

YEDITEPE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

EXPLORING SOLIDARITY ECONOMIES

**Labour, White-Collar, and the Intersection of Theory
and Practice**

Sedef Öztürk

Istanbul - 2023

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Labour, White-Collar, and the Intersection of Theory and Practice

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING SOLIDARITY ECONOMIES

Labour, White-Collar, and the Intersection of Theory and Practice

This study explores the practical implications of solidarity economies, particularly their impact on white-collar labour, and investigates the intersection of theoretical frameworks with real-world applications. The introduction, emphasizing the fragility of capitalism, positions solidarity economies as pioneering alternatives. The study critically assesses the sustainable change potential of solidarity economies.

The first section explores global discussions on solidarity economies, examining diverse perspectives and initiatives. The second section criticizes contemporary economic assumptions, proposing a theoretical framework for solidarity economies and exploring their transformative potential on work patterns across different economic systems. It also investigates the negative effects of the current working model on individuals.

This study employed a qualitative method with the ethnographic approach. Based on the fieldwork involving face-to-face interviews and participant observations, the third section provides direct insights from white-collar individuals in solidarity networks. It reveals the impact of the existing work structure on individuals and explores motivations for creating solidarity networks. Ethnographic data sheds light on operational mechanisms.

In conclusion, the study emphasizes the need for change by sharing experiences within solidarity networks. White-collar solidarity emerges as a cultural phenomenon, shaping new strategies, language, arguments, and a comprehensive activism discourse to address challenges in work dynamics.

Keywords: Solidarity, Solidarity economies, White collar, Post capitalist economy

ÖZET

DAYANIŞMA EKONOMİLERİNİ KEŞFETMEK

Emek, Beyaz Yaka ve Teori ile Pratiğin Kesişimi

Bu çalışma, dayanışma ekonomilerinin pratik etkilerini inceleyerek özellikle beyaz yaka iş gücü üzerindeki etkilerine odaklanır ve teorik çerçevelerin pratik uygulamalarla kesişimini araştırır. Giriş, kapitalizmin kırılabilirliğini vurgulayarak geleneksel ekonomik gerçeklere meydan okur ve dayanışma ekonomilerini alternatif ekonomik sistemlerin öncü projeleri olarak konumlandırır. Çalışmanın odak noktasını dayanışma ekonomilerinin sürdürülebilir değişim potansiyeli üzerine yapılan eleştirel bir değerlendirme oluşturur.

İlk bölüm, dayanışma ekonomileri etrafında yürütülen küresel tartışmaları inceleyerek çeşitli perspektifleri ve girişimleri araştırır. İkinci bölüm, ekonomik motivasyonları sorgulayarak ve prehistorik ile geleneksel ekonomik ilişkilere odaklanarak günümüz ekonomisinin temel varsayımlarını eleştirir ve dayanışma ekonomilerine teorik bir çerçeve önerir. Ayrıca, farklı ekonomik sistemlerde evrimleşen iş ilişkilerini ve mevcut çalışma düzeninin bireyler üzerindeki olumsuz etkilerini inceleyerek dayanışma ekonomilerinin çalışma biçimlerini dönüştürme potansiyelini araştırır.

Üçüncü bölüm, yüz yüze görüşmeler ve katılımcı gözlemlerle elde edilen verileri içerir. Bu bölüm, dayanışma ağları içindeki beyaz yakalılarından gelen doğrudan görüşlerle, mevcut çalışma biçiminin bireyler üzerindeki etkilerini anlatır ve değişim ihtiyacının nedenlerini ortaya koyar. Elde edilen etnografik veriler, dayanışma ağları, bu ağları kurma motivasyonları ve bu ağların işleyiş biçimleriyle ilgili bilgiler sunar.

Sonuç olarak bu çalışma, dayanışma ağları içindeki bireylerin deneyimlerini doğrudan paylaşarak değişim ihtiyacını dile getirir. Beyaz yaka dayanışması, çalışma dinamiklerine dair zorluklara yeni stratejiler, dil, argümanlar ve kapsamlı bir aktivizm söylemi oluşturarak kültürel bir fenomen olarak ortaya çıkar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dayanışma, Dayanışma ekonomileri, Beyaz yaka, Kapitalizm sonrası ekonomi

Hayatımın her aşamasında yanımda olan ve fikirlerime her zaman saygı gösteren sevgili annem ve babama

Kendime inancımı kaybettiğimde, kaybolduğumda ya da düştüğümde beni cesaretlendiren dostlarım Cemre, Aysu ve Emel'e

Açık yürekli paylaşımları ile çalışmama katkıda bulunan görüşmecilerime

Teşekkür ederim.

Son olarak, bu süreçte kendi içimde keşfettiğim sabır, direngenlik, inanç ve cesarete ise çok şey borçluyum.

TEŞEKKÜR

Bu tezin hazırlığı boyunca faydalandığım tüm fikirlerin, makalelerin ve kitapların sahiplerine ve dayanışma ekonomileri alanında faaliyet gösteren herkese bilgi birikimlerini dünyayla paylaştıkları için teşekkürler.

Beni etnografik araştırma yöntemleriyle tanıştıran saha çalışmamı nasıl yapmam gerektiğine dair bilgi ve deneyim kazanmama yardımcı olan sevgili Dr. Umut Kuruüzüm'e,

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Lisans öğrenimim boyunca beni hep cesaretlendiren ve destekleyen canım hocam Prof. Dr. Aynur İlyasoğlu'na,

Ve tabii ki aylar boyunca tezimi titizlikle inceleyen, sabırla ve dikkatle fikirlerimi dinleyen; sorduğu sorularla tezimi, hocalığıyla ufkumu, bilgi birikimiyle zihinsel dünyamı zenginleştiren; tezimle candan ilgilenen ve ortaya çıkan sonuçlara benimle birlikte heyecanlanan, yüksek lisans öğrenimim boyunca karşılaştığım her zorlukta arkamda duran ve beni destekleyen, sevgili tez danışmanım Prof. Dr. Nuri Vedit İnal'a binlerce teşekkür.

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INTRODUCTION

In the discipline of economics and at every intersection where this discipline impacts our lives, there exist certain purported "truths" that are often unquestioningly accepted. One of these so-called truths is that human beings have a fundamental instinct to maximize the utility they acquire from any consumption activity. Another one is the belief that the economic order which we live in is inevitable and unchangeable. The existence of numerous preconceived truths like these play a pivotal role in creating and sustaining the perception that capitalism is the absolute and ultimate economic system.

Despite these deeply ingrained beliefs, discussions and research regarding alternative systems have persisted both in academic and the public spheres since the emergence of capitalism. While capitalism has gained legitimacy and may appear to have established itself as the ultimate social and economic organization, it is, in reality, a system that is an increasingly fragile, imperfectly functioning, and inherently flawed. Criticizing this system, which has been associated with economic and humanitarian crises, wars, and environmental destruction, has now become an everyday discourse for society. Particularly, starting from the 2010s with movements like Occupy Wall Street and the global spread of protests against the status quo, capitalism, fascism, and discrimination, these discussions have not only become more widespread but have also incited practical efforts toward this end. It is clear that a fundamental shift in the ethical values that underpin global economic relations, a transformation of accepted truths, and changing the narrative are essential.

Solidarity economies, first and foremost, represent an effort to change the narrative. It constitutes a project of hope and aims to establish an alternative economic system to capitalism while targeting the transformation of all elements within the economic cycle. This movement includes the production of new knowledge required for the transformation of the economic system and the experimentation of practices. It also encompasses the production of knowledge regarding the transformation of new economic forms, new-generation enterprises, the legal, bureaucratic, and political

regulations of institutions, consumer consciousness and behaviours, production tools and methods, and labour forms, as well as the rehearsal and construction of this alternative way of life, occur at local, national, and international levels worldwide. The first chapter of this study will discuss various debates and attempts concerning solidarity economies carried out worldwide.

However, how can we evaluate the likelihood of discussions, experiences, and initiatives associated with solidarity economies to bring about meaningful change and establish sustainability? This critical question lies at the heart of the viability of solidarity economies as an alternative economic system. If we aspire to reorganize the economic sphere with a more ideal structure, how do we establish its fundamental principles? What should we pay attention to in our economic life as we envisage a better future for people, societies, nature, and the world? How do we determine what constitutes the "better"? While seeking answers to these questions, the critique of the damages and flaws caused by the current order has taken top priority. In this context, the critique will primarily focus on the two most contentious fundamental claims of the current economic discipline: the assumption that the primary motivation behind individuals making economic decisions is to increase their own benefit and happiness, and the assumption that if all actors operating in the economic sphere prioritize maximizing their interests, optimal outcomes will be achieved across all aspects of the economy. The second section of this study will not only criticize these assumptions and explore the possibilities of establishing economic relations based on different ethical values, but also will provide an examination of prehistoric economies and traditional economic relationships.

One of the most significant promises of solidarity economies is their potential to bring about transformation in labour and working patterns. Another aspect of the conceptual framework to be outlined in the second chapter will be examining the differences in labour relations that have evolved within various economic systems and their effects on human behaviour and psyche. Moreover, while exploring the adverse effects of the current economic system's working patterns on individuals, this study aims to shed light on what aspects solidarity economies should focus on when organizing working patterns, providing further support for the necessity of transforming the current system.

One of the indirect impacts of solidarity economies is their potential to transform the relationships surrounding economic actions. Despite its indirect nature, these economies draw their sustainability and fundamental foundation from this very impact. This impact extends to various aspects, ranging from interpersonal relationships to individual lifestyles, consumption decisions, and even worldviews, leading to irreversible changes. Therefore, ethnographic data obtained through face-to-face discussions and participant observations will be analysed. Efforts will be made to understand why people feel the need for solidarity, why they establish solidarity networks, and how they are transformed within these networks. In the concluding section, we will hear directly from individuals within these networks as they share their experiences regarding the current state of the narrative, its current impact on individuals, and the reasons for the need for change. We will learn from their voices how solidarity economies are reshaping the narrative.

1. CONTOURS OF SOLIDARITY ECONOMIES

In recent years, the concept of solidarity economy has emerged as a vibrant and evolving field of study. This paradigm challenges traditional economic models and calls for a re-evaluation of the fundamental principles that underpin our economic systems. Solidarity economies represent a departure from the established norms of capitalism, and they have captured the imagination of scholars, institutions, and activists alike. While the core idea of solidarity economies is clear—promoting cooperative, socially responsible, and sustainable economic practices—the precise definition remains a matter of ongoing debate and interpretation. Different institutions and scholars have offered nuanced perspectives on what solidarity economies entail.

At the heart of the discussion lies the aspiration to create a post-capitalist world, one that champions values like community, cooperation, and equity. These movements are not characterized by a single, all-encompassing theory or blueprint for a non-capitalist society, but they share a common thread in their local origins, sectoral diversity, and overarching commitment to social well-being. Indeed, solidarity economies reflect a diverse and pluralistic landscape, and their actions are grounded in the principles of human relations, solidarity, and democracy. In essence, they invite us to question the very essence of our economic existence and explore new possibilities for shaping a more just and equitable future.

1.1. What is Solidarity Economy?

Solidarity economies are at the centre of the debates trying to build a new life in a post-capitalist world. They reveal the need to re-think and debate again more creatively on what the economy is. They are the efforts to interpret, understand and categorize the diverse initiatives in all continents. They are not the elements of a grand non-capitalist project derived from strong theories that will change the world overnight. Although solidarity economy initiatives are extremely diverse and pluralistic, they have some common features by their nature. They emerge for and from local needs, can

operate in all sectors, their ultimate aim is to provide social benefit, and they take human relations, solidarity and democracy at the centre of their activities.

At this stage, a reminder about the difference between the terms *economics* and *economy* would be useful to understand the difference between the terms *solidarity economics* and *solidarity economy*. Defined very broadly, *economy* refers to the alternative methods of production, distribution and consumption of goods and services in a region, country, or in the whole world. *Economics*, on the other hand, is the study of what is intrinsic to the economics spheres of life. It is the doctrines and models developed for this study (Buğra, 1995, p.26). In this context, the terms *solidarity economics* and *solidarity economy* represent the same difference. *Solidarity economies* are the material base of the theory of the *economics of solidarity*.

The difference between *mainstream economics* and *solidarity economics* also need to be emphasized. Actors of the solidarity economy arose as a reaction to the existing economic system that is destroying the planet, constantly creating poverty and excluding many productive activities that are important to the continuity of society. However, solidarity economies are more than social movements that emerged suddenly, in reaction to the problems of capitalism. They imply “at the same time, economic, political and social projects which lead to a new way of doing politics while establishing various human links on the basis of consensus and citizenship actions.” (RIPESS, 1997, p.1). Solidarity economics can be regarded as a brand new field that examines the theoretical ground of the solidarity economies and criticizes the doctrines of mainstream economics. As Sunil Ray pointed out when choosing the title of his article, economics of solidarity is seen as “economics of the 21st century” (Ray, 2012, p.39).

Social movements, the concept of the commons and the new understanding of globalism are the constituent elements of solidarity economies. Additionally, some approaches (such as social economies) that are sometimes intertwined, sometimes referred together and sometimes confused with each other due to their similarities can actually be considered as supportive elements to solidarity economies, because all these approaches nourish a rich and colourful space in which alternative economic models stand outside the mainstream economic system.

Social movements are the engine power of solidarity economics. All around the world people resisting inhumane practices, from identity discrimination to poverty from the pressure of anti-democratic states' decisions to challenging working conditions, create a culture of rejection against market-based capitalist activities. Solidarity economics is one of the creative discoveries of this culture. It can be seen that the social movements as a field of experimentation in which solidarity behaviour emerges, is experienced, learned, taught and flourished. The field that the mythical concept of the self-interested, utility seeking individual has failed to bring the ultimate well-being.

1.1.1. Insights from International Organizations

All over the world, it is seen that *social and solidarity economy* (SSE) models are at the centre of the debates on social change. It has become a hot topic in many fields, from largely funded non-governmental organizations to grassroots movements operating in the political arena.

In 2013, the United Nations put the potential of social and solidarity economies on its agenda and organized a conference where the role SSEs can play in the context of sustainable development goals was discussed (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, 2013). The International Labour Organization (ILO), which co-hosted this conference, already has a long history of SSEs relating them to the activities of cooperatives since the 1920s. Yet, the concept was first formalized by the ILO in 2009 by making a definition of social economies (International Labour Organization, 2009, p.2).

The concept of solidarity economy was first mentioned in the declaration of the first International Meeting for the Globalization of Solidarity held in 1997 in Lima, Peru (RIPESS, 1997). Since then, association representatives, immigrants, farmers, cooperatives, native, women, youth and workers' organizations, academics, environmentalists and grassroots from all around the world, began to gather together every four years, to discuss, transfer experience and set agendas for the future of social and solidarity economy.

As a conclusion to the Lima Declaration, Intercontinental Network for the Promotion of Social Solidarity Economy, with its original name in Spanish, *Red*

Intercontinental de Promoción de la Economía Social Solidaria (RIPESS) was founded. Here social and solidarity economies were defined as “economic, political and social projects which lead to a new way of doing politics while establishing various human links on the basis of consensus and citizenship actions” (RIPESS, 1997, p.1).

RIPESS is a network of continental networks for promoting social and solidarity economy, and works for creating a dialogue between practices which aim at a systemic transformation and democratization of its economic activities (production, consumption, and exchange), placing, not profit and capital, but people and the environment at the centre of economic activity. Humanism, democracy, solidarity, inclusiveness, subsidiarity, diversity, creativity, sustainable development, equality, equity and justice for all, integration of countries and people and a plural and solidarity-based economy are their main values (RIPESS, 2008). Through continental network —Latin America & Caribbean (RIPESS-LAC), Europe (RIPESS-EU), North America (RIPESS-NA), Africa (RAESS - African SSE Network) and Asia (ASEC- Asian Solidarity Economy Council)— RIPESS connects social and solidarity economy networks throughout the world, brings together national and sectoral networks (RIPESS, 2012, p.1).

Although the examples are highly diversified as far as their sectors, organizational strategies and operations are concerned, according to RIPESS, they all continue their activities by pursuing four main goals;

1. Prioritizing social needs, not profitability, when organizing an activity to meet the needs of the community.
2. The encouragement of individuals and social networks to participate and actively take part in the activities of the SSE initiative.
3. Building local and international networks between initiatives and implementing these processes by making consensus-based decisions and cooperation, not by majority voting, implementation and supervision.
4. To work for finding collective ways of business management and development and creation and implementation of new economic and social regulations (RIPESS, 2001, p.6).

Social and solidarity economy is a concept that links wide-ranging initiatives together which operate in many different sectors according to certain principles. According to RIPESS, SSEs organize their activities according to four principles;

1. Indivisible collective property,
2. The distribution of wealth according to the needs of people, not the needs of capital,
3. Freedom of assembly and democratic governance,
4. Autonomous decision-making and governance by associating with the state (RIPESS, 2001, p.7).

These organizations can be communities, associations or cooperatives, but they are mostly communities without a formal status. SSEs can operate in all sectors, work for the benefit of a region or a minority group, but they are also part of a global vision. If they are managed with a social or collective framework and work to strengthen local communities, a privately owned entrepreneurship can also be included in this scope, by RIPESS's declaration (RIPESS, 2001, p.7).

As already mentioned, SSEs get their driving force from social movements. For example, initiatives in Turkey often state that the Gezi Park protests in 2013 and the following forums had a strong motivation on the establishment process of their organizations. Social movements or groups that seek equal rights for women, fight against unemployment, or struggle to protect the environment, are all the baseline for SSE practices (RIPESS, 2001, p.9). They are structures that actively oppose exclusion, sexism and racism. (RIPESS, 2001, p.8)

SSEs' success also depends on a vision of society, an alternative concept of development (RIPESS, 2001, p.9). RIPESS is critical of the traditional development perspective in which the duties of the market and the states are strictly separated. It is stated that governments carry out development in line with neoliberal policies by ignoring the needs of the citizens. The best example is Latin America, which has been adjusting neoliberal policies since the 1980s. In response to many social problems that emerged during the adjustment process, the development policies of governments were also dictated by neoliberal structures. (RIPESS, 2001, pp.25-26). Even if the development arguments

have progressed in time, going from an approach based on per capita GDP growth to one based on improving living conditions (health, education, etc.), there is still a long way to reach a development perspective which involves elements, such as participation, social issues, equity and democratization (RIPESS, 2001, p.27). SSE based perspective does not limit development to be a duty solely of the public sector, and by giving civil society an important role for development, considers it to be an issue of collective interest. Also, if well organized, the public sector and SSEs can work together for collective interest (RIPESS, 2001, p.8). Current thought on development can be summarized as follows:

1. Social needs must take precedence,
2. The economy must be considered for what it is, a tool for development and not an end in itself,
3. The environment must be a new factor to take into consideration in economic decision-making,
4. Some main priorities must be pursued simultaneously, notably employment, creating democratic institutions and sharing wealth (RIPESS, 2001, p.9).

Since 1997, the gatherings have been held in different continents by discussing different agendas in line with the needs of that region. In Lima and in Quebec (2001), there was an emphasis on minority groups and women. In these conferences, there were demands such as the recognition of the labour that women put in social reproduction, the informal sector to settle into a legal plane and decent work and life conditions for all. They aim to organize hundreds of groups under a certain economic activity which has a social purpose and aims to develop a new economic thought and life (RIPESS, 2001, p.6). European participants mentioned that SSEs in Europe are developed from cooperatives, associations and mutual societies and the activism created around the social movements has also contributed to the development of SSEs' (RIPESS, 2001, pp. 16-17). Participants from Africa brought up the colonization process, the non-functioning of welfare and the failure of Northern capitalist development policies for the South. The SSEs are seen as the recognition of the labour of the everyday economic activities of family farms and businesses and informal workers; and these units motivated the emergence of SSEs. In Dakar (2005), the demand was not to lose the gains of the years of struggle against multinational companies, to oppose privatizations and protect the access to water, and to

give priority to eliminate environmental and social problems (RIPESS, 2005). Participants from Latin America, on the other hand, talked about crises, state mechanisms that have lost their function, the effect of globalism being felt intensely, and the role of SSEs as a means of finding a solution to all these problems. It was mentioned that North America (specifically Quebec) has a history of the culture of solidarity in society and in the process of their revitalization, as in the case of cooperatives, they see SSEs as practices that are widely accepted by the state and society. In other words, in geographies with different challenges, there are practices arising from different motivations and corresponding to different needs (2001, pp.16-23). At RIPESS's fourth gathering, in Luxembourg (2009), SSE definition took its final form as;

The social solidarity economy is an ongoing collective process of creative work. It is an ethical path of inclusive development grounded in real practices of cooperation, reciprocity, participatory democracy, social and economic justice, peace, plurality and cultural diversity, creativity, sustainability, and equity (North-South, gender, ethnicity, class, age, etc.) (RIPESS, 2009).

As social solidarity based economy needs a pluralistic understanding of economics, it is also emphasized that a different understanding of globalization from that imposed by neoliberalism is possible and building this new understanding is necessary in the process of organizing the international communication of SSEs (RIPESS, 2001, p.23). This necessity is emerging from the absence of regulation of the world economy, massive poverty that leads to the exclusion of a growing segment of the population from basic provisions, social rights, economic wellbeing or decent work, particularly women and children, and threats to the planet's ecological balance (RIPESS, 2001, p.39). RIPESS claims that a different globalization approach covers a new way of experiencing and thinking about the economy, and aiming to link the citizens of thousands of projects from all over the world to share experiences, innovate creative responses to problems raised by globalization, change the understanding of work and economics, the consumption habits, and spread it to the world. Process of an alternative globalization not dictated by multinational corporations, governments and the institutions and not serving their interest is also one of the top

priorities of the World Social Forum¹ (WSF, 2001, p. 355), in which the participants that organize RIPESS gatherings are also the components. The *alterglobalisation*² movement which accelerated with WSF gatherings, emerged from the critique of globalization which is seen as the last phase of capitalism and has many negative effects on society and nature (Pokhrel, 2011, p.31). Depending on different values from pure economic concerns, alterglobalisation aims at turning different social movements into a global movement and gathers a wide spectrum of demands like democracy, global and social justice, environmental protection and human rights (Pokhrel, 2011, p.34).

The International Labour Organization (ILO) also offers a broad definition by addressing the concepts of solidarity economies and social economy together. There is not an official definition proposed by ILO yet, but in their first Social and Solidarity Academy³ it is stated the SSE refers to organizations and enterprises that are based on principles of solidarity and participation that produce goods, services and knowledge while pursuing both economic and social aims (Fonteneau et al., 2010).

¹ World Social Forum is an annual meeting first held in Brazil, 2001. It is founded by civil society organizations in response to the World Economic Forum, with the purpose of developing a counter culture to the neoliberal globalism. After holding their first meeting, WSF became an assembly that brought together thousands of participants and social movements from all over the world, united and organized campaigns. “The World Social Forum is the most recent, vibrant, and potentially productive articulation of an emergent global civil society” (Fisher & Ponniah, 2015, p. 34). “The World Social Forum was impressive in all accounts as a vibrant response to the World Economic Forum. If the latter was the symbol of capitalist neoliberal globalization, the WSF came to symbolize the counter-hegemonic globalization, the globalization from below, the globalization of grassroots movements fighting against capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy.” (De Sousa Santos, 2015, p.xvii).

² Alterglobalisation is derived from the counterculture which is created in World Social Forums. It is a social movement criticizing the practices of globalism that create destruction on human life, local economies and nature, on the one hand, and aims to establish international solidarity and cooperation on the other.

³ The training that seeks to provide a better understanding of the concept of SSE, discusses the relevance of SSE as a development alternative and its relation to the ILO’s Decent Work Agenda, and further build and strengthen networks of SSE practitioners. <http://ssecollectivebrain.net/iilo-academy-on-sse/>

According to ILO, there are some distinctive features and comparative advantages of SSEs from conventional enterprises to reduce the social and economic inequalities, ensure social cohesion and economic growth and reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Democratic governance, autonomous management, collective ownership and participatory principles are the distinctive features of SSEs. ILO sees the SSEs as complementary organizations of public and private sector enterprises and as by-products of conventional economic systems to enhance economic growth and prosperity and handy tools to implement SDGs. Also ILO states that social enterprises and organizations are supported or are about to be supported, by an increasing number of States. The major effort of ILO is on creating policy frameworks for the development of the social economy at the national and regional level and implementing them across all regions of the world (Fonteneau et al., 2010).

ILO mentions the common features that diverse organizational forms have, and asserts that academics rely on the features to distinguish them from public and private enterprises and organizations. Setting social goals with priority over economic goals, having values like not harming nature and adopting sustainable methods, operating with participatory principles, and protecting the voluntary involvement principles are all form the base for SSEs (Fonteneau et al., 2010).

A francophone SSE network for universities in France, *Réseau Inter-universitaire de l'Economie Sociale et Solidaire (RIUESS)*, states in their manifesto that there is a tension between the two approaches; the first one is addressing SSEs as an alternative entrepreneurial model, and second one a broader description of the SSEs, as a set of alternative means of action and alternative means of production, but also of self-production, consumption, saving, learning, decision-making and autonomy. It is asserted in RIUESS manifesto that SSE is a proponent of social and environmental change, and not a managerial strategy to provide economic efficiency in times of crisis, not the complementary of public policies, and not a social responsibility project for companies (RIUESS, n.d.).

United States Solidarity Economy Network (USSEN) which grew out of the 2007 US Social Forum —the United States leg of the WSF gatherings— defines solidarity economy as:

An alternative framework for economic development grounded in practice and the following principles; solidarity and cooperation, equity in all dimensions (race, ethnicity, gender, class, etc.), social and economic democracy, sustainability, pluralism (not a one-size-fits-all approach) and putting people and the planet first (United States Solidarity Economy Network, 2011).

USSEN is also on the board of RIPESS and carries the mission to build regional, national and international connections between individuals, organizations and projects which pursue solidarity economy practices. The network organized over 165 forums, workshops and presentations until August 2011; it has 13 board members consists from different cooperatives, new economy collaborations, alternative lawyers, anti-capitalist financial planners and has four working groups including the issues about research and policy, education, network and organizing, media and communication and development/fundraising (United States Solidarity Economy Network, 2011).

Sustainable and Solidarity Economy (SUSY) is a project that brings together the examples of solidarity economies in Europe to open a space for sharing ideas and experiences for people who are interested in solidarity-based initiatives. It is a network where 26 local actors from 23 countries aim to strengthen their links and capacities and to build a new development paradigm (Sustainable and Solidarity Economy, 2016). While adopting the RIPESS's definition of solidarity economy, SUSY also defines the solidarity economy actors as; "thousands of cooperatives, grassroots organizations, social enterprises, small associations are the main infrastructure of the Social and Solidarity Economy movement worldwide" (Sustainable and Solidarity Economy, 2016).

New Economy Coalition (NEC) as a membership-based network representing the solidarity economy movement in the United States, organizes its members—a cross section of non-profits, mission-driven businesses, grassroots community organizations, and sectoral associations—to accelerate the transition of the economic system from capitalism to a solidarity economy. They define themselves as "an ecosystem that includes tens of thousands of groups using varied and different strategies to build a more just, liberatory, and democratic world" (New Economy Coalition, n.d.). According to NEC, solidarity economy is;

A global movement to build a just and sustainable economy where we prioritize people and the planet over endless profit and growth. Growing out of social movements in Latin America and the Global South, the solidarity economy provides real alternatives to capitalism, where communities govern themselves through participatory democracy, cooperative and public ownership, and a culture of solidarity and respect for the earth (New Economy Coalition, n.d.)

1.1.2. Literature Review

In the understanding of solidarity economies, there is no attempt to offer a recipe where a group of people apply or impose certain ideas on societies, it is not a blueprint strategy. Ethan Miller describes solidarity economies as “a grassroots form of cooperative economics that is working throughout the world to connect thousands of local alternatives together to create large-scale, viable, and creative networks of resistance to the profit-over-all-else economy” (Miller, 2004, p.2). Aslıhan Aykaç (2016) discusses solidarity economies on four main theoretical grounds: reorganizing production, redistribution, workplace democracy and rethinking employment relations. According to her, solidarity economy term covers the;

...economic activities of various sizes and scope that fall outside of the domain of the state and the capitalist market. As such, it may or may not be formal, structured and organized. It does not depend on the state in terms of resources and is not governed by the parameters of the capitalist market. Solidarity economies operate locally, make use of locally available resources and economic inputs, and cater to the economic needs of local inhabitants (Aykaç, 2016, p.13).

Jean-Louis Laville (2010) analyses the subject from a historical and global perspective, covering all continents, and contributes to the literature on solidarity economies by presenting an overview of initiatives that can be considered pioneers or correlatives of solidarity economies.

Sunil Ray offers establishing a new epistemology of economics, the “Economics of Solidarity” (Ray, 2012, p.40), which is based on three main discussions; exploration of the incorporation process of social and cultural spaces into global capitalism, formulation of an alternative development epistemology and introducing the economics of solidarity as a new way of doing politics.

Solidarity economies are not just a single formula to answer the question of "how to create a non-capitalist economic system" (Miller, 2004, p.3). They do not start with a grand theory but with everyday life experiences and practices of ordinary people. According to Miller, what is important is our own economy that we have created in our daily lives and relationships, which he calls *microeconomies*. He states that when we look beyond the grand economic system, we see our own economies, not the economics of expert economists or financiers. Thus, trying to understand solidarity economies from where we begin to understand socialist or capitalist economies may be ineffective. One of the first steps toward understanding solidarity economies is to challenge the narratives that have led us to assume that capitalism is the only true and unavoidable option. The capitalist forms of work and wage are actually just a few of the ways to survive and be productive, and are not the only options. He states that the economy should be defined differently from the scarcity-based definitions we have seen so far to uncover the diversity of economic relationships (Miller, 2004, pp.5-7). By stating that “in its largest sense, economics is about how we as human beings collectively generate livelihoods in relation to each other and to the Earth” (Miller, 2004, p.4), Miller includes all the social relations people have during the process of generating livelihoods into the human economy. What the economy is or how to define the term economics is a debate that is far from being recent, unlike the debates on solidarity economies. Karl Polanyi also used a broader definition of economy in his book *The Livelihood of Man* (1977), long before Miller's. He mentions the substantive meaning of the economic activity of human beings, as a process that ensures individuals' survival by the interactions between each other and with their surroundings (Polanyi, 1997, p. 20).

Analysing and understanding what is already realized is better than trying to define a new model with its technical details and putting it forward and imposing it as a more ideal alternative (Miller, 2004, p.11). Understanding solidarity economies begins by realizing that they actually already exist. We were all familiar with solidarity economies but never

considered them as valid economic practices. Miller gives the following examples: *Household economies* which include all activities to meet basic human needs like raising children, cooking, cleaning (which unfortunately is seen by patriarchy as a woman's duty and devalued as an economic activity), building and caring relationships, learning and teaching skills, etc. *Barter economies* are swapping all of the useful items and things with people around us. *Collective economies* ' simplest form is kind of a pooling and sharing activity (bringing food to a charity bazaar, car sharing) and the radical form is common ownership of resources, health/child/elder care collectives and more. Miller defines *scavenging economies* as "living on the abundance of Earth's own gift economy" like fishing and hunting; and "living on the abundance of human wastefulness" (Miller, 2004, p.5) like *freeganism*⁴ and *urban squatting*⁵. *Gift economies* are giving some of our resources to the people or communities; volunteering, food banks, taking hitchhikers, even inviting neighbours to dinner. *Worker-controlled economies* are cooperatives, worker-owned companies, self-employment, etc. *Pirate economies* are various activities labelled by some as theft and by others as rightful-reappropriation. These are some of the many more creative and diverse examples which reflect that people already have concepts of value that are not determined by money. Alternative economies do not focus on competition and profit, they put human relations and needs at the centre, seek cooperation, equality, diversity and spontaneity. Miller states that these are seeds that already exist and even sown, but people were prevented from seeing their existence. He states that to overthrow the belief that capitalism is "the economy", it is important to understand that capitalism needs to be reframed. He mentions people's economy as the basic forms of cooperation and solidarity. They keep people alive when factories are closed, when there

⁴ Freeganism is an anti-consumption movement which combines the free or shared resources with veganism. They associate themselves with economic, social and political concerns and focus on minimizing the detrimental effects of consumerism by consuming discarded food, clothing or housing (Pentina & Amos, 2011, p.1769).

⁵ "Urban squatting is living in – or otherwise using – a dwelling without the consent of the owner" (Pruijt, 2012, p.17). Individuals or groups can have different motives while squatting; deprivation-based, political, as an alternative housing strategy, entrepreneurial and conservational. Besides meeting the shelter needs of oneself, squatting is also a radical social movement opposing gentrification, poverty, estate shortage, environmental destruction etc. (Pruijt, 2012, p.52-53).

are disasters, when they fail to make the end of the month. The human relationships are the material that hold society together and enable people to meet the basic needs such as love, trust, mutual support (Miller, 2004, p. 6).

Solidarity economies is a model in which people build their life and economy on these relationships and values. Formulation of Ray's alternative development epistemology is based upon the critique of axioms on the rules of human behaviour and builds a new understanding on the basis of reciprocal altruism, which is the opposite of the self-interest seeking individual assumption of mainstream economics. This assumption has two disputable outcomes: first, the belief that human behaviour is motivated by only one trait while ignoring others; and second the labelling all forms of behaviour that prevent the growth of capital circuits as immoral. Also, when self-interest arranges institutions and guides human actions, it is natural that the capital circuit tends to work more for capital, resulting in the centralization in a few hands, while the rest of the world lose their species-being⁶. Solidarity is an embodiment of reciprocal altruism, which removes the walls between "self" and "other" (Ray, 2012, p.42-43).

