

EXCLUSIVE FREE LABOR:
VOLUNTARY UNPAID INTERNSHIPS OF WHITE COLLAR CANDIDATES

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Exclusive Free Labor: Voluntary Unpaid Internships of White Collar Candidates

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ABSTRACT

An abstract of the Thesis of Melis Soyumgürbüz, for the degree of Master of Arts from the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History to be taken June 2015

Title: Exclusive Free Labor: Voluntary Unpaid Internships of White Collar Candidates

This thesis examines voluntary unpaid internship system, and the profile and the motivations of those who participate in this form of internship in Turkey. For this purpose, interviews were conducted with totally 30 students and new graduates from three universities (Boğaziçi, Bilkent and Marmara Universities) who do at least one voluntary unpaid internship. These interviews are very significant for this research because of the inadequate voluntary internship research in academic literature. This inadequacy stems from both the lack of academic resources about unpaid internships resulted from being a recent debate and the lack of internship categorization.

The need of doing an internship which results especially from the harsh competition among peers, the desire of expanding choices and having a strong network increases the number of interns all over the world that also make internship types vary. It is a fact that not every student has a formal internship (academic or optional) at school. At this point, internship categorization is important to differentiate academic, optional and voluntary internships, and paid and unpaid forms of internships from each other.

This thesis categorizes internships and presents “voluntary unpaid internship” as the most vulnerable internship form. Then, it analyzes voluntary unpaid internships by drawing on the analysis of the precariat of Guy Standing and the forms of capital of Pierre Bourdieu. In doing so, it claims that even though voluntary

unpaid interns require higher level of the forms of capital in order to construct the intern identity, the need of doing internship usually results in white collar candidates' free labor in precarious working conditions. In other words, despite of their powerful cultural, economic and social support, voluntary unpaid interns are still a part of the process of precarization.



ÖZET

Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü'nde Yüksek Lisans derecesi için Melis Soyumgürbüz tarafından Haziran 2015'te teslim edilen tezin özeti

Başlık: Ücretsiz Seçkin Emeği: Beyaz Yaka Adaylarının Gönüllü Ücretsiz Stajları

Bu tez Türkiye'deki gönüllü ücretsiz stajları ve bu staj türüne dahil olanların profilini ve motivasyonunu incelemektedir. Bunun için, 3 üniversiteden (Boğaziçi, Bilkent ve Marmara Üniversiteleri) en az bir gönüllü ücretsiz staj yapmış toplam 30 öğrenci ve yeni mezunla röportaj yapılmıştır. Akademik literatürdeki gönüllü staj araştırmaları yetersizliği yüzünden bu röportajlar bu araştırma için oldukça önemlidir. Bu yetersizlik hem ücretsiz stajların artışıyla bu konunun yeni bir tartışma olmasından hem de staj kategorileştirmesinin eksikliğinden kaynaklanmaktadır.

Özellikle yaşlılar arası rekabet ve seçenekleri çoğaltma ve güçlü bir sosyal ağa sahip olma isteği gibi nedenlerden kaynaklanan staj yapma ihtiyacı stajyer sayısının dünya çapında artmasına neden olmuştur. Bu durum stajların da farklılaşmasıyla sonuçlanmıştır çünkü her öğrencinin resmi stajı (akademik ya da isteğe bağlı) yoktur. Staj kategorileştirmesi de tam bu noktada, akademik, isteğe bağlı ve gönüllü stajları ve ücretli ve ücretsiz stajları birbirinden ayırt etmek açısından önem taşır.

Bu tez stajları kategorize eder ve “gönüllü ücretsiz staj”ı en korunmasız staj türü olarak sunar. Sonrasında da, bu çalışma, gönüllü ücretsiz stajları Pierre Bourdieu'nün sermaye türleri ve Guy Standing'in prekarya tanımlarıyla analiz etmektedir. Gönüllü ücretsiz stajyerler, bu stajyer kimliğini oluşturabilmek için sermaye türlerinin yüksek seviyelerine ihtiyaç duymalarına rağmen, staj yapma

ihhtiyacı, genellikle, beyaz yaka adaylarının güvencesiz çalışma koşullarındaki ücretsiz emeęiyle sonuçlanır. Diğer bir deyişle, güçlü kültürel, ekonomik ve sosyal desteęe rağmen, gönüllü ücretsiz stajyerler yine de prekarizasyon sürecinin bir parçasıdırlar.



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There are not enough words to express my gratitude for my family. I have the most warm-hearted and wisest parents. They are the reason for who I am. They have always supported my decisions and encouraged me to realize my dreams. I am very lucky to have them.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this thesis to two people, my dearest aunt, İclal İdem; and my “doctor” uncle, Hüseyin İdem for their smiling faces, best wishes, and far too numerous contributions throughout my life. They both passed away this year. I would really have liked them to share in my happiness and for them to be proud of me. May they rest in peace.

*To İclal İdem
and Hüseyin İdem*

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PREFACE

During my undergraduate studies at the Department of Political Science and International Relations, I was always hearing internship stories. Some of these internships were paid, some unpaid. Because I had no internship requirement from my undergraduate degree and I have never thought that I would work in the private sector, I have never needed to do an internship. This is why I was not able to understand why people would “work” for free. I use the word of “work” in quotation marks because as I still see that the interns do not get training so much as perform relatively simple and unchallenging tasks, and work long hours as well. In other words, their positions are called as internship; however, what they do in the work place is not training but working, producing something for a firm.

The interns I know usually complain about the internships that do not improve them. Thus, I wondered why someone would do an internship which is not required if it does not improve them? These are mostly voluntary internships which are not related to undergraduate courses. Academic internship, on the other hand, is directly related to university as a requirement for some university departments. Academic internships mostly receive practical training, according to their technical backgrounds. Thus, it can be claimed that they can improve themselves for their future jobs in a way. However, the voluntary unpaid interns of business and creative business areas seem not to really get prepared for future jobs if they claim that the internship does not provide them with any improvements indeed. Thus, the key question is here that by whom, why and in what way are these internships done?

What I claim for this thesis is that white collar candidates use the forms of capital to get into precarious positions of unpaid internships which can only be done if they are supported materially in order to have a better chance at getting a better job

than people who do not have the necessary level of the forms of capital. In order to confirm voluntary unpaid interns' claims to begin a study on this issue, I did two different internships. One of them, which started in June 2014, was in a cultural and art organization firm. During this one-month internship, I was not paid. The second internship took place in September 2014, in a consultancy firm, this position lasted six months. My payment was legally correct there, according to the minimum wage. By doing these internships, I have had a chance to examine the world of interns in terms of its relations, desires and goals.

This thesis will contribute to studies on internship, white collar and employment organizations of the new economy, and the literature on the unequal conditions originated from the forms of capital. While doing a literature survey for this thesis, I noticed that a categorization is not available for internship studies. A differentiation among the various types of internship is important since the experiences they offer vary in important ways. Yet this more nuanced differentiation is not a prominent feature in the literature; this is one aspect of the discussion to what I hope to bring more clarity in this analysis. It is because the topic of this thesis is “voluntary unpaid internships,” which includes categories of both being volunteer and unpaid. Thus, a categorization seemed indispensable for this thesis. Moreover, because unpaid internship debates are quite recent this is why academic literature on this issue is insufficient.

The lack of adequate academic sources inclined me to write with “grey literature,” which refers to not academically published sources. For this reason, this thesis consists of many news reports and articles from daily newspapers and essays from career and internship blogs. In addition to the grey literature, I chose to give long quotations from interviews in the empirical chapter, Chapter Four, so as to make

the respondents speak about their situations. In doing so, I aimed to demonstrate how valuable the experiences of interns are for an academic study and my thesis.



CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

When I started to do my internship, I was about to graduate and dreaming of getting a job in this place after two months of an unpaid internship. They told me that there would be a recruitment period at the end of the summer. Sometimes, I was working more than 10 hours, I was that ambitious. However, at the end of summer, nobody offered me a job. They offered me a one more month unpaid internship. I continue to do that to have a good result. At the end of one month, they said let's try one more month again. Then, it continued like that totally six months after my graduation. When I realized that they would never hire me, I quit.¹

Elif, who did a voluntary unpaid internship in an advertising agency, told her story with these words. Internship seems in her words to be different from what someone who has not experienced an internship in recent years understands about internships. People who do not have any internship experience in the recent past think that an internship is where one gets on-the-job training. However, while the world economy and sociology have changed day by day, the internship system cannot be expected to remain the same.

In this thesis, the voluntary unpaid interns implies young people who have entered to the work life in the first decade of the millennium, have no work experience of the Fordist type and they do not have many expectations of job security. They are willing to be reskilled and re-trained again and again.² In order to have that improvement, they even accept to work under the precarious working conditions.

¹ Elif, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: "*Staja başladığımda mezun olmak üzereydim ve 2 aylık bir ücretsiz stajın sonunda orada bir işe gireceğimi düşünüyordum. Yaz sonunda işe alım süreci olacağını söylemişlerdi. 10 saatten fazla çalıştığım zamanlar falan oldu, o kadar hırslıydım yani. Ama yaz sonunda kimse işe falan almadı onun yerine 1 ay daha staj önerdiler. İyi bir sonuç almak için devam ettim ben de. 1 ayın sonunda hadi 1 ay daha deneyelim de ne olacak görelim dediler. Bu şekilde mezuniyetten sonraki 6 ay orada devam ettim. İşe almayacaklarını fark edince de çıktım.*"

² George Morgan, Julian Wood, and Pariece Nelligan, "Beyond the Vocational Fragments: Creative Work, Precarious Labour and the Idea of 'Flexploitation'," *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 24, no.3 (2013), pp. 397-415, p.403.

Increasing insecurity of employment and youth unemployment are globally observed characteristics of the contemporary work environment. In this environment, different forms of internship are widely discussed both as a means of combating unemployment and a manifestation of the precarization of work.

This thesis begins with an observation that there are different types of internship which is often overlooked in the relevant literature and focuses on voluntary unpaid internships. In general, the discussion of internship in the literature does not provide an evaluation of the different outcomes of different internship situations and thus presents an incomplete picture. By keeping in mind the existence of different types of internships, this thesis aims to provide an overview of internships in Turkey.

On the basis of a study carried out by conducting structured, qualitative interviews with students and recent graduates of Boğaziçi University and with a more limited sample of students from two other universities in Turkey who have chosen to do voluntary unpaid internships, the thesis raises a series of questions concerning the motives behind this choice, the expectations from and the kind of work involved in voluntary internship, and the profile of students who have the possibility of finding such internship opportunities.

There are some articles which explain the situation of unpaid workers of the creative business with the forms of capital, but they are limited to a few specific sectors such as media and photography and do not differentiate between different types of internship³. The only detailed study on the recent situation of interns is Ross

³ Sabina Siebert and Fiona Wilson. "All Work and No Pay: Consequences of Unpaid Work in the Creative Industries." *Work, Employment & Society* 27, no.4 (2013): 711-721; Keith Randle, Cynthia Forson, and Moira Calveley. "Towards a Bourdieusian Analysis of The Social Composition of the UK Film and Television Workforce." *Work, Employment & Society* (2014): 0950017014542498.

Perlin's book *Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy*.⁴ Perlin notes the ambiguity of the term internship in the following way:

The very significance of the word intern lies in its ambiguity. It represents a broader concept, and sends out a more targeted social signal, than "temp" or "freelancer" ever has. Of more importance than any definition is the rhetoric that flavors the internship discourse: "a foot in the door" for young people and a way of "paying your dues," internships are also "a great way to get experience," "build your résumé," and "make contacts." A "win-win" for employers and "go-getter" interns alike, "you get out what you put in."⁵

In stating so, Perlin makes a very useful contribution toward a definition of internship. However, even Perlin's book, does not adequately account for different types of internship. On the other hand, the literature on Turkey focuses on academic internships. There are actually many theses written on internship, but none of them aims to explain the case of voluntary internship.

While this thesis aims to contribute to the existing literature with a discussion on three types of internships, there is only one type of internship legally, the type which is linked to the educational system. In fact, all of these theses written on internships in Turkey are on these academic internships which refer to compulsory internships that are part of the requirements for graduation. Internships done by the students in medical and vocational schools are the most commonly studied compulsory internships in this context.⁶ This thesis, on the other hand, attempts to

⁴ However, even in his book, the bibliography consist of the grey literature usually online sources (career websites, columns, newspapers etc.), see. Ross Perlin, *Intern Nation: How to Earn Nothing and Learn Little in the Brave New Economy*. (New York: Verso Books, 2012).

⁵ Perlin, p. 23-24.

⁶ For some examples, see. Recai Gören, "A Comparative Analysis of Internship Practice in Tourism Management Programs of State and Foundation Universities: The Case of Ankara Province" (MA. Thesis, Gazi University, 2005); Nurdoğan Uysal, "Effects of Trading Education of Commercial High School Students on Their Vocational Education and Training Places, an Application (İstanbul, borough of Bağcılar)" (MA. Thesis, Adnan Menderes University, 2006); Ömer Faruk Yener, "Tıp Fakültesi 6.Sınıf Öğrencilerinin Aile Hekimliği ile İlgili Düşünceleri ve Mezuniyet Öncesi Tıp Eğitiminde Aile Hekimliği Stajının Yerinin Değerlendirilmesi" (M.A. Thesis, Ondokuz Mayıs University, 2011); Fatma Nur Afşin, "Stajyer Öğretmenlerin Meslekle İlgili Sorunları ve Çözüm Yolları" (MA. Thesis, Hacettepe University, 1988); Meral Korkmaz, "Summary of the Study on Adequacy of Occupational Training of Students of Ready-wear Curriculum the School of Higher Education" (MA. Thesis, Gazi University, 2003).

present a picture of voluntary- and more specifically voluntary unpaid- internships in Turkey.

What is interesting is that much of the ongoing debate on internships in Turkey takes place with reference to the recently emerging phenomenon of voluntary internship as will be discussed later in this chapter. In Turkey, even the government and different public institutions emphasize the importance of doing an internship through their discourses and practices. However, the unpaid character of voluntary internships which are not related to school or any academic institution leads to certain questions as revealed in Elif's story mentioned in the beginning of this chapter. How is that situation accepted by interns? One of the points made in this thesis is that academic internships are usually based on observation and experiential learning whereas voluntary unpaid internships actually involve regular work and interns get really tired at the end of the day.

The studies concerning free work draw attention to only some sectors, like the media. However, voluntary unpaid internships can be observed in almost every sector. At this point, the thesis asks by whom, for what purpose and how are voluntary unpaid internships done and aims to contribute towards answering these questions. In doing so, the claim of this thesis is that white-collar candidates who are at the top layer of the youth employment do voluntary unpaid internships in order to prepare themselves for future precarious working conditions. The atmosphere of insecurity and the increasing competitive pressures regarding employment opportunities affect students even in prestigious universities and lead them to seek voluntary unpaid internships with the full knowledge that it involves exploitation and does not really constitute a meaningful learning experience. This type of internship indeed involves exploitation and enables employers to substitute interns for regular

employees in a context where internship is seen as a necessity for those preparing to participate in the labor market. This is largely in conformity with the prevailing literature on the precarization of employment, with the work of Guy Standing in particular. Perhaps doing voluntary unpaid internship alone does not place them in the same class position as the precariat but still they have a lot of things in common with the precariat. Thus, they truly experience the process of precarization. Yet, the findings of the thesis also show that the main motive of the students interviewed is not really the fear of unemployment. Instead the fear of unemployment, these students rather seem to be motivated by three objectives: To build a good CV with more than a good university education, to build a network, and to get a good knowledge about the work environment in order to be able to make informed choices about future career paths.

The thesis pursues the question about the profile of students who have the possibility of doing voluntary unpaid internships in an analytical frame which draws on Bourdieu's work on economic, cultural and social capital to argue that the possibility of internship is open to students who already possess these types of capital by virtue of their family background and education. Those who are economically able to work without being paid, who have sufficient cultural capital to be attractive to employers and who have networks to have access to internship opportunities are the ones who can be voluntary unpaid interns and can thus expand their networks and form a better basis to make informed career choices in conformity with their preferences and capabilities.

By showing how internship takes different forms and by focusing on voluntary unpaid internships, the thesis tries to draw attention to the attitudes and practices that are shaped in the current context of flexible employment relations

which are not fully explored in the literature that presents internship in general as a form of precarious employment.

Methodology

Internship Categorization for Turkey

This thesis examines voluntary unpaid internships in Turkey. However, one of the disappointments experienced in reviewing the literature was the lack of distinction among the quite different types of internship. Thus, the thesis begins with an attempt to categorize different types of internships. When someone says that “I am doing an internship,” it does not create a specific picture in one’s mind recently. According to the research on literature and preliminary interviews with university officers, instructors and students, there are three fundamental internship categories that I observed: academic, optional, and voluntary internships.⁷ While academic and optional internships are formal, voluntary internships are informal form of internship. Because these three internship types have both paid and unpaid options, these options could also lead to six sub-types of internship.

The first type is academic internship. This internship is required to graduate from university this is why the respondents called it "compulsory internship" in the Turkish context. In this type of internships, the social insurance contribution of this interns are paid from the university's budget. According to the regulations of the three different universities used in this study, the scope of the education programs including academic internships are prepared by the departments concerned and are finalized by the proposal of relevant faculties or the school committees' and senates'

⁷ These internships can be called as “Zorunlu Staj,” “İsteğe Bağlı Staj” and “Gönüllü Staj” in Turkish.

approval.⁸ Therefore, the internship requirement for a department can differ from one university to another.

Academic internships are usually included in the programs of departments providing technical or professional education such as engineering, education, or tourism. However, this practice has now spread to other departments such those in the social sciences in some universities as well. While the Department of Sociology does not have any internship requirements at Boğaziçi or Marmara University,⁹ the Department of Sociology at Galatasaray University requires an academic internship before graduation in both the business and creative business sectors such as human resources or advertising.¹⁰ Therefore, internship also seems to be a growing obligation for the social sciences, although it does not offer a specific technical profession to its students.

A new and unexpected finding of the thesis appeared during the preliminary research which showed that that some university departments permit their students to do “optional internships.” Unlike the university departments which require academic internships for students’ graduation, departments without compulsory academic internship might open an optional internship path for students’ careers.¹¹ These

⁸ For Boğaziçi University Undergraduate Academic Regulations: http://www.boun.edu.tr/tr_TR/Content/Ogrenciler/Ogrenci_Isleri/Yonetmelik_ve_Ic_Tuzukler/BU_Lisans_Egitim_ve_Ogrenci_Yonetmeligi [1 April 2015].

⁹ Further informations could be useful to understand internship conditions if any because for example, Bilkent University does not have sociology department.. For Boğaziçi University, Department of Sociology, the scope of education program: http://www.boun.edu.tr/tr_TR/Content/Akademik/Lisans_Katalogu/FenEdebiyat_Fakultesi/Sosyoloji_Bolumu [1 April 2015]; For Marmara University Department of Sociology, the scope of education program: http://dosya.marmara.edu.tr/www/mevzuat/yeni/mu_yonetmelik_onlisans_lisans_v54.pdf [1 April 2015].

¹⁰ This link would be useful to reach the Academic Internship Conditions of the Department of Sociology in Galatasaray University: <http://sosyoloji.gsu.edu.tr/programlar/lisans/staj> [1 April 2015].

¹¹ For some examples, related links from Turkish Universities: Boğaziçi University University Committee Decision on Optional Internships: http://www.fed.boun.edu.tr/form_files/Zorunlu_olmad%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1_halde_staj_yapma_konusunda.pdf [1 April 2015]; Marmara University Science and Art Faculty Decision on Optional Internships: http://dosya.marmara.edu.tr/www/mevzuat/yeni/mu_fef_ogrenci_staj_yonergesi_v09.pdf [1 April 2015].

optional internships are not same as compulsory academic internships. After students apply to their departments and fill out some forms, if the university finds the internship relevant to the program offered by the department, the student might have a social insurance contribution through the university like in an academic internship. This means that the optional system allows students to do internships that could be counted as “experiential learning” by the regulations on internships, as will be discussed in Chapter Two.

The last category of internships in Turkey is “voluntary internships.” Unlike the other types of internship, voluntary internships have no school connection. They are done not as an obligation to graduate, but for another reason, which this thesis investigates. Due to the lack of school connections, they can be fulfilled in various ways involving different people, sectors, payments, and working conditions. Voluntary interns can be students or graduates while academic and optional interns have to be students because of the experiential procedure. Thus, it is possible to witness many arbitrary and different "intern" situations in voluntary unpaid internship system. It is observed that today’s internship perception has changed with the existence of voluntary internships. Unlike other types of internship, voluntary internships can be done in many different conditions such as short-term or long-term, part-time or full-time.

