers (Altuntaş, 2008; Yardımcı & Saltan, 2007), usually research is not concentrated in this field and most of the studies have been conducted in the field of waste management (Oran, 2019).

The resistance of waste pickers, which started in Istanbul Umraniye in October 2021 and lasted for days, resulted in waste workers gaining public attention, who were previously ignored by large sections of society. The resistance has also come under the lens of various NGOs and political parties, and the struggle for the survival of waste pickers has been the subject of newspaper interviews, press releases, and even documentaries broadcast on online streaming platforms. Thanks to the resistance, waste pickers were also taken into account by public actors. Those who had meetings with the Ministry of Environment and municipalities, decided to form an association in Istanbul. The experience of organizing was not actually a first for waste pickers. They established waste pickers associations in many cities such as Ankara in 2005 (Gügüş, 2019, p. 59) and Antalya in 2011 (Gür, 2019, p. 137). Although waste pickers managed to attract the attention of public actors and large masses of society with their previous struggles, the organization and mobilization of waste pickers in Istanbul were considerably higher than the organizations they

established in other provinces. Since Istanbul is the most populous city in Turkey, the number of waste pickers is considerably higher than in other provinces. Therefore, it was the first time that so many waste pickers had been organized.

The idea of conducting this research arose with the organization created by the resistance movement of waste pickers in 2021. The resistance of the waste pickers, who can be considered to belong to the lowest class of society or labelled as precariat, and unlikely to get organized, pushed me to investigate the reasons for this resistance and organization. When I started to research the reasons and how they organize, I had the opportunity to examine the living and working conditions of waste pickers more closely. In order to understand their motivations for organization, I first had to examine the factors that create waste picking and the features of the working conditions. Thus, I realized that garbage is seen as a commodity and that the recycling industry is a very profitable sector as a part of capital accumulation. As I dived into the research, I realized that the recycling industry in Turkey is very closely tied to the international market and that many companies in Turkey import waste from various countries in Europe, separate them, and bring them back into production by using waste workers' labor.

Garbage had become a cheap raw material for global capital and a commodity that provided the continuation of production. The commodification of garbage was one of the reasons for the emergence of a business such as waste picking. However, there were other factors that pushed waste pickers to do this job. Many people I interviewed in my field research said that they had to do this job to survive. When I examined the reasons for this, I realized that the issue could not be understood without a structural analysis. The commodification of garbage and the transformation of recycling into an industry was a result of capitalist production relations. However,

especially as a result of neoliberal policies, a lot of dispossessed or unemployed migrated to the cities but these masses could not be included in the formal sector. It has caused many people who could not benefit from social rights such as education and health, to start waste picking to live. People who had to do waste picking had to live in very precarious conditions. Precarity was reflected not only in their work but also in their social relations, and they faced problems such as insecurity, unemployment, inability to access social services, and social exclusion.

In this context, I realized that in order to understand the organization of waste pickers, the precarious conditions created by neoliberal capitalist production relations should also be analyzed. The precarious living and working conditions of the waste pickers have been further deepened and stratified by the development of the recycling industry and privatizations. Capitalists wanting to get more surplus value from garbage, wanted to collect and sort the garbage entirely for their own share, and the garbage collection and sorting operations, which were the responsibility of the municipalities, were transferred to private companies such as Albayrak or Doğanlar. Another factor that caused this was Turkey's signing of the Green Deal with Europe. According to the agreement, the ministry, which guaranteed to increase the amount of waste recycling, gave more responsibility to the municipalities and they delegated the task of collecting and separating the waste to private companies, since the municipalities had the budget limitations to handle waste management. Thus, all of the profit to be earned from garbage with state-capital cooperation was given to companies through privatizations. Waste pickers were prevented by municipal officials from collecting garbage and police raids were organized on warehouses where garbage was sorted. The prevention and criminalization of waste pickers cause their precarious conditions to deepen. Thus, waste pickers are exposed to

multidimensional problems such as being deprived of social, legal, and economic rights and not being able to benefit from equal citizenship rights. Without economic or social capital, deprived of legal rights and equal citizenship opportunities, many are stuck in precarious conditions. Thus, waste work is no longer a job that they can leave whenever they want. This causes them to work as unfree labor.

Unfree labor is the fact that people cannot leave the job whenever they want due to indebtedness, obligation to look after their families, inability to access education, and deprivation of social and economic rights, even if they enter the job voluntarily (Phillips, 2013). Thus, waste pickers trapped in this cycle have become even more vulnerable. In this context, while explaining the living and working conditions of waste workers, the concept of precarity was insufficient in terms of explaining only the insecure employment conditions. In order to understand the status of socially excluded and legally criminalized waste pickers, it is necessary to look at their socio-legal status. Waste pickers experience precarity not in one dimension, but through the combination of many precarities. At this point, the concept of hyper-precarity emerges. Although hyper-precarity is a concept used for migrant workers within the scope of migration studies (Lewis et al., 2015a), I find it appropriate to use this concept in my research to define working and living conditions of waste pickers. Hyper-precarity emerged as a result of the combination of the precarities created by the socio-legal status of the waste pickers and their place in the employment market and it is a consequence that their precarity becomes multi-dimensional. That's why I explain the situation of waste pickers that I interviewed during my field research with hyper-precarity.

I am not using the concept of hyper-precarity only to explain the working and living conditions of waste pickers. Drawing on the literature on informal workers'

organization, I argue that precarious conditions are one of the reasons for the organization of people working in informal sectors such as waste picking. Eliminating precarious conditions and regaining the means of livelihood, demanding citizenship rights from the state, and living a dignified life have been a driving force of organizing for many informal workers (Atzeni, 2016; Rizzo & Atzeni, 2020). Based on this view, in my study where I examined the hyper-precarious conditions of waste pickers and their organization in Istanbul, I claim that the hyper-precarious conditions of pickers are one of the reasons that push them to organize. Eliminating hyper-precarious conditions is crucial to them in several dimensions. Economically, they want to regain their access to waste and continue to do their job with a state guarantee. They also want to be legally recognized and not criminalized, doing their job without police harassment. They also demand basic citizenship rights such as social security or access to health care from the state. Besides, they want to exist in society as an equal citizen without social discrimination and humiliation.

In brief, what causes hyper-precarious conditions of waste pickers and how hyper-precarity affects the organization of waste pickers are the main questions of this study. Throughout the study, I will first hypothesize that neoliberal capitalism gave rise to hyper-precarity. Neoliberalism has caused the commodification of garbage, labor market flexibilization, dispossession, and forced displacement and migration flow, resulting in the expansion of the informal sector and making waste picking a job for many. Secondly, I hypothesize that one of the main driving forces of the organization is that waste pickers become hyper-precarious and want to eliminate their hyper-precariousness by regaining their livelihoods, demanding their citizenship rights from the state, and living as dignified and equal citizens.

1.1 Methodology

Within the scope of the research, I carried out my fieldwork in Istanbul between May and November 2022. During the fieldwork, I carried out in-depth interviews with local and refugee waste pickers. Interviews were conducted both face-to-face and through phone. In this process, the interviews were recorded as long as the interview participants agreed to it. Most of the participants agreed to have the interviews recorded, but although a few participants agreed to chat with me, they did not want their conversations to be recorded. In this case, I did not use the information they gave in the research. Then, I transcribed audio recordings into written text and used them for data analysis.

I employed qualitative research method in the study because in addition to better capturing the experiences of the participants, it also examines how they attribute subjective meanings to their social contexts and actions (Fossey et al., 2002). Therefore, through qualitative method I was able to understand the organizational experiences of the waste pickers, their perspective on working conditions, and the work they do.

I used snowball sampling in order to reach waste pickers from different districts of Istanbul such as Yenisahra, Bostancı, Kadıköy, Kadosan (Ümraniye), Taksim-Tarlabaşı-Dolapdere, Yeşilköy, Fatih, Kağıthane, and Osmanbey. For this, I connected with the Recycling Workers Association as a key actor to expand the network and reach other participants. Also, I tried to communicate with the waste pickers by walking on the streets one-on-one in the field. Participant information is kept anonymous in order to maintain the confidentiality of personal information and because of the vulnerability of participants. A translator's assistance was used for

Afghan refugees during the research as the language gap has posed a limitation for this study.

During my fieldwork, I interviewed 61 people in total. Interviewees were mostly warehouse owners or waste pickers, but I had the opportunity to meet with representatives from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Waste Management Directorate, Paper Recycling Manufacturers Association (AGED), and Dönkasan (a recycling company). 10 of the interviewees were women (three of them were working in IBB, and the rest were waste pickers). One of the women was Syrian. The remaining 51 interviewees were men (one of the men worked at IBB, one at AGED, and one at Dönkasan. The rest were either warehousemen or waste pickers).

Eight of the people I interviewed were migrants. Two of them were Syrian (one female and one male), and the remaining six were Afghans (all Afghans were male). Among the warehousemen or waste pickers I interviewed, some of the Turkish citizens were Roma, some were from Aksaray-Niğde, and the rest were from Urfa-Siverek or Diyarbakır. Apart from these, there were also people from other provinces, but mostly Kurds (especially people from Siverek and Diyarbakır), Roma, and Aksaray people who did this job. For this research, I have conducted a multi-sited ethnographic fieldwork across different neighborhoods of Istanbul. I started my fieldwork in Yenisahra and continued in Bostancı and Kadıköy. I also did fieldwork in Kadosan (Ümraniye), Taksim-Tarlabaşı-Dolapdere, Yeşilköy, Fatih, Kağıthane, and Osmanbey.

The findings that I obtained from the field research were analyzed with the qualitative content analysis method. Qualitative content analysis is a type of analysis in which the researcher focuses not only on explicit content but also on implicit meanings and themes. In this way, the researchers deal with the expressions of

participants that are not clearly expressed with a holistic approach and consider context while making their analysis (Erdoğan & Uyan-Semerci, 2023, p. 215).

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Garbage collecting or waste picking emerged as a business sector since garbage became a commodity and has been operating under informal market conditions. Often described as "dirty", waste work has been humiliated and despised by many segments of society (Beall, 1997, p. 74). In recent years, this topic has gained importance with the development of the recycling sector and environmental policies, although it has been framed in relation to informality, urbanization, poverty, and subalternity (Oran, 2019, p. 20). However, previous studies have mostly focused on waste management or the vulnerability of waste workers due to their harsh working conditions and their precariousness (Altuntaş, 2008; Acar & Acar Baykara, 2008, Clapp, 2002; Keser, 2010). While discussing the precariousness of waste pickers, some studies have addressed waste picking as a problem to be solved, as in the Street Collectors Socio-Economic Research Report by the Paper Recycling Industrialists Association (AGED) (AGED, 2022) but they failed to consider the structural reasons that lead to waste picking. This is because waste workers are treated as a self-employed underclass, not characterized as the proletariat, and were thus not subject to a thorough class analysis (Agarwala, 2016, pp. 109-110). This has made it difficult to understand the main factors that lead to waste picking and to analyze the reasons for the precariousness of waste pickers.

Nevertheless, later studies revealed that waste picking cannot be examined independently from a class-based analysis that should consider the neoliberal market conditions. As the effects of neoliberal capitalism on the transformation of garbage into a commodity, the development of the recycling industry, and the informalization

of the employment market are examined, it has become clearer how waste picking emerged as a job and how the precarious conditions that pushed waste pickers to do this job were created.

This thesis analyzes the working and living conditions of waste workers in Istanbul through the lens of hyper-precarity. In doing so, a class-based analysis will explore the conditions under which waste workers experience hyper-precarity and question how hyper-precarity affects the collective efforts of the organization. In order to better understand the hyper-precarious conditions of waste workers and to discuss how these lead to the organization, first of all, how these conditions and waste work emerge should be examined. Therefore, this chapter lays the theoretical framework of this research to understand how the conditions that generate the labor of waste picking are entrenched in the neoliberal capitalist system. To set the theoretical framework of this analysis, the relationship between the conditions that create waste picking and the neoliberal capitalist system will be discussed through a Marxist analysis. To do so, first, this chapter provides a detailed explanation of the commodification of garbage, then discusses the rise of the informal sector and the emergence of the recycling industry. Then, this chapter provides a brief overview of the literature that questions the influence of urbanization, globalization, and migration on waste-picking, which will serve as an additional context in which the hyper-precarity of waste workers is heightened. Lastly, it introduces the concepts of precarity and hyper-precarity that characterize the informal labor of waste workers.

2.1 The commodification of garbage

To better understand why waste pickers do this job, it is necessary to analyze their hyper-precariousness. However, first of all, it is necessary to discuss the reasons why

hyper-precarious conditions occur and why waste picking is considered a job. In this context, the commodification of garbage is one of the reasons why waste work is seen as an industry and has become a livelihood for many.

Prior to mentioning how garbage is commodified, it is necessary to talk about the concept of commodification. Commodification is the transformation of material in capitalist production relations using human labor and making it exchangeable in the market. In the first volume of *Capital*, Marx (2004) explains that a commodity has two values: a use-value, and an exchange value. Use-value means something has utility for others which can satisfy a need or desire for a purpose. The concrete labor of the human being creates the use-value. However, just because something has a use-value does not make it a commodity by itself. For something to become a commodity, it must be processed, labored, and traded. In other words, in order for the goods to be transformed into commodities, they must be processed by the worker and have an exchange value, that is, they must be tradeable. It is the abstract labor of humans that constitutes the exchange value. Abstract labor is the socially necessary labor time that a person spends to produce a product. In the capitalist system, the exchange value of the commodity is determined by looking at the time spent on it, not the quality of the labor spent to produce a commodity. In this way, labor is abstracted from its useful nature. Different types of labor are reduced to a single form and they are equalized so that other commodities in the market can be compared and exchanged. The material produced with concrete labor is transformed through abstract labor and becomes a commodity (Demircan, 2016, p. 52). In summary, commodities are things that are sold in the market to meet people's wants, needs, or desires by using their exchange value (Harvey, 2015).

The person who produces a commodity cannot determine what will be a commodity and for what purpose it will be produced, although he/she performs his/her own labor, he/she produces it not to use the commodity itself but to exchange it in the market. The owner of the capital decides the value or purpose of the commodity, so what becomes a commodity is in the control of the owner of the capital. However, not only materials become a commodity. Human labor is also commodified. The worker sells his own labor power to the owner of the capital. He/she receives a wage for his/her labor power, but this wage is sufficient only for his/her livelihood and basic needs. Workers selling their own labor and producing commodities form the basis of capitalist relations of production (Paterson, 2013).

In the capitalist mode of production, the abstract labor spent by the worker and the wages they receive are inversely proportional. That is, a worker is paid much less than the exchange value of the commodity. The surplus value remaining from the exchange value is taken by the capitalists as profit. This, according to Marx (2004), forms the basis of capitalist relations of production. In other words, it is the essence of capitalism to exploit the worker who cannot receive compensation for their abstract labor. Capitalism relies on the accumulation of capital through exploitation. This accumulation takes place with continuous growth. That's why, the aim of capitalism is to ensure continuous growth. For this, it is necessary to reduce the costs of production, invent new commodities, open up to new markets, and commodify more human labor (Paterson, 2013).

Garbage has also emerged as a commodity resulting from capitalism's greed for profit and preoccupation with growth. Especially after the Great Depression and the Second World War, the idea of "production for consumption" was introduced into society (Oran, 2019, p.18). This has created a consumer culture that makes buying

and consuming everything new a social norm (Strasser, 1999). As the number and consumption of manufactured goods increased, the number of waste began to increase. As the volume of waste grows, the problem then lies with the location of its storage (Yardimci & Saltan, 2007). In addition, more raw material is needed to produce more products. Due to the limited resources of raw materials and difficulties in their transportation and processing, capitalists seek to have easier access the raw materials and to maximize their profit. Thus, the search for new raw materials began and the potential use-value in the garbage was discovered. When garbage is separated and recycled by waste workers, waste workers' labor turns garbage into raw material. Garbage acquires a use-value to produce another product, and when the waste is exchanged in the market, the garbage becomes commodified by gaining exchange value. The commodification process of the garbage can take place thanks to the human labor of the waste workers. The labor of workers who are forced to live in precarious conditions despite doing the heaviest and most dangerous work is exploited by the capitalists. The commodification of garbage and the participation of waste workers in the recycling process means they are cheap labor for capitalists. Thus, recycling companies that reduce their production costs by using cheap labor can sell waste in the market with more profit (Demircan, 2016, pp. 53-55).

The commodification of garbage has another advantage for capitalists. While it is more difficult to process raw material extracted from its source, it is less costly to recycle the waste to turn it into raw material. In addition to constructing waste recycling facilities, the collection, transportation, and sorting of garbage also brings extra costs for municipalities or private companies. Therefore, waste pickers, who work cheaply and can be exploited, are very useful for many companies that cannot afford this cost (Demircan, 2016, p. 62). In other words, as Gidwani (2018) stated,

not only the need for raw materials is met, but also the energy and time required to extract the raw material are saved. As the cost of production decreases, the surplus value of the commodity increases, hence profits. As a result, since the commodification of garbage meant cheap raw materials, cheap labor, and a reduction of production costs for the capitalists, the recycling sector emerged as a business, and the precarious conditions of waste pickers were used by the capitalists as a means of labor exploitation. However, the commodification of garbage is not enough to explain why many people pick waste today. To understand this, the development of the recycling industry, informalization, and globalization should also be examined.

2.2 Informal sector and emergence of recycling industry

To understand the reasons why waste work is done by large masses as a job, it is necessary to understand the precarious conditions that push waste pickers to do this work. Although waste has an exchange value and becomes a commodity, the reason many people work in this job is related to the neoliberal economic system. The globalization, dispossession, and expansion of the informal sector created by neoliberal capitalism have made many people precariat and condemned to waste picking. Therefore, in order to discuss the conditions constituting the precarity of waste pickers, it is first necessary to understand what globalization is and the link between this process and the expansion of the informal sector. In this section, the expansion of the informal sector and its effects on the recycling sector will be discussed.

The informal sector is the “unregulated” organization of jobs for which the state does not draw the legal framework. The state also does not pay any social security subsidies (Ergun, 2005). The main feature of this sector is that the capital

breaks up production processes in order to reduce costs that make the work flexible. The state also does not implement regulatory policies to protect workers (Gür, 2019, p. 127). In addition to being deprived of rights such as organizing, collective bargaining, and unionization, those working in the informal sector are also deprived of rights such as health, job security, and social security (Bölükbaşı, 2008, p. 74).

Harvey (2005) argues, as a result of the flexibilization of the labor market with the desire for more economic growth, informality has become even more widespread with neoliberal capitalism. Similarly, Overbeek (2002a) explains flexibilization through the globalization project of neoliberalism. Globalization is geared towards providing both the free movement of goods and the free movement of capital. Expanding into new markets, commodifying new products, and investing in other regions, companies are aimed at increasing profits. The flexibility of the labor force is a part of this project. Thus, neoliberalism causes the employment market to be more insecure and flexible through new regulations, along with practices such as privatization, liberalization, and deregulation. In this way, wage demand is depressed, and the masses are willing to work as cheap labor for long hours in dangerous conditions, as they are in danger of being unemployed at any moment. Hence, outsourcing or subcontracting begins to be implemented frequently in regions with cheap labor and flexible labor market. When companies can outsource, they earn more profits as production costs decrease. As a result, when companies make more profit, the regulations applied towards informalization of the labor market also increase. Özatalay (2006) also argued that with the spread of subcontracting, the formal and informal sectors were intertwined, and informality thus expanded.

In his study *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, Guy Standing (2011, pp. 9-10) explains the informalization process. After the 1980s, labor market

flexibility was seen as a profitable method to reduce labor costs. Accordingly, corporations have started to invest in offshore countries where labor costs are low. Thus, the workforce has become flexible and insecure. In parallel with this, employment security was eliminated so that the labor force can become cheaper. Moreover, wage flexibility has been used as a solution to the changes in demand in the market. Foreign direct investments flocked to countries where labor cost was cheaper thanks to globalization. To be more competitive, countries deregulated their labor markets to reduce labor costs, while also intensifying migration movements, creating new job opportunities to create cheap labor. Competitiveness, flexibility, and insecurity have become the norm in employment (Standing, 2011, p.43). In order to compete, states implemented deregulations. With the emergence of outsourcing and the removal of bureaucratic barriers in trade, legal obstacles such as preventing liberalizing industrial production and foreign companies and goods from entering the national market for commodification were removed. Flexibility in the labor market has removed workers' control over their labor and blurred the boundaries between workspaces and life (Standing, 2011, p. 65). Therefore, working hours increased, social security disappeared, and wages decreased. As a result, many people working in the informal sector had to live under very precarious conditions, were insecure and received low wages.

According to Alpman (2015), informalization is a part of the accumulation strategy of the neoliberal capitalist system and is systematized through legal regulations and policies. Arguing that this systematization process cannot be realized without the intervention of the state, Alpman claims that the state makes both economic and social arrangements to accomplish capitalists' goals for economic growth (2015, p.10). As Portes, Castells, and Benton (1992) stated, the form of

informalization is updated by the state from time to time to cater the needs of the capital. Thus, the expansion of the informal sector depends on the cooperation of the capitalists and the state. Therefore, it would not be right to position the informal sector in a place completely independent from the formal sector. Webster (2010) argues that informal and formal economic activity cannot be separated from each other. Under all circumstances, analytically and geographically, they are linked to each other. In a similar vein, Sassen (2000) argues that the informal sector cannot exist without the formal sector. The legalization of informal work is also one of the reasons why the distinction between formal and informal is blurred (Çavuşoğlu, 2014). Thus, the disappearance of this distinction has become possible with the cooperation of the capital and the state.

The recycling sector is a good example to demonstrate the extent to which the formal and informal sectors are interconnected. The recycling industry was born as a direct result of the transformation of garbage into a commodity. The discovery that every waste that emerges from our consumption has a recyclable value and can be resold in the market has led to the sector's emergence (Oran, 2019, p. 14). Generally, this sector is portrayed very "innocent" by the capitalists, and it is considered positively due to its economic returns and its contribution to the environment. This situation prevents many to realize that this sector is a profit-oriented sector arising from the pressure to create new raw material resources. Recycling is promoted by public actors or international organizations and used by the private capital to protect its profits earned from this industry (Kılınç, 2011). Although the recycling process is carried out using formal means, in practice, it is carried out through the relations of production in the informal sector.

After the Earth Summit in 1992, the inclusion of the goal of promoting recycling into the UN's development goals, the regulations by the EU to reduce carbon emissions, and international agreements such as the Green Deal agreement have all clearly considered the recycling sector as a new source of profit for the capitalists. After the 1980s, with the spread of globalization and the neoliberal capitalist accumulation process, structural adjustment loans granted by IMF and World Bank to developing countries such as Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, India, Turkey, Pakistan, and Zimbabwe required these countries to implement some new policies and programs. The purpose of these policies is to remove barriers in front of global capital (Robinson, 2002) by opening these countries to free trade, privatizing state-owned companies, and enabling foreign capital to enter local markets (Kothari & Kothari, 1993). These new programs and policies have also been applied to the recycling sector. For example, Florin (2011) explains that municipal solid waste services in Cairo were privatized with the entry of European companies into this sector. In Turkey, companies such as Doğanlar Holding and Albayrak made contracts with the municipality and carried out garbage collection and recyclingⁱⁱⁱ. In addition, Turkey meets most of the European market's needs for waste importsⁱⁱⁱ. As a result, these new policies caused garbage to gain value as a commodity and many companies to enter this sector. Thus, the recycling sector has grown and the need for recycling has deepened with increasing consumption. Municipalities and private companies could not meet the need for recycling. So, waste picking, which emerged

ⁱ <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/sirkethaberleri/holding/turkiyede-yillik-6-milyon-ton-atigin-sebep-oldugu-ekonomik-kayip-1-5-milyar-lira/664959>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.albayrak.com.tr/sektorler/atik-yonetimi/bayfa-geri-donusum/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://m.bianet.org/english/environment/243072-turkey-is-once-again-the-biggest-importer-of-plastic-waste-from-europe>

outside the boundaries of the formal sector, has become a source of livelihood for many people who have to work in the informal sector.

In other words, due to both the waste import agreements signed by the European countries and the entry of international and local companies into the recycling sector, garbage has become a commodity from which the capital-owning class profits by taking advantage of its cooperation with the state. With the growth of the recycling sector, the profit rates have increased, while the informal sector has been expanded by the formal sector (Demircan, 2016). In other words, waste workers, who are a part of the informal sector, have started to contribute to the circulation of garbage in the formal sector by selling the waste they collect to recycling companies. As a result, the neoliberal capitalist system expanded the informal sector, created a new source of cheap raw materials and cheap labour. As a result, with the expansion of the informal sector, the number of workers in the recycling sector has increased, but these people mostly had to work as cheap labor under insecure and precarious conditions. So, what are the conditions that push them to work in the informal sector? To understand this, it is necessary to focus on the effects of globalization, urbanization and migration movements, which cause the expansion of the informal sector, on precariatization and waste picking.

2.3 Globalization, urbanization, migration, and waste-picking

In *The Accumulation of Capital*, Luxemburg (2003) argues that capitalists will expand into new non-capitalist geographic regions to produce commodities and exploit those regions to obtain new raw materials. Thus, capitalism is no longer a closed system. Likewise, Harvey argues that “the capitalist mode of production is

based on endless accumulation”, (2015, p. 89) and that this will be achieved by accumulation by dispossession.

For Harvey, the period of neoliberal capitalism has begun with globalization. The capitalists crossed geographical borders to establish transnational corporations and dispossess indigenous peoples and peasants from all over the world, depriving them of the means of production and the basic means of survival (2015, p. 115). Harvey also uses Marx's concept of reserve army of labor. Capitalists want to create masses that can become workforces when they want and easily sacrifice when they do not. Thus, according to Harvey, capitalist relations of production are made not only for surplus value but also to generate a surplus population. The capital proletarianize dispossessed and/or forcibly displaced communities and turns them into an important source of cheap labor force (2015, p. 162). Dispossession is not only the reproduction of raw materials or resources into commodities but also the depreciation of labor power. Along with this process, the production of workers as wage laborers take place uninterruptedly (Harvey, 2015, p.162). This process is a necessary condition of the neoliberal capitalist accumulation regime.

International organizations such as the IMF distribute incentives and loans and pressure governments to privatize public properties and implement neoliberal economic models. Public services or public lands are monopolized by private companies. On the other hand, to find cheap labor, transnational companies move their production to offshore markets (Harvey, 2015, p. 323). Owing to neoliberal reforms, capitalist power is centralized and monopolized. This also occurs with the constitutive power of the states when the state acts together with the capital-owning class (Radice, 2000; Harrod & O'Brien, 2002). As a result, in countries that implement structural adjustment programs or neoliberal policies for foreign direct

investment, the labor force becomes cheaper, the peasants become proletarian. The proletarianized peasants form a worker pool and lose the monopoly over their labor (Sengenberger & Wilkinson, 1995; Boswell & Stevis, 1997). Along with the capitalization in agriculture, the use of machinery in the harvest is also taken away from the means of production of the peasants who are dispossessed and unemployed in their villages, and thus, the villagers migrate to the metropolises en masse (Oran, 2019, p. 101; Özbay, 2015, p. 40).

In Turkey, export-oriented policies along with the mechanization of agriculture have left many people unemployed in rural areas (Keyder, 2013). The fact that the villagers migrated to big cities and created labor pools between 1950-1980 (Şengül, 2012) did not only increase urbanization but also transformed the labor market (Oran, 2019, p.106). The expansion of the informal sector in the post-1980 period is also closely related to this process.

