Social Identity and Collective Action: Two Case Studies of Unionization in the Turkish Information Technologies (IT) Sector

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Abstract

Information Technology (IT) workers are widely considered as incompatible with the practices and goals of unionization. Unionism in the IT sector has become even more difficult where socio-economic conditions and union legislation constitute another obstacle to development, as with the case of Turkey. A primary motivation of this study has been the gap in the research dedicated to the critical evaluation of the relationship between collective action and worker attitudes in the specific Turkish IT context. This study focuses on two contrasting cases of unionization in the Turkish IT sector; one of which was successful (UNIBEL), the other unsuccessful (IBM Turk). This study primarily explores answers to two questions: *1) How did IBM Turk and UNIBEL workers engage in collective actions?*; and 2) *How did the specific individual, group-based and contextual dynamics play a role in the different unionization outcomes of these two cases?* This study argues that IT workers are likely to unionize when being and acting as a union member is consistent with their individual and group identity, and when they fit with the social environment of unionism. The social identity perspective provides an incorporated approach by considering an interaction between workers, their groups, cognitions and their social contexts. A variety of data is based on comparative case study and collected with in-depth, semi-structured and group interviews with IT workers, union experts and academicians. In general, the research findings demonstrated the significant effect of worker's identification with a social group on their decision to or not to engage in collective action. The research findings also indicated the importance of social and political contextual factors in both cases. Overall, group dynamics and social contextual factors significantly led to negative perceptions and decreased the likelihood that IT workers would participate in union action.

Keywords: IT Unionization, IT Worker, Social Identity, Turkish IT

To my mother and father

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Contents

ABSTRACT 2

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS 4

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION 16

CHAPTER 2: TURKISH CONTEXT OF LABOR RELATIONS AND IT SECTOR 29

2.1 Historical Legacy of Turkish Labor Unions 30

2.2 Neo-liberal Transformation of Turkish Industrial Relations since 1980 37

2.3 Current Labor Union Legislation 40

2.4 Characteristics of Turkish Labor Market with Respect to Unionization 43

2.5 An Overview of Turkish IT Sector 47

2.5.1 Turkish IT Sector and Unionization 50

Summary 53

CHAPTER 3: SOCIO-PSYCHOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO EXPLAIN COLLECTIVE ACTION . 55

Introduction 55

3.1 An Overview of Socio-psychological Approaches 56

3.1.1 Individual based approaches 59

Locus of control and Political efficacy 59

Rational Choice Approach 60

3.1.2 Social and Contextual Approaches 61

Frustration-Aggression Approach 61

Relative Deprivation Theory 62

Concluding Remarks 63

3.2 Social Identity Perspective 65

3.2.1 Social Identity Theory 66

3.2.2 Self Categorization Theory 67

Depersonalization 68

Stereotyping 69

Accessibility and Fit 70

3.3 Implication of Social Identity Perspective for Labor Union Action 71

3.3.1 The Role of Beliefs in Intergroup Relations 72

3.3.2 The Role of Group Identification 73

3.3.3 The Role of Perceived Threat for Union Participation 76

3.3.4 The Role of Social Influence and Political Context for Union Participation 77

Summary 79

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN 81

4.1 Rationale of the Research 82

4.2 Sampling & Population 85

4.3 Data Collection 86

4.4 Data Analysis 90

Summary 95

CHAPTER 5: DESCRIPTIONS OF THE CASES AND ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH DATA 96

Introduction 96

5.1 Brief Descriptions of Cases 97

5.2. Case Trajectories: Unionization in IBM Turk and UNIBEL 100

The Trajectory of Unionization in IBM Turk 100

The Trajectory of Unionization at UNIBEL 104

5.3 Interpretation of the Research Data 107

Research question 1: 108

Perceiving collective action as desirable/perceived collective injustice 108

Perceiving collective action as possible 110

Research question 2 111

Perceptions of Threat 113

Perceptions of Conflict 115

Perceptions of Social and Political Context 117

Summary 119

CHAPTER 6: EXPLORING UNION PARTICIPATION IN THE IBM TURK CASE 120

6.1 Aspects of Group Socialization and Identification 121

6.1.1 Employment Conditions at IBM Turk 122

6.1.2 Construction of the IBM'er Identity: Working in a Prestigious Company 124

IBM as a Global Company 125

IBM as a company of innovation in the IT sector 126

6. 2 Perceived Collective Relative Deprivation and Injustice 128

6.2.1 Changes in Employment Policies 129

Cancellation of benefits 129

Nomination of the new general manager 130

Salary freeze 130

Differentiation of wage groups 131

6.2.2 Disappointment & Questioning the IBM'er identity 131

6.3 Perceiving Collective Action as Possible 133

6.3.1 The Role of Activist Workers in Group Formation 133

6.3.2 Union Legacy 136

6.3.3 Use of New Communication Technologies 137

6.4 Transformation of the IBM'er Identity from the Perspective of a Top Performer ex-IBM Turk Manager 139

Introducing Aziz 140

Aziz's Dismissal 141

Summary 145

CHAPTER 7: EXPLORING NON-PARTICIPATION AND DISSOLUTION OF UNION IN THE IBM TURK CASE 146

7.1. Social Context and the Role of Perceived Threat 147

7.1.1 Dismissals and Dismissal Threats 148

7.1.2 Organizational Obstructions against Union Activities 150

Concluding remarks 152

7.2 Perception of Conflict in the Intra-group and Inter-group Context 153

7.2.1 Intra-group Conflict and Perceptions of Social Context 153

7.2.2 The Role of Beliefs about being an IBM Professional and Union Member 156

Professionalism and Organizational discourse 157

The Role of Education and Credentials 158

Reputation Loss: How would it be to be a unionist? 160

7.2.3 The Role of Beliefs about Labor Unions 162

Unions as Irrelevant 163

Unions as Standardizer 164

Unions as Political Entities 166

Concluding remarks 168

7.3 Perceptions of Workplace Context on Group Identification 168

7.3.1 Willing to have more: Career Expectations 169

7.3.2 Status Preservation 173

7.3.3 Perceptions of Working Conditions on Group Identification 175

Concluding Remarks 178

Summary 178

CHAPTER 8: EXPLORING UNION ACTION IN THE UNIBEL CASE 181

8.1 Perceptions of Collective Deprivation 182

8.2 Aspects of Group Identification in the Workplace 185

8.2.1 Group Socialization 186

8.2.2 The Role of Political Ideology and Activist Workers in Group Formation 189

8.2.3 The Role of Union Legacy 191

Concluding Remarks 192

8.3 The Influence of Political Context and Company Characteristics 193

8.3.1 Perceptions of the Political Context 194

8.3.2 Perceptions of Working in Public Sector 198

Concluding Remarks 202

8.4 The Role of Beliefs on Group Identification 203

8.4.1 Perceiving Self 203

8.4.2 Perceiving Labor Unions 208

Unions for the Interests of Workers 209

Unions as unreliable organizations 211

Unions as irrelevant to IT 212

Unions as standardizer 214

Unions as Conflict Generating Organizations 215

Unions as Political Organizations 217

Summary 218

CHAPTER 9: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE IBM TURK AND UNIBEL CASES WITH RESPECT TO COLLECTIVE ACTION 219

9.1 Perceptions of Collective Injustice and Group Identification 220

9.2 Conditions for Union Action 223

9.3 Role of Perceived Threat on Group Identification 228

9.4 The Role of Self Perceptions with Regard to IT Work 230

9.5 The Role of Union and Union Member Perceptions on Collective Action 237

9.6 Company Characteristics and Political Context 240

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION 243

REFERENCES 249

APPENDIX 1. AMENDED NOTES ON INTERVIEWS AND RESPONDENTS 266

APPENDIX 2. INTERVIEW GUIDELINE 269

APPENDIX 3. CODING SAMPLE 277

APPENDIX 4. SAMPLE CODING CHART 278

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 1: OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION 28

FIGURE 2: UNIONIZATION RATE – OFFICIAL STATISTICS 2003-2009 35

FIGURE 3: UNIONIZATION RATE ESTIMATES 1989-2009 36

FIGURE 4: TURKISH IT GROWTH RATES 2006-2009 48

FIGURE 5: ICT MARKET IN TURKEY, 2005-2009 (USD IN BILLIONS) 50

FIGURE 6: NET INCOME SCALES FOR IT POSITIONS IN 2012 IN TURKEY (IN TURKISH LIRAS) 52

FIGURE 7 : TRAJECTORY OF UNIONIZATION AT IBM TURK 102

FIGURE 8: TRAJECTORY OF UNIBEL 106

FIGURE 9: STRIKE BANNER IN FRONT OF UNIBEL BUILDING; DAY 4 OF STRIKE (TRANSLATION: “ON STRIKE”) 107

FIGURE 10: PARTICIPATION IN COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE IBM CASE 110

FIGURE 11: PARTICIPATION IN COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE UNIBEL CASE 112

FIGURE 12: ASPECTS INFLUENCING DIFFERENT OUTCOMES IN THE IBM TURK AND UNIBEL CASES 112

FIGURE 13: PERCEPTIONS OF CONFLICT IN INTRA-GROUP AND INTER-GROUP RELATIONS 116

FIGURE 14: IBM CYBER STRIKE IN ‘SECOND LIFE’ 139

FIGURE 15: UNION’S BULLETIN BOARD IN UNIBEL 197

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1: TURKISH LABOR UNION CONFEDERATIONS AND MEMBERS (2011) 31

TABLE 2: OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF LABOR UNIONS AND NUMBER OF MEMBERS (2012) 31

TABLE 3 : SHARE OF LABOR FORCE BY SECTOR 1995-2011 44

TABLE 4 : SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS OF IBM TURK AND UNIBEL..... 98

TABLE 5: DESCRIPTIONS OF EMPLOYER ATTITUDE AGAINST COLLECTIVE ACTION IN THE IBM TURK AND UNIBEL CASES..... 114

Chapter 1

Introduction

People find themselves in a society which is structured by determined routes, experience exploitation, define themselves through facing antagonisms and get into struggles about these antagonistic issues. They realize themselves that they are members of certain classes in these struggles. And the class consciousness is nothing but the knowledge of this realization itself. – E.P. Thompson (in *Class Struggle without Class*, 1995)

Recent history has witnessed the tremendous impact that technological change and the globalization of markets have had on the nature of work and employment patterns (Adams & Demaiter, 2008). Major reorientations of work and employment conditions include, but are not limited to, deregulations, restructurings, and adoptions of new forms of 'flexible' work and employment (Kalliola, 2005; James & Vira, 2009). These changes have, as a side-effect, weakened collective organization and brought new pressures on existing collective agreements (Sverke & Goslinga, 2003). These developments, however, have not drawn proportional concern regarding the collective rights of IT workers, whose sector has developed within the parameters of this changing economic environment (Ferus-Comelo, 2008; Benson & Brown, 2007; Brophy, 2006). In addition, there are significant differences between the typical IT worker and those workers which come to mind in the field of industrial relations. IT workers are widely considered as incompatible with the practices and goals of unionization. Their position is seen as incongruent based on their own professional identity perceptions and those of society at large (Noronha & D'Cruz, 2009; Goslinga & Sverke, 2003). Unionism in the IT sector has become even more difficult where socio-economic conditions and union legislation constitute another obstacle to development, as with the case of Turkey.

The IT sector, without a doubt, has become the most dynamic sector since the outset of leaps in technological development around the 1970s. This development was seen significantly in the United States and European countries. The IT sector in the EU, including communication technologies, accounts for approximately 6 percent of GDP on average, even despite the recent

banking and finance crisis (EITO, 2012). In Italy, for example, employment in IT has increased at a rate three to four times higher than the overall rate for manufacturing and service industries (Ferus-Comelo, 2008). In Denmark, total employment in IT increased by 20% from 1992 to 1998, a much higher growth rate than total employment over the same period (3.5%). In Finland, employment in the IT sector increased more than sevenfold between 1976 and 2000. Turkey despite being new in the market, on the other hand, has the highest growth rates (27%) among European countries expected to reach a volume of 20 billion Euros in 2010 (EUROSTAT, 2010). Though the share of IT in total employment is relatively low, the IT sector is of major economic importance (van het Kaar & Grünell, 2001) contributing to 40 percent of productivity growth (EITO, 2012)

The presence of this industry is more pronounced outside the EU and US, especially in the so called BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China). India's IT economy exhibits the largest rates of growth of all BRIC nations, at approximately 20 percent annually. Brazil and Russia experiences growth rates around 10 percent. China has the largest market among BRIC countries, with a volume of 204.5 billion Euros (EITO, 2011).

The IT industry is generally perceived as technologically driven, employing a high-skilled, high-wage workforce in engineering, software programming, and related services (Ferus-Comelo, 2008). Generally, the literature on IT labor portrays these individuals as 'knowledge workers' in an environment of 'risky freedom' (Beck, 1992; Bauman, 2001), who are self-sufficient, self-confident and creative thinkers (Robinson & McIlwee, 1989). They are also distinguished as

flexible, mobile and have pronounced self-perceptions of above average abilities in coping well with uncertainty (Milton, 2003; Van Jaarsveld 2004).

IT workers generally have high levels of education, often with advanced degrees in science, engineering, or computer technologies. Many of them emphasize self-learning and work experience as more important sources of skill development, despite the high premium these individuals place on education (Adams & Demaiter, 2008). Many authors focus on the importance of self-learning as an issue of survival and not simply as a means of getting a job done, or as a route to personal satisfaction and growth. Almost all IT work is project-based and requires workers to focus intensively on one or more projects at a time (Benner, 2002). It is this environment which enables IT workers to make short term plans due to their projects and rapidly changing work environment. Greater portions of the workforce are required to absorb new information and integrate knowledge into their work practices, adapting to organizational contexts and developing new relationships in order to keep up with changes in competition and industry structure (Altieri et.al, 2005; Hoogenboom et.al, 2006; Milton, 2003).

However, union organization has not been so successful in adapting its structure and activities to the technological developments and transformation of work as it is once used to (Kalliola, 2005). Over the last quarter of a century, labor unionism, the dominant form of collective worker representation and advocacy, has declined in most countries (James & Vira, 2009). As Dolvik and Waddington (2004) stated, contemporary labor unions faced important challenges with regard to the changing composition of employment, including: intensification of several forms of flexible and precarious employment, individualization and social polarization. These

developments lead to difficulties in the recruitment of new members and retention of existing members. Within this perspective, the 'male breadwinner model' prevalent in some early industrialized countries, on which much trade union organization was based, became increasingly inappropriate (Murray & Waddington, 2005). In accordance with Adaman et.al. (2009), the decline in labor union organization is not only the result of economic changes, but is an overall institutional transformation questioning union activity. The question of relevancy can be easily associated with the question of legitimacy, especially in gradually booming sectors such as information technologies.

It is fundamental for labor unions to attract and retain members from the growing groups of IT workers in order to maintain and strengthen their bargaining power to match the size of the growing IT workforce (Goslinga & Sverke, 2003). However, it is suggested by Kalliola (2005) that unions have difficulties in recruiting workers employed by private sector services or by knowledge intensive businesses. These industries did not exist during, or have not been integrated into, the working and bargaining culture of mass production. The IT sector is steadily developing, with many software and service firms still in their infancy. Subsequently, bargaining structures, or the 'culture of solidarity', still require time to emerge. IT companies, regardless of their size, are seen as difficult to organize due to structural factors. Those which are smaller in size are characterized by a greater personalization of work relations (Robinson & McIlwee, 1989; van het Kaar & Grünell, 2001). Smaller firms have low bargaining capacity and coverage. The internal organization of these small firms often resembles a partnership more than a traditional organization with a strict hierarchy. Extensive use of non-standard employment forms

and outsourcing add to the erosion of union membership as well (D'Art &Turner, 2008; Robinson & McIlwee, 1989; Holdcroft, 2009).

Aforementioned structural factors aside, this study focuses primarily on workers' perspectives. In contrast to the image that IT workers are 'pioneers writing history' (Plantenga, 2005; Valenduc, 2006), they are also workers who are confronted daily with the darker side of global markets, such as increasing work hours, layoffs, economic downturns and perpetual restructurings. The question this work proposes is, then, why is it that IT workers are reluctant to unionize in the face of such erratic work conditions?

Unionization, with its message of 'one for all, all for one', rather than performance based rewards and hierarchical organization, is often thought to be inconsistent with the professional values of IT workers (Blackwood, 2007). The notion of professionalism appears to differentiate IT workers from blue collar workers[1] or unionists. The professional identity of IT workers mostly stems from the prestige of the IT sector itself (Ashfordth & Mael, 1989). Work environments, use of advanced technology, high salaries, modern workplace atmospheres, positive relationships, and close supervision reinforce the belief that IT work is for 'professionals' – not for 'workers' (Noronha & D'Cruz, 2006; Robinson & McIlwee, 1989).

[1] *IT worker* is used as a specific form of knowledge worker, whereas conventional worker is denominated either by *blue collar worker* or *traditional worker*. Apart from that, all of the uses of the term *worker* signifies IT worker throughout the study. Moreover, differences between *professionals* and *workers* are also emphasized. The term professional refers to IT workers and is used to differentiate them from blue collar workers.

Dickson et.al's (1988) study of IBM Scotland evaluates the IBM system and the attitudes of workers towards their company. They found out that individualistic relationships combined with strong corporate culture facilitates little need for labor unions.

As D'Cruz and Noronha (2006) indicated, the reconstitution of workers as professionals involves more than just a process of relabeling. Evetts (2003) argues that professionalism is used to persuade workers to perform and behave in a way that the company considers to be appropriate, effective and efficient. Professionalism also involves the delineation of appropriate work identities, such as self-motivated, self-managing and self-controlled workers (Evetts, 2003). The strong emphasis of 'self' on being professional brings in a more individualistic culture. As Sarkar (2009) states, individualistic cultures place priority on personal goals and self-actualization, rather than collective goals. Unionization has almost no appeal for the 'self'-oriented professionals (D'Art &Turner, 2008).

Additionally, these issues are compounded by a lack of union awareness, negative public opinion towards collective worker action, a disproportionately young work force, and the construction of worker identity that is opposed to, or incompatible with collective bargaining; further contributing to low levels of unionization in the IT sector (Robinson & McIlwee, 1989; Noronha & D'Cruz, 2009). Consequently, union membership seems less attractive and less relevant for the professional IT worker identity than for traditional workers. These aspects of IT work and the combination of the characteristics of work and workforce result in competition rather than mutual defense or cohesion.

Despite the relatively recent creation of the IT sector, and its inherent antagonistic nature towards unionization, IT unions do exist. The collective organization of workers in the IT sector has largely been ignored by industrial relations researchers, a gap this research endeavors to narrow. There is limited research addressing unionization in information technologies, with the majority of existing research originating from the U.S. or India. Instances of unionization from India draw heavily from the Information Technology Enabled Services/ Business Process Outsourcing (ITES/BPO) industry. ITES/BPO industry includes IT in fields like finance, banking or telecommunication. The Indian cases are especially significant (Bist, 2010; Noronha & D' Cruz, 2006; D'Cruz & Noronha, 2009; Remesh, 2004, 2010; Sarkar, 2009), exhibiting notable similarities with the Turkish cases regarding their unionization processes and outcomes. Danielle Van Jaarsveld (2004) has documented the unionization of the Washington Alliance of Technology Workers (Washtech), focusing on the insecurities faced by temporary workers.[2] Similar research, including IBM workers organized under the Alliance@IBM (Diamond and Freeman, 2002), focuses on the new communication possibilities that modern labor unions can benefit from. Despite this, these unions represent a small group of IT Workers. In the US, approximately five thousand IT workers out of three million are union members (Hinkes-Jones, 2011). Studies have also documented new forms of 'open-source unionism' (Freeman and Rogers, 2002) which target hard-to-unionize workplaces using e-mails, listservs, chat rooms and websites to bring together workers across multiple locations (James & Vira, 2009).

[2]Washtech is the major labor union for IT workers in the U.S.

There has been, so far, almost no discussion concerning the unionization of Turkish IT workers. The literature regarding the situation of IT work and labor unions in Turkey, outside of a short report written by the Chamber of Electrical Engineers in 2009, is non-existent (EMO, 2009). The Turkish IT sector is dynamic, showing continuous economic growth and rapidly developing in the last two decades. In addition, its labor related problems have only been emerging recently. The Turkish IT sector did not experience the era when the labor unions were stronger actors, owing to its stalled development until the 1990's. Thus, the IT sector in Turkey has no significant historical background of unionism. It is clear that the attempts of Turkish IT workers to unionize without a historical legacy are itself exceptionally interesting in an age of union decline. Within this context, this study aims to broaden the theoretical conceptions of IT worker attitudes, and to explore the different dynamics influencing their perceptions on unionization in the Turkish context.

This study focuses on two contrasting cases of unionization in the Turkish IT sector; one of which was successful (UNIBEL), the other unsuccessful (IBM Turk). These cases were purposefully selected, as the two companies represent unique examples of unionization in the Turkish IT sector. Moreover, the dissolution of the union in IBM Turk during the fieldwork added an unexpected, though valuable, element to the research. Particularly, this allowed an analysis of the factors driving dissolution, incorporated into the comparison with the UNIBEL case.

This study primarily explores answers to two questions: *1) In the face of global and local pressures, how did IBM Turk and UNIBEL workers engage in collective actions?*; and 2) *How*

did the specific individual, group-based and contextual dynamics play a role in the different unionization and collective action outcomes of these two cases with respect to strike action? The expectation is that investigating constellations of group-based factors which lead to union action within the comparative case study of two different IT companies helps to answer these research questions. Except for a few cases, there is very limited knowledge on which factors shape IT workers' attitudes and, more importantly, when and how group-based identity is activated and results in union action.

The social identity perspective provides an integrated approach by considering a dynamic interplay between workers, their groups, cognitions and their social contexts (Blackwood et.al, 2003). As mentioned above, IT workers have distinctive professional identities that are part of their social identities. The nature of social identity is that it theoretically provides a powerful source for shaping individual and collective actions, and it is produced and maintained through perceived group boundaries and differences (Tajfel 1982; Turner et.al, 1987). This theoretical framework helps to guide this research in understanding the unionization processes of IT workers in the Turkish context, based on their various group-based identities and attitudes (e.g., knowledge/high-tech workers; public versus private sector workers; flexibility of work; anti-union). In its most general sense, the added value of this project is its contribution to the analysis of sector specific interest representation and collective action processes and outcomes in a late industrialized country by way of an explorative case study.

This study is organized in the following way (see Figure 1). The next chapter provides descriptive information about the characteristics of the Turkish labor market, labor unions and IT sector specifically. The period from 1980 (the date of the military intervention) onwards is discussed with respect to the changes in labor legislation and the impact on labor unions and unionization. Following this, a brief overview of the characteristics of the Turkish IT sector is presented with respect to unionization discussions. Overall, this chapter serves to introduce context and background information on the two specific Turkish cases of IT unionization investigated herein.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed overview of relevant theoretical perspectives, including a literature review on socio-psychological approaches to explain collective action. The purpose of this chapter is to relate the specific Turkish IT unionization cases to larger issues discussed within the labor relations field. The chapter begins by laying out the theoretical dimensions of the research, and looks at how unionization is studied in different theoretical models with an emphasis given to interactionist theories. Of which it is argued that social identity can best frame the complex process of IT unionization, even though other theories are able to explain some critical points as well. After the relevant literature is introduced in broader terms, it then proceeds to discussions on how these theoretical models help to guide in-depth research on union activities related with union action.