Paid and unpaid internships in Turkey will be examined in Chapter Two and Three in more detail, but in the methodology, the definition of unpaid internship for this thesis is important in the selection of the respondent. As can be seen in the “field research” section of the thesis, all of the respondents have at least one voluntary unpaid internship. Being an “unpaid intern” means that the labor is not secured and

paid, according to the labor standards in Turkey. Although voluntary interns receive really low payments (100-500 liras per month) or for food and transportation expenses, they are still regarded as unpaid interns if they work below the minimum wage which is calculated according to how many days in the week they have come to work.¹²

Codifications and Statistics

Academic internships are primarily carried out by the regulations of the Ministry of Education and the Social Security and General Health Insurance Law. These regulations concerning internships will be presented in Chapter Three, and will be compared to academic, optional and voluntary internships. When this thesis defines the meaning and the implementations of academic internships, it refers to undergraduate internships. Moreover, statistics from TURKSTAT¹³ are used to constitute the framework of educated youth employment and unemployment. In doing so, the status of white-collar candidate in Turkey will be examined.

Field Research

The method used in this research was in-depth interview. The research targeted white collar candidate university students who had done voluntary unpaid internships. It was useful to understand the influence of internships for the future work life so the respondents also included graduates who had done voluntary unpaid internships during their undergraduate careers. Only one of the respondents had done a voluntary unpaid internship during his graduate program.

¹² As it will be discussed in Chapter Three in more detail, voluntary interns are counted as regular employees, according to Labor Law no. 4857.

¹³ TURKSTAT (Turkish Statistical Institute) is the official statistical institution of the Turkish State.

There was also no sectoral differentiation in this research because it was possible to encounter unpaid interns in many different sectors. The voluntary unpaid internship system is present in a diverse range of sectors from advertising agencies to state hospitals, from consultancy firms to translation bureaus.

Thirty people were interviewed for this thesis. Twelve students and 18 recent graduates (less than three years had passed since graduation) constituted the sample. The interviews were conducted between September 2014 and April 2015, mostly around university campuses. The contacts generally took 25 to 40 minutes. Not all the interviews were selected to quote to support our findings in Chapter Four, but some of the respondents provided rich information so they were worth mentioning. The names of these respondents and the companies where they did their internships were changed to provide confidentiality.

The type of the interview was standardized, open-ended interview. They had identical questions so they were free to contribute much detail information. Thus, the respondents expressed their experiences, expectations and desires at in detail. There was only one different question for the graduates and students during the interviews. This different question concerned the evaluation of the expected value before graduation for the students and the real value of the internship after graduation for the graduates. There were various profiles of graduate respondents. During interviews, one was looking for a job, another was preparing for the university entrance exam again, one another was doing a voluntary paid internship. The other eleven graduates had entered jobs after graduations at different times and in different industries. The students also were studying in different years at university. All respondents had done at least one voluntary unpaid internship. Nine out of 30 respondents had done more than one voluntary unpaid internship. These 30

respondents have 45 voluntary unpaid internships in total. Six of 30 respondents had done academic internships as well, but they also had done voluntary unpaid internships. Seven of 30 respondents had also done paid internships.

These 30 respondents had studied at three different universities. 20 interviews were made with the respondents from Boğaziçi University as the main group, five interviews from Bilkent University and five interviews from Marmara University. University choices were paid regard to the different levels of educational attainment, and regional and socio-economic differences. The different level of educational attainment is related to cultural capital in modern industrial societies.¹⁴ Because one aim of the thesis seeks demonstrate the relationship between the forms of capital and doing voluntary unpaid internship, I chose different universities to strengthen this relation.

Bilkent University located in Ankara is in another city than other two universities, which are located in İstanbul. It helps to analyze the regional variability of internships. Bilkent University is also a private non-profit foundation university. It is an autonomous institution which is not directly connected with the state institutions. Although there are many students with scholarship, a considerable amount of fees are demanded from those who are not scholarship students. Thus, in order to control the belonging to higher economic class effect on voluntary unpaid internships, three out of five the respondents from Bilkent University were non-scholarship students.

Moreover, in order to evaluate the effect of different levels of cultural capital on voluntary unpaid internship system, Marmara University was selected. Boğaziçi University and Bilkent University are on the list of best universities in the world.

¹⁴ Paul DiMaggio and John Mohr, "Cultural Capital, Educational Attainment, and Marital Selection," *American Journal of Sociology* 90, no.6 (1985), pp.1231-1261.

According to Times Higher Education's 2014 records, Boğaziçi University ranks in 139th place and Bilkent University between 201 and 225.¹⁵ The universities are ranked in terms of "their core missions: teaching, research, knowledge transfer and international outlook."¹⁶

Marmara University was not included in this ranking, thus, I would like to compare voluntary unpaid interns' experience from Marmara in order to examine whether or not Marmara University's students and graduates have the same experience in voluntary unpaid internships even though they have a different cultural capital. As a result, I chose Bilkent (different location, different industrial culture) and Marmara (different cultural capital, less competitive) universities to confirm my main results for Boğaziçi University. In the end, the results from different universities confirmed themselves in the reasons to do voluntary unpaid internships. All the respondents had similar reasons to do voluntary unpaid internship regardless of the regional, educational and economical conditions.

Based on the preliminary personal interviews, at first I hypothesized that women would be more likely to do voluntary unpaid internships than men. In particular, considering traditional gender roles, it was expected that men might be less willing to work unpaid. Despite the interns' young age range, men were expected to seek paid jobs in order to gain independence from their parents. Still, the male respondents were not questioned concerning gender roles, during the interviews. However, they did not use any expression with regard to their expected gender position in unpaid internship either. Moreover, although a gender-based generalization from the interviews data cannot be valid, our interviews included 17

¹⁵ *Hürriyet*, 3 October 2014, "Dünya Sıralamalarında Türk Üniversiteleri," <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/egitim/27323412.asp> [1 April 2015]

¹⁶ For all the rank published by Times New Education, see *World University Rankings 2014-2015*, <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/> [1 April 2015]

male and 13 female respondents. Accordingly, what can be said from this study is that voluntary unpaid internship does not pertain to female, white collar candidates.

This study also included to social science students who did not usually have academic internships in the first place. However, it was surprising that some students and graduates had studied in faculties like law and engineering who had academic internships also did voluntary internships. This finding contributed a great deal to this thesis while investigating the reasons for doing voluntary unpaid internship. By doing so, it was observed that voluntary internships were not done only because of the lack of academic internships, but also because to gain more internship experience.

Organization

In the Chapter Two, the thesis presents a survey of literature along with an analysis based on career websites and discusses the frame of analysis by critically engaging with the studies on the precarization of employment and by drawing on Bourdieu's approach to different forms of capital.

In the Chapter Three provides a general preparation for the interview analysis of Chapter Four. In the first part of this chapter, a discussion of the legislative changes concerning internship in Turkey is presented in their relationship with the changing context of employment in the country. In the second part, statistics of youth unemployment as it affects university graduates are presented. The involvement of the universities in supporting their students in the pursuit of internship opportunities is also discussed in this context.

The Chapter Four presents the main arguments of the thesis on the basis of the interviews conducted with the students. The field research of this thesis provides

the opportunity to observe three different universities and student and graduates from these universities. The interviews with students and graduates of these universities are the main source of this thesis. Due to the lack of a voluntary unpaid internship literature in Turkish sources, there will be many direct quotations from the interviews in this chapter in order to constitute more reliable results to support my arguments.

Finally, the conclusion chapter will present an overview of all the results and analysis in the thesis and the conclusions of the author.



CHAPTER II

INTERNSHIPS IN LITERATURE AND THEORY

This chapter examines, first, the literature on internship. By doing so, it aims to provide an overview of the arguments specifically about unpaid internships.

Because the debate on internship is a recent one, it is rarely covered in academic books or journals, but the topic has an increasing importance as its media coverage indicates. In the second section of this chapter, a discussion on the forms of capital is presented. Bourdieu's theory on the forms of capital is useful in the assessment of the identity of the voluntary unpaid interns. Last, how internship has been formed under today's precarious working conditions is explored by drawing on the literature on the working conditions of the new economy. While the studies of Richard Sennett discuss the sociology of the new working conditions, Guy Standing shows the economic results of these conditions.

The Fundamentals of Unpaid Internship

Internship is basically a way of experiential learning; in other words, "learning by doing."¹⁷ In a global understanding, it can be called a practice of one's theoretical base, or job training for professional career, usually related to the undergraduate education.¹⁸ As was first discussed by Dewey, even before World War II, "learning by doing" has always seemed very useful for students. There are many

¹⁷ John Dewey, *Democracy and Education* (Teddington: Echo Library, 2007); John Dewey, *Experience and Education* (New York: Touchstone, 1997) ; J. E. Swan & S. W. Hansen, "CAPS - Client Adaptive Problem Solving: Experiential Team Learning," *Marketing Education Review* 6, no.2 (1996), pp. 33-44, p. 33.

¹⁸ The Ohio State University Department of Political Science's definition of internship, "What Is An "Internship"?" <http://polisci.osu.edu> [10 March 2015].

definitions of internship, such as experiential learning, experiential education, practice, service learning, cooperative education, and field experience.¹⁹ However, discussing unpaid internship is a new phenomenon. Here, current and old definitions of internship will be presented and discussed. Thus, the background of the recent importance of doing an internship, and the arguments for and against of unpaid internships, will be examined in the following paragraphs.

An up-to-date definition of internship could be given by comparing it to apprenticeship. Taylor claims that internships are also presumed as work experience which must be realized before graduation by students.²⁰ However, rather than a type of job training similar to apprenticeship, internship is recently considered as a job type which is recommended to write on one's CV. Liz Bingham, managing partner of Ernst&Young (an international financial services company), remarked that "internships are jobs and should be treated as such."²¹ Similarly, according to recent news, blogs and career websites, an internship seems like a traditional apprenticeship but it is basically temporary paid or unpaid jobs or white-collar careers to practice and does not have to be done during the undergraduate years.²²

According to career experts of important career websites from different

¹⁹ Robert L. Sigmon, "Service-learning: Three Principles. Synergist. National Center for Service-Learning," *Action* 8, no.1 (Spring 1979), pp.9-11; Deborah F. Beard, "The Status of Internships/Cooperative Education Experiences in Accounting Education," *Journal of Accounting Education* 16, no.3 (1998), pp. 507-516; Richard A. Katula and Elizabeth Threnhauser, "Experiential Education in the Undergraduate Curriculum," *Communication Education* 48, no.3 (1999), pp.238-255.

²⁰ M. Susan Taylor, "Effects of College Internships on Individual Participants," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 73, no.3 (1988), pp. 393-401.

²¹ Ben Lyons, 2013, "Interns Are Workers too," <http://www.oecd.org/employment/interns-are-workers-too.htm> [10 April 2015].

²² Heather R. Huhman, 30 July 2013, "5 Reasons Internships after Graduation Are a Good Plan," <http://www.businessinsider.com/5-reasons-internships-after-graduation-are-a-good-plan-2013-9> [10 April 2015]; Mehroz Baig, 09 December 2013, "Unpaid Internships for Graduates Now the New Norm?" http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mehroz-baig/unpaid-internships-for-gr_b_3908475.html [10 April 2015]; Steven Steinfeld, 15 September 2014, "Intern Your Way to a Job after Graduation," <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/20140915162200-12203319-intern-your-way-to-a-job-after-graduation> [10 April 2015].

countries who specialized on youth employment, all newcomers of business life should have at least one experience before getting hired for an entry-level job.²³ Thus, it is a fact that even though one has no academic internship during the undergraduate education, these career experts claim that internship is still necessary to get a job in the future. These experts imply voluntary internships while they are stating the necessity of internships in business life. However, unlike the grey literature, academic literature usually does not regard internships as a type of job level, as was stated in the former paragraphs, but instead as a type of job training which implies the function of learning practice with the theoretical background of university or high school classes.²⁴

When it comes to the content of internships, they consist of the interns' labor and time. In this regard, many universities in the United States provide information and advice their websites about how interns can take the maximum benefit of this labor and time such as "goal settlement," "time management," and "networking." However, according to a study in the United States, by a Gallup-Purdue University of college graduates, not every intern has to get these benefits of internship. Only one out of three recent graduates think that they have had useful internships as a practical

²³ Katharine Hansen, "College Students: You Simply Must Do an Internship (Better Yet: Multiple Internships)!" http://www.quintcareers.com/internship_importance.html [10 April 2015]; Susanne J. Grossman, "Why You Should do an Internship?" <http://www.qcc.cuny.edu/careerServices/oim/11-article1.html> [10 April 2015]; Merve Tunçer Sepici, 14 May 2013, "Staj Yapmak Ne İşime Yarar?" <http://www.kariyer.net/kariyer-rehberi/staj-yapmak-ne-isime-yarar/> [10 April 2015]; Penny Loretto, "Is an Internship Really All That Important?"; <http://internships.about.com/od/internshiptip1/a/Is-An-Internship-Really-All-That-Important.htm> [10 April 2015].

²⁴ Barbara A. Hursch, and Lenore Borzak, "Toward Cognitive Development Through Field Studies," *Journal of Higher Education* 50, no.1 (1979), pp. 63-77; Rick Williams, "The Impact of Field Education on Student Development Research Findings," *Journal of Cooperative Education* 27, no.2 (1990), pp. 29-45; Deborah F. Beard, "The Status of Internship / Cooperative Education Experiences in Accounting Education," *Journal of Accounting Education* 16, no.3-4 (1998), pp. 507-516; Sharon Burnett., "The Future of Accounting Education: A Regional Perspective," *Journal of Education for Business* 48, no.3 (2003), pp.129-134; Dimitrios M. Mihail, "Internships at Greek Universities: An Exploratory Study," *Journal of Workplace Learning* 18, no.1 (2006), pp.28 – 41.

background to their university studies.²⁵ It is possible that they expected to get more things than “goal settlement,” “time management,” and “networking” from their internships. This could be the reason that they are not satisfied by these internships. Hence, it is not very easy to understand why and how young people choose internships and whether or not these internships meet their expectations afterwards. In this thesis, Chapter Four will examine these expectations and reality issues concerning the experiences of voluntary unpaid interns.

The internship system is now an international phenomenon. While career experts insist regarding internships as necessary for students or graduates to get jobs, work life has globally been shaped in this way, too. Internships can easily be seen among young people who live in countries that share similar economic, technological, and social experience all over the world. This situation allows intern candidates to apply for internship programs in any city in which they live or study or abroad through academic or corporate programs. For instance, Disneyland Florida takes online applications from intern candidates from all over the world or The Erasmus Program encourages students to do internships in Europe.²⁶ These internships are not for academic reasons. These programs, organized by recognized institutions, are usually voluntary, but also paid.²⁷

Internship must be defined with a differentiation between paid and unpaid internships. Internship can be done for free or one can earn money in exchange for

²⁵ For the details of the research of Gallup-Pardue University, Sean Seymour and Julie Ray, 13 November 2014, “Recent Grads More Likely to Have Had Useful Internships”, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/179201/recent-grads-likely-useful-internships.aspx> [10 April 2015].

²⁶ Disneyland accepts internship applications from all over the world, for further details: <http://disneycareers.com/gateway> [10 April 2015]; Erasmus programme also provides students with work experience in European countries, for more information: http://www.erasmusprogramme.com/international_internships.php [10 April 2015].

²⁷ Payments for Disneyland are presented on the website: <http://www.glassdoor.com/Intern-Salary/Walt-Disney-Company-Internship-Salary-E717.htm> [10 April 2015]; Payment conditions for Erasmus interns, here: <https://www.studium.uni-freiburg.de/studienbewerbung-en/austausch-en/erasmus-en/placement/placement-en.htm#foerderung> [10 April 2015].

their labor. Thus, internship is not always perceived as a training period during which young people gain practice adding to their theoretical background. Instead, it could be seen as a job from which students or recent graduates earn money.²⁸

The most controversial topic is whether the unpaid internship is acceptable or not.²⁹ Unpaid internships recently have become a matter of discussion throughout the world including Turkey.³⁰ While some argue that unpaid internships are acceptable because they are for the benefit of both employers and interns, others claim the disadvantages of unpaid internships for employers, interns, employees and all the employment system. In the following paragraphs, the arguments of the different sides on unpaid internships will be discussed.

A number of views which consider internships as a practice of school education support the normality of unpaid internships. Rob Killich, CEO of Clerkswell, a digital solutions company in UK, claims that the company has some jobs which do not lead directly to money making (it is what is called “intern jobs” in Chapter Four, such as translating some texts, preparing presentations and filing); in

²⁸ As an example, the US companies that pay interns the most: “Stajyerlere En Fazla Para Ödeyen 25 Şirket,” <http://www.webmasto.com/stajyerlere-en-fazla-para-odeyen-25-sirket-2014> [5 April 2015].

²⁹ Rachel Burger, 16 January 2014, “Why Your Unpaid Internship Makes You Less Employable,” <http://www.forbes.com/sites/realspin/2014/01/16/why-your-unpaid-internship-makes-you-less-employable/> [10 April 2015]; David Ellis, 20 March 2014, “Unpaid Internships: Work for Pay, Never Pay for Work,” <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/universityeducation/student-life/10709334/Unpaid-internships-work-for-pay-never-pay-for-work.html> [10 April 2015]; Zach Schonfeld, 17 February 2014, “Internships Where You Do Real Work for Free Are Illegal, but Colleges Haven't Treated Them That Way,” <http://www.newsweek.com/internships-where-you-do-real-work-free-are-illegal-colleges-havent-treated-them-229349> [10 April 2015]; Christopher Zara, 19 July 2013, “Are All Unpaid Internships Illegal? Labor Lawyers Explain How Businesses Can Avoid Lawsuits,” <http://www.ibtimes.com/are-all-unpaid-internships-illegal-labor-lawyers-explain-how-businesses-can-avoid-lawsuits-1352583> [10 April 2015]; Steven Greenhouse, 2 April 2010, “The Unpaid Intern, Legal or Not”, http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/03/business/03intern.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 [10 April 2015].

³⁰ Turkey, USA, Canada, Australia and the UK are some of these countries. For further information: Christopher Zara, 30 September 2014, “Unpaid Internships Illegal In Canada: Ontario Businesses Busted In Labor Blitz,” <http://www.ibtimes.com/unpaid-internships-illegal-canada-ontario-businesses-busted-labor-blitz-1697380> [10 April 2015]; Emily Bourke, 11 August 2014, “Unpaid Internships under Scrutiny as Experts Investigate Line between Experience and Exploitation,” <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-08-11/unpaid-internships-under-scrutiny/5662856> [10 April 2015]; Jim Waterson, 28 November 2013, “9 Of The Worst Unpaid Internships In Britain,” <http://www.buzzfeed.com/jimwaterson/worst-examples-of-unpaid-internships-in-britain#.ouwA533Eb> [10 April 2015].

other words, the client does not pay the company for these jobs. In this regard, an intern can gain experience while doing these types of jobs and the company does not pay the intern for his/her non-profitable work. Besides, according to Killich, it is difficult to find an inexperienced good intern. It is his claim that the company cannot afford to pay for a bad employee. Thus, an unpaid intern is good for the company. Thus, in his words, having an unpaid intern is regarded as a benefit for both who can gain experience and who receive benefit of free labor.³¹

Penny Loretto is an internship expert who writes articles on an important internship website and makes career planning workshops. She asserts that even if internships are unpaid, they are still of benefit to interns, thus unpaid internships have to be done.³² Thus, she indirectly emphasizes that unpaid work is hard to accept but internship is still very important to one's career.

Moreover, Stephen Poloz, the governor of the Bank of Canada, recommends that young people work for free in order to be prepared for the struggles of business. A person who works free can endure every harsh situation in work life.³³ From this point of view, it seems that the most difficult step of the working life is the unpaid work. It means that one, who is able to resist free labor, can also win every battle in business life.

Other arguments in the defense of unpaid internships regard internships as a kind of free training provided by employers, instead of seeing it as a form of exploitation. When interns receive training in work place, the work experience

³¹ Rob Killick, 17 October 2011, "Why Unpaid Internships are a Good Thing - They Help the Young Get a Foot in the Door," <http://search.proquest.com/docview/898486691?accountid=9645> [10 April 2015].

³² Penny Loretto, "Are There Benefits to Doing an Unpaid Internship," <http://internships.about.com/od/internshiptip1/a/Are-There-Benefits-To-Doing-An-Unpaid-Internship.htm> [10 April 2015].