In her study on waste pickers working in Rio's garbage dump, Millar (2018) mentions that with the post-1980 neoliberal reforms in Brazil, the masses who migrated from the countryside to the cities started to do scrap business to earn their livelihood. Waste picking has become an opportunity for people who cannot access job opportunities in the city or do not have sufficient education levels for formal employment in the city (Medina, 2000). In addition, with the increase in urbanization, the amount of waste has also increased, and as a result, recycling waste has created job opportunities for many people including migrants. Urbanization has brought poverty for many dispossessed or forcibly displaced. For instance, migrants who work as "unskilled" laborers at precarious jobs and settled into the city's shantytowns, have entered the cycle of poverty, and made up an important portion of the urban poor. Altuntaş (2008) argues that this poverty has become permanent for

waste workers, and that's why they have to live as precariats and work in informal jobs.

Dispossession and globalization have increased migration to the city, which has led to more waste in the city. At the same time, when the dispossessed, unemployed, poor masses migrated to the cities in hopes of looking for new jobs, they had to work in the informal sector because they were not qualified enough (Dinler, 2016). Özgen (2001) argues that rural-urban migration, which started in Turkey in the 1950s and gained momentum in the 1980s, should also be examined in this context and argues that migration flow is related to the transformation of waste management. According to her, the transformation of garbage into a commodity and rampant implementation of neoliberal policies have also led to privatizations in the waste management system. Private companies' takeover of the waste management and recycling sector has initially become a source of livelihood for the urban poor living under precarious conditions and they have started to work as cheap labor (Özgen, 2001, pp. 88-91). However, it would be a wrong definition to limit waste workers only to the masses who migrated from the village to the city. As Rittersberger-Tılıç (2015) argues that neo-liberalization enables foreign direct investment. Thus, when foreign companies made new investments in offshore countries to reduce labor costs, made the market flexible, and dispossessed the masses, many people had to make transnational migration to work as cheap labor and started to pick waste.

Migration is a phenomenon that should be evaluated within capitalist relations. Migrant labor in waste picking is also proved to be useful for the capital. Akkuzu (2015) claims that capital accumulation is created by a reserve army of labor force and this surplus population is the lever of capitalist accumulation. In order to

increase capital accumulation, it is necessary to reach labor power. This is possible by detaching and displacing people from the means of production. This extra labor, displaced and unemployed, is a surplus of labor power for capitalists to employ workers cheaply. Migrants are not only cheaply employed but also stripped of their right to resistance and bargaining. Especially if migrants are irregular and undocumented, they are forced to consent to work under harsh conditions. In this way, the obligation of the capital or the state to raise the labor force or to make social security expenditures is also eliminated. This causes the migrants to work cheaply and under vulnerable conditions and to lead a precarious life without access to any social rights.

Similarly, Saraçoğlu and Belanger (2019) state that refugees are useful for capital because the places they live and work are isolated and they are unable to participate in the struggle for rights against exploitation. In case of Turkey, the inefficacy of the laws regarding the working conditions of Syrians and the prevention of their participation in the formal sector creates an environment conducive to exploitation by the capital. The reluctance of the state to control the informally working refugees should also be read as steps towards the continuation of market-state cooperation and capitalist production processes. Refugees are also less likely to show resistance, as they are afraid of being deported in this exploitative system and cannot be included in solidarity networks. Therefore, migrant workers find employment opportunities in 3D (dirty, dangerous, demeaning) jobs that even workers with citizenship do not prefer (Daniş, 2016, p. 572). In addition, as Cığerci-Ulukan (2015) indicates, one of the most important reasons why migrant labor seems attractive is that they can be easily recruited during periods of economic expansion, but they can also easily be fired during times of crisis.

The relationship between immigration and waste picking is not only linked to rural-urban migration or transnational migration. People who were forcefully displaced started picking waste as the neoliberal capitalist relations of production has pushed them to proletarianize and work in precarious jobs. Garcia (2002) explained that the rural population of Colombia who was forcibly displaced survived with the help of waste picking when they migrated to the big cities. Similarly, village burning and village evacuation practices implemented during the state of emergency in the 1990s in Turkey caused many people to be forcibly displaced. The internally displaced people migrated to the big cities. As Yüksekler (2012) explains, when people who made a living from agriculture and animal husbandry before the forced migration came to cities, they were dispossessed and transformed from being producers to poor consumers. However, they were also excluded from the formal labor market in the cities due to their ethnic identity (Lordođlu & Aslan, 2012; Acar & Acar Baykara, 2008; Oran, 2019, p. 103). That is why, Kurdish migrants had to enter waste picking to make a living.

Alpman's study (2015) on Kurdish workers in Tarlabası also supports this argument. Alpman considers the process of the creation of a nation-identity as the institutionalization of capitalism. According to him, Turkey's process of becoming a nation-state is based on the belief in creating a homogeneous national identity. This belief also brings a development-oriented approach. In addition to creating a common national identity, ensuring the social cohesion of the society in the process of establishing a new state that has come out of war also includes the goal of giving priority to development and industrialization. Accordingly, capitalism must be institutionalized in Turkey for the aim of development, and national identity must be built in order for this institutionalization to take place in every region of Turkey.

According to Alpman (2015), this situation also led to the forced migration of different ethnicities by political power. The Kurds, who moved to big cities due to forced migration, turned into a cheap labor force.

The globalization and informalization that is created by the neoliberal capitalist system have caused many people who have been dispossessed, forcibly displaced, or cross-border migrants to work in the informal sector under precarious conditions without being able to access formal employment in the cities. The masses who migrated to be cheap labor were forced to live under precarious conditions. This precarity caused them to work long hours in the dirtiest and most dangerous jobs, with low wages and no social security. With the transformation of garbage into a commodity and the expansion of the informal sector, the recycling sector and waste work have become a source of livelihood for these people.

In summary, we have examined how the working and living conditions of waste workers are shaped and the reasons that push them to do this work. Their conditions made it possible for them to be defined as a new class beyond the orthodox Marxist definition of class. This class associated with insecurity is the “precariat”.

2.4 Precarity and hyper-precariety

Precariat is a concept that has been widely discussed in the literature. It has been the subject of many debates, such as whether it can be defined as a class or what its class features are. The concept of precarity was first put forward as a new employment form associated with poverty. It later became something that includes other terms such as insecure work conditions and uncertainty (Barbier, 2002). Due to the global neoliberal policies and the disappearance of the distinction between regular and

casual work, the precariat has become associated with flexibility and insecurity (Lazar & Sanchez, 2019, pp .6-9). However, as Neilson and Rossiter (2005) argue, the precariat is not only based on employment conditions—"it is also intertwined with all areas of life such as household dynamics, individual welfare provision" (Barbier, 2002).

The precariat is inseparable from the neoliberal capitalist relations of production. As Standing (2011) has pointed out, the neoliberal capitalist system informalizes the market in order to reduce costs and obtain cheap labor. Further, the substantial outsourcing of the labor market opens the way for mass migration, which demonstrates how migration and precariat have become so intertwined. For example, studies have shown that undocumented refugees who migrate to find better job opportunities cannot enter the formal employment market due to the legal barriers of migration governance in host countries. This causes them to work in the informal sector for low wages and under harsh conditions. Also they are exposed to exploitative treatments by their employers and host society. In addition, the fear of being deported prevents them from participating in social life, leaving exploitative working conditions, or accessing basic rights such as health or education. This causes the migrants to live under precarious conditions (Castles, 2015; Karadağ, 2021; Lewis et al., 2015; Nimer & Rottmann, 2021; Sunam, 2023).

The emergence of the precariat as a new employment form, especially after the 1980s, has led to the questioning of the Fordist class structure's efficiency (Bayat, 2004; Wright, 1985). Various scholars have intended to provide a definition of the precariat since Marxist class theories were insufficient to explain it. Some scholars, like Guy Standing (2011), argue that precariat has not yet completed the process of becoming a class and therefore it is not a class-for-itself but class-in-the-

making. According to Standing (2011), precariousness not only means a loss of control over one's own labor, but also brings a lack of work-based identity. As a result, there are situations such as a lack of social income and not benefiting from any community support. Furthermore, the concept of precariat causes people not to be able to benefit from their citizenship rights. Thus, a new type of citizenship, which is conceptualized by Standing (2011) as "denizens", deprived of cultural, social, and economic rights, emerges. In parallel, unemployment is a part of the precariat, and the precariat, which is in constant danger of being permanently unemployed, cannot perform upward social mobility and finds itself in a vicious cycle called the precarity trap. Morgan and Olsen (2009) also called this the 'tunnel of entrapment'. The situation is even more difficult for undocumented migrants. Migrants and refugees, who are condemned to work under precarious conditions as a cheap labor force, are deprived of all kinds of rights such as access to education and health, legal residence permit, and social security.

There are also scholars who argue that the precariat should be considered as a working class and that it is not class-in-the-making, also it has a work-based identity (Lazar & Sanchez, 2019; Oğuz, 2011). This study also considers the precariat as a working class. However, the precariat should not only be associated with working in insecure conditions in the informal sector. As Alpman (2015) argues, precariatization acquires a cultural and social character. Even though, the precariat is a very broad definition, the most important distinguishing feature for Alpman is that it is the process of normalizing discrimination and inequality by obscuring the labor power of the precariat. He gives the example of the Kurds, who were forcibly displaced as the precariat class. The Kurds, who had to migrate to the cities, were also cut off from the means of production and had to work in the informal sector as they could not find

a place for themselves in the formal sector. Their ethnic identities and class positions are intertwined as their inability to enter the formal market is strongly linked to the widespread discrimination against Kurds based on their ethnicity. Thus, the precariat is not only a class position for the Kurds but also a part of an ethnic marginalization process. I, too, consider the precariat both as a working class and as the form of living of those who have been subjected to processes of economic, social, cultural, and ethnic marginalization. In this context, I include waste workers in the precariat class.

There is debate in the literature about how to define waste workers in terms of class relations. Often this labor is considered as self-employed work. On the other hand, Birkbeck (1978), in his study on waste workers in Colombia, argued that workers sell waste to paper factories and that the informal sector and the formal sector are intertwined. According to Birkbeck, even if waste workers are not hired directly by the factory, they are not completely independent from regulations and market structure and have a dynamic competition amongst themselves. Therefore, he defines waste pickers as “self-employed proletarians”. Millar (2008) opposes this view. She claims that waste workers belong to the precariat class, and argues that waste pickers should also be considered the working class. According to Millar, although workers relatively have more autonomy and flexibility in the work they do—they still produce a commodity through their labors (2008, p.32) and sell this commodity to intermediaries or recycling companies for a wage.

The commodity value of the garbage is determined by indexing to the international markets and the dollar, and they participate in the production of surplus value as an employee of a warehouse owner. Warehouse owners, as petty capitalists, pay the garbage collectors a piece rate and hire wage labor. They also have

bargaining power in the determination of prices in the market economy (Dinler, 2019). Therefore, waste workers should be seen as a type of working class and evaluated in terms of labor framework, even if they do not participate in Fordist relations of production. Dinler (2019), contrary to Birkbeck, argues that waste workers are free to sell the collected commodities (garbage) to any recycling company or warehouse owner of their choice. However, this does not make them self-employed because they do not have the opportunity to set the terms of the market or change prices. They have to work in accordance with the market conditions and the rules determined by the corporations and states in the formal sector. In addition, due to the insecurity brought about by precariatization, they earn money per piece and per kilo. Therefore, the choices they make within the sector cannot always be made “freely”—costs and gains have to be calculated. Warehouse or factory owners encourage workers to collect more goods. As evinced in Dinler’s analysis, although it is a different class from the proletariat, the precariat is the most vulnerable class in the capitalist system of exploitation, and thus, waste workers cannot be evaluated without a careful consideration of class relations. In this study, I consider waste workers as a working class, but I treat them as a precariat class, different from the proletariat. However, although I used the definition of precarity to describe the living and working conditions of waste pickers in Istanbul, where I did my fieldwork, I realized that precarity was insufficient to explain the conditions of waste pickers since the concept of precarity explains only the insecure employment conditions. In order to understand the status of socially excluded and legally criminalized waste pickers, it is necessary to look at their socio-legal status. Waste pickers experience precarity not in one dimension, but through the combination of many precarities. Therefore, I will use the concept of “hyper-precarity” while

mentioning working and living conditions of waste pickers I interviewed during my fieldwork.

The concept of hyper-precarity, together with the concept of unfree labor, was developed by Lewis et al. (2015a) to describe the conditions of migrant workers because, according to them, the concept of precarity is insufficient to explain the situation of migrant workers. Migrants are exposed to exploitation under precarious conditions in the informal sector (Dwyer & Brown, 2005; Burnett & Whyte, 2010) and faced with “deportability in everyday life” as conceptualized by De Genova (2002). That is, the danger of being deported is one of the reasons for them to enter into the informal sector. However, according to Lewis et al. (2015a) migrant workers' precarity has become multi-dimensional. Not only their employment conditions were insecure, but also their socio-legal status became insecure due to strict immigration regimes and they faced the danger of being deported continuously. Therefore, the concept of hyper-precarity has been used to explain the conditions created by the combination of precarities constituted by employment and migration status (p. 593).

While explaining hyper-precarity, it is necessary to mention the concept of unfree labor. Phillips (2013) argues that the concept of unfree labor has gained a different dimension from its traditional meaning in the modern global economy. Unfree labor is when people sell their labor by making a contract and getting wages in return, as opposed to slavery or using violence and confiscating their labor. While people are “free” when entering a job, they are not free to quit. That's why it's called unfree labor. Workers have to work as unfree laborers due to poverty, indebtedness, dependence on employers, violations of labor and human rights, lack of access to information and fundamental human rights such as health and education, pressures to

support family, low social status, and strict immigration policies. Immigrants working in the informal sector for very low wages, in dangerous conditions, and without security, are unable to predict their own life provisions. They have to continue to work as unfree laborers because there is no “no real and acceptable alternative” to working in another job or living in better conditions, and their families mostly depend on them for their livelihoods (Lewis et al., 2015a, pp. 588-589). As an unfree laborer, the precarities created by both employment and migration status come together to create hyper-precarious conditions, and they are stuck in the hyper-precarity trap because they cannot leave the job even if they voluntarily enter the job (Lewis et al., 2015b, p. 171).

In my opinion, the concept of hyper-precarity is more appropriate to explain the conditions of waste pickers in Istanbul. The terms of Syrian and Afghan migrant waste pickers fit Phillips' definition of unfree labor. Immigrants who come to send remit money to their families or to find refuge by escaping the war are employed as cheap labor, in precarious conditions, and in the most dangerous jobs. However, they also cannot access education and health services, depending on the owner of the warehouse where they work, are mistreated, and are socially excluded by society. In addition, they are in constant danger of being deported due to their migration status. All these multi-dimensional precarities make them hyper-precarity and do not allow them to get out of their insecure jobs and find another alternative. However, I do not use hyper-precarity only to explain the situation of migrant waste pickers. Of course, the situation of migrant pickers is more vulnerable than others. However, waste pickers who are citizens of Turkey have to live in hyper-precarious conditions, as well.

Turkish waste pickers are also deprived of social security, secure and stable working conditions, and basic rights such as education and health. As cheap labor, they are exposed to degrading treatment and live under conditions of indebtedness and social isolation. Besides, they are legally unprotected, as waste picking is not legally recognized as a profession. In addition, many waste pickers are subject to social and economic exclusion and racism because they are Kurdish or Roma. Furthermore, the Turkish government implements new regulations to exclude waste pickers from the recycling sector. So, the privatization of waste management with neoliberal policies and state-capital cooperation has caused waste pickers to be criminalized and dispossessed from their means of livelihood. Although there is no danger of being deported, waste pickers are excluded both socially, economically, and legally. As a consequence, they cannot benefit from their basic rights since they are not able to exist as equal citizens in society, and their work is criminalized by the state. This forces them to live under more vulnerable conditions as unfree labor. These vulnerable conditions push them into a hyper-precarity trap from which they cannot get out. In other words, a lack of rights and capital prevents them from finding a more stable job in the formal sector or living in a society without discrimination. It further condemns them to the informal sector and waste picking. In this context, precarity created by their socio-legal status and their position in the labor market are combined. As their precarious conditions have become multi-dimensional, they are excluded from all areas of life and cannot see an exit point for themselves. This situation enables their conditions to be considered hyper-precarity.

2.5 Conclusion

This thesis provides a class-based analysis on the working conditions of waste workers that is characterized as hyper-precarity. In order to understand hyper-precarity, first of all, it is necessary to examine why and how waste workers started this work and the reasons that lead them to live in hyper-precarious conditions. Therefore, in this chapter, starting from the reasons for the emergence of the recycling industry, first of all, it is discussed how the commodification of garbage was seen as a way to resolve the crisis of capital accumulation and to meet the need for cheap raw materials. Especially after the 1980s, with the effect of neoliberal policies and globalization, the consumption rate increased even more, and recycling was seen as an opportunity to make more profit for transnational capital that opened up new markets. Thus, the recycling industry has developed. Parallel to this, neoliberal capitalism aimed to create cheap labor in order to reduce the cost of production. That is why, it made employment conditions flexible, more insecure, and unstable.

In addition, the accumulation of capital was achieved through dispossession and the dispossessed masses began to migrate to the big cities. When these masses could not enter formal employment, poverty became inevitable for them. Thus, the dispossessed, forcibly displaced, or refugees become precariat, and waste picking has become a way of living for them in order to survive. While discussing the concept of the precariat in this chapter, it has been evaluated as a new working class apart from orthodox Marxist class definitions. Considering the working and living conditions of waste pickers, it was suggested that the concept of precarity was also incomplete and the concept of hyper-precarity was used instead. The concept of hyper-precarity has been used to explain the conditions created by social, legal, ethnic, and economic

exclusion, as a result of the combination of socio-legal status and economic dimensions making precarity multi-dimensional. Due to the increasing profits in the recycling sector, after waste management started to be privatized with the cooperation of the state and the capital, this caused waste pickers to be excluded from waste and to be criminalized. The criminalization process fed hyper-precarity. The following chapter will examine how the social, legal, ethnic, and economic insecurities brought by hyper-precarity lead to the organization of waste workers.

CHAPTER 3

THE ORGANIZATION OF WASTE PICKERS

In this chapter, the organizational practices of waste pickers working in the informal sector will be examined together with the notion of hyper-precarity. In order to understand the organization of waste pickers, the literature on informal workers' organization will be used and the effect of hyper-precarity on organization and organizational forms will be discussed. For this, first of all, different views on the organization of informal workers in the literature will be examined. The second part exemplifies the organizational experiences of waste pickers in three different countries.

3.1 Different views on the organization of informal workers

The organization or mobilization of informal workers is often overlooked by many scholars as they do not participate in direct commodity production, and do not have associational power, or resources (Kabeer, Sudarshan, & Milward, 2013; McDermott, 2022). Traditionally, they have been seen as “unorganizable” because they lack legal protections or work in an atomized manner (Rosaldo, Evans & Tilly, 2012, p.9). Nevertheless, especially after the 1980s, the increasing number of informal workers and urban poor organizations attracted the attention of researchers, and studies on these organizations began.

Many scholars who have studied the organization of informal workers have discussed the reasons and motivations that drive them to organize. For example, Agarwala (2013), in her work based on women working in the informal sector in India, claims that the precarious conditions created by informalization allowed

workers to establish a new social contract with the state. In her view, although workers began to organize to eliminate precarious conditions in employment, their motivation to organize has evolved to demand their rights from the state. That is, informal workers organized to claim equal citizenship rights from the state and succeeded in obtaining state-supported welfare benefits as in Tamil Nadu. Furthermore, there are scholars who consider the reason for the organization of the informal to be poverty and inequalities created by the global capitalist system (Patnaik, 2018; McDermott, 2022; Yerochewski, 2015). According to McDermott's (2022) study on informal workers' mobilization in West Africa or Yerochewski's (2015) research on informal workers' resistance in Brazil, although the organization of informal workers carries an anti-capitalist notion and has class consciousness, the main purpose is to achieve basic citizenship rights and eliminate income inequalities.

On the other hand, some scholars oppose class-based analyses and argue that informal labor mobilization does not have class consciousness, but it aims to resist exploitation and dispossession (Levien, 2013, p. 352). In addition, Gür (2019) in her study examining the social exclusion of waste pickers in Antalya emphasized that their organization is generally a reaction to state intervention and that access to garbage is the main motivation (p. 137).

Moreover, some scholars explain the organization of informal workers with the precarious conditions created by societal gender norms and gender-based violence. In the book edited by Naila Kabeer, Ratna Sudarshan, and Kirsty Milward (2013), obstacles and organizational experiences faced by women working in the informal sector (e.g. sex work, farming, waste picking, fishing, domestic work) in South Africa, India, and Brazil are compared. What these women have in common is that they live under conditions of poverty, lack recognition and social rights, and face

gender-based discrimination. Care responsibilities, sexual harassment, earning lower wages compared to men, and patriarchal social norms are common problems faced by women working in the informal sector. These problems have pushed them into precarious living conditions. Women began to organize against these precarious conditions. However, according to the authors, these organizations are not just for the sake of gaining better working conditions, but also “for recognition as human beings, for dignity, and citizenship” (p. xi).

Although there are different views on the motivations that lead to the organization, studies have shown that informal workers organize to eliminate the precarious conditions in which they live. While these conditions are sometimes poverty caused by the income inequalities created by the capitalist system, sometimes they can be the demand to access citizenship rights or the desire to live in dignity without being discriminated against because of their ethnic background and gender in society. However, for informal workers who are exposed to economic insecurity, poverty, and ethnic and social exclusion, precarious conditions both at work and in society are one of the main reasons for their organization (Atzeni, 2016; Rizzo & Atzeni, 2020). Therefore, this study argues that the organization of waste workers is to eliminate the insecurities due to hyper-precarity and to demand basic citizenship rights from the state with the desire to live in dignity.

However, before talking about the organization of waste workers, it is necessary to mention the organizational structure. Informal workers often fall outside the legal framework to which formal workers are subject. Employment relations are unclear since mostly they work on a self-employed basis. Besides, they often work in scattered and individualized workplaces. They often have multiple jobs and cannot spare time for another activity because of long working hours. This prevents them

from joining a traditional trade union (Bonner & Spooner, 2011, pp. 89-90).

Therefore, when examining the organization of informal workers, it is necessary to consider new forms such as cooperatives, federations, local organizations, associations, member-based organizations, community-based organizations, and national and international networks rather than a traditional trade union (Bonner & Spooner, 2011, p. 92). These forms, unlike the traditional trade union, are horizontal, bottom-up organizations based on collective decision-making that take place with the workers' self-activity (Azzelini & Kraft, 2018, p. 6).

The basis of organizations lies in eliminating precarities such as economic precarity such as working long hours with low wages, legal precarity, and social precarity such as exclusion from society. Mobilizing against exploitative and unfair conditions and developing a shared identity allows them to mobilize and organize. Once mobilized, workers begin to activate others for their shared objectives. Thus, the process of organization proceeds. For the organization to be successful, the workers must increase their associational power (Però, 2019). Associational power depends on the workers' success in establishing alliances with actors such as other organizations, NGOs, and political groups, their ability to campaign, their ability to establish public representation, and their ability to gain bargaining power (Però, 2019, pp. 903-907).

In this context, the organization of waste workers is generally community-based, far from traditional forms, and depends on self-activity. Self-activity refers to the autonomous organization of workers without the top-down decision-making mechanism found in conventional trade unions (Azzelini & Kraft, 2018, p. 6). That is, workers organized other workers on their own, with their own strength and

capacity. Also, while they aim to improve employment conditions, they also advocate for the demand for basic human and citizenship rights.

3.2 Three examples of organizing waste workers in India, Brazil, and Colombia

3.2.1 India

India has successful examples of waste workers' organizations. Most of the waste workers in India are women and children and they are from the lowest caste called “untouchables” and often do not have access to basic public services such as education and health (Chikarmane, 2012). The hierarchy in the caste system causes the "untouchables" to be excluded from both the formal employment market and society. Therefore, informal and easy-to-enter jobs such as waste picking become the only option for those at the bottom of the caste system (Wiego, 2016). In addition, working without an employer is seen as preferable for female waste workers as it protects them from the danger of sexual harassment (Chikarmane & Narayan, 2005, p. 2). Those who have to do waste work also face social stigma (Chandran et al. 2009), and they are seen as “dirty” or “thieves” (Chikarmane & Narayan, 2005, p. 3). Waste workers, who are already living and working in very precarious conditions, have also lost their job opportunities as municipalities privatize garbage collection and separation services and establish incineration plants instead of garbage sorting.

Shankar and Sahni (2018) suggested in their study that privatization of waste management is used as a means of dispossession. Privatizations are not only profitable for companies, but they are also a way for the government to save money on public services. Hence, privatization is implemented through the state and for the sake of the market. In addition, they argue that privatizations are the dispossession of

the urban poor living in the informal sector and that this is done for “neo-liberal reconceptualization of urban development”(Shankar & Sahni, 2018, p. 56). In other words, privatizations and the displacement of the urban poor are interrelated and this is done through the cooperation of capitalists and the state. Following privatization, companies get more profit, while the state is freed from the responsibility of providing public services. The urban poor, on the other hand, are excluded from the public spaces and job opportunities they previously had access to and are forced to live in even more vulnerable conditions. Such was the case with waste pickers in India. The privatization of garbage collection services by municipalities has resulted in waste pickers being prevented from reaching landfills or garbage containers. Informal waste pickers have been made illegal with legal regulations and criminalized the brutal oppression of the state (Chaturvedi, 2013).

Shankar and Sahni (2018) also emphasize the gender factor while explaining the disposal of waste pickers. Women working in the informal sector are more disadvantaged than men. Men have access to better financial capital, productive assets, and work spaces (Chen, 2005, p. 4). The same is valid for the waste work industry in India. Male workers usually pick up trash by bike or pushcarts, so they can collect more trash and earn more money. Also, male pickers are often itinerant buyers, buying and selling waste directly from shops and households, so men dominate the trade part of this sector. On the other hand, female workers collect by walking with sacks in their hands. Thus, women collect less waste and do heavier work compared to men. In addition, women's responsibilities such as doing housework and taking care of children also cause them to work double shifts. When the government privatizes garbage collection services, closes landfills, or removes garbage containers from the streets, women are deprived of their livelihoods, while

men could continue their business by trading and intermediating or buying waste from shops and households. Therefore, Shankar and Sahni argue that these privatizations are a direct strike by the state against female-centered waste picking (2018, p. 57).

The organization of waste pickers in India is a women's movement. Women have united against the state's intervention in livelihoods and the privatization of landfills. Women are legally criminalized and do not earn enough to ensure their survival, and they are excluded from the opportunity to find a better job because they are from the lowest caste. Thus, women whose legal, economic, and social precarities intersect, who are also harassed because of their gender, who earn less than men, and who have care responsibilities, have turned into hyper-precarity. This situation prompted them to take action. In 1993 they staged large-scale protests and demanded their right to work with dignity and without harassment from the police. Thousands of waste pickers joined these protests and demanded recognition for their work with the slogan "Kachra amchya malkicha.... nahi kunachya bapacha" (we own the waste, it does not belong to anyone's father!) (Chikarmane, 2012).