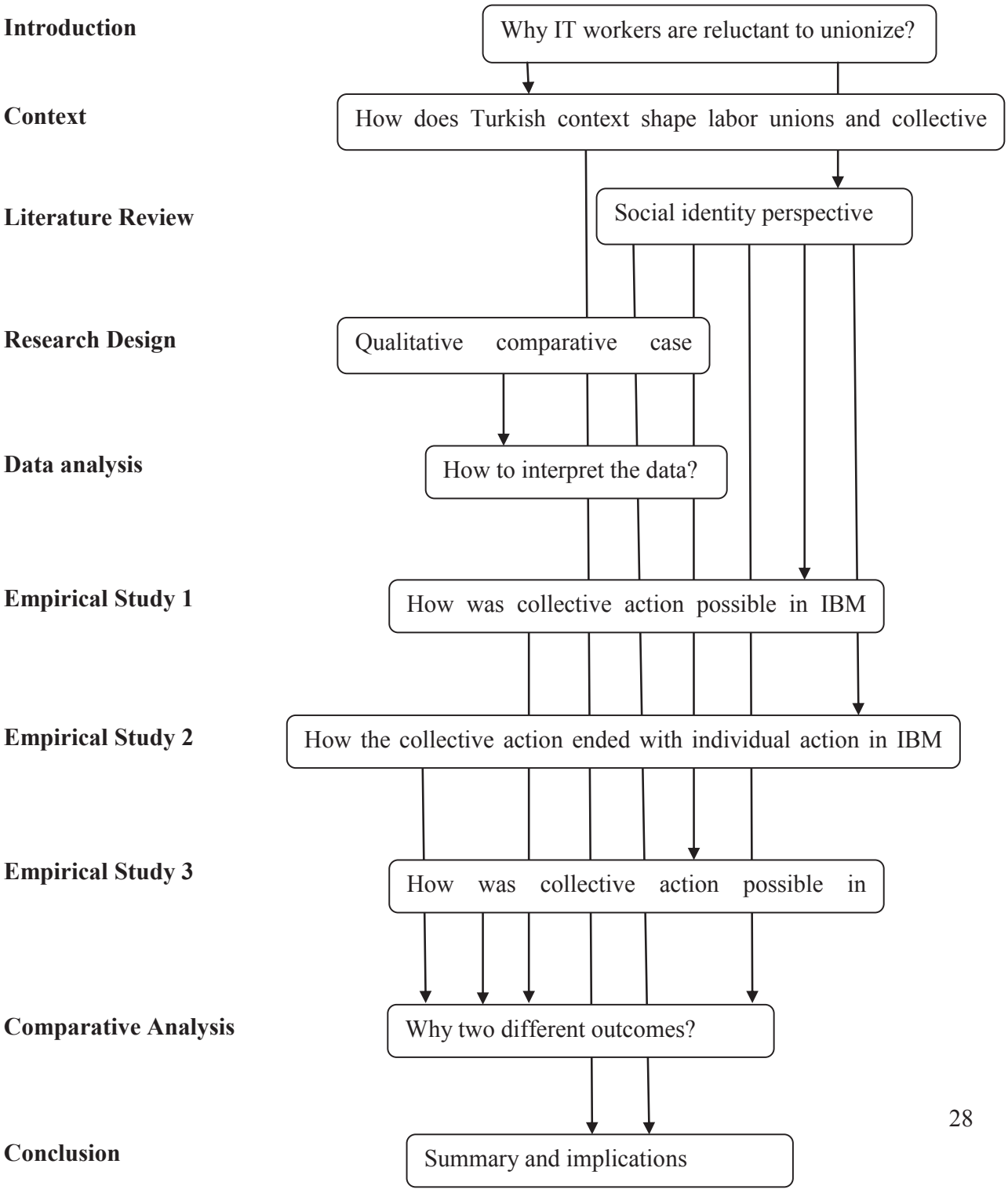
Chapter 4 explains the research design of the study. This chapter lays out how the research was conducted and how the data was evaluated. The relevance and necessity of a qualitative approach is indicated with respect to the main research questions. The chapter includes detailed

descriptions about case selection, sampling, method selection, structure of the interview guideline, interview situations and data analysis.

Chapters 5 – 8 present detailed findings of the field research. Chapter 5 provides an overview and interpretation of the research data. Chapter 6 explains the union participation process of IBM Turk workers. It focuses on the workplace conditions which produced the pressures and opportunities to trigger union participation at IBM Turk. Chapter 7 describes the process that led to dissolution of a union in the IBM Turk case. The purpose of this chapter is to illustrate how collective identification processes ended with individualistic considerations. The aspects of unsuccessful strike are portrayed here to explain non-activism in the IBM Turk case. Chapter 8 presents the UNIBEL case and explains how UNIBEL workers managed to hold a successful strike.

Chapter 9 brings together all aspects and offers a critical assessment of the theoretical framework and the specific case study outcomes. It opens up a platform for the interaction and the discussion of all factors from the field research. It is argued that there is strong evidence of a relation between worker perceptions, social identification and collective action. In addition to this, social influence and socio-political context impact acutely on IT worker identity issues. Finally, a general evaluation, further implications for a future research and summary of the dissertation are provided in Chapter 10.

Figure 1: Outline of Dissertation



Chapter 2

Turkish Context of Labor Relations and IT Sector

This chapter outlines the context within which Turkish labor unions exist. It provides an overview of Turkish specificities of industrial relations and how this context shapes related labor unions and collective action. By doing this, a panorama of the state of labor unions will be drawn. First, Turkish labor unions will be described from a historical perspective (2.1). Second, neo-liberal transformation of Turkish industrial relations is provided (2.2). 1980 is taken as a starting point to explain the legal framework of Turkish industrial relations. Then, the legal framework will be presented (2.3). The effects of the new labor law will be discussed comparatively with the previous law. Next, the characteristics of the Turkish labor market will be examined with respect to its outcomes on unionization (2.4). Current issues of unionization come into sight in this context. The evaluation of this Turkish context of industrial relations merits serious attention in order to analyze this particular situation of labor unionism. Last part is reserved for description of Turkish IT sector with respect to a general overview of unionization atmosphere in Turkey (2.5). First a brief description of the Turkish IT sector will be presented and then unionization issue will be discussed with relation to the general characteristics of the Turkish IT sector.

2.1 Historical Legacy of Turkish Labor Unions

Labor unionism in Turkey is primarily based on public sector; unionization in the private sector remains extremely low. The union culture in Turkey is not based on a history of class-rooted social movements, with the existing working class lacking a strong history of actions dedicated towards the protection of their own rights (Adaman et.al, 2009). Labor legislation has been the major means of establishing labor standards and trade union rights. Therefore, the power of unions is strongly related to the attitude of the state, the largest employer and dominant actor in industrial relations since the establishment of the republic in the 1920's (Yildirim & Calis, 2008; Sugur & Nichols, 2004).

This unique relationship between workers and the state has lead to unionism which is founded upon a pragmatic and conciliatory understanding based on wage bargaining (Selamoglu & Urhan, 2008). The strength of labor unionism is highly dependent on state policies (Yildirim, 2008; Bakir et.al, 2009). As privatization accelerated, and the public sector withdrew from investments from the major industries, large union presence in this area has significantly been diminished. Turkish labor unions are split on both a sectoral (occupational pluralism) and ideological (ideological pluralism) basis. The largest labor confederations for workers are the centrist Türk-Is (Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions); the left-wing DISK (Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey); and the conservative Hak-Is (Confederation of Real Trade Unions of Turkey).

Table 1: Turkish Labor Union Confederations and Members (2011)

	TÜRK-IS	DISK	Hak-IS
Orientation	Centrist	Left-wing	Islamic
Number of labor unions	35	21	9
Number of members (2011)	2.1m	410000	350000

Source: Ercan, 2011(visited on 15.6.2012)

Table 2: Occupational Structure of Labor Unions and Number of Members (2012)

Sector	Union	Confederation	Number of Members
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting, Fisheries	Orman-Is	Türk-Is	59.707
	Tarim-Is	Türk-Is	43.348
	Birlik Orman Is	Hak-Is	10.667
	Öz Orman Is	Hak-Is	18.310
	Öz Tarim Is	Hak-Is	669
Mining	Genel Maden Is	Türk-Is	32.008
	Türk Maden Is	Türk-Is	573
	Dev Maden Sen	Disk	1464
Petroleum,	Petrol-Is	Türk-Is	88.569

Chemicals, Rubber			
	Lastik-Is	Disk	42.888
Food	Tek-Gida-Is	Türk-Is	191.360
	Öz-Gida-Is	Hak-Is	73.851
	Gida-Is	Disk	25.257
Sugar	Seker-Is	Türk-Is	26.297
Textile	Teksif	Türk-Is	338.551
	Öz Iplik Is	Hak-Is	89.612
	Tekstil	Disk	75.994
Leather	Deri-Is	Türk-Is	17.608
Wood	Agac-Is	Türk-Is	13.583
	Öz-Agac-Is	Hak-Is	14.717
Paper	Selüloz-Is	Türk-Is	17.450
	Tümka-Is	Disk	3703
Press and Publishing	Basin-Is	Türk-Is	5411
	Basin-is	Disk	3910
Banking and Insurance	Bass	Türk-Is	5411
	Bassien	Türk-Is	72.991
	Bank-sen	Disk	13.961
Cement, Clay and Glass	Cimse-Is	Türk-Is	70.899
	Kristal-Is	Türk-Is	21.318
	Cam Keramik-Is	Disk	14
Metal	Türk Metal	Türk-Is	340.715

	Celik-Is	Hak-Is	95.158
	Birlesik Metal-Is	Disk	75.544
Shipbuilding	Dok Gemis-Is	Türk-Is	7355
	Limter-Is	Disk	1377
Construction	Yol-Is	Türk-Is	165.012
	Devrimci Yapi-Is	Disk	17
Energy	Tes-Is	Türk-Is	121.708
	Enerji-sen	Disk	43
Commerce, Office, Education,Fine Arts	Tez-Koop-Is	Türk-Is	62.337
	Koop-Is	Türk-Is	46.157
	Sosyal-Is	Disk	43.914
	Sine-sen	Disk	31
Road-Transport	Tümtis	Türk-Is	14.770
	Nakliyat-Is	Disk	16.851
Railway Transport	Demiryol-Is	Türk-Is	23.117
Sea Transport	TDS	Türk-Is	23.117
Air Transport	Hava-Is	Türk-Is	17.357
Warehouse and Storage	Liman-Is	Türk-Is	7890
Communication	Türkiye Haber-is	Türk-Is	25.053
Health	Saglik-Is	Türk-Is	17.755
	Dev-Saglik-Is	Disk	4396
Accommodation and entertainment	Toleyis	Türk-Is	48.028

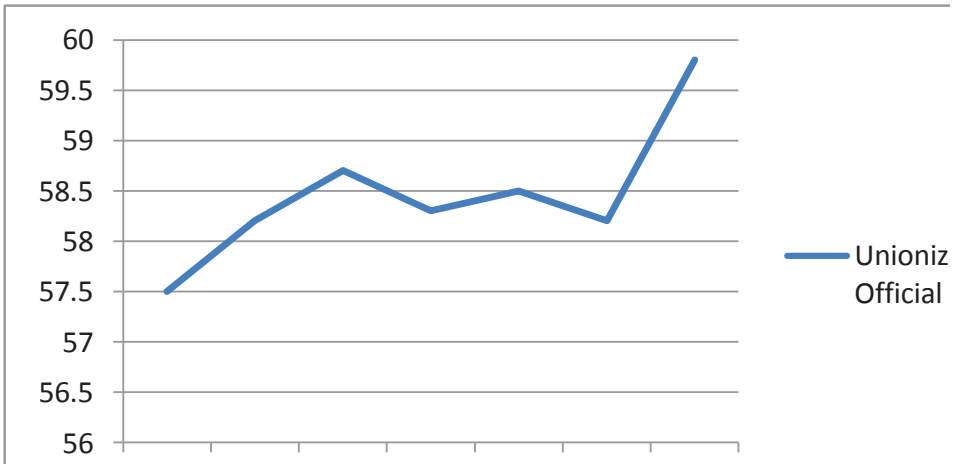
	Oleyis	Hak-Is	33.070
National defense	Türk-Harb-Is	Türk-Is	30.839
Journalism	TGS	Türk-Is	4550
General Services	Belediye-Is	Türk-Is	205.244
	Hizmet-Is	Hak-Is	126.107
	Genel-Is	Disk	81.394

Source: Dinler (2012) (visited on 10.01.2013)

Türk-Is was established in 1952 and is the largest confederation of blue collar workers, with 33 affiliated unions and over two million members. Formed during the cold war years with strong influence from the United States (Nichols & Sugur, 2004), it was geared towards the ideology of American trade unions (Wannoeffel, 2011). Even though Türk-Is occupies a centrist position, it is mainly composed of right wing unions with a minority of left-wing unions. The general understanding of the confederation is focused on "bread and butter" policies as opposed to other political issues. Türk-Is acts as an organized interest group focused on lobbying and negotiation rather than acting as a social movement. DISK was established after the separation of a group of leftist unionists from Türk-Is in 1967 (Yildirim et.al, 2008). DISK had a close affinity with the Turkish Worker's Party (TIP) (Nichols & Sugur, 2004; Wannoeffel, 2011) with a history of pursuing active militant political roles until it was silenced by military rule in 1980 following the coup d'état. Before 1980, the leftist unionism of DISK dominated Turkish labor unionism (Adaman, et.al, 2009; Yildirim, 2008). DISK reconstituted its activities in 1992, still representing left-wing unionism, though having given up much of its previous radicalism (Adaman et al, 2009).

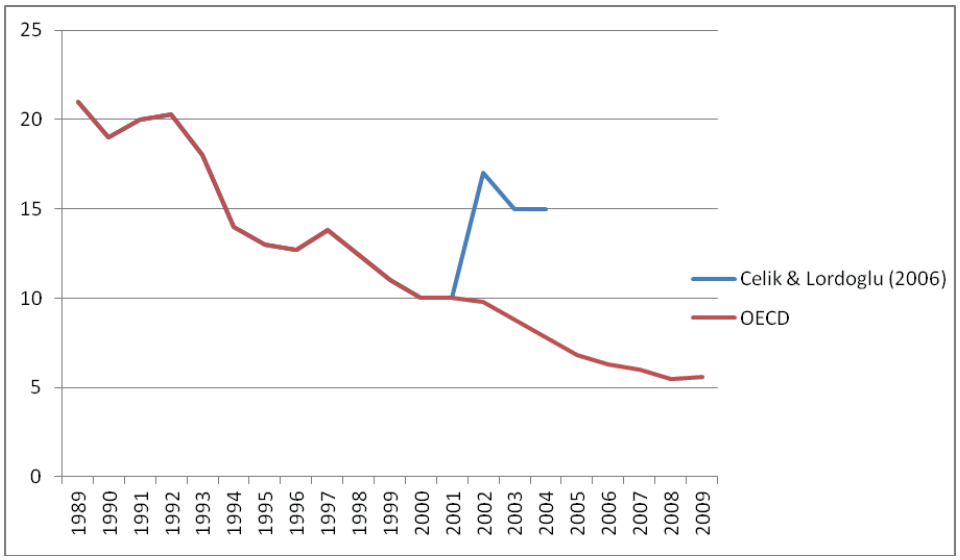
Hak-Is, on the other hand, represents a conservative and even Islamist union since its establishment in 1976. The principal of commonality between employer and worker is based on the Muslim brotherhood (Yildirim et al., 2008). However, over recent years, Hak-Is had underwent a transformation liberalized from Islamic conservatism by incorporating secular and democratic values, a signal of the general context of transformation to western values. Official unionization statistics are exaggerated and do not accurately reflect the reality of the situation in Turkey (Bakır et.al, 2009; Celik & Lordoglu, 2006). The rate of unionization in 2007 was approximately 58% amongst all salaried workers in Turkey, according the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (Figure 2). Contrary to official records, findings by Celik and Lordoglu (2006) reveal that only around 8% of workers were unionized in 2006, declining to 6% in 2010. Celik and Lordoglu's estimates were maintained by the OECD until 2009. The sudden increase in 2002 in Celik and Lordoglu's data (Figure 3) is attained by the inclusion of public sector unionization rates.

Figure 2: Unionization Rate – Official Statistics 2003-2009



Source: http://industrialrelationsinturkey.wordpress.com (visited on 15.10.2012)

Figure 3: Unionization Rate Estimates 1989-2009



Source: http://industrialrelationsinturkey.wordpress.com (visited on 15.10.2012)

Official unionization statistics are inflated for several reasons. First, the high rate of official unionization rates is due in part to underestimation of the informal economy (ETUC, 2011). Second, unionization rates are further distorted due to union laws (Bakir et.al, 2009). Third, labor unions also report higher rates in order to have the double-threshold requirements to qualify for collective bargaining agreements **(**Wannoeffel (2011).

Due to the aforementioned reasons, the Turkish labor market does not provide an available background for the promotion of labor unions. Rather, the structure of the labor market has a negative impact for the development of labor unions.

2.2 Neo-liberal Transformation of Turkish Industrial Relations since 1980

The 1980 military intervention and the paradigmatic change after military rule made a considerable and long-term impact on Turkish labor unions by reversing the gains of the previous period (Nichols & Sugur, 2004). The post – military coup period can be summarized with the words of the president of the Turkish Employers' Union Confederation: "For years on end the workers laughed and the employers cried, now the time has come for the employers to laugh" (Adaman et al., 2009). Due to the atmosphere of freedom which prevailed in the 1961 Constitution and the state policy of corporatism until 1980, workers gained extensive rights and the influence of labor unions was elevated. However, labor union activities in Turkey have been in decline since the transition from corporatist state policies to liberalization and military intervention in 1980. During 1970s, in the context of state dominated economy where both international and domestic competition was limited, labor unions found the opportunity to impose their demands.

January 24, 1980 was a critical turning point in Turkey's social, political and economic history. This occurred as the social corporatist system of the 1970s was replaced by economic liberalization, known as '24 January Decisions' in the Turkish political literature. The Turkish industry based on import substitution had to be left over due to reduction of exports and rising oil prices. Turkey was forced to have a neo-liberal stabilization and structural adjustment program of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Keyder, 1989; Nichols & Sugur, 2004). The military coup on September 12, 1980, and the subsequent constitution installed by the military rule, ensured the implementation of these market oriented, neo-liberal economic policies.

The effect of this was the creation of a hostile political and societal environment boosted by the military regime causing dramatic erosion in Turkish labor unions (Yildirim & Calis, 2008). During this period, all trade union federations and independent labor unions were banned. During the military coup and the following years, many DISK members were imprisoned, tortured or even killed. DISK was closed down until 1992. However, Türk-Is members were not persecuted. Its American style of operation was encouraged in order to break the left wing unionism of DISK. Further weakening of labor unions ensued through the 1983 Trade Unions Act (Nichols & Sugur, 2004). The adaption of the Trade Unions Act constrained the rights and freedom to a great extent (Wannoeffel, 2011). The new changes in labor legislation introduced the ability to postpone permitted strikes for veiled reasons of 'national security'. Collective bargaining rights of unions were made conditional to threshold requirements, which curtailed the ability to organize on condition of at least 10 percent of all workers in the relevant sector and 50 percent of those in any company. It also implied an increase in bureaucracy and the costs of registering new members (Adaman et.al 2009). Together with liberal market and privatization policies, the number of unionized workers was drastically decreased and the powers of unions were severely curtailed. Tragically, these union laws are still in operation.

The overall aim of these actions was to limit rights and freedoms and destroy any union movement which might form a threat to government policies. It was, according to Boratav (2006), disciplining the working class through non-economic means. The Turkish state was actively involved in controlling and weakening labor unions and collective bargaining power (Yildirim & Calis, 2008). Since that time, the Turkish labor market has operated within the 'neo-

liberal restructuring' or 'structural reforms' of the IMF and the World Bank (Özdemir & Özdemir, 2006).

The post-1980 period was regulated with the premises of the so-called flexibility through informalization of the market and introducing a variety of temporary and insecure employment forms (Özdemir & Özdemir, 2004; Taymaz & Özler, 2004). Privatization policies were accelerated and public employment decreased; the union movement, which was mainly based on the public sector, was to a significantly weakened (Selamoglu & Urhan, 2008). The end of the 1980s witnessed a revival of labor unionism and a return to normal electoral democracy. DISK gained the right to maintain its activities, large scale strikes increased, and efforts towards European Union (EU) candidacy brought regulations to extend democratic rights and to increase civil liberties in the favor of labor unions (Adaman, et.al, 2009). Turkey's accession to EU and the obligations brought by the EU are, to a degree, important to keep in mind. This is still an ongoing process and these new obligations helped to organize the Turkish labor market in a positive way. It also provided more social rights to workers, including changes which amended the restrictions hampering organization of workers.

The main examples of the EU's influence include the Public Servants Trade Union Act of 2001 and the new Labor Law of 2003, directed at social protection and competitiveness. The new Labor Act brought a wide range of provisions including non-standard employment, flexible working time, temporary employment, protection for workers in the event of insolvency of their employer, job security, and the implementation of occupational health and safety measures. While the new Labor Act contains provisions against arbitrary dismissal, however its scope of

application remains limited. Regardless, a legal framework on rights of association and collective bargaining exists in Turkey, including: the right to organize, to establish unions, the right to collective agreements and the right to strike and lock-out as described in the constitution. Despite the new changes in the Labor Law and collective bargaining agreements in 2003, Turkish labor laws continue to hinder unionization and are quite far away from meeting workers' demands (Özdemir & Yücesan-Özdemir, 2006; Yildirim & Calis, 2008, Yildirim et.al. 2008; Yorgun, 2005; Safak, 2006).

2.3 Current Labor Union Legislation

Turkish labor unions suffer from employers' non-compliance with the existing labor laws even though freedom to unionize is guaranteed by the constitution and the relevant ILO conventions. Many workers remain unprotected despite provisions set forth in the relevant labor laws. In many cases, social security rights exist only on paper; consequently, many workers do not receive severance payments, overtime payment or social security contributions (Labor study, 2006). A study by the World Bank (2006) revealed that employers use a variety of strategies to harass and intimidate workers who join a union. Dismissals, exploiting inter-union rivalry, strike postponements and abuse of strike ballot are counted as the major anti-union policies (Yildirim & Uckan, 2009).

Turkish labor unions can be classified under two titles. The first type of unions covers workers *(işçi),* under the jurisdiction of the Labor Act, and operates on the basis of the Trade Union Act no 2821, the Collective Bargaining and the Strike and Lockout Act no 2822 of 1983. The second

type of unions cover, public workers *(memur)* who are under the jurisdiction of the Public Servants Act and operate on the basis of the Public Servants Trade Union Act of 2001 (Yildirim & Calis, 2008). In the following pages, only the legislation for workers will be explained.

The new labor union legislation was enacted in October 2012. The new legislation was seriously criticized by international organizations such as International Labor Organization (ILO) and European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) as well as Turkish labor union confederations. The criticisms were mainly arguing that the new labor union law adds new problems to the existing ones by. It seemed to provide flexibilities, yet the restrictive regulations are maintained.

The new law causes a serious threat to the number of union membership especially in enterprises employing less than 30 workers. Those workers will not be able to receive any compensation in cases of dismissals due to union activities. Dismissals due to union activity are a common practice in Turkey (Yildirim & Uckan, 2009). When the high rate of workers in small scaled enterprises are considered, this amounts to almost 70 per cent of the total labor market. Nearly 6 million workers will not have protection in cases of dismissals related to union activities.

With the new law, the number of sectors is decreased to 20 from 28. Each union could only organize the workers of a single sector. In addition, according to the previous labor union law, a labor union had to fulfill the double threshold requirements stated by the labor laws, representing at least 10 percent of the total employment in the industrial sector and at least fifty percent plus one worker in the workplace in order to participate in collective action. The sectoral threshold is maintained the same, with a slight change that if the enterprise level agreement covers several

workplaces of same employer, it will be subject to 40 percent plus 1 threshold. The sectoral threshold is lowered to 3 from 10 percent. At first sight, this might seem an improvement in labor laws. However, due to merging sectors and new calculation of statistics, it will not be effective and a number of unions have the risk to lose their rights to have collective bargaining agreements. After the enactment of the new law, only around 3 million out of 12 million workers will officially have the right to have collective bargaining agreements.

Strike bans or postponements remained the same. Strikes are prohibited in certain industries or establishments which are not considered essential under ILO standards (Yildirim & Calis, 2008). Groups of workers who are allowed to be union members are not permitted to strike at all. The right to strike is only allowed in cases of work related purposes, and they 'shall not be exercised in a manner contrary to the rules of good faith or in such a manner as to damage society or destroy national wealth' (Nichols & Sugur, 2004). That is, solidarity strikes, political strikes or general strikes are prohibited. The government also maintains the right to postpone strike activity on the basis of legal provisions for reasons of loosely defined national security (Adaman et al., 2009), further diminishing the power of labor unions (ETUC, 2011).

Public notary payments of joining and resigning from a union are replaced by an e-government system. Before, a worker who wants to be a union member had to certify his/her documents to a public notary. Following this, a lengthy bureaucratic process begins between the labor union and the Ministry of Labor and Social Security. Resignation from a union necessitated an equally long bureaucratic process as well. These requirements and bureaucratic processes of union membership which deter unionization are eliminated. In brief, despite bringing more flexibility,

the new legislation still gained enormous criticisms and does not comply with international labor requirements and standards.