³³ Tavia Grant, 4 November 2014, "Poloz's Prescription for Unemployed Youth: Work for Free," <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/poloz-having-something-unpaid-on-your-cv-is-very-worth-it/article21439305/> [10 April 2015].

gained has the same value as money.³⁴ As a consequence, these examples show that the insufficient economic conditions of a company to train an inexperienced person can result in hiring an unpaid intern. The free labor of interns is also glamorized with the career planning advice and the illustration of a good start to prepare for a harsh future.

There are counter-views as will be explained in more detail below. First, Miya Tokumitsu, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, produced a theory on creative business, named "do what you love," which illuminates free work in other sectors as well. , The unpaid internship system as a whole seems to be a form of exploitation of young people's labor. Tokumitsu's research shows the glamorization of work life in which one can even work for free. She examines the mentality that people's relationship with their work turns into a romantic love affair. She indicates Steve Jobs, Apple CEO, as the biggest representative of the "do what you love" creed. While Jobs advised people to find something they loved to do, Tokumitsu claims that the way to work is not as romantic a path to walk as Jobs claimed. The real work life offers harsh conditions and is very remote from to be creative. It cannot also be realized without strong family support and a strong nervous system.³⁵

Second, it is illegal to make people work without pay even if they are interns. In some countries,³⁶ it is allowed under some conditions, but still these conditions hardly apply to long-term internships. For example, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, six main criteria must be met if there is an unpaid internship.

³⁴ Derek Thompson, 10 May 2012, "In Defense of Unpaid Internships," <http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2012/05/in-defense-of-unpaid-internships/257000/> [10 April 2015].

³⁵ Miya Tokumitsu, "In the Name of Love," <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/01/in-the-name-of-love/> [10 April 2015].

³⁶ United States is one of these countries which allow unpaid internships. In order to see the conditions: United States Department of Labor, Internship Programs Under The Fair Labor Standards Act <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm> [10 April 2015].

The first criterion is “the internship, even though it includes actual operation of the facilities of the employer, is similar to training which would be given in an educational environment”; second, “the internship experience is for the benefit of the intern”; third, “the intern does not displace regular employees, but works under close supervision of existing staff”; fourth, “the employer that provides the training derives no immediate advantage from the activities of the intern; and on occasion its operations may actually be impeded”; fifth, “the intern is not necessarily entitled to a job at the conclusion of the internship”; and last, “the employer and the intern understand that the intern is not entitled to wages for the time spent in the internship.”³⁷

These criteria actually imply academic internships more than voluntary ones. Under these conditions, the internship has to be job training rather than a job. Thus, the U.S. Department of Labor conditions do not match what employers expect from voluntary unpaid interns or the expectations of voluntary unpaid interns. On the other hand, in the Turkish legislation, as will be examined in the next chapter, only internships with school connection are considered internship. Voluntary interns must have the status of normal employees of the company in terms of insurance contributions and payments.³⁸

Third, the unpaid internship system also might be a threat for permanent employees. Some argue that the internship system is replacing entry-level jobs, which could lead to problems for both permanent employees and unpaid interns. Unpaid internships allow employers to distinguish skilled and less-skilled, educated

³⁷ For all conditions, see the United States Department of Labor, Internship Programs under The Fair Labor Standards Act, <http://www.dol.gov/whd/regs/compliance/whdfs71.htm> [10 April 2015].

³⁸ The employment rights and payments of interns in UK and Turkey, which are very similar to each other: <https://www.gov.uk/employment-rights-for-interns>; Kurt, Resul (2011) “Stajyer Üniversitelilerin Ücret ve Sosyal Güvenlik Durumu,” *Yaklaşım Dergisi* 224, (2011); Murat Özdamar and Erden Çakar. “Staj Yapan Öğrencilere Ödenen Ücretlerden Verdi ve Sigorta Primi Kesintileri Nasıl Yapılacak?” *Mali Çözüm Dergisi* 116, pp.201-208.

and less-educated intern candidates in the earlier stages in one's working life.³⁹

While early categorization eliminates some who were described as less-skilled or less-educated in the first step of the business world, others gain early experience in business life and have more chance to become regular employees than others. Still, some interns remain willing to work for free and gain unpaid experience that would appear on their resumes.

Fourth, it is a commonly held view that paying interns makes the internship more attractive to interns. Paid internships can be seen as preferable to unpaid internships because they allow students to meet their expenses even when the money earned is not much. On an intern search website, "InternMatch," paid internships have two and a half times more clicks than unpaid internships.⁴⁰ Therefore, for the employers, paying interns can be much more useful if they want to be able to choose from among a greater number of intern candidates.

Last, a study on unpaid interns conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE),⁴¹ an American employer's association research, illustrates that unpaid internships are not as useful as paid internships. 2013 Student Survey of NACE showed that unpaid internships do not result in as successful an outcome as paid internships do. Although the research does not provide any reason for this outcome, it gives some numbers to compare the benefits. While 63.1 percent of paid interns receive at least one job offer, unpaid interns receive 37 percent. One other result of this research, doing paid or unpaid internship really increases the chance of getting a job offer because only 35.2 percent of those who have no

³⁹ Emily Delaney, "Unpaid Internships Replacing Entry-Level Jobs," https://www.academia.edu/6032008/Unpaid_Internships_Replacing_Entry-Level_Jobs [10 April 2015].

⁴⁰ Nathan Parcells, 4 November 2013, "The Dangers of Offering Unpaid Internships at Your Startup," <http://thenextweb.com/entrepreneur/2013/11/04/dangers-offering-unpaid-internships-startup> [10 April 2015].

⁴¹ Nace; more about the Association: <http://www.naceweb.org/about-us/index.aspx> [10 April 2015]

internship received one job offer.⁴² Thus, both paid and unpaid internship may be advantageous, but they do not have the same outcome in terms of getting a job.

The Precarious Labor of Unpaid Interns

In this section, interns will be examined with reference to precariousness of working conditions. First, the economy after the 1970s will be examined and then the figure of the precariat and precarious working conditions will be discussed. The precariat as a new concept is largely explained by Guy Standing⁴³ in his book, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, which will be discussed and examined below.

First of all, internship recently has become a common concept that is highlighted as a prerequisite for work life in business and creative business. There are a few possible triggers that have made the phenomenon of unpaid internship globally increase. The reason of that the number of unpaid or paid internships has increased and internships have been varied in different sectors after 1970s might be post-industrial capitalism. It is possible to say that it originated from the demand for nonstandard labor. The concept of “contingent labor” was first defined by Audrey Freedman in order to “connote conditionality.” Her definition of contingent labor was “conditional and transitory employment relationships as initiated by a need for labor—usually, because a company has an increased demand for a particular service or product or technology, at a particular place, at a specific time.”⁴⁴ The concept is

⁴² “Class of 2013: Paid Interns Outpace Unpaid Peers in Job Offers, Salaries,” 29 May 2013, <http://www.naceweb.org/s05292013/paid-unpaid-interns-job-offer.aspx> [10 April 2015].

⁴³ Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2011); Guy Standing, *A Precariat Charter: From Denizens to Citizens* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014); Guy Standing, “The Future of Work: The Precariat’s Challenge,” German translation published in Kulturaustausch online, March 2013 http://www.guystanding.com/files/documents/The_Future_of_Work_for_Kulturaustausch_Mar_2013.pdf [10 April 2015].

⁴⁴ Anne E. Polivka and Thomas Nardone, “On the Definition of Contingent Work,” *Monthly Lab. Rev.* 112, no.9 (1989).

related to part-time, temporary and home-based work. Many global human resources consultancy firms have conducted research on how contingent worker numbers change. The outcome is that there will be more and more contingent workers in the future.⁴⁵ It is thought that there will be an increase in the number of interns in the new economy.

In addition to common labor norms after the 1970s, the new economic system, so called “the new capitalism,” began in the United States in the late 1990s and then spread all over the world.⁴⁶ The technological developments led the economy to evolve. The new capitalism, also called the information economy, the high-tech economy, and the technology revolution, has facilitated production. This situation leads to a transformation from a manufacturing-based economy to a service-based economy.⁴⁷ New technologies have not only influenced the country in which they are invented, they affect all the global market. It can be said that technological innovations in the 1990s changed the speed of access to news, the methods of doing business and human relations. The internships system was also influenced by this change.

The sociological effects of the new capitalism are also significant in order to understand young people’s perspectives on the business life. Richard Sennett’s book, *The Corrosion of Character*, discusses how the new capitalism influences personal life in terms of flextime and decentralization; and work life in terms of flexibility, the change in long-term commitments; as well as the change in work ethics and the

⁴⁵ Accenture’s Report, 2013, “The Rise of the Extended Workforce,” <http://www.accenture.com/sitecollectiondocuments/pdf/accenture-future-of-hr-rise-extended-workforce.pdf> [15 March 2015]; Manpower Group’s Report of 2014 Global Analysis, 2014, “Contingent Workforce Index,” http://www.manpowergroupsolutions.com/manpowergroup-solutions/Home/resources/71fa1428-b9b2-4f23-a42d-9e108d9895a2/CWI_report_FINAL_Lores.pdf [15 March 2015]; Tammy Erickson, 7 September 2012, “The Rise of the New Contract Worker,” <https://hbr.org/2012/09/the-rise-of-the-new-contract-worker/> [15 March 2015].

⁴⁶ Jean Gadrey, *New Economy, New Myth* (London: Routledge, 2002) p.5.

⁴⁷ Dennis W. Jansen, ed., *The New Economy and Beyond: Past, Present and Future*, Vol. 5. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2006), p.1.

teamwork concepts.⁴⁸ Sennett argues that there is one more characteristic of the new capitalism alongside the global market and technological developments, the new forms of organizing time, especially working time. The traditional careers have been replaced with careers that constantly require the renewal of people's skills. "No long term" is a slogan Sennett presents in his book. This slogan refers to Americans who change their jobs at least 11 times in their total work lives and three times to renew their basic skills by late 1980s.

Moreover, Sennett writes that the modern institutions of the new economy try to reduce the bureaucratic layers of institutions so as to make them more flexible organizations. Hence, modern companies have begun to create short-term, contractual, and episodic forms of labor.⁴⁹ The new economic system requires having more educational qualifications than people need to do the job. This situation generates status frustration, which is the most common among young people.⁵⁰

All in all, the practice of the new economy has led to a new type of job understanding. The growing contingent labor trend of the post-Fordist era⁵¹ has led precarious work conditions. Now, there is ongoing discussion whether people who work under these precarious working conditions constitute a new class type, the precariat.⁵² This group is not an exact part of the working class or middle class because both these class positions actually indicate stable jobs with fixed salaries and

⁴⁸ Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character - The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*, (W.W. Norton: New York, 1998).

⁴⁹ Ibid. pp.22-23.

⁵⁰ Guy Standing, *The Future of Work: The Precariat's Challenge*.

⁵¹ Polivka, and Nardone, p. 9.

⁵² Peter Frase, "The Precariat a Class or a Condition?" *New Labor Forum* 22, no. 2, Sage Publications (2013); Arne L. Kalleberg, "Book Review Symposium: Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, Reviewed by Arne Kalleberg," *Work, Employment & Society* 26, no.4 (2012), pp. 685-686; David A. Spencer, "Book Review Symposium: Guy Standing, *The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class*, Reviewed by David Spencer," *Work, Employment & Society* 26, .no.4 (2012) pp. 688-689.

work hours.⁵³ In fact, the precariat is not only an economic class to clarify the internship situation, but it also gives a whole picture of the characteristics that define current precariousness of working life and this is why it is important to analyze the precariat.

Precarious work was first defined after 1970s.⁵⁴ Today, it particularly stands for low wages, unsafe, insecure working conditions, temporary and fixed-term contracts, and irregular work hours.⁵⁵ It is more flexible than other working conditions. The precariat, which was discussed as a class category in 2011 by Guy Standing, basically are those employed in these precarious working conditions. Standing's focus area is the insecure conditions of the new working life. One group who contributes to this working type made up of educated young people. While unemployment and competition are increasing because people are willing to work in very insecure conditions in order to gain experience and make a good career step, internship takes a place at the heart of precarious work as well as that of the new economy. "The New Dangerous Class" is how Guy Standing calls the precariat.

In addition, as Dan Woodman writes, the precariat is characterized by what it lacks. He sums those deficiencies as "lack of multiple dimension of security, including security of employment tenure, insurance against illness and accident and security of income."⁵⁶ Uncertainty and insecurity prevail in all areas of the precariat.

⁵³ Standing, *The Precariat*, p. 6.

⁵⁴ Efrén Cordova, "From Full-time Employment to Atypical Employment: A Major Shift in the Evolution of Labour Relations?" *International Labour Review* 125, no.6 (1986), pp.641–657.

⁵⁵ Michael Quinlan, "The 'Pre-invention' of Precarious Employment: the Changing World of Work in Context," *The Economic and Labour Relations Review* 23, no.4 (2012), pp.3-24, p.4; Arne L. Kalleberg, "Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition," *American Sociological Review* 74, no.1 (2009), pp.1-22, p.2.

⁵⁶ Dan Woodman, "The Rise of the Temporal Precariat: Conceptualising Inequality among Young People in the Context of Labour-Market Change," 29 November 2012, Paper prepared for TASA Conference Proceedings, <https://www.tasa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/Woodman-Dan1.pdf> [15 March 2015].

Flexibility as one of the most important characteristics of the new economy has set a ground for the precariat with a greater risk and insecurity.

In an interview, Standing argues that people in the precariat do not know what they want instead of what they are against.⁵⁷ Social solidarity is prevented in this class because of the presence of different groups.⁵⁸ Another reason for social solidarity deficiency is the lack of a long-term relationship in the new economy. According to Sennett, the long-term relationships established with the social and ethic rules of traditional employment have erased in the new economy. He also claims that what the precariat has in common could only be that the jobs are "instrumental (to live), opportunistic (taking what comes) and precarious (insecure)."⁵⁹

In his book, Standing analyzes seven forms of labor-related security which actually refers to today's precarious working conditions. Each of the seven forms of labor-related security addresses a particular aspect of modern labor security. "Labor market security" refers to "adequate income-earning opportunities; at the macro-level, this is epitomized by a government commitment to 'full employment'."⁶⁰ "Employment security" requires "protection against arbitrary dismissal, regulations on hiring and firing, imposition of costs on employers for failing to adhere to rules and so on."⁶¹ As such, it refers to a situation where there is a binding contract between employee and employer. "Job security" refers to the "ability and opportunity to retain a niche in employment, plus barriers to skill dilution, and opportunities for 'upward'

⁵⁷ Interview of Federica di Lascio with Guy Standing, *The Precariat – the Making of a New Class*, 27 May 2013, <http://podacademy.org/podcasts/the-precariat-the-making-of-a-new-class/> [15 March 2014];

⁵⁸ Standing, *The Precariat*, p. 22.

⁵⁹ Ibid, p.14.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p.10.

⁶¹ Ibid.

mobility in terms of status and income.”⁶² “Work security” concerns “protection against accidents and illness at work, through, for example, safety and health regulations, limits on working time, unsociable hours, night work for women, as well as compensation for mishaps.”⁶³ “Skill reproduction security” means to have the security of “opportunity to gain skills, through apprenticeships, employment training and so on, as well as opportunity to make use of competencies.”⁶⁴ “Income security” refers to being paid at least the minimum wage while “representation security” requires “possessing a collective voice in the labor market, through, for example, independent trade unions, with a right to strike.”⁶⁵

In fact, there are some non-profit organizations such as “Intern Aware” in the United Kingdom, “Génération Précaire” in France, “La Repubblica Degli Stagisti” in Italy and “Canadian Intern Association” in Canada. These organizations try to become the voice of interns in these countries for a collective solution of interns’ problems. Unlike their foreign colleagues in the countries where there are such organizations, unpaid interns in Turkey do not have any voice in public and they lack almost all of the other labor- related securities as will be highlighted in the Chapter Four.

The last point concerning the situation of interns in the new economy is that they create a threat for both themselves and permanent employers. A website chief executive claims that when people work unpaid, they are more willing to work for promotion or be appreciated than permanent paid employers; thus unpaid workers outperform and get more creative.⁶⁶ This is basically what interns do on the job. This

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Katherine Reynolds Lewis, 25 March 2011, “Unpaid jobs: The New Normal?” <http://fortune.com/2011/03/25/unpaid-jobs-the-new-normal/> [15 March 2014].

makes them dangerous for regular employees, who do not have such the motivation to work more and more. Another reason which makes unpaid interns attractive to employers is that students are “more easily deployed and are more adaptable to changing market-demands.”⁶⁷ As Hofman and Steijn report, this could lead to tension between them and regular employees.

Accordingly, Standing claims that the internship mechanism is a threat “*in and around*” the precariat.⁶⁸ In other words, while interns are producing their own inequality by working at uninsured and precarious jobs, they also generate inequalities for the wide employment system by working for low wages or for free. They might be replacing a person who has a permanent paid job in the work place. Alex Try, co-founder of InternsAnonymous, “a forum for interns to share their experiences and discuss the ethics of unpaid employment”, states that

Internships seem to be getting longer and longer, with less chance of a job at the end. Increasingly, it seems to be a myth that unpaid internships lead to paid, permanent jobs. Now, it seems, they are actually replacing paid, permanent jobs.⁶⁹

Thus, even though an experienced laborer can create more value for a company in the most cases, employers might prefer to hire less costly interns in their workforce.

The Forms of Capital of the Intern World

Work life and employment have both social and economic bases. While economic conditions explained why there are unpaid internships in this section, sociology asks how unpaid internship came to be. The reason for the existence of popular paid/unpaid internship trend is based on economics; sociology explains the

⁶⁷ W. H. A. Hofman and Abraham Jan Steijn. "Students or Lower-Skilled Workers? 'Displacement' at the Bottom of the Labour Market," *Higher Education* 45, no.2 (2003), pp. 127-146, p.129.

⁶⁸ Standing, *The Precariat*, p.75.

⁶⁹ Tanya de Grunwald, 9 September 2011, “How to Make the Most of an Unpaid Internship,” <http://www.theguardian.com/money/2011/sep/09/make-most-of-unpaid-internship> [15 March 2014].

structure of being an intern. The employees' personal backgrounds and relations increase the importance of sociability in academic studies concerning work life. In this section, interns are examined according to the theory of "the forms of capital." By whom voluntary unpaid internships are done and how people are able to find this type of unpaid internships are examined. By doing this, those who do internships will be differentiated from those who do not, according to the levels of capital. Thus, the definition of internship and the identity of the intern can be constructed.

The literature related to the forms of capital and employment relations is usually about permanent jobs. The thesis tries to reveal a more special strong relationship of the forms of capital and the voluntary unpaid internship system. In order to make this specialization, Bourdieu is used with the forms of capital.⁷⁰ Although using the forms of capital is implemented often in the academic literature, internships still needed to be evaluated with Bourdieu. His theory gives an idea about the affordability and accessibility of voluntary unpaid internships. Personal relations, wealth and educational background influence the future of interns.

According to Bourdieu and his colleague Loïc Wacquant, different forms of capital exist. Among them, economic capital, social capital, and cultural capital are the "three fundamental species."⁷¹ In the Marxist version of capital, it is money which is used to buy things that the individual will sell again for a financial profit. The capital only exists in this economic exchange situation.⁷² However, in Bourdieu, non-economic things are also able to change society. He emphasizes the interrelation of economic and non-economic things and the inequality that occurs via the unequal

⁷⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital," In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York: Greenwood, 1986), pp. 241-258.

⁷¹ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital"; Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc JD Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology* (Cambridge: Polity, 1992), p.119.

⁷² Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, Vol. 1, trans. Ben Fowkes, (New York: Penguin, 1990).

distribution of capital.⁷³

While capital as a single definition is described in terms having the means of production in Marx, Bourdieu defines economic capital in a direct income-property relationship. He also does not consider economic capital sufficient to justify the socio-economic classes. Because of the interrelation of different types of capital, class structures and limits are much more ambiguous, in contrast to Marx's clear class definition.⁷⁴ In this thesis, the use of Bourdieu will help to examine the internship system and the process on the way of being an intern in terms of "three fundamental species" of capital.

Cultural capital, as a form of capital, is collecting information, so it is called information capital.⁷⁵ Culture is a type of transferred information from generation to generation within the family. Thus, cultural capital is the accumulation of transferred information. It basically includes all learned behavioral patterns.

In addition, Bourdieu argues that social inequalities are justified by the educational system held by those in dominant positions. He regards education as "one of the most effective means of perpetuating the existing social pattern, as it both provides an apparent justification for social inequalities and gives recognition to the cultural heritage, that is, to a social gift treated as a natural one."⁷⁶ Thus, it legitimizes the fact those who acquire better educations in a better condition have better future conditions. Higher-class students maintain the dominant position in academia and industry.