Waste picker women, who gained public visibility as a result of the protests, established KKPKP [the Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (Organization of Scrap Collectors)] and they prepared a convention (Chikarmane, 2012). KKPKP is a membership-based trade union aiming at legal recognition of waste pickers. The difference between KKPKP from traditional trade unions is that it demands their rights from the state, not from the employer. It also not only fights for workers' wages or legal recognition but also negotiates with both the municipality and the state on basic civic rights of workers, such as the right to access health and education. As a result of their struggle, a municipality-supported social insurance

program is established for women to retire. Reading courses are provided to illiterate women. Financial incentive programs are established jointly with the municipality for the return of child workers to school (Chikarmane & Narayan, 2005, p. 39). In doing so, waste picker communities living in different slums elect representatives among themselves. These representatives form the board of directors of KKPKP. This board of directors also makes an election for the distribution of duties within itself and thus the organization structure is determined by a democratic method. All members are waste pickers.^{iv}

KKPKP, which carries out lobbying activities in addition to mass mobilizations and street protests, also did networking with other NGOs and academics and increased its associational capacity. Thus, it was able to organize more than 7000 waste pickers in more than five cities and provide the recognition of waste pickers as a profession in the relevant labor law (Chikarmane & Narayan, 2005, p. 39). Nevertheless, the privatization of public services in India continued. For example, in 2007, the Pimpri–Chinchwad Municipal Corporation (PCMC), owned by the municipality of Pune City, signed an agreement with a private firm named BVG. According to the agreement, the task of establishing and operating a plastics-to-fuel plant was given to BVG. In other words, the company has also retained the right to collect plastic waste. As a result, waste pickers are restricted from accessing the waste. KKPKP became involved and a cooperative named SWaCH (Solid Waste Collection and Handling) was established in 2008 to protect waste pickers' job opportunities. The cooperative negotiated with the municipality and waste pickers signed a contract with PCMC to collect waste from households. Organized women, who started to work with the door-to-door collection method, also obtained ID cards

^{iv} <https://kkpkp-pune.org/>

from the municipality showing that they were allowed to collect waste. Thus, unionized women, whose working hours have decreased and their incomes have increased, also got rid of police harassment (Shankar & Sahni, 2018).

The success of KKPKP and SWaCH has set an example for many regions of India and waste pickers have started to establish their own associations and cooperatives in many cities (Shankar & Sahni, 2018). In addition, alliances with international NGOs and international solidarity networks have been established. An example of this is WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing). WIEGO is an advocacy organization operating in many countries, established to empower poor women working in four informal sectors such as domestic workers, home-based workers, street vendors, and waste pickers. In cooperation with WIEGO, KKPKP participated in the international waste workers conferences and expanded its capacity for empowerment and advocacy. As a result, the KKPKP is not only important for waste picker women to gain legal recognition or to achieve their basic rights. KKPKP is also very important because it reflects the struggle of women who are precariat in legal, social, gender-based, and economic terms and whose precarities intersect with state intervention and privatization, and who have no alternative but to collect garbage. Women united by their own efforts to organize protests, negotiate for their rights, form unions, and demand from the state to live in dignity as equal citizens. Hyper-precarius conditions are one of the reasons that push them to organize, and as a result, they have established a member-based organization that will set an example for waste pickers in other countries.

3.2.2 Brazil

The organization of waste pickers in Brazil is very important in terms of their legal gains and wide mobilization. Brazil is one of the countries where waste pickers are most organized. This is because waste pickers in Brazil are legally recognized and there is a tradition of social mobilization both within favelas and throughout Brazilian society. However, achieving legal recognition was possible with the self-activity and bottom-up organization of the workers. I find the organizational model in Brazil very important and worth mentioning in that it resembles some of the practices I have encountered in my field.

Waste picking in Brazil is usually done by landless peasants or urban poor living in favelas, who migrated from the countryside to the city (Ramos, de Castilhos, Forcellini, & Graciolli, 2013, p. 232). Most of the waste pickers are also black. Therefore, waste work results from both economic and social exclusion and racial discrimination. This situation is similar to the Kurdish waste pickers I encountered in my field. Kurdish waste pickers are also exposed to racism and social exclusion because of their ethnicity. In addition, there are many Kurdish and Turkish waste pickers who come to the city as landless peasants to work or who are urban poor and live in urban slums and struggle with economic exclusion and poverty. In this context, the example of Brazil can be a model for the organization of waste pickers from Turkey, who has become hyper-precarity, struggling with social, economic, and legal exclusion.

The first steps in organizing began in the 1970s when the state closed some landfills. Various protests were held as the closed landfills were both a working and a living space for waste pickers. However, waste pickers did not act in an organized manner until the Paper and Reusable Waste Pickers' Popular Organizations

meeting in 1992. In 1999, the first National Congress of Recyclable Waste Pickers was held. In 2001, the National Movement of Recyclable Waste Pickers (MNCR) was established. MNCR has expanded its networks across the country, creating a solidarity network that has led to the establishment of more than 1200 waste picker associations and cooperatives in different cities. The main objective of MNCR is to reduce the social exclusion of waste pickers, to enable them to benefit from their citizenship rights such as access to health and education, public resources for housing, and to regulate the recycling trade by guaranteeing the participation of workers in every stage of recycling. It is to enable those who are engaged in work to work in better conditions (Fergutz, Dias & Mitlin, 2011). Since MNCR is a national network created throughout Brazil and contains many associations and cooperatives, the general assembly is formed by electing representatives from the members. The size of the organization is massive. This organization has been made possible by the unification and self-activity of waste workers who are mobilized separately in cities, establishing associations or cooperatives^v.

The first achievement of MNCR was obtained in 2001 when waste picking was legally recognized as a profession for the first time. In 2010, the role of waste pickers was legally defined in the National Policy of Solid Waste. Legal rights and recognition of waste picking have been achieved through cooperatives such as MNCR and the Association of Collectors of Paper, Cardboard, and Reusable Material (ASMARE) founded in 1990 in Belo Horizonte. These cooperatives negotiated with municipalities and the state, made agreements on waste trade and recycling, and carried out lobbying activities. However, private companies have control of the recycling industry and the trade of waste. Therefore, the prices of the

^v <https://www.mnncr.org.br/>

waste are determined by private companies and the state does not provide any assurance to waste pickers in this regard. In addition, the state's privatization of landfills creates an obstacle for waste pickers to reach the garbage. Social inclusion programs implemented by the state are also not enough for waste pickers to benefit from public services such as health, education, and formal employment opportunities (Fergutz, Dias & Mitlin, 2011). In addition, waste pickers were banned from using pushcarts in 2017 and their pushcarts were taken from them. In fact, pushcarts were already prohibited by a previous law, but according to the law, municipalities had the responsibility of giving waste pickers a vehicle instead of pushcarts. The municipalities did not fulfill this responsibility, but they implemented the ban. As a result, waste pickers organized street protests with a wide participation rate (Rosaldo, 2017).

Despite the struggle still going on and all the state's efforts to curb waste pickers, Brazil is one of the countries where waste pickers have the highest organization rate and obtain their economic and social rights the most. People who mostly live in favelas, do not have access to formal employment, education, and health, struggle against racism, and therefore cannot find a livelihood other than waste picking, and thus they organize to eliminate hyper-precarious conditions.

3.2.3 Colombia

The resistance of the waste pickers in Colombia is very crucial in terms of both its social, economic, and ideological dimensions and the gains of the pickers. However, one of the reasons why this is important is that waste pickers are mostly dispossessed and forcibly displaced people. In this respect, it is similar to Kurds who were forcibly displaced in Turkey in the 1990s migrated to big cities, and started waste picking.

Ethnic conflict and discrimination have caused some people not to enjoy their fundamental rights as equal citizens and brought social, legal, and economic exclusion in Colombia. Although the atmosphere of violence in Colombia is more than in Turkey in many respects, the example in Colombia is important in terms of showing the motivations that lead to the organization of the forcibly displaced and dispossessed masses.

Waste picking in Colombia started in the 1950s when many peasants migrated to urban slums due to armed conflict, violence, and oppression. Due to the civil war, the number of people dispossessed increased, and mass migration to big cities happened. People who migrated to cities could not enter the formal employment market because they were generally uneducated, and unskilled, and also they faced social exclusion. These pushed them to waste picking. Those who collect waste mostly at dumps started to collect garbage on the street in the 1980s because the state evicted waste pickers from dumps. The first attempts at establishing cooperatives started after the eviction of pickers from dumps. By the 1990s, the Colombian state completely criminalized waste workers and tried to remove them from the street. Waste pickers on the street were faced with police harassment, were jailed, and had their pushcarts confiscated (Abizaid, 2015).

However, the violence that waste workers were exposed to was not limited to this, and thousands of waste workers were kidnapped or killed in cooperation with the police and fascist groups due to the "social cleansing" movement initiated by fascist organizations to clear the streets from "disposable" people. This has caused the organizational movement that started with cooperatives to turn into a social mobilization (Rosaldo, 2019, p. 10). In the 1990s, waste workers organized nationwide protests and pressured Congress to recognize their rights (Parra, 2016).

Yet, the problems faced by workers have increased due to privatizations and legal regulations. In the 1990s, municipalities started outsourcing their recycling and garbage collection services to private companies, and some public officials and state elites set up their own companies after realizing that the recycling business is very profitable. As a result, waste work was criminalized and banned by a series of legal regulations in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Rosaldo, 2019, p. 10).

Between 2002 and 2011, waste workers took several steps to strengthen their mobilization. First of all, they won the human rights and labor rights lawsuits they filed against the state in the Constitutional Court and received compensation from the state. As a result of these lawsuits, the state was tasked with ensuring that waste pickers were integrated into formal waste management. Thus, waste workers gained legal recognition (Rosaldo, 2019, p. 11). It is the Asociación de Recicladores de Bogotá (ARB) that provides both the legal and street mobilization of the waste workers. The ARB not only organized the pickers through mass protests or legal means but also created many alliances with other NGOs across Latin America and within Colombia to raise public awareness (Abizaid, 2015, p. 6). The organization of the ARB is based on socialist ideology and advocates that waste workers should get their rights both as a working class and as citizens. In this context, ARB, which advocates that the state should completely nationalize the recycling industry and that waste prices should be fixed, fights for waste workers to continue to do their work through membership-based organizations or cooperatives. In other words, pickers who have experienced dispossession by the state before do not want to be included in the formal sector completely. They want to maintain their autonomy over the cooperatives since they think that when they work entirely on behalf of the state, the state will dispossess them from their working and living spaces (Rosaldo, 2019).

The struggle of the ARB continues today. Although waste workers are legally recognized and have a strong organization, state intervention in the recycling industry continues. As can be seen from the struggle of the ARB, waste workers united against violence, legal criminalization, dispossession, privatization, and state intervention and showed a very strong example of the organization against their hyper-precarious conditions.

CHAPTER 4

WASTE PICKING IN TURKEY

4.1 Historical background of recycling industry and waste picking in Turkey

Waste picking in Turkey has been an informal sector since the birth of the recycling industry in the 1950s. It was started by the homeless people who sorted newspapers (Top, 2022, p. 57) and grew with the involvement of "Aksaraylılar" (people coming from Aksaray) who migrated to big cities to find a job in the 1970s and 1980s. In the 1990s, the Kurds, who migrated to big cities as a result of the forced displacement, faced ethnic discrimination, could not enter formal employment, and could not access education, started waste picking to earn a living (Özgen, 2001; 2006). The mass migration experienced after the Syrian Civil War and the Taliban's take-over of power in Afghanistan caused Syrian (Florin, 2018) and Afghan undocumented migrants who migrated to Turkey to enter the informal sector in order to live and send remittances to their families. Thus, they also start waste picking. In addition, the Romani people are among the oldest at the waste-picking job. In summary, the reasons for waste picking can be ethnic and social discrimination, lack of access to rights such as education and social security, not being able to enter formal employment, being dispossessed or displaced, and not having legal migrant status. Although it is a job adopted by different socio-cultural groups, the common feature of these groups is that they are poor and live in precarious conditions.

The living conditions and profiles of waste pickers will be explored in more detail below. Firstly, it should be mentioned that the expansion of waste-picking work among the urban poor and the fact that many people choose this work to make a living has been possible with the development of the recycling and packaging

industry. The production of packaging in Turkey dates back to the 1960s and they were made with materials such as paper, cardboard, and glass. In the 1970s, the production of plastic and aluminum cans began. Thus, recycling started to emerge as a sector in the 1970s (Özen, 2018, p. 143). By the 1980s, the adoption of neoliberal policies by the Turgut Özal government paved the way for international commercialization and integration into the international packaging production and recycling market (Top, 2022, p. 70). As a result, plastic bottles started to be produced for the first time in the 1980s, and aluminum cans that were previously imported began to be produced by domestic manufacturers. From the 1980s to the early 1990s, the production of corrugated cardboard in Turkey attracted the attention of many investors, and the monopoly of SEKA, a public corporation in this field, was over. Investors have started to enter the corrugated cardboard and plastic production sector (Özen, 2018, p. 143). After the 1980s, the abandonment of the import substitution economy increased the number of imported products. The packaging of these imported products has created a new opportunity for investors in the recycling sector (Top, 2022, p. 70). The increase in consumption, the increase in packaging waste, and the realization that recycling is a profitable sector also showed the need for legal regulations. In this context, the Ministry of Environment and Forestry enacted the first legislation on solid waste management in 1991 (Gügüs, 2019).

In the 1990s, several developments affected waste management and trade. Özgen (2006) argues that the responsibility for waste management has passed from the municipalities to the Ministry of Environment and a “product-oriented” perspective has been adopted. According to her, the undertaking of waste management by companies within the “market mechanism” has begun to be encouraged. With the GATS (The General Agreement on Trade in Services)

agreement signed in 1994, international trade in waste management was liberalized and foreign companies were allowed to have commercial assets in Turkey. Also, since the disposal of industrial wastes in developed countries by incineration caused public opposition, their industrial wastes were exported to underdeveloped countries. Therefore, Turkey started to import waste from developed countries and both state and municipal authorities realized that they could profit from waste (Top, 2022).

In 1999, the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) founded the Waste Stock Exchange. So, the waste market in Turkey was integrated with the international market (Gügüş, 2019, p. 21). This integration process continued with the introduction of new regulations on packaging within the scope of the EU harmonization process. The EU's imports of packaging waste to Turkey increased by 23% between 2002 and 2007 (Dabak, 2009, p. 36; Top, 2022, p. 71). As a result of the EU harmonization process in 2005, the regulation on the Control of Packaging Wastes was implemented. This regulation was changed several times until 2011. The regulation aimed to make packaging companies responsible for collecting and recycling packaging waste, and it enabled private companies to open recycling facilities and undertake garbage collection services. ÇEVKO is held responsible for the implementation of the regulation. ÇEVKO (Environmental Protection and Packaging Waste Assessment Foundation) is a foundation established in 1991 by 14 industrial organizations such as BP and Shell & Turcas Petroleum, Coca-Cola Beverage, Johnson & Johnson, and Migros. With the authorization of ÇEVKO, the monopolization process of large companies in the recycling sector started. Simultaneously, the municipal law changed, and municipalities are also held legally responsible for the separation and disposal of waste (Gügüş, 2019, p. 22). In this way, companies that want to benefit from the profits in the recycling sector such as

Albayrak, Doğanlar, and Tarhan have taken over the waste management responsibilities of municipalities by taking tenders from them (Maden, 2014)^{vii}.

The privatization of waste management and the taking of recycling responsibility over by large companies with the collaboration of the state and capital resulted in the inclusion of transnational corporations in the recycling sector in Turkey. For example, İSPAK, a branch of Kibar Holding, one of the largest packaging manufacturers in Turkey, has partnered with the US-based Heritage company to recycle packaging waste. Also, Swedish company RVM has installed recycling vending machines in Turkey (Top, 2022, p. 72).

The transformation and monopolization of the waste management sector with neoliberal policies and privatization continued with the “Zero Waste” project. This project was first announced by the President's wife Emine Erdoğan in 2017 and became official in 2019. The purpose of the Zero Waste project is explained as promoting on-site segregation. In addition, with the Green Deal signed with the EU in 2020, Turkey has agreed to reduce its carbon emissions and waste by promising to adopt a green circular economy. Consequently, recycling projects accelerated. The Zero Waste project and the Green Deal were not adopted as a result of ecological sensitivity. The main purpose is to reach more and better quality raw materials and return them to production (Top, 2022, p. 72).

Another significance of the agreements was that Turkey aimed to obtain climate finance loans from various international institutions such as the EU and the World Bank for the development of the waste management system. Thus, Turkey would have the opportunity to access many funds to achieve green transformation.

^{vi} <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/sirkethaberleri/holding/turkiyede-yillik-6-milyon-ton-atigin-sebep-oldugu-ekonomik-kayip-1-5-milyar-lira/664959>

^{vii} <https://www.albayrak.com.tr/sektorler/atik-yonetimi/bayfa-geri-donusum/>

For example, in 2023, the German state-owned investment and development bank KfW agreed to provide a climate finance loan of 100 million Euros to TSKB (Turkish Industrial Development Bank) in order for Turkey to fulfill its commitments under the Paris Climate Agreement. With this loan, the aim is to support renewable energy investments^{viii}. Similarly, The European Investment Bank (EIB) and İllbank (İller Bankası A.Ş.) signed an agreement of 250 million Euros to increase municipal capacities in the water sanitation and waste management system throughout Turkey^{ix}. The World Bank also gave a loan of 148.80 million dollars to Turkey in 2020 and aimed for municipalities to access financing in several areas such as waste management systems through İller Bank^x. In 2019, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) gave a loan of 57.5 million Turkish liras for the establishment of a solid waste facility in Çanakkale. International and national companies entered the international tender to win this loan and establish the facility. French SUEZ group and Turkish waste management firm ALTAŞ became partners by winning this tender. Thus, Çanakkale municipality, SUEZ group, and ALTAŞ formed a private-public partnership, received financing from the EBRD, and started to establish a huge landfill in Çanakkale^{xi}. For the Waste to Energy plant to be established in Istanbul, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality received funding of 100 million Euros from the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in 2021^{xii}. Thus, the government, which had access to a lot of loans and funds, made various

^{viii} <https://www.tskb.com.tr/hakimizda/bizi-taniyin/haberler/tskbye-alman-kalkinma-bankasindan-100milyon-euroluk-iklim-finansman-kredisi>

^{ix} https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2019-12/c_2019_8726_ad_environment.pdf

^x <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/ar/726481585965774365/pdf/Turkey-Municipal-Services-Improvement-Project.pdf>

^{xi} <https://www.ebrd.com/news/2019/ebrd-funds-solid-waste-facility-in-turkeys-historic-province-of-ankkale-.html>

^{xii} <https://www.aiib.org/en/projects/details/2021/approved/Turkey-Istanbul-Waste-to-Energy-Generation-Project.html>

arrangements and took initiatives to implement the zero waste project. Ensuring on-site separation was one of these attempts.

In order to ensure on-site separation, it was stipulated by regulations that public institutions and chain markets deliver their wastes to the municipality. Besides, deposit systems and recycling vending machines were started to be installed in various places where pilot projects would be implemented. The aim here is to receive waste directly from the end consumer, namely households and workplaces, and to increase the amount of recycling. In addition, within the scope of the Zero Waste project, municipalities have been given more responsibilities, but they could not fulfill their responsibilities because they did not have sufficient capacity for waste management services. So, they transferred their waste collection and recycling services to private companies. All these regulations paved the way for subcontracting. The waste market came under the control of several companies that hold the recycling industry. At this point, it should be noted that recycling companies supply most of their raw material needs from imported waste. However, in 2020, the waste export quota was reduced from 80% to 50% with a new regulation. Recycling companies that could not find enough waste raw materials due to this regulation turned to the domestic market (Top, 2022, pp. 73-74).

In order to meet the needs of the companies, the garbage left in the recycling bins or collected from public institutions and chain markets was not enough. The tenders for garbage collection and recycling from municipalities could not meet the need either. Therefore, it is very important to reach the household trash, where the most waste is generated. But most recyclable materials found in the household waste are collected by waste pickers. This means that the waste collected and sorted by the waste pickers will need to be transferred directly to the capital without an

intermediary. The way to do this is to prevent and criminalize waste pickers from waste collection. The owners of recycling companies and the government that is the architect of the Zero Waste project are aware of this fact. For example, İbrahim Engin, President of the Recycling Industrialists Association, stated in an interview that 1.5 billion Turkish Liras of recyclables are "wasted" every year in Turkey, and they cannot be reproduced. He added that informal waste collection should be prevented in order to bring them back into the economy (İlhan, 2022). This has been the reason for a series of state interventions to dispossess waste pickers, which started in late 2021 and continued in 2022.

The development of the recycling sector in Turkey has been realized through neoliberal regulations and privatizations in cooperation with international and national private companies and the state. With the Green Deal Agreement, the share and importance allocated to the recycling sector increased, and with the involvement of international capital by lending in this sector, the recycling sector became quite profitable for both private companies and the government. Today, the number of projects for solid waste management systems is still increasing. However, after looking at the development of the recycling sector in Turkey, it is necessary to mention the factors that make this development possible. The first factor is waste pickers, the cheap and invisible workforce of recycling. Thanks to the exploitation of waste pickers' labor, it is possible to recycle household waste that private companies and municipalities cannot reach. In order to understand how the labor of waste pickers, who live in the most severe and dangerous conditions as cheap labor, is exploited, it is necessary to focus on the reasons that push them to do this job and informalization process.

4.2 Informal sector and waste picking

The informal sector is closely related to capitalist development and globalization. Companies aim to reduce labor costs and increase productivity in order to cope with competition in the international market in the neoliberal world. The way to do this is to make the market flexible. Market flexibility is achieved through some state regulations (Chen, 2005; 2012; Uyanık, 2008, p. 220). Due to these regulations and deregulations, those who informally work must work under unregulated and insecure working conditions (Williams & Round, 2010). In addition, the flexibility of the market and the expansion of informal work not only reduce labor costs but also transform the welfare state's public services. In other words, the rate of access to social security and the bargaining share of workers in the system also decreases (Erdut, 2005, p. 30). As a consequence, people condemned to poverty are forced to work long hours for low wages in the most dangerous jobs without social security and live as a precariat.

As discussed earlier in the Theoretical Framework chapter, one of the reasons for informalization is the migration from rural to urban due to neoliberal capitalist globalization's dispossession of masses with structural adjustment programs and state policies or privatization of agricultural lands. Dispossessed had to work in the informal sector because they could not enter formal employment (Erdut, 2007).

An interviewee who came to Istanbul from Urfa and opened a warehouse explained the reason why he prefers waste picking:

We have fields in our hometown, Siverek. But we can't irrigate them. 60 km of pipes must be laid to bring water. The state had a GAP project, they were supposed to support the farmers. But they only supported big companies. There are a few companies that can bring water from the Euphrates. But how shall we do it? We could not cultivate our field. Regarding animal husbandry, feed prices increased 10 times. Everyone sells their animals. We were unemployed, we came here out of necessity and started waste-picking. We already learned right away, one pushcart (çekçek) is enough. No need for

capital. We have been collecting waste for a long time. When we saved money, we opened our own warehouse (Interview 1, see Appendix B).

As can be seen from this example, since the support and incentives that should be given to small peasants and farmers were given to large companies due to the privatization policies of the state, dispossessed people who could not benefit from the source of Euphrates for irrigation became unemployed in their villages and had to migrate to big cities. The peasants who became unemployed had to work in a job that did not require capital and was easy to enter, such as waste picking. Therefore, dispossession, unemployment, and poverty are among the reasons that push them to do this job and to live under precarity.

Poverty came up many times during my field research. Without exception, all interviewees stated that the reasons for starting waste picking were poverty and unemployment. Many of the interviewees said, “We have no other choice, we have to do this job to make a living” (Interview 2, see Appendix B). One of the causes of poverty was dispossession, but some interviewees also stated that they started this job because they were dismissed from their previous jobs and could not find a secure job in the formal sector. For example, one interviewee stated that she used to work as a janitor at a gym, but they fired her after the subcontractor decided to employ fewer people to cut costs. She started waste picking because she could not find a paid and insured job for a long time after her dismissal. Subcontracting is the preferred method of the neoliberal system to lower labor costs. Thus, workers are at risk of being laid off at any time. Employees in the subcontractor company are condemned to work in precarious conditions and turn to the informal sector by joining the reserve army of labor when they are unemployed.

Another reason for poverty and informalization is that the state leaves the responsibility of providing basic services to the private sector. The privatization of education services is an example of this. The state's failure to fulfill this responsibility, allowing the private sector to open schools instead of opening qualified public schools, causes many disadvantaged people to not be able to benefit from basic citizenship rights such as education. Thus, people without a diploma who have lost the chance to become qualified employees cannot find secure jobs in the formal sector, cannot do upward social mobility, and cannot get out of the poverty cycle. This causes them to work in the informal sector under precarious conditions. Hence, it is no coincidence that most waste pickers I interviewed were primary school graduates or secondary school dropouts.

One of my interviewees, who is only 18 years old and graduated from a high school in Urfa, explained why he did waste picking as follows:

Actually, I would like to study at university and find another job, but I couldn't. The public schools in Urfa are not of very high quality. Teachers don't care about students. If you want to go to a good school, you have to go to a private school, but for that, you have to be rich. The quality of education in private schools is not the same as one in public schools. Students who go to private schools are more successful in the university exam. I took the exam, but I couldn't win. I had to work to support my family. No one employs a high school graduate. Now, everybody wants a college degree (Interview 3, see Appendix B).

The privatization of education and the reduction of its quality causes many poor youth to be trapped in the cycle of poverty and turn to jobs in the informal sector such as waste picking. As another interviewee put it, "In the waste picking, nobody asks for anybody's diploma" (Interview 4, see Appendix B). That's why waste picking has become a livelihood for many people trapped in poverty and for those who cannot access social services and citizenship rights such as education.

Another reason for starting waste picking is the forced displacement of Kurds in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia region in the 1990s. The Kurds, whose fields, properties, and job resources were taken from them, migrated to other cities and were forced to live as urban poor in those cities. A waste picker whose family had to migrate from Diyarbakır, whom I interviewed during my fieldwork in Ataçehir, summarized this situation as follows:

I was young, I don't remember. But my parents were telling me. When our village was evacuated, they came to Istanbul to live with relatives. Even though our belongings remained in the village, the soldiers did not allow them to take them. They came here with only three or five items. My father is not even a primary school graduate. What will he do here? How will we live? He had to start this job... I started by helping my father when I was little too.... We could not live on what my father earned. So, I didn't study after high school, I worked in this job. I can't do anything else without this job (Interview 5, see Appendix B).

The Kurds, who are deprived of means of livelihood, and exposed to social discrimination due to their ethnic origins, are marginalized in the eyes of the society. This situation caused them to be unable to find a job in the formal sector due to the discrimination they faced when they came to the city. The interviewee replied, "Nobody who does this job asks you where you came from. Everyone can do this job. No one is excluded" (Interview 6, see Appendix B). He said that he turned to waste picking because there was no ethnic discrimination in entering this job.

Ethnic discrimination is a problem that Kurdish waste pickers are particularly exposed to. I also had the opportunity to meet with waste pickers, who said that they were not preferred when they applied for another job because of their accent when speaking Turkish, or that they were discriminated against by other students at school. This situation also causes them not to exist in society as equal citizens and not to benefit from their citizenship rights. The state's nationalist policy causes Kurds to be stigmatized as "terrorists" in the eyes of society, and services such as education and

health are not delivered to areas where Kurds live properly. Some of the interviewees have a card called "green card", which is given by the state for people who do not have social security to benefit from health services free of charge. However, since this card was given according to some criteria determined by the state, most of the interviewees did not have social security or green card. Therefore, they do not have the opportunity to benefit from free health services when they become ill. Thus, many people who could not receive adequate education and health services, and who were exposed to racism and discrimination, were condemned to live in precarious conditions in urban slums and to do informal work such as waste picking.

Ethnic discrimination is not a problem only Kurds are exposed to. Roma and refugees have also had to live in precarious conditions because of this situation. This situation will be examined in more detail below. However, transnational migration is very important as it increases as a result of informalization. Migrants are a cheap source of labor that can be hired and fired whenever desired by capitalists (Akkuzu, 2015). Therefore, undocumented migrants, who are constantly in danger of being deported, have no choice but to work in the informal sector as a cheap labor force under precarious conditions.