2.4 Characteristics of Turkish Labor Market with Respect to Unionization

The Turkish labor market exhibits important differences in socio-economic structures compared to the early industrialized OECD or EU countries. Despite a population of approximately 74 million, the rate of labor force participation remains the lowest among other OECD states (Turkey 48.4%, OECD average %64.8) (OECD Outlook, 2011). The share of informal employment in total employment, estimated to be above 50 percent, surpasses formal employment (Wannoeffel, 2011). Only 21.7% of the total employed population is covered by social insurance (Wannoeffel, 2011; ETUC report, 2010). Female employment rate is also the lowest among all OECD countries with Turkey 27.8 % and OECD average 56.7 % (OECD Outlook, 2011). In addition, female informal employment rates remain high due to unpaid family labor and agricultural employment. It is important to note that the large portion of informal economy has direct impact on unionization rates since only the people who are registered and covered by social security system can be union members (Yildirim & Uckan, 2009).

The social security system was designed at a time when the urban population was less than rural population. Over the last two decades, the pace of urbanization increased from 46% to 74% as the rural areas lost their populations to the cities (Ercan, 2011). The early generations of urban migrants were relatively better-off than the late-comers in finding jobs. The generations after 1980 mostly had to find a place for themselves in the unregistered and low-paid informal

economy (Adaman et.al, 2009). Meanwhile, population growth exceeded employment growth. The number of people working in service sectors increased rapidly, however the protective system for the rights of this increasing population provided inadequate social protection (Bugra & Keyder, 2006). Previously, the informal economy was evaluated as a survival strategy for predominantly rural migrants to urban areas, becoming the most distinctive structural characteristic of the urban labor market (Urhan, 2005). Currently, however, self employment, unpaid family labor and unregistered employment practices now characterize the Turkish labor market structure. While the working age population increased by twenty three million since the last three decades, only six million jobs were created (Taymaz & Özler, 2004), leaving a significant shortfall for those having left the agricultural sector (Adaman et al., 2009; Bakir et.al, 2009).

Table 3 : Share of labor force by sector 1995-2011

Sector/Subsector	**1995**	**2000**	**2005**	**2007**	**2011**
Agriculture	44.1	36	29.5	26.9	25.5
Industry	16	17.7	19.4	19.5	20.5
Mining and quarrying	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7

Manufacturing	14.7	16.9	18.5	18.4	19.1
Electricity, gas & water	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.7
Construction	6	6.3	5.3	5.8	5.9
Services	33.9	40	45.8	47.7	48.1
Wholesale, retail trade, hotels and restaurants	13.2	17.7	20.7	21.1	21
Transport, communication, storage	4.3	4.9	5.1	5.3	5.5
Finance, insurance, real estate, business services	2.3	3.3	4	4.7	4.9
Community, social and personal services	14.1	14.1	16	16.6	16.7

Source: TürkStat, 2011 (visited on 16.10.2012)

Table 3 above clearly illustrates the growing importance of the service sector in the overall labor market with industrial employment (20%) trailing, the agricultural and service sectors (25% and 48% respectively) (TurkStat, 2011). Despite a sharp decrease over the last 30 years, agriculture remains above the EU average, with approximately 90% of agricultural employees lacking social security (Ercan, 2011). The dramatic rise in service sector employment has not coincided with a sizable affinity towards unionism, denoting the lack of tradition and ability to integrate unionist attitudes among the emerging white-collar workers in the sector over the last 20 years (Yorgun, 2005).

The outcomes of the large rate of informal and insecure employment have, consequently, dramatically weakened union power. The informal economy caused a high level of exploitation and workers have been forced to accept wages even, sometimes, lower than minimum wage; forcing socially protected workers to accept worse working conditions (Özdemir et.al, 2004). In an absence of social security, workers can more readily be 'hired and fired' and evaluated as temporary workers (Yücesan-Özdemir, 2001). Furthermore, a large portion of workers are unable to benefit from health and unemployment insurance, severance pay and pensions.

The neo-liberal restructuring of the Turkish economy by the IMF and the World Bank was geared in large part by privatizations (Yildirim & Uckan, 2009). Due to privatizations 430000 workers in state-owned enterprises lost their jobs between 1985 to 2007 (Bakir et al., 2009). Downsizing of public enterprises pushed substantial numbers of workers to find alternatives in

the informal economy (Özdemir et al, 2004; Kutal, 2005). Dismissals from public employment contributed to increases in the rate of informal employment and self employment. Many of the self employed consist, in actuality, of unpaid family workers, making up nearly half of the official labor force and a large part of informal employment (Özdemir & Özdemir, 2006).

The suppression of unions is often a byproduct of privatization. Public employment has always provided more secure working conditions than private employment. Employers use sub-contracting and temporary employment forms extensively to hinder unionization. Employers suppress unions at workplace in order to increase competition, efficiency and profits (Kutal, 2005). Moreover, they use existing loopholes in the legal system and abuse it by threatening workers (Selamoglu & Urhan, 2008).

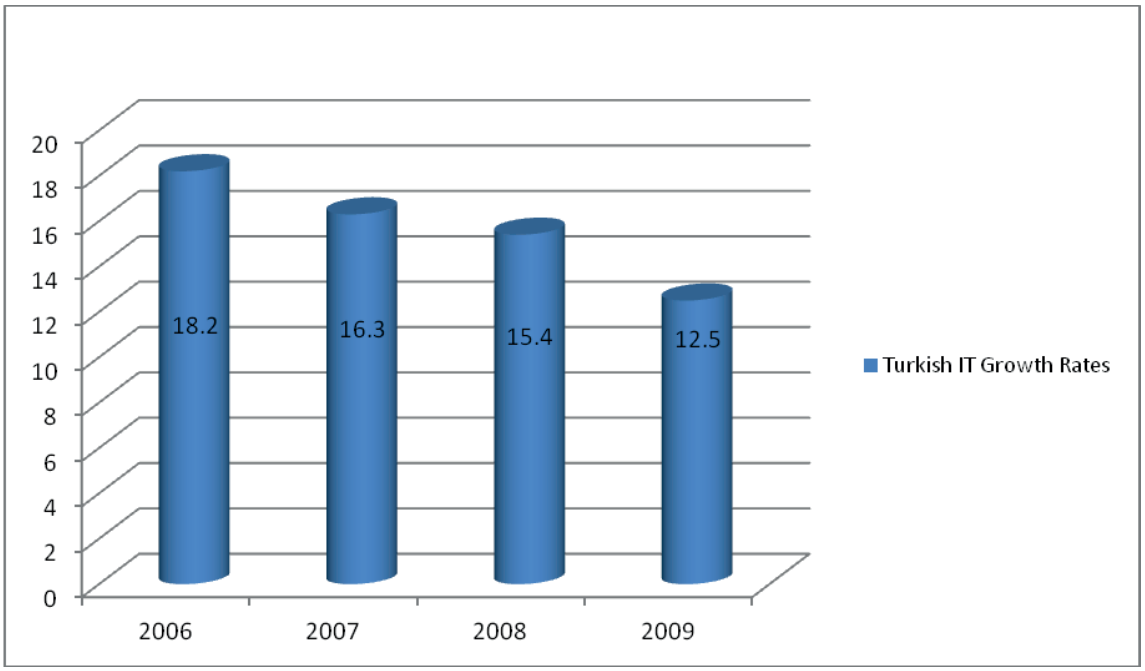
In addition to these features of the labor market, it is useful to keep in mind that a considerable part of salaried workers are employed in small enterprises (Yildirim & Uckan, 2009). According to the ETUC report (2010), firms with less than ten workers comprise roughly 60% of total employment. Moreover, workplaces with fewer than 250 workers count for approximately 80 percent of total employment (TURKSTAT, 2010). Informal employment is widespread among small and medium scale enterprises (Bakir et.al, 2009). Therefore, the dominance of informal market is also considered as one factor affecting low levels of unionization.

2.5 An Overview of Turkish IT Sector

As with other European countries, the IT sector is one of the most rapidly developing sectors and the driving force of economical change in Turkey. Compared to its European counterparts,

however, the IT sector in Turkey makes up a small portion of economic output. The share of IT terms of global economic output is around 14 percent while it is only 3 percent in Turkey (Information for Progress, 2012). Moreover, the ratio of ICT expenses to GDP is over 8 percent in countries such as Singapore and South Korea, it remains at 4.5 percent in Turkey (Information for Progress, 2012). Despite this rather small share of economic contribution, the Turkish IT market is one of the important markets with respect to its potential growth. The Turkish IT market has grown significantly over the last decade, making it one of the fastest growing sectors in Europe (see Figure 4 and 5). Reforms and privatization policies implemented by the Turkish government provides the critical infrastructure for this astounding growth, accounting for approximately 30 billion US dollars in 2011 (Business Monitor International, 2012).

Figure 4: Turkish IT Growth Rates 2006-2009

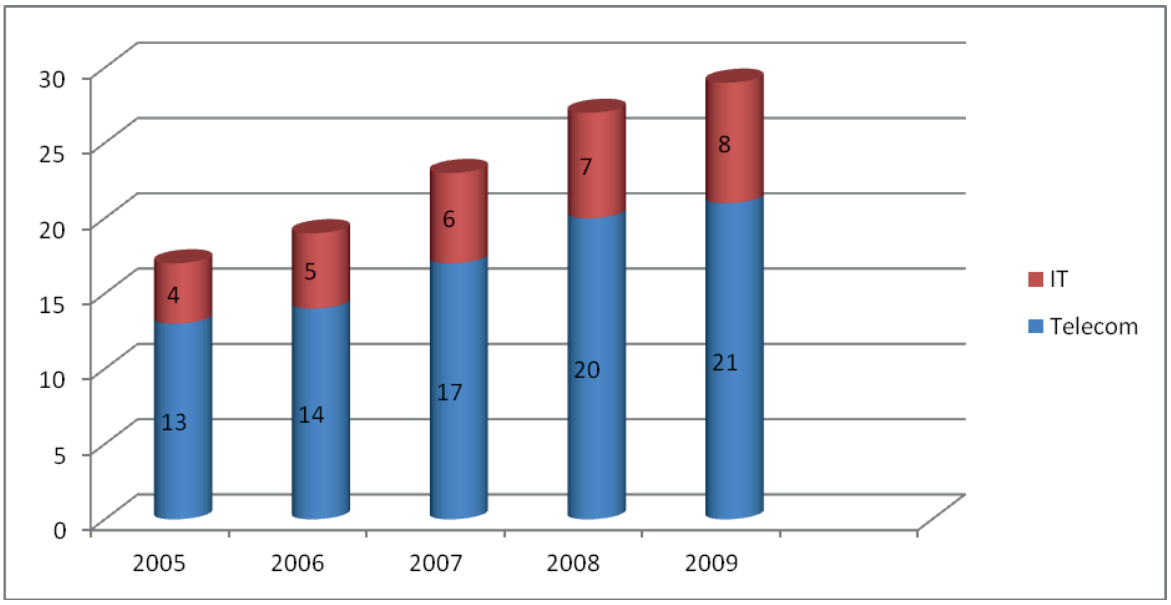


Source: Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey, 2010 (visited on 7.10.2011)

Turkey, with a large and predominantly young workforce, offers growth opportunities in the local and global arena in the IT sector. The IT sector in Turkey employs nearly 120.000 workers (Bozkurt, 2010). It has a young and highly qualified workforce. According to the Report of the Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey (2010), 65% of the population is below 35 years old and Turkey has the 4th largest workforce among the 27 European countries, with over 24 million people. The IT sector is probably one of the youngest sectors, with a workforce consisting mostly new graduates or workers in their initial earning years. 63% of workers were under 30 years old and almost half of those have no more than three years of work experience (TMMOB, 2009).

The Turkish IT market is dominated by either foreign companies such as Microsoft, IBM, HP, Foxconn, Huawei, Microsoft, Toshiba and Siemens Business Services or local military software companies such as Havelsan and Aselsan. Turkey has become as a kind of headquarters in the region. It is highly dependent on the application of foreign technologies, even though technology import is not a way to compete with the global markets since technology changes rapidly.

Figure 5: ICT Market in Turkey, 2005-2009 (USD in billions)



Source: Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey, 2010 (visited on 7.10.2011)

2.5.1 Turkish IT Sector and Unionization

While the Turkish IT sector is reported to be primarily focused on growth rates, the number of internet users or PC sales, the working conditions of IT workforce is largely ignored. There is only one short report found covering issues about working conditions of Turkish IT workers and the necessity of collective action. The report prepared by the Chamber of Electrical Engineers (EMO, 2009) argues that the Turkish IT workers suffer from the flexible working conditions and need an institution to protect their rights.

As Turkey lacks strong trade union traditions, and technology focused work is widely encouraged, evolving IT enterprises are largely unencumbered by traditional work regulations.

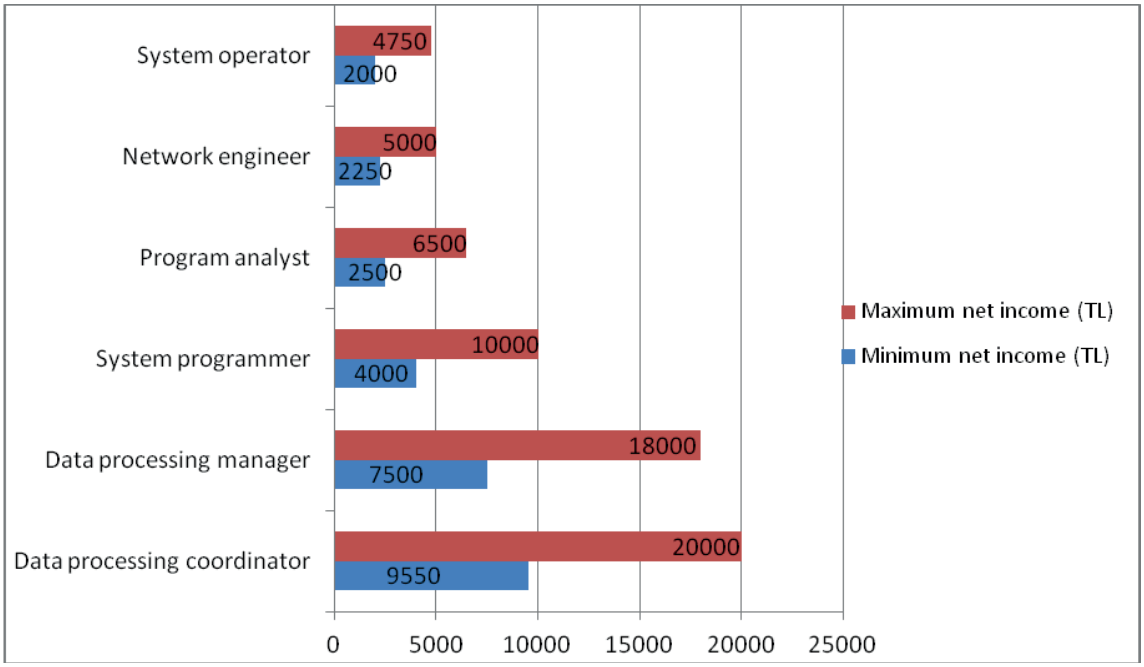
The IT sector in Turkey remains one of the most union-resistant sectors in the country despite its tremendous financial growth. Its cold war roots affect every aspect of the industry, from its attitude towards unions to the workforce. This is in no small part due to the historic dependence on government defense contracts and increasing military budgets (Bacon, 1999). Compared with European models, in Hall and Soskice's (2001) terms, the features of the Turkish IT sector are more oriented towards market relations between individual worker and employer rather than strategic interaction. The functions of unions or trade associations are left to individuals. Unionization and collective bargaining systems are underdeveloped at best or completely devoid of power at worst. The national specificity plays an important role in the anti-union strategies of international companies (Bain & Taylor, 2002). The same companies whose workers are unionized elsewhere are union-resistant in countries such as Turkey. Employers, unsurprisingly, are not overly enthusiastic for the formation and persistence of labor unions.

The development of Turkish IT sector began in the 1990s. The IT sector evolved parallel to the restrictive Trade Unions Law and the Collective Bargaining, Strike and Lockout Law which was enacted in 1983. Established under these conditions, the Turkish IT sector was deprived of a tradition for such unionization practices. A collective bargaining structure without a historical legacy of collective action is highly unlikely. Thus, unionism in the IT sector is complicated by a variety of social conditions and union legislation which constitute significant countervailing influences.

Turkey's IT labor market also suffers from serious gaps in social security. The IT sector is characterized by more flexible and company level agreements, as opposed to sector wide

collective agreements. IT employment is mainly in private industries and contains a large measure of flexible work practices such as part-time, home office, project based work or tele-working. IT sector has a highly educated workforce. Those highly educated IT workers also receive higher salaries compared to other sectors (Figure 6). In general, highly educated and well-off white collar workers are not in favor of labor unions.

Figure 6: Net income scales for IT positions in 2012 in Turkey (in Turkish liras)



Source: www.kariyergundem.com, (visited: 24.12.2012)

Small start-up firms make up the majority of companies and unionization level is lowest among small companies in general. Due to the structural characteristics of small companies, such as the generally informal organization of workplace activity and less hierarchical institutional structure,

unionization is understood as an indicator of distrust for managers and problems are likely resolved among workers and employers. Moreover, bargaining coverage of small companies is lower (van het Kaar & Grünell, 2001). According to the Turkish Labor Law, workplaces which employ less than 30 workers are not covered under the law of work security and workers are not covered with collective bargaining agreements

Summary

A general overview of Turkish industrial relations and specifically the Turkish IT market is presented in this chapter. Legacy of Turkish labor unions revealed the characteristics which form the context of labor unions and collective action in Turkey. Characteristics of Turkish labor union confederations are provided to have a panorama of labor unions in Turkey. It is indicated that Turkish unionism, that is, has not emerged so much from a specific labor movement, but rather it has developed with resolutions of problems via laws on industrial relations. A historical overview of Turkish labor relations provided background information about the restructuring of labor market and industrial relations actors. The neo-liberal policies found a suitable environment after the military intervention in September 1980. The military rule and enactment of new labor laws profoundly affected Turkish industrial relations and labor unions. Next, the change brought by new labor law which was enacted on October 2012 is briefly described. After that, the characteristics of Turkish labor market are made clear with its effects on unionization. In general, labor market characteristics such as the large share of informal market, dominance of small scale companies and increasing privatization policies do not provide an appropriate environment for labor unions to recruit new members and to become stronger as an industrial

relations actor. The end of this chapter is reserved for relating unionization to the Turkish IT sector. Since its beginning, the Turkish IT sector and unionization were not pronounced together. While the Turkish IT sector has one of the fastest growth rates among EU countries, its labor related aspects have always been ignored. All of the above given information about the Turkish context of industrial relations is indeed important to show that, the Turkish IT sector was born and developed under such conditions.

Chapter 3

Socio-Psychological Approaches to Explain Collective Action

Introduction

In this chapter, the basic theoretical approaches will be reviewed, and then a more detailed description of the group-based interactionist approach will be presented. First, socio-psychological approaches will be classified by focusing on either individual or social-contextual characteristics (3.1). Special emphasis will be given to social identity perspective, namely social identity and self categorization theories (3.2). Last, after describing the main theoretical framework, its implications into labor union action will be examined (3.3).

Even if they are based on the previously stated argument, a variety of socio-psychological perspectives have been used to analyze and explain collective action depending on the level of analysis (Blackwood et.al, 2003). Individual based analysis gives priority to attitudes, beliefs, personality or individual decision making processes of collective action (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Blackwood et.al, 2003). On the other hand, social-contextual based approaches analyze individual behavior within group relations in a given social context (Klandermans, 1984; 1986; Blackwood, 2007). In this study, individual behavior of collective action in *group* contexts from social identity perspective is given priority due its broader coverage, presenting a more sophisticated theoretical background to understand collective action.

3.1 An Overview of Socio-psychological Approaches

Industrial relations research spans various disciplines including political science, economics, sociology and law. However, psychological explanations are generally ignored or seen as insufficient in order to explain collective action (Barling et.al, 1992). This is mostly due to a general understanding that psychological perspectives are primarily individualistic. Throughout the years of the development of psychological theories, they have been well integrated to the realm of collective action by including the social context. Briefly, socio-psychological perspectives examine how individuals behave in intra- and inter-group relations. Collective action is defined as individual behavior acting in a social group in accordance with the group values in order to favor and improve group membership (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996).

Klandermans (2002) highlights that people's concerns about social and economic issues do not necessarily translate into collective action. Even if collective action is able to bring about the social change, it is often not perceived as an appealing strategy (Hornsey et.al. 2006). So, why are people not especially eager to act together with others?

The research to date, on unionization, has generally been based on union perspectives or organizational structures (Fiorito et al., 1988; Bain & Price, 1983). It assumes that either unions or organizational structures take a central role for collective action taking place (Newton & Shore, 1992). This perspective presupposes that unions bring together the necessary conditions for a successful strike activity and they have the capacity to demand change through formal collective channels. Moreover, worker identity and attitudes tend to be either neglected or treated

as non-problematic (Dixon et al., 2004). More recently, union-centered explanations of worker mobilization and militancy shifted to a focus on workplace relations, conflicts and work-based identities (Fantasia, 1988; Jasper, 1997).

The 'organizational commitment' (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Mowday, 1998) literature is useful in providing a background to socio-psychological approaches. According to Meyer and Allen (1991), commitment is a psychological state that characterizes the worker's relationship with the organization and has implications for the decision to continue or discontinue membership in the organization. Simply put, the more committed to a movement someone is, the more likely s/he will continue participating (Klandermans, 1997). Union commitment can also be applied to this framework. The affective, normative and continuance components of commitment may refer to union decisions because the workers *want* to, *ought* to or *need* to have collective action (McDonald & Makin, 2000; Klandermans, 1997; Goslinga & Sverke, 2003). However this conceptualization does not provide an inclusive framework for the specific IT cases. IT specific employment conditions might hinder development of commitment.

In that sense, socio-psychological approaches such as social identity theory (SIT) and its extension, self categorization theory (SCT), provide a broader and alternative perspective to understand and analyze unionization as a form of collective action (Turner et.al, 1987; Blackwood, 2003; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). Social identity perspective suggests that self-categorization processes and identity issues have a profound effect on people's behavioral expectations of themselves. Considered as a group phenomenon, labor union participation

decisions of workers present especially interesting outcomes about the very specific identification and differentiation processes based on perceptions in a given social context.

As presented in theories related with union participation, the perception of group-level injustice is noted as a critical point in SIT. Mobilization theorists argue that injustice needs to be attributed to some place (e.g. company) or someone (e.g. manager) (Kelly, 1998). Social identity theory supplements this by including identity considerations. People will conform to group values and act together when they perceive similarities in how they define, think and feel about themselves (Kelly and Breinlinger, 1996; Kelly and Kelly 1994; Veenstra & Haslam 2000).

Another aspect of the socio-psychological theories is its ability to relate individual behavior to group context. The IT sector is defined as highly individualistic and a collectivist culture that can be found in some other sectors has not been rooted among the IT workforce. The IT context, in general, has a strong emphasis on individual interest and personal identities (Noronha & D'Cruz, 2009; Sarkar, 2009). Therefore social identity perspective is also preferred for the specific circumstances of the present cases which require an understanding of the processes of group behavior in an individualistic social context. The aforementioned aspects of social identity perspective provide a unique perspective in examining union participation decisions.

3.1.1 Individual based approaches

Locus of control and Political efficacy

A socio-psychological approach based on personality argues that individuals who have a sense of locus of control are able to make changes in their social positions (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Blackwood et.al, 2003). This approach is based on the idea of individual efficacy that a person can guide and have control of events through his or her own behavior (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). It is predicted that individuals who have a locus of control are more likely to participate in collective action in comparison with individuals who think that they have limited or no power to affect change (Blackwood, 2007). However, locus of control and the ability to participate in collective action has to be evaluated by taking into consideration the ideological orientations, expectations or group memberships (Haslam, 2004).

Political efficacy is also related with the internal locus of control. This model presumes that one can have an effect on political processes within individual decision making (Blackwood, 2007). Some social and demographic characteristics such as age, gender and level of education generate differences in levels of efficacy (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996). As mentioned in Veenstra & Haslam's study (2000), political efficacy is defined more as group characteristics rather than individual decisions. A socialist individual will most likely support union activity not mainly because of his/her individual decision making processes, but due to their group memberships.