Besides education, the importance of the additional components of one's

⁷³ Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 125.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 101, 372.

⁷⁵ Pierre Bourdieu and Loïc JD Wacquant. *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, p.119.

⁷⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, "The School as a Conservative Force: Scholastic and Cultural Inequalities," In J. Eggleston (ed.), *Contemporary Research in the Sociology of Education* (London, Methuen: 1974), pp. 32-46, p. 32.

background become clearer when the internship candidate has little to show on his/her CV. Internships are frequently done by inexperienced or less experienced people. They may have done another internship or worked before, but the work experience section in their resume is empty or the shortest part in comparison other parts. It was confirmed by the student resumes of the interviewees for this thesis that students try to fill their CVs with the name of the university at which they study, the courses they have taken since childhood, achievements in competitions (such as exam, sports, and competitions), various sports activities, and university and high school club memberships. In other words, intern candidates attempt to show their backgrounds. Anything they have accumulated since childhood, they put on the table to get an internship. As a result, internship is both a kind of capital and a result of capital.

Quite aside from cultural accumulation, economic capital in Bourdieu's sense, gives the opportunity to unpaid interns to pay for their expenditures during their internships. It is a fact that students or new graduates who work for free without any other income cannot do unpaid internship. This situation recently has lead to a discussion. Unpaid internship is a luxury that is only possible for the rich.⁷⁷ There are a couple of articles on this issue in the some American daily newspapers, "Why Unpaid Internships Are Unfair and Favor the Rich," "The Luxury of Unpaid Internships," "Unpaid Internships: A Priceless Experience?", "Internships Don't Need to Pay, as Long as You're Rich." These titles show how obvious is that working for free requires significant economic support.

⁷⁷ Stephanie Nunez, 30 November 2014, "Why Unpaid Internships Are Unfair And Favor The Rich," <http://elitedaily.com/money/unpaid-internships-unfair-favor-rich/855043/> [3April 2015]; "The Luxury of Unpaid Internships," <http://www.ramblingsonappeal.com/2014/02/the-luxury-of-unpaid-internships.html> [3April 2015]; Ezra H. Stoller and Lily C. Sugrue, 3 April 2014, "Unpaid Internships: A Priceless Experience?" <http://www.thecrimson.com/article/2014/4/3/unpaid-internships-experience/?page=3> [3April 2015]; Hamilton Nolan, 8 January 2013, "Internships Don't Need to Pay, as Long as You're Rich," <http://gawker.com/5974122/internships-dont-need-to-pay-as-long-as-youre-rich> [3April 2015].

A study conducted by Sutton Trust, an educational charity in United Kingdom, supports this claim. According to this research, the cost of being an unpaid intern is very expensive nowadays. For instance, a person needs 5,556 pounds for a six-month internship, in addition to transportation expenses. Even though London is regarded as one of the most expensive cities in the world, Manchester is expensive as well, according to Sutton Trust. An intern who lives in Manchester must shoulder a 5,078 pound total cost for a six-month internship.⁷⁸ This cost of free work requires a powerful economic support from the family.

The common point of other capital forms with cultural capital in Bourdieu is convertibility to each other.

Apart from the fact that the increase in the proportion of holders of the most prestigious academic qualifications among the ruling classes may mean only the need to call upon academic approval in order to legitimate the transmission of power and privileges is being more and more felt, the effect is as though the cultural and educational mechanisms had merely strengthened or taken over from the traditional mechanisms such as the hereditary transmissions of economic capital, of a name or of capital in terms of social relationships.⁷⁹

As a result, it can be said that economic capital in Bourdieu is capital that can be converted into money (property), whereas cultural capital is gained through education and converted into economic capital in some cases.

The relationship between cultural capital and unpaid internship is located at the point where the economic capital transforms into cultural capital. Bourdieu regards parental economic support to prolong schooling (whether a master program

⁷⁸ The Sutton Trust Report: "Internship or Indenture?" 24 November 2014, <http://www.suttontrust.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Unpaid-Internships.pdf> [3April 2015].

⁷⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, "Cultural Reproduction and Social Reproduction," Jerome Karabel and A.H. Halsey (ed), *Power and Ideology in Education* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), p.496.

or more) as the conversion of economic capital into cultural capital.⁸⁰ Family savings are used to pay for the university expenses of the child more and more in order to gain advantage in a growing young population. The economic support of parents of their student children improves their cultural background and helps to put into more experience on their children's CVs. Internships have a similar way in the accumulation of cultural capital. In order to increase their qualification on the career path, parents might contribute to their children's cultural capital by supporting them economically in doing unpaid internships.

The third type of capital is social capital, which essentially refers to the accumulation of social networks for this study. It has also a vital importance in the unpaid internship system; this is why it will be explained in more detail in this part.⁸¹ Until 1970s, social capital had examined with an economic perspective. Since 1980, Bourdieu have been one of the pioneers in the sociological perspective of social capital. While some authors claim that social networks create a public interest by facilitating productive activities which benefit all people,⁸² Bourdieu's concept of capital has a discriminatory function rather than a positive inclusionary impact. He describes social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition."⁸³

Furthermore, according to Portes, social capital has four disadvantages, the "exclusion of outsiders; excess claims on group members; restrictions on individual

⁸⁰ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital."

⁸¹ While other forms of capital portrays interns' needs so as to have an internship, social capital is responsible for the necessary network which actually constitutes unpaid internship system, according to our research.

⁸² James S. Coleman, "Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital." *American Journal of Sociology* 94, (1988), pp. 95-120, p. 98; Robert D. Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Y. Nanetti, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.167.

⁸³ Pierre Bourdieu, "The Forms of Capital."

freedom; and downward leveling norms.”⁸⁴ Social capital first has specific limits not everyone can reach the benefits of being a member of the group. Second, social capital is responsible of the pressure on group members. Mutual assistance in a community may lead to some individual problems in favor of others or norms. Third, in a close community, everyone sees everything; nothing can be kept in secret, so individual freedom is restricted. Last, although Portes examines the disadvantaged ethnic groups’ social capital, the main idea in downward leveling norms is that the difference from other groups should remain; otherwise, it can diminish group solidarity. Therefore, it might be said that social capital is not a stabilizing factor that contributes to equality. It is possible to claim that social capital creates inequality because exclusion, prevention from some individual successes, and freedoms or keeping being similar to each other may occur in the difficulty of reaching the networks of unpaid internships.

Similarly, social networks which cover all human relations might result in a new recruitment, a promotion or a replacement in daily work life. Because social relations have such an importance, an unbalanced establishment of this relationship can cause some problems. Lin claims that because of the homophily in a social group, established social networks in conjunction with the socio-economic classes lead to unequal situation by keeping individuals within or out of certain limits of networks of people who share similar attitudes.⁸⁵

When it comes to using social networks to be recruited, Albert Rees divides information networks in job searching into two, formal and informal methods. While formal methods include “the state employment services, private fee-charging employment agencies, news-paper advertisements, union hiring halls, and school or

⁸⁴ Alejandro Portes, “Social Capital: its Origins and Applications in Modern Sociology,” *Annual Review of Sociology* 24, pp.1-24, p.15.

⁸⁵ Nan Lin, "Inequality in Social Capital," *Contemporary Sociology* 29, no.6 (2000), pp.785-795.

college placement bureaus,” informal ways to be involved in labor market are “referrals from employees, other employers, and miscellaneous sources, and walk-ins or hiring at the gate.”⁸⁶ Accordingly, social networks used finding job are regarded as informal methods. As stated by both Harry Holzer and James Montgomery, 50 percent of job seekers use personal relationships, spouse, friends, and acquaintances, to find jobs.⁸⁷

The first job search of an inexperienced person is quite likely much harder than that of an experienced person due to the lack of former work experience. This is why inexperienced people might need more references to get a job. According to a study conducted with 399 people in 1975, 57 percent of participants used personal connections in their first job search, 22 percent of participants directly applied to employer and 21 percent used formal methods.⁸⁸ Hence, the amount of social networks may make especially first job or internship searching process shorter and less costly. A person who is deprived of the necessary social capital would be excluded from the network and would not get enough advantages in work life.

When it comes to how social capital extends to internships, of the three capitals, social capital seems the most influential in the voluntary unpaid internship system. Social capital not only provides unpaid interns with initial reputation, but also it provides the existence of the internship system itself. The legality of voluntary unpaid internship in Turkish law will be examined below in more detail; however, uninsured and unpaid internships have no employee records in general, and thus this

⁸⁶ Albert Rees, "Information Networks in Labor Markets," *The American Economic Review* 56, no.1/2 (1966), pp.559-566, p.559.

⁸⁷ Harry J. Holzer, "Search Method Use by Unemployed Youth," *Journal of Labor Economics* 6, no.1 (January 1988), pp. 1-20; James D. Montgomery, "Social Networks and Labor-Market Outcomes: Toward an Economic Analysis," *The American Economic Review* 81, no.5 (1991), pp.1408-1418.

⁸⁸ Nan Lin, Walter M. Ensel, and John C. Vaughn, "Social Resources and Strength of Ties: Structural Factors in Occupational Status Attainment," *American Sociological Review* 46, no.4 (1981), pp. 393-405, p.397.

informal job type is illegal.⁸⁹ In this context, it can be observed that one cannot easily make public the desire to find unpaid and uninsured internships, an informal worker, to have them run errands or work in real sense. This is why social relations are counted as the primary way to find a voluntary unpaid internship and a voluntary unpaid intern.

As a result, voluntary unpaid internship can be seen as interrelated with Bourdieu's forms of capital. Voluntary unpaid interns are incorporated into the internship system through their social capital, recruited thanks to their cultural capital and are supported by economic capital of their parents. This allows the reconstruction of internship system with the conversion of forms of capital.

The following chapter will discuss the institutional frame of different forms of internship in Turkey and situate the case of voluntary unpaid internship in this frame.

⁸⁹ For further information concerning the importance of the social insurance, see "Neden Sigortalı Olmalıyız?" http://www.sgk.gov.tr/afis/neden_sigortalı_olmalıyız.pdf [1 April 2015].

CHAPTER III

THE TRIANGLE OF THE INTERNSHIP SYSTEM IN TURKEY: LEGISLATION, EMPLOYMENT AND UNIVERSITIES

In order to explain the conditions which prepare white collar candidates to undertake internships, it is necessary to discuss the legal regulations in Turkey on internships, the details regarding young population, the high unemployment rates and higher education systems with inadequate career development opportunities. Doing so will allow a better understanding of voluntary interns' world. In addition, this chapter aims to contribute to the literature in terms of the explanation of legal regulations on internships, and the function of career centers and university activities on the improvement of the career futures of white collar candidates.

The state role continues to gain importance on the preparation of voluntary unpaid internships. It has increasingly enlarged the scope of internships in legislation such as in the regulations of the Ministry of National Education, and the Social Security and General Health Insurance Law. Meanwhile, there are still some exceptions in the academic internships, such as education and medicine which are regulated by their own law. The state through its institutions recently contributes to young people's career lives by expanding the scope of legislations on interns, to mobilize career centers and an increasing number of universities.

Moreover, thanks to their autonomous structure, universities have the ability to arrange internship opportunities even for some of the departments the state does not cover with legislation. However, the state still provides limited opportunities for interns and those who are seeking an internship. These encouragements of the state and its institutions most likely strengthen the need for doing more and more

internships for white collar candidates.

In addition, student clubs are organizations which are founded by students at university to improve themselves. It is possible to say that the activities of some student clubs show they function to meet the career preparation need of students. By organizing career events, these clubs try to compensate for the limited career opportunities provided by the state and universities. Moreover, the increasing internship emphasis by the state and the internship need because of the increasing competition may lead to an increase especially in voluntary internships. It is because voluntary internships regardless of their being paid or unpaid do not have limits which state or university regulates. They can be done many times; there is no limit about it. Thus, it can be said that voluntary internship is a new way to build a fully-fledged CV. It is also responsible for the pressure of doing internship despite the fact that it is unpaid.

Internship in National Legislation

As the term “internship” has its own meaning in every language, the Turkish Language Association (*Türk Dil Kurumu*) defines internship (*staj*) as a period of practical learning for those who want to acquire a profession or to improve professional knowledge.⁹⁰ It refers to a period of learning this is not paid by an employee. In the following paragraphs, the legislation concerning internship will be presented. By doing so, it is aimed to demonstrate where voluntary internships are placed in the Turkish legal code.

The internship which is related to the educational system is the only internship type that the national legislation covers. Some specific professions (like

⁹⁰ *Türk Dil Kurumu*, Translated by author, <http://www.tdksozluk.com/s/staj/> [17 April 2015].

education and medicine), vocational and technical higher education institutions, and vocational high schools are the most-mentioned internship types in the legislation. In this thesis, only higher education internships are addressed. Vocational high schools' training might be seen as more of an apprenticeship than internship. Thus, high schools' internship is not a part of this discussion.

Labor Law no. 4857, Article no.2, states that an employee is defined as “a real person whose work is based on a labor contract.”⁹¹ It does not regard interns as employees because the only exception of internship for remaining outside the scope of the labor legislation is Article no.77 of the Labor Law. With the amendment of Article 77 in 2012, Law no. 6331 on occupational health and safety includes everybody who works at a work place including “interns”.

Internship is framed by Law no.3308 (1986) and Law no. 6111. These laws regulate the definition of interns for the Turkish legislation except professional trainings (as in education and medicine). According to Law no. 3308 on vocational and technical training, Article no. 18, companies which employ ten or more employees are required to train students from vocational and technical education institutions at a rate of not less than five percent of the number of their employees.

The phrase "Vocational and Technical Education Schools and Institutions"⁹² in Law no.3308, Article no. 3, was revised in 2011. Before the revision, this law only included vocational and technical education in high schools. In Law no. 6111 on higher education, Article no. 61, the phrase of "higher education institutions which have technical training" was added to the text with the amendment.⁹³ Thus, since

⁹¹ Translated by the author. The original text is provided here: “Bir iş sözleşmesine dayanarak çalışan gerçek kişiye işçi, işçi çalıştıran gerçek veya tüzel kişiye yahut tüzel kişiliği olmayan kurum ve kuruluşlara işveren, işçi ile işveren arasında kurulan ilişkiye iş ilişkisi denir.”

⁹² Translated by the author. The original text is provided here: “Mesleki ve Teknik Eğitim Okul ve Kurumları.”

⁹³ Murat Özdamar and Erden Çakar, p. 201.

2011, higher education institutions have been using the law no. 3308 to define and practice academic internships of technical departments.

In addition to technical departments, departments like education and medicine which the state regards as professional occupations also have commonly their own professional training system. First, the academic internship of education faculties is enacted with "the instruction of the teaching practice of teacher candidates in the ministerial educational institutions of the Ministry of National Education."⁹⁴ Article no. 7 of this instruction regulates the duration (one year) of the undergraduate and graduate level of teaching practice. Second, medical students' academic internships are called *intörn* (intern). Medical students who have completed the fifth year of medical school and begun the sixth year are medical interns. Law no. 2547, Additional Article no.29 in 2012 on higher education institutions prepares medical interns regulations. As a result, it can be said that in some professions, there are different implementations of internship which are separately regulated in the national legislation.

All of these different academic internship laws show that there are many different types of internship implementations in Turkey. The legal code recognizes several types of internship from the technical educational training of engineers to the medical training of medical student and prepared legislations to regulate the internship system in terms of the definition, the duration of internship process, the payments, and the social insurance. The common points of all these internship types are the professional training and the payment of social insurance by the university.

According to Law no. 5510, Article no. 5, the social insurance payments of academic and optional internships (which are regulated by universities) are paid by

⁹⁴ Translated by the author. The original title is "Öğretmen Adaylarının Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına Bağlı Eğitim Öğretim Kurumlarında Yapacakları Öğretmenlik Uygulamasına İlişkin Yönerge."

universities. This insurance payment is not an initial contribution to the retirement payments of the Turkish Social Insurance system but it covers health and occupational accidents.

According to Law no. 3308, Article no. 25, university interns who study in vocational and technical education, must be paid at least 30 percent of the minimum wage in a work place where there are more than 20 employees. They have to be paid 15 percent if less than 20 people works there. The minimum level of monthly payment in academic internships changes between around 140 and 285 Turkish Liras.⁹⁵ The companies can pay more than this. There is no maximum level of payment for academic internships. In this regard, interns of university departments other than vocational and technical faculties do not have to be paid even though they are required to do academic internships, such as interns from Galatasaray University Sociology Department.⁹⁶

Academic internships other than vocational, technical and some other professions are regulated by the decisions of university committee, faculty or department.⁹⁷ There is also another type of internship which is an optional internship that is also related to university, but not regulated by law. Optional internships are based on the decisions of university committees, faculties or departments. As seen at Boğaziçi University, the social insurance payment is also paid by university.⁹⁸

Beyond all these internship-academy relationship, voluntary internship has no

⁹⁵ The minimum level of allowance is calculated by the author according to the minimum wage. For the details of the minimum wage in Turkey : “Çalışma Genel Müdürlüğü,” <http://www.csgeb.gov.tr/csgebPortal/cgm.portal?page=asgari> [17 April 2015].

⁹⁶ “Galatasaray Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Bölümü Stajı” <http://sosyoloji.gsu.edu.tr/programlar/lisans/staj> [1 April 2015].

⁹⁷ As an example Boğaziçi University Undergraduate Academic Regulations: http://www.boun.edu.tr/tr_TR/Content/Ogrenciler/Ogrenci_Isleri/Yonetmelik_ve_Ic_Tuzukler/BU_Lisans_Egitim_ve_Ogrenci_Yonetmeligi [1 April 2015].

⁹⁸ Boğaziçi University University Committee Decision on Optional Internships: http://www.fed.boun.edu.tr/form_files/Zorunlu_olmad%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1_halde_staj_yapma_konusunda.pdf [1 April 2015].

legal base in the Turkish context. Being a volunteer is regulated by Law no. 5253 on associations; however, it does not exactly cover the meaning of internship.

According to Law no. 5253, Article no. 13, the members of the associations (non-governmental organization) can be employed for free under the name of volunteer. However, even for a volunteer-intern in a non-governmental organization who was interviewed for this study, young volunteers list their voluntary experience as internships on their CVs.⁹⁹ As it is shown in the former chapters, internship have become an indispensable part of career-focused, educated young people.

Voluntary interns are not regarded as "real interns" for any of these regulations. Even though voluntary interns are also called interns, they are not interns in the legal terms. They can of course be a volunteer as a member of a non-governmental organization or a part-time or a full-time paid employee. If they are not a volunteer of an association like this, then these interns are basically considered to be regular employee for the labor law. Thus, voluntary unpaid interns should pass through all the same processes as any employee does. They should have the same labor regulations and rights, despite the fact that voluntary unpaid interns do not comply with these standards.

From the state's perspective, internships are carried out on the behalf of learning a profession better and increasing employment opportunities. In other words, legislations demonstrate that the state does not provide internships to expand student career choices, but provides a specific job. Under some conditions, with this encouragement of the state, interns have to be even paid although the payments are really low.

Universities in Turkey have their own autonomous structures. Thus, they can

⁹⁹ Hakan, interviewed by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 01 March 2015.

make independent decisions about a departments' curriculum, as the case at Galatasaray and Boğaziçi Universities Sociology Departments Schedule (the former requires academic internship). Hence, internship requirements in non-professional, non-technical and non-vocational departments such as chemistry, economics, political science, philosophy or physics may change from one university to another. Not all these internships which are regulated by university decisions comply with the law concerning internships. Even though a political science student might have an academic or optional internship, it is not present in the content of the Turkish Legal Code. While universities even pay the social insurance of this type of an internship, the employer does not have to pay these academic or optional interns for their labor. In this context, voluntary interns are not regarded as real interns because they are not formal. They are seen as regular employees to the state. If one wants to employ a voluntary intern then one must pay him or her at least according to the minimum wage.

Some Facts and Figures from the Daily Lives of Interns in Turkey

This section aims to provide a view of the anxiety about the future of people in Turkey. The need for internships can only be understood by showing the need for improvement to survive in difficult social and economic conditions. Turkey is a country with around 78 million people of whom 3,259,000 are unemployed (11.3 percent of labor force from all ages) in 2015.¹⁰⁰ The crowd and the number of unemployed people influence the youth statistics and employment statistics and population affects also identify what an intern world is in Turkey.