Ray argues that social movements constitute a front against the illusion created by the practices of development economics. The present development strategies are affected by the axiomatic free market doctrines. He states that the principle of economic freedom is actually an "ideological smokescreen of neoliberalism". The false sense of legitimacy given to the present development epistemology by the free market doctrine is now being unmasked by social movements. He criticizes self-interest seeking human understanding of mainstream economics, and places reciprocal altruism as a lesson learnt via social movements at the heart of solidarity economies. (Ray, 2012, p.40). Imperfect examples that wither away and confront numerous issues as the early thrill of social movements fades. Interpersonal relationships deteriorate as ideals become more difficult to achieve or issues become more difficult to solve. Or, volunteer-based activities become increasingly challenging, necessitating the need for regular compensation and the need to seek funding. Nonetheless, Laville claims that these cases demonstrate the presence of an initial utopia that is never totally abandoned and serves to conceptualize it (Laville, 2010, p.30). It is

⁶ Species-being will be discussed in detail in section 2.2.1.1. of this thesis.

also one of the most fundamental features of solidarity economies, because they do not promise to be idealized examples or to create fully working systems. Existing practices of democracy turned into alliances between the economic and the political elite, deprived the masses of their civil and political rights and became insufficient to represent workers' rights and demands. The class-based movements, which dissolved in the face of attacks on trade unions and workers' movements are replaced by identity-based movements. The dominant ideology of neoliberalism is not only observed in the economic field, but also in political organization forms of individuals who are deprived of the support of the state and social institutions and left at the mercy of the market. Also, it can be mentioned about a global civil society movement rising in the face of common concerns about globalization and social problems (Aykaç, 2016, pp.78-79). International solidarity between the women's movement, environmental movements, and human rights movements, as well as labour rights movements, will set a worldwide picket line for a better democracy. The form, demands and values of today's social movements will determine the social, political and economic framework of the future of humanity.

The form of class struggle in Europe, based on representation and material demands via collective negotiation, began to transform in the 1960's. Mostly immigrants and young workers began to move away from unions which were not representing them, organized against the so-called scientific forms of management adjustments like dual specialization⁷, coordinated worker-led movements and did not limit their demands to wage negotiations. Thus, discussions expanded on eliminating alienation, not only reducing it, and self-management ideas came to the intellectual scene. The qualitative demands including political rights additional to the primary needs, have enriched the social movements but also led to some divisions in principle. Operational differences have arisen between groups who prioritize political action and declare a revival of socialist roots, and those who make much of spontaneity and creativity and adopt a here and now approach. Laville states that it is not unexpected that while the first group organized large protests, the other group showed a tendency to experiment on alternative economic practices (Laville, 2010, pp. 2-3). Although these alternative economic practices have a high fail rate, they continue to

⁷ Laville describes dual specialization as “vertical by separating the conception and execution of tasks, and horizontal by dividing work into repetitive gestures” (Laville, 2010, p.2)

survive throughout history, taking on different models and names on different continents, evolving and reorganizing at every turn.

Search for an alternative economy aiming at social transformation mostly revolve around self-management, worker takeovers and company acquisitions, inspired by the cooperatives of the 19th century (from the thoughts and experiments of Robert Owen (1771-1858), Henri de Saint-Simon (1760 - 1825), and Jean-Baptiste Joseph Fourier (1768 - 1830)); and the experiences to turn business models into cooperatives managed by those working there. In Europe, alternative economy experiments have strengthened the cooperative movement and the cooperative work movement opened up to the provision of intellectual and cultural services in various countries. According to the figures presented by Laville, in 1985, the new cooperatives operating only in the service sector accounted for 45% of cooperatives and 32% of jobs in the service sector in the United Kingdom; 13.5% of all cooperatives in Quebec; and 18.1% of cooperatives and 6.5% of jobs in France. What was remarkable in these new cooperatives was the creation of a production organization according to the social and environmental benefit desired. Hierarchical forms of organization were questioned and the mode of organization became the guarantor of social and environmental utility that will emerge from production. These groups have radical criticisms on the subjects of labour and employment. While having grand ambitions may prevent them from being long-term, if they give up having big claims and manage themselves by giving each member individual responsibilities and collectively take initiatives of separate units, they can survive. Even companies that operate in niche areas in the market can be established among these initiatives. Their success may depend on the political and social networks of their members. Laville names all these initiatives as "intervention collectives". Because their goals are broader than their own activities; they care about the democratization of society in line with their internal functioning, they are experimenting with forms of democracy in the workplace and are not satisfied with the form of representative democracy in cooperatives, they aim to protect the environment and reduce inequalities. Even if they lose sight of the alternative economy vision, they influence initiatives that will emerge later (Laville, 2010, pp.3-5).

While exploring the incorporation process of social and cultural spaces into global capitalism, Ray makes use of Marxist terminology like *alienation*, *capital circuit* and

*species-being*⁸. He reflects the alienation as the loss of the essence of the human species and states that it is derived not only from the traditional forms of class dominations, but also non-class domination forms like racial or gender discrimination and environmental degeneration. Thus, by referring to Lee (2010, pp.7-8), Ray groups the struggles rooted in economic and cultural oppression together with direct and indirect struggles against capital accumulation (Ray, 2012, p.40). For example, the people organised around *Ofissizler* (The Officeless) an informal collective of white-collar freelancers in İstanbul, are not organized along class or political lines. They vote for different political parties, have different views on women's rights, and come from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. The organization they formed brings together their similar concerns derived from being a freelancer, working from their homes. Ray argues that people from societies' different kinds of spheres can have different deprivations, but they all engage in resisting alienation which causes their loss of species-being. According to him, an individual's resistance is actually against the capital circuit. The capital circuit does not merely exploit work life or the economic spheres; it also commodifies⁹ humanity and all areas of life, culture and values together with it. Because the circulation of capital exploits every sphere of life, the mechanisms of exploitation are hidden under identity struggles or social and cultural exploitation (Ray, 2012, pp.40-41). Solidarity economics meets the necessity to create an alternative form of resistance that breaks down the duality of class and non-class struggles and embraces the economic, environmental and cultural movements to bring the individuals' species-being back.

Aykaç contributes to this debate with workplace democracy as one of the main grounds for solidarity economies. The concept of workplace democracy is the set of regulations that creates the ways of integrating productive masses into decision-making processes and management lines. Utopian socialism (focusing on the material and organisational foundations of production) represented by Owen, Saint-Simon, and Fourier;

⁸ In Ray's article, the loss of species-being is used simply as the loss of the human essence of a person. Further discussion about alienation and species-being is made later in this study.

⁹ Commodification is the attribution of economic value to something that was not considered in economic terms before (Ray, 2012, p. 47).

and the anarchist current of thought (based on the principle of communal solidarity, reciprocity in production, consumption, and decision-making processes) represented by Proudhon, Bakunin and Kropotkin show that the concept has existed in Europe and America since the early stages of industrialization. The current literature on the subject focuses on capitalist practices aimed at increasing productivity by providing psychological and economic benefits to the workers by increasing their participation in decision-making mechanisms. Collective management understanding in solidarity economies means much more than improvements in vertical organization in capitalist workplaces. Practices such as collective ownership, granting workers the right to vote on profit sharing or investment decisions, and agreeing on the goals of growth or degrowth means that the out-of-work consequences are also considered. For example, employees have the right not to take a risk if the expansion of a production area would damage their neighbourhood or natural resources around their living spaces. Workplace democracy is also an effort to ensure that the most appropriate tools are used to address the most urgent problems in the workplace, such as giving equal representation and the right to decide, automatically preventing the oppression of vulnerable groups such as women or minorities. Workplace democracy has the potential to move the concept of democracy out of the monopoly of politics and state mechanisms, into the sphere of economy and society and turn it into a daily life practice of individuals (Aykaç, 2016, pp.88 - 92).

Laville mentions similar examples in all continents, taking different forms according to the specific conditions of that region. Debt crises and social irregularities in the countries of South America, caused by dictatorships and authoritarian regimes disrupting democratic processes, cause a large active population of the society to become unemployed and pushed to informal working conditions. These populations survived through practices based on solidarity. These practices, called *popular economy*, are organized to meet all the needs for survival, based on mutual help and shared ownership. In addition to meeting the basic needs such as food, accommodation, health and education services, by its nature it becomes a political struggle for the rights of minorities as well as a field of application of environmental practices. Laville states that studies show that almost half of the active population in Chile is involved in popular economy activities and 70% of workers express their attachment to a particular lifestyle according to these practices and that they do not want to change. Another remarkable and often cited example is the Landless Rural

Workers' Movement (MST) in Brazil. The workers reoccupied the uncultivated lands, started to operate in cooperatives with their production and can provide services such as education and health to the region. In 2000, 250,000 families reappropriated unoccupied lands that were unproductive. In this cooperative system, there were 1800 primary schools with 3800 teachers and 150000 pupils, 1200 nursery school teachers and 250 crèches (Laville, 2009, pp.9-10).

Focusing especially on the evaluation of the 2008 mortgage crisis and its aftermath, Aykaç states that this is a crisis stemming from the internal contradictions of capitalism, and by referring to Thomas Piketty (2014, p.297) argues that has a tendency to increase inequality. As inequality increases gradually, the decline in purchasing power leads to a contraction in demand at the macro level. In response, financial institutions begin to give high-risk loans to the poor and vulnerable, and the long-term result is only the deepening of inequality¹⁰ (Aykaç, 2016, p.40). According to Aykaç, solidarity economies have the potential to reflect and meet the needs of workers and local communities, as they can reorganize their production processes outside of the global market relations and state mechanisms (Aykaç, 2016, p.58). She considers cooperatives, community-building corporations, profit-sharing alternatives, employee buyouts and the idea of economic citizenship as already existing structures where various forms of production based on solidarity can emerge (Aykaç, 2016, p.52). Cooperatives are one of the most important examples where an alternative mode of production is organized. The fact that they are traditional structures does not reduce their importance today; on the contrary, it emphasizes their potential. According to the numbers presented in the *World Cooperative Monitor*, the top 300 cooperatives in the world have 2,145.79 billion US \$ total turnover (International Cooperative Alliance, 2020, p.46) and International Cooperative Alliance (2018) states that “more than 12% of humanity is part of any of the 3 million cooperatives in the world”.

¹⁰ Many analyses have been made on the causes and consequences of global crises from different perspectives, from Marxist to liberal. While an analysis of the causes and consequences of global crises and their effects on companies or states is beyond the scope of this study; the reflections of such crises on individuals and societies is its main motivation. Hence, an in-depth crisis analysis is not seen as necessary.

Laville addresses the Northern versions of solidarity economy examples as *proximity services*. These Scandinavian initiatives are supported by the public authorities and citizens are encouraged to take responsibility. Parents establish kindergarten cooperatives and manage their children's education collectively on a voluntary basis, women set up women's shelters and organize them by themselves (Laville, 2010, p.14). The proximity term is used both for the connection of the actors and for their geographic proximity. These are the services where people can carry their daily and private problems to the public area, and seek collective solutions. Some initiatives mentioned in popular economic sources can also be included in the scope of proximity services, if they are not limited only by meeting material needs. By proximity services, what is to be provided is not the subsistence needs, but equal access to services and processes that respect human rights. The most important factor in individuals' involvement in these practices is a sense of belonging, even if it is not inherited; and a sense of belonging can be developed within these processes (Laville, 2010, pp.17-18).

According to Aykaç, one of the roles of solidarity economies is to ensure redistribution in the face of increasing global inequality conditions (Aykaç, 2016, p.60). She discusses the increased global inequality in economic and social dimensions. Despite the continual rise in GDP values, the notable income variability contributes to the growing economic inequality, highlighting the substantial gap between countries with the highest and lowest income levels¹¹ (Aykaç, 2016, p.62). Predictions concerning the decrease of inequality as a result of the technological advancements in less developed regions and their better integration into the global markets have already become invalid. What is new about global inequality is that it is no longer simply an income inequality or difference in developmental levels. There is also a transformation in the nature of inequality (Aykaç, 2016, p.63). While the gap between the highest and lowest wages increase, the mobility of

¹¹ According to 2019 World Bank GDP per capita data, express in terms of PPP (current international dollars), the GDP per capita of the world's wealthiest country (Luxembourg with 120,962 \$) is 154 times the GDP per capita of the world's poorest country (Burundi with 785\$).

labour between different wage levels decreases. Thus, the welfare level of the segments of the society at the bottom of the income scale gradually declines.

In the meantime, the expectation that an upward mobility will be seen in wages as the worker gets more qualified, is also not met. Furthermore, the change in the modes of production aggravates working conditions and exploitation mechanisms. The global division of labour also increases inequalities. On the one hand, the disparity in economic and social conditions between nations focusing on the service sector and those emphasizing industrial or agricultural production intensifies, leading to increased inequality (Aykaç, 2016, p.64). On the other hand, the consequences of global economic crises aggravate inequality rapidly. In periods of crises, it is of great importance whether governments make their policies by prioritizing capital or the people. The implementation of austerity policies in many countries, regardless of their levels of development, shows that governments cut social security spending in order to protect the market mechanisms (Aykaç, 2016, p.65). Where formal social security mechanisms do not work, people turn to social safety nets offered by the private sector or the civil society. While the private social security services are dependent on the income status of the households, civil society services are mostly voluntary mechanisms that offer only temporary improvements (Aykaç, 2016, p.71). Solidarity-based production relations can be the way of organising a fairer redistribution in a local, non-market and non-state framework (Aykaç, 2016, p.77). Solidarity economies, operate in line with various redistribution principles such as re-proportioning the wages of managers and workers in a way that does not lead to huge income gaps, and determining all types of wages by the return of the work, not by the rent or interest of capital. These principles mean to eliminate the income and social distribution gap between the employer and the worker and bring them to the same level as individuals involved in the production process (Aykaç, 2016, p.71). Besides wage regulations, fair trade and fair pricing are also important to achieve fairer redistribution. There is also an urgent need to identify appropriate methods and actors when organising the redistribution. Instead of the top-down regulators, the organization should be left to the beneficiaries and active participants of the system (Aykaç, 2016, p.72). The fairer redistribution is expected not only to redistribute resources more equitably, but also to create qualitative transformations in living standards. One of the most acclaimed examples that can be found in the literature is the development model employed by the Indian state of Kerala. In

Kerala, the region which has the highest literacy and lowest infant mortality rates, poverty was addressed through land reforms; a unique development model has been implemented via protecting women's rights, reducing social inequality and meeting basic needs first. The traditional and geographical advantages of the region were organised in a way to support local development; and social movements have also used the media, literature and cinema as tools of social transformation (Aykaç, 2016, p.72).

Ray offers to create a new development epistemology to formulate solidarity economies, and mentions the reconstruction of *relational totality*. By referring to Leys (2018, p.50) and Miller (2003, p.54), he explains relational totality as the interactions structured between humans, humanity and nature; also between humans, nature and society and reflects how human nature is continuously in the process of creation. The reality that humans tend to mutual survival through interconnection and cooperation with others is often ignored by mainstream economics. This causes overlooking the externalities of structural changes on the relational totality which again results with the loss of species-being. The reversal of the disintegration of relational totality is one of the aspects that social movements are also aiming for. Solidarity is the way to bring integration between humans who are oppressed, between oppressed humans and nature or between societies located at the receiving part of the global power structures (Ray, 2012, 43).

Another concept that contributes to the alternative development epistemology is non-singular development trajectories. This arises from societies' need for multiple strategies to reach multiple development goals, contrary to what the present development paradigm designed by capitalism suggests. Forcing the world into standardized development trajectories both causes the loss of cultural diversity and makes individuals more vulnerable (Miyoshi, 2004, p.375), especially in the developing world. This cultural alienation results with the growing constriction of survival choices by the extinction of traditional and non-commodified parts of the economy (Ray, 2012, p.43). Global capitalism transforms all parts of the traditional cultures and integrates them into the global market, at the expense of dragging the cultures and the individuals that belong to them into extinction and alienation, loss of identity and sense of community¹². At this point, Ray also

¹² It is important to underline that this is not a praise to “all” customs of traditional cultures. Intensification of commodification under global capitalism mostly causes the intensification of exploitative traditions around

remarks that the local development discourse is a product of global capitalism, arising from the insufficiency of mainstream development goals and never enough for the poor to benefit. The trademark of local development is the increasing mobilization of civil society organisations (called NGO-isation) and self-help groups with local municipalities' good governance practices acting as an anti-insurgency strategy to combat the emergence of a mass movement arising from the intensification of inequalities. Formulating alternative development policies which are non-singular and non-reductionary is one of the ways to resist the standardisation of local cultures. Following development trajectories which are tuned with diversified economic and social relation forms, ultimately serve the reconstruction of solidarity in these societies (Ray, 2012, p.44).

Aykaç defines the dominant production structure in the world as flexible specialization while considering reorganizing production in an alternative way, which emerged by the globalization of production and is driven by multinational companies (Aykaç, 2016, 16). Although the transition from the Fordist mode of production to the flexible mode of production and to non-standard work arrangements arising from the capital's crisis of profitability has provided many benefits for its mobility, in the meantime it has meant for the working class a heavier and precarious exploitation (Aykaç, 2016, 17). This has been discussed in detail in the following parts of this study by referring to Richard Sennett's examination of the effects on mental health and collective character transformation of the society (Sennett, 1998). One consequence that arises from flexibility is the blurring of the boundaries of time and space in which labour processes take place. The difference between the time allocated to production and the time allocated to the reproduction of labour loses its meaning and home-office systems where households are used both as workplaces and living spaces have become widespread (Aykaç, 2016, 20). This violation of the work-life balance boundaries of the employees was clearly exposed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

gender, race and caste; and deepens inequality in an already unequal society. While wealthy segments easily absorb the new cultural codes, underprivileged attach more tightly to their exploitative traditions (Ray, 2012, p.44).

In Turkey, in addition to the danger of losing one's job or life, the disappearance of the work-living space and the work-leisure time distinctions caused a great distress for employees with the transition to the home-office system especially in the service sector. Employees state that the transportation and meal benefits were cut immediately, and gradually the concept of work hours disappeared, and that they started to work during lunch hours while they could not even find the time to cook for themselves. In addition to all these cuts, there is no employer who takes responsibility for the increased expenses like electricity, water and natural gas bills of the employees. In Turkey, the effects of not providing adequate time and facilities for the reproduction of labour and the inadequacy of pandemic aids were seen quickly. The number of people seeking mental health support and suicide rates have risen, the domestic physical and psychological violence against women and youth increased. In addition to these, home accidents increased with the rush of completing heavy work duties. An occupational health and safety expert from *Ofissizler*, states that he had to write two reports raising the issue that the self-harm of children at home due to their parents' inability to spare time with them was not taken into consideration within the current labour law; and was seen as the negligence of parents (personal communications from *Ofissizler* meeting, March 11, 2021). Because of the advantages for employers, the number of companies that decide to continue the home-office system permanently after the pandemic is increasing, while companies are already violating the articles of remote work in Turkish Work Law (Duran, 2021). Although it is unclear how permanent the applications will be after the pandemic, governments' tendency to protect the sustainability of capital over individuals' well-being is clearly apparent. While the combination of flexible production, global manufacturing, and multinational corporations consistently contributes to economic growth and employment, it also leads to a notable rise in global inequalities and an expanding range of crises (Aykaç, 2016, p.28).

While rethinking the employment relations, Aykaç argues that in today's world where modes of production are fragmented and non-standard forms of employment are widespread, the labour movement is faced with different challenges than those emerged so far, and that new strategies should be developed in the face of these difficulties (Aykaç, 2016, p.119). She identifies that basic concepts such as work, labour, employment, occupation and job have been transformed by the domination of flexible production and there is a need to redefine them (Aykaç, 2016, p.106). To understand the innovations that

solidarity economies will bring in these concepts, it is important to examine them in a conceptual context. Aykaç emphasizes basic distinctions that Marx makes while conceptualizing labour. The first of these distinctions is between productive and unproductive labour. According to Marx, labour is considered to be productive only if it creates surplus value in a capitalist production process, and the labour which circulates or manages the products in any way, is considered as unproductive labour. Second, alienated labour refers to the loss of reality induced by the form of labour's participation in production. The third is the commodification of labour in which labour and wage are exchanged in the market. The commodification of labour in the market, as well as the transaction between the capitalist and the worker, is actually an exchange of two commodities, namely labour and wages (money). "The value of labour power is determined, as in the case of every other commodity, by the labour-time necessary for the production, and consequently, also the reproduction of this special article [. . .] the value of labour power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of labour" (Marx, *Capital* vol I., Part II. Ch. VI). The market value of the labour power (wage) is determined by supply and demand equilibrium, the cost of reproduction of labour power, and the capitalist's profit under market conditions (Aykaç, 2016, p.94).

Karl Polanyi states in *The Great Transformation* that labour is not an economic but a social category and he argues that land, labour, and capital are fictitious commodities because all three concepts are entities that existed before the market and were not actually produced for it (Aykaç, 2016, p.95). In order to understand the current forms of labour, the discussions about the transformations experienced with globalisation should also be taken into account. Integration to the global markets lowered wages and informalised labour especially in the less developed regions and the weakening of the trade union movement made labour more vulnerable against capitalists. Inclusion of new types of goods and services into the market created new types of labour that have not been commodified before and the flexibilisation of the dominant mode of production revealed new forms of employment. Finally, the fact that unemployment has become a structural component of the world economy with the deepening of the global crises can be given as examples of these transformations (Aykaç, 2016, p.96).

According to Aykaç, Guy Standing (2009) makes a clear distinction between the intertwined concepts of labour, employment and work (pp. 6-7). On the one hand, the

concepts of labour and employment have an economic motivation and aim to maximize efficiency through competition. Productivity and efficiency are guaranteed through established external pressure. On the other hand, work is a set of actions that come from within and in which reproduction, personal development and survival take place and have a sense of self decision making. As opposed to work, labour-intensive forms of employment cause much more stress, alienation and burnout for the individual (Aykaç, 2016, p.97). According to Andre Gorz (1999), as capitalism requires less and less workers with the development of technological possibilities and he predicts a future with less employment, less labour and less service sales where collective opportunities and services become widespread, non-monetary exchange systems and self-sufficiency become the norm (Aykaç, 2016, p.97). According to Kalleberg (2009), occupations are of primary importance in terms of building belonging and identity. Occupation differs from the concept of job in that while occupation stands for a long-term position, an identity and a cultural framework built around this identity; job does not require such a long-term commitment. It emerges or disappears according to market needs and includes certain actions which can be easily learned through on-the-job training (Aykaç, 2016, p.98). The labour movement is in a period of transition in terms of its organisational form, strategies and goals. The transformation promised by solidarity economies will inevitably affect labour and work experiences directly and find its place in the period where labour movements are transitioned. Globalisation transformed labour struggle as much as it transformed labour, and as a result of the weakened trade union movements, traditional forms of solidarity were replaced by movements organised collectively in the civil society field based on more collective organisations where creative and modern techniques are used.

Local exchange trading systems were one of the most important components of solidarity economies. While it may seem utopian for now that all needs can be met through local exchange activities, if it turns into a collective effort and collaborates with cooperatives, it can provide an effective disengagement from global markets (Aykaç, 2016, p.72). First of all, local exchange systems that exclude the money relationship from the exchange relationship or use alternative currencies are mechanisms that directly link producers with consumers and protect them from the externalities of capitalist exchange relations. Local exchange systems have also been an area of struggle against the

consumption culture that companies nurture to create demand. Information technologies and the prevalence of the internet have also contributed to the development of these systems (Aykaç, 2016, p.73). Aykaç gives the example of Magnesia Exchange and Solidarity Network, a small local exchange network in Volos Greece, which emerged in 2010 as a response to the Greek debt crisis, and was using its own currencies within its own small market. The number of people benefiting from the system, which offered products and services such as local products, childcare, language courses and second-hand goods, reached 1300 in 2013. Equal status was attributed to all members, decisions were made with their full participation and communication was based on solidarity and cooperation between members. She states that such systems, which provide some protection to its members against financial difficulties and global financial fluctuations, have become quite widespread in Greece after the crisis (Aykaç, 2016, p.74).

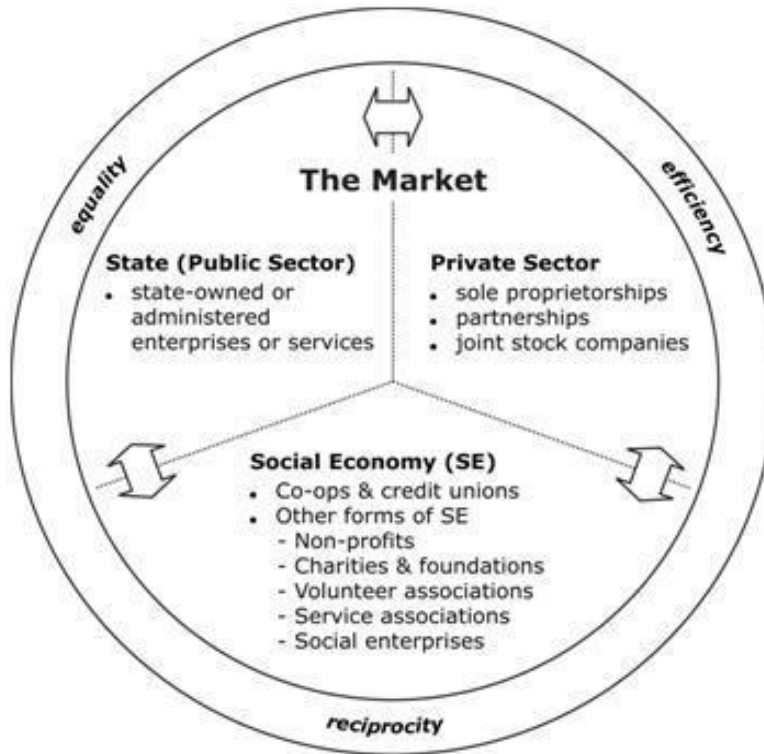
All these examples can be evaluated from different angles and are always prone to catching controversial criticism. The form of communication with local authorities and non-governmental organisations have always been both necessary and a source of trouble. There are many unanswered questions and controversies about technical efficiency and the dynamics of solidarity, but, as Laville mentions, the volume and diverse nature of all the discussions and criticisms show us that these models are no longer destined to remain archaic or destroyed by capitalism. They are freed from the narrow framework of finding solutions to poverty, are no longer confused with the informal economy, are recognized, put pressure on public authorities, and are attracting attention by academics (Laville, 2010, p.12).

1.1.3. Social versus Solidarity Economy

Often social and solidarity economies are mentioned together in order to be more inclusive, as seen in the papers issued by ILO and RIPESS. However, there are significant divergences between the solidarity economy and social economy.

Social economy refers to a third sector in addition to the public and private sectors and is a concept that emerged before the solidarity economy term. As shown in Figure 1, social economy is an area where non-profit and non-governmental organisations, businesses, associations, charities and voluntary groups are active (Neamtan, 2004, p. 27). Third sector is mostly understood as a complement to the first sector (the private sector, which consists

of privately owned and profit seeking companies, operates in the market) and second sector (the public sector, which consists of governmental operations). Third sector often undertakes a recuperative role in solving the problems that the primary sector causes and the secondary sector fails to solve. For example, the second sector needs to make and implement decisions regarding environmental pollution caused by the activities of the first sector. When it fails to do so, environmentalist associations, organisations and volunteers step in and try to impose laws and limit the activities of institutions in the first sector through various methods (Restakis, 2006, p. 2). Also, it is not rare to encounter competitive practices between non-governmental organisations to find funds, or apply traditional capitalistic methods for social entrepreneurs to be favourable in the market. According to the B.C.-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA), although there is still an ongoing debate about definitions, one definition includes social enterprises that use market mechanisms to pursue explicit social objectives (BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance, n.d.).

Figure 1*Market Sectors*

Source: From the website by BC-Alberta Social Economy Research Alliance (BALTA).

Solidarity economies are the efforts to create structures that operate outside the market mechanisms. While the dominant economic and financial system is questioned all over the world, the solidarity economy is positioned as a grassroots movement in which its actors naturally are activists creating local solutions to local problems in public politics and economy by using collective action. In this way, it can be said that solidarity economies are born from local needs but they also try to make structural and permanent changes. Thus, solidarity economies are based on values that require the transformation of all capitalist concepts. Solidarity economies take on their agenda to build a new understanding of economics and question many beliefs that are accepted as given in the current system. It is the effort to reorganise different aspects of life, beginning with the economic experience sometimes by questioning the dominant paradigms and replacing them with the ones that

are more human oriented, creative and non-competitive; sometimes by recalling the archaic practices that prehistoric societies maintained for a long time and still continue as traditions today (RIPESS, 2015, p.10).

Solidarity economics identifies the dominant economic system as the main factor that harms humanity and nature, and carries a potential of a radical change. Interpreting solidarity economics as a mere component of the public sector or a useful equipment to reach development goals set by non-governmental organisations is not compatible with the grassroots nature and the autonomy of solidarity economies. It implies sterilising the transformation potential from solidarity economics and articulating it to what is already prevalent. Also, it may not be efficient to evaluate solidarity economics according to the criteria determined within the conditions of the current economic and social system. Rather than trying to answer capitalist questions such as how to manage a solidarity economy, how to compete with corporate firms in the market, what are the resources used by, how to share the profits; these models should be evaluated by generating new questions within their own originality. It is necessary to change the capitalist mind-set completely to understand solidarity economies.

For example, according to ILO, SSEs naturally attract people who have poor access to wealth and opportunities around the world (Fonteneau et al., 2010). Although one of the main objectives of solidarity economies should be to decrease poverty, they also aim to reveal and change the foundations of the current economic system that gives rise to the concept of poverty. Many strategies that could be alternatives to the capitalist business model are being researched and debated. In this regard, distinguishing solidarity economies from other alternatives to the capitalist business model is important.

1.2. Contribution of Diverse Economies Concept

In the broadest sense, solidarity economies can be described as non-market and non-state economic mechanisms. But this definition is not enough to understand solidarity economies, because there are many other examples which are not involved in market mechanisms or are not subject to state control. As mentioned in the previous section, social economies are the most well-known example of practices staying outside of market and state controls. Thus, it is important to consider other non-market and non-state economic

alternatives and to classify them within certain categories in order to show the difference of solidarity economies from them.

If we proceed with the broad definition of economic activity that has been made before, which is "the set of relations that individuals establish with themselves, the individuals around them, nature and all other beings in order to meet their material and non-material needs" (Polanyi, 1977); the concepts of transactions, market, labour, wage and the organisation style of economic activities are similarly broadened. In this sense, J.K. Gibson-Graham's¹³ diverse economy concept contributes to the discussion. Diverse economy is a language in creation, in which "the economic landscape is represented as populated by a myriad of contingent forms and interactions" (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.54). They use the term to classify non-capitalist and alternative economic transactions, labour and enterprises including the practices that are often excluded and marginalized by economic theory.

Below is a flexible and open-ended table in progress and can be expanded, interpreted in different ways, and can have different inputs according to different localizations. This flexibility is useful to bring visibility to diverse economic actions and allowing a more comprehensive understanding of various economic phenomena for clarification. Gibson-Graham states that the diverse economy framing can be useful in discussing and theorising an extremely heterogeneous economy (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p.618). By representing the alternatives, their claim is to liberate the colonised imagination, repoliticise the economy and build a new language by revealing differences, not to search for dominance by making the invisible visible. They oppose to the idea that wage labour, commodity market and capitalist enterprise are the only forms of work, exchange and business organisation (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.53). If it is to present new economies, the general understanding of "the economy" must be reimagined. In Gibson-Graham's expressions, the change in understanding begins with language politics. The language and discourse shapes the way of thinking and the meaning. The meaning fixes itself by affecting values, norms and perceptions. This situation explains the perception that a certain discourse on economics (real, natural, unalterable, ultimate, capitalist) establishes

¹³ The pen-name of feminist economic geographers Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson.

hegemony and declares everything else as either an impossible fantasy or a threat. It masks the disadvantages of the system and blinds people to realise the other options. This is the colonisation of the entire economic landscape by a capitalocentric¹⁴ discourse (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.55). Abandoning capitalist economic activity as the model for all economic activity is the first step to understand differences.

Their conceptualization involves three main economic relations; “different kinds of transactions and the ways of negotiating commensurability (Figure 3); different types of labour and ways of compensating it (Figure 4) and different forms of enterprise and ways of producing, appropriating, and distributing (Figure 5)” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.60). Figure 2 shows the breakdown of the three main relations, their alternative forms and the non-market, unpaid and non-capitalist versions. Despite the fact that only market transactions are considered as "economic," the transactions available in the world are not restricted to them. There are numerous varieties of transactions, but if divided into three categories, market, alternative market, and non-market, labour and enterprises will take distinct forms accordingly.

¹⁴ Capitalocentrism is the dominant economic discourse that affirms all economic activities associated with capitalism, and capitalism devalues all other economic activity by labelling them as a complement to, an opponent of, or included within capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.56). The capitalocentric economic discourse is describing all forms of economy primarily with reference to capitalism: as being fundamentally modelled upon capitalism, or as being deficient or substandard imitations as existing in capitalism's space or orbit (Gibson-Graham 1996, p.6).

Figure 2*A Diverse Economy*

Transactions	labour	Enterprise
MARKET	WAGE	CAPITALIST
ALTERNATIVE MARKET	ALTERNATIVE PAID	ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST
Sale of public goods	Self-employed	State enterprise
Ethical 'fair-trade' markets	Cooperative	Green capitalist
Local trading systems	Indentured	Socially responsible firm
Alternative currencies	Reciprocal labour	Non-profit
Underground market	In kind	
Co-op exchange	Work for welfare	
Barter		
Informal market		
NON-MARKET	UNPAID	NON-CAPITALIST
Household flows	Housework	Communal
Gift giving	Family care	Independent
Indigenous exchange	Neighbourhood work	Feudal
State allocations	Volunteer	Slave
State appropriations	Self-provisioning labour	
Gleaning	Slave labour	
Hunting, fishing, gathering		
Theft, poaching		

Note. From "Diverse economies: Performative practices for 'other worlds'." by J. K. Gibson-Graham, 2008, *Progress in Human Geography*, 32(5), p.616, (doi:10.1177/0309132508090821)

Diverse economy already exists and is nourished by different disciplines of economics; political economy, economic sociology and economic anthropology; by different social movements; women's rights, working-class, community activists, socialists, cooperatives, etc; and by different societies that are subject to economic systems operating with different economic rules and values (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.57). They have always existed from the very beginning of human history and will continue to exist but are condemned by the capitalocentric discourse as marginal, ineffective or unproductive. One of the most common examples is women's unpaid activities, such as housework, child-rearing or elderly care. It is mentioned that these seemingly marginal or

unproductive economic practices actually produce more value than expected, and are more prevalent (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p.617). Empirical studies show that 30 to 50 percent of economic activity in both rich and poor countries is created by unpaid household labour. However, this large sphere of economic production is still seen by capitalocentric view as just a supporting element of the real economy in the reproduction category (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.58). Another example is informal economies which cover various economic activities that do not depend on wage labour, commodity production for market or capitalist enterprise. Although they are seen in both less and more developed countries, they mostly originate from southern countries. As often shaped around traditional indigenous values, access to natural resources is seen as a common right and economic transactions, production, exchange and redistribution are governed by kinship, community networks and rituals (German, 2001). The failure of development policies and growth-oriented capitalist models to increase well-being has promoted the indigenous practices to be revised and embedded in current survival networks (Benediktssen, 2002). Undoubtedly, the greatest contribution to discourse against economic hegemony and the language of economic difference came from Marx and the socialist tradition. According to Marx's economic theory, capitalism is only a specific form of economic practice that has emerged in human history, evolved from its predecessor (from feudalism), and carries the potential to evolve into another system by political action (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.59).