Locus of control and political efficacy explanations are based on personality and individual differences between people. Personality based explanations help us to predict the choices of an

individual, however their focus on individuality might not provide sufficient explanations for group behavior.

Rational Choice Approach

The rational choice approach can be summarized as a cost-benefit calculation of collective action. Industrial relations researchers use value expectancy theory to explain the cost-benefit analysis (Klandermans, 1984; 1986). Tilly (1978) assumes that collective action depends on definitions of interests, the degree of organization and the cost and benefits of taking action. Klandermans' (1984, 1986) model of collective action also identified cost-benefit calculations as one of the key intervening variable between perceived injustice and collective action. In other words, the rational assessment of the expectancy of having positive outcomes (goal motive) determines the level of willingness to act. The expected reaction of others also plays a significant role (social motive). Union participation is chosen if the benefits outweigh the costs, or if it is beneficial to reach the goals (reward motive) (Klandermans, 1984; Johnson & Jarley, 2004). The cost of the action is the most important predictor of the type of the strategy if it is active, passive, constructive or destructive (Anuradha, 2011). The use of the rational choice/value-expectancy model can be observed especially in strike action (Klandermans, 1984; 1986).

One criticism to rational choice might be that people are not only mobilized on the basis of instrumental calculations of individual self-interest (Klandermans, 1986). Increasing costs of action might even lead to stronger willingness to participate to collective action (Youngblood et al, 1984). Individuals with a strong social identity may think in terms of group interests, gains or

losses (Newton & Shore, 1992). Social and ideological factors, the belief of doing the right thing or commitment to union activity may have more determinative influence than the sum of economist calculations (Ashfordt & Mael, 1989; Griffin & Svensen, 1999). In this sense, rationalism might fail to explain individual and group behavior. In addition, workers who have similar problems do not necessarily make similar choices. Any choice of a worker could be rational from an individual perspective. Moreover, deprivation or frustration does not necessarily evoke agreement with the goals of a movement which portends to remedy these feelings (Blackwood et al, 2003).

3.1.2 Social and Contextual Approaches

Frustration-Aggression Approach

According to the frustration-aggression approach, people and organizations are defined as systems striving for equilibrium (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). Union activity happens when the equilibrium is disturbed. If workers are frustrated, dissatisfied or alienated, then they are driven to be a member of a labor union to reestablish the equilibrium (Blackwood et al., 2003; Klandermans, 1986; Sarkar, 2009). The frustration/aggression approach has references to the exit-voice-loyalty formulation of Hirschman (1970). A frustration leading to collective action is similar with what Hirschmann described with voice. Voice represents articulation of interests in an attempt to change the unfavorable situation, restore deteriorating conditions and return to previous levels of functioning, rather than to escape from it (Hirschman, 1970). In that sense, union affiliation is a form of 'voicing'.

However, it also suffers from serious limitations. Frustration does not have to result in union activity in all cases (Gallagher & Strauss, 1991). It may be a necessary but in sufficient condition for participation (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000; Youngblood et.al, 1984). Frustration does not in itself clearly explain how and why workers organize for union action. Workers may choose different means of resistance such as quitting, stealing from one's employer or even sabotaging production (Hodson, 1995; Johnson & Jarley, 2004). A labor union does not have to be the remedy for the frustrated workers. It may also end with an 'exit' option, according to Hirschmann's terminology. Moreover, frustration and dissatisfaction can arise from issues which are not related with management's acts (Johnson & Jarley, 2004). Here mobilization theory brings a further explanation by arguing that workers have to blame the employer or the management for their problems (Kelly, 1998).

Relative Deprivation Theory

Relative deprivation theory assumes the role of expectations and the feelings of deprivation as most important predictors in workers' decisions for collective action. Collective action occurs between workers who have the same or similar discontent with their work depending on the perceived consequences and the value of the consequences (Klandermans, 1986). They perceive their group as relatively deprived against the other in terms of benefits or rights (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996). However, there is an important distinction between individual and collective relative deprivation (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). Individual deprivation is due to self comparison with other individuals and leads to an individual response; collective deprivation is due to a comparison of one's group with others and leads to a collective response

(Kelly & Kelly, 1994). It is collective relative deprivation which is significant for collective action (Kelly, 1993; Anuradha, 2011). Since collective action is a matter of group identification, the main motive is the perceived deprivation at the group level rather than personal expectations (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996). Relative deprivation theory is used in macro analyses to explain union growth and union decline, or in strike analyses (Klandermans, 1986).

However, collective deprivation theory is not able to provide strong explanations between perceived deprivation and collective action (Kelly, 1993). In an industrial relations context, exemplified in the cases presented herein, short-term oriented workers are less likely to participate in collective action in cases of perceived deprivation. It should be kept in mind that collective action is constructed internally. Collective relative deprivation can be related with the social identification processes and opens a door to understanding the significance of social identity and self categorization. Thus, it cannot be considered as completely distinct from social identity and self categorization theories. An individual's own group identification has a direct effect on the perception level of deprivation and counter behavior (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). It would be expected that individuals who strongly identify themselves with their in-group will be influenced more from the feelings of deprivation.

Concluding Remarks

Individual based and social context level explanations are evaluated specifically in this brief review of relevant approaches to union action. The roles of ideological beliefs and attitudes, perceptions of inequality, and feelings of deprivation are highlighted in order to understand the

dynamics which motivate union action. It is apparent that individual based or social-contextual level approaches are not completely distinct from each other. Both of them influence each other and include the characteristics of the other. However, when considered alone, those explanations fail to provide a complete understanding of collective action.

Viewing unionization simply as a response to dissatisfaction or deprivation conceals the multifaceted function unionization plays in worker identity and the effect of identity on the tendency of workers to unionize (Milton, 2003). Theoretical formulations of collective action must be sensitive to preexisting differences in identity perceptions and attitudes (Roscigno & Hodson, 2004). Collective action is not a natural or obvious self-response to dissatisfaction or deprivation, but a more sophisticated pattern of collective behavior (Thompson, 1995; Turner, 1999). Indeed, the benefit of reviewing these approaches is to discern the necessity of a very sophisticated set of social and psychological aspects for a broader insight to worker collective action.

The use of social identity and self-categorization theories provides a deeper understanding of collective action to reveal the dynamic interplay of psychological processes between the person, their cognitions and their environment (Blackwood et.al, 2003). Even though the social identity perspective has common components, it specifies a more elaborated model (Blackwood, 2007). The models presented above are conceptualized differently at the group level. The next part provides a theoretical framework for understanding the role of worker perceptions in a labor union context from the social identity perspective.

3.2 Social Identity Perspective

From the interactionist perspective, SIT and SCT provide valuable insights into the dynamics of individual behavior in social groups. SIT and SCT develop a framework to understand individual behavior with respect to salience and perceived relevant group membership. These two theories form the social identity perspective (Blackwood, 2007). Based on the concept of social identity, both of them are in accordance with each other, related to identification processes in group culture and give the basic priority to social context (Turner, 1999; Schnabel & Wagner, 2003; Klandermans, 1986). Even if they are occasionally mistaken for each other, they differ in what that they emphasize. Social identity perspective describes the concept of social identity and the processes of intergroup behavior in a social context; while SCT brings them forward and underlines more of a cognitive and detailed account of identification and differentiation processes (Turner et al., 1987).

Due to its emergent use as a new method of providing an alternative framework to understanding group processes by social scientists, social identity perspective has generated a vast amount of empirical research. From electorates and racial and ethnic groups, to work organizations, and many others, social identity perspective seeks to explain how status, stability, permeability and legitimacy influence social identity (Tajfel, 1974, 1982; Turner, 1999). The richness of the approach lies in the direct relationship of its range of application (Reicher et.al. 2010). A number of key issues from gender perspective (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996), Dutch farmers (Klandermans & de Weerd, 2000), and others are among those currently incorporated with the social identity perspective. They open a broader pathway for social scientists without bearing the shortcomings

of psychological reductionism (Reicher et.al. 2010). These theories will be elaborated in detail in order to provide explanations for understanding worker collective action.

3.2.1 Social Identity Theory

SIT began as a method to explain discrimination in intergroup processes in the early 70's (Tajfel, 1974, 1982; Turner, 1999; Turner et.al, 1987; Reicher et.al, 2010). SIT aims to provide an explanation of individual behavior in group with an emphasis of psychological processes and its interaction with social and political processes (Reicher et.al, 2010).

Social identity is described by Tajfel (1974) as part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the emotional significance attached to that membership. It is shaped by individual beliefs and also produces more of them which influence the interaction with people (Oakes et al., 1994). It means much more than self-perceptions. There are various social identities that an individual may belong to and the significance or priority of a social identity depends on social context.

Social identity theorists argue that each individual has a personal identity, and a social identity, which comprises the social categories to which they belong (Ellemers et al, 2002; Milton, 2003). Personal identity defines the individual as a unique person and differentiates the individual from other individuals. On the other hand, social identity refers to self-definition of individuals with respect to his/her positioning compared to social categories (Hogg, 1992; Ellemers et.al, 2002).

According to SIT, one's identification within a social group is crucial to understand her perceptions and attitudes (Oakes et.al, 1994; Kelly 1993). SIT argues that we evaluate ourselves in social groups and in a social context considering our group membership and compare it with out-groups by favoring the in-group (Turner, 2002; Klandermans, 1984; 1986). Social categorization as in-group and out-group influences our self-perception and perception of others (Tajfel, 1974; 1982). Comparison between group's leads to pressure for intergroup differentiation to achieve a positive self evaluation for the preferred identity along valued dimensions of comparison (Turner, 1999; Reicher et.al, 2010; Klandermans, 1984; 1986; 2002). In this way, we experience the successes and failures of our in-group personally and we choose to maintain our evaluative distinctiveness.

In other words, the value of our self-perception and how we define ourselves and others is derived from the groups that we belong and the salience of group memberships (Ashforth & Mael, 1989; Hogg, 1992). SCT supplements the issues raised by SIT. It gives special attention to the distinction between interpersonal and intergroup behavior by accentuating the differences between personal and social identity (Turner et.al, 1987, 1994; Turner, 1999).

3.2.2 Self Categorization Theory

SCT is an offshoot from SIT and deals with its limitations. It is a more systematic way of social identification for an understanding of individual behavior in a social group (Hogg, 1999). SCT emphasizes more the operation of cognitive processes of categorization, different levels of identification and focuses on intra-group relations (Hogg, 1999; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000;

Reicher et.al. 2010). The difference between SIT and SCT is more in emphasis than in content (Hogg, 1999). The emphasis is given to a cognitive definition of social groups. Social groups are not only constituted by interpersonal relations between individuals (Reicher et.al, 2010). Interpersonal relations and interactions are important to have social categorization, but they are not sufficient to constitute the psychological in-group (Reicher et.al, 2010). The in-group and out-group boundaries are clarified through self categorization (Hogg, 1999). By doing so, individuals tend to focus on the perceived similarities between the members of the same group and perceived differences between the members of the different groups (Hogg, 1992; Turner, 1999). These processes of self categorization transform self-conception and bring us to de-personalization and stereotyping of self-perception in terms of salient social categorizations.

Depersonalization: The central hypothesis for group behavior is that as shared social identity or valued group membership becomes salient, perceived in-group homogeneity increases and individual self-perception tends to become depersonalized. The depersonalization process represents self-stereotyping in terms of relevant social categorization (Turner et al., 1987: Turner, 1999). In other words, we perceive the others with their group membership rather than their individual characteristics (Haslam et.al, 2000; Reicher et.al, 2010). The in and out-group members are no longer perceived as individuals, rather perceived as an example of their group (Hogg & Terry, 2001). In that sense, depersonalization contributes to collective action by increasing the in-group cohesion, stressing the shared attributes among in-group members and social comparisons.

Individuals see themselves less as differing individual persons and more as prototypical representatives of their in-group (Turner, 1999; Kelly & Kelly, 1994). Prototypes include the whole properties of the group and clearly differentiated from the out-group (Hogg, 1999). The prototype is, in other words, the cognitive representation of the group. Prototypes not only describe the group that they belong to, they also shape the behavior of other group members. Individuals must have things in common to a certain extent with the prototype rather than a full set of attributes (Oakes et al., 1994). In brief, it is depersonalization which produces the group behavior by representing a change from personal to social identity (Turner, 1999; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996).

Stereotyping: Stereotyping is the process of ascribing characteristics to people on the basis of their group memberships (Oakes et al., 1994). Stereotyping is an outcome of group identification and it enables differentiation between in and out-groups (Kelly, 1993). Stereotyping is a form of showing the salience of group values, as well as group cohesiveness (Kelly, 1993). Group identification results in treating the members of out-groups as more different than they actually are. Moreover, the out-group members are also perceived as homogeneous of their social category. The out-group member is evaluated with the prototypical characteristics of his/her group. Briefly, stereotyping makes the reality simple and manageable, although this process of categorization has often been considered unreliable and in close association with prejudice and ill-treatment (Oakes et al., 1994; Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Depersonalization and stereotyping processes link social identity with social reality, even if it is distorted with individual perceptions. Nevertheless, categories should not only be evaluated as biased information, they reflect the perceived world of an individual in a group.

Accessibility and Fit: Salience and prototypes of categories are determined by two processes: accessibility and fit (Turner et al, 1987). Accessibility refers to the willingness or readiness of an individual to identify him/herself with a particular social category (Hogg, 1992; Turner, 1999). If this social category is important for the individual and if that individual can identify him/herself with the group in SCT terms, and if the individual is 'ready' to perceive, s/he will be likely to think and act in terms of that particular social category (Reicher et.al, 2010). This is determined by past experience, present expectations, current motives, values, goals and needs. For example, if being a socialist is an important part of a person's sense of who s/he is, s/he will be more likely to act in terms of that social self category. S/he will perceive and interpret the actions of others in terms of categorical divisions between socialists and non-socialists (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000).

Fit refers to the matching of social category and perceived situation. It has two aspects. *Comparative fit* refers to the social organization of similarities and differences between people in a given context (Reicher et al., 2010). It is the process of contrasting self against others to determine if a social category fits to that individual (Turner et.al, 1987). The differences between in-group members are perceived as less than those between in-group and out-group members (Turner, 1999). Comparative fit reflects the context of collective action by creating a sense of 'we' and 'they' (Klandermans & de Weerd, 2000). Moreover, according to *normative fit* the similarities and differences must be also consistent with a perceiver's content-related

expectations about in-group and out-group categories (Oakes et al., 1994; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000; Reicher et.al, 2010).

3.3 Implication of Social Identity Perspective for Labor Union Action

After having explained the basic framework and the concepts of the social identity perspective, I continue with its implication in the context of labor unions. The labor union participation decisions of workers can be evaluated as a form of collective action. The in-group and out group identification of workers and management may vary depending on the individual behavior of workers. It involves an in-group (workers) and an out-group (management) which is necessary for identification and categorization processes. Depending on the specificity of cases, workers might also act in accordance with management or with their occupation and perceive them as in-groups, as well.

Within the last two decades, the number of studies from a socio-psychological perspective gained more importance in sociology, political science and political economy due to its all-encompassing character and contributed to the development of the main theoretical framework (e.g. Haslam et al., 2000, Blackwood et.al, 2003, Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Ashfordt & Mael, 1989; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). However, the link between group identification, social context and willingness to participate in union action remains largely unexplored in the available studies (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). There exist only a few studies by Klandermans (1984; 1986), Kelly and Kelly (1994), Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) and Blackwood (2007) which directly refer to

the interaction of strength of identification and willingness to join union action. In the following the relevant literature of collective action from the social identity perspective will be reviewed.

3.3.1 The Role of Beliefs in Intergroup Relations

Individuals can make categorizations at different levels of abstraction. The most relevant is at the level of in-group identification and out-group differentiation. The salience of out-groups is also directly related with the identification process. According to social identity perspective, if out-group awareness is strong, then it also increases the awareness of one's in-group (Hogg, 1992; Blackwood et al., 2003).

Individual motives, values, expectations, background knowledge, and so forth, are among the significant variables that determine social categorization processes (Turner, 1999). It is important to know how these beliefs impact in an intergroup context. Inidividuals' subjective beliefs are placed into the center of intergroup relations in a given social context. It can be criticized that those beliefs are typically sourced from stereotypical perceptions. However, as Oakes et al. (1994) stated, social stereotypes are not always biased, but they are also driven by accurate assessment of intergroup differences. The important thing from the social identity perspective is that those beliefs play a crucial role in individuals' decision on participation to collective action.

From the unionization perspective, studies by Kelly and Kelly (1994), Milton (2003), Noronha and D'Cruz (2006) and Remesh (2004) provided evidence that workers examine its suitability to decide whether being and acting as a union member is compatible with their perceptions of themselves as IT workers. Kelly and Kelly's (1994) London based study on white collar union

members found that union identification was the best predictor of willingness to participate in union action.

In her study on programmers, system engineers and software engineers, Milton (2003) tried to develop an identity based explanation of unionization among high-tech workers. She found out that high-tech workers will unionize only when they perceive unions addressing issues that concern them and propose solutions that sustain their identities. In parallel with Milton's outcomes, Noronha and D'Cruz (2006) showed that a central reason why Indian call center agents in ITES/BPO industry were not willing to join unions was this lack of perception of unions as organizations able to fit in and sustain their IT identities. They neither identified themselves with unions nor saw their relevance. According to them, unions were for blue-collared workers who are exploited in factories, not for well-qualified people working in professional arrangements which looked after their interests.

3.3.2 The Role of Group Identification

According to the socio-psychological explanation of social behavior in organizations, social identity plays an important role regarding feelings of belonging to a group. The social identity perspective argues that one's own identification to social groups creates the difference in the decision of union participation. There is considerable evidence from previous research indicating the positive effect of social identification on collective action (Kelly& Kelly, 1994; Kelly 1993, Veenstra & Haslam, 2000; Klandermans, 2002). Collective action is the outcome of individual behavior acting behaviorally as a member of a relevant social group together with others who

identified themselves for similar or same motives (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000).

Veenstra and Haslam's (2000) study on the Australian higher education sector examines the role of social identification and one's willingness to participate in industrial protest. Their results showed that strongly identified union members were more willing to participate in collective action. Similarly, Klandermans' (2002) study, with emphasis on elderly, South African citizens and Dutch farmers, confirms that group identification fosters protest participation. Klandermans' findings illustrate that individuals have a tendency to participate in collective action if they identify themselves with a group, and if this group is treated unjustly. In their study of the white collar union members in a London local government authority, Kelly and Kelly (1994) found union identification was the best predictor of engagement in collective action. This stands in contrast to other psychological variables, such as political efficacy, collectivist orientation, perceived intergroup conflict, out-group stereotyping, and relative deprivation. Group identification as perceived oneness with a group establishes in-group homogeneity and converts it into collective action by locating the difference between 'us' and 'them' (Kelly, 1993; Klandermans, 1984; 1986; 2002; Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

Theoretical explanations of collective action, from resource mobilization theory to socio-psychological theories (such as relative deprivation, social identification and self-categorization theories), share a common factor: the emphasis on injustice (Blackwood et.al, Kelly 1998; Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Klandermans, 1984; Fantasia, 1998). Injustice is seen as crucial for worker mobilization and seems to provide a powerful construct for understanding identification

dynamics (Johnson & Jarley, 2004). However, the responses to inequality do not necessarily lead to collective mobilization; it is group identification which has the power to convert individual perceptions of illegitimacy and instability into collective action (Kelly, 1993).

According to social identity perspective, individuals will be likely to engage in collective action when they perceive injustice and a relative deprivation compared to their previous status (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Klandermans (2002) also showed that people are more likely to participate in protest the more they feel that a group they identify with is treated unjustly. Simply put, if individuals share the same grievances at the workplace, group identification is reinforced and motivates the others to participate as well in collective action (Ashfordth & Mael, 1989; Jarley & Johnson, 2004).

Collective injustice depends on to what extent an individual sees his/her group membership as central to him/herself. In social identity terms, the conditions of accessibility and fit have to be met. In other words, the individual should perceive him/herself ready with the social category (accessibility), and this social category must fit with the perceived situation (fit) (Turner et.al, 1987). The socio-economic and demographic profiles of the workforce also contribute to the conceptualization of an individual's identity. D'Cruz and Noronha (2006) provide evidence on how a specific professional identity serves to differentiate IT workers and their problems from conventional manufacturing employments. In her interview with the president of WashTech, Brophy (2006) highlighted education and social status as main determinants that make IT workers differentiate themselves from other workers. Similar with the previous studies, Remesh (2004) also indicates that Union membership is not perceived as central for Indian IT workers.

Union membership, in this study, is seen as degrading the professional status of IT workers to that of blue collar workers.

Another aspect of an individual's willingness to participate in collective action an individual's belief that their collective action is going to provide the social change they seek (Klandermans, 1989; Kelly, 1993). However, temporarily employed workers have negligible intentions of pursuing social change. As such, they workplaces where workers are temporarily employed do not provide the necessary environment for establishing identification and commitment among workers. Quitting is seen a better alternative for resolving problems and grievances for workers who are not employed permanently (Noronha & d'Cruz, 2006). Hodson et al. (1995) and Dixon et.al (2004) emphasized the significance of stability as a precondition for solidarity. Veenstra and Haslam (2000) also revealed that permanent workers contribute and identify themselves to their groups more than the temporary workers.

3.3.3 The Role of Perceived Threat for Union Participation

Collective action depends on seeing the self as part of a group in order to have a positive self-concept and maintain the group membership (Hogg & Terry, 2001; Hogg, 1992). Yet, all group members differ from each other with respect to their motivations for pro-group behavior and their closeness to the prototype figure. While some identify strongly and are considered as central group members, others may be more peripheral (Hogg, 1992). Stronger in-group identification leads to normative and stereotypical behavior, favoring the in-group and negating the out-group (Kelly, 1993). The self categorization process provides compliance with group

norms (Hogg, 1999; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000) and establishes intra-group cohesion, solidarity and positive evaluations of their own group (Ashfordt & Mael, 1989).

Union attitudes are fundamentally tied to the lived experiences of conflict and perceptions (Fantasia 1988; Roscigno & Hodson, 2004). It can be assumed that a person who strongly identifies him/herself with a labor union will be more committed or apt to work for the goals of his/her union rather than their own personal goals (Ashfordt & Mael, 1989; Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Kelly, 1993). In cases of conflict or threat, frustration leading pro-union behavior is expected from strong identifiers. They will be more disposed to engage in 'stand and fight' behavior, while low identifiers would be expected to `bail out' at the first sign of trouble (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000; Reicher et.al, 2010; Doosje et al, 1995; Ellemers, 2002). From the taxonomy of situations developed by Ellemers et al. (2002), weak identifiers prefer to distance themselves and act individually in cases of perceived threat and conflict. Moreover, strong identifiers strive for protecting their identity, more than low identifiers, by acting together and harmoniously (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000; Reicher et.al, 2010), increasing the psychological costs of accepting out-group influence (Kelly, 1993). However, as Doosje et al. (1995) argue low identifiers perceive their group more heterogeneous and differentiate themselves from their group.

3.3.4 The Role of Social Influence and Political Context for Union Participation

Group identification plays a direct role for the level of social influence. Social influence has often been defined as perceived pressures to act in line with others (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996).

From the social identity perspective, the relevant and salient group norms influence individuals' behavior in their group. From the unionization perspective, workers adopt and conform to the norms and values that are central to their group to strengthen the similarities with members of their group and to differentiate themselves from management (Haslam, et.al, 2000).

They act accordingly with the group norms if an individual identifies him/herself with a group, experience subjective uncertainties about his/her own perceptions or if the norms of a group are unambiguous (Hogg & Terry, 2001). People do not conform to group norms for mere social approval, but because these norms have actually become important in their self-definition (Terry & Hogg, 1996). For instance, if unionization is socially acceptable in a working environment, it would influence other workers to be more supportive of labor unions.

Even if historical, political, economic or cultural dimensions are not directly linked with the realm of social psychology, identification and categorization processes should take into account the influences of the social context on the attitudes and perceptions of workers in which collective action takes place (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000; Anuradha, 2011; Zientara & Kuczynski 2009). A more comprehensive understanding of collective action is possible by considering and referring to the importance of the political context.

Workers can choose to participate or not to participate in collective action due to different motives. Union participation decisions can vary depending on the country, sector or even more micro-reasons (Klandermans, 1992). Norms such as social interaction and networks at the

workplace, common goals, shared life styles, and family background have an impact, to some extent, depending on the political context (Blackwood et.al, 2003; Hogg, 1992).