In 2013, there were 8,697,760 million people (between the ages of 18 and

¹⁰⁰ TURKSTAT, "Adrese Dayalı Nüfus Kayıt Sistemi Sonuçları, 2014," <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18616> [5April 2015]; TURKSTAT, "İşgücü İstatistikleri, Ocak 2015," <http://tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18636> [5April 2015].

24.) Around 7,000,000 million of these people in 2013 lived in urban areas.¹⁰¹ For this reason, when they go out to seek employment, they see many peers outside, which might lead to panic due to the competition for the future plans. For example, one of the respondents in our interviews was quite worried about the future although she studies at one of the best universities. She said that she did not know how to stand out from the competition among the 15,000 people she studies with at the same university.¹⁰² The anxiety about the future concerning competition can be seen in her words. Similarly, the rate of the youth unemployment (between the ages 15 and 24) which includes 4,683,000 people as labor force was 20 percent in January 2015¹⁰³ can also be counted as an indicator of the competition among young labor force.

For this chapter, it should be emphasizes that the youth unemployment is as high in Turkey as it is in some other OECD countries. However, they usually have more extensive unemployment insurance as in Sweden and Finland.¹⁰⁴ It does not mean that the youth in these countries feel similar levels of anxiety about the future. In Finland, unemployed people are paid 85.1 percent of their previous salaries for one year by the Finnish state; similarly, unemployed Swedes receive 80 percent of their previous income for 300 days.¹⁰⁵ However, the unemployed receives 40 percent of their previous income up to 300 days in Turkey.¹⁰⁶ Thus, the anxiety about

¹⁰¹ TURKSTAT, “Bitirilen Eğitim Düzeyi, Cinsiyet ve Yaş Ggrubuna Göre Nüfus – 2013” and “Yaş grubu ve cinsiyete göre il/ilçe merkezi ve belde/köy nüfusu, 2007-2014.”

¹⁰² Selin, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 6 February 2015.

¹⁰³ TURKSTAT, “15-24 Yaş grubundaki nüfusun yıllar ve cinsiyete göre işgücü durumu,” Students who are regarded as institutional population are not counted as unemployed in this statistics (TURKSTAT definition of unemployed). The reason of giving these data is to present all Turkish daily life in order to constitute a better background for the next chapter.

¹⁰⁴ For seeing all the data, “Unemployment, Youth Total (% of total labor force ages 15-24),” <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS> [5 April 2015].

¹⁰⁵ Matt Woolsey, 28 April 2008, “World’s Best Places For Unemployment Pay,” http://www.forbes.com/2008/06/27/unemployment-benefits-world-forbeslife-cx_mw_0627worldunemployment.html [17 April 2015]; Matt Woolsey, 28 April 2008, “In Depth: World’s Best Places For Unemployment Pay,” http://www.forbes.com/2008/06/27/unemployment-benefits-world-forbeslife-cx_mw_0627worldunemployment_slide_7.html?thisSpeed=30000 [17 April 2015].

¹⁰⁶ Turkish Labor Agency, <http://www.iskur.gov.tr/en-us/jobseeker/insurance.aspx> [17 April 2015];

unemployment is not mitigated by generous unemployment benefits.

There are 185 universities in Turkey.¹⁰⁷ Four out of these are ranked in the highest 200 universities on the World University Rankings.¹⁰⁸ Thus, the success of the education system might be open to debate. The need for higher education has been increasing day by day. One hundred eight out of the 185 universities have been founded since 2006. It is not only because the non-profit foundation universities have gained popularity, but also state universities have increased at a rate more than before this period.¹⁰⁹ Thus, in the 2010s, a strong need for higher education has been perceived. Similarly, the number of university graduates has been increased. Education seems like a solution for unemployment; however, according to higher educated unemployment statistics, higher education is not always a solution.

There were 2,650,272 higher educated people between the ages 25 and 34 in 2013, according to TURKSTAT statistics. In the same year, the number of unemployed people in this group was 265,000, which make around 10 percent.¹¹⁰ This age range is just the next generation of those who are still studying or recently graduated. Thus, under these conditions, other one million higher educated people who are between the ages 18 and 25¹¹¹ are not expected to feel comfortable about their future plans. This might direct them to seek ways to differentiate themselves from other higher educated people, such as doing one more internship. Moreover, Umut Oran, who is a deputy in the Turkish Parliament, stated that “each one out of

Faruk Erdem, 8 February 2014, “İstifa edene 10 ay maaş!”, <http://www.sabah.com.tr/ekonomi/2014/02/08/istifa-edene-10-ay-maas> [17 April 2015].

¹⁰⁷ For the full list: <http://www.yok.gov.tr/web/guest/universitelerimiz> [17 April 2015].

¹⁰⁸ For further information about the World University Rankings: <http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/world-university-rankings/2014-15/world-ranking> [17 April 2015].

¹⁰⁹ Durmuş Günay and Aslı Günay, “1933’den Günümüze Türk Yükseköğretiminde Niceliksel Gelişmeler,” *Yükseköğretim ve Bilim Dergisi* 1, no.1(2011), pp.1-22.

¹¹⁰ TURKSTAT, “Bitirilen Eğitim Düzeyi, Cinsiyet ve Yaş Grubuna Göre Nüfus – 2013” and “Geniş Yaş Grubuna ve Eğitim Durumuna Göre İşsizler”, 2013.

¹¹¹ TURKSTAT, “Bitirilen Eğitim Düzeyi, Cinsiyet ve Yaş Grubuna Göre Nüfus – 2013.”

five young people is unemployed; one out of every three unemployed is young. In 2002, one out of every ten unemployed was a university graduate, whereas now, almost one out of every four is unemployed."¹¹²

Unemployment and inadequate employment of educated people raise a doubt and despair. In this chapter, it is argued that a certain level of the forms of capital discussed above may overcome unemployment concerns because people continuously improve themselves and increase the level of capital in this harsh competition. The environment of white collar candidates is most likely to influence them in terms of ambiguous future anxiety and differentiating themselves from “others” who are not as successful as them. Thus, they can show their efforts to draw attention among crowds. This chapter also aims to show the reason for the competition among young people. The competition which is created by the crowd should refer not only to the fear of unemployment, but also the anxiety concerning finding a job at which a candidate wants to work.

Career Centers and Student Activities of Three Turkish Universities

As the prestigious representatives of higher education, universities seem to be required to contribute to their students’ futures so the question here is to what extent universities support their students to become white collar workers? It is better to answer this question first by showing the career centers created by the Council of Higher Education (*Yükseköğretim Kurulu*) on internship issue in Turkey. Second, the activities concerning the internship of autonomous university structures will be

¹¹² Translated by the author. The original text is “*Her beş gençten biri işsiz; ülkedeki her üç işsizden biri gençtir. 2002’de her on işsizden biri üniversite mezunu idi, bugün neredeyse her dört işsizden biri.*” For the full public statement of Umut Oran, this link would be useful: <http://www.umutoran.com/2015/04/05/genclerin-mektep-meslek-kaygisi-chp-icin-memleket-meselesi/> [5 April 2015].

examined within Boğaziçi, Bilkent and Marmara Universities.

First of all, university career centers are one of the career contributors to prepare white collar candidates to have better careers by providing them with various opportunities, including internships. The second contribution is made by the alumni associations of universities as it is shown in detail below. Alumni of a university may offer some opportunities for young people who enrolled at the same university to help them have better careers. The final career support comes from the student clubs of universities. In this section, career centers and other university activities of three universities will be examined. By doing so, it will be shown how and how much support is given by universities and university environments to students to find internships and jobs.

The first career center was founded in 1988 by Bilkent University.¹¹³ Since then, the number of career centers has been increasing within universities. This increase may be regarded as an indicator of the increasing need for doing voluntary internship to have better careers. In the Council of Higher Education, 2015-2019 strategies, the desire to support and increase the number of career centers is stated.¹¹⁴ Within this context, it could be observed that career-focused university graduates are encouraged by the state and this is happening in a very natural way, which leads to a situation in which doing internship seems necessary even for students who do not have academic internships. Students who are encouraged to do internships by the universities could start to see the internships as a necessity for their education and career plans. This situation might demonstrate that students are directed to a single career understanding by all university administrations.

¹¹³ Bilkent University Career Center Official Website: <http://kariyer.bilkent.edu.tr/> [15 April 2015].

¹¹⁴ For the full text of this planning, *Yükseköğretim Kurulu Stratejik Planı 2015-2019* http://www.yok.gov.tr/documents/10279/14571052/yuksekogretim_kurulu_2015_2019_stratejik_plan_i.pdf/0eb5d6db-565b-495e-a470-8823f7e6f6b9 [15 April 2015].

Moreover, the perspective of the Council of Higher Education on the career centers should be noted. The Council was founded according to the 1982 Turkish Constitution to supervise the universities.¹¹⁵ It basically monitors university activities. This is why it is important to understand the council in order to explain its position on the career centers of universities. The Council as a state institution reflects the perspective of the Turkish government concerning the educational system in the universities. The role of Council of Higher Education was based on the Law no. 2547, Article no.47 in the process of founding career centers in the universities. In that article, career centers are considered as “activity organizations” in universities. However, according to its new strategic plan, it seems that career centers will become one of the most important functions of universities in the near future.

The Council of Higher Education hosted a career centers meeting in 2013. The purpose of this meeting was defined as increasing awareness concerning the preparation of university students for professional life, and sharing the model implementation of career centers, which are founded in order to conduct internships effectively in the universities. In this meeting, the head of Council of Higher Education emphasized both that there should be cooperation between the universities and industries, and the importance of lifelong learning.¹¹⁶ This demonstrates that state-supported training policies and the encouragement of lifelong learning have been made more powerful not only in practices, but also discourses. Career centers are seen as institutions which provide internship programs to the students through universities.

Boğaziçi University conducts its projects about students’ careers in different

¹¹⁵ For further information about the history and the function of Council of Higher Education, one can look at this link: <http://www.yok.gov.tr/> [15 April 2015].

¹¹⁶ For more details about the meeting see: <http://www.yok.gov.tr/web/ogrenci/kariyer-merkezleri-toplantisi> [17 April 2015].

ways. A career center was established within the university according to the regulations of the Council of Higher Education to facilitate students' career goals through internship opportunities, informative meetings, and personal development seminars.¹¹⁷ By sharing internship postings, the center also brings students and employees together.

The second career activity of Boğaziçi University is done by the alumni association of university (BÜMED).¹¹⁸ On the social platform called the Boğaziçi Network, BÜMED provides students and graduates with internship and job opportunities.¹¹⁹ While the career center within the university serves only students, BÜMED accepts applications from graduates by posting both full-time and part-time positions.

Last, with the cooperation of two university's student clubs; the Management and Economics Club and the Engineering Society, P&R Days (Presentation and Recruitment Days) have been held for 25 years.¹²⁰ This is an event during which companies can create an interactive environment with university students by informing them about the process of hiring, recruitment, and application processes of internships and organizing interview simulation during the two days. In addition, the results of the interviews for this thesis' research demonstrate that the most effective method is the career days organized by students club. None of the respondents from Boğaziçi University reported having benefitted from the career center. Only a few were aware that there was such an institution. Apart from that, only four people were aware that the alumni association also offers internship opportunities. Thus, it seems

¹¹⁷ Boğaziçi University Career Center Official Website: <http://kariyermerkezi.boun.edu.tr/> [17 April 2015].

¹¹⁸ BÜMED is *Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Mezunlar Derneği* (Boğaziçi University Alumni Association).

¹¹⁹ The career opportunities for both Boğaziçi Students and Graduates will be presented here: <http://www.bogazicinetwork.com/> [15 April 2015].

¹²⁰ For all the content and participant firms list see: <http://heyevent.com/event/1644471019117001/bogazici-universitesi-kariyer-fuar-pr-days> [15 April 2015].

that the most popular activity is held by student clubs' career days.

Bilkent University was first to establish a career center within the university. Bilkent University has hosts six different career events organized by the career center in a year. These events are ; Personal Development Days, Sector Introduction Meetings, Career Fair, Corporate Introduction Days, Public Institutions and Organizations Days, and Firm Introduction Meetings.¹²¹ In addition, the career center provides job and internship opportunities and helps to regulate the resumes of the students and arranges interviews for both students and graduates. However, the Alumni Association of Bilkent University (BİLMED) does not conduct active career projects for either students or graduates.

Apart from this, two student clubs, which are the closest to corporate life and most active student clubs are the Operational Research and the Engineering Society. Both of them present different events involved with different companies by organizing their own career days.¹²² During these events, students acquire information about the companies and can apply for the internship positions of those companies. All the respondents from Bilkent University had participated in at least one of these activities organized by the career center and student clubs.

However, there is no career center linked to the Council of Higher Education at Marmara University. However, the Alumni Association of Marmara University offers many job postings (a few of them internship positions) in different sectors on its website.¹²³ Second, the Career Employment Center, which was established by the Marmara University Student Council Presidency, is an attempt to ensure

¹²¹ Bilkent University Career Center Official Website: <http://kariyer.bilkent.edu.tr/> [15 April 2015].

¹²² For further information about these student clubs: Operational Research, <http://www.orbilkent.com/> [15 April 2015]; Engineering Society (*Mühendislik Topluluğu*) <http://www.mtbilkent.com/> [15 April 2015].

¹²³ For seeing all job postings, this link could be useful: <http://www.marmaramezun.com/IsIlan> [15 April 2015].

coordination between employers and Marmara University's students and graduates. In doing so, it aims to increase employment.¹²⁴ Beside these, Marmara University has as many student clubs as the other two universities have. The most active career days are organized by the Marmara Community Club and the Creative Management Club.¹²⁵ Except for one person who participated in one activity of a student club, none of the respondents from Marmara University had participated in these activities organized by the career employment center, the alumni association, or student clubs.

In spite of these career activities efforts, the students of Marmara University reported that they found the career projects of the university inadequate and students are not satisfied with them according to the 2013-2017 Strategic Plan booklet of Marmara University.¹²⁶ Accordingly, it can be observed that Marmara University prepares its students less than the other two universities for career-oriented futures.

As a result, it can be said that the contribution of the universities to students' careers changes from one university to another. Some universities such as Boğaziçi and Bilkent Universities, are more career oriented whereas in some situations, students may still complain about the inadequate career opportunities of universities such as in Marmara University. However, there is also a common point between the universities. This point is the career events organized by student clubs. In general, these events are directly organized by students, not universities. This organization effort of students indicates the desire for students to improve themselves. Students who find career opportunities provided by the university authorities inadequate try to organize their own events. Thanks to these events, students may become more

¹²⁴ The career opportunities for both Marmara Students and Graduates will be presented here: http://ogrencikonseyi.marmara.edu.tr/ust_menu/kariyer-istihdam-merkezi/kim/ [15 April 2015].

¹²⁵ For further information about these student clubs: Marmara Community Club, <http://www.etkinlik.com.tr/marmara-community-kulubu/> [15 April 2015]; Creative Management Club (*Yaratıcı İşletmeciler Kulübü*), <http://sektorgunleri.com/sponsorlukdosyasi.pdf> [15 April 2015].

¹²⁶ For Marmara University Strategic Plan 2013-2017: http://dosya.marmara.edu.tr/www/images/universite/2013-2017_Stratejik_Plan.pdf [15 April 2015].

familiar with the companies and find internship opportunities. They also observe that in order to be a white-collar worker, they need to do many things and work hard.



CHAPTER IV

VOLUNTARY UNPAID INTERNSHIPS: FROM A BRIGHT BACKGROUND TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

One can hear many internship stories while walking through a university campus. Apparently, internship is not something special only to one university, but it is practice that constitutes a popular trend among today's white collar candidates, as was discussed in the former chapters. It has serious influences on the national economy, the youth sociology and employment, and working relations. Thus, it is very significant to discuss such a topic academically.

This thesis tries to create a new perspective on internship. Internship seems to be easy to explain in its meaning and reason. It could be called job training, which is a useful way to gain practical knowledge of a job. However, our findings show that the internship concept in Turkey is varied and the reasons to do an internship are quite various and unusual compared to the philosophy "learning by doing". This chapter presents the results and the analysis of the interviews with 45 voluntary unpaid internships of 30 respondents to show the different and common tendencies to achieve an academic result.

According to the observations and the preliminary interviews with the university administration offices, students and graduates, as discussed above, there are three types of internships in Turkey, academic (compulsory) internships, optional internships (very recent) and voluntary internships. While the first two types are legal-based internships with school connection, the third type, voluntary internships, has no school base. Voluntary internships are completely based on the interns' free will and should be regarded as normal employees, according to the Turkish Legal Code, as was discussed in Chapter Three.

Definitions

In this section, internship will be defined and discussed by drawing on the perceptions of the interviewees. First, an attempt will be made to differentiate and analyze compulsory/voluntary and paid/unpaid internships by raising a series of questions: Are interns in need of academic internships to reach their career goals? Or are voluntary internships more useful for the formation of a vision on future career paths? These questions will be discussed by considering the statements of the respondents. Then, we will examine voluntary internships with the differences between voluntary paid and unpaid internships in mind, with a view to put the discussion in the following sections in context.

Another question that is pursued concerns the content of internships. Here, the new internship practice is examined as an entry-level job by exploring what interns do at the work place. There is a growing debate on the “internship economy” that transforms this position from job training to a job level.¹²⁷ Is this transformation really happening? Is there something new about the current practice of internship? On the basis of the comments of the respondents, we try to assess whether voluntary unpaid internships function as job training.

The Perspectives on Different Internship Types

Here, internship types will be defined in a broader sense. The respondents

¹²⁷ Heather R. Huhman, 28 January 2014, “4 Reasons Internships Aren’t the New Entry-Level Jobs,” <http://communitytable.com/253997/heatherhuhman/4-reasons-internships-arent-the-new-entry-level-jobs/> [12 April 2015]; Amy Scott, 4 March 2013, “Internships Become the New Job Requirement,” <http://www.marketplace.org/topics/economy/education/internships-become-new-job-requirement> [12 April 2015]; Natalie Avon, 7 December 2010, “Are Internships The New Entry-Level Jobs?” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2010/12/13/are-internships-the-new-e_n_793948.html [12 April 2015].

were asked a broad range of questions to get an idea of their perceptions about internship. As a consequence of the answers, internship can be categorized as academic and voluntary internships.

Of all the internship categories perhaps the least controversial is the academic internship, since it is seen as a natural outgrowth of the educational process. These internships are compulsory for graduating from university, so they are called “compulsory internships” in Turkey. Not all university departments require internships for graduation. The most common fields in which they are required are medicine, engineering, education, and tourism as discussed above.

The respondents discussed their interest in doing academic internships. As a result of the interviews, two groups emerged among them those who supported and who did not support the existence of the academic internship. The first group supported academic internships, saying the university always pays the social insurance contribution of academic internships.¹²⁸ It was a common answer from respondents that interns who are paid by the students’ academic internship social insurance are more preferable to voluntary interns because the employer can avoid paying the social insurance of the intern. Another point was that it takes more attention from university, because of doing something relevant to graduation outside of university. One of the respondents who had no academic internship requirement had graduated from the department of political science and international relations. He emphasized the importance of academic internships. He said:

Students who have compulsory internship get more help from the instructors. They guide students more. For example, my friends from the department of

¹²⁸ Law no. 5510, the Social Security and General Health Policy Law.

Tourism Administration were supervised in their compulsory internships by their advisors. They were quite concerned.¹²⁹

The other group, who thought that compulsory internship was not useful for them, usually said that compulsory internship restricted students to some specific industries. Because academic internships had to be related to the theoretical background of the department, it limited students in a particular sector and business area. Sociology graduate Sarp expressed his reluctance to take an academic internship as follows:

It is not nice being forced about your preferences. I would like to decide for myself what I'd prefer. I would like to decide for myself in which industry I will do my internship. I could understand that a lawyer has an internship in law. What lawyers do for their future is a certain thing. I studied sociology. Sociologists have the opportunity to work for the state. I knew that if I wanted I could take the KPSS and work as a government officer in reform schools which have to hire at least one sociologist. However, due to these circumstances, if I had a compulsory internship, I would not be happy.¹³⁰

According to one view, academic internships require greater attention from university instructors. It is also possible that the paid social insurance makes academic interns more preferable for companies. However, six out of 30 respondents who had done academic internships had done voluntary unpaid internships as well. Thus, it means that at some points, academic internships may not be sufficient to provide students with the necessary practice. Academic internships offer students a

¹²⁹ Kerim, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 5 March 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “Zorunlu stajı olan bölümlerde hocalar öğrencilere daha çok yardım ediyor. İhtiyacı olan durumlarda öğrencileri daha çok yönlendiriliyorlar. (...) Mesela Turizm bölümünden danışman hocaları arkadaşlarımı zorunlu stajlarında denetlemeye geliyorlardı. Oldukça ilgililerdi.”