During my field research, interviews with Syrian and Afghan pickers also revealed the relationship between migration and waste picking. Although Syrian interviewees have residence permits, they generally cannot enter formal employment. They explained the reason for this based on several factors. Firstly, Syrians migrated to the big cities as there were no developed job opportunities in the provinces where they were registered. However, they could not enter the formal sector because they cannot speak Turkish properly, their education level was insufficient and they were not registered in their destination city. In addition, according to the laws in Turkey,

Syrians cannot apply individually to obtain a work permit, their employers must apply. This prevents them from entering formal employment. Besides, both of the interviewees stated that they were excluded, insulted, and unwanted by the Turkish people. For these reasons, Syrians, who had difficulty finding a job in the formal sector, turned to waste picking. “The warehouseman won't ask you who you are. You give your waste, and get your money” (Interview 7, see Appendix B) they replied and stated that they do not face any ethnic discrimination in entering this business.

The conditions of Afghans are different. Factors such as language barrier, being uneducated, racism, and social exclusion also apply to them. But Afghans, unlike Syrians, are undocumented. This means that they cannot enter formal employment under any circumstances. For Afghans who are undocumented and in constant danger of being deported, working in informal jobs such as waste picking is the only way to send remittances to their families.

In summary, the informal sector is the only option for many people who are dispossessed, turned into cheap labor, become a member of the reserve army of labor, and struggle with poverty. Therefore, waste picking has become a livelihood for many, as it does not require special training or capital. However, there are other reasons such as forced displacement, social exclusion, discrimination, and refugee status among the reasons for those who choose waste picking. As a result, being excluded economically, socially, and legally has created various precarious conditions. The precarious conditions of waste pickers, who cannot benefit from citizenship or human rights, cannot access basic public services, have no legal security, have no social security, live poorly as cheap labor in urban slums, and are socially excluded, are determined by the combination of their socio-legal status and their place in the employment market. So, precarity has become multi-dimensional

and turned into hyper-precarity with this combination. Hyper-precarity will be explored in more detail below. However, in order to understand the hyper-precarity of waste pickers, firstly, it is necessary to explain the conditions under which waste pickers work and live.

4.2.1 A day of waste picker

I first started my fieldwork in a shantytown in Yenisahra. Most of the warehouses were located in this slum area just behind the high-rise residences of Yenisahra. While walking on the streets, I observed that this neighborhood hosts people of different ethnicities such as Kurds, Roma, Afghans, or Turks, and that these people mostly make a living by waste picking. Most of the waste pickers live in warehouses, in small containers. Although there is electricity and water in the containers, they cannot use them due to the lack of sufficient infrastructure. These warehouses, where a large group of men usually stay together, are not only a workplace but also a living space for many. Waste pickers, who do not stay in warehouses, are accommodated in very worn and derelict buildings called slums. Paying rent is a big problem for poor waste workers, therefore most stay in warehouses. Warehouses also served another function. Waste pickers, who usually start this business with kinship ties, mostly stay in warehouses with their relatives. Thus, these places also function as a space of solidarity or socialization. For example, responsibilities such as cooking are handled by division of labor. A meal is prepared and eaten together.

Waste pickers usually start work around 6 or 7 in the morning. Many pickers go to work several times a day. They work an average of 12-15 hours a day. Every day, they collect household waste from the street by traveling with sacks, pushcarts, or electric motorcycles in certain areas. They have to walk an average of 10 km a day

to collect the waste. Sometimes they can also buy waste from sites or shops, but as will be explained in the next sections, the waste pickers mostly collect household waste. Since these wastes are disposed of as mixed, they must be separated. Pickers do the separation sometimes in their homes or sometimes in the warehouses where they sell the waste. After the separation process is done collectively, the wastes are weighed. Because the price of each type of waste varies, waste pickers charge per piece or kilo depending on the type of waste. For example, the price of one kilo of corrugated cardboard and 1 kilo of aluminum cans is different. How prices are determined will be explained below.

When the segregated and categorized waste have accumulated enough, the warehouse owner acts as an intermediary. They provide the link between recycling factories and waste pickers. When they deliver the waste collected by the waste pickers to the factories, they receive a commission fee. They take the waste to different recycling factories according to their type and charge per kilo for the materials weighed from the factories. So far, waste collection and separation are generally done informally. So, almost none of the warehouses have a legal license, they are not taxpayers. However, after the separated waste leaves the warehouse, the process transforms from informal to formal. Recycling factories have to have licenses called TAT or GDT and document every waste, also they have to pay taxes on every recycled waste. TAT and GDT certificates are referred to as non-hazardous waste collection and separation certificates, and the authority for waste separation and recycling is given to private companies by the Ministry of Environment. Without these documents, recycling cannot be done legally. Therefore, the factory owners who buy the waste from the warehouses re-introduce the waste into the formal economy. Documented and taxed waste goes through some recycling processes.

These processes are different for each material. For example, the processes of recycling paper and recycling plastic are quite different from each other. Therefore, different factories recycle each material and specialize in it. Recycled wastes become raw materials. These raw materials are sold to paper or packaging manufacturers. Manufacturers process the raw materials into products again and sell them in both national and international markets.

The most well-known example of this is Modern Karton owned by Eren Holding. Modern Karton is not only the largest corrugated cardboard producer in Turkey but also exports corrugated cardboard to the EU. Eren Kağıt, another subsidiary of Eren Holding, is a company that works entirely on recycling, and it buys and recycles both imported waste from abroad and wastes from the Turkish domestic market. However, Eren Kağıt was not only limited to the domestic market but also entered the recycling sector in the overseas market by purchasing Shotton Mill Limited Company in the United Kingdom^{xiii}. As can be seen, the recycling process, which started in the informal sector with the efforts of waste pickers, first continued by being formalized in recycling factories, and then it was articulated with international capital as the manufacturer companies recycle the waste into products in the national and global markets.

The process of recycling and recommodifying the waste as raw material takes place with the labor of waste pickers as explained above. However, this is only the visible part of the job. During my field research, I observed that the working conditions of waste pickers are more difficult than they appear.

When I asked them how it was to work under these conditions every day, many said that it was very difficult to walk at least 10 km a day with at least 100

^{xiii} <https://geridonusumekonomisi.com.tr/valmet-en-buyuk-kagit-uretim-hattini-eren-icin-kuruyor.html>

kilos of waste on their pushcart, especially when going uphill, therefore sometimes they helped each other. Moreover, weather conditions could aggravate it. While working in the snow is difficult due to cold and icy conditions, I encountered many pickers who complained about working in the summer heat. They said that apart from walking long distances with 100-150-pound sacks in the heat in the summer, the iron of the garbage containers got very hot, burned their hands, and the smell and gas of the garbage in the hot air made them feel sick to their stomachs. Also, waste can pose a serious risk of disease. Pickers, whose hands were cut off and exposed to chemicals, said that most of the time they could not be treated because they did not have social security, therefore they tried to recover by their own means.

They also stated that they are constantly suffering from financial difficulties due to low wages and the inability to negotiate. Most had large families and dependent parents, siblings, or children. When I asked if they wanted their children or siblings to do this job, they all said that they never let them pick waste. However, this contradicts some facts that I have observed in the field. First of all, there are many child workers in this job. Sometimes I've seen even 4-5-year-olds carrying big sacks and collecting garbage. Children cannot access school because they have to support their families financially, and they have to do this job where they were badly affected both physically and psychologically. Child labor is seen very seriously in waste work. Therefore, although parents do not want their children to pick waste, many also earn income through their children's labor.

Secondly, I realized that even though all the waste pickers talk about how hard and dirty this job is, they have no motivation to look for another job. There were several reasons for this. Some had already tried to find another job, but could not find one because of their ethnicity or lack of education. Others started waste picking

because they were unemployed after being fired. But I have come across many waste pickers who have never looked for another job before. They started this work through their families or relatives. When I asked them why they were not working in another job, they said they did not try it because they thought no one would hire them. Their precarious conditions influenced their own provisions of life and they internalized some of the stigmas imposed on them by society. The comment that surprised me the most came from a Kurdish picker from Bingöl. He considers himself ignorant because he is from the East and cannot go to school and says, "We, Kurds, are an uncivilized society. So why does someone hire us for desk jobs?" (Interview 8, see Appendix B). The ethnic discrimination causes him to internalize the racism he experiences and prevents him from thinking that another life is possible for him.

Furthermore, working self-employed without a boss gives them a "sense of freedom". The fact that entry-exit times were not controlled and they could work wherever they wanted created a sense of freedom for waste pickers. However, on the field, I observed that this is not quite true. They did not have a boss controlling them all the time, but most of them remained in warehouses, so they were dependent on their warehouse owners. This dependency was sometimes through debt and sometimes through kinship relations. Staying in the warehouse for free, pickers had to work hard both for their own livelihood and for the profit of the warehouse owner. It was not possible for the warehouse owner to follow them all the time while working, but the control of the trade of waste belongs to him. Therefore, what they understand by the sense of freedom is that they should not be interfered with while working. Also at this point, I share the observations that Millar (2018) made in her field research on a landfill in Brazil. Millar (2018) argues that for waste pickers,

precarity has become a form of living, and work spaces also become spaces for socializing and living. This situation causes the work of pickers to become a way of life. She argues that because they do not know any alternative but this way of life, they cannot think of the idea of quitting this job.

In order to understand the hyper-precarity that pushes waste pickers to do this job and affects their own life, it is necessary to examine the exploitation process that prevents them from getting out of this cycle. This is made possible by private companies and states controlling the informal sector. In this context, examining the relationship of the formal sector with the informal sector is important to understand the structural reasons for the hyper-precariousness of waste pickers.

4.2.2 Relationship between informal and formal sector

In recent studies in the literature, it has been argued that the informal and formal sectors are interdependent and intertwined. According to many scholars, although the informal economy is perceived as an unregulated and self-executing mechanism, it is not independent of the formal economy (Harding & Jenkins 1989; Meléndez et al. 2010). Government intervention constantly changes and defines the boundaries of the informal economy and ensures that it is intertwined with the formal economy (Vande Walle, 2008).

Martha Alter Chen (2005) explains how the informal sector is related to the formal. According to Chen, there is a continuum in economic relations. For example, even though a garment maker working as “self-employed” or sub-contracted seems to be producing in the informal sector, she sells her products to a formal company in the regulated market. Thus, economic relations of production connect the formal and informal sectors (p. 77). Chen also explains that many raw materials and finished

goods are produced in the informal sector and sold to intermediary firms and formal companies. Thus, capitalist firms that encourage informal production to reduce labor cost purchase products or services through subcontracting. The products are sometimes sold directly to formal enterprises, sometimes through intermediaries. Most intermediaries are informal. However, by establishing commercial relationships, informal and formal sectors are connected (p. 84). Finally, Chen explains how global value chains connect informal and formal. According to her, transnational firms buy the finished products of the people they informally produce through sub-contract work and sell them in the global market. Thus, an informally produced product is included in the global value chain (p. 85).

Regarding waste picking, although it is an informal sector job, it is highly related to the formal sector and the global value chain. As seen in the example of Modern Karton, manufacturers owe their profits in both national and global markets to the waste that is processed in the recycling company and becomes raw material. The fact that the waste can be a raw material depends on the collection and separation of the waste by the waste pickers through physical labor. Thus, the product that emerges as a result of the informal work of waste pickers, who work as cheap labor for manufacturers, turns into a commodity and is sold in the formal sector. As Dinler advocates, “Waste pickers are a constant source of recyclable waste for those formal companies” (2016, p. 226).

During my interview with an official from DÖNKASAN, one of Turkey's leading recycling companies and a subsidiary of corrugated cardboard manufacturer KARTONSAN, I got detailed information about how the waste process is integrated into the global market. The interviewee stated that corrugated cardboard and paper wastes are taken from warehouses, municipalities, and companies producing

cardboard. After they are recycled, sold to KARTONSAN or sometimes to other companies as raw materials. Since the company is legal and licensed, the interviewee claimed that the warehouses from which the cardboard was taken were also licensed, but this did not seem quite possible given that most warehouses were not licensed.

While explaining why the wastes are collected informally in Turkey, the interviewee stated that since there is no established system in Turkey, they depend on the informal sector:

Usually, no one collects waste that come out of the end user. The wastes left by the end user usually end up in the trash cans, in our case, they end up in the household waste bins. A mass of street collectors survives by constantly collecting them. The reason behind this is that the financial infrastructure of the waste collection system has not been established efficiently in Turkey. In developed countries where the waste system is also developed, we see that the financial infrastructure has been established to meet the costs of collection. The polluter pays principle operates there. This means that the packaging-producing company pays a certain amount of money to the municipalities for the collection of packaging waste. Since this system does not work properly and waste cannot be separated on-site in Turkey, the collection of domestic waste is possible thanks to waste pickers (Interview 9, see Appendix B).

As the representative of the recycling company has stated, waste work in Turkey cannot progress without informal economic relations of production. The work of waste pickers allows the production of raw materials and re-introducing them to the market as a final product. In my interview with the representative, it was also emphasized that Turkey is integrated into the international market by importing and exporting waste:

There is a need for raw material supply far above the amount of recycled waste in Turkey because, for example, in sectors such as home textiles, Turkey ranks first in Europe in terms of exports. Therefore, a significant part of the raw material required for production is met from imported waste. Most of the raw materials used in home textiles are obtained from recycled plastic. Since the recycling rates are still very low in Turkey's domestic market, it cannot meet the needs of manufacturers (Interview 9, see Appendix B).

The imported wastes are brought to the port cities of Turkey by the companies. Separation of waste is done informally. An interviewee who does waste picking in Ümraniye stated that imported waste is bought by the warehouse owner and sold to recycling factories after being sorted by waste pickers. Thus, the wastes used in many sectors such as textile, industry, and packaging production in Turkey are met both from the domestic market and from the international market. Transforming these wastes into raw materials is possible by intertwining informal and formal economic relations.

A warehouse owner I interviewed in Ataşehir stated that the separated waste is taken to the recycling factories in Ferhatpaşa and processed there and transferred to the production factories in Çorlu:

The state does not see what we do because we are unregistered. We collect the real waste. But then we take it to the factories, where they are recorded. The government thinks that the waste comes directly from the factories. If not us, who will these bring to the factories? (Interview 10, see Appendix B)

As the interviewee reported, since waste pickers work informally and are not registered, their connection with the formal sector is generally ignored by the state. I witnessed this situation in my interview with the officials from the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (İBB) Waste Management Department. Officials had the impression that the work done by pickers took up very little of the industry proportionally. However, the separation rates collected by waste pickers cannot be known due to informality. İBB wants all municipalities to record the waste they collect and take to the recycling factory. However, some recycling factories, where the municipality takes the waste, do not only recycle the waste of the municipality. Waste collected by pickers is also recycled in these factories. Therefore, although the

figures and information given by the factories seem to belong to the district municipalities, they also include the amount of waste collected by pickers.

Another dimension of the relationship between informal waste picking and the formal sector is the entry of international capital into the recycling sector in Turkey. The Turkish recycling industry is very profitable for many transnational companies. US-based packaging manufacturers such as International Paper are establishing both production and recycling facilities in Turkey. International Paper bought OLMUKSAN, owned by Sabancı, and entered the Turkish market^{xiv}.

Similarly, the UK-based company Mondi bought the company owned by International Paper and established both packaging production and recycling facilities in Turkey^{xv}. The Switzerland-based ITC company has been recycling in the Turkish market for years and signing waste collection agreements with municipalities. In addition, not only transnational companies but also companies such as Sabancı and Albayrak, which operate in many sectors in Turkey, establish recycling facilities and sign agreements with municipalities to collect and recycle garbage.

Transnational companies such as WH International, which won tenders from the municipality to collect textile wastes and put textile bins on the streets, do not recycle them. They repackage and sell the textile products thrown by households in the European market, as I learned from waste pickers that I interviewed in two separate field studies in Yeşilköy and Ataşehir. The interviewee in Yeşilköy described the process as follows:

^{xiv} <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/international-paper-completes-the-sale-of-its-corrugated-packaging-business-in-turkey-301301815.html>

^{xv}

<https://www.mondigroup.com.tr/tr/hakk%C4%B1m%C4%B1zda/tarih%C3%A7e/#:~:text=ve%20faal%20iyete%20ge%C3%A7ti.,1984,olarak%20de%C4%9Fi%C5%9F>

In the past, we used to take the clothes that were thrown away from the garbage, and we used to wear them ourselves when we did not have money to buy clothes for our children. But now the municipality gave them to a company through a tender. This company just put new bins on the streets, you can't put your hand in them because your hand is jammed. I was wondering what they are doing with these clothes. A friend of mine was working at this job. He also took me to work. They take the clothes to a big warehouse and separate them according to their types. Then they sell to Europe. So what you throw away as garbage does not go to the needy, it is sold in Europe (Interview 11, see Appendix B).

The inclusion of waste in the global value chain can be seen through another example. A waste picker whom I interviewed in Dolapdere during my fieldwork said that some of the collected plastic waste is sold to spinning factories after being recycled and that plastic granules are turned into yarn and sold in foreign markets. He even mentioned that a Chinese company opened a plastics factory in Aksaray. In my later research, I learned that many international companies opened plastic, textile, or automotive factories in Turkey. Most of the raw material needs of these factories are met from the collected wastes, and after the wastes are transformed into raw materials, they are turned into products in the factories and put on the market both in Turkey and abroad. For example, according to a report in 2021, a Chinese-based company established a yarn factory in Niğde in partnership with a Turkish company^{xvi}. This yarn factory also produces mostly using plastic raw materials. As can be seen, the inclusion of waste in the global value chain can be achieved not only by the recycling sector but also by meeting the raw materials of production in different sectors such as textiles from waste. Thus, the waste collected by the waste pickers can be processed by a Chinese company in Turkey and sold abroad.

It is not only the relations of production that connect the informal and formal sectors, or the integration of the recycling sector in Turkey with the global market.

^{xvi} <https://aksarayhaberci.com/haber/cinli-firma-nigdede-fabrika-kuruyor-29433.html>

Pricing also reveals the relationship between the formal and the informal. During my fieldwork, I asked how the prices were determined in the interviews I had with both the warehousemen and the waste workers. Everyone stated that there is an international exchange of waste prices and that the prices are indexed to dollars. Exchanges such as the London Metal Exchange set the prices of metal waste, while the increase in the dollar increased the prices of petroleum products. Since the packaging wastes were imported, their prices were also increasing with the rise in the dollar. However, I realized that the international market is not the only thing that determines the prices. At the time I was doing my field research, waste prices had fallen by half, even though the dollar had risen. When I asked why, several factors turned out to be at play.

The warehousemen I visited in Dolapdere, Tarlabası, and Yenisahra attributed the decrease in waste prices, inversely proportional to the dollar rate, to the war between Ukraine and Russia: "Some companies brought the waste from the buildings destroyed due to the war in Ukraine to Turkey. Waste is abundant in the market right now. Prices fell because of this" (Interview 12, see Appendix B). An official at Paper Recycling Industrialists Association (AGED) confirmed this, adding that the drop in prices is closely related to global regulations and policy. In my interview with the official at AGED, I learned about the effect of the quota imposed by China on plastic waste imports in 2017 on waste prices. China made some environmental regulations on importing plastic waste in 2017. These regulations have caused China, in particular, which imports most of the EU's waste, to reduce its import rates (Tran, Goto & Matsuda, 2021). The EU, whose wastes remained in their hands, turned to other markets. Turkey is one of these markets. Due to the increase in the amount of imported waste entering Turkey, the waste supply has increased and prices have

decreased. This decrease in prices worked against the waste pickers and they had to sell the waste cheaper. However, for recycling companies and manufacturers, the decrease in prices meant cheap raw material supply and they made a lot of profit. Nevertheless, after 2017, since the borders were closed during the pandemic period, waste imports were interrupted and prices suddenly increased. This has affected production in the industry, but according to my observations from my work in the field, it has been a very lucrative period for waste pickers.

The interviewees stated that the price of waste increased 3-4 times during the pandemic, between 2020 - 2022. After the pandemic, with the implementation of the Green Deal signed with the EU, the quota of waste imports was reduced from 80% to 50%. The Green Deal is an agreement that stipulates reducing carbon emissions and that the circular economy should operate in an environmentally friendly manner. With this agreement, Türkiye has also committed to increasing waste recycling. Therefore, the state has reduced the quota in order to reduce the amount of waste coming from the EU and to supply its raw material needs from the domestic market. In my interview with the official from AGED, he declared that the quota on waste imports has resulted in very bad consequences for industrialists since the production in the industry is mostly carried out with raw materials obtained from imported wastes. As a result, the capitalists began to have difficulties in the supply of raw materials, and due to the shortages of raw materials, their expenditures increased. Inflation and rising energy prices were other factors that increased costs and expenditures. In this case, while waste prices were expected to increase, on the contrary, they decreased.

When I researched the reason for this, I learned that waste prices depend not only on the international market, and global political and financial crises but also the

monopoly in the Turkish waste market. In my interview with the official at DÖNKASAN, he said that several “big players” set the prices:

There are several big players in this sector. Actually, the price depends a little bit on them... There are too many waste collection and sorting facilities. When there are many facilities, the stock areas of the warehouses become very small. When the stock area of the warehouses shrinks, this company has to sell its waste within a week at the most. Therefore, as soon as a big player sees a little swelling in the market, they lower their prices. In this way, you can repress prices as you wish by observing a large number of manufacturers of the market in their warehouse areas, if you are a big player (Interview 9, see Appendix B).

This monopoly in the recycling sector causes large manufacturers to reduce prices in order to reduce their costs. I had a chance to confirm it. When I asked all the waste pickers and warehousemen I talked to how the prices were determined, everyone, without exception, said that the manufacturers determine it and they had to sell waste at whatever price they said. When I asked if they had a chance to negotiate, they replied that such a thing is not possible. That is, the determination of prices depends on several factors. International waste exchanges, political and economic crises, and monopolized producer companies in the Turkish domestic market are the factors that determine the prices. Changes in prices directly affect waste pickers.

To summarize, the informal economy and the formal economy are interdependent and intertwined. Waste pickers are exploited by both transnational and national capital as cheap labor and their labor is used to transform waste into raw materials. With the inclusion of waste in the global value chain, companies make huge profits. However, waste pickers continue to work for very low wages and under dangerous conditions, despite doing all the hard work. This causes them to be stuck in hyper-precarious conditions. The fact that the state legally allows the import and export of waste and the establishment of recycling facilities by foreign companies increases labor exploitation. State knowingly ignores the role of waste pickers in

recycling, so that cheap labor can continue to be provided for capital. It also means that if the state accepts the role of waste pickers, it should formalize them. This causes the state to take on many responsibilities such as providing social insurance. State and municipal officials do not want to meet this responsibility. As a result, they are in persistent denial when I asked them what the waste pickers' role is in the recycling system.

Another factor that connects the informal sector and the formal sector are the prices. Prices change in accordance with the international stock market, international political and economic crises, formal regulations, or when formal companies monopolize and suppress prices. Changes in prices directly affect the income of waste pickers working in the informal sector. Waste pickers, who already earn very little, continue to live in poverty as private companies suppress prices or due to the market conditions. So, the effect of the formal sector on the informal is one of the structural reasons why waste pickers cannot escape the hyper-precarity trap. The effect of the formal sector on the informal is possible with the cooperation of the state and capital. In other words, in order to understand the reasons for hyper-precarity and the inability to get out of hyper-precarious conditions, it is necessary to talk about the cooperation of the state and capital.

4.3 The cooperation of state and capital

The expansion of the informal sector and the increase in the number of people engaged in waste picking cannot be understood only with the dynamics of the market. Processes such as the flexibility of employment conditions and the privatization of the means of production are a process in which the state actively makes new regulations in favor of the capital and makes the market precarious,

rather than a situation where the state is passively left behind (Uyanık, 2008, pp. 215-219; Gür, 2019, p. 49). The state is the actor that realizes this process with various regulations, structural adjustment programs, or privatizations. As Dinler argues, "Many market activities are regulated by the state itself: legal definition of property, licensing, and enforcement of sectoral laws and competition laws, setting the terms and conditions of trading practices, defining technical standards for workplaces... etc." (2016, p.121). The state can cause the market to expand or tighten through its policies and regulations (Harriss-White, 2011). These practices in the formal sector directly affect the informal sector and therefore waste pickers.

The state directly intervenes in waste management system by establishing an infrastructure, building storage and incineration facilities, determining which waste is recycled, allocating recycle licenses, authorizing companies for waste management, drafting and enforcing legal regulations, and determining conditions and terms of waste trade (Dinler, 2016, p. 126). Therefore, many rules that directly affect the informal sector and waste pickers are set by the state and applied. In addition, practices such as privatizations and custom regulations implemented by the state to realize integration with the global market are formed as a result of the state's direct intervention in the sector in favor of the capital.

In the previous chapter, some of the regulations made by the government in the recycling industry are discussed. However, in order to understand the cooperation between state and capital, it would be useful to show that neoliberal policies implemented within the scope of the EU harmonization process and integration with global markets cause the informal sector to expand and the conditions of waste pickers to become more precarious.

After the 1980s, Turkey moved from the import substitution industrialization model to the trade liberalization model with a series of neoliberal policies. Although the aim is to promote export and various government credits are also allocated to encourage export, import items have been liberalized to enter the national market (Boratav, 2005). Nonetheless, export rates did not increase as desired, the government incentives applied were not enough to cope with imported goods and so the unemployment rate increased (Dinler, 2016, p. 32). In addition, employment conditions have been made flexible by state regulations to integrate into global supply chains and cope with competitiveness in the global market. Regulations such as the Labor Law of 2003 legalized part-time and temporary work, and informal work conditions such as subcontract work and home-based work were also supported by the state in this period. Along with the investment of multinational companies in Turkey and the privatization of some state-owned sectors, multinational companies also preferred informal business forms such as subcontracting to take advantage of cheap labor opportunities (Roberts, 1989; Tokman, 1991).

Moreover, the free trade agreements signed during the EU harmonization process and the structural reforms encouraged by the IMF and the World Bank also caused the market in Turkey to be integrated into the global market through the intervention of the state (Dinler, 2016, p. 34). For example, the privatization of state-owned enterprises such as aluminum factories in the 2000s caused many people working in this sector to be unemployed and to work in the informal sector (Yücesan-Özdemir & Özdemir, 2008, p. 147). Similarly, with the agricultural reform programs implemented, some of the agricultural factories were privatized, the production of some agricultural products such as tobacco was limited, the importation of agricultural products was liberalized, and multinational companies

were allowed to engage in contract farming in Turkey. All these have led to dispossession in agriculture and an increase in unemployment. Many unemployed people migrated to big cities and started to work in informal jobs such as waste picking (Dinler, 2016, p. 34; Özüğurlu, 2011).

Since the mid-1990s, EU directives, which determine the conditions and terms of waste trade, have been adopted within the scope of waste management. Waste export and import from the EU started. The Law on Foreign Investment was implemented in 2003, allowing foreign capital to invest in Turkey, and many foreign recycling companies have started to open facilities in Turkey since then. Together with the By-Law on Packaging and Packaging Waste Control implemented in 2004, private companies were allowed to operate waste management, waste collecting, and recycling services by gaining tenders from municipalities. This law also authorized ÇEVKO, which was formed by many private companies, to implement the regulations of waste management. In 2005, the state-owned enterprise, a paper manufacturer, SEKA was privatized and the import of cellulose products was liberalized. As a result of the privatization of SEKA, which provides price stabilization, and the entry of new investors into the waste management sector, a few monopolized companies have had the opportunity to put pressure on paper prices (Dinler, 2016). The state received many funds for waste management projects from the World Bank and the EU (Dinler, 2016, p. 127; Başkavak, 2013). These funds accelerated the implementation of privatization and liberalization^{xvii}.

All these regulations and policies of the state have continued over the years, and waste management has been rearranged for the benefit of capital with the laws implemented, incentives given to recycling companies, privatizations, and trade

^{xvii} <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/turkey/brief/towards-a-greener-and-more-resilient-turkiye>

liberalization. These regulations not only changed the border between formal and informal constantly, but also the privatizations and laws caused the dispossession of the villagers, the unemployment of many people, and the flexibility of employment. Therefore, many people who could not find the opportunity to work in formal employment started to work in the informal sector under precarious conditions. The informal sector has expanded and waste picking has become a profession for many people.