The costs and benefits of union participation are consciously and unconsciously evaluated within the social, economic, cultural and political context of a country. Union participation decisions are affected by the economic and political characteristics of the society and vary across regions even within the same nation (Anuradha, 2011). A Swedish IBM worker will, most probably, have different perceptions of collective action than his/her Indian colleague. This depends, in varying degrees, on the rate of unemployment or the benefits provided to unemployed people. In the case of Turkish unionization, perceptions of labor unions as illegal, underground or communist organizations are strongly related with the military regime and its created environment against labor unions.

Summary

In this chapter, different theoretical explanations for collective action with respect to their relevancy for unionization were discussed. Individual and group level approaches were evaluated as significant for the aims of this specific study of Turkish IT workers. Irrespective of the similarities and connections of individual and social context centered theoretical approaches, social identity theory is given preference due to more comprehensive explanations of collective union action. In especially this strand of theory argues that identification with a social group passes beyond the cost-benefit calculations emphasized in individual based approaches (Klandermans, 1999; Tajfel & Turner 2003). Social group identification is more than the

instrumentality of reasons, or in other words, the weighing of costs and benefits of union participation. In contrast social identity theory suggests that people define themselves with contextually relevant categories by considering their similarities and differences (Turner et.al, 1987) and thus provides a systematic link between the individual and society. It allows social identity researchers to understand individual behavior in a socio-cultural context. Perceptions are transformed and determined in a context associated with the relevant categories and in conformity with our group membership (Reicher et.al. 2010). In the following chapters, those premises of the social identity perspective will be applied to the union decisions of Turkish IT workers in the two specific cases.

Chapter 4

Research Design

This dissertation investigates particular aspects of social identification on collective interest representation in the Turkish IT sector. The main focus is the exploration of key factors which contribute to different outcomes in two cases (IBM Turk and UNIBEL) of union mobilization in the Turkish IT sector. The chosen research design is employed to respond specifically to the main questions raised previously. That is: 1) What factors enabled IBM Turk and UNIBEL workers to successfully engage in collective action?"; and 2) How have particular individual, group-based and contextual dynamics resulted in different unionization outcomes in the two cases with respect to strike action?

The project period ran from October 2009 to January 2013. Field research was conducted in the Turkish metropolitan areas of Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir over a period of three months. The IBM Turk case was observed during the unionization process, as well as the following dissolution of the union. In Izmir, the first IT strike in Turkey by the UNIBEL workers was observed in this project. After the successful strike, a follow up visit was carried out whereby observations of changes resulting from the action were recorded.

4.1 Rationale of the Research

This exploratory study is designed as a comparative case study of the two companies. A descriptive method is used to conduct this research. Referring to Yin (1994: 13), a case study is defined as "an empirical inquiry which investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and . . . [that] relies on multiple sources of evidence". In this study a systematic comparison of the two IT cases is done with the data obtained by the use of case study method. Inferring from Yin's (1994) definition, it can be argued that there are three main reasons why a case study method particularly suits to the needs and purposes of this study. First, a case study occurs in real life context and recognizes that context can make a difference (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1994). Second, the process of the study is as important as the outcome. Last, a number of techniques can be integrated into a case study research design (Kaarbo & Beasley, 1994).

The comparative research design relies primarily on qualitative data gathered from the fieldwork. Methodologically speaking, unionization has hardly been seen as a topic to be studied by following qualitative methods in the realm of social psychology. Social psychology is strongly influenced and shaped by positivist and quantitative methods. Qualitative methods have either been treated as inappropriate or irrelevant for the reporting of objective outcomes. Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) argue that this is one reason why sociological and psychological approaches have not been integrated into collective action. Therefore, this study has also an importance for its attempt to understand and explain collective action from a qualitative perspective. The value of the present study stems not in the measurement of variables regarding the union participation

decisions of workers, but rather its' exploration of the processes of different outcomes in the two Turkish IT cases.

In quantitative research, theory and concepts are determined forehand (Patton, 1990). However, qualitative methods are not used to validate the theory but to let the theory come out by itself. Consistent with Silverman (2006), the *a priori* use of a specific theory is intentionally avoided to be open and flexible, so that the outcomes of the study can be interrelated with a broad range of factors. As this study on the unionization of IT workers in the Turkish context is a primary attempt, instead of using a pre-determined strict technique, rather an interactive method is employed. Instead of deriving theories and testing them in a strict sense, potentially relevant theoretical concepts are consulted and prior research findings relating to the research question are used to frame the research and design the interview guidelines. Initial and continuous findings again informed the choice of particular theoretical concepts. The field research experience indicated that social identity and self categorization theories were optimal in explaining the theoretical background of the study.

Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) emphasized that the main advantage of conducting a qualitative rather than quantitative study is the direct contact with those who are studied. For the aims of this study, various methods are applied such as in-depth, expert and focus group interviews. Interviewing provided opportunities to enter into subject workplaces, allowing having insights to better compare and contrast the two different worlds of IT. In addition, meeting places of interviews gave clues concerning the different outcomes of the two cases. For example, some interviews with the IBM workers were conducted in a Starbucks café in a large shopping mall. In

Turkey, Starbucks has a symbolic value which is a place to go not only for drinking coffee, but also showing off that person's relatively higher social status. That shopping mall is located in the business 'plaza' area of Istanbul. On the other hand, interviews conducted with the UNIBEL workers were located in a local tea shop in the old town of Izmir.

Second, as Silverman (2006) argued, a qualitative perspective allowed for direct reflection on the self-interpretations, meanings and environments of the interviewees. Social relations established with interviewees continued to play a vital and constructive role even after the completion of field research. For instance, one dismissed manager agreed to share his personal diaries after his interview. This provided a valuable insight into the process and social relations at the respondent's workplace. As Orb et al. (2000) note, during the data collection process, the personal interaction between researcher and respondents is crucial. This, obviously, opens up the risk of introducing bias from sustained personal interaction with respondents. This research proceeded cautiously with close observation of the case studies, while remaining alert to the potential drawback of introducing bias. The insights gained from this intimacy of data collection have proved highly valuable to the research in both cases. The fact that this research was known to be conducted by an official researcher from a foreign (German) university served to accentuate the objective distance needed in such research.

A third motivation supporting the use of qualitative methods stems, unavoidably, from the contentious reliability of official statistical data. Official statistics from the Turkish Statistics Institute are unreliable in the context of unionization, as they tend to be either exaggerated or otherwise distorted. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Turkish Statistics Institute and

OECD statistics reported the unionization rates 58% and 5.6%, respectively. In addition, the statistical information on the Turkish IT sector is extremely limited, at best. The Turkish IT sector is gradually developing and there is a lack of quantitative data to be found relating to unionization and this sector. As mentioned before, there is only one short report found on the working conditions of Turkish IT workers conducted by the Chamber of Electrical Engineers (EMO) in 2009.

4.2 Sampling & Population

IBM Turk and UNIBEL cases were purposefully selected, as the two companies represent unique examples of unionization in the Turkish IT sector. In this research, IT workers are defined as hardware engineers, software engineers, computer scientists, computer programmers, consultants and webmasters. Either unionized or non-unionized, the study population is IBM TURK workers and the technical staff of UNIBEL. The sample size for each company was not pre-determined.

The criterion of sample size on maximum heterogeneity is saturation (Marshall, 1996). It is shaped during the fieldwork according to the information gathered from interviewees until the receipt of any additional information becomes superfluous. With respect to the research objectives and the characteristics of the study population, workers from different age groups, union tendencies and gender were intentionally chosen to gain a broader perspective of information. Purposive sampling was applied as main strategy to enlist interview partners: a) snowball sampling was used, i.e. interviewees were asked to identify other persons in order to contribute to the research; b) intensity sampling (Patton, 1990) was used, some cases which have

potential to generate richer information (Miles & Huberman, 1994) were selected to gain more substantive information of specific cases, such as from the former IBM TURK manager, union representatives, or activist workers.

4.3 Data Collection

Explorations of union (non)participation decisions of IT workers necessitate understanding inter- and intra-group relations between individuals. This entails investigation into how they perceive and give meanings to their social world. For this reason, semi-structured interviewing was chosen for the aims of the study. Semi-structured interviewing enables a greater explorative research approach with respect to its open-ended nature which "makes it possible for respondents to generate, challenge, clarify, elaborate or re-contextualize understandings of social movements" (Blee & Taylor, 2002).

As mentioned in social movement literature, semi-structured interviews are useful to explore, discover and interpret processes (Blee & Taylor, 2002; Fantasia, 1988). They include the voice of interviewees and locate it in the very center of the research. Information gathered from the interviewee does not have to be the objective 'truth', yet understanding their beliefs is the 'fact' for the researcher (Thompson, 1988). It gives clues about their expectations, perceptions, imaginations etc. or how they established social identities and differed themselves from others (Blee & Taylor, 2002). Semi-structured interviewing is also preferred due to its flexibility to the researcher depending on interactions with the interviewee. The semi-structured guideline allows the researcher to have a focus on certain topics, meanwhile it also permits *ad hoc*, and

unscheduled questions in the course of the interview. Such flexibility is extremely useful given the often impromptu circumstances faced over the course of the project.

Question sets were developed in consultation with my supervisor, to ensure clarity, readability, and focus. The interview guideline included open-ended questions and it was prepared so as to provide possibilities for coming out of new topics. In some of the specific interviews, interviewees were left intentionally free to explain topics; for example, detailed internal information about the transformation of work culture in IBM TURK from an ex-assistant manager; or the story of the establishment of a new company in IBM TURK from an ex-IBM TURK worker who was transferred to that company.

To collect consistent data, a total of twenty five interviews were conducted, covering: in-depth interviews with IT workers, managers, consultants and union representatives; expert interviews with union experts and academicians (See Appendix 1 for brief information on respondents). Among the types of semi-structured interviews, one life history, three focus group (in-depth) and five key informant (expert) interviews were conducted. Life history interviewing provides increased flexibility and requires less intervention than other types of semi-structured interviews, since the informant herself narrates particular histories (Blee & Taylor, 2002). Life history interviewing technique is applied in the case of the second top person in the IBM Turk hierarchy before his dismissal. This insight contributed significantly with information regarding the transformation of IBM TURK in the preceding twenty five years. It also provided valuable information concerning the background and the dissolution of the unionization process in IBM TURK.

Key informant interviews were conducted with experts concerning the topic, including a former IBM TURK assistant manager, the first two IBM TURK workers who headed the unionization struggle, and a unionist who was an ex-IBM TURK worker. The benefit of these key informant interviews was to gather detailed information from the key persons. For instance, the dismissed ex-IBM TURK worker was writing articles to a politically left-oriented newspaper and was able to make references to Castells and Sennett relating their perspectives to their own way of life and work by referring to the new middle classes.

Focus group interviews also enriched the empirical data by creating an environment of free discussion in a small group of interviewees. Its benefit was to provide a more interactive atmosphere and the opportunity to gather unexpected issues on the same topic among the same group of people (Patton, 1990). Significant information is gathered especially about different interpretations of injustice at the workplace.

The interview guideline was designed to draw conclusions about the theoretical background of the study. A different interview guideline with more specific and direct questions was prepared for the expert interviews (See Appendix 2 for the in-depth and expert interview guidelines). Interview questions reflected a number of complex issues concerning social psychology such as group identification, collectivist/individualist orientation, personal/group deprivation, political efficacy etc. Interviews were focused specifically on answering the questions of how unionization came about in the two companies, and why in the UNIBEL case unionization was successful and in the IBM Turk case unsuccessful. Personal stories of unionization in UNIBEL and IBM Turk, from the beginning until the end, were given special importance in order to

understand the complex world of IT workers. The in-depth interview questions were categorized into five main topics: (i) beliefs about inter-group relationship, (ii) activation of group-based identity, (iii) perceived threat and conflict at workplace, (iv) role of in-group norms and expectations, (v) socio-political context. Beliefs about inter-group relationship covered questions about labor union and unionist perceptions. Motivating and de-motivating factors such as belief in collective action, self perceptions, job characteristics etc. tapped into activation of group based identity. Questions about employer pressure and interpretation of threat were another category. Role of in-group norms and expectations involved questions on intra-group relations and career expectations. Last, socio-political context focused on the general atmosphere of unionism in Turkish context and differences between characteristics of the employing organization. Expert interview questions also covered the above topics, but also included questions concerning unionizing in the public and private sector, the state of labor unions and labor laws and problems of labor unions in organizing IT workers.

Interviews were conducted at IBM Turk and UNIBEL workplaces, in public cafes, during strike events and in union offices depending on the availability of locations for workers. Interviews lasted approximately forty-five minutes to two hours, with a semi-structured format. Interviews were conducted on a one-to-one basis, tape-recorded and transcribed. Only two of the interviews were not recorded due to the interviewee`s concerns over security. Both interviews were conducted in a cafeteria in close proximity to the IBM Turk facility during a heightened period of unionization publicity with ongoing IBM dismissals due to unionization; as such, many potential participants were put off from involving themselves in this research. Notes were the

sole form of information collection in these cases (n=2). Due to the possibility of being subject to legal sanctions, all real names are kept anonymous for the protection of participant identity.

Interview procedures were similar. Interview guides were tailored to the relative professional position of the interviewee with especially detailed notes taken accordingly. In addition, these questions were not restricted to the topic sets. Those interviewed were informed that the sets were a guide. Probing questions were utilized throughout the interviews to ensure clarity of topic. Follow-up issues were inquired with focuses on expansion or clarification of what had been said in the interview. Additional questions were also based on statements made in earlier interviews. Comments were solicited on these topics if they did not come up in answers to the question sets. Interviews were conversational, even in cases when the interview was the first meeting between the interviewee and the researcher. Following the interviews, short field research summaries were recorded to capture key elements of the interviews. This is made more for personal reasons not to miss a significant point which can be related with theory.

4.4 Data Analysis

All interview data was collected and transcribed in the interviewees' native language (Turkish) and subsequently translated into English by the primary researcher. Data was coded utilizing methods developed from the context of grounded theory, though this does not entail a use of the entirety of means prescribed in the grounded theory approach. There were no specific expectations from the data before the analysis began. Rather, concepts and themes related to unionization in the Turkish IT sector were expected to emerge from the texts (Patton, 1990).

Indexical and conceptual coding were used incorporating inductive and deductive approaches together for the analysis of material (Atkinson, 1996). Coding was employed to both reduce and expand the data. Indexing assisted in labeling data and achieving a schema or outline that was predominantly driven by the topics of the interview guide. Conceptual coding was valuable to categorize findings into useful and meaningful insights from the interview material. Describing and coding the processes were the central concerns in the research setting, similar with the approach used by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Miles and Huberman (1994) see coding as the starting point in looking for patterns in the material. Those coding frames provide information about the very unique unionization experiences of the Turkish case. ATLAS.ti software was used to support the coding process. However, due to constant technical problems causing the risk of losing data a few times, manual coding is preferred for the rest of the coding process. Interviews generated approximately 500 pages of transcripts. The interview texts enabled an analysis of interview data on particular themes derived from the existing studies about IT unionization cases. When new codes emerged, the coding frame was changed.

The findings are derived from both my research objectives and directly from raw data. The raw material from the interviews is analyzed within two levels. The first level is determined primarily by the research objectives, literature review and prior fieldwork experience (a priori codes); however the second level, derived from the evaluation of the raw data, was almost entirely data-driven (grounded codes). The first level aims at a reduction of data and represents the indexical coding of major topics and sub-topics (Atkinson, 1996). The second level aims at an extension of

data, consisting of open, focused and axial coding phases (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Within this, the first phase consists of open coding: the line-by-line coding of all interview material in order to find as many codes as possible. The second phase is axial coding: assignment of more abstract codes to the previously defined open codes in order to form topics and sub-topics and identifying relationships between them. The third phase is selective coding: systematically relating a core category to other categories and validating those relationships (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). (An example of coding process can be found in Appendix 3).

Level 1: Indexical Coding as Data Reduction

Indexical coding is used to file away data under specific titles (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The indexical coding process was indeed a kind of preparation of the dissertation outline. Indices were achieved in primarily two ways, deductively or inductively (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). First, the research question and the literature reviews helped to code deductively. This process benefited significantly from previous research on IT or other specific white collar (e.g. call center work) cases in other countries, such as the U.S. and India. Those sources helped to identify key themes which shaped interview guidelines and contributed to the analysis from a deductive perspective. For example, it was observed that employment conditions, specific job characteristics or employer's position have an important impact. Second, the fieldwork (including field observations and close readings of the interview material) experience also provided the chance to learn about the specific features of the Turkish cases and contributed to the analysis inductively through the three-pronged coding method comprising open, axial and

selective coding mentioned above. The characteristics of the employing organizations and political context are added to the study after re-reading of the interview material.

Indexical coding was an inter-changing process consisting primarily of two phases, namely before and after the field research. Initial coding terms were considered prior to the preparation of interview questions. Those deductive indexical codes assisted in categorizing interview questions. Following the completion of interviews, codes were re-evaluated and re-categorized; adjusting titles, introducing new sub-topics and consolidating some a priori sub-topics.

Indexical coding process was directly linked to the main research question. Codes reflect the core aim to uncover relevant aspects of unionization, and as such, the strong presence of unionization terminology is an intentional outcome. This is noticed, for instance, with the use of 'Labor Union Perceptions' as a sub-topic of the 'role of beliefs about the inter-group relationship. The concepts of union trust, union instrumentality and union satisfaction are taken from various literature sources (deductive). However, the sub-topics of those concepts such as 'unions as irrelevant to IT', 'unions as standardizer', 'unions as conflict generating institutions' were created and shaped within the field research analysis (inductive).

Level 2: Conceptual Coding as Data Expansion

In the second level analysis, the aim was to extend the information from the interview material. In the data reduction level, large amount of data is condensed to labels or sub-topics so that the

data is simplified and more manageable. However, the second level aims to go beyond the data in order to produce a framework. New questions can arise and the data can be re-conceptualized in a new context (Coffey & Atkinson, 1996). During these processes, the texts were unitized and concepts were highlighted and labeled. As the coding proceeded, additional themes and activities emerged which were not covered before. Conceptual coding phase mainly refers to Straus and Corbin's (1990) framework.

a. Open coding: this method was used initially to form a preliminary framework for the analysis for all passages. Each interview transcript was interpreted and annotated on a line-by-line basis to develop the first ideas of cases.

b. Axial Coding: The focused coding phase is the summary and abstraction of open codes. After closer inspection of the open codes, more abstract codes were assigned (labels).This process the research to go beyond to the previously identified open codes. Codes regarding specific sub-topics were grouped with links formulated with other sub-topics. Some codes may refer to more than two major or sub-topics. Connection of codes formed the most significant phase of the data analysis.

c. Selective coding: Selective coding is done after finding the core category which is related to all other categories. By this way, the story of the whole case is built. (A sample of coding analysis is provided in Appendix 4). The differences between the first and second level of analysis can be seen there.

Summary

The present study is designed to demonstrate the underlying social and cognitive processes of IT workers on their decisions for union action. This chapter described the methodology of how the research was investigated. The research is designed as a comparative case study to explore the aspects of collective action in the IBM Turk and UNIBEL cases. The two cases are unique examples of IT unionization in Turkey. The field study was carried out in Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara during February 2010 and September 2011. The study population consisted of IBM workers and technical staff at UNIBEL. This explorative study is based on qualitative data. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with current and ex-IBM workers, managers, UNIBEL workers, academicians and union experts. In general, purposive sampling was used as the main selection strategy with coding applied as the method of data analysis. This information is supplemented with both historical background information relevant to the study and a small degree of anecdotal evidence from personal observations.

Chapter 5

Descriptions of the Cases and Analysis of Research Data

Introduction

The following chapter presents the analysis of the data gathered from the IBM Turk and UNIBEL cases and interprets them with respect to the main research questions posed in the introduction chapter. The primary purpose is to understand the meaning of the findings, to bring them in order and determine the aspects which rendered or hindered collective action in the two cases. It is an investigation into how individual perceptions and group identification processes are activated in favor of, or against, engaging in collective action. It also aims to determine in what way aspects of socio-political context influenced workers' collective action decisions.

Interviewing was used as the main data collection technique. Having conducted interviews pre- and post-dissolution of the IBM Turk labor union, the project presented here had the opportunity to observe the changing attitudes of workers on unionization and workplace atmosphere. The enthusiasm of engaging in progressive actions among IBM Turk workers gave way to a profound sense of hopelessness regarding their future prospects. There was a near universal hopelessness towards collective action at the conclusion of this research; to the extent that even conversations addressing the issue had expired. The dissolution of the union in IBM Turk during the fieldwork added an unexpected, though valuable, element to the research. Therefore, the aspects of the

union participation process and the end of unionization have to be laid out in detail. This allowed an analysis of the factors driving dissolution which have been incorporated into the comparison with the UNIBEL case.

In contrast, following parallel visits before and after strike actions at UNIBEL, successful strike activity created an entirely dissimilar environment compared to IBM-Turk. UNIBEL workers believed and trusted each other during the strike, with stronger ties apparent following the action. The successful strike action bolstered their influence and confidence in actions against any future grievances with management.

This chapter is organized into three parts. The first part provides a brief presentation of the two cases together, with a comparison of selected characteristics (5.1). In the second part, the unionization backgrounds of both cases are provided to give a summary of the collective action processes (5.2). In the last section, focus is given to the interpretation of the themes which emerged from the field research (5.3). The roots and dynamics of unionization are different in both cases.

5.1 Brief Descriptions of Cases

In this section IBM Turk and UNIBEL cases are described with respect to selected characteristics and their unionization trajectories. The selected characteristics are illustrated in Table 4 with a comparative manner.

IBM Turk

IBM Turk, established in 1938, is the first IT company in Turkey and previously held a monopoly in the Turkish IT sector. IBM Turk provides internet security systems, information technology strategies, business continuity, consultancy and software interface services. It has a global reputation and known as pioneering the Turkish IT sector. It is a large scale company employing more than 200 workers. IBM Turk workers have, generally, high levels of education either in computer or electronic engineering sciences. Despite the employer's strong anti-union attitude, IBM Turk workers were affiliated with Tez-Koop-Is union which is a member of centrist union confederation Turk-Is.

IBM Turk has been restructured since 2005, with more secure and standard forms of employment replaced by more flexible and competitive structures. Prior to this, IBM was recognized as providing significant social security and benefits to its workers; however this situation has deteriorated in the past years. Together with the increasing competitiveness in the Turkish IT market, IBM TURK management has moved towards a younger workforce and a reduction of benefits. Job turnover has increased as never before and remote work such as home office working or client based work is especially encouraged.

Table 4 : Selected Characteristics of IBM Turk and UNIBEL

	IBM Turk	**UNIBEL**
Ownership	Private	Public
Size	Large-Scale (>200)	Small-Scale (<50)
Type	Multi-National	Local

Job security	Low	Relatively High
Employment forms	Non-Standard Forms Used	Standard
Wages	Relatively High	Low
Union characteristics	Centrist	Left-Wing Militant
Employer attitude towards unions	Strongly Disagree	Neutral
Worker profile	Middle Class, Upper Middle Class, Mostly Engineers with University Degree	Lower Middle Class, Middle Class, High School, Few with University Degree in Engineering

Source: Analysis of data

UNIBEL

UNIBEL, established in 1994, provides consultancy, hardware, web design, web updating and technical support services to the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality and to other municipal companies. UNIBEL is a relatively small scale, local IT company with less than fifty workers. As a publicly owned company, it exhibits differences from other typical, privately owned IT companies. Excluding technical staff, workers at UNIBEL are either high school or college graduates. The technical staff mainly is mostly educated to degree level in computer sciences. As a public company, UNIBEL workers have relatively secure working conditions and enjoy standard employment forms. The wages however, typically the most important reason of strike

action, are much lower compared to IBM TURK. UNIBEL workers are affiliated with the Sosyal-Is labor union which is a member of DISK. DISK is known as a politically left wing labor union confederation. The current status at UNIBEL is 37 out of 48 workers are unionized, including service personnel and technical staff.

5.2. Case Trajectories: Unionization in IBM Turk and UNIBEL

The Trajectory of Unionization in IBM Turk

It is important to understand the history of unionization to figure out the dynamics of collective mobilization at IBM Turk (see Figure 7). IBM Turk is a unique case, as its' workers have experiences with a company union. In addition, IBM Turk also managed to affiliate to a labor union in 2008. The unionization of IBM Turk workers in dates back to 1967 when workers established a union inside the company, BIL-IS (Union for Software Workers). After the military intervention in 1980 and the new constitution in 1982, many forms of organizations were restricted, with BIL-IS losing both its function and power. BIL-IS from then onwards has had no collective bargaining power, though it has proven useful in negotiating some worker rights.