¹³⁰ Sarp, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 6 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “(...) birinin direktmesi hoş değil neyi tercih edeceğime kendim karar vermek isterim. Hangi sektörde staj yapacağıma kendim karar vermek isterim. Bir avukatın avukatlık stajı olmasını anlarım. Ne iş yapacağın bellidir. Ben sosyoloji okudum. Sosyologların devlette çalışma imkanı var. İslahevlerinde hapisanelerde bir sosyolog bulundurma zorunluluğu var diye biliyorum yani KPSS’ye girebilirdim isteseydim. Bu durumdan dolayı bana zorunlu bir staj verselerdi ben mutlu olmazdım.”

certain development and work experience. They seem to be to the benefit of students, but a majority of the respondents regarded internship as a means to expand their choices, as will be discussed further on. Thus, the academic internships' limits sometimes lead to a disagreement about the aim of doing internships. This could be another valid reason for doing voluntary internships.

According to the result of the interviews, to decide why a company chooses to pay interns whereas another chooses not to pay is difficult. During the research, it was recognized that it would not be possible for this thesis to make a sectoral distinction for paid and unpaid internships because voluntary unpaid internships are present almost in every sector. However, in this study, it was observed that the sectors with the most voluntary unpaid interns were available in media groups and advertising agencies. One of the respondents who was a voluntary unpaid intern in a local media group stated that there were around 200 unpaid interns in this media group, each working approximately one year.¹³¹ Thus, in spite of lack of accurate result, unpaid interns in media could be observed as a common occurrence.

The study also examined who prefers to do internship voluntary and unpaid. According to respondents' work experience, first they usually tried to find paid internships if they were juniors or seniors. Fifteen of the respondents had looked for paid internships first in their junior and senior years or after graduation. Unless they found a paid internship, then they perhaps agreed to do unpaid internships to gain experience for their career goals. For the interns who wanted like to do internships during the first years of undergraduate study, it was observed that they did not have many choices to be accepted to a work place on a paid basis. Thus, they did internships briefly where they were able to find them.

¹³¹ 2000 people work in this Turkish Media Group in 2015 according to internet sources.

As a great example to this subject, one of the respondents who had done two voluntary unpaid internships in two different sectors (construction and electronics-retailers companies) said that he had done his voluntary unpaid internship in the freshman year for the preparation of the second year of his undergraduate studies and had done the second year's voluntary unpaid internship in order to find a voluntary "paid" internship during his junior year. He was in his junior year, looking for a paid internship and doing another unpaid internship in an NGO at the time of the interview. Based on this story and other internship stories, in some situations, it is necessary to have a former internship experience to get another internship.

Similarly, Selin who had done her internship in the field of human resources, said that whereas for paid internship, the applicant was usually expected to have former work experience (it is more likely another internship for a student), it was not necessary for unpaid internships. A generalization in this topic for this thesis is not possible because it does not involve the paid internship as the main topic; however, it could be said that having former work experience may facilitate getting a paid internship in some sectors.

Except for two people, no respondents said they would do an unpaid internship again. The two respondents who reported that they would do another unpaid internship said that they might accept one in an-other sector. In sum, the white collar candidates do these internships because provide a brighter career for them and to be hired as an intern or as a permanent employee in the future a company in which they want to work. There will be more results below.

Moreover, voluntary unpaid internships usually are of the non-contractual uninsured working type. Interns and employers usually have no contractual commitment to each other. According to the respondents, this could create a

difference between paid and unpaid internships. The contract and the money interns earn from internship can cause more stressful jobs, responsibility and rigid rules for interns. In voluntary unpaid interns' situation interns might have less responsibility and have less stress. The respondents also said that voluntary unpaid interns were probably more comfortable with the employer relations. The voluntary unpaid interns usually did not work extra hours or days. Miray who had done voluntary unpaid internship in a tourism agency said this about the company demanding that she work extra hours on a holiday:

Once, there was a conversation about working on holidays. They told me that during the holiday, there would be only one person at the office, and asked if I could come to help him. I said; I don't have to, so I won't come. I take from here what I could take; I do not earn money, so I can leave anytime. They said don't be silly, come after the holiday, no problem. In the end, we were friends again.¹³²

Another difference between the paid and unpaid internships is the way the internship is found. In the interviews, there were seven people who had done paid internships alongside unpaid internships. While investigating ways of finding unpaid internship, an interesting outcome about the different ways to find paid and unpaid internships emerged. The respondents who had or had searched for paid internship said that paid internships usually appeared on career websites (such as *kariyer.net*, *secret.cv* or *yenibiriş.com*.)¹³³ Most of the respondents said that they had found these internships through family, friends or an acquaintance. Other internships had been found through social media, career websites, firms' websites, and contact with firms' human resources department.

¹³² Miray, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: "*Bir keresinde bayramda çalışma muhabbeti oldu. Bayramda ofiste bir kişi olacak sen de ona yardıma gelirsin dediler. Ben de zorla değil herhalde, gelmeyeceğim dedim. Zaten para almıyorum ben alacağımı aldım giderim dedim. Sonrasında saçmalama gel canım olur mu öyle şey dediler. Olay tatlıya bağlandı.*"

¹³³ These are the most popular job seeking websites in Turkey.

During the preliminary interviews, one organization firm owner answered our questions concerning the way he found his unpaid interns.¹³⁴ He stated that in order to make work someone for free, this person had to come to the employer. One could not search for someone publicly to work for free; this would be “shameful.” When this was compared to the answers of the respondents, the way to find a voluntary unpaid internship seems usually similar. Even though there were some different ways, as can be seen above, it is possible to regard social relations as the most common way to find a voluntary unpaid internship. It makes sense because employing someone unpaid and uninsured is illegal as was discussed above. Therefore, it is conceivable not to make public announcement to find someone to work for free. As a result of the interviews, it was seen that social relations have a vital importance in the voluntary unpaid internship system. Having the necessary social environment provides white collar candidates with social network to find a voluntary unpaid internship.

Internships: Job or Job Training

Asking what voluntary unpaid interns do at the work place helps to get an idea about what interns actually expect from an internship. Do they perceive internships as a job? Or do they expect that the internship is job training, from which they learn a lot? One of the questions of this thesis is how internship concept has been transformed. As some articles state that internship is a job now,¹³⁵ not job training, these interviews also tried to comment on this question in accordance with its main purpose. Thus, the respondents were asked to describe their internship as

¹³⁴ The author’s employer in her first internship.

¹³⁵ Ben Lyons, 2013, “Interns are Workers too,” <http://www.oecd.org/employment/interns-are-workers-too.htm> [10 April 2015].

job, job training or both. All of them said that internship should be job training not a job if there was no money in exchange for their labor.

On the other hand, what the respondents did at the work place was defined as job. The jobs voluntary unpaid interns usually do at the work place need a lot of attention, care, and time such as translation and preparing presentations, although they do not require high skills. It is important to give some examples of different comments of voluntary unpaid interns on the tasks they undertake. Elif, who had done internships in three different advertising companies, described what she did in the workplace:

I did competitor analysis. I was preparing presentations. Sometimes I did translations. Only my last internship was long-term and I had more responsibility. They were looking at competitors more deeply. I worked on that. So I did not do crazy things.¹³⁶

Melih, who had done his internship in an industrial company, described his job as follows:

I was doing very simple things. I did translation or cataloging. I was doing catalogs for the zippers that the company produced. Some were saying to me, what are you doing here? You study at Boğaziçi University, what are you going to do here? I do a lot of legwork that they gave me there. After I realized that I could not improve myself there, after one month, I said that I needed to concentrate on my studies and I quit.¹³⁷

¹³⁶ Elif, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 8 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “*Rakip analizleri yapıyordum. Sunumlar hazırlıyordum. Bazen çeviri yapıyordum. (...) Sadece son stajımda daha uzun süreliydim ve daha fazla sorumluluğum vardı. Rakipleri daha derin inceliyorlardı. Onda görev aldım. Çok çılgın şeyler yapmadım yani.*”

¹³⁷ Melih, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “*Çok basit bir şey yapıyordum. Katalog ya da çeviri falan yapıyordum. Firmanın yaptıkları fermuarların kataloglarını yapıyordum. (...) İstekiler şey diyordu: abi napıyorsun ya sen, Boğaziçi’nde okuyan adamsın ne yapacaksın burada? Bana orda verdikleri işler de çok ayak işi gibi işlerdi. Kendimi de geliştiremeyeceğimi görünce, 1 ayın sonunda ben okula ağırlık vereyim dedim ve çıktım.*”

Kenan, who did voluntary unpaid internship in two different industries, emphasized how easy it was to learn the jobs done in the work place:

I have totally three or four months internship and all the work can be learnt in two or three days. You gain only networks there, you know people. You learn how a company operates and how you communicate. I worked as assistant in my first company; I took notes during the meeting. In my second internship, I was checking the money in the bank accounts and reporting them.¹³⁸

Apart from those examples, interns are mostly described as people who do the work that nobody wants to do by the most of interviewed white-collar candidates.

These results suggest that although companies look for skilled interns, the tasks that are assigned to voluntary unpaid interns do not require skills. In the literature, the so-called “new economy” jobs demand more and more middle or less skilled labor than higher skills.¹³⁹ Thus, it should be another study the subject of whether the kind of work interns do reflects the new economy’s job design or the character of the interns’ job design as in the discussions of “intern jobs”¹⁴⁰ as the jobs that full-time permanent employees do not want to do. If an intern is responsible for some jobs which improve or require more skill in comparison to “the intern jobs”, these interns would say that they are not seen as interns at work place. Their colleagues value these interns more than other interns. For this reason, the results of the interviews basically show that while people said they did internships, they did not usually

¹³⁸ Kenan, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 8 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “*Toplam da üç dört ay staj yaptım işte iki üç günde öğrenilecek şeyler. Orada sadece network kazanıyorsun, insanları tanıyorsun. Şirketin nasıl işlediğini ve hitabeti anlıyorsun. İlk şirketimde asistanlık yaptım, toplantıda not aldım, diğerinde banka hesaplarındaki paraları kontrol edip bildiriyordum.*”

¹³⁹ Literature on the change of employment share: Paul Beaudry, David A. Green, and Benjamin M. Sand. “The Great Reversal In The Demand For Skill And Cognitive Tasks,” *National Bureau of Economic Research*, No. w18901 (2013) and Craig Holmes. “Why Is The Decline Of Routine Jobs Across Europe So Uneven?” *Skope and University of Oxford*, no.33 (November 2014).

¹⁴⁰ The respondents define “intern jobs” as the jobs which do not improve them. Anyone can do this job with a little knowledge of foreign language and computer. Sometimes, they even do not need these skills. There are some voluntary unpaid interns who bring coffee for superiors, makes photocopy or doing payments on an ATM machine for the employers.

receive training or get real learning at all. The interviews also suggest that interns do what regular employees would or should do. These two voluntary unpaid intern stories show the interns' contribution to the work place:

There were two organizations which managed to do much better thanks to my ideas. I seriously believed that there should have been a compensation for that; however, there was not something like that in the contract. We did a sports organization at a high school. People at work did not have any experience with sports organization, I found the company to put on the show. Thus, they took one project. In another case, they made me prepare the tender documents. I think I should have been given more than ice cream for all that.¹⁴¹

The second story is from an advertising agency:

There was a guy who was doing a copywriter internship in the company. He came up with a slogan for an advertisement which became the title of the advertisement. The clients liked this title and all the papers published the advertisement with this title. However, the guy did not get any payment and he was not hired for the job. He just left then.¹⁴²

In general, the respondents' internship stories suggested that the interns actually worked like permanent employees during the internship period. Although internships vary and it is difficult to make a definitive judgment, there is a perception of interns that the work place in which they do the internship gains by employing them as qualified free labor. All of the respondents agreed that they contributed to the company where they did internships and they did not learn anything substantial. This does not mean, however, that they regarded internship as a useless experience.

¹⁴¹ Miray, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “Benim fikirlerimle kurtarılan iki tane organizasyon vardı. Ben onun bir karşılığı olması gerektiğini çok düşündüm o an ama tabii ki sözleşmede öyle bir şey yoktu. (...) Biz lisede spor organizasyonu yapmıştık. İstekilerin spor organizasyonu tecrübesi yoktu hiç, firmayı ben buldum gösteri yapmak için. Bir işi öyle almışlardı. Bir tane de ihalenin dosyasını sadece bana hazırlattılar. Dondurmadan fazla olmalıydı karşılığı bence.”

¹⁴² Sarp, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 6 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “Şirkette metin yazarı stajyerliği yapan bir arkadaş vardı. Çocuğun stajyerken bulduğu başlık bir ilan başlığı oldu. Müşteri o başlığı beğendi ve bütün gazetelerde dergilerde o şekilde yayınlandı ama çocuğa ne para verdiler ne işe aldılar. Ve çocuk gitti.”

Motives and Consequences

This section analyzes the value of internship for the respondents. It discusses what the interns expected from the internship and what they achieved from the experience. The section also explores the benefits and the costs of internships in interns' lives in an attempt to assess whether the expected and the real value of internships match.

The Expected Value of Internships

During the interviews, the respondents were asked to explain their reasons for doing internships. The purpose of this question was to find out what they hoped to gain from doing these internships. The question here was whether what they did was aimed to achieve something for their future. The sum of the results was as follows: First, the respondents had done internships in order to know right people, which might provide them with better employment opportunities in the future. The majority of the respondents (25) said that internship was a "networking" issue.¹⁴³ The respondents wanted to have jobs in an industry and a company of their choice. According to them, in order to get those jobs, they needed references from the network they gained from internship.

Second, the experience gained through internship was regarded as a means to overcome competition, as discussed before. Thus, competition among white collar candidates can be seen as one of the main reasons for voluntary internship system. Voluntary interns try to create a chance to come to the fore in the crowd.

Third, internships seem important for idle time management. While someone

¹⁴³ A large number of the respondents used "network" word. Some other used similar words to refer "network" such as connections, references and relations.

asks in a job interview what the candidate did in their summers, there should be an answer which shows the interns' enthusiasm for being a white collar candidate. Thus, if interns usually do pass all their summers at a work place, then that could be counted as enough enthusiasm.

Finally, voluntary internship is important to get to know sectors and to decide what the candidate wants to do as white collar workers in the future. Some argued that university did not give the technical or practical details of work life. Others claimed that they would like to tend different industries than their university departments, so they needed these internships to get to know these sectors and to get a job in the future.

The issue of whether or not internship is a requirement for the future shows some differences than the reasons of doing internship. Internship, which is regarded as beneficial does not always have to be seen necessary. A few of the respondents said that internship is not something necessary although it is useful for them. The detail concerning the benefit of internship will be discussed in the next section. In the remaining part of this section, we try to understand whether internship is perceived as something necessary, and if so why it is seen as a requirement for the future? The results show that internship seems necessary. Many interviewees (27) confirmed that internship was necessary today.

The answers usually concerned the general nature of internships. The respondents gave some example of what would happen to one who did not have any former work experience while applying for a job. In this answers, the future anxiety of white collar candidates clearly appeared. A few examples of the interviews will be shared here in order to show the need for internships and the anxiety about the future

of voluntary unpaid interns. Cemre, who studied at the department of translation and interpreting studies, described her distress due to the lack of an internship:

I now believe that if you do not have an internship experience on your CV, then you are a loser for a company, they will never evaluate you for a job position because they do not look for that, they do not look while they search either. If you don't have any experience, then they eliminate you. Sending an e-mail to the contact person of a company, applying jobs on kariyer.net, yenibiriş or linkedin do not work. There is more and more competition This is why everyone looks for an internship. It is definitely related with future anxiety because you do not get anything at school. Even if you are an engineer, you do not get anything despite your compulsory internship.¹⁴⁴

Elif thought that the education university gave students was not enough for work life.

She expected to make clearer career decisions by doing an internship:

People pull themselves up with internships. After they do internships, they would be hired at the same firm because of their experience regardless of university grades or something else. It does not matter whether they have real jobs at work place. They necessarily learn things because, for example, I have not done anything at a work place that I had learnt at university. I did not say a thing that I know this from my courses; I can use it now at work. I've seen what it is to work in advertising by doing internship in advertising. If I did an internship in a corporate company, then I could see if I wanted to have a career in corporate life or not and now I would know that I do not want it. At least, I would not had to say let's try this now while I was looking for a job. Otherwise, you graduate from university with enthusiasm, but you have a big disappointment after you enter a job. This disappointment may be due to people's profile. The topics you talk about, your problems become different. People should not feel this shock. Second, people also avoid the shock of waking up in the morning, coming home in the evening. Third, the routine of work should not make you surprised. This is why internship is important, especially for a corporate company.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴ Cemre, interview by the author, tape recording, Ankara, Turkey, 10 March 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “*Bana artık CV’nde bir staj tecrüben yoksa sen o şirket için boşsun, hiçbir şekilde seni değerlendirmeye katmayacaklar gibi geliyor. Bakmıyorlar çünkü, search yaparken de bakmıyorlar. Tecrüben yoksa eliyorlar. Sen onların contact personına direk mail atmadığın sürece, kariyer.net’ten, yenibiriş’ten, linkedinden başvurman hiçbir şeye etki etmiyor bence. Daha bir rekabete döndü iş, o yüzden millet deli gibi staj arıyor. Bu tamamen gelecek endişesiyle bağlantılı çünkü okulda bir şey alamıyorsun. Mühendis olsan bile okulda bir şey alamıyorsun ki onların zorunlu stajı var.*”

¹⁴⁵ Elif, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “*İnsanlar stajla bir yerlere geliyor. Bir yerde staj yaptıkları zaman o staj yaptıkları yerlerde, not ortalaması vs çok önemli olmadan stajda kazandıkları deneyimlerle işe alınabiliyorlar. İş yapmış olmaları önemli değil. İlla bir şey öğreniyorlar. Çünkü ben mesela okulda aldığım eğitimle bir şey yapmadım bugüne kadar. Okulda ama ben bunu*

Selin, who did an internship as a human resources intern in a corporate company, answered the question, “Do you think that internship is a necessity?”

I think yes. For example, let us consider a management student. This student has never done an internship; they do not know what they will do in the future. I think that political science students are the same. Will that student go into international relations or political science after graduation? Management has also a lot of sub-segments. Both accounting and marketing are areas of management. After graduation, it does not really matter how presentable a candidate is. No one would say you are a presentable candidate and a Boğaziçi graduate who knows English, so let us hire you for sales if you like, then if you don't like it, we can shift you to marketing. There is no such flexibility in the private sector. Thus, students have to decide in which sub-segment they would like to work. Moreover, they can eliminate your CV in 7 seconds. Who would hire a Boğaziçi graduate without any internship? I think that they ask what this student did in three months of summer during four years. If the best students are in this university, how can one stand out among 15,000 people?¹⁴⁶

Finally, Melih described his internship perception and observations as follows:

For example, I graduated in June and I started to look for a job in November. Although I graduated from Boğaziçi University, I took three or four interviews. Time passes and I did nothing. When I look back now, in this process, I could have done an unpaid internship which taught me something because time passed in vain and my CV did not get fill. A full CV makes a real difference in the interviews. When the interviewer asked me, what you did in your internship? I did not have a lot of things to say. However, if you had more internship, you can say I did this there, I went there from there. Then, your profile gets a little more attractive to be hired. The interviewer

öğrenmişim, dur burada kullanayım dediğim bir şey olmadı.(...) Ben reklamcılıkta çalışarak onun ne olduğunu gördüm. Eğer daha önceden kurumsal bir yerde staj yapmış olsaydım, kurumsal hayatı isteyip istemediğimi de görecektim. Ve şu an istemeyeceğimi biliyor olurdum. İş ararken de ya bir de bunu göreyim demek zorunda kalmazdım en azından gittiğim zaman neyle karşılaşacağımı biliyor olurdum. Öteki türlü üniversiteden mezun olduktan sonra bir heyecanla mezun oluyorsun ve bir yerde işe girip büyük hayal kırıklığı yaşıyorsun. İnsan profilinden dolayı olabilir bu hayal kırıklığı. (...) İnsanlarla konuştuğunuz konular, derdiniz başkalaşmaya başlıyor. Bunun şokunu yaşamamak lazım. İkincisi sabah kalk akşam eve gel şokunu yaşamamak lazım. Üçüncüsü oraya gidip o rutine girdiğinde şaşırmanın lazım. Bu yüzden staj önemli, kurumsal bir yer için özellikle daha önemli.”