In order to better understand the effects of state interventions, it is necessary to mention a few examples. In 2005, Ankara Metropolitan Municipality signed an agreement with the Switzerland-based ITC company and transferred all waste collection and recycling services to this company. In the same year, Çankaya Municipality signed an agreement with SIMAT. As a result of these agreements, the waste from rubbish bins has become the property of these companies. In order for the companies to collect the waste completely, the waste pickers were removed from the street by the force of the municipality officials and the police, fines were given to them and the warehouses were closed. The process was summarized as follows in an interview I made with a former warehouse owner who lived through this process in Ankara in 2005 and took an active role in the resistance process, which will be examined in detail in the last section:

I had a warehouse in Macunköy at that time. Melih Gökçek, Mayor of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality, agreed with a company. They tried to prevent us from doing this work because that company would take the garbage. The police came to close the warehouses. Police detained some friends of mine. They beat us. But we didn't want to give away our waste either. They gave us a lot of trouble (Interview 13, see Appendix B).

State interventions in 2005 subsequently led to mobilization and resistance. This will be explored in the final section. However, the privatization policies and interventions

of the state were not limited to those in 2005. Over the years, various municipalities have raided warehouses, and detained pickers' pushcarts or fined them to exclude waste pickers from streets. A waste picker I interviewed in Tarlabaşı reported that Beyoğlu Municipality did not allow them to collect the garbage in Taksim because it had an agreement with the Tarhan company, and when they went to collect garbage, the municipality officials confiscated their cars and took their waste. Similarly, another interviewee who did waste picking in Kağıthane stated that the municipality made an agreement with Albayrak company and harassed them while collecting garbage for years:

The municipality agreed with Albayrak. They said if you want to continue collecting garbage, sell your garbage to them. They said that if we do not sell our garbage to Albayrak, they will not let us collect this garbage. They came and took our waste. But, Albayrak bought the garbage below the market price from us. We gave our waste to other private companies for a higher price. If they're going to buy our waste cheap, why would we give it to them?
(Interview 14, see Appendix B)

As the interviewee reported, the municipality tried to prevent the pickers, both legally and physically, but when they could not prevent pickers, they pressured the waste pickers, which they consider them a cheap labor source, to sell the waste they collected to the contracted company.

During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to interview many waste pickers who talked about the pressure that municipalities put on waste pickers to sell waste to certain companies. Many interviewees said that the municipality tried to prevent them first, and when they couldn't, they wanted waste pickers to sell their waste to the companies they had a contract with. An interviewee who has a warehouse in Yenisahra said:

This recycling business brings billions of dollars to this country. Let's say big companies, big guys, went after this business. Many tried to take this job out of the hands of poor people. They still work. Municipalities, big companies,

and big businessmen wanted to take over the recycling system completely... I mean, for example, when the raw material of this bottle is obtained from the soil, it takes 1 year or 2 years to become a bottle, and with a lot of expense. But when this is recycled, bottles can be produced in 1 month and at very little expense. So, this recycling business is very profitable in production. But of course, they don't leave it to us. They put pressure on us. We had to sell the waste to the company agreed with the municipality (Interview 10, see Appendix B).

As the interviewee stated, the profit of the recycling industry is quite appetizing for capitalists. On one hand, the waste pickers doing the sorting and collection of waste is very useful in terms of reducing the cost, on the other hand, for capital, the waste pickers' access to the garbage should have a limit. Capitalists who want all the revenue from recycling for their own account, want to restrict or completely prevent waste pickers from accessing the trash. This is made possible by the direct intervention of the state. The state prevents waste pickers from accessing the trash, sometimes by inflicting fines, sometimes by confiscating the pushcart, and sometimes by violence. If somehow it cannot prevent their access to garbage, the state forces the pickers to sell the waste they collect to the companies at a cheaper price so that the private companies with which they contract can make more profit.

The municipality did not prevent waste pickers by simply confiscating pushcarts, raiding warehouses, or imposing fines. The companies that the municipality agrees with have the right to directly collect the waste from the chain markets and sites. If chain markets or site management do not deliver their waste to the company, the municipality fines them. This practice had a great impact on pickers, who used to collect waste directly from markets or sites such as Migros and CarrefourSA. A waste picker I interviewed in Kadıköy described the situation as follows:

In the past, we could always take it from these markets. Employees used to come and give us the cartons, but now the municipality's company is taking

them. I asked employees of this market several times, they said they can't give it to me, because they would be fined by the municipality (Interview 15, see Appendix B).

In my interview with the authorities from IBB, I asked about both the functioning of the recycling system and their approach to waste pickers. The official explained that they have authorized companies through tenders for the construction of recycling and incineration plants. The biomethanization plant was established by a company through these tenders. They also stated that within the scope of waste upcycling, funds were received from the EU and projects were carried out in various district municipalities. They also expressed their thoughts on waste pickers as follows:

Who owns the waste? It is the municipality. They take the job of the municipality. The municipality normally does not collect taxes on waste, there is no waste management tax. We have to bear the cost of this ourselves. We cover this cost by selling the packaging waste so that we generate an income. There should be a reward for the service of the municipality. The company, which won the tender to collect waste, does not want to enter for fewer goods. It should be worth the cost of staff and fuel. Pickers collect and sell the waste belonging to the municipality, making an unfair profit. For example, if the company has agreed to collect two thousand tons, it can collect only a thousand tons because of these street collectors. It has to be worth collecting. Therefore, even if the collector will take the waste, he can sell it to the company to which the municipality agreed. The municipality normally has the right to fine and sue street collectors. Some companies sell their waste to the municipality, like MİGROS, but not everyone does. District municipalities also tolerate street collectors because they do not have enough capacity to collect all the waste (Interview 16, see Appendix B).

As seen in the example in this interview, municipalities see waste as their property, as they are legally obliged to collect waste. By transferring the responsibility of waste collection to private companies, they both receive money from private companies and use this money for budget expenditures, and private companies earn profit per waste they collect. For companies to benefit from waste, waste pickers should not have a place in this sector, according to municipal officials. Thus, I have seen why state or public officials persistently cooperate with capital and try to

prevent waste pickers. When municipalities authorize companies to collect and recycle garbage for a fee, they also create a profit for themselves. I also learned that there are municipal recycling companies and sometimes they take the tenders, so the profit goes directly to the municipality. This situation causes a win-win situation for municipalities and private companies. Waste pickers, on the other hand, are not desired to be partners of this profit.

The Zero Waste project, The Paris Agreement and the Green Deal agreement show us the cooperation of the state with the capital. The president of the Recycling Workers Association explained how it is realized:

The Paris Agreement actually imposes very heavy obligations on Turkey. These are the obligations that turned upside-down the entire market. For example, when we look at the liabilities, the most striking point is; The amount that needs to be spent in Turkey until 2030 in order to fulfill the obligations of this agreement is 136 billion dollars. For Turkey to realize this, it is not possible with its own internal dynamics. But on the other hand, they offer other solutions. More than 250 banks, which own three-quarters of the entire capital, have started to give serious loans to the recycling sector, and Turkey will benefit most from these loans. Likewise, the banking system in Turkey has restructured its loans. İş Bank has decided not to give loans to facilities that produce using fossil fuels. At the same time, banks in Turkey such as the Industrial Development Bank of Turkey and KuveytTurk allocated billions of dollars of loans for facilities that produce using renewable energy.

The role Europe has set for Turkey with these agreements is to turn Turkey into Europe's garbage dump... Especially after some countries such as India and Vietnam stopped buying garbage, the problem of where they stored waste arose in Europe. Turkey is the most suitable country for this. All investments were built on this necessity. Related to this, the projects to establish Organized Industrial Zones were implemented. We know that they will be established in Balıkesir and Sakarya. They will try to run this business through larger, more complicated plants for the sorting of garbage from Europe... Despite this, the waste that comes out of the houses is still very valuable because consumption is growing so disproportionately that the need for raw materials cannot be met. That's why they put even more pressure to meet the waste from the domestic market (Interview 17, see Appendix B).

The interviews I had with the officials from AGED and DÖNKASAN confirmed the information I obtained from the meeting with the head of the Recycling Workers

Association. They stated that they talked to the ministry many times and insisted that systems such as the deposit system should be implemented in Turkey. Thus, the plastic waste that will be received directly from the citizens with the deposit system will be recycled by the companies. This means an increase in recycling and profit rate. In other words, the Green Deal has created a source of funds for the state and a new investment and trade opportunity for companies. Although the goal of the deal seems to be to increase recycling, the main purpose is to ensure that both the state and companies make more profit. While they profit, waste pickers are more doomed to poverty.

The effects of the Zero Waste Policy led to the closure of many warehouses by police raids in KADOSAN in 2021, the detention of a few waste pickers, and the confiscation of the waste and pushcarts in the warehouses. In 2022, when I was doing my field research, the warehouse raids by the police and the municipal officials and the police harassment against the waste pickers continued. The state's privatization of the waste management and recycling sector for the benefit of the capital and legal regulations has further deepened the precarious living and working conditions of waste pickers. After their basic livelihood was taken away, waste pickers had to fight for survival. The pickers, who are criminalized by the state, were prevented from collecting garbage both legally and physically. This has led to the legal exclusion of the pickers, who are already socially and economically excluded, and the precarity created by their socio-legal status combined with the precarity created by the working conditions and as a result, it becomes hyper-precarity. Waste pickers who wanted to live with dignity as equal citizens and regain their livelihood began to organize. However, before examining the dynamics of their organization, I

would like to discuss their hyper-precarity in more detail, based on my interviews with waste pickers of various gender and ethnic backgrounds in the field.

4.4 Hyper-precarity of waste pickers

In this section, the hyper-precarious working and living conditions of waste pickers will be exemplified by the findings I have obtained in my field research. In doing so, because the hyper-precariousness is experienced in different dimensions by different socio-cultural and gender groups, waste pickers will be divided into groups and the precarious experiences of each group will be explained separately. While many experiences associate pickers from different socio-cultural backgrounds, factors such as ethnicity, gender, and immigration status deepen the hyper-precarity of some groups.

4.4.1 The relationship between waste pickers and warehouse owners

Warehouse owners provide the link between the formal and informal sectors, as they act as an intermediary. Pickers cannot sell the waste directly to recycling companies because it is necessary to store the waste and transport it in large quantities. The warehouse owner steps in and sells the goods to factories by putting a profit on it. Therefore, warehouse owners are hierarchically above waste pickers in waste work and make money off of their physical labor.

There are different types of warehouses. Some of them are very small and only family members work there. Therefore, the warehouse owner both collects and separates waste and puts in physical effort. However, generally, warehouses are places where several waste pickers are employed or a few waste pickers regularly come and leave their waste. The income of the owner increases depending on the size

of the warehouse and the number of people working inside, and owners who earn a lot of money do not collect or sort waste again. Warehouse owners do not pay taxes or provide insurance for waste pickers since they are not licensed legally. The basic expenses of owners are fuel expenses required for transporting waste to recycling companies, rent paid for the land of the warehouse, and sometimes electricity and water bills. Thus, owners can earn a lot of profit by employing people with very few expenses.

In this context, it is necessary to distinguish between waste pickers collecting waste on the streets and warehouse owners. Since this study focuses more on waste pickers collecting waste on the streets, owners' conditions have not been emphasized much. However, it is necessary to briefly mention the economic and social relationships between waste pickers and owners to describe the hyper-precarious conditions of waste pickers.

Warehouse owners are who have done waste picking in the past and then found some capital to rent a warehouse. The size of the warehouses and the number of employees determine whether they continue waste picking or not. In this context, not every one of them has equal economic conditions. However, those who own large warehouses and have more than 20 employees are becoming wealthier. Since they usually work with their relatives, when waste pickers start this job, pickers bring waste to their relative's warehouses. Kinship and feudal relations cause waste pickers to establish not only an economic but also a social relationship with warehouse owners. Although waste pickers say that they can bring waste to any warehouse they want and no one interferes with them, I observe that it is not quite true. In theory, if the warehouse owner pays less to waste pickers, they have the opportunity to work for another warehouse owner who pays more but in reality, warehouses are not just a

workplace. Most waste pickers live in warehouses. Those who stay in warehouses do not pay electricity, water bills, or rent. All expenses belong to the owners. Therefore, waste pickers who have nowhere else to go and cannot afford rent are dependent on them.

Social relationships can turn into both exploitation and solidarity tools. For example, having the opportunity to find a job thanks to their relative warehouse owner, having the doctor and medicine expenses covered by the owners when sick, or being able to ask for debt and advances from them when in need of money, not only provides solidarity between waste pickers and them but is also a reason for pickers to continue this job. A waste picker from Urfa, whom I interviewed during my field research in Göztepe emphasized his relationship with the warehouse owner when explaining why he does waste picking:

Even if I find another job now, I can't work. I'm comfortable here. For example, if I need money, I can ask the boss for debt directly, but no employer in another sector will lend me money. Also, we all know each other here. We are all relatives. When we have a problem, we support each other (Interview 6, see Appendix B).

Although debt is an example of solidarity between waste pickers and owners, it can also turn into an exploitative relationship. Waste pickers who have a debt to the warehouse owners cannot work for another owner even if they are not satisfied with the one they are working for because they have to pay off their debt.

In summary, while some warehouse owners continue to do waste work, some have become small bourgeoisie and have become rich through waste pickers' labor. Kinship ties and social relationships between waste pickers and warehouse owners are two-dimensional, providing the necessary solidarity for waste pickers to live while sometimes leading to further exploitation of waste pickers' labor.

Demonstrating this hierarchical relationship in order to understand the working

conditions of waste pickers is also important in terms of shedding light on relations of exploitation.

4.4.2 Turkish waste pickers

The number of people coming from Aksaray to Ankara in the 1970s to collect scrap metal seasonally increased in the 1980s due to the adoption of neoliberal policies by the state. Those who started doing this work as a profession in the 1970s and 1980s from Aksaray, Niğde, and Nevşehir, generally realized the profitability in the scrap sector and directed their families and relatives to this business, taking advantage of being the first to enter this sector and opening many recycling companies in Turkey. Those who started in the 1970s and 1980s were mainly engaged in the recycling of metal waste, with Aksaray, Nevşehir, and Niğde being known as the most involved in the metal sector. Therefore, they generally became very wealthy. Apart from the people from Aksaray, people who have been dispossessed or impoverished from all over Turkey also do this job. During my field research, I witnessed waste pickers from different cities such as Artvin, Adana, Konya, Zonguldak, and Afyon. I also met a few waste pickers from Tokat. However, because they are amongst the pioneers in the recycling sector and dominant in this sector, this section will only discuss waste pickers from Aksaray.

Aksaraylı (people coming from Aksaray) pickers generally work intensively in areas such as Sultangazi, Dolapdere, Küçükpazar, and Beşiktaş. Being one of the oldest in the sector, they have established their dominance in these areas and expressed discomfort with other waste pickers working in these areas besides themselves. Especially in my fieldwork in Küçükpazar, some stated that they do not allow any "foreigners" into certain areas.

Although *Aksaraylı* waste pickers struggle with precarious conditions such as poverty and lack of education, they are in a more advantageous position compared to other waste picker groups mentioned below. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, being one of the oldest in this sector, they have established their dominance in many regions, become wealthy, and established recycling factories. Although those still working in waste picking are still disadvantaged compared to factory owners, Aksaray locals are not subjected to social and ethnic discrimination by the government and society, unlike Kurdish or Roma waste pickers. This means that they can collect waste in any area without experiencing exclusion. Additionally, although they may face problems accessing education and healthcare services, they do not face any ethnic discrimination in public institutions due to being Turkish.

Another issue where *Aksaraylı* waste pickers are less disadvantaged compared to other waste pickers is their relationship with the government and municipalities. Although they claim that their pushcarts were seized by the police, like other waste pickers, I learned that most of the time, the police or municipal officials who came to raid the warehouses did not close the warehouses of the Aksaray people or confiscated the goods in the warehouses. According to the experiences of the interviewees, when they find out that they are from Aksaray, the police usually leave them alone. Thus, it can be said that the most advantageous group among waste pickers is the people of Aksaray.

4.4.3 Kurdish waste pickers

The Kurds' starting waste picking began with the migration of people who were evacuated from their villages and forcibly displaced to big cities in the 1990s. The migrants faced ethnic discrimination, could not enter formal employment and lacked

educational opportunities (Özgen, 2001; 2006). Although the state stopped emptying villages in the period after the 1990s, the conflicts between the state and the PKK have prevented small farmers from farming and animal husbandry in the villages for years. Additionally, the neoliberal policies implemented by the state have led to the industrialization of agricultural production, the importation of agricultural products, the selling of small farmers' fields who cannot compete with imported goods, the cutting of state support given to farmers, and the cessation of farming and animal husbandry by villagers due to expenses such as animal feed or diesel fuel. Unemployed villagers continued to migrate to cities. Due to being Kurdish in the cities, they faced ethnic discrimination and could not enter formal employment (Lordoğlu & Aslan, 2012). Kurds who migrated to cities, who were not treated as equal citizens, who were discriminated against ethnically, and who could not benefit from public services, had to work in the informal sector.

For many Kurds, waste picking is a means of making a living without experiencing ethnic discrimination. The close kinship relations among Kurds have enabled them to work together in waste work. Thus, waste work has started to be done by many Kurds, especially from Diyarbakır, Siverek/Urfa. Kinship relations have an important place in coping with hyper-precarious conditions. Those who do this work with their relatives have the opportunity to be less affected by poverty. For example, all the warehouse owners I interviewed during fieldwork started waste picking and then accumulated capital by borrowing from their relatives. Those who had capital rented a warehouse and started working with their relatives, becoming a kind of "shop owner." Those who could not find capital or save money to open a warehouse continued to work in waste work. However, since they usually work in warehouses belonging to their relatives, they may ask for help from the warehouse

owner when they have any problems or need to borrow money. In addition, warehouses have become a "home" for many waste pickers.

Kurds and waste work are intertwined. During my field research, I had the chance to observe that the Kurds were the community that did the most waste-picking in Istanbul. The reason for this is not only the wide-scale practice of this work through family ties. Three waste pickers I spoke with in Yenisahra expressed that forced displacement or dispossession has caused many people to migrate to cities and become unskilled laborers. Forced displaced waste pickers stated his experiences as follows:

We came in the 1990s, then my father started this job. Our village was burned down by the soldiers, and our animals died. People died. Some of our relatives also died. We had to leave our village. Who wants to leave their land and come to a city where they do not know? We had relatives in Istanbul, so we came to them first. My father had to start this job. We work in the dirt, carrying loads of 100-150 kilograms on our backs for at least 12 hours a day... We work to survive, if we don't do this job, we have no other job (Interview 5, see Appendix B).

The waste picker who could not cope with imported products due to privatizations and free trade agreements and was engaged in animal husbandry before starting waste-picking explained his experiences:

My family is in the village. I send them money. Actually, we were also engaged in animal husbandry, but we couldn't afford the feed prices. We also sell meat cheaply. When you buy meat in Istanbul, it is expensive for you, but we sell it cheaply. Imported meats come from abroad, and since they are sold cheaply, we have to lower our prices when selling. We saw that this wouldn't work, so we sold our animals. I came to Istanbul and started collecting waste with my relatives here (Interview 18, see Appendix B).

Kurds who have become impoverished due to dispossession and forced displacement often cannot break out of the cycle of poverty even when doing waste picking. Many waste pickers I spoke with said that they work for very little pay and "work on an

empty stomach," and that they would have difficulty meet their needs if they do not have to do this job.

They have also pointed out that not being able to access education has pushed them to work under insecure and difficult conditions. A waste picker I interviewed in Ataşehir talked about the difficulties caused by the lack of access to education:

Our provinces have been neglected by the state. For example, a school in a village in Siverek in Şanlıurfa is not the same as a school here. The teachers there are newly appointed. A 22-year-old child becomes a teacher there. They send them there as a teacher when they are still in the learning stage. They go there and teach for 7-8 years, develop themselves, and then come and teach children in the West, which is a disadvantage for people in the East. We are already starting our lives 1-0 behind. That's why they don't make us love school. Even in this period of the information age, 50% of our people are illiterate. So, the reason we don't value our schools is that people really cannot read or do not have opportunities or financial resources. The child goes to school, and the whole school is a ruin. How can that child love school and study? But you go to a school here and see that the school is like a paradise. So, that child does not want to study and comes here to collect waste. Also, we cannot speak our own language. When the child starts school, he does not speak Turkish. He only speaks Kurdish. The teacher gets angry and sometimes beats him because he speaks Kurdish. He does not understand the lessons. Then he does not study. There is also poverty. Families are already poor, so they do not send their children to school to avoid school expenses. If you do not study, you cannot find a decent job. For example, I have an elementary school diploma. Who will hire me? (Interview 10, see Appendix B)

The fact that Kurds cannot benefit from public services such as education is related both to the fact that they are prevented from receiving education in their mother tongue as a result of the Turkification project that has been implemented since the foundation of the Republic of Turkey and that the state does not invest enough in the education system. Deprived of the opportunity to receive qualified education, the Kurds turn into an unskilled workforce and become socially and economically precarious.

One reason why Kurds face difficulty in entering formal employment is ethnic discrimination. A waste picker I interviewed in Yenisahra described his experience:

When I came here from Diyarbakır, my Turkish was not this good. I spoke with an accent. I applied for many jobs to be a waiter, but they didn't want me when they realized I was Kurdish from my accent (Interview 19, see Appendix B).

Kurdishness not only prevents them from finding formal employment but also leads to discrimination in society. Same waste picker I spoke to in Ataşehir told me that one day while they were collecting waste on the street, he and his Kurdish-speaking friends were told by someone passing by, “This is Turkey, you cannot speak Kurdish here” (Interview 19, see Appendix B). Ethnic discrimination prevents waste pickers from finding work in the formal sector as well as from existing in society. In addition, a few waste pickers have expressed that they are unwanted by the residents of the neighborhoods where they work because they are considered thieves or criminals due to their ethnicity. Moreover, a waste picker I interviewed in Ümraniye stated that people grimace when they pass by them, look at them disgustingly, and sometimes change their path out of fear when they see them. Waste picking is a dirty job. When this work is associated with being Kurdish, some residents stigmatize the Kurds as thieves or dirty because they scavenge in the garbage. They identify Kurdishness with waste picking and reflect their racist and discriminatory attitudes towards Kurdish waste pickers. In my field research conducted in different districts of Istanbul, many interviewees stated that they were not wanted by the residents of the neighborhood, they complained to the municipal police, and they were regarded as potential criminals because they were Kurds. The ethnic discrimination that the Kurds are exposed to causes social exclusion and this situation feeds the precarity.

This attitude is adopted not only by citizens but also by public officials. A waste-picker in Tarlabası described the attitude of a police officer and a municipal officer as follows:

They come to raid our warehouse. They say that they're looking for drugs and stolen goods. They see us as thieves or drug dealers. They turn everything upside down, but can't find anything because there is nothing. We collect garbage with our own labor and sweat. We don't steal, we don't sell drugs (Interview 20, see Appendix B).

A similar example was also given by a warehouse owner in Ataşehir who said that the police raided his warehouse to find the "criminals", checked the criminal records of all his employees, and left when they found that no one had a criminal record. This ethnic discrimination against Kurds leads to them being stigmatized as criminals.

Ethnic discrimination and economic competition also lead to various tensions between Kurds and other waste pickers. The tension between Kurds, Roma, and Turkish collectors results in Kurds not being seen as acceptable citizens or being labeled as terrorists. However, ethnic discrimination has also merged with the struggle for resources. Waste work is piecework, so those who collect a lot of waste earn more. An increase in the number of people collecting waste in the same area reduces the amount of waste collected per person. Therefore, Turks and Roma who collect waste in the same area are hostile towards Kurds due to the combination of competition and ethnic discrimination. The most striking example of this is the lynching attempt in Yenisahra in June 2022. The lynching attempt lasted for four days and will be explained in detail in the "Refugee Waste Pickers" section. Although the main reason for the lynching attempt was hostility towards migrants, as the wave of lynching grew, it turned into racism towards Kurds. Kurdish warehouses were raided and some Kurdish waste pickers were stabbed. Ethnic discrimination and competition for economic resources also affect the attitudes of Kurds towards Roma,

Turks, and refugees. Some Kurdish waste pickers have said that they do not want Afghans and Syrians to do waste work because they earn less because of them, while others have claimed that Roma people are thieves, dirty, and dishonest.

While Kurdish waste pickers are condemned to poverty through forced displacement or dispossession, they are not seen as equal citizens by society and the state and are unable to access public services such as education. In this case, they have to do very heavy physical work for long hours in a low-paying job such as waste picking. Socially and economically excluded Kurds are criminalized due to state interventions, their warehouses are closed, and they are removed from the waste through physical and legal interventions. This situation turned into hyper-precarity as the precarities created by their socio-legal status and their economic situation became multi-dimensional.

4.4.4 Roma waste pickers

Roma communities are referred to as nomadic artisans, that is, peripatetic communities. In the past, Roma people used to produce work tools such as farming tools or blacksmithing and tin plating to provide settled communities with the means to cultivate the land and migrated to different parts of the world to sell their crafts. Each craft group began their profession in childhood, and the economic unit was the family, and they migrated according to the demands of customer communities in different regions. Migrating to sell what they produced increased their mobility (Gündoğdu et al., 2020, pp. 24-25). However, due to capitalist production relations, the shift to mass production of every item by factories reduced the demand for their crafts. As a result, they were unable to acquire any profession other than their own craft, becoming unskilled laborers, and began migrating to cities to settle and find

work in the informal sector. Due to being seen as unskilled labor, they had to work in jobs such as waste picking (Gündoğdu et al., 2020, pp. 25-26). Another reason why Roma people turned to the informal sector and waste picking was social discrimination and the social exclusion they faced (Gündoğdu et al., 2020, p. 26).

During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to interview a total of ten Roma waste pickers, four of whom were male and six were female. I will share the findings from my interviews with women in the "Women Waste Pickers" section. The interviews with men took place in Yeşilköy. The Roma waste pickers were all relatives and they all came from the tin plating profession. One interviewee described how he transitioned from tin plating to waste picking as follows:

All the Roma people who work here are relatives, we are all immigrants from Thessaloniki. We used to be tin platers. My wife and I traveled all over Turkey with our car. We used to do tin plating everywhere. But then plastic containers appeared. Everyone started buying plastic containers, no one needed tin plating anymore. Then, we sold vegetables for a while but the tax and expenses were too high. We came here and have been doing waste picking in Yeşilköy for years (Interview 11, see Appendix B).

As can be seen, due to capitalist production relations, the Roma people, who were unable to continue producing the crafts, became impoverished and started to work in different occupations. Although waste picking was an easy job for them to enter, problems such as long working hours, insecurity, and low wages deepen their poverty.

The only reason why Roma people live in precarious conditions is not that they have lost job opportunities. The discrimination and social exclusion they faced have also limited their communication with people from other ethnicities and led them to waste picking. One of the interviewees stated that he faced a lot of discrimination when he went to the army and asked his commander to prevent his fellow soldiers from insulting him. Another interviewee mentioned that her daughter

was bullied and insulted at school, and that's why she dropped out of school. Also, one interviewee stated that they are not wanted by the residents of the neighborhood where they work because of the discrimination they face in society:

They see us as dirty and thieves. However, we are not thieves. We collect the garbage by our own labor, we do not steal. But they don't want us here because we are Roma. Some of the neighborhood residents complain about us to the municipal officials while we take the waste from the containers (Interview 21, see Appendix B).

Social exclusion and discrimination lead to constant harassment by the police and confiscation of their pushcarts.