Gibson-Graham express their intervention about diverse economies as a weak theory¹⁵ of the economy, which can be summarised as “an exploratory thinking practice” (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.60). Diverse economies’ contribution is a project which aims to

¹⁵ *Strong theory* establishes what is without regard for what it does. While it provides the pleasures of recognition, acquisition, and intellectually subduing that last thing, it does not provide respite or an exit to a place beyond (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.6). On the other hand, weak theory can't tell us that social experiments have already been coopted and are thus doomed to fail or reinforce dominance; it can't tell us that the world economy will be altered by an international revolutionary movement rather than the chaotic proliferation of local enterprises (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.8). Weak theory does not elaborate and affirm what we already know; rather, it observes, interprets, and yields to new knowledge (Stewart, 2008, p.3). A weak theory of diverse economies does not presuppose a single direction for economic change, but is aware of how crises and stability are experienced differently throughout the heterogeneous economic activities that comprise a "economy" (Stewart, 2008, p.5).

expand our economic vocabulary by opening up space for differences and taking into account practices marginalised by the strong theory of capitalism. While aiming to weaken the capitalist economic hegemony, it does not aim to present a finished, complete and ready-made map of alternative economies (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.60). This is a flexible and open-ended discussion in progress and can be expanded, interpreted in different ways, and can have different inputs according to different localizations. This flexibility is useful to bring visibility of diverse economic actions and for clarification.

Figure 3 displays the alternative transactions and non-market transactions out of the formal market exchanges; and different rules out of the commensurability calculations of mainstream economics. As opposed to the formal market the rules of which are determined by the supply and demand of the rational, self-interested individuals; the large part of daily life is sustained by a various set of transactions that have no rule on how to measure the equivalence; but they always have socially negotiated reciprocity principles (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp. 61-62). There are many examples of goods and services that are produced and shared in the household, resources provided by nature for free to take or to process, grants given by some institutions and organisations and many transactions where money is not used as a medium of exchange, of which barter is the best-known example. Also in many countries, traditional or religious practices and rituals which operate on socially constructed rules still exist, even modern adaptations emerge. A fine example to the non-market exchange is the “bread on the rack”¹⁶ (*askıda ekmek* in Turkish) tradition in Turkey which has historic roots. Sometimes customers pay the price of two or more breads and leave the bakery with just one, the other one is left on the rack to be picked up for free by someone who cannot afford it. This tradition is used today for many different goods and services other than bread. *Askıda Ne Var?* (“What’s on the Rack?”) is a social enterprise that offers meals, movie tickets, books etc. to students, from sponsors and donors (*Askıda Ne Var?*, 2017). During the pandemic, the *Askıda Fatura* (“Utility Bill’ on the Rack”) application implemented by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality for gas and water bills of the households that gradually became poorer as a result of the insufficient pandemic aids, was expanded to a whole suspended support package. The total amount of support

¹⁶ This Turkish term does not have a direct equivalent in English. A translation has been provided solely to convey the literal meaning of the term for better understanding.

collected until mid-April 2021 reached 40.119.149 in Turkish Liras (İstanbul Büyükşehir Belediyesi, 2021).

Figure 3

Transactions

Transactions	Rules of (In) Commensurability
MARKET EXCHANGE <i>“Free”</i> <i>Naturally protected</i> <i>Artificially protected</i> <i>Monopolised</i> <i>Regulated</i> <i>Niche</i>	ECONOMIC COMMENSURABILITY <i>“Laws” of supply and demand</i> <i>“Natural law”</i> <i>Social agreements or state policy</i> <i>Monopoly corporate power</i> <i>State policy</i> <i>Social agreement</i>
NONMARKET Household flows Gift giving Indigenous exchange State allocations State appropriations Gleaning Hunting, fishing, gathering Theft Poaching	INCOMMENSURABILITY Intra-household negotiation Cultural norms of reciprocity Ritual practice Citizen entitlements State entitlements Traditional right Negotiation of stewardship Illegal right Right of the have-not
ALTERNATIVE MARKET Sale of public goods Ethical “fair-trade” markets Local trading systems Alternative currencies Underground market Co-op exchange Alternative credit Barter Informal market	SOCIAL COMMENSURABILITY State policy Producer-consumer agreement Producer-consumer agreement Community agreement Trader agreement Inter-co-op agreement Financier-borrower negotiation Trader agreement Trader agreement

Note. From *A Post capitalist Politics* by J. K. Gibson-Graham, 2006, University of Minnesota Press. p.61.

Figure 4 includes the unpaid and alternatively paid labour. *Unpaid labour* are the labour forms labelled as “unproductive” by mainstream economic stance. The work that is managed in the household, family or in the broader community is not paid in monetary

terms but compensated in the form of companionship, love, trust, support and a sense of self-worth as a human being. *Self-provisioning labour* is the work for subsistence like gardening, hunting, fishing or making clothes. By including all these work in the conception of diverse economies is to reveal that the people (mostly women) who are seen as "unemployed" or "economically inactive" are also the subjects of economic functioning and to indicate that their labour is also a part of economic functioning. It is also to gain awareness of the fact that the labour which all of us engage in our daily lives actually has an economic meaning (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp. 62-63). Human-trafficking, sex slavery, forced prison labour are examples of contemporary *slave labour*.

There are also many diversities within the category of capitalist wage labour. Ideally, the salary depends on an agreement reached between the workers, state, unions and the employer, which is enough to ensure that workers can meet their needs and maintain humane living conditions. However, there are countries where the minimum wage is below the poverty line, or where wages are determined by individuals, or where pay categories are unprotected. Finally, the alternative paid labour comprises many other forms where there is payment, but they are different from capitalist wage labour. Cooperatives pay the amount that is decided by the cooperative, not by the labour market. Self-employed workers decide their own wage under a loose contract decided by what the market pays for similar self-employed people. Payments in kind and indentured labour are mostly the monetary payments plus non-monetary favours (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 64). For example, *yarıcılık* ("share-cropping", *yarı* means "half") is a common practice in the Anatolian lands. Landowners, who cannot cultivate their own land, leave all the land and planting work to a person called *yarıcı*, and half of the crop is left to the landowner and half to the sharecropper. *Karaburun Collective* is a modern example founded by a group of university students who produce their products from the harvest of their share-cropping and are managed without the use of capitalist labour relations (MedyaScope, 2018). *TaTuTa*, the Anatolian pillar of a project known worldwide as *WWOOFING*, is also a contemporary example. This project brings together young volunteers together with eco-friendly farmers on the basis of trust and knowledge exchange. While volunteers contribute to agricultural production, and help the farm workers, the accommodation and food needs are met by the farm owners (WWOOF, n.d., WWOOFTurkey, n.d.)

Figure 4*Labour*

LABOUR	COMPENSATION
WAGE LABOUR Salaried Unionised Nonunionized Part time Temporary Seasonal Familial	Negotiated salary + benefits Protected wage + benefits Unprotected Un/Protected wage Unprotected Unprotected Personally set wage
UNPAID Housework Family care Neighbourhood work Volunteer Self-provisioning labour Slave labour	Nonmonetary Nonmonetary Nonmonetary Nonmonetary Food and other goods Food and lodging
ALTERNATIVE PAID Self-employed Cooperative Indentured Reciprocal labour In-kind Work for welfare	Living expenses + savings Cooperative wage + share Food, lodging, and stipend Reciprocated labour In-kind payment Dole payment

Note. From *A Post capitalist Politics* by J. K. Gibson-Graham, 2006, University of Minnesota Press. p.63.

In Figure 5, enterprises are distinguished by those who appropriates the surplus produced and it is considered the various ways that different production units produce and distribute the wealth they generate. While in family-run firms the surplus is appropriated and distributed among the family members; in private firms, it is appropriated by the capitalist or the board of members. In public companies, the surplus is appropriated by the board of directors and distributed to the banks, governments, etc. Multinational firms work in a similar manner but possibly with a tendency of wealth distribution to intensify in the more developed regions and appropriation in the less developed regions the firm operates.

In many other enterprise forms, different from capitalist businesses like feudal agricultural establishments or households in which traditional gender division prevails, the first claim on distributing the surplus does not belong to the producer. In independent, self-employed, communal and cooperative enterprises producers set their own wages, and exert a control over surplus appropriation and distribution. Some of the alternative capitalist firms may be distinguished by the responsible allocation of their surplus distribution by their socially or environmentally palliative activities (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp. 65-67). For example green capitalist firms might agree to spare a part of their profit for recycling technologies, or socially responsible capitalist firms might sponsor a project which aims to increase women's literacy rate.



Figure 5*Enterprise*

Enterprise	Appropriation of Surplus
CAPITALIST Family firm Private unincorporated firm Public company Multinational	Family Business owners Board of directors ¹⁷ Board of directors
NONCAPITALIST Communal Independent Feudal Slave	Co-operators Self Landlord/household head Slave owner/leaser
ALTERNATIVE CAPITALIST State enterprise Green firm Socially responsible firm Non-profit Producer and consumer cooperatives	State Board of directors Board of directors Board of directors Producers, consumers

Note. From *A Post capitalist Politics* by J. K. Gibson-Graham, 2006, University of Minnesota Press. p.65.

Because of the difficulty in breaking the capitalocentric belief that these examples are marginal and ineffective, revealing the diversity of economic activities and making them the main focus of non-capitalistic research is important. But Gibson-Graham states that the economic autonomy projects and experimental practices are becoming widespread, and mentions the emergence of a burgeoning infrastructure via conferences, books, websites, blogs and other new media (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p.614). Gibson-Graham's is

¹⁷ "In private unincorporated capitalist firms it is the capitalist or board of directors who are the appropriators and first distributors of surplus. In public companies the board of directors are in charge of appropriating surplus and distributing it to the banks, governments, realtors, advertising agencies, and management staff who provide supports for the enterprise and make competing claims on appropriated surplus." (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.66)

only one of the many efforts to classify these different economic mechanisms and that there are several alternative names and definitions for these concepts and various intersections between them. The economic landscape is repopulated and diversified with research in different fields. Many different disciplines gathered under a wide roof in order to investigate this huge variety of economic transactions which aim at social and environmental well-being (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p.615). They mention the need for researchers who examine alternative economies to adopt a different way of thinking on the way to theory (Gibson-Graham, 2008, p.618). They also state that every economic relation form has potential to liberate or exploit their subjects, according to the circumstances and capitalist enterprises are as diverse as non-capitalist or alternative enterprises (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p. 72). For example, in the founding years of the Turkish Republic, cooperatives were very important and are still very common. However, it is possible to divide them as traditional and the new generation cooperatives. Traditionally, agricultural credit cooperatives which bring together small family farmers and the real estate cooperatives cannot be regarded as democratic or empowering initiatives. Abdullah Aysu, the founding chairman of the Confederation of Farmers' Unions (ÇİFTÇİ-SEN), defines traditional cooperatives as "free market cooperatives" because they do not depend on their own resources to survive and are not independent from state intervention. In such initiatives, policies are determined and implemented by the state, members are not included in the decision-making mechanisms, and profit shares are not distributed equally. He states that the most important feature that separates the traditional and the new generation cooperatives is the decision of what to do in the case of an increase in the income of the cooperative. In the latter, more members are reached with the surplus income keeping the shares equal between the existing members, while in the former the shares of the existing members increase creating capital accumulation (personal communication, July 30, 2019).

This chapter has explored the emergence of solidarity economy as a dynamic and evolving field of study. Challenging traditional economic models, this paradigm encourages a re-evaluation of the fundamental principles that underpin our economic systems. Solidarity economies, diverging from established norms of capitalism, have become a captivating area for scholars, institutions, and activists alike. The examinations illustrate that solidarity economy is approached as a combination of various economic

models and concepts. At its core, lies the desire to create a post-capitalist world aiming for a future that highlights values such as community, cooperation, and equity.

Solidarity economies signify a perspective that promotes sustainable, socially responsible, and collaborative economic practices. The diversity and pluralistic nature of these models are grounded in the principles of human relations, solidarity, and democracy. This literature review contributes to understanding the complexity of solidarity economies, providing future researchers with insights for a better comprehension of this field. It also aims to guide them towards the enhancement of social, economic, and environmental sustainability. The fundamental principles of solidarity economies, guiding towards a fairer and more equitable future, open the door to positive changes in economic paradigms.

2. CRITIQUES, PERSPECTIVES AND PARADIGM SHIFTS

In this chapter, a theoretical baseline is presented for solidarity economies. The arguments on the theoretical foundations of solidarity economies are diversified by numerous researchers and diverse currents of thought, as seen in the literature review. The thesis' fundamental assertion is that solidarity economies are various models that operate outside of the capitalist economic system and may provide a powerful alternative frontline for reorganising economic interactions based on certain ideals. Following that, a new understanding of economics will be discussed, which will be based on an interdisciplinary framework that relies on perspectives outside of orthodox economic theories to grasp solidarity economy practices.

The most significant reason for attempting to develop a theoretical foundation for solidarity economics is because understanding solidarity economy models with our current notion of economics is inefficient, if not altogether impossible. Due to the centuries old implementations of capitalism, as well as the reductionist character of economics teaching, it is conceivable to have difficulty comprehending solidarity economics. It is necessary to reassess all we know about the economy and to drastically change our perspective on it. Solidarity economics, inevitably, is a comprehensive critique of neoclassical economics and capitalist economic structure. As a consequence, the theoretical foundation is based on the works of intellectuals who focus on critique of economics and the current economic system.

Solidarity economy examples and solidarity economics can be distinguished from mainstream economics and developmentalist perspectives by distancing them from the palliative solutions used to reduce the effects of economic crises or improving the situations of disadvantaged groups in societies. Instead of simply attempting to promote welfare by eliminating problems like poverty and inequality through intrasystemic methods, solidarity economics tries to explore and change the understanding and practices that cause poverty and inequality. The attempt to redefine well-being and welfare is another feature that differentiates solidarity economics from mainstream economics.

Since solidarity behaviour is created and manifested in interpersonal interactions, examination of individuals, their experiences in life, and their connections are also key to understanding solidarity economies. As a result, unlike many mainstream economic

research, one of the primary focus of this study's review is on the present system's impact on individuals. The first element in this study's theoretical framework is the critique of the fundamental basis of economics teaching, the homo economicus assumption. Because the capacity of solidarity economies to reintroduce solidarity to human behaviour in economic relations is critical, a critique of the assumption that human nature prioritises its own benefit is also essential.

The following is a critique of work and labour concepts, as well as an analysis of their historical and sociological contexts. These critiques contribute to the discussion of the possible changes solidarity economies may bring to how and why we work. The greatest deprivation, is the incapacity to live a meaningful life which needs the free use and application of an individual's labour and time. The right to freely use their labour to create themselves and the meaning for their lives is the most fundamental aspect of well-being.

The subject is enriched with historical perspectives on the working concept. Thus, the stages prior to the current form of work will be evaluated. How the current working conditions contribute to the consumption culture and the dilemma created by the separation of workplace and leisure time in daily life will also be discussed in this context.

The following section is an examination of the anthropological aspects of economic systems as a critique of capitalist market conditions on the one hand and neoliberalism and globalism on the other. In the last section, in order to understand solidarity economies, a definition of economy will be made that is broader than the definition of mainstream economics and will cover activities in many areas of daily life.

2.1. Mainstream Economics' Perception of Human Nature

The foundations of the economics discipline are based on a well-known assumption about human behaviour. It is believed, according to the homo economicus assumption, that in every civilization and time of history, people direct their economic decisions in accordance with their self-interests. At the end of the nineteenth century, economics expanded beyond the field of economic decisions and evolved into a set of theories and methods that investigate the relationship between goals and the means used to achieve these goals on the basis of the self-centred individual's behaviours (Buğra, 1995, p.14),

and this understanding began to influence the morality of societies. However, because of the significant differences between homo economicus and actual humans, the consequent gap between economic theories and the real world has been a source of intense criticism since the emergence of neo-classical economics (Peksan, 2021, p.192). Behavioural economists' studies show that people can act with different motivations in their economic behaviours, and anthropologists' studies show that economic systems have been shaped by these different motivations throughout history, as will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections of the study. Mainstream economists disregard principles other than self-interest, such as mutual aid, reciprocity, and altruism, which govern the nature of all human interactions, including economic relations. The number of economists who specialise on human behaviour, on the other hand, is growing. Behavioural economics research contributes with new ideas about human behaviour as it is shaped by a set of economic relationships. Economists and psychologists work together to produce significantly more comprehensive results than economists' "rational individual" assumption. Daniel Kahneman points to studies conducted between 1970 and 2000 that found significant data contradicting the neoclassical assumption of human behaviour. Many researchers have produced fulfilling and psychologically realistic outcomes as compared to rational individual assumptions such as selfishness, complete information, or agents' unchanging tastes (Kahneman, 2003). Economic behaviours of humans such as working, producing, and consuming are not exclusively oriented around individual benefit, according to studies in social science disciplines such as social anthropology, prehistoric economies, and the history of early civilizations. According to Karl Polanyi, almost all of the anthropological or sociological assumptions used by economic liberalism to justify human behaviour have been demonstrated to be unrealistic (Polanyi, 1957, p. 277). Regardless of its political and cultural structure —tyrannical or peaceful, primitive, small towns or huge empires— no culture in human history has had an economic system whose economic structure was wholly driven by the gain motive and governed purely by markets. Throughout history, the human economy has been rooted in social interactions, and humans have acted to safeguard their social status, social rights, and social values rather than mere financial wealth and private interests (Polanyi, 1957, p.48).

Utilitarian behaviour grew with the rise of capitalism and evolved into a distinct identity. Despite the fact that utilitarianism has become common wisdom, humans continue

to act in ways that are not solely motivated by self-interest. A lifestyle based on the self-centred human model, as expressed within the context of capitalist relations, furthermore, has a negative impact on interpersonal relationships, mental health, and the environment. The core values of economics are based on hedonistic and utilitarian philosophy. This not only gives homo economicus behaviour a scientific foundation, but it also allows individuals to save selfish behaviour from being labelled as immoral. Furthermore, economic theory argues that utilitarian action is the most rational kind of behaviour. While rationality refers to well-considered action in everyday life, in economics, a rational person is someone who prioritises their own interests and acts by doing the necessary calculations precisely in this direction. To put it another way, it is sufficient for a person to maximise their utility to be rational. Despite this, many economists agree that in a world full of ambiguities and uncertainties, optimal behaviour cannot be completely fulfilled (Ruben, 2011, pp. 34-36).

Human nature is not independent from environmental, societal or historical conditions. While capitalist conditions reveal behaviours such as selfishness, greed and rivalry; operating in different conditions can enable the flourishing of characteristics such as solidarity, altruism, empathy, benevolence and creativity, which is why solidarity economies are important. Solidarity economies attempt to return and reintroduce these values to social life, economic sphere and work life, not merely assuming that these alternative kinds of behaviour are acceptable and inclusive. There are examples of solidarity economies that have succeeded by embracing ideas other than utilitarianism, which is often regarded as the foundation of individual and corporate success. Mondragon Corporation, one of the world's most successful cooperative groups from Spain's Basque Country, has managed to be highly competitive in capitalist market conditions while building their administration and distribution approaches around egalitarian and democratic ideals (Flecha & Cruz, 2011, p.157). Mondragon's success is based on solidarity between its members and democratic decision-making mechanisms by guaranteeing every worker's right to vote. The cooperative's workers determine what to do with 70 percent of the profit left over from reserves and the share set aside for training. Workers' solidarity is utilised to support unemployment through collective funds, and the majority of the resources are used to seek employment. For example, despite the fact that cooperative work fell by 8.3 percent during the recession in 2008-2009, the number of

cooperative members climbed by 6.1 percent, providing a guarantee. In comparison to a typical corporation, the ratio between the highest-paid employee and the lowest-paid employee is 1 to 6, which is a very egalitarian ratio¹⁸. While temporary and flexible work is restricted to a minimum of 20 percent, it is critical to safeguard them from precarity because the majority of cooperative members have long-term relationships. Mondragon's network of solidarity is available to cooperative members for the rest of their lives. As an example of this solidarity, in 2009 the workers agreed to give up their extra Christmas pay so that it could be invested in the early retirement of 128 workers who were over age 58, and some others over age 55 who could not be reallocated in other cooperatives. Members also have other advantages: all workers, and all of their family members, have total medical coverage for only 30 Euros per month, and for 15 Euros per month they can send their children to a good private school which is also a cooperative (Flecha & Cruz, 2011, p.162).

2.2. Evolution of Work and Rethinking Labour

Economics and the economic rationale have affected contemporary employment conditions and the meaning assigned to work and labour. Individuals' productive acts have been shaped historically, socially, culturally, and politically by classifications such as productive and non-productive; creative, intellectual, or physical; or skilled and unskilled. Examining the origins of the work ethic that is institutionalised in society's collective consciousness, in which the belief that work is more important than other human activities and that it is a virtue, as well as questioning and criticising the meaning of work, are important pillars of solidarity economies. Solidarity economies represent a new understanding of work and labour relations that differs from their current forms, dominantly consisting of wage labour. Furthermore, solidarity economies may give light on the future of the various forms of work that have been evolving over time. The initial topic of this chapter will be the productive activities of human beings, as well as the meaning and transformations of work and labour throughout history. The effects of modern forms of employment in the context

¹⁸ According to the realised measure of CEO pay of the 350 largest publicly owned U.S. corporations in 2020, the ratio of CEO-to-typical-worker pay was 351-to-1 (Economic Policy Institute, 2021).

of consumerism, the work/leisure time dichotomy, and the weakening of workplace solidarity will finally be explored.

2.2.1. The Meaning of Work

The comprehensive set of activities previously referred to as "productive activities of human beings" is currently referred to as "work" in a very narrow sense, and this is insufficient to grasp the form of work and labour relations in solidarity economies. Labour is embedded in a wide range of human activities and is far too diverse to be limited within the act of work alone.

When the origin of the concept of work is studied, it is seen that, depending on the social environment, work can have one of two extreme meanings: pleasure or agony. While some words in Ancient Greek refer to manual labour used to relate to unpleasant activities and were associated with the lower classes, both intellectual and manual labour were regarded as respectable and enjoyable activities in Ancient China, and the working and creative element of society was honoured. When the origin of the concept is examined, it is stated that while the word *labour* is used in Western languages with meanings such as trouble, pain and struggle, in prehistoric societies there is no word that distinguishes the daily activities of individuals from the activities of work or labour and the concepts used to characterise daily productive activities are too diverse to compare with modern work (Peksan, 2021, pp.23-28).

Another distinction established when categorising human activities is which activities are considered productive and which are not. While artistic creation is regarded as a privileged activity in some cultures, it is not regarded as a productive activity in others. For example, domestic chores in some countries are seen as women's duties and not considered as productive or worth any wage, although they take a significant amount of time on a weekly basis.

Today, various words such as labour, employment, job, and work are used interchangeably and ambiguously to define individuals' productive actions. Especially discussing the difference between the terms *labour* and *work* is critical, because this distinction also underpins the distinction between all human activities and those that have meaning in the current economic system. Part of the debate on the definition of work and the distinction between labour and work is the critique of the economic classification

of daily human activities. The majority of critiques are opposed to valuing human activities based on whether they have a material value in capitalist market conditions, measuring productivity based on its potential to be sold and converted into capital, and dismissing other activities unless they have economic equivalents (Peksan, 2021, p.151). Throughout the study, the term "work" has been used to refer to the category of wage labour, the labour that is worth to pay and considered as productive in capitalist settings. "Labour", on the other hand, is used to express to all of individuals' mental and physical activities which are immanent to them and that they engage in in order to make sense of and maintain their life and existence.

When discussing labour, it is essential to bring up Karl Marx's views on the topic. However, rather than dealing with the contrast between work and labour, Marx uses the term *labour power*. He defines labour power as all of the bodily and mental skills that exist in man's living existence and used to generate use-values. When the owners of labour power freely put their labour power on the market, it becomes a commodity that generates surplus value for capitalists (Marx, 2011, p.170). Marx's position on the subject of *work* is unclear, despite the fact that he stated the distinction between labour and labour power in the statement "whoever says labour power does not speak about labour" (Marx, 2011, p.175). However, he defines a worker as a "seller of labour power," meaning that a person becomes a worker when he sells his labour power to a buyer of labour power and begins to work. He has only the potential of labour power before he starts working. In *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels distinguish between self-activity and the production of material life, and define *work* as the latter. In the capitalist framework, work becomes a means for individuals to obtain the necessary means of subsistence, rather than an inherent part of their self-fulfilment. Marx argued that this alienation intensified as the capitalist mode of production advanced, leading to a growing divide between the worker and the product of their labour, as well as a detachment from the broader societal context in which work takes place. In essence, the capitalist economic order, in Marx's view, created a situation where individuals' labour, which should be a source of personal fulfilment and connection to the community, instead became a mere instrument for survival within a system that prioritizes profit over the holistic well-being of individuals and society. (Marx-Engels, 1999, pp.110-114). The social division of labour, or the limitation of people to activities dictated by external conditions as a natural necessity, draws them into a self-enslaving process. Self-

activity means that in a communist society, individuals will not be restricted to a particular area of activity that prevents them from doing other activities, and everyone will work as much as they want, in whatever area they want, at any time and as much as they want (Marx-Engels, 1999, pp.57-63).

The social meaning and forms of work and labour, similar to human nature, are historically determined rather than being subject to fixed and eternal natural laws. The productive acts of human beings have been conceptualised in various ways and given diverse meanings by different societies in different periods of history and diversely rewarded. For example, labour is driven by reciprocity, rivalry, joy of work, and social approval as an anthropological category; thus, expecting money for labour is not "natural" in prehistoric societies (Polanyi, 1957, p.277).

The literature on Karl Marx's conception of labour contributes to the depth of this subject. Although the raw material of human beings has been the same since the history begins, human existence is constantly being reshaped with historical and social processes according to the Marxist system of thought. Human nature is in a dialectical movement that guides and is shaped by historical processes. The way for individuals to create themselves is through their ability to direct the conditions outside themselves by exhibiting their labour. According to Marx, the effort to make sense of human existence is conditioned on the free realisation of labour. In Marxist language, labour is the "free conscious activity" (Wartenberg, 1982, p.85). Labour is a means of realising the creative capacity that each and every human being possesses, thus, it is a technique of self-realisation for individuals. Labour has been classified in a variety of ways, including productive and unproductive or wage and unpaid labour. Work, on the other hand, may exhibit historical and social variation, and it is not the only means by which individuals might realise themselves. Work isn't the sole means of putting someone's labour to use. What is productive labour implemented under capitalist conditions is the alienated form of work (Méda, 2004, p.110).

What distinguishes work from other types of daily activities is determined by social and historical factors. In a footnote to *Capital* Volume 1 (Marx, 2011, p. 60), by Frederick Engels, "work" refers to labour that creates use-value and is qualitatively evident, whereas "labour" refers to labour that creates value and is measured quantitatively. Based on his statements in *The Wealth of Nations*, Engels criticises Adam Smith's definition of work as

a renunciation of workers' rest, freedom, and happiness. Smith, according to Engels, is referring to the modern form of wage labour.

According to Richard Sennett, Marx sees labour as the effort of humanity to shape and develop nature, and it reveals the effective being of people. In *Marx's Concept of Man* (2004), Sennett describes Marx's perspective on the history of humanity as the process of human beings' self-creation through productive activities, which means freely realising their labour. The process of self-creation is the collection of experiences that emerge as a result of putting their labour into action (p.24). Through labour processes, the outside world gets an appearance that people can affect. Humanity is a part of nature (which is outside the world of an individual, contains other individuals, the material and abstract world, the society and all natural resources), but is also the mere entity that shapes nature according to their needs. The being of individuals lies not only in their existence, but also in the capacity to process and develop nature, the objective world around them. According to Erich Fromm, for Marx, work is individuals' active relationship with nature, the construction of a new world, including their own creation. However, as private property and division of labour becomes more widespread, labour loses its nature as an expression of individuals' abilities; labour and its products come to exist independently of them, their will, and their planning (2004, p.46), and this is where the contrast between labour and work becomes evident.

In fact, Marx appears to have left his views on this subject somewhat ambiguous. In a footnote in his book, Edward Granter asserts that an etymological discussion of the distinction between the usage of the terms labour and work in Marx is largely irrelevant. The key distinction is between labour/work and capitalist labour/capitalist work (2009, p.52). Even if it remains a source of confusion whether Marx projects "a liberation from labour or the liberation of labour (as human essence)" (Berki, 1979, p.54); it is beyond dispute that he saw work—or labour—as central to both individuals as humans and the historical development of the human species. Marx defines labour as "the existential bedrock of human existence, the material activity through which humans create themselves and society," and it is "the material activity through which humans create themselves and society." (Granter, 2009, p.52-53). As a result, Marx does not argue for the elimination of work, but rather of meaningful and free labour. Wage labour transforms workers into wage slaves who sell some of their time and use the rest to increase the capital that employs

them. Thus, if people grasp the world with all of their productive actions and create themselves by producing, when they find their life stuck in the “work to stay alive” mentality, they get deprived of the process of self-realisation, and are condemned to live an unfulfilled life. Types of labour different from wage labour are not considered productive and wage labour claims hegemony over all labour types and processes. However, for an individual's happiness and self-creation, labour must be free, and existing working conditions are far from offering this satisfaction.

Throughout history, the concept of work has always existed, but working conditions and the meaning attributed to work have always evolved in response to changing economic situations, whether in the form of slavery, serfdom, or wage labour. Many intellectuals have highlighted the role of free implementation of labour in constructing the individual's world of meaning. While some suggested that the agony of work should be altogether abandoned, others underlined the importance of meaningful work and free labour.

2.2.1.1. *Species-Being and Alienation*

The collectivity of the production relationships of the individuals in the society affects the social structure, the form of the relations between people, the institutional and political structure, in other words, almost everything about the daily life of individuals, from the collective mind-set to their spiritual universe and intellectual and artistic expressions, is influenced by production relations. Today's economic organisation has squeezed the labour implementation activity —hence the process of self-creation of the individual— into the concept of “work” and reduced it to a single type of activity; the effort to make money to meet the needs. Production is never a mere relationship between nature and people to meet societies' primary needs. Individuals carry pieces of their existence in the abstract and concrete assets they produce. Tearing away people from the assets of their labour, leaving the value determination of a product to a mechanism external to the individuals themselves (which is the market) or taking away their decision-making capacity about production processes are all conceptualised as alienation or estrangement in Marx's writings (Marx, 1988, pp. 69-84). The collectivity of the production relations constitutes the economic structure of the society, the foundation on which arises a legal, political and cultural

superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The economic structure of society is the concrete foundation for a legal and political superstructure that corresponds to particular forms of social consciousness. The social, political, and intellectual life cycles are all influenced by the way of formation of material life (Marx, 1979, p.25). The mode of production of material life conditions shapes the general process of social, political, cultural and intellectual life.

The ability to see oneself as an effective being in nature, society, and one's own life is a fundamental condition for self-realisation and fulfilment. In the process where individuals create themselves, the free relationship they have with the nature is the activity of objectification of their essence. While individuals freely implement their labour, they both realise their own potential and identify themselves through the product they created in their relationship with the nature. At the end of this process, individuals will have created themselves in a relationship they reveal by implementing their labour. Labour, which is implemented freely and consciously is the way for human beings to self-create and live a meaningful life. According to Marx, human beings are a combination of two characteristics; the first is the raw material of humanity which is abstract, natural and stable for each human being and the second is the social feature of them which can affect their environment and they are also affected by the interaction between them. The combination of these two characteristics is named as species-being. Species-being is the productive existence of people; the essence that creates meaning for human beings (Marx, 1988 pp. 75-78). His early studies, which examine the problems caused by the individual's inability to have full control over free labour processes during production activity, shed light on many current problems humanity struggles with.

The concept of “species-being” first appeared in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscript of 1844* (1988) as *Gattungswesen* in German. Marx's early work focused on the philosophy and ideas on human nature which will lay the basis of economic analysis in his later works. According to Marx, species-being is what determines the essence of a human which means that a person is a combination of both an individual and a social being at the same time. A person is a species-being because of their cognitive abilities and the activity of life, also is a social being because of all their humane activities, all the interactions between the person and the outside world (which constitutes nature). In his later works on capitalism, he extends the concept of species-being by examining it into

production relations and introduces four types of alienation as a result. The alienation from one's species-being is one of the four types, stands for the deprivation of the power of humanity to collectively transform their natural consciousness to a life activity itself. Alienation is the loss of species-being and what makes human life meaningful is to realise this feature and to act in line with fulfilment of it (Marx, 1988, p.78).

Production for the market is one of the main grounds on which the concept of alienation becomes visible. By implementing their labour into the product and consequently objectifying their existence in a product and leaving its value to be decided by the market relations, people not only alienate the product they created, they also alienate themselves, as biological species, to nature, and to other individuals. While examining whether solidarity economies have the potential they promise, it is important to examine the deprivation forms that the capitalist work and labour categories have left on the working class. The labour market is a mechanism that determines the market price of an individual's labour according to the point where quantity of production and the prices are optimised. The appropriation of the commodity produced by individuals and letting the market mechanism decide the value of their time and efforts reduces them also to a commodity for the market.

According to Harvey, Marx considers the process of reproduction as an activity ground which will allow the worker to vigorously return to production repeatedly everyday which is also a blessing for capitalist, because these activities create a large portion of the demand in the market. In this ground, not only wage goods are consumed, but also social relations are created, class struggles are shaped, institutions and organisations where the politics of daily life such as gender, patriarchy, kinship and education are emerged. There are also many other types of hidden or unpaid labour created while supporting the reproduction of the labour such as house or child and elderly care (Harvey, 2018, pp.14-15).