¹⁴⁶ Selin, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 6 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “Bence evet. Mesela işletme öğrencisini düşünelim. Hiç staj yapmamış olsun, mezun olduğunda nerede ne yapacağını bilemez. Bence politika da aynı şekilde. Uluslar arası ilişkilere mi yönelecek siyaset bilimine mi, işletmede de bir sürü alt kırılımlar var. Muhasebe de işletme, pazarlama da işletme. Diyelim mezun oldu tam zamanlı işe başvuracak, karşısına aldığı evet çok prezentabl biri, İngilizcesi de var zaten Boğaziçi mezunu diye işe alıp biz seni satışa koyalım orda yapamazsan pazarlamaya alırsın diye bir esneklik yok hiçbir özel sektörde. O yüzden bence her bölümde öğrencilerin hangi alt kırılımlarda çalışmak istediğine karar vermesi gerek.(...) Ayrıca önünüze bir CV konulduğunda 7 sn içinde eleyebiliyorlar sizi. Staj yapmamış bir Boğaziçi mezununu kim işe alsın ki. Yazın 3 ay bu öğrenci ne yaptı diye sorarlar bence. 4 sene boyunca. En iyi öğrenciler buradaysa 15.000 kişinin arasından benim sıyrılmam nasıl olacak.”

may be convinced that the candidate wants this career a lot, he managed to get himself accepted; so if he comes here he can be successful here, too. The man who is doing an internship is doing it for his career. He thinks that these internships return as better jobs. I have a friend who graduated from a science high school at my university department who does internship in a good multinational corporate company. He has really bad grades because of chasing these internships, but he will have a brighter career due to his internship experience. At least, for the next few years, it will be like that. ¹⁴⁷

All in all, as shown in all the examples, these white collar candidates gave a lot of importance to voluntary internships. All of the respondents had many things in common. However, the most important points on internships of these answers will be examined here. Cemre said that even though engineers had academic internships in general, they still might not find sufficient what university provided for them. They may need to do something other like voluntary internships. Likewise, it can be observed that the respondents complain about the incompatibility of the theoretical base of university and the corporate base of work life. Therefore, internship is expected to be a business school in any sector.

Other results are as follows: Elif emphasizes her wrong career choice which could be prevented by doing an internship in this work field, according to her. Thus, internship is expected to build proper career goals. Another expected effect is to have more qualifications than competitors. Selin sees other 15.000 people in her field as

¹⁴⁷ Melih, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 25 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “Ben mesela şu an Haziran’da mezun oldum, Kasım’da gerçekten iş aramaya başladım. O zamandan beri Boğaziçi mezunu olmama rağmen 3 4 tane mülakata gidebildim sadece. İş ararken zaman geçiyor ve ben hiçbir şey yapmıyorum. Şu an geri dönüp baktığımda bu süreçte parasız ama bana bir şeyler öğretebilecek bir staj yapsaydım daha makuldü. Çünkü zaman boşuna geçiyor ve CV’im dolmuyor. CV’nin dolu olması mülakatlarda başka bir ortam yaratıyor. Adam bana ne yaptın stajda deyince, diyecek çok fazla bir şey de yok ama birkaç tane staj olsa, orda onu yaptım burada bunu yaptım, oradan oraya gittim falan dersin. O zaman oluşturduğun profil biraz daha işe alınası oluyor. Adam vay adam baya kovalamış, kendini de kabul ettirmiş. Buraya gelse de yapar falan diye daha bir ikna oluyor. (...) Staj yapan adam kariyer için yapıyor stajı. (...) yaptığı stajların kendisine daha güzel işler olarak geri döneceğini düşünerek staj yapıyor. İyi bir çokuluslu kurumsal şirkette staj yapan ama bölümde her sene çok kötü notlar alan bir arkadaşım var fen lisesi mezunu, adam bu stajları kovaladığı için okul performansı benden çok daha kötü olmasına rağmen, staj geçmişi olduğu için kariyeri biraz daha parlak olacak illa ki. En azından önümüzdeki birkaç yıl yani.”

competitors and internship is something has to be done to be better than them.

According to respondents, one has to do something different or something more than others despite “they graduate from Boğaziçi University.” A final comment on the expected value was related to the anxiety of idle time. Melih thought that the need to fill idle time makes unpaid internships more acceptable as they seem more valuable than idle time. All these reasons explain what makes internship attractive despite the fact it is unpaid. The competitive pressures young people feel in the new economic system lead them to accept working under precarious working conditions in order to build a good CV and improve their future employment prospects.

The Real Value of Internships

In this section, the benefits of internships and the influences of internships on educational and work life will be examined. When the interviewees were asked if internships were beneficial for them or not, all answered in the affirmative. However, they also reported that they did not do high skilled work and they did not learn much there, as was mentioned above. According to these interviews, although the benefit of an internship is not job training, almost every respondent said they had gained at least work discipline or built networks. Can who had done a six-month voluntary unpaid internship in a digital agency expresses the importance and the benefits of internship as follows:

Even though you study at Boğaziçi University if you do nothing during university time, you cannot do anything after that. Maybe it is too early to say that for me, but I know a lot of graduates. All of them talk about the vital importance of doing internship. First you build a network and work discipline. There could be a job with a 2,000 Turkish Liras entry-level salary

and two people apply for it. If one of them has done four years of internships, the result is not the same for them.¹⁴⁸

According to the respondents, work discipline refers here to waking up in the morning, being efficient during work hours, getting used to meal times and organizing life outside of work hours. The office environment is also a different environment from that of a university campus. The office environment is where white collar candidates encounter new people and new cultures. They gain experience in building relationships with colleagues in the office which gives rise to another work discipline. Some respondents said that they had learned how to properly communicate and the hierarchical relation between senior and junior in the work place. In addition, it is assumed that networking has a direct effect on work relationships. Hakan, who did a five-month, voluntary unpaid internship at an NGO had started to work at the same place. He says that networking was essential to getting a job. Berk, who did a voluntary unpaid internship in a culture and art organization firm, confirmed Hakan's statement:

This field proceeds with networks. This is why I want to continue as an intern. Most of permanent employees started as interns before they started to work there. So I think that you need to be physically present there at first. Because there is no regular recruiting seasons. When one quits the job, someone like an intern fills this position. I know that two of the seven people in my department were interns, and one was doing operational work there before they started to work.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ Can, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 3 March 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: *"Okuduğun okul Boğaziçi de olsa boş çıkınca bir şey olmuyor. Bunu söylemek için erken şu an benim için ama bir sürü mezun tanıdığım var. Hepsi ne olursa olsun okurken staj yapmanın inanılmaz önemli olduğunu söyledi. Birincisi network kuruyorsun. İş disiplinin oturuyor. 2000 lira giriş maaşı olan bir işe 2 kişi başvurur, biri 4 yıl staj yapmıştır. İkisi aynı olmaz yani."*

¹⁴⁹ Berk, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 24 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: *"Bu alan biraz bağlantılarla ilerliyor o yüzden stajyer olarak devam etmek istiyorum ben de. Şu an çalışanların çoğu orada daha önce stajyer olarak başlamışlar. Bence bu yüzden öncelikle orada fiziksel olarak bulunman gerekiyor. Düzenli işe alımlar olmadığı için biri çıktıkça yerine biri geliyor. Benim şu an tanıdığım 7 kişinin içinde kendi bölümündeki 2 kişinin stajdan 1 kişinin operasyonel çalışmadan geldiğini biliyorum."*

Building a network also refers to the possibility of providing references during the recruitment process. Interns can show the relations they had during former internship as reference for their new jobs. Tülin, who did a one-year voluntary unpaid internship at two different newspapers, and is currently employed at a newspaper, stated that employers even demand a work reference from new graduates. Thus, employers also may expect that new graduates have serious experience. Although the results are not certain, it is observed that the demand for work reference by employers strengthen the necessity of internships. In this study, networking is not useful for finding an internship or as reference in a new internship or job application.

The respondents were also asked if the internships had had a negative impact on their university success. This was asked to understand if internships had an effect on their grades whether students continued to do internships or not. Because voluntary internships are optional, they can be done at any time of the year. For the internships which are done outside of university time, some respondents said that they had not had courses at that time. Others said that internships took up certain parts of their week during the educational term (fall, spring and sometimes summer). Thus, the internship could affect their grades. However, a large part of the respondents said that their coursework had not affected by their internships. A few respondents stated that their grades had been low before internships. Some said that they had internships which went parallel with the university courses so they actually benefitted from the internship for their courses. Another two of the respondents commented on the negative effects of their grades. As a result, it cannot be said that internships have a negative effect on educational life.

Moreover, a long-term internship during the educational period might hurt grades, but it depended on the number of days the intern worked every week. All in

all, it can be observed that internships could affect grades in both ways, so it was not something to avoid for a better educational life. Tülin, who continued to do her long-term internship despite its negative effect on her grades, said her that internship compensated for its bad effect on the courses in the future life even though she had to extend university. There were also some who extended university. These respondents had thought that they needed to work at that time. One of those people was Ümit, who did voluntary unpaid internship in an entertainment company. Both Tülin and Ümit entered a job in the same industries after internship without any difficulty. Above, Melih told about his friend who had done badly at university, but Melih was sure that his friend would get a better job offer than himself. All of these examples show that experience in work life might be an alternative to educational failure between white collar candidates.

When it comes to the effect of internships on work life, in the some cases, interns had expected to be hired after their internships. Two of respondents said they were available to work full-time, and two others were not available because they still had courses during this full-time employment. Another two respondents indicated their expectations to work after their internships during the interviews. Of the four respondents who had begun to do internship during the last semester of their school had expected to be hired during their internships; however, because this internship process seemed to never end, they had lost their hope and quit new internships. The example of the last situation was given by Sarp, who did a six-month internship at an advertising agency:

My last internship was the hardest one. I worked in customer relations. In this department normally, one director, one senior, and one junior works. The junior of our department quit in the second month of my internship. I took

over his work. Meanwhile, I had finished university and wanted to be hired by this company, but they did not hire me in the end.¹⁵⁰

During his internship, Sarp took over someone else's jobs. According to his answers, he did both the translations jobs (which seemed to be the main "intern job" for some) and junior level jobs. In this case, internship can be seen at the level of a permanent job and can create expectation for interns. Because Sarp took over a junior's jobs and he was a graduate, he thought that he would most probably be hired. When he was not hired, he quit. As a result, it can be perceived that the intentions of new graduates in doing an internship might be to work in that place afterwards.

Furthermore, exploitation may be considered as a reason for or a result of voluntary unpaid internships. Although the interns mention the two main benefits (work discipline and network), it is also possible for employers to hire an intern who has expectation to be hired after the internship and to delay giving a job as long as possible to make this person work for free as long as possible. There were many cases in which the employer extended the internship period, most likely to benefit from the free labor. For example, in eleven cases from the interviews, the people did internships more than six months. Another result was that the increase in the duration of the internship period possibly had a negative effect on the grades of students. However, the students in the interviews usually said that they were careful about their schedule for the school programs and internships.

In summary, voluntary unpaid internship contributes to interns work discipline and network resources although they do not provide real training. Actually,

¹⁵⁰ Sarp, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 6 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: "*Son çalıştığım şirketteki stajım en zorlu stajımdı. Müşteri ilişkilerinde çalıştım. Normalde 1 direktör, 1 senior ve 1 junior çalışıyor. Bizim bölümdeki junior benim başladığımın 2. Ayı işten ayrıldı. Ve onun işlerini de ben devraldım ama sonunda beni işe almadılar.*"

internships appear as entry-level jobs which do not require many skills that cannot be easily learned. It is also true that long-term internships might negatively affect a student's grades. Although the respondents usually said that their work did not improve them much and what they did at the work place could be learned easily, their expectations largely matched what they obtained from the experience. Their ultimate expectation was to stand out in the competition for jobs and they thought that the internships contributed to this. In this respect, there was not a discrepancy between the expected and real values of internships.

Analysis

This section summarizes the arguments of the thesis on the basis of the interviews. The first argument is that the internships are not done because of the fear of unemployment. They are rather seen as basically a way to expand the interns' choices, as will be discussed in more detail below. Second, the interviewees do not regard their unpaid and unsecured internship as a fair situation. The final point is that when the earnings and expenditures of interns are considered, it becomes clear that unpaid internships are possible only for those who have serious economic support basically provided by families. In other words, unpaid internship is a luxury that is not available to all.

Voluntary Unpaid Internship is not a Way out of Unemployment

The unemployment rate in Turkey is high even for educated people, and the literature on internships often present them as a possible solution to the problem of

unemployment.¹⁵¹ However, what our interviews show is not a strong fear of unemployment among white collar candidates. In the interviews, voluntary unpaid internship was never presented as a means to deal with unemployment. It was rather the fear of not being able to achieve future plans. In other words, anxiety concerning the future does not involve unemployment, but the failure to pursue a desirable career.

Although the competitive pressures were often mentioned, the interviewees were not afraid of not being able to find a job. When we look at the experience of graduate respondents on the labor market, we see that three of them had had some trouble finding a job. These interviewees said that in their case having an internship did not appear as a solution to the problem of unemployment. They said that internships are beneficial, but they do not necessarily lead to employment. Hence, internships cannot be relied upon as a remedy for unemployment.

The absence of a widespread fear of unemployment among the interviewees might be explained by nature of our sample which included the students and graduates of three universities with good reputations. However, our research findings are still useful in suggesting that the fear of unemployment falls with the increase in cultural capital without, nevertheless, making the internships seem unnecessary.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ For Turkey, Prof. İnci Kayhan Kuzgun demonstrates internship as a solution for educated youth unemployment problem. İnci Kayhan Kuzgun. "Türkiye'de Eğitimli Genç İşsizliğinin Çözümünde Bir Alternatif Olarak Staj: Özellikleri ve Sosyal Boyutu," *Toprak İşveren* 99, (2013), pp.7-12.

¹⁵² A research which does not agree with our findings is in the following. A daily newspaper in Turkey, Sabah, made a research with Secret.cv career website. In this research, they ranked universities according to ease of finding a job. Marmara University has the second place in 20 different universities while Boğaziçi University has the 12th place. Bilkent University is not included in the list. However, the methodology of the research is based on the number of university students that find jobs via Secret.cv. While Marmara University has 70.000 students, Bilkent and Boğaziçi Universities each have around 12.000 students. The research needs the proportions, not the numbers to claim the best university in finding jobs after graduation. Moreover, according to the General Manager of Secret.cv, the private foundation universities like Bilkent has a lot of students who has better socio-economic situation. These students' parents also may have their own job so they may tend to continue to this job. According to him, this situation decreases the number of the applications from foundation universities. However, all in all, this research has failed to show the real results of the question. However, as a part of literature, it was important to talk about it. For the website: "Mezunları en

A study was conducted among the graduates of the Middle East Technical University, one of the most prestigious universities in Turkey. Graduates of the Faculty of Engineering found jobs in 45 days to two months; it took graduates from the Faculty of Education about two months to find jobs. Graduates from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, the Faculty of Economics, and Administrative Sciences and the Faculty of Architecture had an average duration for finding job between three and four months.¹⁵³ Thus, it can be said that educational field may make a difference. Prestigious universities provide their students with research and foreign language opportunities and more relevant networks for their careers. According to my interviews, the fear of unemployment is rare among the students of such universities. In their case, the absence of unemployment anxiety may actually go together with the interest in doing internships. In addition to the prestige of graduating from a good university, doing an internship confers advantages to students and recent graduates when building their CV's and having more attractive prospects for employment.

According to the interviews, students and new graduates who focused on the future careers did not feel fear unemployment as I observed. The time passed while searching for jobs was not part of the unemployment process, but waiting for a better job. This way was true for Boğaziçi and Bilkent Universities students and graduates. It is also true for Marmara University although its students prepare relatively less for the white collar career at the university in favor of finding an internship. Thus, they also did not complain about unemployment. Ümit, who was a student at Marmara University, started to work where he did voluntary unpaid internship. He told his internship story concerning unemployment like this:

kolay iş bulan üniversiteler” <http://www.sabah.com.tr/fotohaber/ekonomi/mezunlari-en-kolay-is-bulan-universiteler/34476> [10 April 2015]

¹⁵³ *Milliyet*, 10 July 2014, “3 ODTÜ’luden 1’i daha mezun olmadan iş buluyor,” <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/3-odtu-luden-1-i-daha-mezun-universite-1909953/> [10 April 2015].

Unemployment was not something on my mind. Internships you do just to help you until you are called for an interview. During the interview, being accepted is up to you. It is no longer important what you have done before. They tell you their expectations and I had no fear of losing. I asked how you would contribute to me. After that, they accepted me for the position. The CV will take you to the interview; after that, it depends on the way you talk in the interview.¹⁵⁴

Ümit who studied in a department of Marmara University whose educational language is Turkish. This is why it can be argued that he is not as lucky as his competitors from Boğaziçi and Bilkent University but he still says that “unemployment was not something on my mind”. Thus, it can be observed that internship was not a solution for unemployment, according to voluntary unpaid interns. During the interview process, Ümit pointed out other indicators of cultural capital, like parental teaching, schools and the environment which contributes to cultural capital shaped the interviews success. Thus, he emphasized a very important point. A former work (internship) experience, attitudes during the interview, activities the candidate participated, and sectoral connections influence all the internship recruitment process.

In this respect, the forms of capital provided confidence about career and the help of having previous experience for a better career path. Whereas Boğaziçi and Bilkent students said that their universities’ name were mentioned and given attention often during the recruitment process, Marmara University students and graduates cited knowing a second language or having the right social contacts.¹⁵⁵ At

¹⁵⁴ Ümit, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 3 March 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “İşsizlik aklımdaki bir şey değildi. Yaptığın stajlarla dolu olan CV görüşmeye atıyor seni zaten en fazla, görüşmede sana kalıyor iş, ne yaptığın artık çok önemli olmuyor. Senden beklentilerini anlatıyorlar, benim de kaybetme korkum yoktu, siz bana ne katacaksınız demiştim. Bu cümlemden sonra almışlardı beni. CV seni ancak görüşmeye kadar götürür, sonrası senin mülakatta nasıl konuştuğuna bakıyor.”

¹⁵⁵ The students of Boğaziçi and Bilkent University have already known English a second language because the educational language in these universities is English. In Marmara University, a few departments have different educational language.

this point, cultural capital and social capital could be seen as tools to find and get internships. However, according to the interviews, networking seems to have been the main factor in all three universities.

Voluntary Unpaid Interns' Unequal Position

When it comes to the comments of the respondents on doing internships unpaid, no intern regarded unpaid internship as fair. During the interviews, it was observed that the aim of the unpaid internship is not to train interns, but to make them do the unqualified jobs so it does not require only their time, but also their labor. The outcome of the responses is that although unpaid internships are perceived as an unequal situation, they are still normalized and internalized by interns. Elif, who did a voluntary unpaid internship at an advertising agency, answered the question of whether she thought that she was in an unequal position as an unpaid intern as follows:

I do not think of it right now. It is like whether it is fair that not to be able to fly? In the advertising industry, there is no one who gives money to interns, so if you want to do an internship, you have already accepted that. However, if I worked in a corporate company and if I earned less or was not paid, I could see that as an unfair situation. I regard it as unfair that while a corporate company provides its interns better conditions, another one provides worse. Some corporate companies recruit a lot of interns from our university. Because there is nepotism, some refer their friends and you miss the opportunity to have an internship there and do internship somewhere worse. I see this as an unfair situation.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁶ Elif, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 8 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “*Şu an bunu düşünemiyorum. Havada duramamak eşitsizlik mi gibi. Reklam sektöründe stajlara para veren yok ve eğer sen staj yapmak istiyorsan, bunu zaten kabul ederek giriyorsun. Ancak kurumsal bir şirkette çalışıp daha az para alsaydım ya da para almıyor olsaydım, bunu eşitsizlik olarak görürdüm. Bir kurumsal şirket stajyerine daha iyi şartlar sağlarken, bir diğeri daha kötü şartlar sağladığında bunu eşitsizlik olarak görüyorum. Bir de stajyer alımlarında bazı kurumsal şirketlerde bizim okuldan çok fazla stajyer oluyor. Adam kayırmacılık burada da olduğu için kendi arkadaşını alıp oraya götürdüğü zaman sen orada staj yapma fırsatını kaçıırıyorsun ve daha kötü bir yerde staj yapmaya mecbur kalıyorsun. Bunu da haksızlık olarak görüyorum.*”

Elif's comment, "is it fair that not able to fly?" seems to summarize the meaning of unpaid internships. This sentence means that one cannot think about whether the inability to fly is fair or not because nobody can fly. According to Elif, if no interns are paid, there is no question of fairness for some sectors. Although it is observed that there is more intensity of voluntary unpaid internships or unpaid internships in some industries, the lack of informal internship data does not allow anyone to say anything certain. If there is common knowledge among students that a sector usually makes people work unpaid, then it is accepted as normal.