Roma people also face significant problems in accessing healthcare, and those who do not have the "green card" provided by the state to the poor cannot benefit from free healthcare services. Those who are exposed to toxic waste while waste picking, those whose hands are cut due to glass waste, or those who are exposed to infections try to treat themselves with their own means. In addition, the places where they stay carry the risk of the disease since they usually stay in wrecked buildings or among piles of excavation waste next to the garbage.

In addition to these, ethnic discrimination and xenophobia in society are also experienced in waste work, causing waste pickers who work cheaply in the informal sector to compete with each other for job sources and fight with each other. For example, the interviewees in Yeşilkoy are quite uncomfortable with Syrians, Afghans, and Kurds from Siverek:

We have been here longer. There were no Kurds here before. Now Siverek people have come. They are also very crowded. They work together as a family and collect all the garbage. Syrians and Afghans have also started this job. Once a group of Syrians tried to collect garbage from this neighborhood. We said, 'This is our area, you can't collect here.' But they didn't speak our language, we couldn't understand each other. One of them drew a knife on me. I called my relatives. We drove them away. We don't want Syrians here (Interview 21, see Appendix B).

Waste work, although a job done by many people from different segments of society, is a sector where ethnic discrimination is deeply felt. There is a competition based on poverty and access to job opportunities among Roma, Kurds, and refugees. At the same time, there is also a division over the "Turkish identity" due to the desire of the Roma to be recognized as acceptable citizens. Roma generally stigmatizes Kurds as "terrorists" and discriminates against refugees because of their Turkish nationalist tendencies. For example, during the lynching attempts that took place in Yenisahra in June 2022, residents of the neighborhood, including Roma, raided Kurdish warehouses and shouted nationalist slogans such as "Martyrs do not die, the nation cannot be divided."

Another factor that increases the hyper-precariousness of Roma, in addition to poverty, lack of access to healthcare, and ethnic discrimination, is the state's privatization policies. During the period when I conducted my field research, the municipality's efforts to exclude waste workers from the streets gained momentum, and due to the interventions of municipal officers, Roma waste pickers became unable to work regularly:

They raid us almost every day. The police come and say we can't work here. A company takes the garbage. So, they confiscate our pushcarts and take away our waste. We have to wait until the municipal officers finish their shift, and then we start working (Interview 22, see Appendix B).

This situation has led to Roma fighting with officers and resisting giving up their pushcarts.

4.4.5 Refugee waste pickers

Neoliberal capitalist globalization has instrumentalized migration to restructure the labor force and create a reserve army of labor by flexibilizing employment and

reducing costs (Bauder 2006; Raes et al. 2002; Toksöz & Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2012).

Many people who have become landless, impoverished due to colonialism, or forced to flee their country due to wars, have to migrate to work in the informal sector as cheap labor in other countries. Undocumented migrants who work in the informal sector under highly precarious conditions are not only a source of cheap labor for international capital but also for states. Furthermore, since they are undocumented, they cannot benefit from many public services such as health and education that the state should provide for its citizens. In this sense, states not only find cheap labor but also relieve themselves of the obligation to provide public services to this labor force (Schierup & Jørgensen, 2017, p.5). Thus, precarity becomes the way of life for undocumented migrants. Governments regulate the flow of labor and determine who will become a reserve army of labor by changing their immigration policies and using immigration controls. Usually, immigrants are forced to remain undocumented and are used as labor when needed and deported when not (Schierup & Jørgensen, 2017, p.16).

Regarding waste work, undocumented refugees are the most precarious group among waste pickers due to their legal, social, and economic conditions. Migrants who lack legal, social, and economic rights, citizenship, and access to human rights and public services are considered hyper-precarious. Mimi Zou (2015) argues that immigration laws make migrants hyper-precarious, and these laws also create hyper-dependency for migrants who rely on their employers to obtain work permits. Therefore, undocumented migrants are forced to work in the informal sector, cannot quit their job, and are subjected to serious exploitation while working. Due to a lack of legal, citizenship, social, or economic means to escape this exploitation, they remain trapped in a vicious cycle.

Refugees doing waste work will be examined with the hyper-precarity framework, and the conditions of the migrants will be explained in this section. However, it should be noted that there is a hierarchy among the immigrants themselves. Although the situation of Syrians with temporary protection status and Afghans who are completely undocumented is similar in many respects, there is also a serious inequality between them. In this context, first, Turkey's immigration policy will be briefly mentioned and the legal status of Syrians will be explained. Then, based on the experiences of two Syrian interviewees that I had the opportunity to meet during my fieldwork, the hyper-precarious conditions of the Syrians who collect waste will be exemplified. In the last chapter, the immigration policies of the state regarding Afghans will be summarized and the hyper-precarious conditions of Afghan waste pickers will be discussed.

4.4.5.1 Syrian waste pickers

Turkey has been a country that receives or sends migrants for many years, but especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey has become an immigration country with many people from former Socialist countries migrating to Turkey since the 1990s. Since then, immigrants have had to work in the informal sector and without work permits (Toksöz, Erdoğan & Kaşka, 2012). Undocumented migrants have been quite profitable for capitalist production because they have "accepted" to work in insecure conditions (Overbeek, 2002b). One of the main factors determining the precarious conditions of migrants is Turkey's asylum regime. Nazlı Şenses (2017) claims that Turkish states always prioritize national citizenship in their migration policies (p. 103). Turkey's asylum regime only grants refugee status to ethnic Turks or those coming from Europe. Those who are not Turkish or European can also apply

as asylum seekers and have the right to stay temporarily in Turkey for resettlement in a third country (Sirkeci, 2017). Therefore, it is not possible for those who are not ethnically Turkish or who have migrated from countries outside of Europe to obtain refugee status.

This situation also applies to Syrians who migrated to Turkey in large numbers since 2011. The government first implemented an open-door policy, but the arriving Syrians were considered guests and were prevented from benefiting from legal refugee status (İneli-Ciğer, 2015). A special regulation was made for Syrians in the relevant law, and temporary protection status was granted. Temporary protection status is based on the belief that Syrians will not stay permanently and includes regulations that will lead to their precarious livelihoods. For example, with this status, Turkey has prevented Syrians from being recognized as refugees and also stated that it holds the decision to send migrants back one day. In addition, people with temporary status have been settled in satellite cities, registered in those cities, and legally prevented from having freedom of mobility. Those who want to travel to another province legally must obtain permission from the Provincial Directorate of Migration Management. Also, these people do not have the right to be resettled in a third country (Ertörer, 2021, p. 11).

The work permit for Syrians is subject to several rules. Only employers can apply for work permits, and employers are obliged to employ a certain percentage of Turkish workers. This situation leads to most Syrians not being able to work in the formal sector, working in the informal sector for less pay than local workers, and having to work long hours under harsh and exploitative conditions with no social security (Şenses, 2017, p. 106-107). This situation leads to the employment of Syrians instead of Turkish workers in the informal sector and competition among the

poor for scarce job opportunities, resulting in xenophobia (Del Carpio & Wagner 2017; Dedeoğlu, 2018).

Moreover, the hyper-precarious conditions of Syrians are not only due to their lack of legal refugee status or inability to enter formal employment but also to difficulties in accessing public services such as education and healthcare. Many Syrian children cannot access education or drop out of school because their families cannot afford expenses such as books, uniforms, or transportation, or because of language barriers or school principals' refusal to enroll Syrian students (Ertörer, 2021, p. 18-19). Additionally, housing is also a significant problem for many Syrians who have to pay high rent to live in small and unsafe houses (Amnesty International, 2014). The increasing xenophobia in society also affects Syrians negatively and makes their integration difficult (Şenses, 2017).

During my field research, I had the opportunity to interview two Syrian waste pickers, one male and one female, which confirmed the findings of the academic studies mentioned above. The male interviewee had been doing waste work in Turkey for 7 years, stating that he found the work repulsive but had no other job opportunities. When I asked about his earnings, I learned that he earned less than Turkish waste workers, despite working longer hours. Having to earn less money and walk for long hours and collect waste, the interviewee stated that he works 12 hours a day and cannot spare time for anything other than work: "In my free time, I just rest. There is no time left for anything else" (Interview 7, see Appendix B).

When I asked the interviewee questions about his legal status, he stated that the temporary protection document made it difficult for him to travel: "Traveling is difficult. My wife's family is in Hatay, but we can't visit them because we can't get

permission” (Interview 7, see Appendix B). He also expressed concerns about citizenship and deportation:

I have no hope for citizenship. They won't give us citizenship. If they send us back... whether we stay here or go there (Syria), it's the same for us. Our life here is bad. We live in a slum, I pay 350 TL for rent. If I go back to Syria, I will live in a tent. We think every day about how we will find food. I'm 30 years old but I look like I'm 45 because I've aged so much (Interview 7, see Appendix B).

The interviewee sees his future as uncertain due to the uncertainty of his legal status. When I asked if he had any future plans, he expressed his hopelessness by saying, "People like me don't have ambitions and hopes” (Interview 7, see Appendix B). He also stated that the difficult working conditions have worn him down both physically and socially. He said that deep poverty has created economic problems for him that he cannot even meet his basic needs and sometimes they sit in the cold because they cannot find coal. The interviewee stated that poverty has deepened his precarious conditions. He said that his health has been affected both psychologically and physically and sometimes he cannot afford the medication he needs because of the high prices. However, compared to other undocumented refugees, the interviewee's temporary protection status gives him some advantages. For example, although he has to pay for his medication, he has the right to free treatment at the hospital. Also, unlike Afghan refugees, he has not faced the risk of deportation. He has been stopped by the police a few times and his pushcart has been seized, but he has been released after the police checked his identity.

The interviewee was also asked if he faced discrimination by other waste workers in social life or while picking waste. He stated that he usually does not communicate with Kurdish waste pickers, who he encounters more often during waste picking, saying:

There's no trust between Syrians and Kurds. There's no support between people... Kurds are more experienced in this job. They collect waste from the rich neighborhoods. If we want to go to those neighborhoods, they kick us out. So we collect in other places where cheaper waste comes out (Interview 7, see Appendix B).

As can be seen, the lack of job opportunities and poverty has led to competition between local and refugee waste pickers and exclusion of refugees from job sources.

The situation of women waste pickers is more precarious due to patriarchal gender norms, as migrant women workers have to work in worse conditions than migrant men workers (Şahin, 2018). Nergis Canefe (2018) argues that the most fundamental reason for this is Syrian patriarchal cultural norms, which limit women's lives to the household as mothers or wives (p. 45). Women take on all the burden of care and household chores. The perception of women as belonging to the private sphere and traditional gender norms prevent many Syrian girls from accessing education, restrict their freedom to work, and prevent them from controlling the wages they receive when they are able to work. Additionally, many Syrian women cannot control how many children they will have, and they cannot benefit from birth control or abortion (Canefe, 2018).

During my fieldwork, I interviewed a Syrian waste picker woman who had given birth to six children despite being born in 1994. Although her youngest child was only 40 days old, she was collecting garbage on a street in Taksim. The baby was at home, and the oldest child was taking care of him. She had brought two little girls with her, and they were sitting in the pushcart waiting for their mother while she was collecting garbage. This scene made me realize how deep the precarious conditions of Syrian women waste pickers were. Until then, I had never seen any male waste pickers taking care of their children in pushcarts, but most female waste pickers (local or refugee) had to bring their children with them and take care of them

when they went to work. I also asked her if she had seen a doctor during her pregnancy. She said she went to a Syrian hospital in Fatih once to find out the sex of the baby, but she did not go to the doctor again because the cost was too high. Although the hospital in Fatih was a private hospital, she preferred it because she did not have language problems as it was owned by Syrians. However, doctor expenses prevented her from having regular checkups during her pregnancy. She said she had worked while pregnant: "I worked until three o'clock on the day I gave birth, and then my water broke. I went home and cleaned up. Then I went to the hospital and gave birth" (Interview 23, see Appendix B). She also stated that she had to start working four days after her C-section because baby formula and diapers were very expensive. She said her baby was born weak due to heavy working conditions and insufficient nutrition and was hospitalized for a week. This situation shows how the poor working and living conditions of migrant women waste pickers endanger both their lives and their children's lives.

Another factor that deepened the hyper-precarious conditions of the interviewee was the fact that she was responsible for childcare and housework. She stated that her husband did not help her and that she sometimes had to work less to take care of the children, which resulted in lower earnings. She expressed that domestic labor responsibilities caused her to work double shifts, saying, "I wash clothes, take care of the children, clean the house, take care of my husband, I do everything. I look like I'm 50" (Interview 23, see Appendix B).

When I asked to whom she sold the waste she collected, she said that she only collected it and her husband sold it to a warehouse owner. This was a pattern that I encountered many times during my fieldwork. Patriarchal gender roles prevented women waste pickers from doing this work without their male children, spouses,

brothers, or fathers. If a female waste worker is married or living with her family, she is not allowed to collect waste alone anywhere she wants. The interviewee also went to work with her husband. While her husband was collecting waste on one street, she was collecting waste on another street. In addition, because the warehouse owners were men, the sale of the collected waste was carried out by male waste workers. It was not welcomed for women to deal with warehouse owners. The money earned stayed with the male head of the family. Since only a small amount was earned, it could only cover the household expenses and the children's needs. When I asked the interviewee if she received an allowance from her husband, she said that the money was only enough for the children.

Another challenge that women face in waste work is working hours. Women work less due to responsibilities such as childcare and housework. However, safety concerns also prevent women from collecting waste late at night. While men can work at night, women have to return home in the evening. Similarly, the interviewee stated that she only collected waste on crowded streets if she had to work at night, or she returned home in the evening.

When asked about other difficulties she faced while working as a waste picker, the interviewee, whose grandmother is Turkish and whose father is Kurdish, came from the Syrian city of Aleppo in 2015, she can speak very good Turkish thanks to his grandmother. She said she also has Turkish relatives on his mother's side. Being of Turkmen descent on his mother's side made her a more acceptable migrant in the eyes of the state. Although she was registered in Muş, she came to Istanbul because there were no job opportunities in Muş. She said that she had acquaintances with Turkmen relatives in Şişli municipality and obtained a waste collector card issued by Şişli municipality through them. I had never seen this card in

any migrant before. Thanks to this pilot application, which started in some municipalities, waste workers who register with the municipality and pass the security check can obtain an ID card and collect garbage within the municipality boundaries. Kinship and social relations enabled the interviewee, who would normally have a very low chance of obtaining this card, to obtain the ID card. She stated that she could work without being obstructed by any municipal officials within the boundaries of Şişli municipality. However, she said that when she went to collect waste in Taksim, the police stopped her and seized her pushcart because waste collection in Taksim is done by a private company. When asked if she had experienced any discrimination, she replied, "Some people told me to go away and not to work here. Sometimes they curse at me and tell me to go back to my country. But I can't say anything, I leave it to God" (Interview 23, see Appendix B). As we can see, the increasing xenophobia in society leads to verbal attacks and discrimination against the interviewee.

4.4.5.2 Afghan waste pickers

Although Afghans are the second largest refugee group on the migration route extending from Turkey to Europe (Karadağ, 2021, p.10), their migration process is different from Syrians. Although the movement of migration from Afghanistan to Turkey began in the 1970s (İçduygu & Karadağ, 2018), it has significantly increased since 2019 with the expansion of the Taliban's influence. Despite the fact that Afghans of Tajik, Uzbek, or Hazara origin who came to Turkey in the 1980s and 1990s could register and obtain a residence permit in Turkey, this situation has reversed for Afghans who have come after 2018. Afghans who use the Pakistan-Iran-Van route to cross from Afghanistan to Turkey follow a very dangerous route. During

their migration route, they face dangers such as freezing from the cold, being attacked by wild animals, hunger, violence from police or soldiers, and being defrauded by human smugglers (Karadağ, 2021). After completing this dangerous journey and if they can reach Turkey, even more precarious conditions await them.

In 2018, the responsibility for registering asylum applications was transferred from UNHCR to Turkey's Directorate General of Migration Management (DGMM). This has resulted in a significant increase in the rejection rate of Afghan asylum applications (Karadağ, 2021, p.28). Afghans who are forced to remain in irregularity when their applications are not accepted by the government have had to work under the most exploitative and harsh working conditions without access to healthcare, education, or formal employment as undocumented. Unlike Syrians, they cannot have the right to free examination in state hospitals, and more importantly, they face the constant danger of deportation because they are undocumented. As a result, Afghans live in hyper-precarious conditions, without any legal, economic, or social rights, without access to healthcare, and are among the most vulnerable positions among refugee waste pickers.

I had the opportunity to interview 6 Afghan waste pickers during my fieldwork. They were all male and between the ages of 19-24. As the youngest men of their families, they left Afghanistan, which was in an economic crisis after the Taliban took control following the war, and came to Turkey to find work and send remittances to their families. They all have large families, and the responsibility of taking care of the family is entirely on their shoulders. This causes Afghan waste workers to have to work in the heaviest and most difficult jobs, using their only asset, bodily labor. As far as I observed during my work, Afghan pickers work the longest hours among both refugee workers and local workers. If one waste picker collects an

average of 100 kilos of waste per day, Afghans collect an average of 200 kilos. Because of their responsibility to take care of the family and be the head of the household, Afghan workers have to endure all kinds of exploitative working conditions.

For example, Afghan pickers usually stay inside the warehouse to avoid being deported. Staying in the warehouse means being dependent on the warehouse owner because he provides free accommodation. Warehouse owners have established an exploitative relationship with Afghans. If an Afghan picker needs a SIM card or a transportation card for the bus, the warehouse owner provides it. If an Afghan picker gets sick and cannot go to a public hospital, the warehouse owner takes him to private hospitals through informal social relationships. Sometimes these hospitals are underground places established by Afghans, but the warehouse owner covers all the expenses. Therefore, an Afghan waste picker must pay attention to his behavior towards other waste pickers inside the warehouse, work harder to satisfy the boss, turn a blind eye when the boss pays him less than local pickers, and tolerate harassment if the boss does so.

During my fieldwork, one waste picker I interviewed had been beaten by his boss and threatened with deportation. The reason was that the boss expected the picker to work harder. The picker, who was constantly exposed to his boss's threats and insults, could not leave the warehouse because he had nowhere else to go. Another challenge that waste pickers face is competition with local waste pickers. Like Syrian waste pickers, Afghan pickers are also unwanted by other local waste pickers. This competition sometimes results in physical violence and fights between local pickers and Afghans. One interviewee said that they usually remain silent in fights because they would be guilty if they responded and no one would listen to

them because of xenophobia. Another problem related to the conditions of the work is the wages. Although some warehouse owners pay everyone equally, some pay Afghans less than locals. An Afghan interviewee described the situation as follows:

They are angry with us, saying that we are reducing the prices. When we collect, they say there are fewer goods left for them. But they earn more than us. For example, if they do shepherding , they can earn 10,000 TL, but we can earn 5,000 TL. We are everywhere, we know the prices, but when the warehouse owners give us less price, we can't say anything (Interview 24, see Appendix B).

I asked if they had ever been caught by the police or municipal authorities. The answers to this question varied. When I started my research, Afghan pickers could collect waste more easily on the streets, and although their pushcarts were sometimes confiscated by the authorities, they usually did not have any problems. Some of them had been sent to the deportation center a few times, but these were mostly symbolic measures to ease the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the public, and the Afghans taken for deportation were usually released. Afghan workers were quite functional for both capitalists and the government due to their contributions to the Turkish economy as cheap labor. Because they formed a pool of cheap labor, the government turned a blind eye to their illegal employment.

However, this situation changed towards the middle of my field research. The general elections to be held in Turkey changed the political atmosphere. The opposition parties portrayed immigrants as responsible for the economic crisis, which caused the ruling party to be blamed. To win more votes, the government introduced new policies that were suitable for increasing anti-immigrant sentiment. As a result, Afghan waste pickers started to be arrested by the police and deported. The fear of deportation led the Afghans to work more in the sorting process inside warehouses. Unable to work on the streets, mobility restricted, and constantly facing the risk of

deportation, the Afghans became more dependent on warehouse owners, increasing their hyper-precariousness. When I wanted to meet some of the Afghan pickers I interviewed before, I learned that many of them had been deported.

The most significant problem faced by Afghan pickers is increasing xenophobia. One interviewee summarized the situation as follows: "If a migrant does something wrong, they immediately blame the Afghans. Even Syrians, when they do something wrong, we are the ones who are guilty" (Interview 25, see Appendix B). As seen, Afghans are often scapegoated and targeted by the growing anti-immigrant sentiment in society. This hatred led to four days of lynching incidents in Yenisahra in June 2022. On social media, news spread that an Afghan waste picker in Yenisahra had robbed and killed a Turkish youth, which caused the long-growing anti-immigrant sentiment in the area to turn into a lynching attempt. Although this news was completely fake and proved to be false by police records, some racist groups directed the angry crowd. Warehouses, where Afghans worked and lived in the neighborhood, were raided, and an "Afghan hunt" was launched. Some warehouses were burned and looted, and several Kurdish waste pickers were injured. Afghan pickers fled Yenisahra to other areas. The situation in which Afghans find themselves shows how dangerous the level of anti-immigrant sentiment has become. Afghan waste pickers continue to work under hyper-precarious conditions without any legal, social, or economic rights while being exposed to such racism and human rights violations as well as in danger of being deported. Their migration status, socio-legal status, and employment conditions pushed them into hyper-precarity.

4.4.6 Women waste pickers

Waste pickers working in the informal sector struggle with poverty and precarity. However, the conditions of female waste pickers are even more vulnerable compared to male pickers. Women's experiences of poverty, unequal gender roles, and the result of patriarchal system are heavier than men's (Kümbetoğlu, 2002). Women cannot access the means of production, capital or income equally compared to men, and cannot have a say in the control of property and income (Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2009, p. 14). Also, with the development of capitalist production relations, women have been seen as belonging to the private space or home, while they are separated from the workplace or public space (Bora, 2005). The work carried out in the private sphere, such as care responsibility and household chores, is seen as women's work. These forms of labor are completely undertaken by women and are called invisible labor because they are not paid for the emotional, physical, and mental labor they spend (Acar-Savran & Tura-Demiryontan, 2008, p. 11; Ünlütürk Ulutaş, p. 27).

The feminization of poverty indicates that women work more in the informal sector than men and become even poorer (Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2009). The reasons for this are the migration of dispossessed peasants to the cities due to neoliberal policies and the inability of women who participated in agricultural production in rural areas to find job opportunities in the city (Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2009, p.28); the flexible nature of the job market leads women, who are seen as unskilled and cheap labor, being the first to lose their jobs in times of economic crisis in the formal sector, resulting in an increase in women employed in piecework in the informal sector (Ecevit, 2007); and the patriarchal societal structure, where women have the duty of caring for the sick, children, or doing household chores, and therefore cannot participate in employment, as well as husbands not allowing their wives to work (Bora, 2007). Another factor

that causes women to live in poverty and precarious conditions is the fact that women benefit less from the right to education compared to men. Families who prefer to educate their sons instead of their daughters due to increasing school expenses in poor households assign their daughters to take care of younger siblings and do household chores. This situation leads to women who cannot receive qualified education not being able to find qualified jobs and being unemployed (Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2009, p. 32).

Reasons such as inability to access reproductive health, lack of access to birth control or abortion services, and women not being able to decide how many children they will have, confine women to childcare and increase their poverty (Çağatay, 1998). In addition, the control of money within the household being in the hands of men leads to women being unable to access money for their own needs (Şenol-Cantek, 2001), and gender roles even within the same household cause differences in poverty experiences between men and women (Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2009, p. 35). Due to increasing poverty, women consider their work in the informal sector as an additional income to men's income and have difficulty defining themselves as "workers" when they work in precarious, low-paying, or piece-rate jobs (Ünlütürk Ulutaş, 2009, p. 36). All of these factors cause poor women to work in more precarious conditions than men even when they do the same job in the informal sector.

The precarious living conditions of women who do waste picking are closely related to patriarchal norms. Urban poor women cannot work in formal employment due to low literacy rates, childcare responsibilities, and gender roles within the family, so they find jobs in the informal sector, such as waste work, to contribute to the household budget. Because there is no boss who determines working hours in waste picking, women can go home without asking for permission when they need to

take care of their children. These factors that make waste work attractive also bring some difficulties due to the patriarchal norms that are valid in this sector.

Female pickers are more disadvantaged than males because of their gender. Waste work is a masculine job in Turkey. Most of the people doing this job are men. Kurds constitute the majority in this sector, and women's work is not welcomed due to the strict patriarchal gender roles in the Kurdish community. Many Kurdish waste pickers I interviewed in the field stated that they do not approve of women working and that women cannot do such a heavy job because they are weak. However, wives of some Kurdish waste pickers who live with their families help their husbands to separate waste at home, even if they do not go out to collect waste. Male pickers define their wives as housewives and see waste separation work as a continuation of domestic labor. Thus, according to them, women do not do any extra work because they work at home and help their husbands with separation.

Some of the women who work as waste pickers are of Turkish origin, but most of them are Roma. Of the 7 women I was able to interview in the field, one was Syrian and six were Roma. Although patriarchal gender roles are also valid in the Roma community, the traditions brought about by the nomadic and mobile lifestyles of the Roma reveal that work is practiced within the family. Thus, while the Roma male waste pickers I interviewed claimed that women generally do not work and take care of children, working is a practice in which all members of the family participate in the Roma community, allowing Roma women to collect garbage on the streets. Of course, waste picking is not as "easy" for Roma women as it is for men. Roma women cannot go to work without their husbands or male relatives.

During my fieldwork in Osmanbey, one interviewee stated, "My husband doesn't allow me to go anywhere else. I work with him and collect waste next to

him” (Interview 26, see Appendix B). She expressed that her husband determined the workplace. Additionally, all the women I interviewed stated that the waste they collected was taken to the warehouses by their husbands and sold, and that their husbands received the money. When I asked one interviewee how the waste was sold, she responded, "The warehouse owner is a man. It is not appropriate for us to talk to men, so our husbands sell the waste” (Interview 26, see Appendix B).

Another female waste picker in Kocamustafapaşa mentioned her security concerns:

I don't work at night. My husband goes to work, but I cannot go out because there are pickpockets and drug addicts on the streets at night. I can't deal with them alone. I usually collect waste on crowded streets in the evenings and go home at night (Interview 27, see Appendix B).

Insufficient street lighting prevents women from walking comfortably at night, creating a security problem and causing them to earn less money because they work less.

A Roma waste picker I came across while doing field research in Kadıköy mentioned not having access to "good waste":

Young men work here. They run faster than me. When they go to a container that I usually collect from, I can't say anything to them. If my husband is not with me, I can't fight with them, so I go somewhere else. But when there are crowds, they take all the good waste before I can pick it up (Interview 15, see Appendix B).

Sonia Maria Dias and Carolina Ogando's (2015) research on women waste pickers in Brazil also reveals a similar finding. Male waste pickers prevent women from accessing more expensive and higher-quality waste, and women cannot argue with men because they are afraid of physical violence. This results in women earning less. Women's fear of security at work or fear of physical violence by men does not just make them earn less. It also makes them dependent on their husbands or male

relatives. Women cannot choose their own working places and working hours. They cannot have a say in the money earned in return for the waste they collect.

Pregnancy and child care are another factor that exacerbates the hyper-precarious conditions of women. A waste picker woman I spoke with during my field research in Yesilkoy told me that all pregnant women continue to do this job, that they struggle a lot during pregnancy, and that they have to go to work with their babies after giving birth. Since childcare and household chores are seen as the mother's responsibility, most male pickers do not help their partners, which forces women to both take care of their children and collect waste while working. Many women who have young children or do domestic labor have to work less and spend more time on household chores than men. Most women bring their children with them, and the children sit among the garbage in pushcarts, facing many health risks.