2.2.2. Evolution of Work

Wage labour, which today is the dominant form of work, has been shaped by the historical and social processes. Some prerequisites had to be met for individuals to become ready to sell their labour and turn into paid labourers; traditional and social structures had to be dissolved and new ones had to be reinstated to achieve these transformations. This

process has been driven by years of colonial activities, wars, appropriation, fencing, seizure and political pressures in the early stages of capitalism. In the primitive phase of capitalism, these preconditions were unlikely to be met without threat of hunger or violence. However, these conditions are built by more different and complex factors nowadays. In *The Great Transformation*, Karl Polanyi argues that for the capitalist order to emerge and exist, *the organic society*¹⁹ structure that does not allow the individual to starve had to be dissolved (Polanyi, 2001, p.173). Harvey includes a similar argument, preventing labour from accessing natural resources like land, air and water through methods such as fencing and privatisation is vital in the process of creating wage labour (Harvey, 2018, p.36).

According to mainstream economics, the value of a commodity begins to be measured in terms of money from the moment it enters into exchange in the market. However, in order for this exchange to materialise, some conditions must be met. There must be an adequate amount of desire or need and the purchasing power, which is the demand, for the commodity. But these conditions do not always occur spontaneously or immediately. The historical background of capitalism in creating these conditions is quite complex and long-term, spanning into centuries. The emergence of the market economy necessitated the transformation of all social structures in order to separate labour from human existence and subordinate it to market conditions. “To separate labour from other activities of life and to subject it to the laws of the market was to annihilate all organic forms of existence and to replace them by a different type of organisation, an atomistic and individualistic one” (Polanyi, 2001, p.171). The part of this process is to destroy non-contractual relationships (such as kinship, neighbourhood, profession, and creed) and prevent their re-establishment by claiming that they limit freedoms —as liberals do. The mechanisms that colonialists applied to destroy traditional institutions in prehistoric societies, were the forerunners of the process that provided the conditions for the development of “willing worker” of the nineteenth century. The first thing Western world taught the people of the “primitive” communities they conquered was the fear of hunger. Polanyi claims that until the 16th century Europe, and practically all social organisations,

¹⁹ What is meant by the term *organic society*, are the communities based their order upon the behaviours such as solidarity, unity, interdependence and mutual aid which arises from the personal differences in nature.

were free from the threat of individual starvation. It is ironic that these self-sufficient communities are considered economically underdeveloped. The early labourers despised factory life and felt degraded under torture, just like the natives, who were faced with artificially generated food scarcity and torture. However, by implementing the fear of hunger to secure an infinite supply of "willing workers", the final stage was accomplished and the organic society that did not allow its members to starve had vanished (Polanyi, 2001, pp.171-173). While capitalism targets the bedrock of all forms of solidarity in the world, the fundamental need for today's economic, environmental and humanitarian factors to recover is the reconstruction of these structures.

Richard Sennett, in his book *The Corrosion of Character* (1998), compares the early stages of capitalism's development with its subsequent 50 years. Fordist production, the basic mode of production after the emergence of capitalism, is a system in which production time is controlled almost by dividing it into minutes and each worker works with a series of movements that repeat throughout the day. Within this system, characteristics such as stability, continuity, company loyalty and community spirit gained importance and were seen as the key to success. As the mode of production became more flexible with advanced capitalism, it is emphasised that routine is an evil of old capitalism and that flexibility offers workers a life of greater freedom. With new capitalism²⁰, new virtues and the qualities that employers seek in their employees are adaptation to flexible working hours, stress management in uncertainty, adaptability in tasks that are not specified in a job description; and success now depends on how much a person can bend. Flexibility, which was a prescription for the pain of routine, created additional pains with all the risks and uncertainties it brings (Sennett, 1998, pp. 33-50).

The Fordist mode of production increased production rapidly. Post-Fordism is the period in which there was a strong need to create highly dynamic needs in order to resurrect markets that have reached supply and demand saturation. This process can be illustrated by the change of fashion in the clothing industry and the introduction of a new

²⁰ The economy which has been developing since the 70s, is marked with technology integrated production, globalization, flexible bureaucracies, breaking down of the welfare states and less secure working conditions (Sennett, 1997).

one every season. The creation of new needs periodically causes labour and production processes to become more flexible. This necessitates the design of rapidly changing labour class and flexible business processes that can adapt to flexible job descriptions, flexible working hours, and short contract periods. According to Andre Gorz, one of the most significant features of the post-Fordist period is a shift in workers' sense of belonging. Workers in Fordist production continue to do repetitive and simple tasks without controlling the work processes, participating in decision-making mechanisms, or using any creativity or talents, which is far from creating a sense of belonging in the work they do in a work day for them, and this has facilitated worker organisation and unionisation to create a belonging between workers. In the post-Fordist period, workers have more autonomy, a feeling of being included in decision-making processes with “brainstormings” and allowing the use of their creativity. Multiskilled workers who can adapt to the company's flexible production model now see the company's goals as their own; they now put “themselves” in their work. Adopting with the company and the company culture fill the sense of belonging and identity gap created in social life by long and flexible working hours. The sense that the company is “one big family” allows for identity and self-construction of workers. The worker, who used to sell their labour power, now sells their entire existence—which is their species-being (Gorz, 1999, pp. 27-43).

It is considered that the work ethic that drove people to participate in work, began to disintegrate by the end of the twentieth century. Work ethic, according to Zygmunt Bauman, is the process emerged with the necessity of inclusion of large masses in the production process, by which practitioners of the new economy and legislators of the new state indoctrinate work as a social and moral duty to the working class. As a consequence, all members of the society are encouraged to embrace labour with enthusiasm and choose a life devoted to the labour despite the fact that labour is unavoidable, a life devoted to labour means no choice, inaccessibility of choice and prohibition of choice (Bauman, 2005, p.19). Work ethic has been a significant instrument for producing the producers throughout the industrialization process (Bauman, 2005, p.16). However, many sectors and professions become unqualified as a result of the incorporation of technological developments into production processes and because of the increased flexibility and insecurity in the workplace brought on by neoliberal globalisation, workers become increasingly dissatisfied with their jobs. As the pleasure of work and having a job

diminishes, the work ethic begins to deteriorate. The satisfaction of being useful and fulfilling their responsibilities towards society, themselves, their families, and the environment by working is lost for the employees who were drawn to the factories by work ethic. Since the pressure mechanism has been exposed which is covered before by work ethic, alternative mechanisms must be established to ensure that workers continue to work in routine and overwhelming jobs. Consumption, according to Bauman, satisfies this requirement. The process of creating purpose and meaning in people's lives has shifted from producing to consuming. People's incentive to work in jobs that do not provide meaning for their life is majorly rooted in their need to consume in the consumption society. In this situation, the job's worth is determined by how much joy it brings. Jobs that bring pleasure and fulfilment is valued by society, whereas work that is routine and without innovation is regarded as worthless (Bauman, 2005, pp. 10, 41, 51).

2.2.3. Consumerism and Work/Leisure Time Dichotomy

The fear of hunger indicated by Polanyi still exists in the voluntary fulfilment of work and the effort to sell labour and time for a particular wage, but it is now realised through far more complex circumstances. The most essential of these are the work ethic which is covered in the previous chapter, and consumerism. The concept of work divides an individual's entire productive life into work and leisure time. The major problem for the productive individual has become managing the time between work and leisure, and as work time becomes increasingly oppressive, making the most of leisure time has become the arena where consumerism emerges. The work ethic has a considerable impact on daily life in modern societies, and it is also successfully promoted by consumerist ideology. The more dissatisfied workers are at work, the more reliant their leisure time is on consumption, which is essentially the time when workers will meet their self-care needs for reproduction, resulting in the creation of a consumer from a worker. Consequently, consumer culture is a source of psychological misery but also one of the main sources of environmental plunder.

The concept of alienation is one of the main reasons for the set of emotions that postmodern individuals colloquially expressed as “existential void”. Individuals who are deprived of the process of self-creation by freely realising their labour squeeze themselves

into reproduction activities in their leisure time, which is the desirable world of consumption goods. Workers, who have evolved into consumers, are the foundation of the existing economic system and ensure its long-term viability, as well as their own exploitability. The process of humans becoming labourers is the same as their transition into consumers, both of which include the loss of their essence of being.

Capitalism caused a distinction between the commodity production activities and the social reproduction activities. The work time-leisure time dichotomy ensures that workers are as fit and ready for work as possible in the workplace by satisfying their needs for relaxation, entertainment, nutrition, and self-care during their leisure time. As a compensation for having to be present and productive during work hours, individuals who live their life separated into work hours and leisure time, indulge themselves in consumption goods. Money comes to the working class in the form of wages, and at the end of the cycle, it returns to the capital circulation process as demand. Reproduction activities that generate demand are essential for capital to survive (Harvey, 2017, pp.14-15). Inevitably, leisure activities are far from self-directed and autonomous due to the specialisation in manipulation sectors (such as advertising and marketing) to manage wants and requirements on the demand side.

Adorno, Horkheimer and Marcuse, among other Frankfurt School theorists, concluded that the spheres of consumption and leisure are increasingly resembling the area of work. Gorz went so far as to say that the leisure space becomes a part of the work space, and that in this situation, criticising the work necessitates criticising the variables that guide leisure time (Granter, 2009, p.182). Individual consumer behaviour is now directed through false requirements created by tools such as popular culture, mass media, technology, and social media in the leisure space. Individuals become ineffective both in work space and beyond as a result of the emergence of consumption culture (Peksan, 2021, p.161-162). Capitalist work conditions are at the root of this disconnectedness.

Erich Fromm defines alienation as “the negation of productivity” (2009, p.42). Neither commerce, money use, profit orientation, nor wage labour alone make capitalism such a unique economic system. It is known that all these categories existed in some form or another prior to capitalism at some point in history. What distinguishes capitalism is that wage labour has become the most widespread and dominant form of employment, with profit becoming the fundamental goal of labour production. But these are not the only

characteristics that distinguish capitalism. The essence of capitalism is the complete separation of the labourer from the design, monitoring, and management of the production process, as well as from the ownership of the generated product. This constitutes the roots of workers' alienation. This is the essence of alienation and it creates the feeling for labourers that their existence and life also do not belong to them. The unwillingness to work, deficiency of creativity and energy, inefficient production and unhappiness and some forms of depression arise from alienation (Fromm, 2004, p.47-49). Reducing production activities to work hours and human productivity to their success in their work means transforming individuals into tools for the continuation of capitalist economic conditions. This process also means the commodification of human labour.

Neoliberal policies and capitalist profit and accumulation systems have brought the income generation activities to a point that affect the whole spheres of life. Current forms of production relations and labour processes have effects spreading into social relations and even leisure activities which mostly are determined or shaped by the form of work life. The social class which a labourer belongs to not only determines their work time activities, but also determines the type of their reproduction activities.

Production activity is the heart of the process of an individual's self-creation. The existence of the production activity itself serves the individuals to define their own existence and the meaning of their lives. While elaborating the "production activity" it would be helpful to discuss its general definition beginning from an industrial or artisanal mode of production to a broader sense by including intellectual and artistic production, maintenance and services, products of human relations (e.g. solidarity is a product of human relations, or languages are the products to simplify the communication), and even the activities undertaken for the care of a child, which stands for the production of a human being. The efforts not only meet the primary needs such as nutrition and shelter, but also the mental, intellectual and artistic expressions. Even the efforts to develop an understanding in social relations are included in the scope of the production activity. Within the scope of this study, production is defined as an activity immanent to the individuals, defining and determining their existence in the world; the entire activity of putting labour into practice. As such, production is a larger concept than working for a company, being employed or being or not in a business relationship. Even cooking and feeding one's self and socialising with friends is production. As a result, there is no such

thing as a human life separate from any form of production, and no such thing as unproductive labour.

When it is preceded by the notion that production activity is a tool for human expression and realisation, the negative effects of implying work as a renunciation of the spheres of rest, freedom, fulfilment, and happiness become clear. Capitalist production relations oblige the individual to sell their labour time as if it is a commodity in order to earn their living. This causes them to lose control of what, when or how they produce. The time they spend while producing the product and the labour they implement does not belong to the labourer and the value of their product and their labour time is decided by the market.

One of the major failures of neoliberal development strategies was the externalisation and enhancement of the environmental costs caused by the promotion of economic liberalisation, financialisation, privatisation, commodification, industrialization and consumerism. The potential of solidarity economies lies in a more inclusive and diversified developmentalism and its actors' opposition to consumption culture and seeking strategies to minimise consumption or to consume more responsibly, as well as proposing a new way of producing and working. Solidarity economies are concerned with commitment to clear principles and values connected with solidarity and collaboration with those in need, people who share similar identities and goals in the pursuit of social and environmental justice, or with nature itself. For example, solidarity economy practises respect Mother Earth's rights and embraces the notion of *Buen Vivir*²¹ which is Spanish for “good living” (Utting et al., 2014, p.5-9). Solidarity economies challenge unjust and unsustainable capitalist practises by reorganising the economy to be driven by human well-being, community development, and environmental preservation rather than economic growth, consumerism, and profit (Elias, 2019, p.2).

Consumer and producer cooperatives are the most concrete ground of solidarity economy, where we can observe how the environmental effects of unconscious consumerism can be reduced by changing consumption habits. Consumer cooperatives, of

²¹ The Andean traditional philosophy of living in peace with others, as well as Mother Earth, is gaining traction and influence (Utting et al., 2014, p.9), can be loosely translated as “good living” or “well living”.

which Turkey also has many examples, aim to strengthen the relationship between the producer and the consumer by reducing the intermediaries between local producers and the consumer, while also providing a fairer and safer wage for the producer and more affordable prices for the consumer. Another purpose of this method, also known as community-supported agriculture, is to reduce the carbon footprint by reducing the intermediaries. Given its emphasis on a fair and reasonable allocation of resources, progressive goals, and a broad understanding of societal growth, solidarity economies can be an ideal setting for the formation of a sustainable consumer community. By reducing supply chains, solidarity economies can promote sustainable consumption through more localised production and consumption networks (Petropoulou, 2018, p.76). Another example is *Nontropo*, a Greek Urban Consumer and Solidarity Cooperative that aspires to create new consumer-producer relationships and encourage self-sufficient communities. The cooperative began as a result of community action, shortly after the 2011 Greek anti-austerity movement, and was founded by a group of "like-minded" people interested in sustainable production and consumption. It is generally opposed to capitalism and its principles, such as utilitarianism, competitiveness, consumerism, and commercialization, while sympathising with radical social movements such as the 'de-growth' movement. As a result, Nontropo adopts the practises of an alternative socio-economic organisation, in which food is seen as a vehicle of change rather than a commodity. Nontropo purchases food and other goods directly from producers who have been chosen based on ethical and solidarity values, the most essential of which is respect for people and the environment. Nontropo has eliminated the intermediaries in the food system and shortened the food supply chain by establishing a direct relationship with producers, ensuring their ability to receive local food at low costs while also providing farmers with a fair return on their investment and labour. Small, traditional producers are given priority since they are at risk of extinction due to large agro-industrial farms. Solidarity and trust relationship is formed and reproduced on the basis of a personal contact with the farmer. Nontropo's operations also protected their producers from the crisis cycles of the global capitalist system by its production and consumption ideology (Petropoulou, 2018, pp.80-87).

2.2.4. Erosion of Solidarity in the Workplace

The nature of relations between workers and the way work is organised is one of the factors for free implementation of labour. The demand on individuals to maintain steady work output presents itself as the force to maintain the profit and productivity standards. The absence of the human element from work relationships not only creates a work time-leisure time duality, but also turns workers into productive tools, degrading the nature of production and creativity. Rather than flexing, practises like production flexibility have made employee relationships even more competitive. While workplace performance anxiety increases employee rivalry, it also causes the dissolution of solidarity and causes human relations to become benefit-oriented and lacking of support. All personal activities and workplace relations become meaningless if there is no monetary value attached to them.

In its traditional form, the workplace is the space where individuals spend most of their time and have the opportunity to socialise. In the workplace, even minor forms of informal interactions which are so critical to develop solidarity, increase the likelihood of people taking care of each other. Humanitarian values like connection and trust are the basis for solidarity. Success of the struggle to improve or preserve the conditions of the workers and of all their collective action depends on this solidarity built on, which is diminishing in the workplace. Today, workplace-based collective action, which is generally called organic solidarity, faces many new and largely unacknowledged and unmeasured threats caused by reorganisation of work and new technologies (Richardson, 2008, pp.70-73). The competitive environment created by managerial implementations to increase profit and productivity damages the solidarity between workers. Moreover, methods to increase effectiveness like automation, speed-up, increased monitoring and the overall digitalization of the production process led to a significant downsizing of workplaces without any decrease in output. Often the expectation of constantly being online, caused by technological advances, intervenes in the private life of the employees and shrinks their social activities out of work. It is also ironic that as communication technologies developed, real human interaction decreased. Innovative uses of technology can connect large numbers of people, but it also decreases the informal workplace interactions that are critical to solidarity development (Richardson, 2008, pp.74-75).

Isolation of the emotional world of individuals and the essence of human beings from the workplace under professionalism is another name for desensitisation and immorality. It is not possible for a human being to be just an employee at work. Individuals determine their status in the society with their position in the workplace, establish friendships at work, bring the tensions or happiness they experience in their daily life into the workplace—that is, they maintain other ways of self-realisation at work. Depersonalisation of work causes unhappiness, dissatisfaction, depression and irregularities like mobbing in hierarchy that praises the behaviour of competing and surpassing the other to survive. Concepts such as altruism, empathy and solidarity are not encouraged by capitalism and described as "irrational". In environments where ambition, competition, and self-interest are affirmed and built-up the only way to survive, individuals who find it difficult to go along in such behaviours are seen as weak and naive. Institutionalised face of this behaviour in the workplace is mobbing and it is used in the management culture of many companies and implemented professionally by its executive staff.

Co-operativa La Nueva Esperanza (The Cooperative of The Renewed Hope) is a recovered balloon factory in Buenos Aires, Argentina. After declaring bankruptcy caused by challenging economic conditions of the country and poor management the firm, Global S.A., was taken over by its employees. The effort to restore the factory forced workers and one of the management staff to get to know each other. They learned to engage with each other in new ways during the ten months they spent in a tent guarding the machinery. Despite their differences and the new obstacles they faced, they were eventually able to work together to construct a coop. The initial hierarchies have been replaced by a hierarchical structure that appears to be more stable. The general assembly of all coop members, on the other hand, performs as checks and balances over that hierarchy. This new structure allows for and explains significant changes in workers' subjectivity as they attempt to transition from salaried employees to co-operative members who are totally responsible for the management of their workplace. Previously, management was in charge of discipline, which was kept apart from the workforce. Instead, since the takeover, discipline and productivity issues have been addressed by the assembly, which establishes general working hours and productivity standards (Monteagudo, 2008, pp. 175-179). Monteagudo states that the first thing that caught her attention during the participatory

observation process she spent working with the workers at the factory was the dialogue and friendship between the workers. The amount of personal information that circulated among the workers, as well as the numerous connections they had developed, appears to be their bonding strength amid difficult times, and the coop's success. Workers who had worked at the factory for 35 years before the takeover said that while they worked for a boss, they never spoke to each other. In most cases, they didn't even say "hi" to one another, and managers were forbidden from speaking with anyone working at the facility. There are no strangers in the factory now, no salaried workers following a boss's orders, but rather human beings who know, love, fight, help, and respect one another. When someone in the factory becomes ill, these relationships become more active and caring. When one of the coop's founding members was diagnosed with two types of cancer, the coop took swift action. They helped him pay for physicians and medicines (which was required because they still didn't have health insurance), and, probably more crucially, they took turns caring for him at the hospital during the night, and they physically and financially assisted him in building a better home for himself (Monteagudo, 2008, pp. 204-205).

2.3. The Market Society

Throughout history, different human communities have regulated their economic lives with a wide variety of laws shaped by the societies' unique culture, geography, and local demands of the communities. In addition to being governed by principles distinct from those regulating the contemporary economy, every community possesses an economic system involving interactions among production, consumption, and distribution. Furthermore, it includes a market where individuals can engage in trade to fulfil their needs. However, in the contemporary neoliberal ideology, the market has a different meaning than it does in anthropology, where people naturally barter (Peksan, 2021, p.229). A market economy (or a market society) differs in that the entire economic activity is determined by the market's operation, which is largely independent of the primary means of production (land, labour, and capital) are also commodities that could be traded (Buğra, 1995, p.49).

Due to the processes of neoliberalism and globalization, economic diversity has diminished, and the world has been homogenized under a singular economic model. This

has constrained our conceptualization of an economy primarily to capitalism. The process of expanding neoliberalism and capitalism to every corner of the globe is the process of globalisation. As a result, all societies will have a united economic system, all diversity will vanish, and the entire planet will become a capital accumulation exploitation zone. This condition may be extremely advantageous for capital, but it comes at a significant cost to nature and humanity. Neoliberalism opposes self-sufficient economies and societies. Consequently, solidarity economies that prioritize local organization serve as a critique of both neoliberalism and market-oriented economies.

The appropriation of local resources and deprivation of the self-sufficiency and autonomy of societies is called globalism. Even the most secluded societies in the most remote corners of the world are affected by globalisation enabling capital to penetrate into distant corners of the world and into all forms of relations, which play a key role in the rapid and effective expansion of the neoliberalisation process. Neoliberalism, the expanded and intensified version of liberalism, imposes the necessity of determining all aspects of social life, including human relations —not just certain aspects of economic life such as wealth distribution or price determination. Neoliberalism is a philosophy and an attitude, not simply an economic structure. Neoliberal philosophy has also an answer to the classical philosophers' question of "what makes human life valuable?" Accordingly, humanity exists for the market and humans are born to compete. Being ahead of competition is the only factor that determines the value of an individual. The extension of market principles to non-economic areas of daily life, makes all people entrepreneurs who manage their life and maximise the benefits for themselves. Individuals who compete in the labour market to increase their benefit, choose all their behaviour, beliefs, acquaintances, hobbies and even their partners according to their future goals. In the labour market the contract terms (which make labourers a private property of company owners) are shortened and the frequency of contract renewal is increasing, making individuals feel that they are working in more precarious conditions. Productivity pressure is increasing among those who are forced to compete in superhuman conditions (Treanor, 2005). While globalism holds the task of globalising the capital and market phenomena and establishing a uniform economic model in all corners of the world; neoliberalism has undertaken the task of transforming this mechanism into human nature through cultural structures.

According to the neoclassical economic theory, the main motivation of individuals is to maximize their benefits and pleasure. It results in the best interest of the whole society if individuals act in the direction of their self-interest within the capitalist market conditions. However, many communities have led their economic lives with values, diverse actions and motivations other than individual motivations like reciprocity, trust and altruism, which mainstream economics fails to understand. Understanding the economic life of prehistoric human societies is particularly important since solidarity economies follow some of these societies' traditions and are also a part of an economic diversity that has persisted throughout history. Rather than glorifying prehistoric and pre-capitalist systems, the goal here is to extend and diversify the viewpoint on what is economic.

The anthropologist Marcel Mauss studies Amerindian concepts such as the *potlatch*²² or *potluck*, as well as Oceanian concepts such as the *kula*²³, as pre-market services that rely on mutual obligations and reciprocity, which are the foundation of solidarity economies' economic activity. Economic transaction in these communities is more than just the trade of products between two people. Duties belong to communities, not to individuals, and obligations are exchanged in the form of feasts, rituals, mutual courtesy, alliances, marriages, and military duty, rather than in the form of wealth or property. The distribution of wealth is merely one part of a much larger and more comprehensive social contract; it is a system of total services (Mauss, 2010, pp. 77-78). A major part of the daily cycle of economic activity in archaic civilizations is made up of human behaviour that modern

²² Potlatch, introduced for the first time by Franz Boas, is a mutual gift-giving ritual. In the annual grand festivities or funeral and wedding ceremonies organised by the Pacific Northwest tribes, all assets were revealed and shared equally, and the excess food was destroyed. It also sets the hierarchy between rival tribes and thus a possible war is prevented. The failure of a tribe to return a gift with a higher value is a humiliation and puts them under an obligation for the next occasion (Mauss, 2010, p.27).

²³ Kula is first identified by Bronislaw Malinowski in the Trobriand Islands, larger-scale system kula, in-fact is a larger-scale and advanced version of potlatch. It is a highly complex and ceremonial trade organisation dependent on the inter-island circulation of bracelets and necklaces made of precious stones and seashells. kula means circle, participants sail to exchange their kula valuables and visit each island in a simultaneously clockwise and an anticlockwise motion. Far from being a simple exchange of jewellery, joining the kula is the highest rank accessible to those among the tribes, the main purpose of great travel, adventure and life itself (Mauss, 2010, p.113).

economics considers exceptions when analysing economic behaviour, because it cannot be explained in terms of supply-demand relationships. For example, the kula system essentially works on "items" that have no utility or material worth, bringing wealth to the individual only through storing and saving, and then gifting to someone else in the next period (Mauss, 2010, pp.116-117).

Food, people, property, land, labour, services, priestly functions, and interpersonal commitments are all "things" that must be passed through and exchanged on a regular basis. They exist for the purpose of balancing accounts and are continuously moving between different hierarchies from person to person, and clan to clan. Polynesians believe that everything in circulation contains a piece of the original owner's spiritual essence, as well as a piece of each person to whom it is transferred. Thus, the movement of items creates a relationship between the people or communities who possess it. This relationship is the foundation of the law in these civilizations. Receiving or accepting anything from someone entails accepting a piece of that person's spiritual essence as well as a legal commitment to them (Mauss, 2010, pp. 90 - 92).

In comparison to today, concepts of money, property, and measures of value were similarly complex and unique across countries and civilizations. Stringed seashell coins are valued in the hand span of the gift giver in Melanesia. Alternatively, the value of a piece of jewellery can be determined by how many times it has changed hands or how many islands it has travelled. It is undeniable that this is insufficient for the creation of a unit and the measurement of worth. However, inside their system, this money notion is not less transparent, formal, or stable than what we currently use as money, but it is based on different values. In Kula, objects that are exchanged never become the owner's property. It is only kept till the following kula to be recirculated. (Mauss, pp.116-118, 2010). Kula is also an opportunity for all other ordinary exchanges to meet the basic needs named *gimwali* (p. 127). While bargaining is disapproved in kula, it is widespread in *gimwali* (p. 115). There is a time period, known as *kere-kere*, during which no one can decline any of the gifts that are offered (p. 135). *Vaygua*, the money-like objects, are extremely different from the modern understanding of money in nature. These are mystical artefacts that are sacred and almost all have their own story. Uniting the items and their respective owners during the exchange, turning them into partners, is believed to have the potential to bring together even rival parties (p. 124).

The ultimate goal of all of these interactions is to maintain some sort of social order. Wars are prevented by establishing a hierarchy among communities, communities are protected from disasters by committing sacrifices to gods, and marriages are guaranteed by presents given to spouses by making vows, sacrificing, or exhibiting authority. Sacrifice, which is in fact an exchange agreement in which something is expected in return by giving gifts to the gods, is the most well-known gift-giving ceremony that has survived until today. On the Celebes Islands, the landowner must first pay the gods for a tree before cutting it down (Mauss, 2010, pp.101-104). Similarly, charity had the same meaning in Muslim culture as *zedaq* in Hebrew; it meant justice. The money that the wealthy pay to the poor to save their assets also assures justice (p.105). Not rejecting the youngsters with masks who go door to door and ask for flour, sugar, and eggs in an Old Russian tradition, *Koliada*, has become a European festival (p.100). Samoans trade personal belongings between men and women in accordance with their marriage contract (p.82). A good Anatolian example is not to return the plate empty, when a neighbour offers food. Mauss also adds that greetings, hugging, and reuniting after extended separations are akin to gift exchange ceremonies. He discusses how the nature of commerce brings individuals, souls, and emotions together (p. 110). All these types of ceremonies are the foundations of traditions that are still practised today. Law, morality, religion, social order, emotions, souls, interpersonal relations, and economics are inextricably intertwined, in stark contrast to neoclassical economics where markets are free of all irrational behaviour and from all socio-political and cultural layers of society.

Solidarity economy models, which aspire to function outside of current economic dynamics around the world, are being inspired by historical precedents and integrate numerous approaches that exist outside of rational economic behaviour. According to Grasseni's ethnographic fieldwork in the solidarity networks of Italy and the United States, food potlucks were an important part of these networks' monthly meetings. She states that they would launch comfortable but devoted dialogues about novel kinds of relational and economic richness, inspired by a reading or each other's work, through this symbolic but also extremely practical form of food exchange (Grasseni, 2020, p.164). According to a study of Boston's food solidarity economy movement, which encompasses all stages of a food system, the movement begins with shared ownership of land. After years of persistent efforts, residents in a Boston neighbourhood successfully secured more than 60 acres of

land through eminent domain. Subsequently, they establish a non-profit, community-run trust to oversee the land, aiming to ensure long-term benefits for the neighbourhood. After securing the land, the products cultivated on this land by the locals of the neighbourhood from gardening activities are circulated through barter and gifting. Furthermore, two of the solidarity network's member institutions are moving toward a non-profit agriculture model. A cafe on the other side of the solidarity network provides local products, serves the homeless, trains ex-convicts and young people in baking, and has regular pay-what-you-can activities (Loh & Agyeman, 2019, pp. 217-219). The Karaburun collective adopts the *yarıcılık* (sharecropping) method to produce olive oil from the olives they harvest in the Aegean region, which was founded by a group of university students without a boss or capital. The Karaburun collective claims that because many olive trees cannot be harvested due to the Aegean's intense migration from rural to urban areas, local landowners are supportive of the formation of such an organisation and young people's interest in agriculture, and that landowners occasionally give them all the products they harvest. The collective, which sells some of its products, also bartering to meet some of their needs (Medyascope, Nov. 22, 2018).

2.4. Taking Back “The Economy”²⁴

It is critical to push the boundaries of our imagination in order to comprehend solidarity economies. Probably the greatest triumph of capitalism has been the assumption that it is an ultimate and permanent system that has infiltrated the minds of humanity and limited the boundaries of our thinking to such an extent. Solidarity economies strive to establish production and exchange relations that are independent of the value created by alienated labour, therefore, it is a way of doing the politics of the post-capitalist economy. According to Harvey, the post-capitalist economy is best outlined by all the effort made by these kinds of *heterotopic spaces*, by adopting Foucault's terminology (Harvey, 2018 p.89). The term *heterotopia* is derived to describe plurality and a fundamental disorder. Contrary

²⁴ J. K. Gibson-Graham criticise the representation of capitalism as the inevitably natural form of the economy in their book *A Postcapitalist Politics*, and propose taking back the economy as a network of relationships and interactions in a variety of forms (2006, p. 54).

to the fantastic structure of utopias based on desires and unrequited aspirations, heterotopias are distinct spaces of real practices. The concept is used to free the human imagination from the world of norms and systems, to identify the places where plurality, diversity, marginality and the alternatives can flourish after understanding the heterogeneity in the reality of human history (Harvey, 2008, p.225-226).

It is possible to argue that J.K Gibson Graham also contributes to the subject through their discussion of economic diversity. They termed the dominant economic discourse as "capitaliocentrism," which assigns a positive value to all activities related with capitalist economic activities while assigning a lower value to all other production and distribution relations (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.56). Diverse economies, as detailed in the literature review chapter of this study, provide a framework for reintroducing and debating economic activity that are regarded as informal, marginal, or alternative to the arena of "what is economy," as well as exploring post-capitalist alternatives.

In this section of the study, it was intended to include opinions that are fundamentally opposed to mainstream economics teaching in academia. Solidarity economies are the concrete practices of "what if a possibility materialises". The strength of this possibility's transformative potential will be determined by the historical process. Many economic counter discourses have emerged from alternative strands of economic thinking, such as classical political economy, economic anthropology, sociology, and working class, activism, socialism, cooperativism, and local sustainability movements, to name a few. The mission of reading economics for the difference, not for the domination, is what Gibson-Graham refers to the efforts to make visible "non-credible" behaviours that are not accepted in the economic field and to define them as a part of the economic field (Gibson-Graham, 2006, pp.57-59). This mission involves describing an alternative economic identity around a nodal point (Gibson-Graham, 2006, p.78).

3. DATA, METHOD, ANALYSIS

Despite the potential risk of remaining an "outsider" within the field of economics, ethnographic methods were chosen for this study's research based on the subject's characteristics. Ethnography has its roots in nineteenth-century Western anthropology, when ethnography was a detailed account of a group or culture, usually located outside the West. Over time, the term came to refer to a combination of first-hand scientific research and theoretical and comparative interpretation of social organisation and culture. From the 1960s onwards, ethnographic methods spread across many subfields of sociology as well as into other disciplines and areas of inquiry; they also migrated from the United States to Europe and other parts of the world; and, in the later decades of the twentieth century, ethnography spread even further, for example, into psychology and human geography (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1995, pp. 1-2). Although ethnography is currently not widely used in mainstream economic studies, modern economics began with Adam Smith's own data collection from a pin factory. Based on his highly detailed observations of the process of pin manufacture, he introduces the fundamental economic concept of the division of labour (Smith, 1977). However, the majority of contemporary economic study is based on the analysis of data acquired by others (such as international or governmental agencies or international or national non-governmental organisations).

Although ethnographic techniques are not common and are newly introduced in mainstream economics and recent interests have inevitably evoked several objections, there are numerous reasons and justifications for conducting ethnographic research, including: mapping the nature, features and dimensions of a phenomenon; descriptions of meanings people may attach to an event, experience or circumstance; identification of typologies (for example, models of organising 'self- help' groups, systems of managing household accounts, or approaches to including women in development interventions), the contexts in which certain phenomena, actions, or decisions might occur; the need to go beyond official and existing categories of data collection; understanding the larger context in which economic decisions are taken and relations built, and building intuition for economic processes as well as better models for them; developing inclusive research processes; achieving reflexivity; and triangulating results from a variety of approaches (Basole & Ramnarain, pp. 135-139).