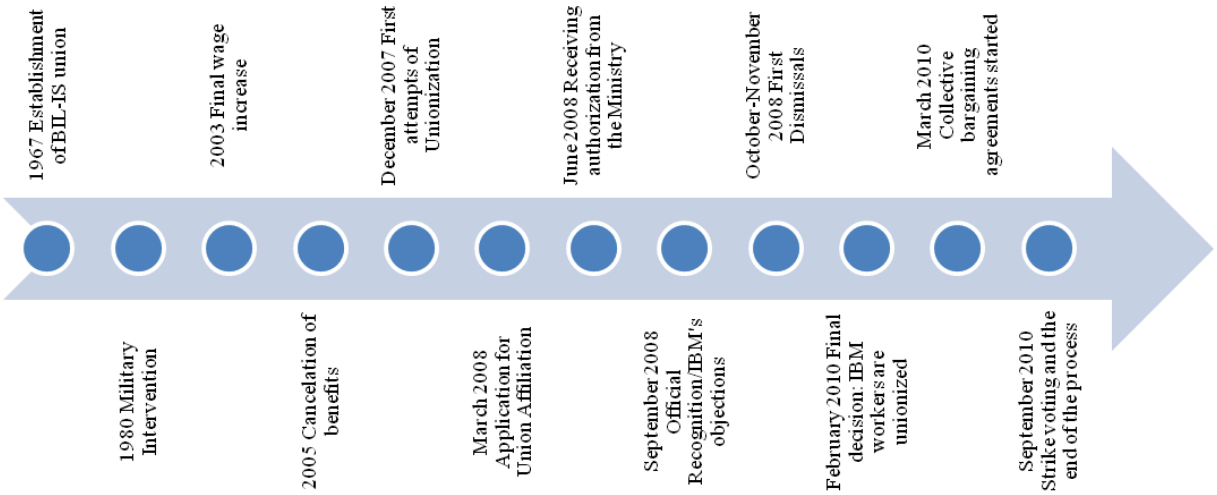
IBM Turk workers experienced two wage increases in recent history; one wage increase occurred during the economic crisis in 2001 and the latest in 2003. However, the management used the wage increases during the economic crisis for cutting off the benefits in subsequent years. IBM Turk cancelled the social benefits for those employed after 2005. Discontent among workers regarding deteriorating working conditions had already begun to increase during this time, with management unwillingly or unknowingly turning a blind eye to these concerns. This

situation was heightened during an assistant manager's speech asking for salary increases and bettering of working conditions during a general company meeting, exacerbating union discussions. Following his speech, the assistant manager was dismissed by management. This unexpected event inadvertently became a triggering factor for the organization of workers. As a result, IBM Turk workers began to organize in December 2007, attacking unjust distributions of salary, lack of job security, decreasing social rights, lack of overtime payment, introduction of subcontracting and a 5 year freeze on wage increases.

After gaining the majority of employees for their cause, IBM Turk workers affiliated with Tez-Koop-Is union which is a member of Turk-Is. In March 2008, IBM workers demanded a collective agreement as their legal right. That same month, IBM Turk workers started to organize labor union activities. On March 26, 2008, the labor union made its application to the Ministry of Labor and Social Security and received authorization on June 17, 2008. Despite Tez-Koop-Is organizing more than 50% of IBM Turk staff, certified by the Turkish Ministry of Labor, the company refused to recognize the union and filed a counterclaim against workers to delay a collective agreement and strike rights. IBM objected to their application on technical grounds, disputing the attainment of a majority, stalling the union's progress.

On 20th September 2008, the government's official gazette published that the IBM Turk workplace belonged to the service branch No.17[3] for workers of commerce, office, education and fine arts, according to the Collective Agreements Act's provision (2822) and the Law of Strike and Lock-out's provision. Although a labor court recently ruled against IBM Turk, and requested the recognition of the trade union, the company refused to change its stance and continued to deny recognition of the union.

Figure 7 : Trajectory of Unionization at IBM Turk



[3] Service branches were re-categorized following amendments in the labor law in October 2012. The number of service branches has decreased from 28 to 20. IT workers now exist under the same service branch category; however their service branch is denoted as No.10.

Source: Analysis of data

In October 2008, two senior managers were dismissed after questioning the dismissal of assistant manager Aziz[4]. A third one was posted abroad and a fourth resigned. During this period, in November 2008, the three elected union representatives were also dismissed. The senior management of IBM Turk was completely purged of dissenting voices with worker representatives dismissed just after the beginning of the unionization process.

In February 2010, a court rejected the company's counterclaims and gave its final decision stating that IBM Turk workers were legally affiliated with the labor union and therefore had the right to make collective agreements. Collective bargaining negotiations began shortly after in March 2010. Legally, parties are allotted 60 days of negotiations followed by 15 days of consensus process. During the negotiation process, IBM Turk management chose to reject and thereby not recognize any collective bargaining agreement offers. Management then road-blocked the consensus process, subverting the bargaining process from the beginning.

In September 2010, the union was faced with the prospect of organizing a strike vote. While not unheard of, it is rare for a union to lose their remit due to complications arising during strike votes. This is precisely what happened on the 27th of September, 2010. The motion to strike, tellingly, was pushed forward by IBM Turk management as an employer strategy to dismantle and dissolve the labor union. The union's chosen outcome was a 'no to strike' vote in order to

[4] In the interest of confidentiality, the names of all interviewees are fictitious.

bring the case before the High Arbitrator Board, which handles the resolution of the dispute. However, the result of the strike voting was a 'yes to strike'. Due to the inability of the union to stage a strike (i.e. organize members into collective action), their official status as a union was dissolved and all authority to negotiate abrogated.

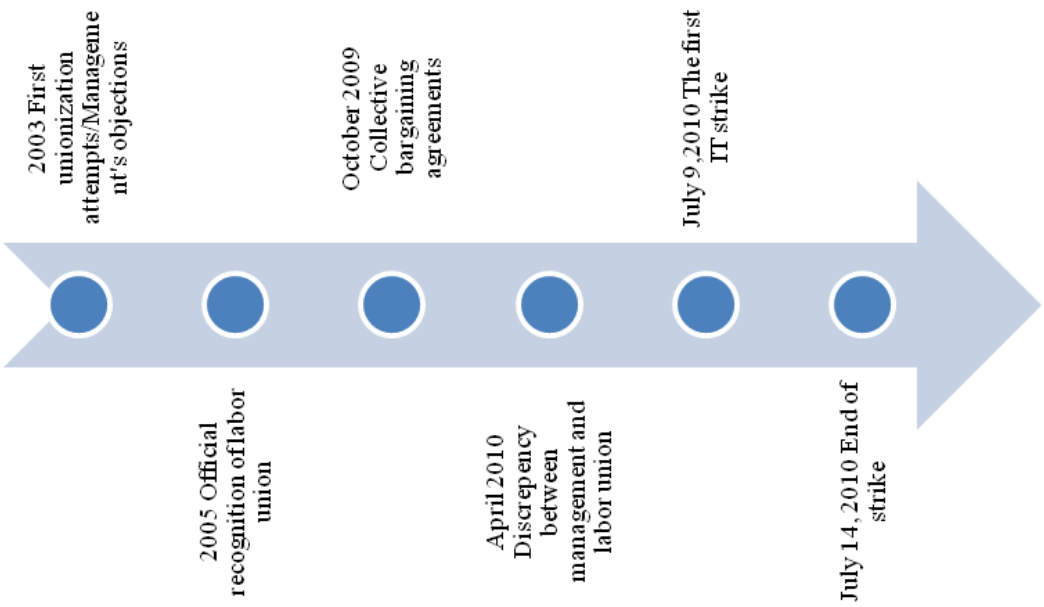
The Trajectory of Unionization at UNIBEL

The Trajectory of unionization at UNIBEL is much less complicated than at IBM Turk (see Figure 8). Current UNIBEL workers did not take part in previous labor union organization. Instead, the labor union was already in place when the current workers joined the firm, with workers maintaining their member status. The movement towards unionization at UNIBEL began in 2003. UNIBEL workers applied to affiliate with Sosyal-Is union which is a member of DISK. The judicial process for the determination of service branch also started just after their affiliation and lasted from until the end of 2005. The appeal to the determination of service branch was used as an employer tactic in order to prevent unionization and lengthen the process, similar to the IBM Turk case. According to the report prepared by the investigators, the ministry's claim lasted approximately two and a half years. Subsequently, the judges came out in favor of UNIBEL workers. After the workers' successful court ruling, UNIBEL unionists were obliged to reapply for their majority status anew. In 2005 UNIBEL workers finally reached a collective agreement.Collective agreements must be renewed every two years. UNIBEL workers re-applied for their majority and authority in October 2009, just before termination. This process took approximately two months. UNIBEL's third period collective agreement was terminated at the 31st of December, 2009. Discussions began in December and ended with a discrepancy in

April 2010, due to disagreements over salaries. Neither side was able to reach an agreement in seven and a half months.

In such an event, according to legislation, parties are required to seek out and utilize the assistance of an independent mediator. This strategy, however, also proved fruitless, with no new offer forthcoming from the employer. UNIBEL workers were forced to either agree with the employer or to strike within 60 days. On 9th of July, UNIBEL workers asked for a final meeting with the employer before the end of deadline to strike. Despite agreeing on many issues concerning social benefits, they could not breach the impasse on salary increases. Instead, the employer decision offered variable wage increases to separate groups. The management offered an increase of 105 Turkish liras for technical staff and 47 liras for service stuff. However, workers rejected management's offer and asked for an increase of 200 liras for all. Negotiations broke down and UNIBEL workers made the decision to strike, and began their actions officially in July 2010. The first strike in the Turkish IT sector lasted for six days (see Figure 9 for strike photo). After meeting with the employer on 14th of July, UNIBEL workers successfully gained their salary increases and improved social rights. In the end, workers agreed on an increase of 130-150 liras for service and technical stuff as well as increases in social benefits.

Figure 8: Trajectory of UNIBEL



Source: Data Analysis

Figure 9: Strike Banner in Front of UNIBEL Building; Day 4 of Strike (Translation: "On strike")

5.3 Interpretation of the Research Data

This section documents how the research outcomes are interpreted with respect to the main research questions. The research questions are first clarified, followed by an elaboration of themes which arose over the course of the field research. The IBM Turk case is considered as a case with two sets of findings, since it represents both the successful union participation processes of IT workers, as well as the later dissolution of the union. UNIBEL workers were already unionized and thus no such processes were available for observation at the time of this

study. Therefore the UNIBEL case only deals with aspects of worker identification, which brought them to have a successful strike activity.

Research question 1: *What enabled IBM Turk and UNIBEL workers to engage in collective actions?*

Here the relationship between the perceived current status as illegitimate and the possibility of engaging in collective action is examined with the first research question. With regards to the IBM case, the question to be answered is why unionization occurred at IBM Turk, and not in another IT company. In particular, I investigate which conditions prepared the foundation of collective action at IBM Turk. On the other hand, the basic questions for the UNIBEL case involve those factors which lead workers to develop a sense of collective interest against their employer. Additionally, how was the strike activity made possible? Interview data emphasizes sharing of mutual grievances and common confidence regarding the ability to improve current social and economic statuses via collective action. Therefore, the themes for the IBM Turk and UNIBEL case are categorized under perceptions of collective action as desirable and possible (See Figure 10 and Figure 11). The role of group identification is clearly shown in these processes. That is, in reference to the social identity perspective, collective action was *accessible* and *fit* with the perceived situation.

Perceiving collective action as desirable/perceived collective injustice

Changes in employment conditions and disagreements over salaries influenced how willingly employees were to participate in collective action. In the IBM case, the research findings

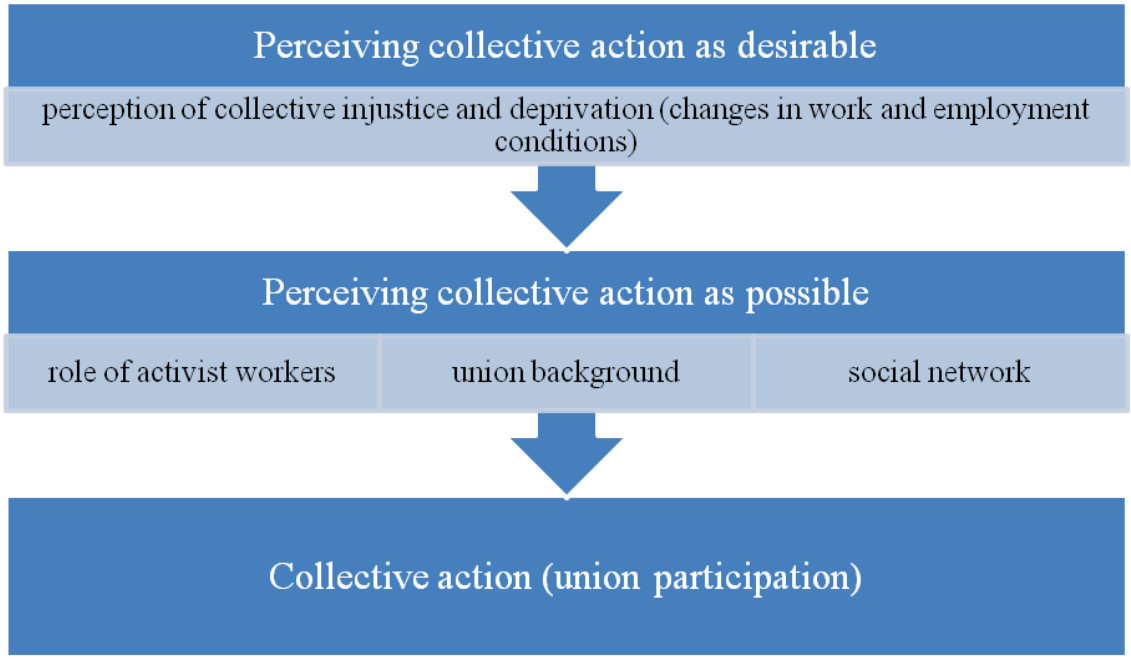
emphasized the significance of secure and privileged employment conditions. Many IBM workers stressed the good old times, and talked about their disappointment with restructurings.

> We all thought 'there is something wrong here. IBM cannot do that, IBM cannot degrade us. IBM is a big company, it will protect us. (Hasan)

The fear of losing privileges, in the case of restructurings, created feelings of collective deprivation which made union action desirable. Similarly, feelings of collective injustice was the main determinant of perceiving collective action as desirable in the UNIBEL case. However, as opposed to the IBM Turk case, UNIBEL workers' collective deprivation was based on salary inequalities rather than real or imagined loss of privileges. Perceptions of *collective injustice* were persistent, even though privileged conditions did not exist.

> We are working a lot. We had to strike because we saw the [low degree of] value given to us. We could not accept that. (Mehtap)

Figure 10: Participation in Collective Action in the IBM Case



Source: Analysis of data

Perceiving collective action as possible

Attribution of injustice was a necessary but insufficient element for collective action. Collective action was made possible later with in-group identification. As stated by the respondents in both cases: mobilization effects of the activist workers, existing union presence at the workplace, ideological considerations, and social networks were the most essential aspects that determined levels of collective action. Leaders established conditions of mutual defense against management. The ex-union representative highlighted the role of activist workers in reference to group identification.

> I became a union representative. So, other people know that I will always be with them whenever they have problems, or at least they know that I am not going to do anything bad to them. (Mustafa)

A historical legacy of unionization and shared memories motivated workers to take collective action. In both cases workers made this reference clear such as:

> When I started to work at IBM, I also signed the documents of BIL-IS. I was aware that there was a union for us. Everybody was aware of it. (Orhan)

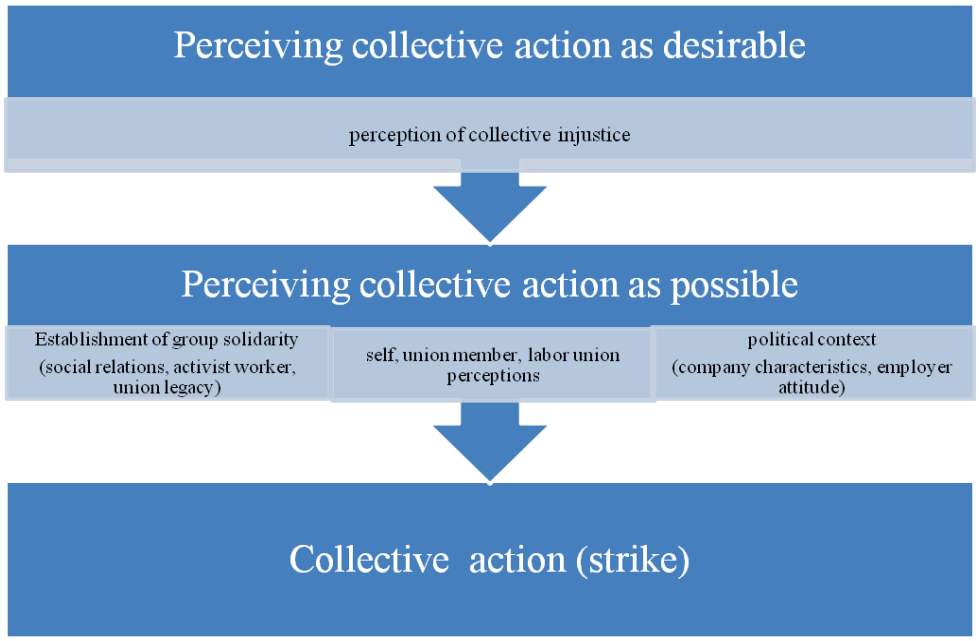
In addition, while IBM workers were able to have international networks via modern communication channels, UNIBEL workers emphasized the role of social relations at the workplace.

> We had good level of friendship. We all knew each other. We knew that we could trust each other if we started acting together. (Tamer)

Research question 2: *How did the specific individual, group-based and contextual dynamics play a role in the different unionization and collective action outcomes of these two cases with respect to strike action?*

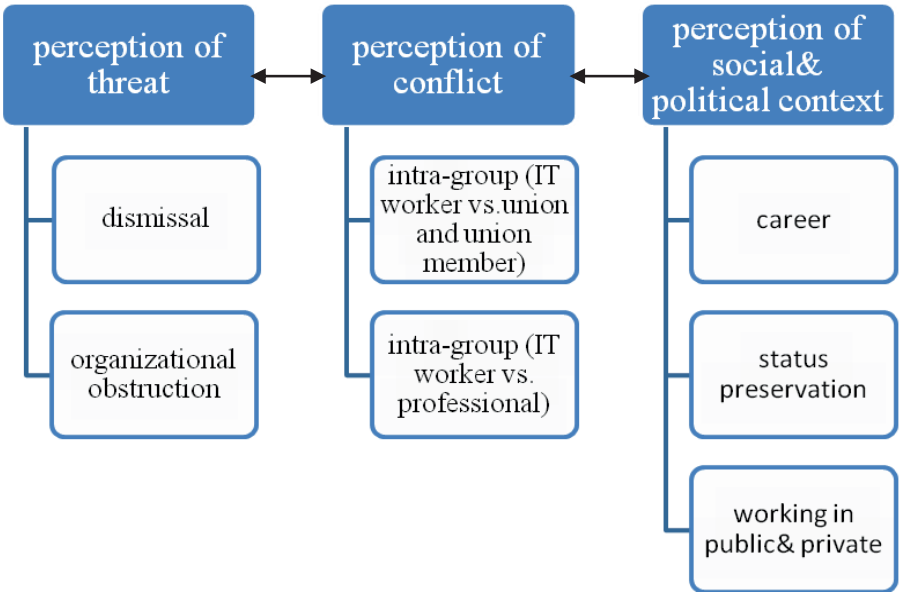
Interview data indicate that union action decisions were exceptionally complicated and strongly interrelated with each other. Three main categories were determined, namely perceptions of threat, perceptions of conflict and perceptions of social and political context (see Figure 12).

Figure 11: Participation in Collective Action in the UNIBEL Case



Source: Analysis of data

Figure 12: Aspects influencing different outcomes in the IBM Turk and UNIBEL cases



Source: Analysis of data

Perceptions of Threat

Intimidation strategies, dismissals and organizational obstruction of union activities were crucial to understand the level of anxiety with respect to collective action decisions. In stark contrast to the UNIBEL case, various union busting strategies were carried out by IBM Turk management (See Table 5). Implementation (IBM Turk) or absence (UNIBEL) of these specific strategies strongly influenced collective action decisions. Employer threat and strategies were instrumental in the IBM case.

> "The people saw that IBM-Turk would dismiss its workers mercilessly. They thought that they would have problems if they were to get involved in those issues." (Ayse)

UNIBEL workers, to the contrary, did not report any significant threat or employer strategy. Employer attitude was also related with employment in the public sector.

> "In public companies, you are not a trouble maker just because you are a unionist. Public companies are used to unions and strikes." (Beyhan)

The threat situation showed the influence of strong or weak identification to social groups. Weak identified members chose individual options rather than engaging in collective action.

Table 5: Descriptions of employer attitude against collective action in the IBM Turk and UNIBEL cases

Anti-union behavior	IBM Turk	UNIBEL
Repression: using dismissal and intimidation	Yes	No
Substitution: better salaries & working conditions, unions as useless org., evaluation of complaints	Yes	Yes
Ideological opposition: unions as communist org.,	No	No
Rejection: no recognition, no bargaining	Yes	No
Obstruction: delaying union meetings, outsourcing,	Yes	No

individual contracting, and separation of dept., firm.		
Moderation: recognition of a convenient union	Yes	No

Source: Adapted from Dundon (2002)

Perceptions of Conflict

Perceptions of conflict illustrate the link between in-group identification and out-group differentiation, and, further, how individuals stereotype the in and out-groups (see Figure 13). Interviews indicate that conflictual intra-group situations seriously damaged solidarity among workers, which is necessary for collective action. A clear separation between senior and junior worker perspective was observed.

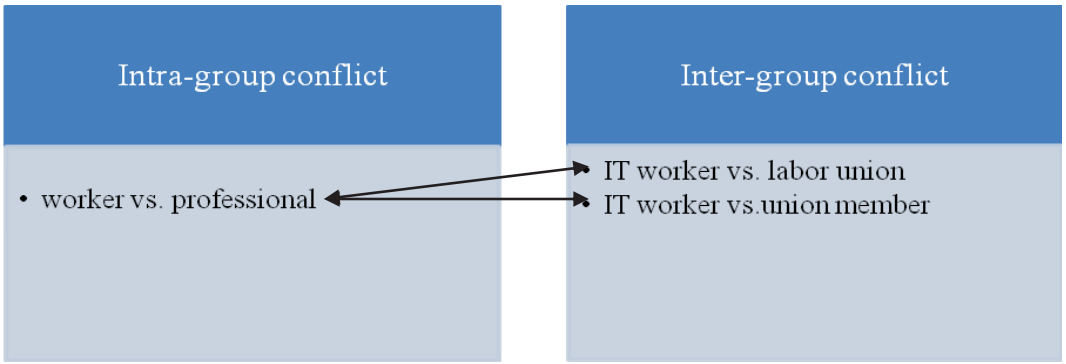
> We [senior workers] have high levels of communication; we share and talk about almost everything with each other. But you cannot share anything with the youngsters. They live in another world. (Mustafa)

Conflicts in intra-group relations are considered as self perceptions with regard to work. It includes distinctiveness of work and the organization, as well as the significance of professional identity for the individual. One's working environment, company prestige, job definition, income, and education level constituted the professional identity among IBM workers. Notion of professionalism was generally observed among junior workers. Professionalism was observed with their self-confidence, self sufficiency and the emphasis on the complexity of IT work. At

the same time, those characteristics of the notion of professionalism gave priority to individual concerns over collective concerns.

The lack of professional identity amongst UNIBEL workers strengthened their self perceptions in a similar way with blue collar workers. How workers defined themselves was directly related to how they perceived the *other* (labor union/union member). Those who categorized themselves as workers clearly supported the labor union and were able to identify themselves as union members. Workers who identified themselves with professional identities, on the other hand, saw no sense in being a union member.