Besides, most of the women I spoke with said they were illiterate and that their families did not send them to school because they were girls. Illiteracy prevents them from finding more qualified jobs and from accessing healthcare services on their own. The waste picker I spoke with in Yesilkoy said she could not go to the hospital alone because she could not read and write. Also, because of her illiteracy, she cannot use a phone. The interviewee, who is quite poor, said that they have a total of two cell phones in their home for children and parents, one of which is with her husband and the other is with her eldest son because she cannot read and write. Women waste pickers, who even have trouble accessing technological devices, become more dependent on their husbands and families.

In addition to the social discrimination and exclusion that women face because of their ethnicity or refugee status, the multi-dimensional precarities created by reasons such as their lack of access to education, criminalization by the state,

insecure work conditions, poverty, their dependence on their husbands due to gender-based discrimination, and their care responsibility have made their conditions hyper-precarity.

4.4.7 Conclusion

In previous sections, the different hyper-precarious conditions of waste pickers have been explained. This hyper-precarious situation has deepened further due to the increasing privatization of the waste management and recycling sector as a result of neoliberal policies. Workers excluded from waste picking have struggled to maintain their livelihoods. The state interventions explained in previous sections have led to the criminalization of waste pickers. The pickers, who have been deprived of their economic, legal, and social rights and have had their only means of livelihood taken away, have moved from precarity to hyper-precarity. Hyper-precarity, which is generally used in studies on undocumented refugees in the literature, describes the multidimensional exploitation of individuals who cannot benefit from citizenship or human rights and social and economic rights (Lewis et al., 2015). In other words, the combination of precarity created by people's position in the employment market and precarity created by their socio-legal status causes their precarity to become multidimensional and transform into hyper-precarity. Hyper-precarity causes the person not to be able to leave the job he/she whenever they want, and not to realize that there is another life opportunity. Thus, people who have to work as a kind of unfree labor, that is, who cannot find another acceptable alternative and leave waste picking.

This concept directly applies to refugee waste pickers. However, in this study, the use of this concept is not only valid for refugee waste pickers but also claimed to

be applicable to all waste pickers, especially due to state interventions and the increasing privatization in waste management. Local waste pickers do not do "decent work,"^{xviii} as defined by the ILO, and they cannot access social services such as health and education, work for very low wages and have to work under physically heavy conditions, and are exposed to ethnic and social discrimination by society. This situation has turned into a survival struggle for waste pickers who are in a state of hyper-precarity and have lost their job opportunities due to state intervention. Therefore, they are not legally recognized for their work, are exposed to physical police violence, and are deprived of their sources of livelihood. As a result, their hyper-precarious situations have deepened further, and they have started to fight for being seen as equal citizens by the state. Eliminating hyper-precarity has become one of the driving forces in their resistance and organization against state intervention. Their organizational experiences will be examined in the next section.

4.5 Resistance and organizing waste pickers

It has been argued by many scholars that precarity is one of the driving forces of informal workers' organizations. This discussion has been covered in more detail in the previous chapter. Eliminating the poverty created by precarity (Hintjens, 2006) or restoring access to the commons that could not be reached due to state intervention (Munck et al., 2011), or demanding basic citizenship rights from the state (Agarwala, 2013) among the reasons for the organization. As Atzeni (2016) points out, eliminating precarious conditions allows informal workers to be mobilized and organized.

^{xviii} <https://www.ilo.org/ankara/areas-of-work/dw/lang--en/index.htm>

In this study, I argue that hyper-precarity is one of the reasons that push waste pickers to organize. Waste pickers, who were socially, economically, and legally excluded and could not find a place in society in any field, faced the danger of losing their only source of income, waste work, due to the state's intervention. In addition, many waste pickers were left homeless when the warehouses, which served as living quarters for many, were closed. Being criminalized by the state has made them criminals in the eyes of society. That's why they started to mobilize. In the first place, their aim is to be able to access the garbage again without police harassment. Besides, legal recognition of waste picking as a profession and providing social security to them by municipalities was among the demands. The desire to live with dignity as equal citizens caused them to demand their basic rights from the state.

The first example of the resistance was seen after the state's initial privatization attempts in 2005 in Ankara. When I spoke to a former waste picker who participated in the resistance and played an active role in the organization, he described how the resistance took place:

When we started making money from this job, the government realized there was money in waste. A lot of laws were passed. We started to face pressure due to capitalism through municipalities. Municipalities were giving garbage collection responsibility to private companies... They said, 'You will no longer collect here.' We also faced pressure from Melih Gökçek. We faced pressure from the Republican People's Party's municipality of Yenimahalle. The police beat us, confiscated our goods... When the pressure increased, we couldn't work anymore. We had nothing left but to resist. We said that we would burn our warehouses rather than give our goods to you when they raided our warehouses. Some of them even burned their own warehouses. We resisted giving our pushcarts. We chained ourselves to the doors of the warehouses. When the pressure increased even more, we said let's organize a protest. A very large protest was held in Ankara. Friends from the press and various civil society organizations came, and we made our voices heard. Then we said that if we don't organize, we can't succeed. Thus, the idea of forming an association emerged. We founded the Waste Paper Workers' Association. At first, we were 3 people, but we went from warehouse to warehouse and explained to our waste picker friends why we needed to organize. It was a very difficult process. But then the association was established, and we showed great participation in the May 1st demonstration. When our voices

began to be heard more by the public, we also published a magazine called 'Katik'. People saw us as garbage men and looked down on us. We published Katik to say that we are not inferior. Only waste pickers were sending articles. They were writing about their work. We were publishing it with our own resources. When the resistance grew, the state realized it couldn't handle it, and the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality invited us for a meeting. We made some agreements. So there was no official gain, but they had to leave us alone thanks to our resistance. We were able to start our work again (Interview 13, see Appendix B).

The police violence, detentions, and the municipality depriving waste pickers of their livelihoods in Ankara in 2005 led to the pickers' resistance to regain their livelihoods. Although this resistance was against precarious conditions and privatizations, the pickers also demanded citizenship rights from the state. For example, one of the biggest demands of the association was for the workers to have social security insurance provided by the state.

The organizational model here formed a reference for the organization to be established in Istanbul later on. With the self-activity of the waste pickers, the organizers went from warehouse to warehouse and created a horizontal organization. This organization not only defended the rights of the workers by mass protests but also formed alliances with various NGOs and negotiated the working conditions of the workers with the municipality. In addition, the magazine that was published enabled the workers to attract the attention of the public.

Although municipalities and the state put pressure on garbage collectors from time to time in the post-2005 period, a new resistance would begin in 2021 with the state's carrying out extensive operations. After the Green Deal was signed with the EU, the government aimed to increase the amount of recycling as per the agreement's rules, and capitalists aimed to establish a more profitable waste system in Turkey and to earn more profit from domestic waste. In 2021, comprehensive police raids began in Istanbul KADOSAN and many regions of Istanbul and Ankara, aiming to

legitimize criminalizing waste pickers by claiming that they are illegal, earn unjustified income, and pose a security threat. However, the closure of warehouses meant the elimination of not only waste pickers' only source of income but also their living spaces. Waste pickers had no choice but to resist in order to sustain their lives. The interviewer who participated in the resistance at KADOSAN in 2021 explained the state intervention as follows:

Early in the morning, they raided us. TOMAs, riot police vehicles, and hundreds of police officers came. We didn't understand what was happening at first. They came with so many police, municipal officers, and heavy machinery... They said they were shutting down our warehouses, claiming that we were making unfair profits. Even the Governor of Istanbul called us outlaws. This is our bread and butter. How are we supposed to live without this? It's also our home. Their real aim is to make a profit from the waste. They won't let us do this job and will give it to companies instead. They have set their sights on poor people's bread... We said we won't close our warehouses. There was a clash with the police. They wanted to take the waste we collected from the warehouses. One of the warehouse owners, an elder brother, said, 'I'd rather burn the waste than give it to you.' He burned his own warehouse. Imagine working for months, collecting a lot of goods with your own effort, and then they come and try to seize it. So, you end up burning your own hard work to ashes (Interview 28, see Appendix B).

After the waste pickers mobilized and mass protested, some organizers decided to take it further. Whatsapp groups, which were opened after clashes with the police, enabled many waste pickers to be included in the organization. Thus, the Recycling Workers Association was established. In my meetings with waste pickers, who are members of the Association and are on the board of directors, I asked them what their organizations aim for. They said that their main goal was to gain legal recognition and keep their business. The Association wanted to sign agreements with municipalities and continue the waste collection and separation. At the same time, I learned that they aimed to establish a cooperative. The cooperative would both ensure their legal recognition and protect them economically from the price pressure of monopolized companies. But the Association's activities did not aim merely for

economic gains. There was one very important point they underlined in each of their press releases: to be treated as equal citizens and live with dignity. Waste pickers, who claim their civil rights from the state, have told me repeatedly how important live in dignity is to them.

Within a few months, the Association reached nearly two thousand members with the participation of various waste pickers and warehousemen from Ataşehir, Kadıköy, Bostancı, Maltepe, Kartal, and Ümraniye regions. Members' involvement was made possible by the organizers going around the warehouses one by one and persuading the warehouse owners and waste pickers. In addition, it should be said that kinship ties are an important factor in increasing the number of members. The financing of the Association is provided by the warehousemen with their own economic resources. Warehousemen pay a certain monthly fee.

The decision-making mechanism operates with the participation of a waste picker representative selected from each warehouse and warehousemen. However, I must point out that there are some problems here. Waste pickers often have difficulty attending meetings because they work long hours, so the decision-makers are mostly warehousemen. Also, this organization was established by Kurdish workers. Roma or Turkish waste pickers are not members of the Association. The reason for this is the ethnic discrimination between these groups. In addition, women do not take part in the organization. When I asked the reason for this, member pickers made very sexist comments. They said that women do not understand the organization and that they should not interfere in men's business. This shows that Association is far from providing gender equality for women. Another group that cannot be a member of the Association is refugees because of their legal status. The dangers of being deported have caused refugees to voluntarily stay away from the Association.

The Association has achieved various successes. The first of these was to increase their visibility in the public and to establish alliances that would support their struggle. For example, they held press conferences which various NGOs and political parties attended. The pickers who spoke to the press called on the governorship, the Ministry of Environment, and municipalities, saying that instead of taking away the bread from waste pickers, they should engage with them: "Produce projects to integrate the waste pickers into the system, not to destroy them... We are not city bandits, the real bandits are those who covet our labor. We are the children of this country." As seen, one of the waste pickers' demands is to be treated as equal citizens. They also expressed that they are forced to do this job to avoid starvation and that they want to work with their dignity, without stealing or committing crimes. They stated that they will continue to fight until they obtain their rights and that no one should touch them and let them work^{xix}.

Secondly, pickers met with the officials of the Ministry of Environment and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and signed agreements with some district municipalities such as Ataşehir and Kadıköy. These agreements allowed pickers to be given ID cards and allowed pickers to work in designated regions without police harassment. However, this agreement requires waste pickers to be registered by the municipality and allows them to operate as self-employed. It does not improve the conditions of waste pickers but will deepen their hyper-precarious working conditions since they work without insurance, also transporting waste to companies is designated by municipalities at a lower price.

Yet, there is also positive developments. Ataşehir municipality signed a protocol with the Association and committed to providing land, and allowed the

^{xix} <https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/turkiye/atik-kagit-iscileri-polis-baskinlarina-karsi-umraniyede-basin-aciklamasi-duzenledi-1874556>

cooperative to be established by the Association to build a garbage collection and separation facility on this land. Since there was not enough capital to establish the facility, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality stepped in and wrote a project to request financing from the ILO. During my fieldwork, the legal process of establishing the cooperative was continuing and negotiations were underway to reach an agreement with the ILO.

As a result, the hyper-precarious conditions of waste pickers are one of the reasons that push them to organize. This organizational process is still ongoing and developing. However, the field study is very promising in terms of showing the effect of hyper-precarity on the organization. The organizational model established by waste pickers' self-activity has serious potential for future gains

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I discussed the process of waste picking and the hyper-precarity that the waste pickers experience. I also touch upon the organization of waste pickers in 2021 and the factors that caused this organization. In order to understand the source of hyper-precarious conditions of waste pickers, a class-based analysis is required. In this context, the commodification of garbage has led to the development of the recycling sector in order to increase capitalist accumulation and realize the increasing need for raw materials.

Nevertheless, the growth of the recycling industry has been possible since the 1980s, with the effect of neoliberal policies and globalization. Capitalism's greed for growth and gaining more profit has caused more products to be commodified, increased consumption, opened new markets, and created cheap labor to reduce production costs. In order to create cheap labor, employment conditions should be made flexible, insecure, and unstable. Thus, the informalization process has accelerated. Informalization is unregulated and workers work long hours for low wages under dangerous conditions. However, the informal sector is not completely independent from the formal sector.

The recycling sector includes both formal and informal economic relations. Recycling companies formally import and export waste in the international market. However, pickers that collect and separate waste work informally for low wages and under hyper-precarious conditions. The labor of waste pickers in the informal sector means cheap labor for the capitalists. Therefore, companies operating in the formal market make a profit by selling the waste collected and sorted by the waste pickers

working informally. In other words, the labor of waste pickers is exploited by companies, and this exploitative system is realized through the cooperation of the state and capital.

The hyper-precarious conditions of the waste pickers are linked to the dispossession of peasants due to neoliberal policies and their migration to the big cities to work as cheap labor. Many dispossessed peasants could not take part in formal employment as unskilled labor. In addition, ethnic discrimination, forced displacement and transnational migration have also caused many people to migrate to big cities to find better job opportunities, but they start waste picking since they cannot enter formal employment. Thus, waste pickers, who could not access public services, were not treated as equal citizens, and were exposed to social exclusion, had to work without social security, and for low wages.

In this context, waste pickers are considered the precariat which is seen as the working class and it is argued that waste pickers are not self-employed, they are completely dependent on the legal practices in the formal sector and the market, and they have to work at the prices determined by the recycling companies. Being subject to the rules in the formal sector means that the conditions of the recycling sector and waste pickers are shaped according to the regulations implemented by the state. For example, the import and export of waste started with free trade agreements, resulting in international companies entering the Turkish recycling market. Thus, the state has privatized waste management. Privatized waste management caused the companies to carry out garbage collection and separation operations by winning tenders from the municipalities for the sake of making a profit. These regulations directly affected the waste pickers. The privatization of waste management leads companies to desire to take all of the household waste themselves. As a result, companies that want to

prevent waste pickers from accessing the trash can criminalize waste pickers with the help of the intervention of the state and remove them from their livelihoods.

Losing livelihoods has deepened the waste pickers' hyper-precarious conditions. At this point, it is necessary to mention hyper-precarity. Precarity is insufficient to explain the situation of waste pickers as it only describes working conditions. Waste pickers work more than 12 hours a day in hazardous and dangerous conditions without social security and at very low wages. However, it is not just the working conditions that determine the precariousness of waste pickers. At the same time, waste pickers lack access to basic public services such as health and education, lack citizenship or human rights, and are exposed to social exclusion and discrimination because of their ethnicity, gender, or migration status. In addition, they remain legally insecure because the state criminalizes them and does not recognize waste picking as a profession. Migrant waste pickers are also in danger of being deported. This forces them to stay in a hyper-precarity trap from which they cannot get out. So, waste picking becomes both their livelihood and their form of living. Therefore, it seems more useful to me to use the concept of hyper-precarity to explain the conditions of waste pickers. The concept of hyper-precarity emerges as a result of the combination of the precarities created by waste pickers' socio-legal status and their place in the employment market. So, waste pickers are socially, economically, and legally excluded. Hyper-precarity was made possible by the combination of precarities in these two fields and becoming multi-dimensional.

In this thesis, while using the concept of hyper-precarity to explain the living and working conditions of waste pickers, I also examine how hyper-precarious conditions arise. As I explained above, the emergence of these conditions was made possible by neoliberal capitalism and through the cooperation of the state and capital.

Neoliberalism has caused commodification of garbage, dispossession, privatization, flexible labor market, informalization, free movement of goods and labor, and migration flow to achieve more growth and profit. All these have caused many people to be displaced, dispossessed, migrated to cities and become urban poor, unable to access education, become cheap labor force, and work in informal sector jobs such as waste picking. Thus, hyper-precarity emerged.

Lastly, this study argues that hyper-precariousness is a factor that pushes waste pickers to organize. The organization took place against poverty, hyper-precarious conditions, and state intervention. Pickers demanded to regain their livelihood and their right to live a dignified life as equal citizens from the state. Although having political consciousness and kinship ties have an important place in pickers' organization, this study argues that the main motivation for organizing is to resist and eliminate hyper-precarious conditions.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW FORM WITH LOCAL WASTE PICKERS

- How long have you been doing this job? How did you start?
- Can you tell me about your daily routine working process?
- If there is a migration situation; why did he come to Istanbul?
- Religion/sect, language, race, cultural dress style, etc. Have you been excluded from such matters? If so, how did you deal with them? H
- If you stay in the warehouse, how many people stay together? How are the living conditions in the warehouse?
- Can you access public services? Transportation, health, education...
- What do you think of other waste collectors? What are your views on refugee waste collectors?
- Where do you see yourself in society? Why does this occur?
- What do you think is the perspective of the municipality and other official institutions on this matter? Have you ever had any problems with official institutions?
- Have the circulars and regulations made so far affect your work?

2. EXAMPLE OF INTERVIEW FORM WITH REFUGEE WASTE PICKERS

- From which country, when, why did you come? What were your expectations and plans for the future when you came to Turkey?
- Have you ever been excluded or reacted while doing this job? If so, what did you do?

- How long have you been doing this job? How did you start?
- Could you tell us about your working process?
- If you stay in the warehouse, how many people stay together? How are the living conditions in the warehouse?
- Can you access public services? Transportation, health, education...
- Is there discrimination between local and refugee waste pickers? What are your views on warehouse owners?
- How do you react when faced with a negative behavior?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW INFORMATION

Interview ID	Interviewee	Ethnic Background	Gender	Date
Interview 1	Warehouse Owner	Kurdish	Male	18.11.2022
Interview 2	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	27.07.2022
Interview 3	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	03.08.2022
Interview 4	Warehouse Owner	Turkish	Male	21.09.2022
Interview 5	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	09.07.2022
Interview 6	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	01.09.2022
Interview 7	Waste Picker	Syrian	Male	29.09.2022
Interview 8	Warehouse Owner	Kurdish	Male	12.08.2022
Interview 9	A representative from DÖNKASAN	Turkish	Male	03.11.2022
Interview 10	Warehouse Owner	Kurdish	Male	30.06.2022
Interview 11	Waste Picker	Roma	Male	11.08.2022
Interview 12	Warehouse Owner	Turkish	Male	16.08.2022

Interview 13	Former Warehouse Owner	Kurdish	Male	17.10.2022
Interview 14	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	07.08.2022
Interview 15	Waste Picker	Roma	Female	01.10.2022
Interview 16	Three representatives from Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality Waste Management Directorate	Kurdish and Turkish (One of them is Kurdish, the rest are Turkish)	Male and Female (One of them is a man, the rest are women)	19.09.2022
Interview 17	The head of Recycling Workers Association	Turkish	Male	11.11.2022
Interview 18	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	18.10.2022
Interview 19	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	18.10.2022
Interview 20	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	16.08.2022
Interview 21	Waste Picker	Roma	Male	18.08.2022
Interview 22	Waste Picker	Roma	Male	18.08.2022
Interview 23	Waste Picker	Syrian	Female	08.11.2022

Interview 24	Waste Picker	Afghan	Male	01.07.2022
Interview 25	Waste Picker	Afghan	Male	13.08.2022
Interview 26	Waste Picker	Roma	Female	07.10.2022
Interview 27	Waste Picker	Roma	Female	08.10.2022
Interview 28	Waste Picker	Kurdish	Male	22.09.2022

REFERENCES

- Abizaid, O. (2015). *ARB: Fighting for an inclusive model for recycling in Bogotá*. WIEGO. Retrieved from <https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/resources/files/Abizaid-Bogota-Wastepicker-Recycling-Case-Study.pdf>
- Acar, H., & Baykara-Acar, Y. (2008). *Başkentin karıncaları, atık madde işçileri [Ants of capital: Scavengers]*. Ankara, Turkey: Maya Akademi.
- Acar-Savran, G., & Tura-Demiryontan, N. (2008). *Kadının görünmeyen emeği [The invisible labor of women]*. Istanbul, Turkey: Yordam.
- Agarwala, R. (2013). *Informal labor, formal politics, and dignified discontent in India*. New York, US: Cambridge University Press.
- Agarwala, R. (2016). Redefining exploitation: Self-employed workers' movements in India's garments and trash collection industries. *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 89, 107–130. doi:10.1017/s0147547915000344 Retrieved from <https://krieger.jhu.edu/sociology/wp-content/uploads/sites/28/2012/02/A-New-21st-Century-Social-Contract-Self-Employed-Workers%E2%80%99-Movements-in-Garments-and-Trash-Collection.pdf>
- Akkuzu, İ. (2015). Göç ve kapitalizm [Migration and capitalism]. *DİSKAR İşçi Sınıfı ve Göç Sayısı*, 4, 20-29. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/15542918/G%C3%B6%C3%A7_ve_Kapitalizm
- Alpman, P. S. (2015). Enformelleşme, kimlik, prekarizasyon: Emeğin Kürt hali [Informalization, identity, precarization: The Kurdishness of labor]. *Katkı - Sosyal Araştırmalar Vakfı*, 1, 6-23. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/38200412/Enformelle%C5%9Fme_Kimlik_Prekarizasyon_Eme%C4%9Fin_K%C3%BCrt_Hali_2015_
- Altuntaş, B. (2008). Enformel bir emek biçimi olarak sokak toplayıcılığı: Ankara örneğinde sektöre ve çalışanlarına ilişkin bir bilgi ve deneyim paylaşımı [Street collecting as an informal form of labor: Sharing information and experience on the industry and its employees in the case of Ankara]. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 112, 31-59.

- Amnesty International. (2014). *Struggling to survive: Refugees from Syria in Turkey*. London: Amnesty International. Retrieved from <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/eur44/017/2014/en/>
- Atık Kağıt Geri Dönüşüm Sanayicileri Derneği (AGED). (2022). *Sokak toplayıcıları sosyo-ekonomik araştırma raporu [Street collectors socio-economic research report]*. Retrieved from https://aged.org.tr/raporlar/AGED_sokak_toplayicilari_raporu.pdf
- Atzeni, M. (2016). Beyond trade unions' strategy? The social construction of precarious workers organizing in the city of Buenos Aires. *Labor History*, 57, 1-22. doi: 10.1080/0023656X.2016.1086537
- Azzellini, D., & Kraft, M. G. (2018). Introduction: A return to the shop-floor or how to confront neoliberal capitalism. In D. Azzellini & M. G. Kraft (Eds.), *The class strikes back self-organised workers' struggles in the twenty-first century* (pp. 1–15). Leiden, Netherlands: Brill. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004291478_002
- Barbier, J. C. (2002). A survey of the use of the term précarité in French economics and sociology. *Noisy le Grand*. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/237692330_A_survey_of_the_use_of_the_term_prekarite_in_French_economics_and_sociology
- Başkavak, T. (2013). *Enformel sektördeki emek süreçlerinin ilişkisel analizi: Atık kağıt işçileri örneği [Relational analysis of the labor process in the informal sector: Example of waste paper workers]* (Unpublished MA thesis). Ankara University, Ankara, Turkey. Retrieved from <https://dspace.ankara.edu.tr/xmlui/bitstream/handle/20.500.12575/31706/tez.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
- Bauder, H. (2006). *Labor movement: How migration regulates labor*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bayat, A. (2004). Globalization and the politics of the informals in the Global South. In A. Roy & N. Alsayyas (Eds.), *Urban informality: Transnational perspectives from the Middle East, Latin America, and South Asia* (pp. 79–104). Landham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Beall, J. (1997). Thoughts on poverty from a South Asian rubbish dump: Gender, inequality and household waste. *IDS Bulletin*, 28, 73-90. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.1997.mp28003006.x>

- Birkbeck, C. (1978). Self-employed proletarians in an informal factory: The case of Cali's garbage dump. *World Development, Elsevier*, 6(9-10), 1173-1185. Retrieved from [https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X\(78\)90071-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(78)90071-2)
- Bonner, C., & Spooner, D. (2011). Organizing in the informal economy: A challenge for trade unions. *International Politics and Society*, 2(2011), 87-105.
- Bora, A. (2005). *Kadınların sınıfı [Women's class]*. Ankara, Turkey: İletişim.
- Bora, A. (2007). Kadınlar ve hane: "Olmayanın nesini idare edeceksin?" [Women and household: "What will you manage that does not exist?"] In Erdoğan, N. (Ed.), *Yoksulluk halleri* (pp. 97-133). Istanbul, Turkey: İletişim.
- Boratav, K. (2005). *1980'li yıllarda Türkiye'de sosyal sınıflar ve bölüşüm [Social classes and distribution in Turkey in the 1980s]*. Ankara, Turkey: İmge.
- Boswell, T., & Stevis, D. (1997). Globalization and international labor organizing. *Work and Occupations*, 24(3), 288–308. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888497024003003>
- Bölükbaşı, B. (2008). *Türkiye'de sosyal dışlanma ve yoksulluk [Poverty and social exclusion in Turkey]* (Unpublished MA thesis). Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey. Retrieved from https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezDetay.jsp?id=50Ig-o8h5ep_oqwNUkG6Sg&no=4KeThMTL89IueinUNO5HWQ
- Burnett, J., & Whyte, D. (2010). *The wages of fear: Risk, safety and undocumented work*. Leeds: PAFRAS and the University of Liverpool.
- Canefe, N. (2018). Invisible lives: Gender, dispossession, and precarity amongst Syrian refugee women in the Middle East. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 34(1), 39–49. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.7202/1050853ar>
- Castles, S. (2015). Migration, precarious work, and rights: Historical and current perspectives, In C.U. Schierup et al. (Eds), *Migration, precarity, and global governance: Challenges and opportunities for labour*. Oxford: Oxford Academic. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198728863.003.0003>

- Chandran, P., Shekar, N., Abubaker, M., & Yadav, A. (2009). *Informal waste workers' contribution, Bangalore*. Retrieved from Hasirudala.in: <http://hasirudala.in/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/1.-Full-PaperChandran- Informal-Waste-Workers-Contribution-in-Bangalore-1.pdf>
- Chen, M.A. (2005). *Rethinking the informal economy: Linkages with the formal economy and the formal regulatory environment*. World Institute for Development Economic Research (UNU-WIDER) Working Papers No. 146. doi: 10.1093/0199204764.003.0005.
- Chen, M.A. (2012). *The informal economy: Definitions, theories and policies*. WIEGO Working Paper No.1. Cambridge/Manchester: WIEGO.
- Chikarmane, P., & Narayan, L. (2005). *Organising the unorganised: A case study of the Kagad Kach Patra Kashtakari Panchayat (Trade union of waste pickers)*. Retrieved from SWaCH: <http://swachcoop.com/pdf/casestudy-kagadkachpatrackashtakari.pdf>
- Chikarmane, P. (2012). *Integrating waste pickers into municipal solid waste management in Pune, India*. WIEGO Policy Brief No. 8. Retrieved from https://www.wiego.org/sites/default/files/migrated/publications/files/Chikarmane_WIEGO_PB8.pdf
- Çiğerci Ulukan, N. (2015). Kapitalizmin denizinde boğulanlar: Göçmenler ve göç politikaları [Drowning in the sea of capitalism: Immigrants and migration policies]. *DiSKAR (Türkiye Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu Araştırma Enstitüsü Bülteni)*, 4, 30-39. Retrieved from https://arastirma.disk.org.tr/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/DiSKAR_4.SAYI_.pdf
- Clapp, J. (2002). The distancing of waste: Overconsumption in a global economy. In Princen, T., M. Maniates, & K. Conca (Eds.), *Confronting consumption* (pp. 155-176). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Çağatay, N. (1998). *Gender and poverty*. UNDP Social Development and Poverty Elimination Division Working Paper Series No. 5. New York: UNDP. Retrieved from <https://iknowpolitics.org/sites/default/files/gender20and20poverty.pdf>
- Çavuşoğlu, E. (2014). *Türkiye kentleşmesinin toplumsal arkeolojisi [Social archeology of Turkey's urbanization]*. Istanbul, Turkey: Ayrıntı Yayınları.