There can be multiple reasons for a researcher to employ ethnographic methods in their study. However, in the context of this particular research, the reasons for the use of ethnographic methods are as follows according to Basole & Ramnarain (2016):

- Because the solidarity economy is an area shaped by unsystematic and evolving structures that have yet to be regulated, there is a necessity for the researchers who investigate the subject to collect the data themselves.
- Researchers in solidarity economics should conduct field work and develop a flexible strategy for all their research procedures. This is because, while literature or theory influences and directs the answers to the research question, in practice, the significance of the prominent subjects may shift, and different concepts and realities may draw attention. It allows for a more comprehensive understanding of a very dynamic research area.
- Because there is no comparable study in the literature, the themes, codes, remarkable elements, and repeated patterns to be used in the analysis can only be discovered through encounters and by experiencing.
- This method enables the researchers to become a subject of the research, allowing them to take a sensible and holistic approach. The researcher's experiences are also incorporated into the research outputs.

3.1. Method of Data Collection

The data for the study is entirely qualitative, gathered through a combination of ethnographic methods such as fieldwork, participant observation, document analysis, and semi-structured in-depth interviews. Since qualitative research does not follow a linear procedure, the data collection process continued in the field, as did the data analysis process. In accordance with the nature and needs of the study, thematic analysis was selected as the data analysis method that allows for as much flexibility as possible.

Sometimes the terms 'qualitative research,' 'ethnography,' and 'fieldwork' are used interchangeably (Basole & Ramnarain, 2016, p.136). While different forms of interviews and focus groups can all be termed "ethnographic methods," I used the term "ethnography" as Basole and Ramnarain did, to expressly designate a prolonged period of fieldwork that includes participant observation (2016, p.147). In addition to data gathered through participant observation, meeting notes and online document analysis, semi structured in-

depth interviews with actors from six different solidarity groups were held during the fieldwork undertaken within the solidarity community known as *Ofissizler*, since December 2019. A preliminary research process that led to fieldwork was also carried out.

3.1.1. Preliminary Research

From the beginning to the end, real-life practices influenced the subject and research questions of this thesis. While I was unaware of the literature on solidarity economies, I was attempting to become acquainted with alternative economic practices in Turkey. In the summer of 2019, a preliminary field research was held to get acquainted with the practices of organising an alternative economic life. Unstructured interviews were held with 2 actors from *Yerdeniz Cooperative* in Kadıköy, İstanbul and *Bozcaada Women Cooperative* in Bozcaada, Çanakkale which are both new generation consumer cooperatives. Also, I attempted to determine the focus of my thesis within this very colourful and vibrant research area, particularly through personal discussions with representatives and advocates of the new generation cooperative movement, which is very active in Turkey recently and enriched with community supported agriculture models and politics of commons during several symposiums, ecology camps, and conferences. After meeting with environmental organisations, agricultural cooperatives, small farmer communities, and communes from around Turkey to protest cyanide drilling in the Kazdağları (Mountain Ida) region in August 2019, I realised how much academic research is being done about cooperatives. During this resistance, I was particularly interested in independent white-collar activists who used their brief summer vacation leave to participate in this resistance. A similar dynamic was previously highlighted in Turkey's Gezi Park protests in 2013.

White-collar workers in Turkey, defined as adults and young adults with generally at least a bachelor's degree who live and work in big cities, have been the topic of numerous studies, but there are many ambiguities; several studies now mention grey collars, some defines them as precariat workers, and also some suggest the term new middle class. In my work, I focused on how the actors define themselves, and began to investigate the dissolution of workplace solidarity—which is actually accomplished through strategic moves calculated by capital owners—the emotional state that this situation creates in workers, the potential for this mind-set to evolve into organisations, and

the possibility of solidarity economies emerging from these potentials. The final decision to conduct participant observation process in the *Ofissizler* network for the field research of this study, settled after a meeting with Aslıhan Aykaç, the author of the book *Dayanışma Ekonomileri, Üretim ve Bölüşüme Alternatif Yaklaşımlar* (2018)²⁵.

After completing the preliminary research, I came to the conclusion that Turkey had relatively few solidarity enterprises that were comparable to those mentioned in the literature as examples of "solidarity economies" from other regions of the world. In Turkey, while there are a number of cooperatives and worker-managed small companies that are institutionally classified, conducting a comprehensive analysis of an entire structure or practices that fully embody the characteristics of the solidarity economy throughout this research is not feasible. The intention of this study was not to delve into the various political, cultural, and economic factors at play in this situation. Instead, the primary goal of this research is to investigate the motivations driving individuals to participate in solidarity, examine the transformations they undergo upon joining solidarity networks, and explore the experiences of solidarity organisations. Therefore, I have chosen to conduct my fieldwork with white-collar solidarity organisations.

3.1.2. Limitations of Data Collection

One of the most significant constraints of this research was the outbreak of the pandemic four months after fieldwork began in *Ofissizler* in December 2019, and the precautions adopted in accordance with the lockdown in Turkey. Although all events and meetings have been transferred to online platforms since March 2020, online interactions have become increasingly irregular, particularly after October 2020, and participants' moods are increasingly influencing the trajectory of research with the frequently announced lockdowns. The fluctuations in participants' emotional states have led to challenges in maintaining consistent and meaningful online engagement, affecting the depth and reliability of the data collected during the research process. Though this may appear to be a limitation, it should be noted that it has evolved into a feature that is remarkably related to the study's theme and strengthens the findings. Specifically, during

²⁵ Originally published by Routledge in English in 2017, named *The Political Economy of Employment Relations: Alternative theory and practice*.

the pandemic, when all social life was restricted and individuals' well-being was ignored in order to maintain working activity, white-collar workers' problems in the "normal" period came to the forefront and became so effective that they could not be ignored anymore. As a result, precisely for this reason, the importance of solidarity became even more pronounced during the pandemic period and further supported the research topic.

Other key constraints are related to the organisational structures of solidarity groups. These organisations, which have an extremely adaptive structure, are few in number, and their members are frequently burned out—even if they strive to stay optimistic. A relatively narrow observational sphere was chosen to evaluate the study's findings in the real world. The lack of an institutional structure, the actors' attempts to carry out organisational activities in the time remaining after their day-to-day tasks and professional jobs, and the fact that the activities are mostly shaped according to the current national and global agenda are all due to this flexible and adaptive structure. Another limitation of the study, which is also one of its findings, is the actors' mental states, which are mostly the result of national and global agendas, such as fatigue and desperation. The research process, in which each interview became an outpouring, each organisational meeting became group therapy, and each solidarity organisation became an emotional and motivational support group, had also an intense effect on the researcher's attitude and perspective.

When data is collected while the event is going on, that is, while a social change process is taking place, it becomes difficult to picture that process. Therefore, while considering the limitations of this study it should be remembered that the process of solidarity economies is ongoing and will continue even after this study is finished. Even if the white-collar solidarity groups were founded in the past, they are just now beginning to gain ground in the fight for social change. Throughout the research what has been done is to visualise that change.

3.1.3. Field Work

This study's fieldwork began with preliminary research in the summer of 2019, and proceeded with participatory observations at face-to-face weekly meetings of *Ofissizler* in December 2019. Throughout the early stages of the Covid-19 pandemic, which began to

effect Turkey after March 2020, the observational process was carried out via meetings transferred to online platforms and progressed with face-to-face in-depth interviews with representatives of many white-collar organisations once the pandemic conditions eased.

“Do solidarity economies have the potential to transform the current economic system's structure?” is the main question put forth by this thesis. I asked myself this question while I was on the field during the preliminary phase. I started to investigate in the field what characteristics would make solidarity organisations an effective and successful alternative, and realised that the necessity for solidarities is what primarily strengthens them. For this reason, I began to question people's motivations to engage in solidarity because I was intrigued by the possibility that long-lasting transformation might lie there. The necessity for the subjects to act in solidarity and whether acting in solidarity can address these needs were the two fundamental concerns that developed in the following phase of the research. The interviews were conducted in this context using a semi-structured method with open-ended questions. In this method, the researcher is in tune with each interviewee's subjectivity and has the opportunity to ask questions and explore the subject from a broader and more dynamic perspective. This reflexivity is especially essential for this study because the actors of solidarity groups have a wide range of professional backgrounds and engage in a variety of practices for their solidarity groups. As a result, the approaches employed during the research took a pluralistic perspective which considers and helps the researcher to see things from a variety of perspectives. Interviews differ in the duration and order of questions. Depending on the direction of the interview, even different questions were frequently asked. The interviews begin with me explaining the research and stating that the interviews were conducted in accordance with ethical principles. Following that, the interviewees briefly introduce themselves. Then questions are addressed about the forms and structures of solidarity groups; when they started, for what purpose they were established, the roles of the participants in solidarity, and so on. The actors' personal experiences with working life and solidarity are then discussed in depth. Finally, the interview concludes with their thoughts and feelings about the concept of work being highlighted. The interviewees' impressions of change, transformation, and development in their life and work experiences as a result of being a part of the solidarity organisation, as well as their future expectations and ambitions, are all examined.

When selecting the solidarity organisations to study for this research, certain parameters were taken into account. Firstly, solidarities that are not directly related to any socialist organisation, which are incredibly numerous in Turkey, were chosen. Political parties, socialist organisations and labour unions have started to take action on the issues of white-collars' working conditions that are not directly related to wages and show increasing interest as a result of the deteriorating working circumstances in Turkey, especially in light of the recent epidemic and economic crisis. But, these organisations have a historical and traditional responsibility to take a stand in the face of current events, and have to adopt a certain attitude due to their political stances. However, attention was given to the selected solidarity groups for the research to be smaller groups that could act more flexibly, that can make quicker decisions, and respond more rapidly to current developments, particularly focusing on narrower issues.

Another parameter is that the groups chosen aspire to make long-lasting and systemic changes which will fundamentally alter social and economic conditions rather than only trying to improve their living situations slightly by coming up with temporary solutions to their existing problems.

According to the conceptual framework of this study, understanding how economic structure and work conditions affect individuals might help identify the potential for and necessity of solidarity economies. Thus, this is how the third parameter was established. The specific problems that white collar workers face provide a clear illustration of the impact that the economic system and working conditions have on individuals. For example, the concept of alienation in the labour struggle dominated by blue collar workers is not a frequently mentioned concept compared to wage discussions or work hours. However, white-collar workers, a group in society that is considered more advantageous than blue-collar workers, find that experience of alienation to be a very distressing one. White-collar solidarity organisations can create a context for discussing more institutional changes and radical solutions to the labour struggle because they also address issues like alienation, the purpose of work in society, labouring, and unemployment. What is discussed in the conceptual part of the study, are the grounds that may lead to the emergence of solidarity economies. The organisations that spoke out against working conditions, questioned the feeling evoked by the concept of labour, and thought that the way to find answers to problems via solidarity are the subject of the fieldwork section of this study.

The first step in creating solidarity economies is the reorganisation of the damaged concept of solidarity of people. The damaged concept of solidarity must be re-established as the first step in developing solidarity economies. In essence, the central thesis of the study is the potential role of solidarity organisations in leading to the development of solidarity economies. In other words, this study is done on a potential that has not yet been institutionalised, has not fully evolved, but is in the process of doing so.

At this point, it would be essential to define what "white collar" is and explain its context. The term is currently highly troublesome and does not accurately describe the subject of this research. Although it is not claimed that the term "white collar" is the most appropriate one to describe this economic and social class, it is used for convenience. It is crucial to set some boundaries around what it is meant by the term. In the context of this study, the term "white collar" refers to a social, cultural, and economic group of people who find themselves positioned between employees who hold the highest hierarchical positions at the workplace and the blue collar workers, who have a long history of being aware of their rights fighting for them. Senior executives, on the other hand, also referred to as "golden collars" in the literature, who have the potential to save a significant amount of money or create capital for themselves with their income, as well as the employees who hold the highest positions in an organisational hierarchy are not included in this study. It doesn't seem appropriate to refer to this group of employees as "workers". Workers, whether they are white collar or blue collar, are essentially a group that is unable to earn money without selling their labour power for a price. On the other hand, this study aims to understand the sociological and cultural problems that are specific to a group other than blue collar workers. The majority of them are young adults who live and work in large cities, and are generally from middle-class families, work in offices or as freelancers, have a university degree or even other higher education degrees. They are still considered as workers, but they face especially specific concerns than those faced by blue-collar workers. In this context, a freelance software developer, an employed lawyer²⁶, an architect, and a research assistant working at a foundation university are all considered as white collar.

²⁶ Lawyers have traditionally held an independent position and should be classified as self-employed, but many young lawyers are now attached or semi-attached to large law firms. As a result of competition from these firms, lawyers cannot be able to find clients and end up working for a fee. Similar to other white collar

In the specific context of this thesis, if we delve into the meaning of the term "white-collar," which refers to workers who, due to their socio-cultural background, carry the potential to be a political subject, since they may not be as aware of their rights in the labour struggle as blue-collar workers or lack the organizational capacity to defend these rights. These workers, like their blue-collared colleagues, face increasingly flexible and precarious conditions in their professional lives due to the changing dynamics of the labour market.

3.1.4. A Brief Information about the Interviewed Organizations

Table 1 lists the original names of the solidarity organisations interviewed for this study, as well as the researcher's suggested English translations. Furthermore, the structure of each organisation is presented exactly as expressed by the interviewees. The following organisations mostly know each other, organise events together, follow each other's activities and often participate together, and communicate together on issues that concern them regarding the labour agenda in Turkey and the world (for example, issuing a joint statement about the loss of rights experienced when the pandemic first began, due to the transition to work from home), and they regularly discuss the united white-collar struggle. They use common communication channels through online platforms. Sometimes the same actors operate in more than one organisation.

workers and they are also subject to the employee-employer relationship. Same situation is also prevalent for architects. This concept will be covered in greater depth later in the analysis section.

Table 1*List of Organisations Interviewed*

Original Name	Suggested Translation to Original Name	Organisation Structure
Ofissizler	Officeless	Labour Organisation
Özgür Yazılım Derneği	Free Software Association	Association
Kaç Bize Gel	Come Running to Us	Solidarity Organisation
Umut-Sen	Hope Collective	Independent Labour Collective
Plaza Eylem Platformu	Plaza Action Platform	Solidarity Network
Politeknik	Polytechnic	Association
Vakıf Üniversitesi Dayanışma Meclisi (VÜDAM)	Foundation Universities' Solidarity Council	Solidarity Network
Avukat Dayanışması	Lawyers' Solidarity	Solidarity Network

Ofissizler (<https://ofissizler.org/>) is a network of solidarity for freelancers. The goal of developing this network is to discover and publicise the particular conditions and issues of freelance form of employment, as well as to ensure that freelancers have a more equitable working environment. Their primary activities include networking, sharing experience and information among freelance workers and developing tools to facilitate this exchange, conducting law workshops to share legal information for freelancers and making various legal demands, and, most importantly, supporting forms of production that centre on solidarist activism to empower freelance workers against loneliness and insecurity.

Özgür Yazılım Derneği (<https://www.oyd.org.tr/>) is a group of people who advocate the free software movement and the rights of all people in the modern world. With the slogan "Use, Research, Share, Improve!" they advocate people's freedom, starting with software freedom and advancing to hardware, Internet, and service freedom. In this

context, it carries out trainings and activities with the aim of popularising the use of free software so that the benefits of the work of the public and civil society can be shared by all humanity, works for the internet accessible to everyone, oppose the technologies that rapidly surround our lives to limit our fundamental rights and freedoms, and the efforts to create a surveillance / control society, and fight for the use of technology to liberate people and society. It works for the development of a brand new communication culture against seeing and using social networks as a mere consumption and display tool. It opposes scientific and technological accumulation to be personal or private property. It defends sharing based production models and licences against patents and licences that do not benefit the society and the commons.

Umut-Sen (<https://umutsen.org/>) is a collective that aims to strengthen the working class's trade union struggle and defends worker solidarity and cooperation in the workplace and in everyday life against a working order that weakens social solidarity networks and isolates workers. It has an organisational structure consisting of the main council, local councils, the coordination unit, the spokesman's board, the editorial board, and various collectives (propaganda, translation, ecology, organisation, law, and financial affairs). It encourages workers to run their own unions. It works to ensure that the workers' will is dominant in all union processes and organisations as opposed to union executives. It defends the workplace committee and assembly structures to that end. It works to ensure workers' direct participation in all speech and decision mechanisms without discrimination, and to make workers' will dominant.

Plaza Eylem Platformu (<https://plazaeylem.org/>) is an independent platform founded by white-collar employees to foster solidarity among themselves, to learn skills in organising, production, and rights defence, and to exist as part of the labour front. They replace the image of the white-collar concept, which is often presented in society with high salaries, stylish cafes, heels, lipstick, and suits, with the definition "educated employees who use antidepressants, who are dulled by performance pressure, who do not know what to do with themselves outside of work, but believe that the reins of life are in their own hands." Among its fundamental activities are organising workshops where mobbing experiences and fighting techniques are shared, organising trainings and meetings to create, refresh, and transform knowledge of solidarity, labour, cooperation, and resistance,

organising protests against employee rights violations, press releases, research and reporting, and organising workplace solidarity from the ground up.

Politeknik (<https://politeknik.org.tr/>) is a platform for communication, discussion, and intervention for engineers, architects, city planners, as well as all other technical staff and technical school students. Their goals are to express the technical staff's economic, professional, and personal employee rights problems, as well as global problems, and to produce solutions to these problems, bringing the political into what appears to be a "purely technical" phenomenon, discussing how to overcome the problems that profit-seeking capitalism imposes on humanity and people, taking this perspective to all problems at the national, global, environmental, city, factory, production, and service levels, discussing the possibilities and problems that will be created by the joint movement of technical staff with other working classes and strata fighting against climate change.

Kaç Bize Gel (<https://kacbizegel.com/>) is defined as a bridge between labour unions and white-collar workers. Its main purpose is to reach a collective bargaining agreement in every workplace. White-collar workers are considered members of the working class, so they prefer to refer to them as office workers. Even if no concrete success can be achieved, they move forward by learning new things at every step, believing that it is possible to achieve something different in daily life through solidarity. They believe that the labour struggle should be sustained in collaboration with all other solidarity networks, and they work to establish solidarity on common grounds.

Vakıf Üniversitesi Dayanışma Meclisi (<https://twitter.com/vudameclis>) emerged through discussions and subsequent gatherings of a group of friends employed at foundation universities. This initiative was sparked by growing concerns over escalating unrest and rights violations among employees toward the end of the first year of the pandemic, leading to the assembly's formation and the subsequent dissemination of information within their networks. They are a solidarity network that aims to combat wage and rights inequalities between state and foundation university employees in the short term, and to retransform universities in Turkey into institutions where academic and scientific production is carried out in the long term.

Avukat Dayanışması (<https://twitter.com/avdayanismasi>) emerged from the need for a systematic organisation of lawyers during the lawyers' protests against the multiple bar

association system, as well as the process of bar association division in Turkey. They want to be the voice of lawyers in Turkey who are dealing with many economic problems, as well as fight the neoliberal transformation of the legal professions. They believe that lawyers should be economically organised, just like blue collar workers, or organised as a line of branch.

3.2. Method of Data Analysis

This research adopted a face-to-face interview method, either one-on-one or with two members from the same organisation. All interviews were digitally recorded with the consent of the interviewees. In total, 8 interviews were held with 10 actors from 9 different solidarity organisations (Table 2). In total, roughly 20 hours of recorded interviews were later transcribed into 268 pages of qualitative material. After the interviews, we continued to be in contact with the interviewees, by maintaining personal relations, the actors were informed about the stages of the research, and the research results continued to be fed through mutual interactions. The material from interviews were analysed using Thematic Analysis, specifically the six phased theme analysis guidelines given by Braun and Clarke (2006). Data analysis was carried out concurrently with the data gathering process, allowing new approaches to be developed and any confusing or ambiguous questions to be examined further.

Table 2*Demographics of Interviewees*

Status of Education	Profession	Age	Stated Gender
Undergraduate Degree	Lawyer	25	Male
Graduate Student	Humanitarian Aid Worker	27	Female
Graduate Student	Research Assistant	28	Male
Undergraduate Degree	Developer	28	Female
Undergraduate Degree	Lawyer	30	Female
Undergraduate Degree	Engineer	33	Male
High School Graduate	Designer	36	Male
Undergraduate Degree	Engineer	39	Female
Graduate Degree	Lawyer	45	Male
Undergraduate Degree	Humanitarian Aid Worker	48	Male

Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and interpreting meaning patterns, “themes” in qualitative data. Thematic analysis provides a flexible—which is the hallmark of this sort of analysis—and systematic method to create codes and themes from the data, especially if the research question is not fixed and can change during analysis development. When conducting research to learn about what participants believe, feel, and do, thematic analysis allows researchers to find patterns within and across data in relation to participants' experience, ideas and perspectives, and behaviour and practices. Thematic analysis' flexibility in terms of research question, sample size and constitution, data collection method, and approaches to meaning generation, is used by many authors from different fields of research, and when applied correctly, it produces highly reliable and valuable results (Clarke and Braun, 2016). Boyatzis (1998) delves into much greater information about thematic analysis. Braun and Clarke's description, on the other hand, is a far more accessible exposition, more understandable to those not trained in the methods, and their technique differs from Boyatzis' in that, while he accepts the subjective

dimension of qualitative analysis, his approach is ultimately, albeit often implicitly, placed within a positivist empiricist paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp.97-98).

Thematic Analysis requires the transformation of qualitative information into codes and themes. Codes are the smallest units of analysis that collect data attributes that are possibly relevant to the research issue. Codes serve as the foundation for themes, or bigger patterns of meaning, which are supported by a fundamental organising notion, a shared core idea. Themes serve as a framework for arranging and summarising the researcher's analytic findings (Clarke and Braun 2017, p. 297). Thus, codes help to define meaningful text units, interpreting data, ensuring focus on specific aspects of the data, and identifying relevant themes. These are the basis for the next phase, development of themes. Theme is a pattern found in knowledge, defines and organises the minimum possible observations and, at the maximum, interprets aspects of the phenomenon (Boyatzis 1998, p. 4). Themes provide a structure required to organise and report the researcher's analytical observation (Clarke and Braun 2017, p. 297). Themes can be created inductively or deductively. The first is a bottom-up or data-driven approach, and the second is a top-down or theory-based approach (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 83). The inductive approach pays more attention to the data themselves or to the research question, and requires a more detailed overview of the general data. The coding process in this approach is independent of any existing coding framework (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 83) and allows the researcher to explore under-explored areas (Clarke and Braun 2017, p. 297). The deductive approach, by contrast, is strongly associated with research questions and researcher's analytical interest. This approach is a more detailed analysis of certain aspects of the data. This research adopts both approaches as it aims to provide more detailed information. A hybrid approach also provides more realistic information about the solidarity networks by considering the actors' point of view. By incorporating actors' personal observations from their professional experiences and aligning them with solidarity networks, the information derived from the literature can be utilized to establish a conceptual framework.

In this research, the well-known and widely applied step-by-step guide of Braun and Clarke (2006) was used to establish the themes and sub-themes. This tool is a handy guide for performing Thematic Analysis consisting of six steps (Table 3). The steps do not need to be used rigidly and followed linearly. On the contrary, it's standard to move back

and forth between each element during analysis, shaped by the researcher's requirements as dictated by this method of analysis.

Table 3

Phases of Thematic Analysis

Phase	Description of the process
1. Familiarising yourself with your data:	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and rereading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking in the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic map of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells; generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis

Note. From “Using thematic analysis in psychology.” by V. Braun & V. Clarke, 2006.

Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2): p. 35,

(<http://dx.doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>).

3.2.1. Phase 1: Familiarizing yourself with your data

At this stage, the researchers become thoroughly acquainted with the data they collect. Basically, it is a process of repeatedly reading data (which are the transcribed interviews for this research) and searching for prominent themes, recurring patterns and meanings as it is read. During the readings, instant impressions and ideas are noted so that they can be turned into codes in the future. Although it is time consuming, the most important part of

this process is the transcription of the verbal data. While this stage can be quite frustrating at times, as transcription requires a great deal of attention to the data it provides, a solid foundation for further steps of the analysis makes researchers ready for the more formal parts of coding.

3.2.2. Phase 2: Generating initial codes

Once researchers are sufficiently familiar with the data, the coding process begins. The codes allow the identification of features that the researcher finds interesting while examining the data. Codes refer to “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (Boyatzis, 1998: 63). An example from the code list used in this study is given in Table 4. Coding serves to gather data into meaningful groups and to create themes (often much broader units of analysis) later in the analysis. Coding can be done manually or using software. Manual coding is preferred in this research.

Table 4*Data extract, with codes applied*

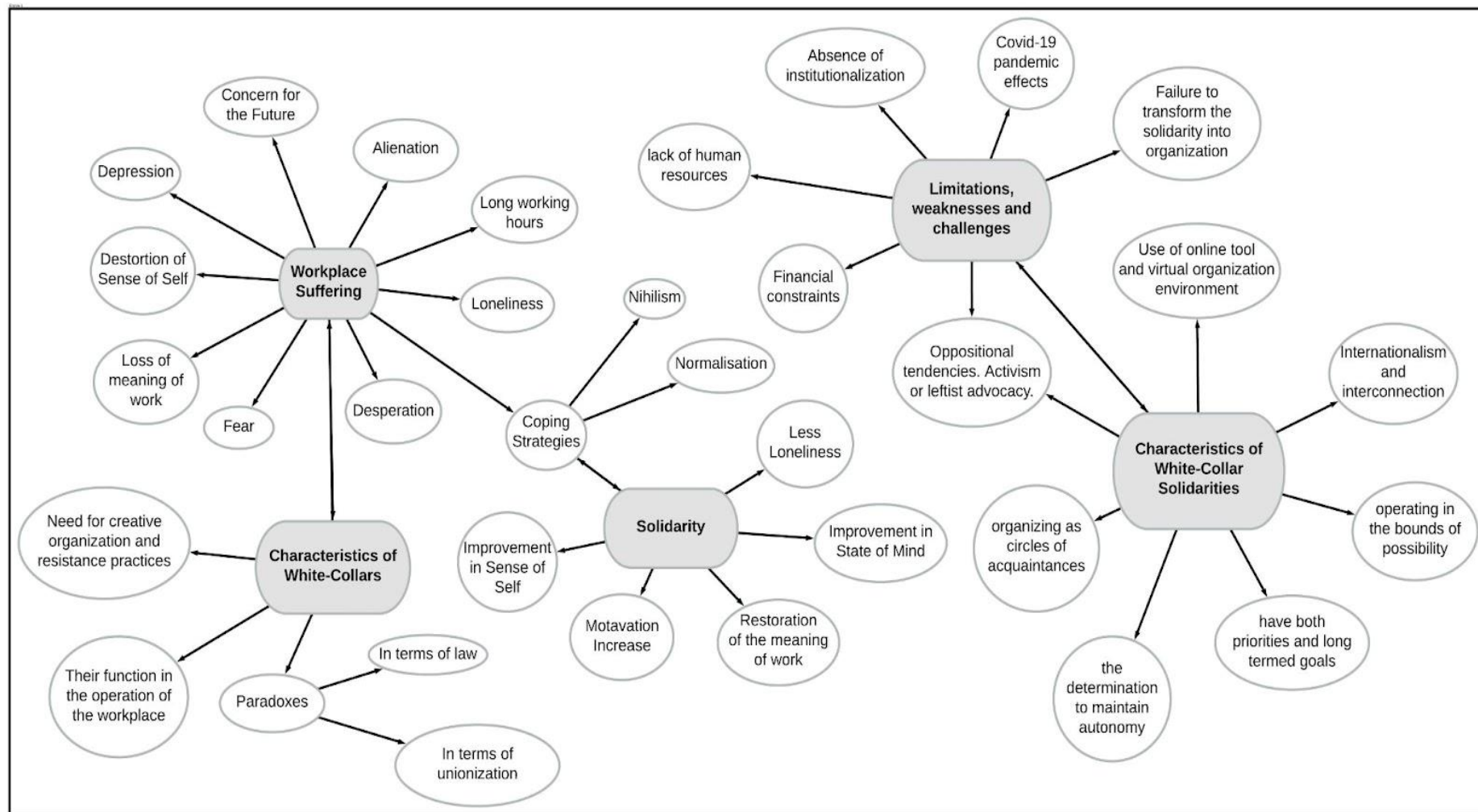
Data extract	Coded for
They say white collar workers do not see themselves as workers, etc., but in fact, labour unions are not very open to recognise white collars as "workers". The problem is that actually they do not see them as workers. (Interviewee 6)	White-collar workers' paradoxes in terms of unionization.
Umut-Sen genuinely makes something like this possible, and I think it's a huge need that I've discovered in my personal friendships and other conversations; "I'm not so alone after all" there is always someone who can help me. (Interviewee 4)	Solidarity relieves loneliness.
I had always been politically involved and planned to stay that way. I was also active in the University, I mean in the student movement. (Interviewee 5)	Characteristics of solidarities: oppositional tendencies, activism or leftist advocacy.
One of the most serious issues is workers' alienation from their work. Because if you can't find meaning in what you do, your feet begin to drag in the morning. And this leads you into inner turmoil, I mean, into something like "what am I doing?" However, you continue to live. The balance of being able to continue living has always amazed me. Why don't we go insane? You know, by tearing our shirts off (<i>laughs</i>). (Interviewee 8)	1. Alienation from work 2. Loss in the meaning of work

3.2.3. Phase 3: Searching for themes

At this stage, the researcher aims to collect and organise the long list of codes under certain themes by contemplating what will be related to each other for creating a meaning. The relationships between codes and themes, main themes and sub-themes, which codes will be discarded and which will remain is determined, results can be visualised with a mind map for clarity (Figure 1). At the end of this phase, a list of themes emerges (five primary themes are generated for this research) which will be reviewed in detail to be decided as final themes.

Figure 6

Initial thematic map, showing five main themes



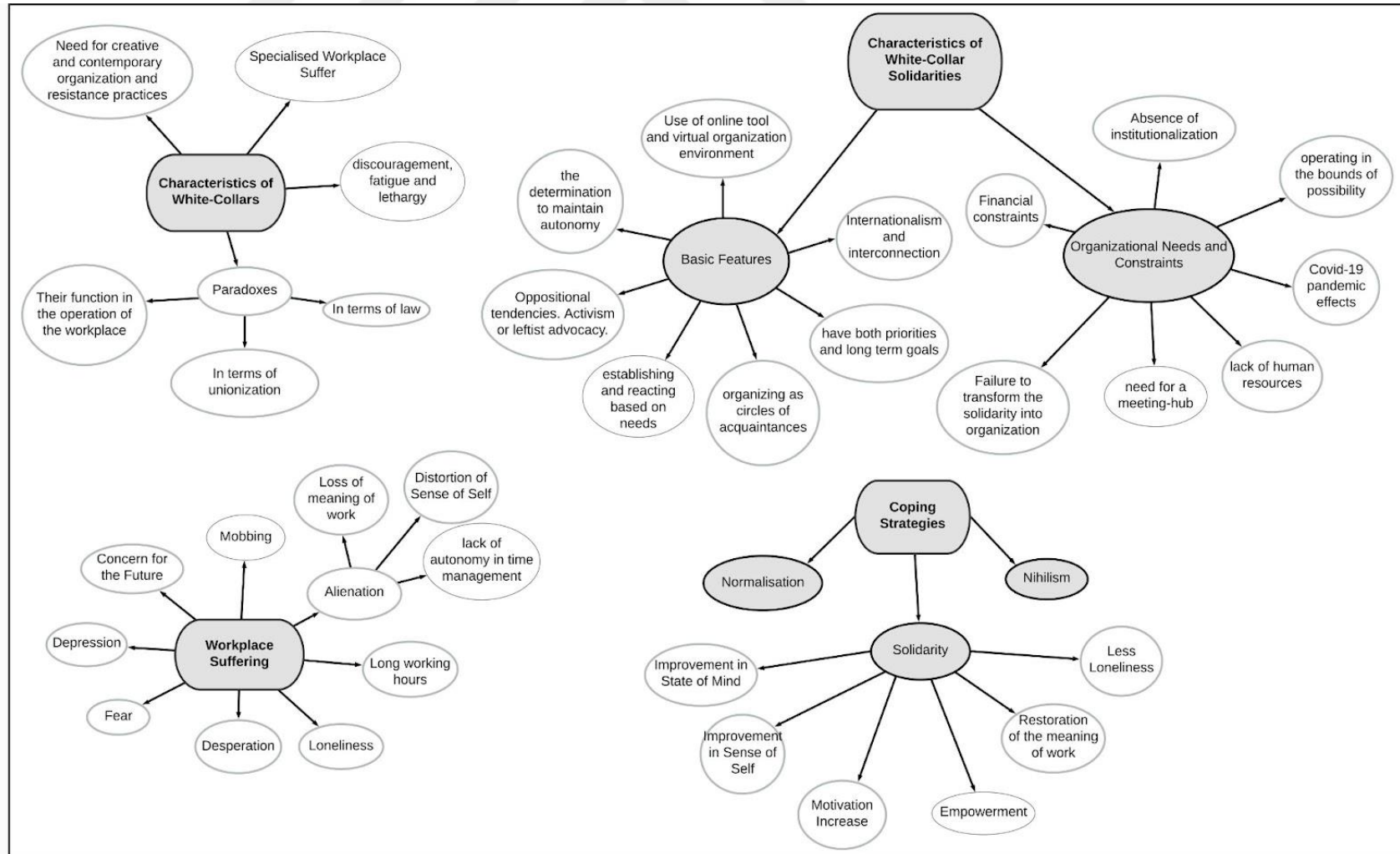
3.2.4. Phase 4: Reviewing themes

Following the identification of the primary themes and candidate codes, the collated coded data is evaluated and analysed to see whether the codes in the primary thematic map are successful enough to make sense of the data according to the research questions. The most important aspect here is that each theme is clearly separated from the others, with no overlapping or conflicting codes, as shown in Figure 7.