The majority of the respondents considered interns to be free labor and the other employees of a company they work for see them in that way. This increased the feel of being unequal and insecure. The respondents said that they always tried to learn something more and take on more jobs during the internship. The two interviews, the respondents talked about new interns in their company who had become permanent, full-time employees. Although both of them had been interns, now they thought that interns should not be given so much responsibility. However they confirmed that it depended on the duration of the internship. Long-term interns could have more responsibility. Another common point they shared was that instead of training interns, they could do jobs faster themselves.

Voluntary Unpaid Internship as a Luxury

When it comes to the limits of unpaid internship, the respondents were asked to explain their income from internship. In some of the internships done by the respondents, none of these expenses were covered. Some companies did not even

meet the interns' basic needs like food and transportation. Although the interns complained about the situation, there was no rebellion. They accepted these conditions before they began their internships. They still did internships and believed in the necessity of internships.

The payments of companies are varied. Even though the majority of companies paid their interns food, transportation costs were rare. Apart from these, four people received payment specifically for food or transportation, but were paid informally around 200-500 liras as scholarship payments or in an envelope as an arbitrary payment. The reason these interns are considered as unpaid is that these payments are most probably spent on work day food and transportation. The labor remained unpaid. The other reason is that these payments were given informally and they were under the legal minimum wage. The payments were totally arbitrary and unrelated to the existing laws and regulations. If the interns were under social security coverage, the hiring company would have to pay them the legal minimum wage, but this was not the case.

Two of the respondents say that they had not wanted social security coverage themselves. They said that the kind of social security coverage they would have as part-time workers would be inferior to what they had through their parents. If the company contributed to their social insurance, then they would lose much of the benefits they had as dependents including benefits such as the special "green" passport¹⁵⁷. It is also interesting that sometimes the interns were asked to sign a contract that they would not demand any payment from the company. Miray and Tülin who did long-term internships said that they had signed this type of contract. Tülin even had to have the document notarized. It is quite intriguing how an illegal

¹⁵⁷ This passport provides with visa-free travelling to some countries

practice of making someone work without payment and social security could be confirmed by a public notary.

Apart from the question of payments, there is also the question of expenses. While academic internships cannot be done during school days in general, voluntary internships can be done whenever the candidate would like to do them. The interns had some expenditure for residence, books, food and other needs during school days and these were met already by their parents or scholarships. Thus, if an internship is done during the school term, then the extra expenditures required for the internship would be limited to items such as transportation. However, if the internship is done during the summer, not only food and transportation, but all living expenses are extra. Those who want to do an internship demanded extra income from their parents to do an internship if they do the internship in another city than that their parents live. They need money for housing, food, transportation, entertainment, and other miscellaneous costs. Although some of successful students have their own scholarships as well which changes between 200-500 liras per month, according to the interviews, they are not enough to meet all their expenses.

Not all parents from all socioeconomic classes can afford this. Unpaid interns generally need the economic support of their parents. Others who need more money than parents can give usually get irrelevant jobs for their white collar careers (the most common jobs, according to interviews, were working as staff at expositions, organizations, or cafes). Thus, being able to do a voluntary unpaid internship requires a certain economic power and support from the parents.

Discussions

In this section, the theory and the practice from the interviews are examined. Although there are some points of the theory above, in order to provide a better discussion and analyze, this section seems necessary. The forms of capital and the precarious working conditions of the new economy with the answers of the respondents are discussed below in detail. Thus, even though they have the advantage of having the forms of capitals, their internship types put them in a precarious condition.

Voluntary Unpaid Interns and Different Forms of Capital

In this section, I will discuss the three main forms of capital in relation to the characteristics of voluntary unpaid interns. In this thesis, cultural capital is examined with reference to its significance in determining the way students and graduates behave during internship and job interviews. Economic capital is analyzed in terms of the role it plays by determining the economic support enjoyed by young people doing voluntary unpaid internships. The meaning of voluntary unpaid interns on earnings and expenditures during voluntary unpaid internships in terms of economic capital was discussed. Last, social capital is used to analyze the ways to find voluntary unpaid internships and the new social network which is wanted to create via the relations of voluntary unpaid internships.

In this thesis, cultural capital is in part defined by the qualifications of white collar candidates, university students and graduates. As the interviews indicate, cultural capital that involves the name of university, the organizations in which the intern candidate has participated and the knowledge of a foreign language and is reflected in the performance during the internship interviews, influences the hiring

process. Internships themselves can also be regarded as a new contribution to the interns' cultural capital because of the new experiences gained through them. As interns try to add to their future cultural capital with the internship experience, they try to have a brighter future. They make better decisions about what they want to do, in which sectors and in what positions they want to work while they are doing their internships. Unless they have these internship experiences, they usually fall behind in the competition and cannot achieve the results they want in business areas. Cultural capital thus plays an important role in the employment process in different ways.

Economic capital is also important since the interns' ability to work without pay implies that they have the financial means to cover their needs during internship. This means a relatively high class positions in socioeconomic terms. In this regard, what we consider in this thesis is the economic means which interns have to have in order to do an unpaid internship. As was mentioned above, this money usually comes from parents or other sources, like scholarship. The need for a voluntary unpaid internship has to be approved and the expenses have to be covered by parents. Thus, the result is that working free is a luxury in the context of voluntary unpaid interns. According to interviews, one of the goals for doing a voluntary internship is to have a well-paying job in the future.¹⁵⁸ Thus, it can be said that the economic accumulation of parents is used to have a better opportunity to improve the economic situation of their children. This defines a situation where the people have economic accumulation are able to invest more in their futures.

Lastly, social capital is accumulated by voluntary unpaid interns in two ways. On the one hand, according to our interviews, the respondents were usually supported by their networks while they tried to find their internships. On the other

¹⁵⁸ Nine respondents claim that it is not possible to have a good entry level job without former experience.

hand, they also said that they expect voluntary unpaid internships to create a broader social network. The respondents said that references were among the most important contributions of social networks because sometimes references were asked from even the new graduates. These references are usually provided by an instructor, a relative or an acquaintance and without them it might also be difficult to get a voluntary unpaid internship. At the same time, a voluntary unpaid internship also presents more opportunity to get other references and thus people who are part of strong networks also have the chance to develop even stronger networks.

As a result, it can be concluded that without adequate cultural, economic and social capital, it seems quite difficult to get a voluntary unpaid internship. While these internships contribute to the accumulation of the forms of capital in question, the absence of the latter lead to the exclusion from the system. Voluntary unpaid interns expect a return for their cultural, economic, and social investments, as discussed above. The voluntary unpaid internship enables interns to broaden their network and provides them with more interesting and better paying job opportunities than they would otherwise have. Those who have more capital endowments thus move to a higher level, and a never-ending cycle is created.

Voluntary Unpaid Interns' Precarity

Although the interviews yielded results that match Guy Standing's description of the new class, the precariat, they also revealed some points absent in Standing's analysis. In some respects the characteristics of our respondents differ from those attributed to the precariat. In this section, it will be asked whether those who are able to do voluntary unpaid internships because of their privileged position could still be considered as part of the precariat.

Remembering the discussion of Guy Standing's discussion of the types of labor related security presented in the Chapter Two, we could make the following observations on the unpaid interns interviewed during our research. Unpaid interns basically do not have "labor market security" because they are not counted as permanent employees so they do not have full employment. They also lack employment security" since they often worked without a binding contract during their internship. In a few voluntary unpaid internships of the interviewees, there was a contract between employee and employer. However, even there the validity of the contracts was problematic as an example from our interviews indicates. Berk, who did an internship in a culture and arts organization, explains the nature of the contract he had with the employer:

I signed something in my last internship, but I do not know what it was because I did not read it completely. Both they and I knew that I worked voluntarily. In that contract, it was written that I would work until June but I would quit.¹⁵⁹

These words indicate show the limited importance interns give to these contracts which had a questionable validity.

It is also difficult to talk about the "job security" of the interns. Although interns are sometimes offered a job, they are not necessarily hired by the company in which they do internship. "Work security", which concerns "protection against accidents and illness at work, through, for example, safety and health regulations, limits on working time, unsociable hours, night work for women, as well as compensation for mishaps"¹⁶⁰, is also absent since there is almost never as

¹⁵⁹Berk, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 24 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: "*Son stajımda bir şey imzaladım ama tam okumadığım için ne olduğunu bilmiyorum. Gönüllü çalıştığımı onlar da biliyor, ben de gönüllü çalıştığımı biliyorum. O sözleşmede ben Haziran'a kadar çalışıcam yazdım ama şimdi de bırakabilirim.*"

¹⁶⁰ Standing, *The Precariat*, p.10.

regulatory contract or social security contribution for voluntary unpaid interns.

Interviews indicate that interns are not necessarily given employment training by the company and hence they do not have “skill reproduction security”. In fact, interns usually do translations, filing, or other things that cannot be considered training.¹⁶¹ Neither do voluntary unpaid interns have “income security”, which refers to being paid at least the minimum wage. Finally, because voluntary unpaid interns are seen as regular employees according to the Turkish Legal Code, they clearly lack “representation security”.

Nevertheless, while the precariat implies the precarious situation of a class, the respondents might be considered to be as the people with the brightest future in terms of their careers. This thesis considers the case of students and graduates from three of the most well known universities. We have seen, however, that the interviewees did not see a guaranteed and secured future ahead of them, so they did those internships to make their lives more secured. Until these students graduated from university, they had a future map such as a good high school, a better university, or good results for exams. However, as seen in the results, they did not actually know what they would do in the future. This uncertainty led them to feel anxiety about their future. Rasim, who studied philosophy at Boğaziçi University, explained his reason for doing his first voluntary unpaid internship:

(My reason is) insecurity about the future, inability to predict. Everyone says that there should be absolutely something on your CV, this is what matters. There are some who says diploma is only a story. People think like that at least if you are graduated from a department like philosophy and if you are not thinking of an academic career.¹⁶²

¹⁶¹ As it can be seen in previous sections; even though interns claim that they do learn things, they say that these are not difficult things, in a few days, everyone can learn them. This is why “intern jobs” are not jobs that improve interns.

¹⁶² Rasim, interview by the author, tape recording, Istanbul, Turkey, 27 February 2015. The original transcription of the cited interview passage: “*Geleceğe dair güvensizlik, tahmin edememe. Bir şeyler olmalı diyor herkes CV’nde mutlaka önemli olan o diyor. Diploma hikaye diyen var. Türkiye’de*

In this situation, as it is observed from the interviews like the one with Rasim, voluntary unpaid interns try to decide what they will do in the future to get over this anxiety and to have the necessary information and networks to expand their choices in this flexible work conditions. Thus, for the respondents, voluntary unpaid internship was a way to make more secure the precarious condition of the white collar candidates. However, as was observed, while these interns were trying to end this condition, they tended to work in precarious working conditions.

Another point in Standing's book is that the precariat is not a part of middle class.¹⁶³ In fact, voluntary unpaid interns can still be counted in the household economy even if they live apart from their parents because all the respondents in the interviews received a large amount of the money for their monthly expenses from their parents. It may lead to a perspective that these interns still belong to the middle class in terms of their parents' material and moral support.

Standing writes about interns, but does not present a categorization for interns. It is not possible to understand whether or not all interns are a part of the precariat or have the same conditions.¹⁶⁴ This thesis can only answer to Turkish categorization. While academic internships' social insurance are paid by universities and as well as food and transportation expenses, there are many interns who do not have the same opportunities. Voluntary unpaid interns can be seen as in the most precarious position among all types of internships, according to the seven employment conditions analyzed by Standing, as explained in Chapter Two.

All in all, the process of precarization influences this group of people. They

felsefe gibi bir bölümden mezunsan öyle oluyor en azından. Eğer akademik kariyer düşünmüyorsan tabii."

¹⁶³ Standing, *The Precariat*, p. 6.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, p.75-76.

are voluntary to be a part of this process in order to comply with the current working conditions. Although it seems that they are more comfortable than their peers due to their white collar dreams and backgrounds, these interns also have some doubts concerning their future. This does not make them directly a part of the precariat, but they still experience the process. In order to make their future more predictable and stable, they try to work in precarious working conditions. Thus, it also seems that capital is not something that protects people from being a part of precarization. Precarious working life is the reality of every person, even the brilliant students of prestigious universities, in the new economic system.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to reveal a recent phenomenon in an academic context. People are neither precisely objecting to the unpaid internship situation nor are the authorities doing anything about it, although it seems to be a type of exploitation. The economic, social and legal system just encourage the acceptance of the situation, it appears. Although internship as a training system has a long history extending back to apprenticeship, there is currently a new internship phenomenon in which it could be argued that internship system become a necessity, a new job level. This thesis examined the internship situation in Turkey but also claimed that there is no longer one type of internship. Thus, it is not possible to explain an internship situation with one definition of internship or of an intern.

Accordingly, the questions behind what an internship is and who an intern is have more than one answer today. This thesis examined the Turkish aspect of internship categories. The focus category was voluntary unpaid internships. The reasons for doing an internship, the duration of an internship, and the identity of interns were examined. In doing so, it was found that the necessary level of the forms of capital builds the identity and the environment of voluntary unpaid interns. However, these capitals do not protect them against precarious working conditions. Although it seems that the forms of capital guarantee their present and future, they can still work under precarious working conditions.

In addition to what this thesis claims, the academic literature, in general, globally regards internship as a job training which prepares students for technical or vocational jobs. This type of a definition only refers to a kind of academic internship

in which one gain practice in a technical department. However, academic internship is not adequate sometimes. Or other times, some departments do not require academic internship. The social, administrative, or natural sciences departments (such as sociology, political science, physics, or chemistry) usually do not actually prepare students for a specific profession. In other words, there is an important distinction in the branches of knowledge for the purposes of understanding with the internship. That distinction is that some branches of knowledge directly result in a profession, such as medicine. And others, those which give more general knowledge of branches, do not lead directly to a profession. Thus, they do not require academic internships. Students who feel that they have to try other ways than academic internships in order to improve themselves outside university for a better future might do other types of internships.

Recently, a new internship type, optional internship, has gained popularity in Turkey. It is not a requirement for graduation, but university connected. If a student wants to do an optional internship, the university pays the social insurance. Not every university provides its students this right. Moreover, the consequences of this internship are difficult to measure at present since this is a rather new regulation made by the universities. If a university has a decision about optional internships, they can be done under the university internship rules (like regulation of days, duration, and benefit of internship).

The absence or the inadequacy of either academic or optional internship might force white collar candidates to look for new ways to improve themselves or to get a foot in the door with or without improving themselves. Voluntary internships were presented in this thesis as a result of this desire of white collar candidates. The focus point dealt with how voluntary interns can accept to do internships for free

while they are not actually training, but instead working for a company or an organization. What they gain from working is not technical details related to the job but networking, time management and work discipline. These internships do not have any school connection, but they are realized by the free will of students or recent graduates.

With this basic background, primarily, internship was seen as a growing work trend in both the grey literature and the present research. This thesis claims that as the number of interns has increased, the shape of the internship system has evolved. For Turkey, as was explained above, three types of internships, academic, optional and voluntary, were conceptualized. All of these types of internships have both paid and unpaid options depending on company. Unpaid internships are regulated through legislation in some countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada or Australia. However, Turkey has not regulated this area and has not made clear statements on this subject either. Thus, voluntary unpaid interns legislatively seem as regular employees.

Another result is concerned economic and social reasons which have globally lead to the existence of the voluntary unpaid internship system. The Chapter Two discussed how the change in economy after the 1970s deeply affected working conditions, which has basically transformed work into temporary or part time jobs. With the technological improvements in the 1990s, jobs evolved even faster. While these changes were happening, the need for free labor gained importance as part of the nature of the neoliberal era. Voluntary unpaid interns can be seen as one of the most important examples of these changes because they are basically temporary, free labor.

Similarly, the sociological part discussed how the new working conditions

make new white collar employees tend to work under the slogan of “no long term.” Their understanding of work has changed. They anticipate changing their careers during their lifetimes. Thus, flexible and decentralized jobs, trying new careers, working without stable work ethics have become the norm, as seen in Sennett. All of these might be seen as global reasons in the world economic and social system that has let voluntary unpaid internships exist. Voluntary unpaid interns do their internships voluntarily, which means that they have to adapt to new working conditions. Their work is flexible and decentralized. They try new careers by trying new fields during their different internships or they do not usually have contracts which can make their positions more stable.

Alongside global reasons, it was found that there are some local reasons that have made internships more important. In Turkish legislation, the word for internship only refers to internships attached to universities. Moreover, according to the report of the Council of Higher Education and universities, higher education and state institutions directly and indirectly influence students’ career choices. They encourage internships and provide students with a single perception of career. Thus, white collar candidates might gain a feel for the necessity of internship in their career lives. However, they also try to meet this necessity in their own way, for example, at career events in various university clubs. These events introduce white collar working life to interns and help them to get an internship.

As a result of these findings, internship appears as a must for one’s career. However, whereas the support of the higher education system encourages students to get more experience before graduation, the legislation process does not provide each student with an internship opportunity, adequate experience opportunity, or labor rights. Thus, voluntary internship as an uncovered internship type in legislation

seems to be a result of inadequate university-related internships.

The fourth result of this thesis is that voluntary paid and unpaid internships should be considered separately in their ways and practice. Paid internships are more regulated and disciplined while those in unpaid internships are more flexible and arbitrary, as explained in Chapter Four. Some research in the literature also claims that paid interns are more likely to get jobs after internship. Thus, even though this thesis does not cover all types of internships in detail, paid internships seem to be more serious for everyone than unpaid ones.

The fifth finding is a conditional confirmation of the argument in the examined literature that internships replace entry-level jobs. It is conditional because as was observed academic internships cannot be seen as entry-level jobs. Academic internships are usually short-term and they are done to train one in procedure. However, because it was claimed in this thesis that there is no limited period for voluntary internships, voluntary interns usually do actual jobs rather than receive a training process for a long time in a company. Accordingly, their conditions seem similar to those of entry-level jobs. This replacement does not create an equal economic and social position for unpaid interns, according to the interviews. Although voluntary internships are usually regarded as places where business is learned, voluntary unpaid interns are not satisfied with their unequal positions.

In the sixth finding of this thesis, which also confirms the main hypothesis on the relationship of voluntary unpaid interns, the forms of capital and precarious work, it is claimed that voluntary unpaid internships occur under an identity which is shaped with the higher level of the forms of capital and under the precarious working conditions. These people have a prestigious educational background, higher levels of economic support, and social network. This implies a higher socio-economic class,

which is hard to relate with the precarious working conditions. However, it also shows that the class definitions are blurred so the new economy can make everyone work under every condition. Voluntary unpaid interns are placed in the process of precarization in order to make their unpredictable future more predictable.

The final finding is a surprising outcome of this thesis, that voluntary unpaid internships are not a way out of unemployment. Voluntary unpaid internships secure interns by providing them with an opportunity of expanding choices through trying new work fields. Thus, they might have a more predictable future. It seems that if voluntary unpaid interns have those internships through their higher levels of the forms of capital, it is not absurd to think that they are less concerned about the unemployment. However, in a harsh competition for employment, it seems difficult to find a job that white collar candidates want for their career paths which usually directs them to undertake an internship even though it is voluntary and unpaid.

To conclude, it can be said that uncertain future careers, too many qualified candidates for too few positions, encouraging internship discourses, and inadequate opportunities provided by higher educational institutions are the main reasons for doing internship voluntarily and unpaid. Thus, voluntary internships recently have become a necessity for every white collar candidate. They are not only for those who do not have academic internships, but they are also done by those who have academic internships, but still want to expand their choices. Although voluntary internship is a choice, it is actually observed as a necessity in current working conditions. However, only people who have a specific educational base, environment, and economic power can do this.

I think that internships have recently emerged as the most basic prototype of white-collar jobs. In this thesis, voluntary unpaid internships gained a meaning in the

career development of higher educated people with the theories of Bourdieu and Standing. This meaning refers to making the unstable and precarious image of the future more predictable for different capital forms owned by voluntary unpaid interns. By claiming so, this thesis provides a basis for white-collar studies.

Despite the fact that this thesis focused on only Turkey in its research, internships are similar internationally, as was explained with the grey literature in the introduction chapter. Thus, internship system should be studied globally in employment, white-collar, labor and class literatures. By categorizing internships and creating a voluntary unpaid intern identity with a theoretical framework, this thesis takes an important step in recent employment studies.

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