- Dabak, C. (2009). *Türkiye'de ambalaj atıklarının kontrolü ve Avrupa Birliği'ne uyum [Packaging waste management in Turkey and integration of the European Union]* (Unpublished MA thesis). Marmara University, Istanbul, Turkey. Retrieved from <https://katalog.marmara.edu.tr/veriler/yordambt/cokluortam/C/C/C/C/A/T0061578.pdf>
- Danış, D. (2016). Konfeksiyon sektöründe küresel bağlantılar: Göçmen işçiler, sendikalar ve küresel çalışma örgütleri [Global dealings in apparel manufacturing: Migrant workers, trade unions and global labor initiatives]. *Alternatif Politika*, 8(3), 562 - 589. Retrieved from <https://search.trdizin.gov.tr/tr/yayin/detay/228883/>
- Dedeoğlu, S. (2018). Tarımsal üretimde göçmen işçiler: Yoksulluk nöbetinden yoksulların rekabetine [Migrant workers in Turkish agriculture: Rivalry of the poor and antagonism]. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 1 (56), 37-68. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/pub/ct/issue/71799/1155224>
- De Genova, N.P. (2002). Migrant 'illegality' and deportability in everyday life. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 31(1), 419–447. Retrieved from http://www.proyectos.cchs.csic.es/politicas-migratorias/sites/proyectos.cchs.csic.es/politicas-migratorias/files/De_Genova_-_Migrant_Illegality.pdf
- Del Carpio, X. V., & Wagner, M. (2017). *The impact of Syrian refugees on the Turkish economy*. World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 7402. doi: 10.3390/socsci6040129.
- Demircan, Ç. (2016). Çöpte saklı değer, değere içkin emek: Çöpün ekonomik politiği [Value hidden in garbage, labor inherent in value: The political economy of garbage]. *Sosyal Araştırmalar Derneği Katkı*, 2, 47-65. Retrieved from http://www.katki.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2_3.pdf
- Dias, S. M., & Ogando, A. C. (2015). Rethinking gender and waste: exploratory findings from participatory action research in Brazil. *Work Organisation, Labour & Globalisation*, 9(2), 51-63. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.13169/workorglaboglob.9.2.0051>
- Dinler, D. (2016). *A multi-sited analysis of rules and regulations in the recycling market from Ankara to London* (Unpublished PhD Thesis). SOAS, University of London, London, United Kingdom. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.25501/SOAS.00023640>

- Dinler, D. (2019). Market, morality and (just) price: the case of recycling economy in Turkey. *Research in Economic Anthropology*, 39, 27-47. doi: 10.1108/S0190-128120190000039002
- Dwyer, P., & Brown, D. (2005). Meeting basic needs? Forced migrants and welfare. *Social Policy and Society*, 4(4), 369–380. doi:10.1017/S1474746405002538
- Ecevit, Y. (2007). Yoksulluğa karşı feminist strateji için [For feminist strategy against poverty.]. *Amargi, Fall 2007*, 14-18. Retrieved from http://www.amargidergi.com/yeni/wp-content/uploads/PDF/amargi_sayi6.pdf
- Erdoğan, E., & Uyan-Semerci, P. (2023). *Toplumsal araştırma yöntemleri için bir rehber: Gereklilikler, sınırlılıklar ve incelikler [A guide to social research methods: Requirements, limitations, and subtleties]*. Istanbul, Turkey: İstanbul Bilgi University Publications.
- Erdut, T. (2005). İşgücü piyasasında enformelleşme ve kadın işgücü [Informalization and female labor force in the labor market]. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 3(6), 11-49. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ct/issue/71776/1155005>
- Erdut, Z. (2007). Enformel istihdamın ekonomik, sosyal ve siyasal etkileri [Economic, social and political effects of informal employment]. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, (1), 53-82. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ct/issue/71790/1155129>
- Ergun, C. (2005). *Yoksulluk ve enformel sektör: Çöp toplayıcıları örneği Isparta-İzmir karşılaştırması [Poverty and informal sector: Garbage collectors Isparta-Izmir comparison]* (Unpublished MA thesis). Süleyman Demirel University, Isparta, Turkey. Retrieved from <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezDetay.jsp?id=at1EFo7f9fAt1hGqCHb6eQ&no=8oP4ZYsuLsXcUxTwWPYcZw>
- Ertörer, S. E. (2021). Asylum regimes and refugee experiences of precarity: The case of Syrian refugees in Turkey. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34(3), 2568–2592. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/feaa089>
- Fergutz, O., Dias, S., & Mitlin, D. (2011). Developing urban waste management in Brazil with waste picker organizations. *Environment and Urbanization*, 23(2), 597-608. Retrieved from https://doi.org/10.1177/0956247811418742_

- Florin, B. (2011). Résister, s'adapter ou disparaître : la corporation des chiffonniers du Caire en question [Resist, adapt or disappear: the corporation of Cairo scavengers in question]. In D. Corteel & S. Le Lay (Eds.), *Les travailleurs des déchets* (pp. 69–91). Toulouse: Érès.
- Florin, B. (2018). When the waste-pickers get out the margin: Little battles and mobilization of Istanbul waste-pickers (Turkey). *Alternatif Politika*, 10, 115 - 134. Retrieved from <https://alternatifpolitika.com/eng/makale/when-the-waste-pickers-get-out-the-margin-little-battles-and-mobilization-of-istanbul-waste-pickers-turkey>
- Fossey, E., Harvey, C., Mcdermott, F., & Davidson, L. (2002). Understanding and evaluating qualitative research. *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Psychiatry*, 36(6), 717–732. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1440-1614.2002.01100.x>
- García, C.M. (2011). Possibilities and challenges of solidarity organizations: The case of recyclers' organizations in Bogotá. *Diversitas*, 7(2), 265–280. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.15332/s1794-9998.2011.0002.05>
- Gidwani, V. (2018). For a Marxist theory of waste: Seven remarks. In Watson, J., & G. Wilder (Eds.), *The postcolonial contemporary: Political imaginaries for the global present* (pp. 187-207). New York, USA: Fordham University Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1515/9780823280094-009>
- Gügüş, E. A. (2019). *The waste pickers of İstanbul: A case study* (Unpublished MA thesis). Sabancı University, Istanbul, Turkey. Retrieved from https://research.sabanciuniv.edu/id/eprint/39457/2/10301045_EbruAysegulGugus.pdf
- Gündoğdu, N., Coşkun Caymaz, F., Gezicier, Z., & Tarlan, K. V. (2020). "Okumuşluk ele geçmez" Türkiye'deki Dom ve Abdal çocukların eğitim durumu: Gaziantep ve Şanlıurfa örnekleri ["Being educated is a distant dream to us" Dom and Abdal Children's education in Turkey: The cases of Gaziantep and Şanlıurfa]. Gaziantep, Turkey: Kırkayak Kültür - Dom Araştırmalar Atölyesi.
- Gür, D. (2019). *Enformel sektör ve sosyal dışlanma: Antalya geri dönüşüm işçileri* [Informal sector and social exclusion: Antalya recycling workers] (Unpublished MA thesis). Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey. Retrieved from https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezDetay.jsp?id=UPAS8eIBzvwwqnuI3W_Ydw&no=CsIBItz5gO3tn4Zb7b_gpA

Harding, P., & Jenkins, R. (1989). *The myth of the hidden economy*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Harriss-White, B. (2011). Theoretical plurality in markets conceived as social and political institutions, In J. Gartel & R. Le Heron (Eds.), *Economic spaces of pastoral production and commodity systems, markets and livelihoods*. Farnham: Ashgate.

Harrod, J., & O'Brien, R. (2002). *Global unions? Theory and strategies of organized labour in the global political economy*. London: Routledge.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Harvey, D. (2015). *Marx'ın Kapital'i için kılavuz [A companion to Marx's Capital]*. Istanbul, Turkey: Metis.

Hintjens, H. (2006). Appreciating the movement of the movements. *Development in Practice*, 16(6), 628–643. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4029920>

İçduygu, A., & Karadağ, S. (2018). Afghan migration through Turkey to Europe: Seeking refuge, forming diaspora, and becoming citizens. *Turkish Studies*, 19(3), 482-502. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2018.1454317>

İlhan, A. (2022, June 27). 'Atığı değerlendiremiyoruz, her yıl 1.5 milyar lirayı çöpe atıyoruz'. *Dünya Gazetesi*. Retrieved from <https://www.dunya.com/ekonomi/atigi-degerlendiremiyoruz-her-yil-15-milyar-lirayi-cope-atiyoruz-haberi-352492>

İneli-Ciğer, M. (2015) Implications of the new Turkish law on foreigners and international protection and regulation No. 29153 on temporary protection for Syrians seeking protection in Turkey. *Oxford Monitor of Forced Migration* 4(2), 28–36. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/11424240/Implications_of_the_New_Turkish_Law_on_Foreigners_and_International_Protection_for_Syrians_seeking_protection_in_Turkey

- Kabeer N., Sudarshan R., & Milward K. (2013). *Organizing women workers in the informal economy: Beyond the weapons of the weak*. New York: Zed Books.
- Karadağ, S. (2021). *Ghosts of Istanbul: Afghans at the margins of precarity*. Istanbul, Turkey: The Association for Migration Research.
- Keser, S. (2010). *Yeni kentin yeni yoksulları: Sokak toplayıcıları [The new urban's new poor: Street waste pickers]* (Unpublished MA thesis). Akdeniz University, Antalya, Turkey. Retrieved from https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/tezDetay.jsp?id=L0LobmsyBfMCu74r_dMPtQ&no=KD4J7DE-zipxze6iyqTJAg
- Keyder, Ç. (2013). *Türkiye'de devlet ve sınıflar [State and class in Turkey]*. Istanbul, Turkey: İletişim Yayınları.
- Kılınç, İ. (2011). *Çöp ekonomisi ya da atık dedikleri [The economy of garbage or waste]*. Ankara, Turkey: Epos Yayınları.
- Kothari, M., & Kothari, A. (1993). Structural adjustment vs environment. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 28(11), 473–477. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4399490>
- Kümbetoğlu, B. (2002). Afetler sonrası kadınlar ve yoksulluk [Women and poverty after disasters], In Y. Özdek (Ed.), *Yoksulluk, şiddet ve insan hakları* (pp. 129-142). Ankara, Turkey: TODAİE İnsan Hakları Yayınları.
- Lazar, S., & Sanchez, A. (2019). Understanding labour politics in an age of precarity. *Dialectical Anthropology*, 43 (1), 3-14. doi: 10.1007/s10624-019-09544-7
- Levien, M. (2013). The politics of dispossession: Theorizing India's land wars. *Politics and Society*, 41(3), 351–94. doi: 10.1177/0032329213493751
- Lewis, H., Dwyer, P., Hodkinson, S., & Waite, L. (2015a). Hyper-precarious lives: Migrants, work and forced labour in the Global North. *Progress in Human Geography*, 39(5), 580–600. doi: 10.1177/0309132514548303
- Lewis, H., Dwyer, P., Hodkinson, S., & Waite, L. (2015b). *Precarious lives: Forced labour, exploitation and asylum* (1st ed.). Bristol, UK: Bristol University Press. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1t896xk>

- Lordođlu, K., & Aslan, M. (2012). Türkiye işgücü piyasalarında etnik bir ayırmacılık var mıdır? [Is there ethnic discrimination in Turkish labor markets?]. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 2(33), 117-146. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ct/issue/71798/1155247>
- Luxemburg, R. (2003). *The accumulation of capital*. New York: Routledge. (Original work published 1913).
- Maden, S. (2014). Ambalaj atıkları toplama ayırma tesislerinin kurulması, maliyet analizleri ve işletilmesi (Unpublished MA thesis). aYıldız Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey.
- Marx, K. (2004). *Kapital, kapitalist üretimin eleştirel bir tahlili, birinci cilt [Capital, a critical analysis of capitalist production, volume 1]* (7th ed.) (A. Bilgi, Trans.). Ankara, Turkey: Sol Yayınları. (Original work published 1867).
- McDermott, J. L. (2022). Searching for the informal labor movement: Theorizing class and collective action among informal workers in West Africa. *Review of Radical Political Economics*, 0(0). doi: 10.1177/04866134221134548
- Medina, M. (2000). Scavenger cooperatives in Asia and Latin America. *Resources, Conservation and Recycling*, 31(1), 51–69. doi: 10.1016/S0921-3449(00)00071-9
- Meléndez, E., Theodore, N., & Valenzuela Jr, A. (2010). *Day laborers in New York's informal economy*. In E. Marcelli, C.C. Williams, & P. Joassart (Eds.), *Informal work in developed nations* (pp. 135–152). Oxon: Routledge.
- Millar, K. (2008). Making trash into treasure: Struggles for autonomy on a Brazilian garbage dump. *Anthropology of Work Review*, 29, 25-34. doi: 10.1111/j.1548-1417.2008.00011.x
- Millar, K. (2018). *Reclaiming the discarded: life and labor on Rio's garbage dump*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Morgan, J., & Olsen, W. (2009). *Explanations of unfree labour in the India case*. ESRC Unfree Labour Seminar Series. Coleraine, UK: University of Ulster.

- Munck, R., Schierup, C.U., & Wise, D. (2011). Migration, work, and citizenship in the new world order. *Globalizations*, 8(3), 249–260. doi: 10.1080/14747731.2011.576553
- Neilson, B., & Rossiter, N. (2005). From precarity to precariousness and back again: Labour, life and unstable networks. *Fibreculture Journal*, 5(5). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/26490721_From_Precarity_to_Precariousness_and_Back_Again_Labour_Life_and_Unstable_Networks
- Nimer, M., & Rottmann, S. B. (2021). Logistification and hyper-precarity at the intersection of migration and pandemic governance: Refugees in the Turkish labour market. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, feab076. doi: 10.1093/jrs/feab076
- Oğuz, Ş. (2011). Tekel direnişinin ışığında güvencesiz çalışma/yaşama: Proletaryadan “prekarya”ya mı?” [Precarious work/life in the light of Tekel resistance: From proletariat to “precariat”?]. *Mülkiye Dergisi*, 35(271), 7-24. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/mulkiye/issue/271/662>
- Oran, S. (2019). *Emeğin sokak hali: Türkiye’de katı atık toplayıcıları [Street form of labor: Solid waste collectors in Turkey]*. Ankara, Turkey: Nika Yayınevi.
- Overbeek, H. (2002a). Neoliberalism and the regulation of global labor mobility. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 581(1), 74–90.
- Overbeek, H. (2002b). *Globalisation and governance: Contradictions of neo-liberal migration management*. HWWA Discussion Paper No. 174. Hamburg: Hamburg Institute of International Economics. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/23511031_Globalisation_and_Governance_Contradictions_of_Neo-Liberal_Migration_Management
- Özatalay, C. (2006). Elmanın öteki yarısı: enformel sektör işçileri [The other half of the apple: informal sector workers]. *TES-İŞ Dergisi*, 57-62. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/228827/ELMANIN_OTEKI_YARISI_ENFORMEL_SEKTOR_ISCILERI
- Özbay, F. (2015). *Dünden bugüne aile, kent ve nüfus [Family, city and population from past to present]*. Istanbul, Turkey: İletişim Yayınları.

- Özen, F. (2018). Tüketici satın alma karar sürecinde ambalajın yeri ve önemi [The importance of packaging in the process of purchasing decision]. *International Journal Entrepreneurship and Management Inquiries*, 2(3), 139-151. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ijemi/issue/39142/436410>
- Özgen, H. N. (2001). Kentte yeni yoksulluk ve çöp insanları [New urban poverty and the garbage people]. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 89, 88-101. Retrieved from <http://neseozgen.net/wp-content/uploads/7.pdf>
- Özgen, H. N. (2006). Kent ve çöp [City and garbage]. *Türk Tabipler Birliği Mesleki Sağlık ve Güvenlik Dergisi*, 7(28), 10-12. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/en/download/article-file/822422>
- Özüğurlu, M. (2011). *Küçük köylülüğe sermaye kapanı, Türkiye’de tarım çalışmaları ve köylülük üzerine gözlemler [Capital trap for small peasants, agricultural studies in Turkey and observations on peasants]*. Ankara, Turkey: Nota Bene.
- Parra, F. (2016). *From domination to inclusion: The recycler population as a political subject* (Unpublished PhD dissertation). Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogota, Colombia.
- Paterson, M. (2013). Commodification. In C. Death (Ed.), *Critical environmental politics* (pp. 53-62). Routledge.
- Patnaik, P. (2018). *Capitalism, poverty, and praxis*. International Development Economics Associates. Retrieved from https://www.networkideas.org/featured-articles/2018/04/capitalism-poverty-praxis/#_ftnref1
- Percot, M. (2020). 'Picking up the neighbours' waste': migration of Bangladeshi villagers to India metropolises. *Migration and Development*, 9(1), 43-55. doi: 10.1080/21632324.2018.1487908
- Però, D. (2019). Indie unions, organizing and labour renewal: Learning from precarious migrant workers. *Work, Employment and Society*, 34(5), 900-918. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017019885075>
- Phillips, N. (2013). Unfree labour and adverse incorporation in the global economy: Comparative perspectives on Brazil and India. *Economy and Society* 42(2), 171–196. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2012.718630>

- Portes, A., Castells, M., & Benton, L. A. (1992). *Enformenliğin politika sonuçları [Conclusion: The policy implications of informality]* (C. Balkan, & O. Işık, Trans.) *Planlama*, 92, 1-4. (Original work published 1989). Retrieved from https://www.spo.org.tr/resimler/ekler/e3159ad04564bfb_ek.pdf
- Radice, H. (2000). Responses to globalisation: A critique of progressive nationalism. *New Political Economy*, 5(1), 5–19. doi: 10.1080/13563460050001952
- Raes, S., Rath, J., Dreef, M., Kumcu, A., Reil, F., & Zorlu, A. (2002). Stitched up: The rise and fall of the Turkish garment industry in Amsterdam, In J. Rath (Ed.), *Unravelling the rag trade* (pp. 71-86). Oxford: Berg.
- Ramos, N. F., de Castilhos, A. B., Forcellini, F. A., & Gracioli, O. D. (2013). Profile survey of waste pickers in Brazil: Requirements for the development of a collection vehicle and optimized routing. *Journal of Urban and Environmental Engineering*, 7(2), 231–246. doi: 10.4090/juee.2013.v7n2.231246
- Rittersberger Tılıç, H. (2015). Türkiye’de düzensiz göçmen işçileri yönetmek. *Göç Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (1), 80-107. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/pub/gad/issue/43298/526420>
- Rizzo, M., & Atzeni, M. (2020). Workers’ power in resisting precarity: Comparing transport workers in Buenos Aires and Dar es Salaam. *Work, Employment and Society*, 34(6), 1114–1130. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1177/0950017020928248>
- Roberts, B. (1989). Employment structure, life cycle and life chances: Formal and informal sectors in Guadalajara, In A. Portes, M. Castells & L. A. Benton (Eds.), *The informal economy, studies in advanced and less developed countries*. Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press.
- Robinson, W. I. (2002). Küresel kapitalizm ve ulusötesi kapitalist hegemonya: Kuramsal notlar ve görgül deliller [Global capitalism and transnational capitalist hegemony: Theoretical notes and empirical evidence] (E. Türközü, Trans.). *Praksis*, (8), 125-168. Retrieved from <https://www.praksis.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/008-05.pdf>

- Rosaldo, M. (2019). The antinomies of successful mobilization: Colombian recyclers manoeuvre between dispossession and exploitation. *Development and Change*, 53, 251-278. doi: 10.1111/dech.12536
- Rosaldo, M. (2017, March). *The criminalization of street waste pickers in Brazil: a human rights crisis*. Global REC. Retrieved from <https://globalrec.org/2017/03/28/the-criminalization-of-street-waste-pickers-in-brazil-a-human-rights-crisis/>
- Rosaldo, M., Evans, P., & Tilly, C. (2012, March). *A conceptual framework on informal work and informal worker Organizing*. Paper presented at the Experiences Organizing Informal Workers: A Comparative Investigation Forum, University of California in Los Angeles (UCLA). Retrieved from <https://irle.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/EOIWCConceptualFramework-Rosaldo-Evans-Tilly-03.12.pdf>
- Saraçoğlu, C., & Bélanger, D. (2019). Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mülteci işçileri konumlandırmak: Mekansal ayar, sermaye ve devlet [Situating the Syrian refugee workers in Turkey: Spatial fix, capital and the state]. *Praksis*, 51, 159-179. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/42153326/T%C3%BCrkiyedeki_Suriyeli_M%C3%BClteci_%C4%B0%C5%9F%C3%A7ileri_Konumland%C4%B1rmak_Mekansal_Ayar_Sermaye_ve_Devlet
- Sassen, S. (2000). Informalization: Imported through immigration or a feature of advanced economies?. *WorkingUSA*, 3(6), 6-26. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1743-4580.2000.00006.x>
- Schierup, C., & Jørgensen, M. B. (2017). From 'social exclusion' to 'precarity'. The becoming-migrant of labour: An introduction. In C.U. Schierup & M.B. Jørgensen (Eds.), *Politics of precarity*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. doi: 10.1163/9789004329706_002
- Sengenberger, W., & Wilkinson, F. (1995). Globalisation and labour standards. In P. Leisink (Ed.), *Globalization and labour relations* (pp. 111-134). Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Shankar, V., & Sahni, R. (2018). Waste pickers and the 'right to waste' in an Indian City. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 53(48), 54-62. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/329865451_Waste_pickers_and_the_'right_to_waste'_in_an_Indian_City

- Sirkeci, I. (2017). Turkey's refugees, Syrians and refugees from Turkey: A country of insecurity. *Migration Letters*, 14(1), 127–144. doi:10.33182/ml.v14i1.321
- Standing, G. (2011). *The precariat: The new dangerous class*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Strasser, S. (1999). *Waste and want: A social history of trash*. New York: Metropolitan Books.
- Sunam, R. (2023). Infrastructures of migrant precarity: unpacking precarity through the lived experiences of migrant workers in Malaysia. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 49(3), 636-654. doi: 10.1080/1369183X.2022.2077708
- Şahin, Ç. (2018). Türkiye’de kadın göçmen işçilerin durumunun ‘emek-sermaye çatışmasında’ yeniden değerlendirilmesi [Re-evaluation of the status of women migrant workers in the capital-labor conflict in Turkey]. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 4(59), 2155-2192. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/tr/pub/ct/issue/71807/1155352>
- Şengül, T. (2012). Türkiye’nin kentleşme deneyiminin dönemlenmesi [On the trajectory of urbanisation in Turkey: An attempt at periodisation], In F. Alpkaya & B. Duru (Eds.), *1920’den günümüze Türkiye’de toplumsal yapı ve değişim* (pp. 407-453). Ankara, Turkey: Phoenix Yayınevi.
- Şenol-Cantek, F.L. (2001). *Fakir/haneler: yoksulluğun “ev hali”* [Poor/homes: The “home situation” of poverty]. *Toplum ve Bilim*, 89, 102-131.
- Şenses, N. (2017). Rethinking migration in the context of precarity: The case of Turkey, In C.U. Schierup & M.B. Jørgensen (Eds.), *Politics of precarity*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill. doi: 10.1163/9789004329706_006
- Tokman, V. (1991). The informal sector in Latin America: From underground to legality, In G. Standing & V. Tokman (Eds.), *Towards social adjustment: Labour market issues in structural adjustment*. Geneva: ILO.
- Toksöz, G., Erdoğan S., & Kaşka, S. (2012). *Irregular labour migration in Turkey and situation of migrant workers in the labour market*. Ankara, Turkey: IOM.
- Toksöz, G., & Ünlütürk Ulutaş, Ç. (2012). Is migration feminized? A gender-and ethnicity-based review of the literature on irregular migration to Turkey, In T.

Straubhaar & S. Paçacı Elitok (Eds.), *Turkey migration and the EU: Potential, challenges and opportunities* (pp. 85-111). Hamburg: Hamburg University Press.

Top, A. (2022). *Le capitalisme recyclé: L'accumulation par réanimation et les récupérateurs des déchets recyclables a Istanbul* [Recycled capitalism: Accumulation through reanimation and recyclable waste collectors in Istanbul] (Unpublished MA thesis). Galatasaray University, Istanbul, Turkey.

Tran, T., Goto, H., & Matsuda, T. (2021). The impact of China's tightening environmental regulations on international waste trade and logistics. *Sustainability*, 13(2), 987. doi: 10.3390/su13020987

Uyanık, Y. (2008). Neoliberal küreselleşme sürecinde işgücü piyasaları [Labour markets in the neoliberal globalization process]. *Gazi Üniversitesi İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Fakültesi Dergisi*, 10(2), 209-224. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/pub/gaziuibfd/issue/28328/301046>

Ünlütürk Ulutaş, Ç. (2009). Yoksulluğun kadınlaşması ve görünmeyen emek [Feminization of poverty and invisible labor]. *Çalışma ve Toplum*, 2(21), 25-40. Retrieved from <https://dergipark.org.tr/pub/ct/issue/71816/1155332>

Vande Walle, G. (2008). A matrix approach to informal markets: Towards a dynamic conceptualisation. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 35, 651-665. doi: 10.1108/03068290810896271.

Webster, E. (2010). 'There shall be work and security': Utopian thinking or a necessary condition for development and social cohesion?. *Transformation: Critical Perspectives on Southern Africa*, 72, 225 - 246. doi: 10.1353/TRN.0.0058

WIEGO. (2016). *Improving wastepickers' lives in Bengaluru - Hasiru Dala innovations*. Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WEIGO). Retrieved from <https://www.wiego.org/resources/improvingwastepickers-lives>

Williams, C.C., & Round, J. (2010). Explaining participation in undeclared work. *European Societies*, 12(3), 391-418. doi: 10.1080/14616691003716910

Wilson, D. C., & Velis, C. (2015). Waste management strategies for informal sector recycling. *Waste Management*, 45, 162-171.

Wright, E. (1985). *Classes*. London: Verso.

Yardımcı, S., & Saltan, A. (2007). Sokak toplayıcılarının iş ve yaşam koşulları üzerine bir değerlendirme. *Toplum ve Bilim*, (108), 206-238.

Yerochewski, C. (2015). Debates over the resurgence of informal work in Brazil: Impact of mobilizations in the solidarity economy on conceptions of social change and union and political strategies. *Sociologie et sociétés*, XLVII(1), 201-224. Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/publication/332522866_Debates_over_the_Resurgence_of_Informal_Work_in_Brazil_Impact_of_Mobilizations_in_the_Solidarity_Economy_on_Conceptions_of_Social_Change_and_Union_and_Political_Strategies

Yücesan Özdemir, G., & Özdemir, A.M. (2008). *Sermayenin adaleti: Türkiye’de emek ve sosyal politika [Justice of capital: Labor and social policy in Turkey]*. Ankara, Turkey: Dipnot.

Yükseker, D. (2012). Kürtlerin yerinden edilmesi ve sosyal dışlanma: 1990’lardaki zorla göçün sonuçları [Displacement of the Kurds and social exclusion: Consequences of forced migration in the 1990s], In S.G. Ihlamur-Öner & N. A. Ş. Öner (Eds.), *Küreselleşme çağında göç- kavramlar, tartışmalar* (pp. 233- 262). Istanbul, Turkey: İletişim Yayınları.

Zou, M. (2015). The legal construction of hyper-dependence and hyper-precarity in migrant work relations. *International Journal of Comparative Labour Law and Industrial Relations*, 31(2), 141-162. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2747823>