Figure 7

Developed thematic map, showing four main themes



3.2.5. Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

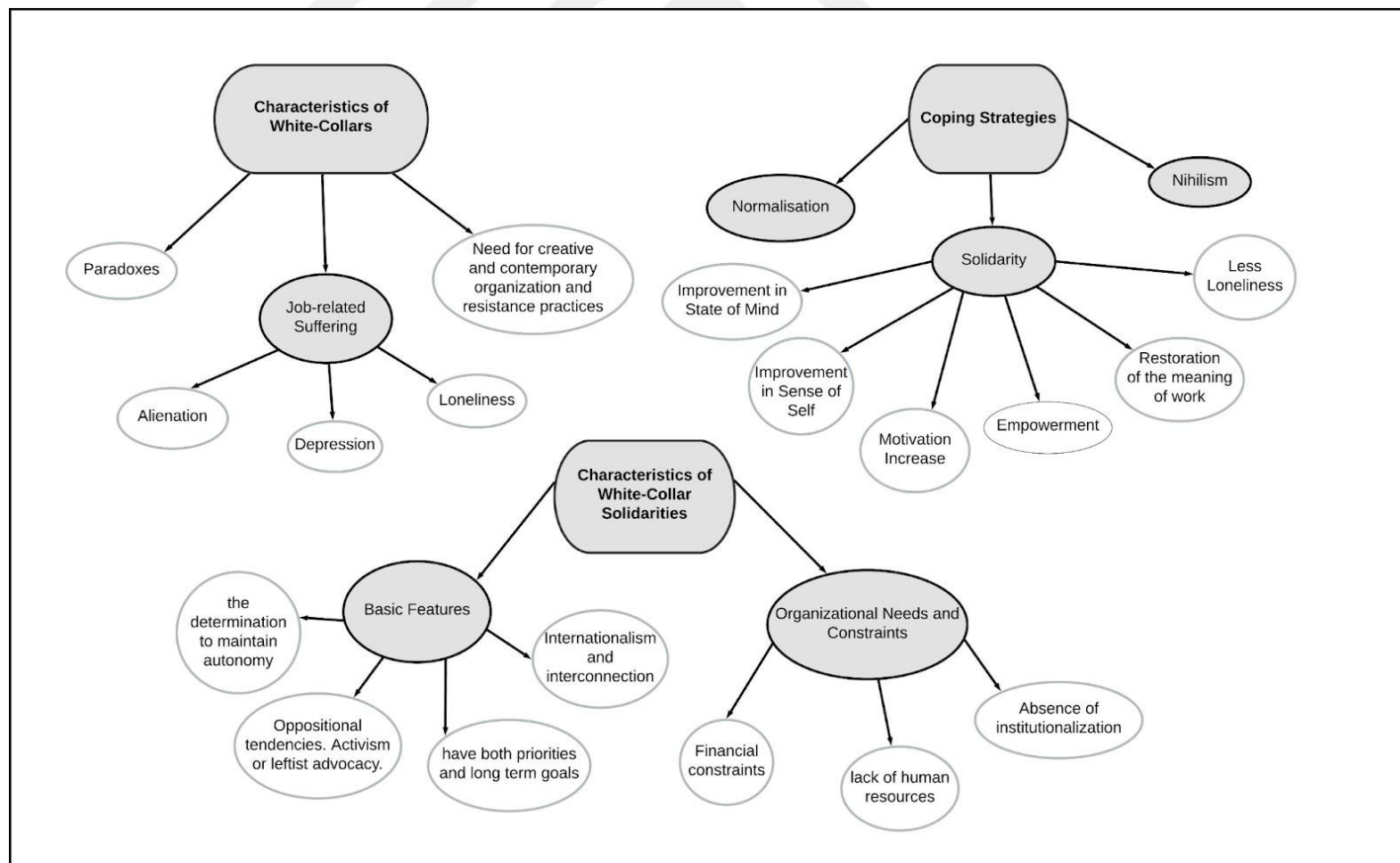
This step requires further theme definition and refinement, such as determining whether there are any sub-themes under the larger and more detailed themes, combining codes with too many overlaps, or discarding codes that do not represent enough data. By the end of this phase, you should be able to clearly define your themes and the story they are telling in a few sentences. Also, defining the names of the themes is important because they must be precise and sufficient to provide the reader with an initial opinion (Figure 8).

3.2.6. Phase 6: Producing the report

This step includes the final analysis and report writing. The final analysis should result in a general story about what the selected themes reveal about the research topic. The goal is to tell the complex story of the data in a way that demonstrates the value of and validates the analysis. Data extracts must be embedded within an analytic narrative that vividly depicts the story you are telling about your data, and your analytic narrative must go beyond a description of the data to make an argument in relation to your research question (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.23).

Figure 8

Final thematic map, showing final three main themes



3.3. Analysis and Discussion

In this section, the themes are determined as explained above in detail. These themes are chosen in a way consistent with the main research questions as well as the topics covered in the literature and conceptual framework sections.

In this section, no modifications have been made to the quotes from the interviewees that would result in a change of meaning. Only minor adjustments and grammar corrections were made during the translation from Turkish to English to preserve the intended meaning.

Based on the remarks of the interviewed white-collar solidarities, Theme 1, *Characteristics of White Collars* describes the characteristics that differentiate white-collar workers from blue-collar workers or from the other employee groups. The similarities among white-collar solidarity between very different structures are also emphasised. The concept of *job-related suffering*, which is found worthy of further investigation while research continues, was chosen as a sub-theme of Theme 1. Theme 2, *Coping Strategies* investigates how white-collar workers cope with job-related suffering, by solidarity organisations playing a key role in this context. Theme 3, depicts the *Characteristics of White Collar Solidarities* by analysing their basic features and their needs and constraints.

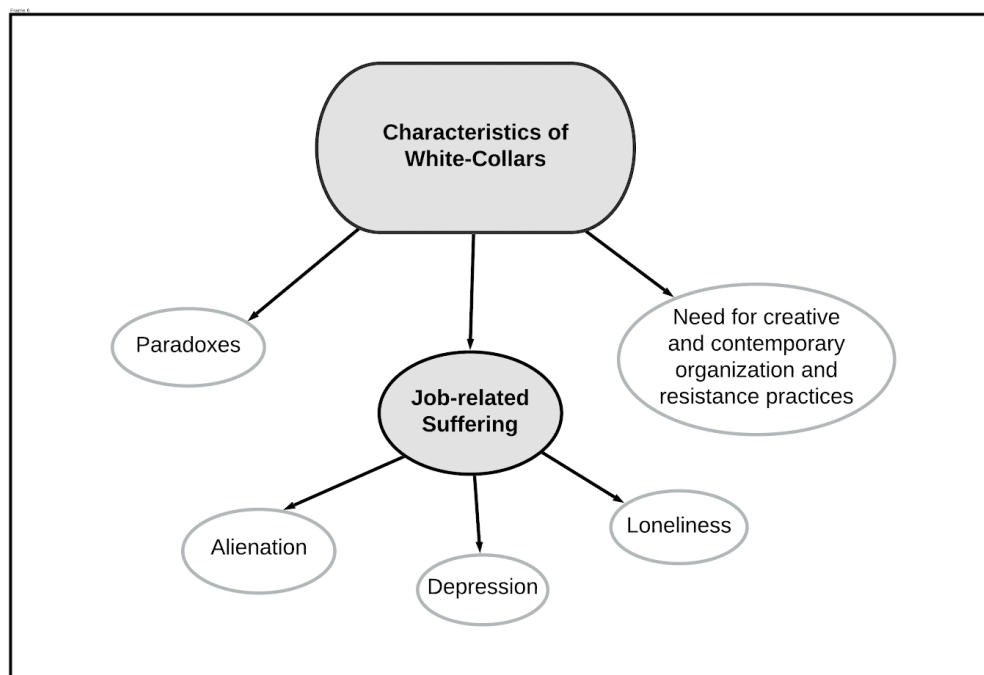
3.3.1. Theme 1: Characteristics of White Collars

Focused on the prior white-collar definition in the study, this theme is based on the characteristics that distinguish white-collar workers from other employee groups. White-collar workers are distinguished by the fact that they are exposed to significant risks and issues. The first theme specifically investigates these. The theme's components are depicted in Figure 9. The working habits of white-collar workers, their function in the operation of the workplace, job-related suffering they face—which will be elaborated later on— paradoxes in terms of law and unionisation and the need for creative and contemporary organisation and resistance practices are highlighted under this theme. Furthermore, it should be mentioned up front that the characteristics examined under this theme certainly influence, condition and also limit the characteristics of white-collar

solidarities, which will be covered under Theme 3 afterwards. Similarly, the specific problems faced by white-collar workers also shape their motivation for solidarity and their other coping mechanisms, which will be analysed under theme 2. The cases examined under this theme also explain why these employees are classified as "white-collar," despite the fact that their occupations and working styles appear to be significantly different from each other. For instance, a teacher working in a private school is more of a private sector employee than an educator in terms of legal rights, salary, and workplace responsibilities by the current conditions in Turkey.

Figure 9

Characteristics of White Collars



As previously stated, the fieldwork for this thesis began with a research among freelancers. The difficulties associated with freelancing, the motivations for choosing this type of employment and the negative effects of it on employees were all quite intriguing. But then I realised that the underlying challenges that freelancers face are not genuine to a specific profession or to a specific form of work, but affect a far broader range of professions. Different expressions of the same challenges were prevalent in a variety of sectors, and there was a sort of "freelancing" in many of them. According to the needs of

the market, many professions are systematically being pushed to be built on a precarious, non-contractual framework in which wages are low, job descriptions are vague, and economy related risks and various costs (such as food, insurance, travel, work-related items and maintenance of these materials, etc.) are passed on to employees. Even the most fundamental professions, such as lawyers and teachers, are gradually subjected to short-term contracts and precarious working conditions. This situation creates paradoxes in terms of law and unionisation and the function of white-collar workers in the operation of their workplace. All of these paradoxes are also the causes of a brand new concept called *job-related suffering*, which will be explained later. The specificity of their challenges also creates specific needs for creative and contemporary organisational practices, as well as resistance practices to organising white collar workers.

Paradoxes

Paradoxes in terms of law, is a characteristic of white-collar workers nowadays. For example, although academics working at foundation universities are educators, they are not considered as public employees in Turkey, which causes them to face a paradox both in legal and union terms. While an academic working at a state university is considered a public employee in legal and union terms and their rights are evaluated within this scope, academics working at foundation universities have to sign periodic contracts, almost like a freelance employee, and this can cause educators to experience loss of rights in conditions when the country's economy is going down or in conditions such as the pandemic we have faced very recently. In such cases, when they experience loss of rights, they are subjected to different procedures than their colleagues working at state universities, and even the court they should apply to in case of loss or violation of rights is unclear. Moreover, while these conditions complicate the job descriptions of employees, the employees who are subjected to these conditions have difficulty in seeing themselves as academics, educators or producers of knowledge, as intellectual labourers. This, in turn, feeds the alienation of employees from their work, the loss in meaning of their work and themselves, which I have included within the scope of job-related suffering in this study. One of my interviewees, a research assistant at a foundation university, mentioned that due to budget cuts at their university, a single secretary handles the administrative affairs of all departments. In this situation, the research assistants of the school are forced to help the

secretary with her administrative work. My interviewee, a two-year university researcher, responds to the question "how does it feel to be a candidate academician?" as "I still don't know because I don't feel like one" and explains their situation in terms of law as follows;

Interviewee 8: One of the most essential aspects of academics at foundation universities is that we are neither public employees nor labourers, but rather both. It is very apparent that as a state university academic, you have the status of a public worker subject to the 25/47 Higher Education Council Legislation, but you also have a separate, independent statute as an academic. When it comes to foundation universities though (laughs), you actually sign an employment contract with them. There is no such thing as a fixed-term contract if you are in a state university; if you are not fired for any reason, you have a contract that lasts forever. But we have a one-year contract. It is usually drawn up from September to September, and we are currently in a grey area in law. If you have a problem about your wage, etc., it is said that the labour court will deal with you on this issue. But if there is an administrative situation like returning to work or recruitment processes, labour court is inconvenient, because we are educators and we should be affiliated with Higher Education Council. Because we are not doing anything like building a wall, like our work is over when the wall is finished... Because we are educators after all and our duty does not end when the year ends, in fact, we are a profession that provides continuous education as academics. Therefore, the Administrative Court deals with labour-related issues, such as employment and resignation, and there is such a dichotomy. Even lawyers are not in agreement on this. There is such a problem, which court should you file a lawsuit to, the administrative court or the labour court? Lawyers are also arguing among themselves. They have trapped us in such a grey area.

Lawyers themselves are subjected to a similar paradoxical situation about their professions' changing situation. Historically, culturally and socially, the legal profession has a certain status and requires lawyers to be independent and self-employed professionals. In a sense, they should be "bourgeois". However, powerful law firms nowadays are taking high-profit cases. This situation makes it difficult for independent lawyers to survive. As a result, most lawyers without large financial resources are forced to work in law firms as workers. Within these firms, there are lawyers who occupy the position as "bosses" and they have lawyers who work on their behalf, who are called "worker lawyers". Worker lawyers are lawyers who do not have their own clients and are paid a predetermined monthly salary where a huge case is divided down as appropriate by their employers and tasks are shared among them. Although many lawyers and institutions have yet to recognize the term "worker lawyer", the majority of lawyers in Turkey are de facto workers. This scenario, like that of academia, places lawyers in a legally uncertain position. It alienates lawyers by making them feel disconnected from their work and as though their profession and work are meaningless.

Interviewee 9: The worker lawyer is subject to labour law but does not have labour law rights. We want to build a type of contract that the employer who wants to hire a lawyer must follow, where the salary rate is regulated, social security is secured, the right of the worker lawyer to have independent clients is regulated, worker lawyers' rights are protected, and the bar association successfully controls all of these standards... There is such a duality, with labour law in one place and attorney law in another. In reality, only the most unfavourable aspects of labour law are applied to worker lawyers. The attorney law puts equal responsibility on all lawyers, with no distinction between workers and employers. This is due to the fact that the attorney law dates back to the 1930s and is regulated for self-employed lawyers. All of the professional responsibilities of lawyers were developed on the assumption that the lawyer is self-employed. Currently, however, the vast majority

of lawyers are employed as workers, although they have the same professional responsibilities and obligations as if they were self-employed, operating on their own behalf and account. And the penalty for failing to meet these professional responsibilities are severe.

In almost every sector and profession, "freelancing" is widespread. One of the main causes of the precarious conditions of employees is the project-based employment system, which makes it impossible for workers to receive severance pay in the event of their dismissal. The material and legal rights of employees have been diminished by short-term employment agreements. Even institutions and organisations working in the humanitarian aid field, put their own employees in the most precarious situations.

Interviewee 4: NGO workers are constantly travelling all over Turkey, working two months in Urfa, three months in Hatay, five months somewhere else, and then they can be fired saying "OK, your project is over, bye". Even though you have been employed there for five years, you might not have any legal rights because you have always signed contracts for short-term projects. They simply make up numerous reasons so you will not be given your rights, which constantly makes you feel insecure. For instance, one of my projects was coming to an end, my team had literally rebuilt a field office. I was probably one of those who laboured the most, we worked on every corner of that office. Well, the project is ending and it will start again, but there may be a month in between, so they said "we will call you all again after evaluating your performances". We're waiting for them to call us again, then the project will begin and we'll return. One day I saw an advertisement for my position while browsing a job-advertising website. We have been unable to contact anyone for over a month and a half. People's money has run out; some have been working there for many years. As if this was not enough, they make you sign your own dismissal because they say they will call you back at the end of the project.

You're going to come back anyway, so you sign it. Then, they simply say "I didn't promise any job for you". After that I was unemployed for six months. And I lived the most penniless period of my life. This happens a lot by the way. In the field of humanitarian aid, they make you sign your own letter of resignation, you think you're going back, you sign it, whoops, they say "we're not hiring". You cannot claim any rights. By the way, because of the funds that these organisations receive, it is financially possible to create contracts that are not project-based. They can find a method for this, they just don't. Working in an NGO is one of the most precarious forms of work.

The fact that the professions remain in a legally grey area further complicates their path to unionisation. This arrangement directly places the employees in a difficult position in respect of their rights. Traditional labour unions and professional organisations are slow to respond to the challenges that professions experience in the face of changing economic and political situations, as their aspects and hence their problems evolve. Although these organisations have now started to address not only the most basic labour agendas like economic demands, but also non-economical and more neglected issues such as mobbing, they have not yet been able to become a fully effective voice. Trade unions such as DISK, KESK, or professional organisations such as TMMOB, in particular, are insufficient to address the problems which are sometimes depicted as affecting exclusively white-collar workers in offices or performing intellectual labour, as they struggle for the rights and problems of a huge number of workers. My interviewees regularly stated that unions underestimated the concerns in this subject, and even had difficulties acknowledging white-collar workers as part of the worker class.

Interviewee 3: In the 2010s, I was organising the white-collar working class, which was then a completely untouched area by unions. White-collars were a group of workers who have never heard of class consciousness or worker unions... I mean, let me tell you something that has happened; when we went on our first worker

visit, I spent three hours with a union executive theoretically explaining that white-collar workers are workers. It took me three hours! (*Laughs*).

According to Act No. 6356 on Trade Unions and Collective Agreements, traditional labour unions in Turkey are regulated by the branch of activity. In other words, which employees have the right to organise in which union is determined by the branch of activity they work in. Furthermore, in order for a labour union to be authorised in a workplace, it must have organised at least 1% of all workers in that branch, which serves as a sort of threshold. However, this position may once again cause workers to be uncertain regarding their legal and unionisation rights. In particular, employers often use the 10th line of business, also used as “*torba iş kolu*” (“the bag labour branch”) by my respondents, to deprive workers of their right to create a union or organise in the union of their choice. The 10th line of business covers a broad range of professions, from non-governmental organisation employees to storage workers, private school teachers to retail workers, and because it covers such a diverse number of professions and workers, they are unable to unionise. Workers that demand unionisation in workplaces are shifted overnight by their employers to the 10th line of business. This problem especially affects white-collar workers who are hired on term or project-based contracts with vague job definitions.

Interviewee 4: I work in the field of humanitarian aid, and most of the people who work in NGOs are also in the 10th line of business. We rapidly formed an NGO working group in our solidarity organisation, because the workers in NGOs had no—how shall I say— “imagination” about the unionisation. They already work in precarious, short-term jobs with unpredictable working conditions, and even if they are unionised, they can be fired after 2-3 months or their contract may not be renewed. It was critical for me as an NGO worker to be able to introduce solidarity to the agenda of NGO workers, and it was critical to make these issues discussable between them.

Interviewee 8: In terms of labour unions, let me explain it simply: an academic at a state university can organise in public labour unions such as *Eğitim-Sen*. However,

we (*as academics in foundation universities*) are unable to become members of those unions. Because we work under short-termed labour contracts, we are involved in the 10th line of business, you know, that “the bag labour branch” (*laughs*). It includes office workers, trade workers, and educators, all of them.... As a result, if we wish to join public unions, we must switch our line of employment.

On the other hand, another frequent subject raised by my interviewees is the contradictory roles they play in the operation of their workplaces. The fact that white collar workers are the ones who produce knowledge about the management and organisation of the workplace is the primary cause of this contradiction, which is also one of the key causes of the most commonly used cliché, “lack of class consciousness or awareness that white collars are workers.” One of my interviewees responded to the question, “Who do you consider as a white collar worker?” as “someone who is constantly trapped between the boss and the blue collar worker.” White collars are a segment between blue collars who typically work with physical labour in companies, and the top-level employees of the company. Although they differ from blue-collar workers in terms of their education level, cultural and social background, and the fact that they mostly perform mental labour, they earn a certain wage determined by the market in exchange for their labour, and can only sustain their lives with this salary, with no opportunity to save or invest; as a result, they are “workers.” White collar workers today, on the other hand, are perfectly aware that they are workers, but they are individualised workers who have not been able to reach the consciousness of their right to organise through the historical process or who have been deprived of this right by countless workplace practices. Also, white collar workers are the actors who create these workplace practices, generate the information on how to organise the workplace, how to increase productivity, how to monitor workers, and who personally control and measure these processes. As a result, white collar workers create, manage, and report knowledge on how to exploit themselves, each other and all of the workers. Even though all employees experience some level of alienation, white-collar workers experience it very differently as a result of this situation in particular.

Interviewee 5: The fact that white-collar workers, at least some of them, also produce knowledge on how to manage workers, contributes to this conflicting

position. They are workers, but they are the ones who create information about how to manage workers. You understand what I mean? And then they become the worker who monitors the workers, for example. Or they become workers who generate knowledge on how to monitor workers. In other words, a worker who, to some part, monitors himself or herself. As a result, I believe that white-collars' needs should be considered in the context of this ambivalent position.

White-collar employees' forced positioning to take political and economic risks in order to shield capital owners from financial loss or legal and social criticism is another aspect that contributes to the paradoxes of their roles in the workplace. Construction engineers, for example, are sometimes forced to continue the construction of an unsafe project due to pressure from their employers. Thus, in the event of a building collapse or loss of life during construction, engineers can be held liable rather than employers. Due to the fear of being fired, an urban planner may be forced to approve a project that is known to be environmentally damaging. Occupational health and safety specialists may be forced to authorise hazardous working conditions in the workplace, and they are ultimately liable for the harm caused to the workers. In addition to all of these obligations, risks, and unethical pressures, white-collar workers receive no compensation other than not being fired.

Interviewee 6: Because you have the authority to sign as an engineer, the issue of responsibility is critical. Because when there is a problem it will fall on your shoulders, and you do not have to be a manager or anything for this. I believe there is a significant issue here. After all, the main productive power in most sectors is first and foremost the blue collar workers who do the production, and secondly the technical people who develop and design the project, who are usually engineers. Thus, if engineers have such transformative power, which implies such responsibility, and the work you do cannot be considered independent of the ethics of that profession. If you create something for war, for example, you are also

responsible for the consequences. This situation has become increasingly apparent in Turkey, particularly in recent years, with so many construction projects, crazy mega projects, and so on. We need to make a statement about this, such as "refuse to participate in it" or "don't be a part of it." Similar invitations should not be extended to blue-collar workers, advising them not to work on constructions for these companies. However, if this project is yours, your signature is there, you are responsible for it. Furthermore, you are held accountable for all the negative outcomes. If you are an engineer with expertise in occupational safety and you turn a blind eye to certain things, for example. And if there is an accident, you are the one to blame, not the employer. You, not your boss, go to prison. The issue of accountability is somewhat entangled with all of this. In other words, you are both responsible for whatever happens as a result of your work, and you will be held individually accountable for it, so you must do your work with this in mind.

Interviewee 7: There is also something like this in white-collar workers, especially in the field of architecture-engineering-urban planning, when a project is completed, there is something like being proud of putting their signature under it. I mean, there are many architects, or engineers, who can proudly proclaim, "I built this building" or "I built this bridge." I mean, you should have the right to sign something you are proud of; that is also an ethical requirement. In this way, an engineer, architect, or urban planner can claim that ethic. In other words, you should be able to refuse to sign something you don't want and are ashamed of. You should have the opportunity to do so. We actually want to create the conditions that will allow those opportunities to arise.

All of these factors, including the blurring of the legal basis of professions as a result of newly developing economic and political conditions, the inability of traditional labour unions to find solutions to some problems, and issues arising from the contradictions of white-collar workers' roles in the workplace, create unique challenges for them.

Job-related suffering

When I first started my field research with the observations at the meetings of *Ofissizler*, loneliness was one of the issues that freelancers focused on the most. Freelancers often spend the whole day alone at home working on their computers because of the nature of their profession. Therefore, it was easy to predict that one of the most significant effects of this form of work would be loneliness. When asked "Where did your need for solidarity come from?" or "Where did the need to establish a solidarity network arise?" the immediate response was always about loneliness.

Interviewee 1: In fact, most freelancers experience constant loneliness in both their professional and personal lives. Furthermore, it's challenging to find friends with the similar tendencies whom they can work through their loneliness. I came together with people who work on the same model as me and suffer from the same problems. *Ofissizler* evolved into an environment where I can voice my problems and participate in a collective where we can develop our own discourse about our problems.

Interviewee 2: Aside from its many benefits, one disadvantage of being a freelancer is that I so often feel lonely. I frequently feel alone, as if this is only happening to me, or this extra workload is just making "me" tired, or it is only "me" who is never sure what steps to take for my career and occasionally think "I should just go work for any company because it would look good on my CV". With these thoughts, I discovered *Ofissizler* and I said, "Oh, let's go and work with them".

However, as I conducted my research and communicated with employees from a variety of professions, I came to understand that loneliness was a common experience for people in all professions and was not specific to freelancers. The feeling of loneliness was an extremely common phenomenon resulting from the current working environment and created by a number of systematically applied managerial techniques. As Richardson stated, “New technologies and innovations with respect to the organisation of work — fuelled by management’s interest in changing work processes to enhance their productivity, profitability, and control— are creating a workplace experience that increasingly fails to provide opportunities for social networking and the development of strong social connections among workers.”(2008, p.71) These techniques ultimately cause isolation and individualisation of workers and undermine or prevent workplace solidarity.

Interviewee 5: Loneliness is always there, it is given to everyone (*laughs*). It is important that the company can apply a special management schedule for you and separate you from others. They should keep you from having direct relationships with your colleagues at work. Turning your face to the person next to you is problematic, your eyes should always look at the company at all times. Of course, there are issues with it. As a result, everyone is struggling on their own at their workplace.

White-collar employees experience a profound sense of loneliness and desperation as a result of managerial practices, which prevent all kinds of human communication, relationship, cooperation, and sometimes friendships; and managers can intentionally prohibit these kinds of interactions. It is necessary to make employees believe they are rivals rather than allies by creating a competitive and precarious work environment where employees are for themselves and elbowing each other’s way to the top is encouraged or imposed. The idea that an employee’s troubles are personal, rather than class-based or related with the company, and that there are only personal solutions (getting a better job, switching jobs, earning more money, working more, getting along with the managers better, oppressing the lower level workers more, changing the sector, etc.) to these problems feeds the sense of loneliness.

Interviewee 6: In other words, white collar workers are exactly like that; we are all extremely lonesome in the workplace, and we can always come up with unique solutions to problems in general. In this way, we differ slightly from blue collar workers in that we always try to fight alone. The biggest issue is that you really have to deal with every issue on your own, which means that whenever one arises, you either change jobs or have to negotiate with your boss or take some other action...

Interviewee 4: After all, what the boss cares about most is that every employee feels isolated and alone. He places a high value on this, and all workplace organisations are built in accordance with this. Working on the basis of bonuses for instance, causes employees to compete with one another, dividing the working hours, and keeping the breaks brief so that the employees cannot talk to one another, or placing smaller managers between them, forcing him to listen and report employees' conversations, in order to turn the employees against one another. And the employee who gets so lonely here often doesn't know that they have a cure for it.

As my research progressed, I realised that this isolation paves the way for a variety of workplace practices. The loneliness of employees creates the ground for many important strategies for the workplace and managers. One of these important practices is mobbing. Mobbing is a very "fashionable" concept today, and as a result, it is easily misunderstood, misrepresented, and devoid of content. Mobbing is an example of harassment. Its primary goal is to compel the targeted employee to resign. In other words, it cannot be reduced to personal conflicts or intentions, such as workplace disagreements or the fact that some managers are disliked by some employees. Mobbing is a set of systematic and long-term methods that include humiliation, isolation, assigning work that is below the employee's qualification, changing the job description or location of work, and forcing the employee to work overtime continuously. There are numerous studies and data on the mental and

physical health issues that arise when employees are subjected to long-term mobbing (Khoo, 2010; Meseguer de Pedro et al., 2008; Leymann & Gustafsson, 1996; Gül, 2012). It has also been reported that deaths and suicides have occurred as a result of mobbing-related health problems in employees who do not have the opportunity to change their jobs (Pompili et al., 2008; Romero Starke et al., 2020; İş Sağlığı İş Güvenliği Meclisi, 2021).

Interviewee 4: They do not express their dissatisfaction with you directly, but they begin to emotionally exclude you, ignore you, and this is all mobbing. Or, for example, you are constantly expected to overwork.

Interviewee 10: We young lawyers are struggling to make ends meet today, and we feel inadequate. And this is something that really triggers us at some point, because we are sometimes subjected to physical and sexual violence. Mobbing is already a well-known problem, to say the least. Maybe this is not the subject of this interview but lower level officers (*she is referring to the follow-up staff in courthouses and law offices*) are also having significant difficulties. Last year, for example, an officer committed suicide in Bakırköy Courthouse. In other words, they have their own form of systematic mobbing. And the law is currently in a state of chaos.

Neither the newly trained lawyers nor the new officers are satisfied.

Interviewee 5: I believe *Getir*²⁷ recently laid off 8,000 people worldwide. They fired each delivery driver one by one because they were all self-employed couriers. It wasn't a mass dismissal, after all. They shook up their employees, but one by one. This also allows for mobbing. In other words, it enables mobbing to evolve. Yes, if you are a woman, a Kurd, or this or that, you are vulnerable to mobbing. However, in another workplace, it may be because you are Turkish rather than Kurdish. Or

²⁷ An e-retailing company originating in Turkey.

maybe it's because you're Chinese or a refugee. However, the goal is not to exclude Kurds from there, but rather to make the pressure that must be exerted on you possible and easier.

Interviewee 9: We're talking about hunger, poverty, exploitation, mobbing, and humiliation here, and this is not only a problem for lawyers. Yes, the forms in which these issues occur varies according to the specificity of different professions; of course, it varies in all professions, as these all have different types of emergence. However, this is a widespread issue among the working class. In other words, the majority of the working class today is hungry, the majority is poor, and they are humiliated, mobbed, and harassed.

Despite the fact that loneliness predominated, white-collar workers also frequently experienced additional negative effects from their work environment depending on the social and economic circumstances. They were battling with feelings of profound despair, depression because of concerns about the future, the fear of losing their jobs because of precarious conditions, heavy workload and long work hours. Especially Turkey's political and economic conditions, as well as the problems of Istanbul, where the majority of white-collar workers reside, such as traffic and housing issues caused by being a big city, exacerbate all these challenges. I have observed that all my interviewees struggle with anxiety, depression and burnout due to their living and working conditions

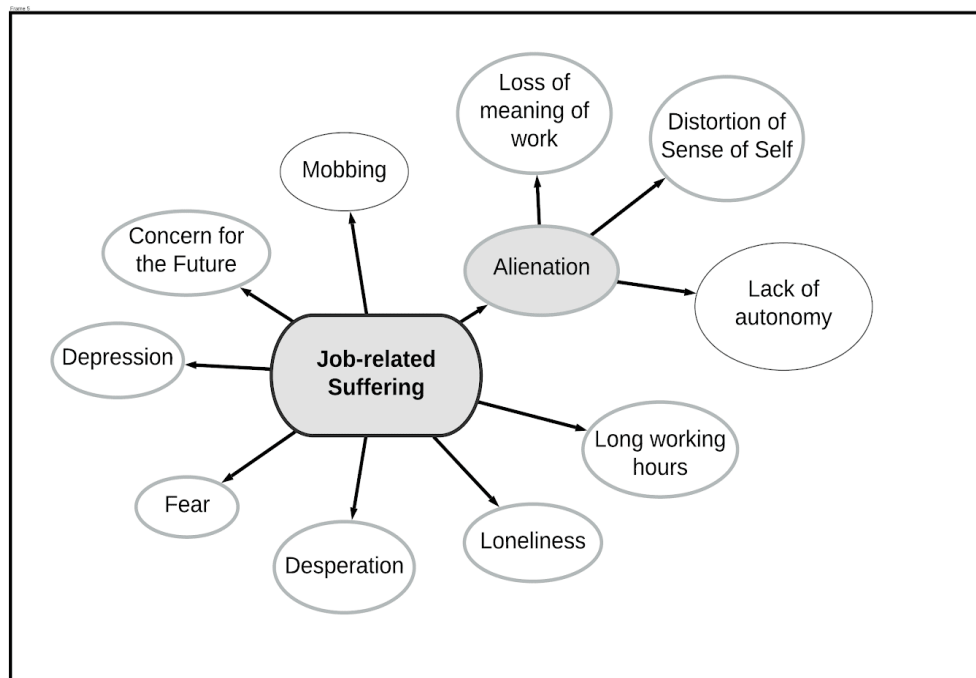
Interviewee 1: When you work in an office, you usually have to do what the boss says. If you live in a city like Istanbul, you spend a lot of time on the road. I was living in Ataşehir, and my jobs were always on the other side of the world, one in Maslak, one in Fulya, and I spent at least two hours of each day on the road, getting up at 6:00 and leaving at 6.15. Bullshit. Who gets up at 6 in the morning? And every day! (Laughs)

Interviewee 6: What is called "work" in Turkey is terrible, unregulated, but unregulated in every sense, that is, the entire process from job interview to dismissal is unregulated. They can ask absurd questions in job interviews and definitely cross all lines. It's the same when you're working. You work extremely hard, you don't get a proper raise, and they constantly expect things from you that are beyond what should be expected of you, things that exceed you. Even when they are dismissing you, they don't say, "Let's give him his payment and let him go without hurting his pride and self-confidence". In other words, it is a process in which such terrible things occur at every stage. I mean, you just graduated from university, you're young and looking for a job, they immediately begin saying things like "you have to do this, you have to do that, you have to be ready for anything, this is life..." and of course, "you have to suffer!" You don't have any say in the matter. It's extremely painful. And for example, I am in the IT sector, technology is constantly developing and changing, and my 15 years of experience can really turn into nothing in a very short time. In that regard, it is a structure in which I am never safe, you never truly feel safe. You can never say "I've been working for years, and I don't think I'll have this much trouble in retirement," You will always have more trouble, you always need to learn more, you always need to think one step ahead. You know, there is a very popular discourse such as "get out of your comfort zone", if you have found a comfort zone, stick to it dude! Why are you leaving it? But no, it is popular because if you stay in one workplace all the time, you get used to it, you cannot improve yourself, you cannot learn anything else, and if you are fired - which can happen, no one is safe - you will be left behind. That is why, I believe, it is a life in which you can never drop your guard.

As shown in Figure 10, I investigated the job-related suffering through several elements. Based on the responses of my interviewees, I discovered that some features were often repeated, and these features constituted a narrative. Working causes suffering for white collar workers because they are unable to complete their responsibilities and tasks efficiently, are unable to access meaningful jobs, or lack autonomy over their work and working hours.

Figure 10

The elements of job-related suffering



Interviewee 7: In many workplaces, the number of times you can go to the bathroom or step outside for a smoke break is determined for you. For example, at my previous job, they granted the right to take three smoke breaks a day because many people went for smoke breaks. So basically, you have no say in anything during the time you spend at your workplace. You don't have a say in how you do your job, and you don't have a say in the time you spend there— we are living

under total dictatorship. Even if you live in the most democratic country in the world, you are still living under dictatorship at your workplace. Someone else decides when you can go to the bathroom, and someone else decides how long your lunch break will be.