Figure 13: Perceptions of conflict in intra-group and inter-group relations



Source: Analysis of data

Perceptions of conflict are also examined in inter-group relations. *How* IT workers interpret union context depends on her personal experiences and beliefs about the social structural relations between relevant groups. The greater the similarities between their perceived self identity and visualizing unions as extension of their identities, the more individuals exhibited

support towards union action. The image of labor unions which people hold in their minds influences their decisions to participate in labor unions. IT worker identities showed that the more IT workers perceived their current and ideal IT worker identities as consistent with their would-be union member identities, the more likely they were to act in conformity with the union. Positive union opinion would be possible if they perceived unions as addressing issues that concern them and propose solutions that maintain their professional IT identities. The quotations below reveal the differences in perceptions of labor unions and union members.

> We are rather managing things more than doing them. That gives us a feeling of being a manager, not a worker. I don't like to call myself 'worker'. (Berke)

> For me, it is very clear. If you are selling your labor, then you are a worker. It doesn't matter if you are in a factory or in an office. (Mustafa)

Perceptions of Social and Political Context

The IBM Turk case represented a 'typical IT' case (i.e. for profit, non-public entity, largely professional). While UNIBEL, despite being an IT company, was more characteristic of a municipal company.

> Since UNIBEL is a public company, it is less risky. People start working here and they think that they will continue here. No one thinks that this is [just] a step in their career. People who would like to have regular weekend holidays, regular working hours and less risk prefer working here. (Beyhan)

Therefore, IT specific factors played a more decisive role in the IBM Turk case. Many IBM workers highlighted the importance played by status preservation and career expectations. Workers who had career priorities over union action were more likely to choose individual mobility options.

> A work experience at a major company, such as IBM or HP, appearing on my CV is definitely prestigious. You have to pay the price first. (Alp)

Perceptions of threat were directly related to perceptions of social context and workers' decisions to look for individual solutions rather than collective action. A different factor was at play for the UNIBEL case, as a municipal company, on account of the significant relationship between labor unions and politics. The current political situation influenced UNIBEL workers' belief that collective action was possible.

> If there is PRP, then you see DISK in the workplace. If the municipality is ruled by JDP, then you see HAK-IS or TURK-IS. Labor unions change depending on the ruling party in the municipality. (Tamer)

The differences in UNIBEL and IBM workers' behavior with respect to the perceived political context showed that collective action decisions are not only due to group identification processes but also influenced from the very specific social and political context.

Summary

The preceding chapter presented the cases under study and interpreted the data, briefly, with respect to the main research questions. The dynamics of collective action have been clarified with a comparison of characteristics of the two companies and their unionization trajectories. In addition, key points and inter-theme relationships derived from the research were also briefly interpreted. The data analysis provided information on how collective action was possible in both cases, as well as the reasons for failure in one and not the other.

That is, a base of knowledge about the unionization cases has been developed to understand the meaning of the findings. Common aspects and differences between the two cases are emphasized and made explicit in the following chapters. The presented outcomes of the research in this chapter are elaborated in greater depth in chapters 6 to 8.

Chapter 6

Exploring Union Participation in the IBM Turk Case

A man is known by the company he keeps, a company is known by the men it keeps.

Thomas J. Watson, Sr. (1874-1956), chairman and CEO of IBM

This chapter focuses on the workplace conditions which produced the pressures and opportunities instigating the decision to participate in unionization activities of IBM workers in Turkey between 2007 and 2010. The unionization process will be laid out in four steps. The early processes of collective action amongst workers in IBM Turk serve to explain how the shared 'IBM'er' identity was constructed (6.1). Second, an explanation of the background of the perceived injustices and collective deprivations is put forth (6.2). Following this, a more in depth description of the process of conversion from grievances to action is outlined (6.3). Finally, the special case of a dismissed manager, Aziz, is presented to describe the unionization processes from a more personal perspective (6.4). This case also contributed to a deeper understanding of the processes of conflict, collective deprivation and group solidarity which are integral to understanding the issue at hand.

6.1 Aspects of Group Socialization and Identification: *"There is a concept called "IBM'er" but "Microsofter" or "HP'er" does not exist."*

Why is it that unionization occurred in IBM Turk and not in another IT company in Turkey? The answer might lie in the role of interpersonal relations. In their study of Indian ITES/BPO industry, Noronha and D'Cruz (2006) revealed interpersonal relations as a significant determinant of successful or unsuccessful unionization. According to Fantasia (1988) and Roscigno and Hodson (2004), worker solidarity is developed more with workplace relations, rather than union effect. Without negating the union effect, similar to studies by Dixon and Roscigno (2003), I argue that group solidarity is established primarily at the workplace including activities such as grievance sharing, group meetings and/or encounters with management. In that sense, it can be argued that organizational identification and satisfaction with working conditions likely increases distinctiveness and positive perceptions about the in-group (Haslam, 2004). In this case, being an IBM'er served as a comparative fit which increases worker identification within inter-organizational comparisons.

The characteristics and conditions that shape this marked social group identity as an IBM'er can be found in their privileged employment conditions and the prestigious corporate identity.

6.1.1 Employment Conditions at IBM Turk

Secure employment conditions at IBM Turk made it possible to develop strong ties among workers. IBM Turk workers were satisfied with employment conditions provided by the company. IBM Turk was popularly known for providing extensive social rights and securities to its workers. The employment policy of IBM was one of long-term employment contracts and provision of social services to increase worker satisfaction and loyalty. All senior workers focused on the given importance on working for longer terms in IBM. A senior IBM worker explained:

> Previously, when a person began working at IBM, they expected to retire from [the company]. This was the policy of management as well If you worked for 20 years, you [ought to] have special benefits; if you work 25 years, you are entitled to additional holidays [and] things like that…IBM encouraged its workers to work for longer years.(Orhan)

As Sennett (1999) argues, strong ties depend on long term association and people who work in a company for a long time adopt a state of belonging. Even IBM Turk management promoted workers' family and close relatives to work in IBM Turk. It was a company policy in order to provide satisfaction at the workplace. Moreover, IBM workers had the opportunity to purchase company shares, a distinct incentive fostering worker retention at IBM. As a result, many workers are veteran workers and are relatively older than other in the IT sector. As will be explained later in greater detail, long term employment and the existence of close ties had a

distinct impact on the unionization of IBM Turk workers, seeking to ameliorate their situation rather than exiting.

Another important aspect is IBM's private retirement pension offered to its workers after 20 years with the company. Such private retirement pensions, until recently, were unknown by other Turkish companies in the sector, the outcome of which led to workers who worked for longer periods in order to obtain this pension benefit. Additionally, IBM Turk workers had a right to sixteen months of salary per annum, and lifetime health insurance for themselves and their families. Employment conditions also included social benefits and activities. For example, the *IBM Club* provided gatherings and trips for workers and their families, biennial department dinners. Through such activities, workers found time to know each other and their families, resulting in solidarity with their company.

The existence of democratic, conflict management mechanisms within IBM Turk, where workers could express their problems via an 'open door policy' or 'speak-up mechanism', also contributed to this phenomenon. The *open door* policy allowed workers to discuss their problems with whomever they want, including the general manager; whereas the *speak-up* policy allowed workers the ability to do so anonymously. *Open door* and *speak up* policies gave IBM Turk workers the feeling that they were able to express their work-related grievances without repercussion. In general, working in IBM was a sign of higher social status in the outside community, even providing workers with easier access to banking credit. A veteran IBM Turk worker summarized the prestige of being an IBM'er:

> When I first started at IBM, no company provided those types of benefits. It is not only about material benefit; [it is] also friendship, the way of doing things, the way customers see you, opportunities for self-development, etc. But of course, the importance [IBM] placed on workers was the most important among all. There is a concept called 'IBM'er'; 'Microsofter' or 'HP'er' does not exist. IBM was number one in many aspects from technology to social issues. (Sefa)

IBM Turk workers were satisfied not only with the use of the latest technology, but also with the social and financial benefits attached to their positions. The aforementioned factors provided secure employment leading to longer than average years of work experience amongst workers in IBM Turk. One might expect that if workers were satisfied with their working conditions, or if they have psychologically and materially invested into their work, then their reaction would be to protect their existing situation in case of conflicts, rather than exiting. Those who have a long association with a workplace are likely to be more confident in their union-related attitudes (Blackwood, 2003). This perspective of thinking was emphasized in many interviews with senior workers.

6.1.2 Construction of the IBM'er Identity: Working in a Prestigious Company

The IBM'er identity became salient, rendering feelings of distinctiveness and making other workers act in accordance with being an IBM'er. Employment conditions at IBM Turk contributed to feelings of exclusiveness and pride which helped them to create and reinforce the

company culture. Positive attitudes of IBM towards the company and its industrial relations system is also emphasized in the study by Dickson et al.(1988).

Research on organizational identification revealed that the external prestige of the organization significantly affects the salience of group values by rendering feelings of superiority compared to other organizations (Ashfordt & Mael, 1989). Working in a prestigious company has positive impacts on increasing the willingness to identify workers with their companies. Before restructurings and the unionization process, working at IBM Turk was, in general, a source of pride for its workers. They considered themselves superior and privileged due to their employment in an internationally recognized and respected company and due to the technological advancements of the company, working conditions, employment deals, social benefits and opportunities provided by IBM Turk. They were, many felt, in the center of the latest technology and highly satisfied with the employment conditions. They shared a social environment, similar life style and a common fate. This created a collective identity and the feeling of 'being an IBM'er'. Workers had pride in their work and encouraged better performance in others as well.

IBM as a Global Company: Today, IBM is operating in more than two hundred countries with around 400000 workers. The global characteristic of the IBM reinforces the perceptions of IBM as a prestigious and strong company. It provides opportunities of growth and an international career for foreign IT workers to work in IBM Turk. As one Dutch IBM'er explained, the multi-nationality of IBM attracted him to work in Istanbul. As opposed to a local company, working in IBM opens doors to employment anywhere in the world. A young IBM'er added:

> When I graduate, this experience at IBM will be a significant advantage for me. If I tell people that I have worked for IBM, they will believe that I am a qualified worker. IBM has a positive reputation in the eyes of people. It is a big American company. People respect that. (Berke)

Especially relevant to younger workers, working in an American and internationally recognized company was a source of pride and an advantage for the workers in their career. The name of IBM was enough to illicit respect from others.

IBM as a company of innovation in the IT sector: First of all, IBM was regarded as a company which created changes in the IT sector, especially in the Turkish context. IBM is one of the leading IT companies in the world, and this is no less the case for the Turkish IT sector.

Its central position in the sector, as the first producer of personal computers and gaming chips, has endowed it with the ability to almost unilaterally dictate sector standards. This early and powerful position in the Turkish IT sector induced many small, yet important, differences between IBM workers and other companies. From the worker perspective, experience with Microsoft Excel© was important in 1986, and those in IBM Turk who obviously had this experience reaped the benefit of exposure to such technology. IBM workers were the first to use e-mails and chatting (1987), had the opportunity to use internet and laptops before any other workers in Turkey, and had mobile phones (1993) well before these technologies were introduced to the market. These technological privileges encouraged feelings of exceptionalism

regarding their company. Two senior IBM Turk workers explained proudly why working in IBM is important for him, relating to its characteristic of bringing change to the sector:

> It is a source of pride to make the "first" of something. So working in IBM was a source of pride for us. IBM makes new products and the others (companies) follow. (Mehmet)

> You want to work in the best company, and if it is the best then you don't [feel the] need to work in another place. IBM is the world leader in innovation; in other words, IBM does not adapt to changes but steers and creates the changes. (Selim)

IBM Turk workers were generally excited with having the latest technology and it contributed significantly to their identification with the company. For the workers, feelings of 'eliteness' were something which cannot be measured with money and is one of the central reasons why people work for longer years in IBM. However, the prestige and desirability of being an IBM'er was interrupted with changes in employment policies. As one ex-IBM'er explained:

> Now I understand better. I never had a conflict of interests with IBM, that's why I didn't have any problem. When a conflict of interests appeared, I saw that the situation changed. (Hasan)

As stated above, the situation for IBM workers changed sharply after experiencing conflicts with the management. In the following section, reasons of collective deprivation and conflicting

interests will be explained, followed by the changing perception of 'being an IBM'er' for IBM workers.

6. 2 Perceived Collective Relative Deprivation and Injustice: *"IBM is not special anymore"*

Working at IBM Turk was, in the past, often seen as something prestigious and reputable for IBM'ers. This situation has declined in recent years. What happened to the prestige of IBM? How did the feelings and perceptions of IBM Turk workers change? How did the meaning of 'being an IBM'er' lose its specificity and distinctiveness?

According to social identity theories, organizational citizenship behavior is strongly related with organizational identification (Hogg, 1992; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). The loss of workers' feelings of prestige was heavily related with how the company treats workers. While they were proud of being an IBM'er, restructurings and transformation in company policies altered workers' attitudes and identification with the company.

This section aims to describe the perceived deprivation of IBM workers and transformation of IBM'er identity. This transformation of the IBM'er identity can be summarized as the reaction of workers against restructurings, who had privileges and relatively broader social rights and securities. The sources of collective deprivation and injustice are directly linked to changes in company's employment policies and the changing perception of worker identification with the company.

6.2.1 Changes in Employment Policies

Rapid improvements in the technology and concomitant escalation of competitiveness in the IT market contributed to the decline IBM's monopoly in the Turkish IT sector. The once niche occupation of computer expert enjoyed by IBM Turk workers was gradually and permanently replaced by a proliferation of computing skills among the general and professional population. Declining market share from challengers such as Hewlett Packard and Microsoft drove IBM Turk to change its protective policies and choose cost reductive measures in the face of inabilities to increase profit from a new, more competitive, market.

Cancellation of benefits: Around 2005, IBM Turk management began rolling back benefits such as retirement pension and health benefits. Retirement benefits, unique in the IT sector to IBM Turk, were cancelled. This ending of social rights and securities formed a core discontent among IBM Turk workers. The retirement scheme at IBM was a supporting pillar in the motivations of workers to work for longer periods in order to have a secure future. Long-term employment as a company policy was ended after 2005, with the promotion of short-term contracts as the new policy in order to sidestep retirement benefits to workers. The burden of these restructurings was borne disproportionately, if not exclusively, by senior workers with significant years of employment previously credited under the retirement scheme. Senior workers, and their higher salaries, are seen as remnants of the old system, to be eliminated in efforts to reduce company overhead.

The restructuring of IBM did not end at retirement. Further reductions to worker social rights were implemented, including the drastic curbing of the nearly limitless personal and family health insurance scheme. The replacement health insurance scheme was based on only outpatient care without covering hospitalized treatment. Additionally, IBM management either cut or decreased the financial support to the IBM Club, historically a centerpiece in the construction and maintenance of IBM'er culture.

Nomination of the new general manager: According to IBM policies, vacant positions are first announced internally and then made public, giving IBM workers priority for higher positions. This practice of partial closed tenders further contributed to and the IBM'er sense of advantage. Countervailing this framework, however, was the hiring of a French general manager in 2009, marking the first such introduction of outsiders in the history of IBM Turk. Senior management prior to this was composed solely of those who had been employed with the company for considerable lengths of time. This was an important change in the eyes of workers regarding the internal organization of the company, stirring discomfort among workers.

Salary freeze: Lack of salary increases over the last five years reflects another primary factor in the diminished prestige among IBM'ers. IBM workers could, previously, expect higher than average relative earnings in comparison to their colleagues in other firms. This certainty, however, has also suffered do to the equalization of wages in other Turkish IT firms. This loss of economic incentive has further added to the decreased value of identification with IBM as a significant part of worker repute.

Differentiation of wage groups: The use of outsourced workers has created a two-tiered worker model inside IBM. IBM had instituted a strategy of outsourcing via a temporary employment agency until receiving warnings from the ministry of Labor in 2005. Though employed in the same tasks, temporary contract workers are not provided social benefits, health insurance, promotions, or retirement benefits that IBM Turk workers are entitled to. Salaries between outsourced and IBM workers are also quite dissimilar. IBM Turk has also solicited outsourced workers to join IBM void of retirement plans and reduced security and health insurance.

6.2.2 Disappointment & Questioning the IBM'er identity

The first reaction of IBM workers concerning the restructurings in the company was one of strong disappointment. The 180 degree turn of the treatment received by the company towards its' workers drove both this dissatisfaction and disbelief.

> We all thought 'there is something wrong here. IBM cannot do that, IBM cannot degrade us. IBM is a big company, it will protect us'. Maybe IBM says that 'do whatever you want, I will be an ordinary company'. But the workers do not want to accept that reality. Being an IBM'er is something distinctive. [IBM] provided numerous benefits for many years and now they want to take away all of them away. (Hasan)

This dismay led further to the dismantling of the value which workers placed on the status as an IBM worker, as an IBM'er.

> There was an expression like "being an IBM'er". It was a great honor for me. You cannot find anyone who is proud of working at IBM now. IBM is not special anymore. Before, it was not important in which department you worked; it was enough that you were an ‘IBM'er’. (Selim)

The feelings of disappointment were followed by questioning the IBM’er identity, leading to repeated arguments by senior workers that “IBM is not special anymore” or “IBM became like the others”; signaling the changing relation between the workers and their company.

> We were proud of being IBM’ers because we took ownership of our company. I can say very clearly that, I was controlling my company 7-8 years ago. I was thinking as if I had my own business, and I am coming everyday to open my own shop. While I was doing that, my company always gave me the message that I am worthless. Then I realized it is a company, that I should just do my work and get my money. That’s all. I don’t have to or need to save the company. This is how I lost my IBM’er identity, as did many others, I think. If the company doesn’t want me, then I don’t have to want the company. It’s like platonic love then, and there is no reason to be in platonic love with your business. (Mehmet)

Similarly, many argued that everything became standardized, blurring the differences between IBM Turk and other companies in the sector. Worker relation with the company was reduced merely to economic motivations. Competitive offers from rival companies are now enough

reason for many to leave IBM, a result of the diminishing workplace satisfaction and loyalty. The developments are a far cry from the days when workers were encouraged to invite friends and relatives to work at IBM; the goal of which was establishing a comfortable and relaxed working environment where people are intimately familiar, can motivate others to work better and identify themselves with the company. The following part is the description of the how collective deprivation is activated. It reveals the social identity conditions of being able to coordinate and act in unison rather than individually.

6.3 Perceiving Collective Action as Possible: Consciousness Raising

As mentioned previously, changes in IBM policy deeply affected workers' perceptions of their company. Perceived conflict, managerial abuse and clashes with IBM workers created a feeling of disappointment and questioning of IBM'er identity. This shared feeling provided a platform to legitimize their action by coming together and discussing possibilities. Workers reconsidered their previous situation against the backdrop of current conflicts and experiences of injustice. They were able to identify themselves with the same grievances and to produce the agency to consider the necessity of a collective action. In the following, the contributions of the existence of influential individual level actors, a union legacy and the use of new communication technologies to the unionization process at IBM Turk are analyzed in details.

6.3.1 The Role of Activist Workers in Group Formation

Active defense of dismissed colleagues formed the immediate response by IBM workers. Defending other workers against management highlights a visible opportunity of a collective

action which, consequently, led to the mobilization of workers against abuses by management. More than 130 workers of IBM signed a petition addressing management, highlighting not only awareness of unfair action by management, but the willingness of workers to collectively act in opposition. The petition in question declared, in clear terms, the strong collective disagreement with the dismissal of the executive manager, Aziz, via the speak-up policy. The IBM workers' attitude can be considered as a mutual defense against the dismissals of significant figures. This mutual defense of workers made an impact on the IBM policies immediately. Though IBM management had to reply within two weeks, according to policy, after one month, it had not only failed to comply with protocol, but had declared that IBM was no longer required to reply to speak-up questions.

This process did not happen by itself. Influential actors in IBM brought this individually perceived threat to a collective level. Some of the senior and respected workers who had experience with the IBM's company union headed the unionization process until the retaliatory dismissals by management. Their role in the construction of solidarity amongst workers and affiliation with the labor union came to the fore only after their dismissal and, eventually, the abolition of the labor union. Solidarity among workers was not *a priori*, but happened during the process of organization. More active workers attempted to convince others to join them for the solution of their common problems.

According to the social identity perspective, a person is perceived as a leader and able to influence other group members to the extent that s/he is seen as prototypical of the group (Reicher et.al, 2010; Hogg, 1992). Leader figures, or in-group prototypes, in the IBM case were

those who had reputations based on skills, knowledge, personality and work experience in IBM. They were behavioral role models who exhibited how an ideal IBM'er ought to be. The leader figures emerged when there was conflict with management or a necessity to defend other members against the abusive practices of management, such as unwarranted dismissals. They played an active role in organizing meetings and informing other workers. It was this activism which enabled the organization of those people who did not have a tradition of a collective action. A former and a current IBM worker define being a leader and their influence as:

> You cannot transmit solidarity via e-mails. If a person looks at your eyes, if you feel the energy, feel the heart beats, then you are affected. This is leadership. (Selim)

> When Selim and Ayse were here, they were trying to get people together. They were leading others. People were informed about many things. For example, now the management keeps something secret from us; but before, Selim and Ayse were informing us because they were very actively involved. For instance, a former IBM'er sued IBM and won the case, but none of us knows about that. Now our channels of information are cut. Imagine you are a journalist, you hear about everything; but a regular citizen does not hear most of the things. They were like journalists to us. (Nilgün)

In accordance with Turner et.al (1987), in the IBM case, the leader figures were able to represent the shared social identity and consensual position of the group. Rather unsurprisingly, all four

leader figures were dismissed not long after IBM workers began to organize. Before dismissals, the activist workers were the basic elements of building solidarity. The absence of union activists in the workplace made union success highly improbable. As Kelly (1998) argues, it is not just the existence of an activist group that is important; the visible presence of the union *in* the workplace is also of principal importance. Leaders are key to ensuring a labor union presence in the workplace, as they are prepared to be identified as union leaders and are able to indoctrinate confidence (Kelly, 1998).

6.3.2 Union Legacy

Riley (1997) highlights the significance of workplaces characterized by union presence and strike history as a determinant of union activity. A history of conflict in the workplace is often shared informally across different cohorts of workers and may provide a basis for collective action (Dixon & Roscigno, 2003). For the IBM workers in this study, the existence of the company union BIL-IS was a source of inspiration and motivation. BIL-IS was established in 1967 as the first and only labor union which belonged to a specific company. Even though it has no right to make collective agreements, it has functioned as a *works council* and enabled workers to comment on, criticize or participate in the administration. The workers adopted this labor union since it belonged directly to them via their company. According to one senior IBM worker:

> When I started to work at IBM, I also signed the documents of BIL-IS. I was aware that there was a union for us. Everybody was aware of it. Two of our former executive managers were even the leaders of the labor union. (Orhan)

It can be argued that the IBM workers were familiar with the concept of 'labor union'. Moreover, since it was a company union, it did not cause tension between the management and the workers. Having such a tradition of a labor union led IBM workers to organize when their situation deteriorated and when BIL-IS was unable to improve their situation. The movement towards the creation of their own labor union was initiated when the IBM Turk workers had the feeling of being unable to participate or influence any decisions related with them. Additionally, given the inability of their existing union to negotiate financial agreements, the necessity of an alternative, able to conduct such agreements, became necessary.

6.3.3 Use of New Communication Technologies

The use of new communication channels, such as social networking platforms, might be considered as a specificity of the IT sector. However, at least in the Turkish context, it would not be expected to use those channels in order to inform or organize workers. IBM workers were able to use social networking platforms and internet based communication channels. Directly related with education level and computer skills, IBM workers were able to elevate their voice, organize, search for international organizations or labor unions through the use of internet. They had the possibilities to find international alliances for their struggles. Union Network

International (Uni-Global), the labor union of IBM U.S. Workers, Alliance @ IBM and IBM Australia supported them in order to pressure IBM top management.

In addition, IBM workers organized a web page, virtual discussions, surveys, conferences and meetings on the internet. They also used communication channels like Facebook and Twitter intensively. Their "Second Life Demonstration"[5] (Figure 14) led them to be known by media. After the successful demonstrations of Italian IBM workers in "Second Life", IBM Turk workers made a far reaching virtual demonstration with the participation of around two thousand "avatars" from thirty different countries with chanting slogans, carrying placards and even entering into the board room of IBM's islands.

[5] Second Life is launched in 2003 and it is an online virtual world where Second Life users interact with each other. The users can socialize; participate in individual and group activities, and trade virtual property and services with one another.