Low wages, long working hours, job insecurity, and workplace bullying may wear down employees, but one of the most significant factors silently corroding white-collar workers is the alienation they feel towards the work they do. In my interviews, I observed that interviewees had lost a sense of meaning in the work they did and their ideals related to it. One way to cope with this situation was to become estranged from their work and become mechanized. Simultaneously, as they lost the autonomy to manage their own time while performing their tasks, this alienation intensified. My interviewees expressed feeling estranged from their work and their own identities during working hours. It is possible to examine this form of alienation within the context of work-related suffering. According to my findings from the interviews, people fundamentally aspire to engage in meaningful work and contribute.

Interviewee 10: For instance, when I was a lawyer working for a firm, I used to approach cases somewhat indifferently. You don't establish a connection with the case or the client, and there isn't much importance placed on establishing such a connection anyway. Of course, I fulfilled all my responsibilities, but I didn't really care too much. Whether the case was resolved or a hearing was scheduled, it didn't concern me much. But now (after opening my own law firm), the scheduling of a hearing is a matter of great concern to me because a swift resolution of my client's case is much more beneficial for me. I've started to feel a sense of responsibility in this regard. Managing my own business, producing something in my own name, is something that brings me a lot of joy.

Having to perform their jobs according to the market's value system, being obliged to be in specific places during certain hours, diminishes the connection they have with their

work and leads to alienation. They also shape the specific characteristics of their solidarity networks based on this suffering. Recognizing, identifying, and ideally exposing bullying in the workplace, developing methods to combat bullying, providing legal support for bullying cases, and establishing empathy and solidarity regarding loneliness, helplessness, future concerns, and the fear of unemployment are the fundamental motivations of these organizations.

The ability to see oneself as an active being in nature, society, and one's own life was mentioned in Chapter-2 of this study as the basic condition for self-realisation and fulfilment. Today's living conditions have reduced an individual's methods of self-realisation and satisfaction from life to work, or hobbies and social activities that can only be performed in the time left over from work (which is a very limited or almost non-existent in the case of white-collar workers as mentioned above). When current working conditions are taken into account, a very gloomy outlook emerges. People who are raised with a Protestant work ethic in societies where work is considered sacred, who are motivated from childhood in their family and throughout their educational life to successfully complete their schooling, enter business life, and become a beneficial and stable member of society, who construct their cultural and class existence around their profession, feel the pain of disruptions in working life much more deeply and psychologically than most blue-collar workers, who typically perceive that work is just work. In my interviews, recurring elements of this situation included the personalization of workplace problems and *the distortion of employees' sense of their own selves, the loss of meaning* in their work over time even if they enjoy their jobs, and, most importantly, *a lack of autonomy* in managing their own time or organising their work (see Figure 5). I believe these are different faces of alienation.

Interviewee 9: Well, exploitation is already a very general phenomenon, so explaining it again will be pointless, but one of the most important things along with exploitation is alienation and humiliation. While working, people feel disconnected from their jobs. This is a situation that affects all labour relations and all types of work. No worker feels that the work they do belongs to them. What I mean by belonging to oneself is more than just owning the product. After all, what

we call production is actually human beings changing and transforming nature, that is, creating something with one's own labour, transforming something that already exists in nature into something else. In other words, this can be either an intellectual or a physical production. However, human labour has a transformative factor in all of these, and this transformative factor is what truly makes people human. This includes your imagination, your creativeness, and the feeling of being satisfied with what you've created. I don't believe any worker today is experiencing any of these things; in other words, I don't believe anyone leaves their job satisfied.

The personalisation of workplace problems and the distortion of employees' senses of their own selves is actually a coping mechanism. I discovered that my interviewees distorted their perception of themselves by viewing the very human difficulties they faced at work (being overwhelmed in long meetings, not enjoying workplace activities, etc.) as a "personal problem," a "character flaw," or a "deficiency" specific to them, or that they personalised the behavioural patterns they developed to adapt at work and expressed them as a part of their character. For example, one of my interviewees, who I observed to be a very sociable and talkative person, responded to the question "why did you choose freelancing?" in the following manner;

Interviewee 1: Now, this is a very personal matter; I am an antisocial person by nature, and I find it difficult to participate in such crowded events and activities in workplaces after a while. That is why I left the regular work. How can I put it... in meetings and stuff like that, "We have such a job for you", "OK?" "And you will do it", "OK, I will do it," and that's all there is! But it doesn't work like that. It is not enough for the employer. You should have endless meetings and nonsense like that...

Employees can sometimes hide themselves with a self-censorship mechanism "just in case," regardless of whether there is a workplace ban on any expression about their personality, beliefs, preferences, or political views.

Interviewee 8: It's kind of like... you know, one of the most important forms of censorship is self-censorship. Similarly, there is no direct prohibition in the workplace, but you censor yourself. I believe that the problem of perceiving your colleague as your enemy, as someone who can hinder your career, is a major one.

When individuals lose their jobs or experience the fear of losing their jobs, it has a significant impact on their inner world, just as it does when whatever happens at work. The belief that work is sacred, that people can only become useful to society by working, and that unemployed people are useless, idle, or, to use a literary term, "parasites" are the root causes of this, once again, in the society or environment in which they were raised.

Interviewee 3: When you're unemployed, there's a perception that you are a failure, you are incompetent, or are incapable of completing the task at hand. This is particular to Turkey, but it also results from Turkey's status as a developing nation. You can't explain this either, it just is what it is. Even if you are the best employee in the world, you will still lose your job. I always tell friends who have lost their jobs. This is due to the fact that it is a capitalist rule. Due to the arrival of a young worker who can perform this task more affordably than you. It's not your failure that you're unemployed. It's not a matter of success or failure. It's one of capitalism's accomplishments. It enables you to personalise everything. You say "it's my fault" rather than "it's unfair, it's injustice." A friend of ours recently lost his job and was told by human resources that "You're not the seed of this soil" (*he laughs*). So he came to me and immediately he was like, "I'm incompetent."

Interviewee 5: I had a job of course but a freelance job that was a very serious problem. It served as evidence of my failure, the proof of my incompetency. Furthermore, freelancing is unsafe because sometimes you can't get paid and you can't demand your rights. I mean, I have experienced a few instances of such

humiliation. They also cause you to break internally. Anyway, once you get into the mind-set of feeling like a failure, you prove it in every way. I was feeling very unsuccessful. The precariousness of the work I was doing...I mean, people in my family got sick and I couldn't take them to the hospital with a car because I don't have a car, I don't have any money to help them, or to support them... And so, I don't know, for example, while my mother was having surgery, I was working. I was trying to catch up with work, because I have to catch up, if I don't, I can't get a job there again. Of course, if social justice in Turkey was a little more robust, I wouldn't feel so insecure.

After all, thanks to one of my interviewees, I learned about a brand-new concept to describe this state of mind: job-related suffering²⁸. The word derives from the discipline of "workplace health" (*santé au travail*) in France, which is based on the French legacy of social resistance and the integrity of critical social sciences. Job-related suffering is the outcome of systematic violence inherent in the working conditions that sustain capitalist production.

It is a serious environmental impact that cannot be attributed to the good or poor intentions of employees, bosses, supervisors, and colleagues. This is "work organisation induced violence," and it is a type of violence that is rarely made visible due to the consequences, that is rarely considered a crime, that the main decision makers cover up with a digitising language, and that is highly scientificised in fields such as industrial engineering, human resources, and organisational psychology. This violence primarily causes mental and physical pain, which sometimes kills abruptly but typically leads to sickness, weariness, death, and suicide (Umman, 2022, foreword by Odman, p.12). Aslı Odman defines the term as one of the symptoms of the commodity production system in which living labour becomes dead labour, and she proposes to apply it to three categories

²⁸ Aslı Odman adapted the original term "*souffrance au travail*" into Turkish as "Çalışma Acısı". Her English translation suggestion for the phrase is "job-related suffering" (Personal e-mail, November 16, 2022).

of capitalist work organisation symptoms: The first is sudden, work-related deaths, which is referred to as "fatal occupational accidents"; the second is work-related diseases and deaths, which is referred to as "spread over time work-related homicides" and which are literally left out of data, undiagnosed, and obscure in Turkey; and finally, "job-related suffering" as a meta-concept to combine the psychosocial risks that cause damage to the psyche and mind of the employees (p.13). The issues in the third category are what make the concept of job-related suffering particularly relevant in my research. Rather than workplace accidents and deaths, suffering of the mind and soul, which is more prevalent among white-collar workers, is the source of their urge to form solidarity organizations as well as the source of their lack of class solidarity. The concept of job-related suffering could suggest the causes for the mind-set that creates both a need for and an obstacle to white collar solidarity.

During the research, I observed that people employ various efforts and, sometimes distortions that can be referred to as coping mechanisms to deal with the pain of work. These efforts manifest in forms such as normalising conditions, resorting to nihilism, and experiencing alienation. However, another coping mechanism involves forming networks of solidarity, which constitutes the main focus of the second theme of this study.

Need for creative and contemporary organisation and resistance practices

Traditional methods of organizing workers do not effectively represent white-collar workers, despite the fact that traditional labour unions are now gradually beginning to address these issues. White-collar workers are not sufficiently impacted by the ideologies, jargons, and traditional left-socialist strategies of the pre-1980s. These unions struggle to understand the lifestyle of young, educated, urban white-collar workers, as well as the influence of Turkish politics and culture on their perspective on life. White-collar solidarities must therefore adopt a different perspective in terms of both the language used and the organisational strategies.

Interviewee 3: Understanding the sociological differences among white-collar workers is important. All labour unions started being politically active before the 1980s, so they are only familiar with that time's arguments. Only that language,

that culture, and that attitude are familiar to them. Young workers' perspective on life and mind-set however, are different. We cannot communicate with them in pre-1980 concepts. Even if we say the same thing, their differing political ideologies and worldviews will cause them to understand it in a different way. We are established to reduce this gap.

Interviewee 5: When we first started organising, we predicted that white-collar workers would face issues such as low pay, long work hours, and possibly mobbing. However, our research yielded unexpected results. For example, there was a problem with confidentiality. Things we talked about under this topic were interesting. This displeased many people. Nobody can tell each other their salaries because the company forbids it. Of course, they tell, but they also pretend not to. Because this is an awkward situation, and dangerous... So, for example, one day, friends work overtime at night, but they also take the opportunity to socialise and hang out together. Then one of them discovers the entire company's salary list. It may be more difficult now, but there was a network connecting all computers and printers back then, and the network was available to all. They leaked the salary list to the rest of the company that night, including all printers. When everyone comes in the morning, they see the lists with everyone's salaries. And of course, there is a mess (*laughs*). Some people quit, some people's salaries have to be increased. So just the loss of salary confidentiality completely changes the system, there is such a thing.

Employees frequently take advantage of legal loopholes or irregularities when they cannot acquire their rights. They seek to establish their own justice system in order to protect themselves. Some methods are shared by word-of-mouth, and it can be accepted as a form of solidarity between white-collars. For example, one provision within the Turkish

Republic's Labour Law enables women who get married to be eligible for severance pay. It is sometimes called "marriage compensation". Although this right might appear to be an example of positive discrimination, it sometimes can promote the exclusion of women from the workforce. According to this practice, women can receive severance pay if they resign within one year from the date of their marriage. Women who want to leave the workplace where they have laboured for years, use this right in order to get severance pay, and in a way, they can choose to attack the system with their own weapons because there is no other way to get their rights.

Interviewee 6: When I left my job, I asked for my severance pay; at first, they said they would give it to me, but they changed their minds a week or two before my termination date. My boss actually wants to give it to me, but the other partners don't agree, and he said "We must do this for everyone if we do it for you. In fact, why don't you marry someone? You'd get it then, you know..." Of course, I had considered this option before (*laughs*). Then I married a close friend in order to get my severance pay. You notify human resources that you are leaving due to your marriage, and the money is deposited directly into your account. Following that, women messaged me on LinkedIn, saying things like, "I heard you did something like that, but how does it work exactly, I wonder if I should do it too." I liked that a little bit, it is an anecdote about my accomplishments (*laughs*). These should be on my resume.

In addition to all of this, white-collar workers may see themselves as belonging to the upper classes of society due to their education, the environment and culture in which they grew up, or their profession. This can be called an illusion by some, can be seen as the reality of society, or even called some kind of "professional deformation". Although this situation is beyond the scope of this study, it can be viewed as one of the reasons that white-collar organising is especially difficult or that there is a need to develop innovative organising methods.

Interviewee 9: And after all, organising lawyers is a difficult task, it is really challenging. We are a very annoying professional group, in that we are people who know everything or pretend to know everything as a professional reflex. On the one hand, there is the reality that when a task comes up, you cannot say you don't know. You must claim to know everything. Following that, you must learn what you don't know without informing the other party. This is now a reflex among all lawyers in response to the attitude in everyday life. In other words, we are dealing with a professional group that says, "I know, I already know best" when confronted with something, and we are attempting to organise this, which leads us to the point where we need to enrich or develop our approaches.

3.3.2. Theme 2: Coping Strategies

White-collar workers have undoubtedly developed a variety of responses to the issues described in the first theme. Although alienation was previously mentioned as a factor of job-related suffering, it also can be viewed as a coping and adaptation mechanism. Employees' alienation from their work and from themselves as a result of disappointments, burnout, and dissatisfaction from the work, or as a result of not having complete control over their lives and their time, is also a coping mechanism for the pain they experience. It is a similar concept in psychology called as dissociation²⁹ which is a protection mechanism to deal with the pressure of the current situation by distancing oneself from the present, the environment, and from their own. My interviewees often

²⁹ Dissociation has come to represent a variety of phenomena and constructs, ranging from altered experiences of detachment from the self or surroundings, and a lack of integration between various mental processes, to a presumed defence mechanism that functions to alleviate ongoing anxiety or pain (Cardena, 1994 p. 27). Even if there is no clear agreement on what dissociation "is," the term often reflects a trauma response that manifests as a consciousness shift characterised by disconnection/disengagement from the self or the environment (p.22).

quoted from a TV series *Severance*³⁰, when trying to describe how they felt, like “If I can severe myself successfully at the workplace, I suffer less”. Even one of the solidarity networks organised events to watch and discuss the series during the pandemic.

Interviewee 1: My current relationship with work is about continuing to live my life. I can't say I enjoy my job or that I love it; I'm disgusted and I despise it. Also, it is a job that is closely related to large amounts of money. The companies I do business with are companies that have money, and I don't want to do business with them, I don't want them to make a profit either. But I've been ignoring those thoughts for a while now and I can do business with anyone, even with the government which I am against. Every time I go to my office, I am disappointed because it seems like I would always be expected to act as someone else.

Interviewee 8: I experience a profound sense of emptiness due to the work I'm doing. Because many of the things we do, don't actually make sense; that is, they are not unnecessary of course but they alienate you. All day you repeatedly press Ctrl + C, Ctrl + V, Ctrl + C, and it goes on and on... Do you understand? It's always been automated in this way, you know. I mean, one of the biggest problems in general is the alienation of employees from their work. When you can't find meaning in what you do, then your feet start to go backwards in the morning. This leads you to inner troubles like "what am I doing?" But, on the other hand, you're still living in some way. The balance of being able to continue living in some way

³⁰ *Severance* is a U.S. television series first released in February 18, 2022 in which the main character, Mark, leads a group of office workers whose memories have been surgically separated from their personal lives. When they enter their workplaces, their memory shifts to a different "self," and they don't remember the time they spent in office, until they return home. When a strange co-worker comes outside of work, an adventure to find the truth about their jobs begins (Internet Movie Database-*IMDB*, 2022).

has always fascinated me. Why don't we go insane? Like, by suddenly tearing our shirts or something (*laughs*).

Interviewee 6: As an individual, I mean really, really, if you stop and think about it, “what am I doing? What will I serve? Why? do I want this?” You would go crazy, that's how I see this thing called work.

Interviewee 4: I don't attribute much value to my work anymore. Work shouldn't be what defines my existence. I wish everyone felt this way, by the way. Because for many people, it is the place where we spend the most time in our lives, our sociability is established there, etc. For me, my job is just something that helps me to continue my life.

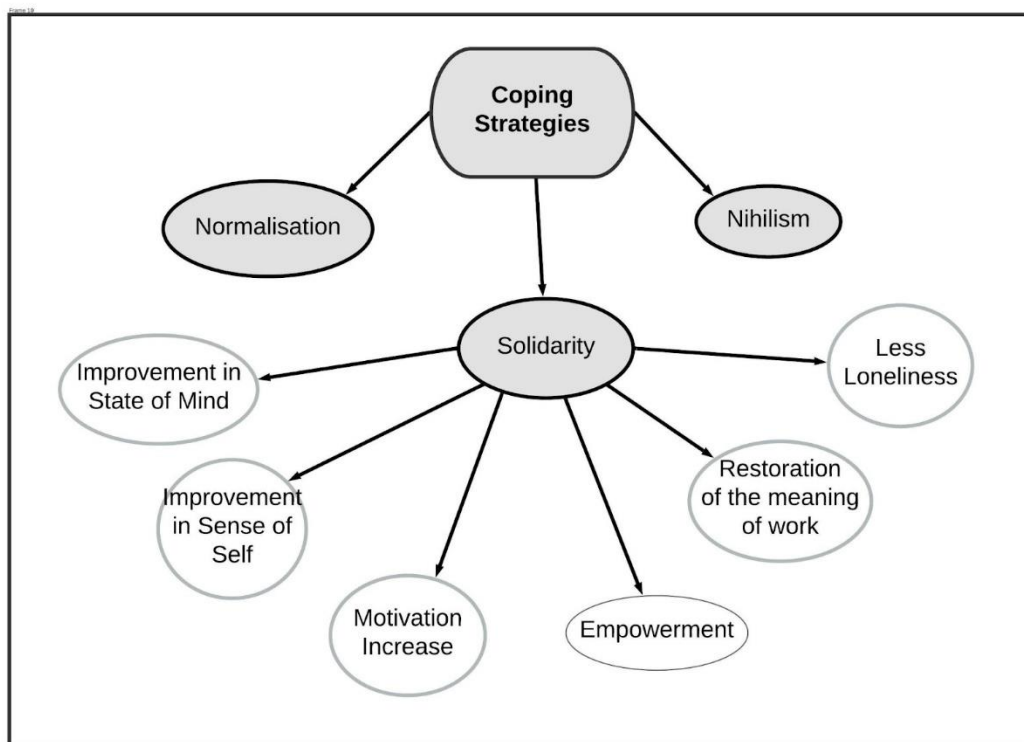
Two fundamental and —at first glance— conflicting ways of thinking emerged in my interviewees' statements as coping mechanisms. The first one includes *normalisation* and *nihilism*, which are types of thinking that can be characterised as realistic or pessimistic, depending on one's perspective, and is claimed to be the acceptance of the current reality. This first way of thinking sees people as passive recipients and ultimately the victims of reality that already exists. Therefore, it is easy to conclude that it stands in a disempowering position. However, the alternative way of thinking, which is examined under the concept of *solidarity* in this study from the outset, while accepting reality as it is, also carries the belief that this reality needs to change and that the ultimate power to create this change is in the hands of those who are exposed to it, gives its actors the power to alter and transform life, society, and reality itself. Figure 11 illustrates these three basic mentalities as sub-themes of *Coping Strategies*, as well as the major influences of being in a solidarity group on individuals.

Interviewee 4: I think the "we are all specks of dust in the universe" nonsense is all propaganda. Our tiny worlds aren't all that small. Okay, space, universe, whatever are all scientific facts, but this mentality is all propaganda for "you are helpless, you are small, and you have no influence in the world." Yes, you and I have little effect,

but when I consider what thousands of people did together 200 years ago and what they left behind in our world, I understand that "I am not that insignificant." Being in solidarity alters the way you interpret history. In that way, you realise how significant you are.

Figure 11

Coping Strategies



Normalisation

Normalization is a coping mechanism characterized by the acceptance of the present circumstances as normal, regardless of its deviation from the expected or ideal. In the workplace, this may be caused by a variety of factors, such as preventing employees from using their talents, forcing them to perform tasks well below their level of expertise after years of hard work, or preventing them from doing their jobs well out of self-censorship or the desire of capital owners to adapt to the political climate. Workers occasionally even have to put up with harsh treatment from co-workers or managers. To

deal with issues like the degeneration of their skills, extreme dissatisfaction from their jobs, mobbing and the loss of meaning in their work, employees may choose numbness and to normalise everything.

Interviewee 1: I work as a visual designer. When a customer requests something that is inconvenient from a designer's perspective, or something that is not pleasing to the eyes, or something that should not normally be in a draft, I immediately say "Yes, I can do it" and I do it (*laughs*)! I fought for it for a long time, telling customers "no, this is wrong, we shouldn't do that," but I didn't see any results. When you tell your boss, "in terms of design, this element should not be here, it should be like this and that, and so on..." "No, it should be like this," he says. Why? Because the one above him desires it. Now you say okay, and you do what he wants.

Interviewee 8: After a while, you grow numb to everyday occurrences and start to accept them as the norm. When I first started working here, I used to come over and tell my girlfriend "Look what just happened today! Isn't that awkward?", "Isn't it awful?", "Isn't it absurd?" etc... I eventually stopped telling her that kind of stuff because I started to see everything as normal over time.

Interviewee 9: Honestly, I did not encounter such a thing much in my internship. When you couldn't complete the task or made a mistake, they were obviously upset, shouting at you, and insulting you, but perhaps these are a little more understandable. I'm unsure, but perhaps not. Wait, actually, these are really awful things. Due to how common these behaviours are in our industry right now, it might not seem very disturbing to me, I don't know.

Interviewee 10: Everyone now seems to view work as a sign of inferiority, in my opinion. Labour has evolved into a humiliating practice. For example, no one wants to be a worker, which, in my opinion, is one of the causes of our lack of class consciousness as lawyers. Our lawyers do not accept that they are workers. Because it is well known that workers are exploited, humiliated, and have a boss who gives orders, gives small wages, exploits and bullies them. Nobody wants to accept this truth for themselves. "OK, I am being exploited, they are humiliating me, they are mobbing me", this is something that bugs your brain and soul. People will think about it when they go home, "I went to work today, and I was mobbed, exploited, and humiliated." Instead, it appears that an illusion is being attempted to be created here. I'm referring to arguments like, "But at least they pay good money, but at least there is a nice environment, but at least they dress stylishly, and we all come to work in style." In my opinion, these come about as a result of both humiliation and alienation.

Nihilism

Nihilism is a philosophical idea that refers to the denial of all values, beliefs, future possibilities, and hope. Under the influence of current post-modern circumstances, this idea has taken on the status of the zeitgeist rather than being merely a philosophical concept. As a result, it is possible to see how it affects the workplace. Employees who feel that challenges and unfavourable circumstances are unavoidable in the workplace, as well as that injustices and inequalities are inevitable components of their workday, hold the opinion that it is pointless to try to overcome obstacles or alter these circumstances.

Normalization and nihilism represent contrasting philosophical perspectives. Normalization, as a mind-set, involves accepting the current state of affairs as normal, irrespective of its deviation from expected or ideal standards. It often serves as a coping

mechanism to navigate challenging situations. On the other hand, nihilism is a more existential philosophy that rejects traditional values, beliefs, and meaning. Nihilists often question the inherent purpose or significance in life, asserting that existence lacks inherent meaning or value. While normalization seeks comfort in conformity, nihilism challenges the very foundations of conventional understanding and embraces a more existential scepticism.

In this context, nihilism appears to be a more hopeful understanding in terms of transforming the existing reality. However, adopting this attitude leads to passivity, inactivity and subordination among white-collar workers.

Interviewee 3: In fact, people have lost faith in everything. Actually, I think we are in a new Middle Ages. This is connected to the collapse of certain paradigms.

People don't believe in anything anymore. We discussed it yesterday, for example, everybody aware that Turkey is currently experiencing a massive brain drain. This is very common, especially in the white-collar world. Engineers and other professionals are attempting to migrate whenever possible. We can't ask why people are leaving. But we must also stay and try to create change. Leaving the country to save yourself was once considered shameful; today, it is considered very normal. This indicates the downfall of a paradigm. After all, we have lost hope.

We need utopias, we need to believe that things can change. Okay, there are many reasons for us to lose faith, countless reasons. However, you cannot live without faith. What are you going to do? I mean, you go to Germany and live a partially better life, but you are still a labour force there, and there is exploitation there as well. We used to believe that we could change the world, but we no longer do. That is why I believe the situation is far worse. Because socialism, Marxism, was an alternative at the time. It is still an option, but people don't believe in it anymore. Because this is the only world they know.

Interviewee 4: The new youth is like a bomb, they call it Generation Z or whatever... But they are the total opposite, like "The Right to be Lazy" nonsense, they don't want to accomplish anything. Of course, this again is the result of leftists' obviously unsatisfactory politics. But, I don't know, there seems to be a tremendous depoliticisation. No, there are astrology, energy, healing stones, and other things. All of them, in my opinion, are connected to nihilism, or, more specifically, to a lack of organisation. People are now obsessed with astrology, energy, healing stones, meditation, yoga and other stuff... All of them, I believe, are related to nihilism, that is, to a lack of political action. Because as far as I understand, we all share the same observation "yeah, we are in a disastrous situation". However, the answers to who is guilty and how we will find a solution are highly internal to the system. It seems obvious to me that discussing one's thoughts, ambitions, beliefs, or whatever it is that one wishes to realise would strengthen one's determination. But of course, there are millions of people who argue this, who say "no, individualism is more important, individual politicisation is more important, organisation is this and that..." there are also a lot of people who are against organising. They may have very valid points, but I believe that any political point of view, even the individualism that modernity and urban life promotes, should be debated and fed by somebody else, even if no organisation exists.

Solidarity

Unfair treatment and injustice at work can, of course, be addressed in other ways as well. The struggle of the working class for better working conditions is a never-ending story in history. However, the bedrock of the working class' struggle is solidarity, and

today this value is the one being destroyed the most. Without compassion, sympathy, communication, unity, altruism, and hope, the fight for better circumstances is restricted to the pursuit of personal liberation strategies. Therefore, movements that seek to restore the whole spirit of solidarity among white-collar workers, which is the group where these values have been severely undermined, are the most promising. Unlike weakening and individualising coping mechanisms, white-collar solidarity networks empower rather than hinder employees. Regardless of the debilitating workplace conditions that make employees feel helpless and as if there is no way out, solidarity organisations provide positive transformations and improvements in their general well-being and working conditions (Figure 11).

The first shift experienced by white-collar workers who have interacted with solidarity organisations —whether they organise because they are predisposed to solidarity, or they are organised by their friends, or if they organise because they are acquainted with oppositional movements (although the leftists have never been the dominant party in politics, the leftist tradition in Turkey is very deep-rooted and strong, and young people at least get acquainted with it in college years)— is the realisation of "I am not alone!" As it is stated in the first theme, the largest challenge for white-collar workers who got isolated due to company culture or the model they work (as in the case of freelancers) is believing that they are the only ones facing the problems they encounter. Workers in solidarity organisations experience *less loneliness* and claim that getting together with people who have similar problems, sharing their common problems, and looking for solutions together —even if the problem cannot be solved— creates a significant transformation in their lives, and that being in solidarity is one of the most life-changing experiences they have had.

Interviewee 1: I discovered that there were others who experienced the same issues as me. *Ofissizler* served as a gathering place for me to meet folks who shared my worries and had similar difficulties. Since I shared these difficulties with other people, I enjoyed looking for a solution to them, taking action to address them, and collaborating with them.

Interviewee 3: *Plaza Eylem Platformu (PEP)* is a place where people can talk about their problems, learn how to deal with them, and then attempt to organise from there. It can also sometimes make it possible for certain achievements in the workplace. For instance, mobbing today is a well-known concept, although this wasn't always the case. One of our friends found a job and started attending *Plaza Eylem Platformu* as soon as she did. Someone at work who shows her how to do things, but while doing so, he teases, laughs at and annoys our friend. One day, she had asked him for a coffee during their break. She confronts him there and says, "Maybe you don't realise it, but you treat me like such. There is a term for this in the law, mobbing." She warns him that people are sued for doing this. And, of course, he is terrified and will not repeat such behaviour. She clearly had won; she applied the skills which she acquired in the solidarity.

Interviewee 4: For me, for example, it was very important to be able to establish a communication network among NGO workers. I think even that feeling itself is very valuable. I mean, the fact that people who do not know each other but who work in the same profession have come together. Because everyone thinks that only they are experiencing it, but even talking, speaking out, daring to speak out is something that makes you feel very strong. The fact that *Umut-Sen* has been able to establish a network of influence among people, such as "there is an *Umut-Sen* there that I can contact when I need it," is quite valuable.

Interviewee 8: You meet many people in Turkey who have experienced the same thing as you did and discover that you are not the only one who struggles. The greatest beauty of solidarity is knowing that you give people hope when they have issues similar to yours.

Additionally, once employees organise together to solve their own problems, they start acting with a sense of responsibility for their organisation. People who fight for their rights in solidarity feel stronger and more resilient than those who fight or try to survive alone, and they are more inclined to continue resisting even when they encounter conditions of despair and failure.

Interviewee 2: Perhaps my need to escape my loneliness is what led me to *Ofissizler*. The fact that I can discuss the same issues and concerns with others greatly motivates me. You can deal with these things on your own to a point, but beyond that, you can find it difficult to handle the loneliness and choose to compromise your values in favour of a more pragmatic way of living. When you are together, you tend to stay on the route. Because you also feel a responsibility to your friends and your organisation. You all share the same problems, and you laugh at your mistakes and tackle the problems together.

Interviewee 4: *Umut-Sen* makes something like this possible, and I believe there is a great need for this; "I'm not that alone actually," "there is someone who can help me". I feel less lonely because there are people with whom I can discuss politics, and I am around those who share my beliefs and with whom I can work to make the world a better place. I really saw things here that I did not see from my family. For example, in my family, money is a very important thing. In a household of relatively lower-middle class civil servants, there is a continual relationship of debt, a constant need for money, a need to protect your money, etc. For instance, *Umut-Sen* taught me very well, money isn't such a big deal; it can be found. They always like "Look how many folks we have here!"

The roles of solidarity organisations become even more crucial in capitalist societies where everything is progressively getting more precarious, the welfare state model has crumbled, and people may have to take on debt to cover even the most basic

needs like food and housing. Where governmental institutions fail to offer the social security that they are obligated to provide, people resist the fear of hunger that dominates their everyday lives via solidarity organisations which appear as social safety nets. Solidarities are crucial in ensuring security in a variety of facets of people's lives. Even if it is not yet systematically offered to white-collar workers, these community-based organisations frequently offer some form of housing, healthcare, or educational help to support the wellbeing of their actors. Solidarity groups can quickly assemble during times of crisis, such as natural catastrophes or political unrest, to offer assistance and support to the affected people and communities. These groups work to guarantee that people's fundamental needs are satisfied and their rights are upheld by encouraging a spirit of cooperation and mutual aid. As a result, it is possible to experience a sense of overall *empowerment*.

Interviewee 3: Seriously, the reason I was able to work as a freelancer for so long was because I was constantly involved with solidarity groups. I did survive because of such a collaboration. My friends shared their meals with me, I stayed at their houses when necessary, and so on. I didn't even feel poor when I was penniless. This continued both before and after we created the *Plaza Eylem Platformu*.

Interviewee 4: *Umut-Sen* gives me the feeling that, certainly, there are people I can rely on if I lose my job. Of course, everyone has friends or something to rely on, an organisation is a network of social relationships after all. But how can I put it... Even if there is no threat of you being unemployed or whatever, when you have an agenda in your organisation about "what can we do if one of us becomes unemployed?" you also develop answers, so I trust that as well. As a result, I don't feel alone.

Solidarity organisations help people become stronger in a variety of ways by providing them the sense that they are not alone in the face of a wide range of challenges that may arise in a lifetime. For example, just like everything else, Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on the activities of solidarity organisations. Contrary to assumptions, they began

to come together more during this time when it was difficult to get together and work on any topic. Despite the fact that the pandemic has badly impacted many organisations, the benefits of being organised for people cannot be denied. While the loneliness and isolation created by labour conditions were not widely discussed before the pandemic, as employees began working from home, it was realised that isolation is as hazardous to public health as the virus itself (World Health Organization, 2020). Solidarity has also been able to safeguard people from these harms.

Interviewee 6: When I listen to some negative experiences, I don't feel as lonely, which is probably why I feel better with solidarity. For example, as *Politeknik*, we continued weekly meetings online during the pandemic. We even increased the number of the meetings from every two weeks to once a week, and because we conducted it online, everyone could join. As a result, we had a very busy schedule every week and we never felt completely isolated. Then, since the restrictions had already begun to loosen somewhat and the weather had begun to warm up, we started to gather in the parks, etc. Therefore, it was a fact that *Politeknik* made that process easier. I mean, we didn't stay idle, especially at the beginning of the pandemic. We collaborated with other white-collar organisations and gathered more often. I didn't feel lonely because of the activities at *Politeknik*. You spend all of your time at home and are quite bored, but everyone was there at the meeting. Therefore, if there is productivity, there is no loneliness my friends (*laughs*).

Interviewee 7: Without my involvement with *Politeknik*, I probably would have felt lonely. Everything felt as usual, as if there were no pandemic. We were still having conversations and attending meetings. We may have been outdoors less, but we still handled it well. So I don't consider myself alone throughout the pandemic.

Furthermore, sharing experiences and realising that these experiences are not uncommon, creates another significant transformation in workers. They acknowledge the

fact that their issues are widespread, and unfair practices are systematic. *An improvement in employees' sense of self and state of mind* results from their realisation that the issues they encounter and the challenges they confront are not primarily attributable to their own flaws or inadequacies and that the goal of the workplace and the current system is to make employees feel inadequate. They see that they should not embrace the feelings of failure, inadequacy, worry, precariousness, and loneliness that are imposed on them; in other words, they become ideologically driven and politically charged.

Interviewee 10: I was essentially in my second year of practice as a lawyer and I don't know what I should do next. Should I apply to firms? Should I take the exams? Should I work in the public sector, but I don't want to limit myself, blah blah blah... So I was experiencing such anxiety. When I first met our solidarity group, I realised that I am not alone and that there are others who are fighting alongside me. I saw that this was not my personal problem, that it was not specific to a person, but rather a systemic problem, a kind of attack on young lawyers. What motivated me to come here and fight was the realisation that this problem was not isolated, that it was not due to my lack of competence, but was rather a systematic problem. First and foremost, I became aware of myself here. Following that, I felt obliged to work in order to increase this awareness and solve these challenges.

Interviewee 4: Well, it's vital to start by viewing life from that perspective, of course. It's not because I'm stupid, unfortunate, or that this organisation is like that; it's because the system is entirely like that. Therefore, you punish yourself less, are less miserable, and feel stronger when you view things from a larger perspective. And you realise that you have options for dealing with it. Let's say, you feel less depressed. Many workers are oppressed with dishonour, I mean, what does it mean to ask permission to go to the toilet? It means oppressing a worker. And this

oppression can go on forever, unfortunately, so finding the strength to rebel against that oppression is a big thing.

Interviewee 7: Solidarity made me feel better. For example, I used to be less demanding, I mean about work, I had problems like demanding higher salaries. Because I was uncomfortable talking about such things. I still am a little bit, but for example, in my old workplace, although everyone worked on Saturdays, I was the only one who demanded and received that I would not work on Saturdays once a month. In fact, in the company people still ask me about how I could manage to get that right. I started my current company as a demanding person, you know, I wanted some things. Solidarity made me more demanding in this regard. And it felt good to ask for things and get them. I think I still have some steps to overcome, but my friends in our organisation have been helpful in that respect.

As workers come together in solidarity organisations to discuss their negative experiences and potential solutions, they not only find healing and support but also become more empowered dealing with employers. By sharing their stories and strategies for addressing workplace issues, workers can develop a deeper understanding of their rights and the ways in which they can advocate for themselves and their colleagues. As a result, solidarity movements can evolve into powerful forces for labour activism and social change. As workers gain confidence and support from their peers, they are better equipped to negotiate with employers for fair wages, safe working conditions, and other essential rights. Additionally, solidarity organisations can provide a platform for workers to engage in collective action, such as strikes or boycotts, to bring attention to their concerns and put pressure on employers to address them. Ultimately, the solidarity movement not only helps workers heal and recover from negative workplace experiences, but also strengthens their ability to fight for their rights and improve their working conditions.

Interviewee 4: *Umut-Sen* aims to strengthen all the workers it can touch in Turkey against working conditions that have turned into a form of capital accumulation,

and to make them stronger against the boss. This definitely makes me feel much stronger. To make workers earn five while they are earning three is just a means for us. The real important thing is the empowerment of them. They of course know intuitively "I don't deserve what I am going through right now. I can stand against this." However, many of them do not even know that they need to get a copy of every document they sign. We tell every worker, and our lawyers constantly explain this. We empower workers legally. Then we look to see if there is a worker with whom we have previously established a relationship in that workplace, we try to reach out, have a cup of tea, and talk about what's going on there. "The boss is like this, mandatory overtime is like that, and so on..." Okay, do you have a friend you can talk to about this in the workplace? "Yes." Okay, let's talk to them. Empowerment actually happens with a process like this. We equip workers with knowledge, and now they are familiar with the tactics of the employer. When they enter the workplace, they see everything with a different perspective after that. We are trying to make the workers show up as strong as possible. This empowerment is not something that will ever be forgotten easily. For example, even if there is no material gain from a worker's resistance, those workers will go everywhere with resistance memories. And our relationship always continues with them, "What can I do here when something like this happens, what can we do?" perspective goes with them everywhere. They never become the old workers again. When we talk about empowerment, we are talking about this. When you realise that what you are going through is not an exception, that the nature of capitalist work is exploiting you through this very relationship. Even if you are not organised, your boss can step back a bit if they realise that you know your rights.

Although working less or not working at all can sometimes be perceived as the core of white-collar struggle, this was not the impression I got from my interviews. Blue-collar workers may perceive their job as a duty that requires them to complete repetitive tasks within a specific time frame in exchange for a wage, which can be due to the nature of their job that does not involve much variation or require specialised skills. Nevertheless, for white-collar workers, the interpretation assigned to work can be far more intricate. White-collar workers tend to view work as something that should have meaning and purpose. They often seek fulfilment in their life via their careers, and their professional lives can have a significant impact on their sense of self and way of living. As a result, frustration in the workplace can generate a desire not to work or searching shortcuts for making more money while working less; to devote additional free time to personal pursuits. However, I have arrived at the conclusion that workers can be able to derive joy or contentment from their professions when they are granted the opportunity to exercise their expertise in a manner that resonates with their core values and beliefs. When people work in humane conditions and earn a decent wage, they are more likely to value productivity and contributing to society. Solidarity among workers can have a positive impact on these aspects as well. Instead of viewing work as a burdensome activity to be avoided, it can be an opportunity for individuals to demonstrate their skills, achieve self-realisation, and give meaning to their daily experiences. By promoting awareness of this potential, solidarity can help *restore the meaning of work*. Organisations that foster solidarity among people with similar professions can help *increase motivation*, and provide a platform for learning that may not be available in a competitive work environment.

Interviewee 10: Working, producing, being useful is something that always makes me happy. You know, when I was a trainee or a worker lawyer, when I completed a job properly, I felt a sense of moral satisfaction. In my own trial files, this meant something different for me, especially in political cases. Because I started to see the projection of my specialty.

Interviewee 2: Well, I do a very technical job for example. I think my main need was to connect with my work. After I met with the Free Software Association, I realised what I am doing is actually creating and sharing knowledge. I create

significance for my profession and hope to share my knowledge with others. So solidarity was quite beneficial to me because I knew what I was doing, which greatly inspired me.

One of my exceptional interviewees discusses the purpose and necessity of living a productive life for people without being exploited (in a way that gives you goose bumps), eliminating the need for any additional explanation on this subject;

Interviewee 5: The Right to be Lazy³¹, in my opinion, is a right to labour. I mean, laziness, as it occurs to us at this moment, requires someone to work for it.

Someone should work so you can be idle. This is not possible if you are not the boss. The idea of "work" would still exist, in my opinion, even if employment were not necessary. I believe the concept of work would have been invented by people in any case. Because it is a mechanism for participating in society. Are you familiar with the Doctor Who³² series? In one episode, the world collapsed and people started flooding into space on a whale's back. Society seems fairly in order, but there is a strange system of punishment. They give the whale electric shocks to keep it moving forward and throw naughty children to the whale as bait. A whale will suffer so that the world can live, or a few bad kids will suffer so that order can be restored. The crucial point in the story is this; everyone is informed that at a certain age the whale suffers and is presented with two buttons. If you press the first button, the whale's pain will end, but so will life. If you press the second button, the

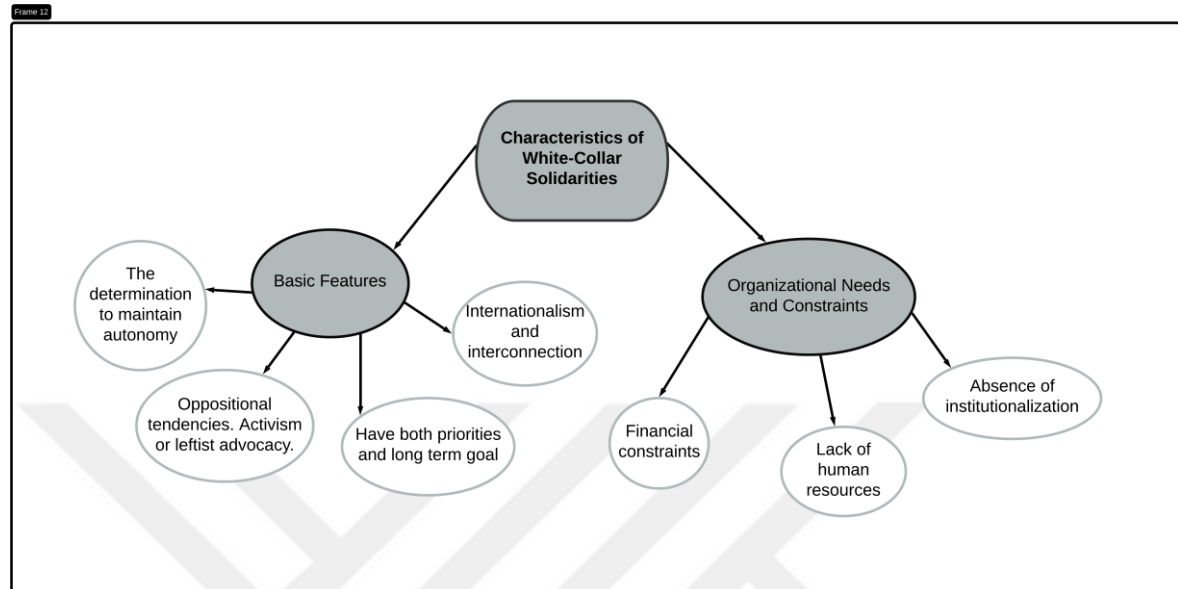
³¹ *The Right to be Lazy* was written by Paul Lafargue and released in 1883 (French: *Le Droit à la Paresse*). In it, mainly, instead of the labour movement's fundamental goal of raising wages, Lafargue suggests abolishing or limiting labour.

³² *Doctor Who* is a British science fiction television programme broadcasted by the BBC since 1963.

information that the whale is suffering will be erased from your memory and the system will continue in the same way. Everyone presses the second button and in this way, that whale has been suffering and carrying life on its back for centuries. Then, of course, the hero of the series presses the first button and saves the whale from suffering. And the whale continues to carry people on its back. The whale doesn't need to suffer that pain. The whale had already shown up after the world collapsed and offered its help, wanting to fit in and contribute in some way. Now this is the problem about working. We do not have the opportunity for owing. We do not have the opportunity to offer anything to society. You are born already indebted. So we don't have a chance to say "let me give it to you and you give it to me". Today I was born in debt anyway, so I have to give. I must. And this desire of mine, that is, my desire to give, is actually exploited by the system. I'm the whale, I'll give it to you anyway, and it is my desire. I'm already going to make bread, build bakeries, and make shoes, I don't know, I want to produce, I want to join the society, or because I want to have something from you, I want to give something. Could I explain? But you are taking this opportunity from me. You are exploiting my desire.

3.3.3. Theme 3: Characteristics of White-Collar Solidarities

In order to define white-collar solidarity organisations, I separated their characteristics into two sub-themes (as shown in Figure 12). The first sub-theme covers some of the basic features of white-collar solidarity organisations based on the conditions they live in and the specific issues they face. The second is the organisational limits of white-collar solidarities, which are caused by their unique circumstances as well.

Figure 12*Characteristics of White-Collar Solidarities*

The fundamental characteristics and limitations of solidarity organisations are often intertwined, with one potentially being the cause or consequence of the other. Therefore, I have grouped them under the same thematic umbrella. For instance, their determination to maintain autonomy can lead to financial difficulties. While most organisations frequently engage in internal discussions about whether to search for funding from any association or institution, the outcome typically reflects their preference for autonomous decision-making and action.

Organisational Needs and Constraints**Financial constraints**

Organizationally, the solidarities under evaluation frequently share apparent weaknesses and remaining limitations. When asked about the most significant organisational difficulties they encounter, the initial response commonly revolves around the refrain, "We don't have money" (Interviewee 4, May 11, 2022). This frequently articulated sentiment reflects a recurring issue within these organisations. However, as mentioned earlier, this situation essentially reflects a conscious sacrifice made by these organisations. They choose to abstain from seeking financial support from any institution

and avoid becoming entwined with the political agenda of any particular political institution.

Interviewee 2: While we are not rigid in our beliefs, we make a conscious effort to refrain from receiving funding from any source for our activities. It seems that our work becomes more meaningful and fulfilling when it's done voluntarily, and we derive greater satisfaction from it in this manner. We appreciate the absence of a restrictive schedule, allowing us to do what we feel passionate about at our own pace and convenience. However, we do face occasional economic challenges, such as not having a proper space for meetings. There used to be a place called "hackerspace" in Kadıköy where we used to gather, which was truly excellent. It would be wonderful if it still existed, but on the other hand, maintaining such a space through volunteer efforts is not an easy task.

Financial constraints, on the other hand, directly contribute to the shortage of human resources. If individuals dedicating their efforts to organisational matters could also sustain their livelihoods through this labour, undoubtedly, the gains and impacts of these organisational efforts would reach significantly different dimensions.

Interviewee 4: I wish we had a solidarity network where, for instance, friends who manage our social media accounts could solely focus on this task, and we could at least provide them with compensation to cover their basic needs.

The lack of human resources

Within the general flow of life, devoting a serious portion of one's limited energy and time to solidarity organisations —without expecting substantial return— creates one of the most significant shortcomings. Furthermore, this issue is directly linked to the challenges that solidarity organisations seek to address in their agenda. Long, exhausting work hours and draining life conditions makes it difficult for everybody to engage in activism during their free time.

Interviewee 3: Imagine you've just come home from work. You will be sitting at home watching Netflix, YouTube, or scrolling through Instagram —there are so many alternatives. However, we are proposing something different, which is a difficult thing. Even more, we propose it to the people who may not believe in it much. It's a very difficult task, but there's no other option.

Interviewee 5: We don't have enough representation. Some of our friends went abroad, others have changed their profession. Some have gotten married and had children, and they can't spare the time anymore. Our committees are currently inactive, and we have a significant shortage of people. We lack individuals who can take on many responsibilities.

In the middle of all of these difficulties, the Covid-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the situation. Organisations who were already difficult to gather in person and try to operate, attempted to maintain their connections through online meetings at first. However, motivation and energy have significantly waned, leaving them depleted in terms of enthusiasm and drive. Majority of my interviewees have conveyed that being part of an organisation has provided resilience against the challenges posed by the pandemic, enhancing their individual psychological fortitude. However, it is evident that the conditions have reached a point of inactivity in terms of organisational viability.

Interviewee 5: During the pandemic, things didn't quite work out online. Since everyone's work is computer-based, online meetings became quite exhausting. We used to get together, have discussions, and engage in lengthy conversations, which were enjoyable. But that didn't last long. After a while, everyone started taking care only for themselves because things were getting increasingly challenging. Trying to do stuff through social media became very draining. Personal conversations continue, but there's no longer that sense of the organisation coming together, or

any activities for that matter. In other words, aside from essential communication, there's hardly any activity going on unless it's very necessary.

Absence of institutionalisation

The third point of concern is the lack of institutionalisation within these organisations. Establishing a proper balance between the decision to maintain autonomy, financial constraints, and a shortage of human resources complicates the institutionalization process. Nevertheless, the most pivotal factor in this regard is the attempt to establish a movement with relatively few precedents and an undeclared methodology.

At times, even when the method can ideally take shape in minds, putting it into practice can be challenging. Achieving institutionalisation with defined values presents a multi-faceted challenge that demands substantial effort and dedication for its resolution, and it stands as a formidable obstacle before all these solidarity organisations.

Interviewee 5: At one point, we unintentionally opposed institutionalisation while advocating for flexibility and autonomy. We've seen the significant drawbacks of this approach. Without institutionalisation, ensuring equity becomes uncertain. There should be clear rules and a certain rhythm; certain aspects regarding how tasks are allocated are crucial. If we could have transformed into an institution, everyone would have benefited. I'm not talking about a highly structured, formal institution here. It's more about a system, something that everyone can be familiar with, easily perceivable, and accessible; a system that actually guarantees equality. It includes a mechanism for accountability, a mechanism for solidarity – a very clear mechanism of solidarity, one that won't undermine nearly anyone, won't allow anyone to fall. For instance, some had children, and because of that they couldn't stay connected to *Plaza Eylem Platformu*. There could be a duty to take care of

children, for example. In each meeting, someone could look after the children, and we could gather together. But this wouldn't be a formal, law-based arrangement; it would be based on voluntarism. Not because it relies on voluntarism but because it involves responsibility, with everyone having expectations and commitments to one another, similar to a mutual agreement.

White-collar solidarity organisations have numerous aspects that still require development. These organisations have quite limited spheres of influence, and their organisational structures exhibit irregularities. They do not currently possess the capacity to generate effective public awareness or exert political pressure in the various causes they advocate for.

Today, they lack the power to demand collective bargaining, unionise with confidence, or engage in organised struggles for their rights against employers. However, there are evident steps being taken on this path. Firstly, the pressure mechanisms are undeniably real, and poverty, hopelessness, and anxiety are on the rise. White-collar workers first need to confront their own inner worlds, their conditions, and the impact of their work lives on them. Subsequently, amidst all these developments in the world, white-collar workers need to understand their position within life and class dynamics and learn to cultivate a culture of struggle. The current state of white-collar solidarity organisations in Turkey serves this purpose for now. On the path to class consciousness, solidarity groups help individuals enhance their personal awareness. This is why solidarity meetings often become a form of group therapy. Revealing, sharing, accepting, and starting to brainstorm strategies for countering exploitation, mobbing, oppression, and loss of rights represent both the most fundamental issue and the most viable endeavour for solidarity organisations under current circumstances

Basic Features

In addition to the encountered difficulties and constraints, the organisations under examination also share certain seemingly immutable and rigid commonalities. Despite their flexible and diverse structures, they actually have specific ethical constants and

fundamental frameworks. These values are sometimes observed by the actors involved in group activities through past organisational experiences, sometimes acquired through trial and error, and some are established as foundational principles from the outset, with no room for debate regarding their effectiveness.

Determination to maintain autonomy

One of the most important basics is an ongoing debate within solidarity organisations revolving around the following questions: “Should we establish an association? Would having a legal status be advantageous or disadvantageous? Should we form a cooperative? Should we seek funding? Can we be considered a worker’s union?” Despite all the financial constraints and the difficulties associated with not having an institutional structure, this debate, at least for now, always ends with the same decision: remaining autonomous.

Interviewee 3: We never wanted to be a union or an association. There's no need to put it in a legal framework. First, we need to build a life that is politicised and woven with solidarity. Then, whatever comes out of this life will come naturally. If you look at it with conventional criteria, we don't have any tangible achievements. We haven't organised a political party, we haven't become a union, nothing like that. But we have such strong bonds, such solid relationships. One friend lives in the UK, another somewhere else. But when you need them, you always feel like you're together.

Furthermore, the Associations Act (*Dernekler Kanunu*) and the prerequisites for forming unions in Turkey, along with the Cooperative Law, contains regulations that solidarity groups have long criticised and deemed insufficient. For that matter, these deficiencies are the basic cause directing white collar workers to establish something different, creating entirely new structures that have never existed before rather than opting for associations, unions, or leftist parties.

Interviewee 9: Acquiring a legal status also entails legal obligations. We believe that the regulations governing associations are quite problematic. It creates a framework where everything needs approval from the ministry or is heavily scrutinised, and you are constantly required to report your activities to the government. There's a common perception in society that if something becomes an association or gains a corporate structure, it automatically becomes legal. In reality, that's not the case. The constitution recognizes the freedom of association for everyone, and the freedom of association is not something that becomes legitimate through specific legal frameworks. Our solidarity groups are entirely legitimate, legal forms of organisation. There's nothing unlawful here. We simply prefer a form of organisation that doesn't get too entangled with the advantages and disadvantages that associations offer.

Oppositional tendencies: Activism or leftist advocacy

The most prominent commonality, quite naturally, is that the actors who shape solidarity groups or take the initial steps towards organisation typically come from a leftist/socialist tradition, or at the very least, have always had a disposition towards opposition, even if they don't align strictly with such traditions.

Interviewee 9: This idea actually emerged during a discussion with a few friends from the organisation I'm a part of.

Interviewee 3: I'm already a socialist, and I've been involved in the socialist struggle movement since my university days.

Interviewee 5: I was always politically active and wanted to remain active. Even during my university years, I was involved in the student movement. Then, I

developed a fondness for organising, coming together, and doing things collectively if something needed to be done and so on.

When discussing oppositional tendencies in Turkey, it would be unthinkable to skip over the Gezi Parkı movement. White-collar solidarity was one of the area's most profoundly impacted by this period of societal resistance and awakening, which began in the spring of 2013 and its effects lasted for months. Aside from the impact and lasting influence of the emotional state generated by organised resistance in collective memory, the knowledge acquired during that period and the momentum of organising had a profound effect on white-collar solidarity initiatives.

Interviewee 3: The Gezi movement in Turkey marked a turning point in the white-collar workers' struggle because it felt like we were making history. The whole of Turkey witnessed the significant role that white-collar workers played in this movement. With the participation of white-collar workers, there was a qualitative leap in that resistance. On the evening of May 31st, for the first time, we saw a flood of people coming from office buildings and plazas to join the protest. Of course, everyone resisted strongly, but what legitimised Gezi on a societal level was the influx of young individuals from those offices and plazas.

Interviewee 5: In my view, the entire Gezi movement —perhaps I'm exaggerating a bit— was also an expression of the need for solidarity. It was a longing for a dimension where, when together, you could also be equal and side by side. It was a desire for a system where you didn't worry about who the manager was, who might trip you up, and such concerns, and where we could all live healthily together.

Interviewee 3: Following the Gezi resistance, there was a period of forums where discussions on various topics were held in parks and gardens all over Turkey. During one of these forums, the need for solidarity among freelance workers

emerged. *Ofissizler* was established during that time, the idea of it has taken shape, so to speak.

Internationalism and interconnection

White collar solidarity groups are in contact with other organisations nationwide that address similar issues. Furthermore, whenever there is an organisation, resistance, or any infringement of rights that concerns white-collar workers anywhere in the world, they try to establish communication. The impact of the effort to create relatively new organisation types, as well as the advancement of communication channels through internet and social media, plays a significant role in this. While claiming to be part of an international community might be challenging at this point, their efforts in that direction never cease.

Interviewee 3: Since the 2000s, there have been various organisational models emerging worldwide. We should take a look at how these people are doing it. For instance, during the 2001 crisis in Argentina, there were neighbourhood solidarity networks. We discussed certain issues by studying what happened there. We're just a drop in the ocean, so it's always important to approach these matters from an international perspective. Additionally, we need to unite with all the other solidarity networks. Building a common ground for all these networks is crucial because this is a very challenging task, and it's not feasible with just a few people. For example, I think one of our recent achievements is this: when the regulation for remote working was published during the pandemic, we immediately collaborated with nine white-collar solidarity groups to draft a joint statement. We already work with these groups frequently.

One reason for this ongoing connection is that such groups are typically organised within familiar circles of people who share similar concerns, needs, and tendencies while attempting to address their issues.

Interviewee 9: Actually, this idea emerged while discussing with a few friends from the leftist group I'm part of. We met a few times and realised we were always discussing similar stuff, and gradually the idea took shape and became somewhat exciting for us. Later on, we were like, "this guy I know might be interested in this, and that friend can also join" and as we started contacting people in our circles, we quickly decided, "let's form an organisation now; it'll be alright as we go along."

Over time, we developed ourselves a bit more, and it became a real organisation where we clarified how our approach should be regarding the subjects we are struggling with.

Organising based on similar groups with oppositional tendencies or following the path of a specific leftist/socialist tradition does indeed come with certain disadvantages. It can be challenging to change, develop, or adapt people's ideas shaped by traditional methods of leftist struggle. This might deter people who don't identify themselves as "leftist" or those who believe that you have to be a "leftist" to engage with such solidarity from participating in or entirely avoiding solidarity organisations. However, this is also what sets solidarity groups apart from leftist/socialist organisations. By nature, solidarities remain in a more inclusive position. While having an inherently oppositional attitude and long-term visions and ideologies, they also aim to seek concrete and swift solutions to present problems.

Having both priorities and long-term goals

White-collar solidarity organisations prioritise finding immediate solutions to urgent issues. They work on generating public awareness for these solutions. To create public awareness, they establish strong bonds within their own groups. They aim to fight for a fundamental change in their way of work, stemming from short-term transformations.

In other words, they have specific priorities while always maintaining long-term goals. They favour palliative solutions but always maintain a long-term perspective.

Interviewee 5: We had what we called “experience-sharing workshops”. In these workshops, our goal was to share our experiences and emotions from our working lives, creating a sense of solidarity. We would take notes or record these discussions during the workshops. Later, we would compile them into written documents. For instance, we'd put together summaries or reports to identify the most critical issues. We would also discuss these written reports. The aim here wasn't just to document but also to evaluate our situations. In these workshops, people would open up and find relief, but simultaneously, we were producing a political tool out of what was being discussed.

Interviewee 8: We receive many messages on Twitter and Instagram, from academics working at foundation universities. We discuss what kind of public opinion we can create based on these messages and what actions we can take. We provide advice to our colleagues, think together, and weigh our options. In fact, there have been some successful cases where our efforts have led to changes. The results are still pending, though. However, we've managed to make quite an impact recently through this approach. We usually discuss and try to implement actions related to the current agenda. For example, right now, we're trying to ensure the practical implementation of a law that was enacted in April 2020. Our goal is to bring the working conditions of academics at foundation universities in line with those at state universities. Initially, we aim to achieve this. We also strive to have our status as public employees acknowledged both in practice and legally, which is a long-term goal of ours. Legally, we won't give up on this, and if necessary, we'll take the matter to the European Court of Human Rights. But on the other hand, we

need to consider what short-term actions we can take. Ultimately, our main objective is to make the university that is not profit-driven, allocates budgets for academic research, prioritises education and scientific work over everything else, and is free from market relations.

Unveiling the Data Narrative

The new information gathered during the fieldwork and the subsequent analysis process not only altered the course of the study but also necessitated a revision of the fundamental questions I was probing. Initially, upon entering the field, I immediately observed the absence of a fully established and institutionalized example of a solidarity economy among white-collar workers in Turkey. This observation prompted me to question the potential within the solidarity networks I was researching to generate a fully established and institutionalized solidarity economy. White collar workers, striving to create a new form of struggle and aiming to foster white collar class consciousness through non-institutionalized solidarity networks, became the focus of my inquiry. How do they transform within solidarity, and what impacts do they experience in their lives or professional spheres after they contacted with solidarities? What influences do their work styles have on them, driving them to establish solidarity networks? To what extent have these networks met their needs? Alternatively, do they require transformations and changes within the solidarity networks to more effectively meet their needs? Questions like these significantly reshaped the direction and content of one-on-one interviews.

This analysis has allowed me to see the reflections of my study in real life and has brought forth some key themes derived from these reflections. Each theme has provided an opportunity for the emergence of an underlying narrative beneath the surface. The first narrative encompasses common challenges faced by different professional groups and the shared emotional state of work-related suffering that arises within individuals in response to these challenges. Elements such as precarity, insecurity, isolation, loss of autonomy in the workplace, the loss of meaning in one's job, alienation, future concerns, and distortions in self-perception are components of the experience of work-related suffering.

In the theme that examines the coping mechanisms developed by white-collar workers in response to this shared emotional state, the story that emerges highlights those who choose solidarity and reveals their dreams and ideals regarding work. One of the most unexpected changes in the course of the study and —personally— the most surprising results was how little we had discussed around the "Right to Laziness." These individuals do not always dream of "not working" or "passing time idly"; instead, they aspire to engage in meaningful work, achieve meaningful productions, work in humane conditions, and have sufficient leisure time to self-recovery. They want to have a say in their own productive processes. The reason for them to turning to solidarity networks is not only to create a common ground for these demands, but also to brainstorm about what can be done to implement these aspirations. Because labour struggles confined around wage negotiations and unions can lead to the neglect of such demands, it is essential to broaden the scope of advocacy to address a more comprehensive range of issues affecting workers' well-being and working conditions.

Another narrative revolves around the experiences of solidarity organizations. Primarily, they face numerous challenges stemming from the inability to institutionalize. Lack of funding, or being reluctant to find or to secure funding, and the inadequacy of human resources are the fundamental issues. The absence of motivation and energy to generate ideas for solving these problems also originates from white-collars' working conditions, leading to a serious vicious cycle. Addressing the mentioned issues seems to lack notable achievements beyond strengthening communication and solidarity networks and sharing common concerns. However, when viewed from a broader perspective and historical dimension, this form of interaction and solidarity networking might be laying the groundwork for a more active transformation. Indeed, it is observable to see the potential energy and accumulated experience within solidarity networks, which could lead to significant transformations if organizations and the actors within them manage to secure sufficient resources. Under the umbrella of white-collar solidarity, a culture appears to be emerging, comprising of new strategies for combating work-related pain, a new language, new arguments, and a comprehensive discourse for white-collar workers' activism.

PATHWAYS FOR FUTURE

From a historical perspective, it is evident that economic systems are continually in a state of change and transformation. In the present setting, irrespective of the terminology used (capitalist, post-capitalist, global free-market economy, etc.), there is a wide array of ideas put forward regarding alternative systems to replace the existing economic system, and discussions about what the future system might look like are quite prevalent. Particularly, as emphasized in this thesis, given the adverse impacts that such an economic system can have on individuals, relationships, and the environment, its propensity to lead to crises, exacerbate inequalities, and stimulate competition, the question of what could replace this system or how it could be transformed garners significant interest. In the academic sphere, various approaches exist that examine different designs for post-capitalist societies.

Ultimately, within the framework of this thesis, the focal point lies in the examination of solidarity economies, a discourse inherently linked to the discussion surrounding post-capitalist economic systems. Specifically, the study meticulously scrutinizes solidarity economies, considering distinct perspectives to accommodate their flexible structure and expansive scope. The critique directed towards the existing economic system and the scrutiny of mainstream economic doctrines serve as the foundational underpinning for this particular perspective. Following this, the concept of labour is delved into through the lens of Marxist theory, and a discourse is engaged regarding the imperative and plausible transformations that solidarity economies could potentially introduce in this domain. This perspective has guided the study towards examining how solidarity economies are organized through labour.

In the literature review section, at first, the concept of solidarity economy has been introduced comprehensively, in a manner accessible even to those unfamiliar with the topic. This introduction, distinct from other related studies, focuses on distinguishing solidarity economies from other new and alternative economic models. Secondly, the rationale for considering the exploration of the transformative potential of solidarity economies as crucial is elaborated. Among these reasons, emphasis is placed on the transformative impact in the dimension of human relationships, the transformative

influence in economic theory, and the effects of efforts to reintegrate historically employed economic relationships into everyday life.

In the theoretical and conceptual framework section, solidarity economies are positioned within a broad perspective, and an attempt is made to establish a framework. In this context, efforts have been made to place economic transformations within a historical perspective, elucidating the dynamics behind the continuous changes and transformations in different economic systems. This process is scrutinized, particularly in terms of its impacts on labour and those who perform it, providing a detailed analysis of how economic transformation brings about changes in this sector. Within this context, the emergence and development of solidarity economies are examined within a historical perspective, with a focus on their role in the evolution of economic systems.

Finally, in the analysis section, fieldwork has been conducted among white-collar workers organized within solidarity organizations. The primary motivation behind selecting this sample stems from the tendency of individuals within this group not to overtly express the harm they experience from the existing system and the fact that they often do not endure significant suffering in terms of primary needs. Ultimately, in this thesis, the choice of white-collar workers as the sample is strategic, aligning with the prevailing perspective within solidarity economies, which posits that addressing secondary challenges can serve as a pathway toward resolving primary concerns.

During my field research, I aimed to examine the motivations driving individuals towards solidarity and, simultaneously, endeavoured to understand their thoughts and feelings regarding current working conditions. Understanding this was crucial for my study because I believe that the functionality of an economic system can also be measured by the happiness of the individuals living within that system, the satisfaction they derive from their lives, and the meaningful contributions they can offer to life through their productive labour.

One of the fundamental propositions of my research is that the capitalist economic system has adverse effects on individuals, and solidarity can mitigate these effects, initiating a transformation in work practices among people and eventually enabling a transformation of the economic system itself. The fieldwork I conducted, along with the

insights gained from conversations with individuals and their work experiences, provided a clearer path to trace this trajectory.

The results obtained in this research are quite diverse. One of the most significant findings is the identification of shortcomings in the current form of organization, specifically organizing through solidarity, and the emergence of questions regarding potential solutions. Another notable result is the need for more discussion, practical implementations, and experimentation in this emerging field. Beyond raising new questions, this study also clarifies the necessity for a change and transformation in the existing system, particularly in the context of individuals and humanity desiring a more humane life. The research highlights the negative impact of the current system's labour conditions on individuals' mental well-being and psyche. I believe this study contributes to the conceptualization of suffering and, perhaps most importantly, provides an opportunity to express and analyse the healing experiences individuals find within solidarity, thereby offering real-life examples for theoretical discussions.

The central thesis of this study revolves around the potential role of solidarity organizations in fostering the development of solidarity economies. Essentially, the research delves into a potential that is not yet institutionalized or fully matured but is actively in the process of evolution. This perspective not only illuminates the current state of solidarity economies but also emphasizes their dynamic nature and the ongoing transformation they are experiencing.

This exploration has given rise to new questions for future research. Investigating metrics designed to measure the impact of solidarity on individuals and conducting analyses can provide valuable insights into this field. The study suggests the possibility of crafting specific models tailored for solidarity economies, along with identifying indicators to gauge the effectiveness of each model. Additionally, the formulation and contemplation of principles and methods for the practical implementation, establishment, and efficient operation of a solidarity economy become paramount. These considerations enable an assessment of how effectively solidarity economies are realizing their objectives in practice, pinpointing areas that may warrant further attention.

In conclusion, this study has sought to explore the untapped potential lying within the realm of solidarity economies, specifically focusing on the pivotal role that solidarity organizations can play in their development. The central thesis underscores a prospective shift that has not yet been fully institutionalized but is actively undergoing transformation. By shedding light on the dynamic nature of solidarity economies, this research contributes to our understanding of their current state and the ongoing evolution they are experiencing.

As a result of this exploration, new avenues for future research have been illuminated. The identification of metrics to measure the impact of solidarity on individuals, the potential development of specific models for solidarity economies, and the formulation of principles and methods for practical implementation all emerge as critical areas for further investigation. This study not only paves the way for a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of solidarity economies but also encourages ongoing discussions and practical applications in this evolving field.

Ultimately, the research positions itself at the intersection of theory and practice, emphasizing the need for continued scholarly inquiry and practical engagement with the transformative potential of solidarity economies. The insights gained from this study aim to inform future endeavours in shaping more humane and sustainable economic systems that prioritize the well-being of individuals and foster a sense of solidarity within communities.

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