Figure 14: IBM cyber strike in 'Second Life'

Translation of banners and t-shirts: "*We want our rights to unionize*" and "*IBM! Withdraw your appeal*"

6.4 Transformation of the IBM'er Identity from the Perspective of a Top Performer ex-IBM Turk Manager

The decision to include Aziz's personal history was made to provide a deeper, personal perspective surrounding the background of the unionization processes at IBM Turk. Aziz, a charismatic person at IBM Turk and a former manager, provided a plethora of first-hand accounts of the recent history and developments at the company. He explained the history of IBM Turk over the last twenty-five years in the interviews. His experiences throughout the 'golden days' of the company endowed Aziz as a living history of IBM Turk, giving this study the opportunity to discern significant clues and insights about IBM Turk and its personnel. His

recounts add a unique value to this study and provide an insider version of not only the internal processes during unionization, but also the development of the IBM'er identity and how this was transformed together with the changing policies of IBM Turk.

Introducing Aziz

In all, there were two meetings with Aziz of approximately two hours in length per session. A worker of IBM Turk for approximately 22 years, Aziz was responsible only to the general manager, a note on the degree of seniority he occupied in the company structure. In IBM Turk jargon, he was a 'top performer'. Not only was he a successful and charismatic manager, but also a respected person and a role model in the eyes of the workers. In 2008, at a company meeting, Aziz spoke out against the lack of salary increases of workers in the preceding five years, despite increased profits over the same period. Three days later, Aziz was dismissed directly by the general manager.

When I first called him to meet, Aziz showed interest in my work and accepted it gladly. We met in a Starbucks café in a shopping mall very close to the business area of Istanbul, where other IT companies, banks and insurance companies have their offices. He was dressed in sportive clothes instead of business attire, owing in part to this current unemployed status. The conversation was relaxed and Aziz carried himself as a man devoid of any air of business-elite superiority. He brought with him a magazine in which he gave an interview about his dismissal, unionization process and explained in detail. Despite his unjust dismissal after nearly two decades of employment, he explained what 'being an IBM'er' meant. His dismissal created a discomfort

among other IBM Turk workers, in no small part due to the high esteem which he was held by other workers, the manner of his dismissal, and his defense of worker rights. The significance of Aziz's dismissal was mentioned as a triggering event by many interviewees over the course of this research project, not least on the effect it had in encouraging solidarity and organization for protecting their rights as workers.

Aziz's Dismissal

The problems at IBM Turk had been building since 2007. IBM Turk attempted to restructure the company, outsourced workers, applied differential wage structures and working conditions for the newcomers, and increased inter-worker wage inequalities. Aziz's life changed sharply three days after his speech in an annual company meeting in January 2008, as IBM Turk was about to present the new plans and the budget adjustments. As Aziz told later:

> I saw that in IBM-Turk's budget, IBM Turk had to spend 200 million dollars but only had 50-60 million dollars of budget. The workers would not accept the new plans because no one would want to lose the rights they had acquired over the years.

He was selected as the manager of the year and went to the stand to make a short speech. Sitting next to the five top managers, Aziz said, "Ok, we have a good run of business, but we couldn't make any salary increase to our workers", followed by a large applause in the meeting room. His leader characteristics were reflected in his attitude of solidarity to the needs of other workers.

The first business day after his speech, arriving to the IBM Turk building as usual, Aziz was brought to the general manager's office where a paper was waiting for him on the table. The paper stated, simply, that Aziz was fired. His contract was dissolved due to the behavior against ethical rules and good will. He was not allowed to go upstairs to his office. The tragic irony of the story is that he was dismissed by his closest friend at IBM Turk, having joined the company together. Their families know each other and they went holidays together. Their children studied together. Aziz reflected about the first moments after his dismissal in his diaries:

> I went to meet with my friends in the cafeteria three hours after I was dismissed. I was expecting only a few friends there, but there were more than a hundred IBM-Turk workers waiting for me. I had no idea how they learned about my dismissal and how they were all able to come together. I was about to cry and didn't know what to say. One friend started to say 'How can they do this to you? If they can do that to you, they can do it to all of us'

This example highlights a visible opportunity of a collective action which might mobilize workers against abuses of management. Aziz's dismissal created anger amongst other IBM'ers, who were already feeling discomfort about recent developments in their company. Aziz's dismissal acted as a litmus paper amongst all workers. He was respected and loved by everyone. He had a long history in IBM Turk and the manner of his dismissal was clearly unfair to all. This prompted workers to rally and discuss seriously about what to do. If management could fire Aziz, then management wouldn't hesitate to fire any other worker. Aziz's dismissal triggered workers' mobilization. The management, however, was not that receptive to worker inquiries

regarding Aziz's dismissal. 130 workers used the speak-up mechanism, part of the democratic mechanisms at IBM Turk, to discover the reason of Aziz's dismissal. After one month, IBM Turk management declared that the compulsion to reply to the speak-up mechanism was cancelled. Nevertheless, four top level managers used the 'speak-up' channel to clarify the reasons of Aziz's dismissal. The result was not an explanation, but rather the dismissal of two, the exile of the third, and the resignation of the fourth. In addition, three union representatives were dismissed for different reasons.

According to IBM Turk policies, Aziz had the right to receive the retirement pension after the age of 55, since he already worked more than 20 years at IBM Turk. The retirement policy was perhaps the most important motive for workers to work at IBM Turk for longer years. However, things had changed sharply for Aziz. He could not get his seniority compensation, severance and terminations pay. Having been denied his rights, and experiencing no small amount of disappointment at the state of affairs he had found himself in, Aziz naively began questioning his dispute with his company, lamenting on the fond memories over the years. He still was not able to understand the reasons of his dismissal.

The tragic point is that this event occurred just after receiving the best manager prize for his department at IBM, not just IBM Turk. His losses also included his shares in the IBM Turk. The option of IBM shares was another company specific benefit which enticed workers to work for longer years at IBM Turk. IBM Turk gave shares to its workers with the condition of converting them to cash in four years. Even if he had the chance to sell his shares, he trusted IBM and decided to keep them. However, he was dismissed and his shares were blocked.

His tragic departure from the IBM Turk caused him psychological problems. In addition, he had to face questions about his dismissal from IBM Turk at two new job interviews. The mental and emotional stress caused by his dismissal, having been a respected and appreciated manager for years, took their toll. He explains his job interview experience with these words:

> They asked me what I did. Why I was fired? They thought that I stole or took a bribe. They didn't believe me. They thought there must be something secret; IBM-Turk normally doesn't do such things. I had many previous job offers, but I didn't accept any of them. Why? First, the pride of being an IBMer. I was respected by the customers, just because I was an IBMer. Second, my trust in the company. Third, my salary, health insurance, meals, and retirement plan; in other words, the lack of insecurity in my future. If I know now that things would end like this, I would have changed jobs.

His tribulations had begun to manifest themselves internally and eventually his feelings and perceptions about IBM Turk were changed completely. It was not the IBM Turk that he had imagined. Aziz explained the change of the meaning of 'being an IBM'er' for himself with these words:

> If IBM Turk is respected in Turkey, it is because of its workers. Everybody has contributed to that. Now I am ashamed of being an ex-IBM'er. I wouldn't work at IBM-Turk now. Even if they said 'Everything is over, come and work with us. We will pay you twice your [previous] salary.' I wouldn't [go back]. It is a matter

of pride. My friends are still working at IBM-Turk. They have offers from other companies, but they still prefer to stay at IBM-Turk. I don't understand that. How can they do that? How can they be sure that the things that happened to me will not happen to them? IBM-Turk stole the labor of its workers. They were working for IBM-Turk for at least more than 15 years. This is no different than stealing.

Summary

Aziz's personal story can also be read as the summary of the unionization process in IBM Turk. Collective union action was enabled by the worker solidarity as a response to the restructurings in IBM Turk itself. It was the notion of 'being an IBM'er' which later caused feelings of collective deprivation and reactions to protect themselves and their company in their images.

As Aziz mentioned, the roots of identification processes for union supportive decisions can be found in the protective employment conditions and the IBM Turk workers' attachment to their company. Belief in the effectiveness of collective action accompanied by an opportunity structure (i.e. channels through which demands can be placed) and a leadership willing and able to mobilize members for action, made it possible for IBM Turk workers to be able to organize for union action. The decision to unionize appeared as one way to maintain their status of being in IBM Turk. A legacy of their labor union also appeared as a motivating factor to unionize in

cases of managerial abuse and conflicts. That is to say, an alternative form of grievance resolution, in the form of a 'labor union', was available to aggrieved workers. Extensive utilization state-of-the-art communication channels and social networking platforms empowered coordination of information sharing and solidarity with IBM Turk workers and labor unions on a global scale.

However, IBM Turk workers were not able to keep their support for their union during the subsequent period. In reality, IBM Turk workers' non-participation decision was less surprising than participation decisions. The decision of striking made a significant difference in the attitudes of IBM'ers towards union activity. The following chapter describes the factors in detail how solidarity among workers was dissolved and finally ended with the abolition of the union.

Chapter 7

Exploring Non-Participation and Dissolution of Union in the IBM Turk Case

Why did IBM Turk workers change their attitudes towards unionization despite a collective action in the beginning? How did identification and stereotyping processes end with individual cost -benefit analysis? Which individual and organizational factors played a role in the change of perceptions of social context for IBM Turk workers? In other words, the basic question is how 'us and them' turned into 'me and them' during collective bargaining and strike process? This chapter deals with these basic questions on the aspects of non-participation.

In the following it will be argued that the change of social perception of collective action can be understood with respect to the specific social context, i.e. management actions, confirming the context-dependency which interactionist theories emphasize. First, social context and the role of perceived threat are examined (7.1). Dismissals and obstruction of union activities seemed to have serious impacts on the interpretation of the conflict situation at IBM Turk. In the second part, perception of conflict in the inter-group and the intra-group context is examined (7.2). This section elaborates how IBM Turk workers differentiate themselves from labor union and union members. In addition, it also reveals how the conflict situation caused a division among IBM Turk workers. Next, perception of workplace context is analyzed (7.3). Self-evaluation of the social context, such as career opportunities and status preservation, seem to be directly linked with the conflict situation that evolved with the diffusion of fear at the workplace. Furthermore, atypical forms of employment, such as temporary employment and home-office work introduced in the course of the conflict, negatively affected workers' union identification.

7.1. Social Context and the Role of Perceived Threat: *"You might guess what can happen if you act against the interests of the company."*

From the workers' perspective, IBM Turk, as a global company, was a source of pride pointing to distinctiveness of values and construction of identification among the workers. However, from the company perspective, a union activity in IBM Turk might represent a dangerous model for the other IBMs in the world since it is a global company. The establishment of the union was to be prevented urgently. For that reason, various suppressive and substitutive union busting strategies were implemented by IBM Turk management. Examples of dismissals and obstruction

of union activities are presented in this section in order to show the relation between perceived threat and social identification.

7.1.1 Dismissals and Dismissal Threats

Dismissals and threats of dismissal were used as fear strategies to increase the perceived threat and conflict situation amongst workers. The central aim was the dispersion of anxiety with respect to potential or current unionization decisions. Management actively organized against unionization in the workplace and invested heavily to defeat unions during strike voting. Intimidation strategies were implemented by specifically targeting workers active in labor union promotion or activities, often through strict implementation of time-keeping and sickness/absence policies, and monitoring work performance. As one IBM Turk worker stated:

> The official reason for Selim's dismissal was that he did not bring his doctor's letter to the HR department. But everyone knows that Selim was dismissed because of his union activities. (Hasan)

Management was adept enough to dismiss active workers by finding apparently legitimate reasons. Union representatives or activists were especially selected as targets and their performances, sick leaves and routine work activities were intensely monitored. Since the beginning of the unionization process at IBM Turk, activist workers or managers who took the side of workers were systematically dismissed. A former manager of IBM Turk stated clearly that:

> It's just because of fear. They dismissed me, the manager of Finance, the manager of Software…whoever might be against them is immediately dismissed. Then the three union representatives were dismissed. The people saw that IBM-Turk would dismiss its workers mercilessly. They thought that they would have problems if they were to get involved in those issues. (Ayse)

The belief was that sackings or victimization will follow. Even though dismissals due to union activations are illegal, employers have made such statements and created such an image. The union representative in IBM Turk explains the situation as:

> No matter what kind of dirty strategies they did to us, no one wanted to be the person who sued his/her own company. The reason was very clear. If you sue your company, then you will be dismissed. It was more for self-preservation than good faith towards the company. For example, they told some people: 'You have a bright future here; but if you vote, then we should re-evaluate your situation'. (Nilgün)

While dismissals had a direct impact on active workers, it also made the remaining workers more cautious about their actions if they were against management. It is clear that their future in IBM Turk depends on having good relations with management, more than their performance ratings, even if IT workers are in favor of performance based-systems. While IBM Turk management implicitly threatened senior workers about the consequences of any unionization to their future employment status, they concomitantly intimidated new workers with temporary work contracts.

As the union representative Mehmet and some other interviewees informed, the IBM Turk management preferred, by and large, face to face meetings with workers to make these threats. A few hour-long talk sessions used to change attitudes, or interrogations, were also applied. Management inquired into worker attitudes regarding unionization and followed by either explicitly or implicitly intimidating the worker. Such tactics were not limited to these face to face meetings, with management sometimes resorting to telephone conversations to make their points apparent to workers. Being a union member was as akin to acting against the interests, profitability and vision of the company.

7.1.2 Organizational Obstructions against Union Activities

IBM Turk management tried to prevent union activities by splitting IBM Turk into another company, IBM Global Services (IGS). This tactic aimed to challenge unions before they were ready to act or while they were in their earliest stages of development. The establishment of IGS was thought even more profitable than outsourcing workers via Adecco. IGS was established as an outsourcing company inside IBM Turk, and by IBM Turk after the unionization process, as a restructuring policy of the company in 2009. IBM Turk transferred more than 100 workers in one day from IBM Turk to IGS without asking IBM Turk workers if they would like to change their position. When the name of the company changed, the unionized workers in IBM Turk were no longer unionized. This simple and destructive strategy employed the premise that unionizing workers had to have more than half of the workers in support in IGS in order to unionize. An ex-unionized IBM Turk worker expressed his anxiety of unionizing and the establishment a new company with these words:

> Now we have started organizing people in IGS. How can we be sure that they will not establish 'MIGS' or whatever in two years? Then we will have to start everything again from the beginning. (Hasan)

Splitting IBM Turk into IBM Turk and IGS also helped management to use the sources of IGS in case of strike action. He continued to explain it as:

> Even if we had gone on strike, nothing would have gone wrong for IBM-Turk. IGS would have done our work. They would continue their business through IGS and our strike would not affect IBM-Turk. Therefore, even if we had a long strike, IBM Turk would not be keen to cooperate with us. That's because they established a company which can function as a substitute for IBM-Turk. We saw that we were much weaker than management. (Hasan)

IGS was a successful management strategy to decrease the number of union members and the power of the labor union by splitting the company. At the same time, it is used as a substitute in case of emergency such as strike. Even if IBM Turk workers unionized, after transfer to IGS, the entire process would need to begin anew for those in the new arm of IBM Turk. This process would certainly be lengthy and create a feeling of hopelessness against the power and strategies of management.

Other actions can be considered as avoidance strategies towards union requests for meetings as well. Though collective bargaining agreements are required, IBM Turk management tried to avoid consensus and thereby make the bargaining process unsolvable. In order to decrease the

bargaining power of the labor union during strike voting, IBM Turk management added interns, workers who work abroad or outside Istanbul, to the voting list. Another union avoidance strategy was the deployment of propaganda against the union. IBM Turk workers have their own company union called BIL-IS (Union for Software Workers) since 1967. BIL-IS maintains its existence until nowadays as a union without having collective bargaining power, but able to negotiate for some regulations. BIL-IS was used by the management against the unionization struggle of workers. One worker stated:

> Our managers told us that we are already members of BIL-IS, so why would we need another union? They said clearly that we should not join the union. (Nilgün)

IBM Turk management sought to convince workers that there were no issues of dispute between them in an attempt to downplay grievances. Their aim was to send the message that union membership causes problems without benefit. These methods imposed costs on workers who were inclined to join a union.

Concluding remarks

The IBM Turk case of union hostility provides examples of various kinds of original employer strategies. Intimidation strategies were applied by the management through dismissals and threats of dismissal. The establishment of IGS from IBM Turk, rejection of agreements with the labor union, and alternative offers were observed as union busting strategies implied by IBM Turk management. Such actions caused existing members to think twice about becoming active in the union and also sent signals to potential members that the union and its activities were

undesirable. In the end, a negative psychological atmosphere was created and the enthusiasm of workers was decreased. This diminished enthusiasm amongst workers was an additional impediment on top of the pre-existing low levels of interest exhibited by workers at IBM Turk. The following chapter focuses on this issue of diminished interest in union activity, specifically on IBM Turk workers' perceptions of professionalism, labor unions and union members.

7.2 Perception of Conflict in the Intra-group and Inter-group Context

This section covers an overview of perceptions which led IBM Turk workers to differentiate themselves from co-workers (intra-group context) as well as from unions and their members (inter-group context). First, changes in the perceived social context among senior and junior IBM Turk workers are discussed. Next, the legitimacy of the union and the perceived instrumentality of union membership are assessed with respect to compatibility between the perceived self-identity and the prospective union member identity labor union and union member perceptions

7.2.1 Intra-group Conflict and Perceptions of Social Context: Senior vs. Junior Worker Conflict

Even though the IBM Turk workers had started collective action, support for the union had gradually deteriorated due to dismissals and increasing conflict at the workplace. The dismissal of powerful figures also affected the relationship and solidarity amongst workers. Activist workers functioned to bring workers together. Their dismissal from the company weakened ties

between workers. The result was that the unionization dynamics at IBM Turk stalled and workers became less willing to continue their support. The conflict situation caused a division of workers almost entirely based on seniority. While many senior workers continued to support union action, younger workers were prone to choose individual mobility options.

Union decisions were not a direct result of age differences; rather they were related more with aspects of job tenure. Lengthier employment at IBM Turk brought with it stronger social relations, experience of privileged working conditions, exposure to unionism and self-investments at the company. This is in combination with relative labor market immobility due to old age and family-life situations.

Senior workers developed social ties sourced from longer histories of co-employment and the enjoyment of benefits from working at IBM Turk which had direct effects on solidarity for collective action. A senior IBM Turk worker emphasizes the difference in comparison to junior workers:

> We [senior workers] have high levels of communication; we share and talk about almost everything with each other. But you cannot share anything with the youngsters. They live in another world. Even I don't go to lunch with them. I work in the same department, I do the same work, but there is no relation… no closeness between us….We talked to the youngsters many times about unionization, but they said "we'll see, we'll see". (Mehmet)

Senior workers, unlike their junior colleagues, had previous experience of a company labor union, BIL-IS. Thus they were not alien to the idea of being a member of a union. This is one specific characteristic belonging to IBM Turk. Having a background of labor union made an apparent difference between the perceptions of senior and junior workers. The significance of labor union experience can be seen from the words of an ex-IBM Turk union representative:

> We [senior workers] are people who worked under a specific work culture. We were also members of BIL-IS, so we have a labor union background. We joined to the union easily. However, it was very difficult for us to convince the younger workers that we were not engaging in illegal activities. We tried hard to explain to them that we were working for getting our rights, and this is legal. (Selim)

Previous union experience made senior workers' decision about unionization easier than the junior workers. The situation was made all the more salient when considering that the union representative saw the necessity to explain to junior workers that, contrary to their beliefs, labor unions were not illegal. Such was the dearth of understanding of junior workers, lacking knowledge on how unions work and what they could contribute.

Moreover, senior workers, who supported the union, preferred stability over uncertainty. Keeping their jobs was more valuable than looking for better options. Such anxieties were not surprising. Older workers face the anxiety of unemployment more severely than their more youthful counterparts. In this dynamic market, it is most probable for the 'old-aged' to be faced

with long-term unemployment in search of a job. The idea of a labor union was more attractive for senior workers than younger ones. A senior IBM Turk worker confirms:

> We are anxious because we know what we are losing. They [the young workers] didn't realize yet what they were losing at the moment. A labor union can do something about that. (Hasan)

However, in some cases the same conditions also resulted in declining union support for the ones who did not identify themselves strongly with the union. Since participation with union activities may also result in dismissal, some senior workers preferred to be on the side of management as well.

The following two sections focus on the processes of out-group differentiation and how these processes influenced workers' decisions regarding collective action. IBM Turk workers' perceptions and the role of beliefs towards labor unions and their members, are explored with respect to how workers define and differentiate themselves.

7.2.2 The Role of Beliefs about being an IBM Professional and Union Member: *"If they don't think that they are workers, how can you convince them to unionize?"*

Self perceptions of IT workers are highly dependent on their perceptions of others; in this case, union members. Whenever describing features belonging to themselves and their in-group, IT workers frequently referred to union members or conventional workers as part of the out-group. The self perception of IT workers emphasizes mainly a professional identity which leads them to

distinguish themselves from other workers (i.e. typical 'blue-collar' workers). This section discusses professional values with its relation to high education, credentials and high social status.

Professionalism and Organizational discourse

The most prominent challenge in front of the unionization of IBM Turk workers concerned their notion of professionalism. Professional identity was used as a device, in many different ways, to separate themselves from out-groups such as workers in other sectors or union members. Distinctiveness serves to differentiate the group from others and provides a unique identity which creates a perception of themselves not as workers, but as professionals (Blackwood et al.., 2003). The contemporary work environment, use of advanced technology, better salaries, modern design of workplaces, and intelligent, young workers prompt workers to believe that IT work is for 'professionals' and not for 'workers'. An IBM Turk worker explained:

> We are rather managing things more than doing them. That gives us a feeling of being a manager, not a worker. I don't like to call myself 'worker'; I prefer to be called a 'professional'. When you say 'worker', it reminds me of blue collar or a person who works in a factory. (Berke)

Organizational discourses were used to strengthen professional identity and also to persuade workers to perform and behave in ways which the organization considers to be appropriate, effective and efficient (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2006; Evetts, 2003; Peetz, 2003). The example of

business cards helped to understand the self perception of IBM Turk workers and to realize how they position themselves. As one dismissed IBM Turk worker argued critically:

> They are channel managers, sales managers, operation executive etc. They are not really managers or executives. It is just written on business cards. All IBM-Turk workers are managers according to their business cards …This promotes arrogance and conceited feelings in the card owner. Now, fresh graduates start at IBM Turk as 'product manager'. (Selim)

Considering themselves as managers rather than workers impacted on self-perceptions and union decisions. Organizational discourses, in that sense, contributed to the notion of professionalism.

The Role of Education and Credentials

The differentiation of IBM Turk workers from conventional workers, and the construction of professional identity, was rooted in the education levels and qualifications exhibited by most, if not all, IBM Turk workers. High levels of education distinguished these workers from union members with respect to specific culture of IT sector; and qualifications, social status and self-manageability of IT workers. Education level determines the boundaries of the 'IT culture'. It made a difference in understanding the language of IT. Uneducated or under-educated individuals had little hope to understand the language of IT. Thus, it was unlikely that IT workers and unionists, seen as 'uneducated' or 'under-educated', could come together. An intern in IBM Turk explained it as follows:

> Imagine, you did a master, PhD in the US or abroad. There is a man who is not educated like you and he is trying to impose on you some ideas or saying that he will find solutions to your problems. There is no chance of a factory worker starting a union organization at IBM-Turk. It is a matter of language. IT workers speak the language of computers, unionists don't. (Alp)

As seen above, the IT sector is considered to have its own language. The level of differentiation was not only limited to sectoral differences. It also had cultural dimensions, including the language. It became more apparent why IT workers and unionists fail to understand each other: they do not speak the same language. Apart from the difference of 'speaking the language of computers', multi-lingualism was also considered an important aspect to distinguish themselves. For some workers, it might be a prerequisite to think about participating in a labor union or not. The ability to speak English was a sign of higher education, in the words of one IBM Turk worker:

> Labor unions should be composed of educated people. Now imagine if I want to join a union, and if I see educated people at the union, if I see English speaking people, then I will think about joining or not joining a union. (Berke)

Credentials and professional superiority was emphasized strongly by workers, contributing to individualistic behavior. They consider themselves self-controlled and self-motivated to perform their work. Their qualifications were enough for them to perform their work. Where skills were

absent, workers consider it their own responsibility to learn and perform their work. According to an ex-IBM Turk worker and unionist:

> They were asking me in an arrogant manner about how I will defend their rights. They said, 'I completed this master's and that PhD, I can speak those languages, I can use these programs. I have the certificate of those courses; I have the experience of this and that. I can find a job for myself whenever I want. I am not concerned with you; I am not concerned with another person. I can do things on my own.' (Ayse)

Here the main issue seemed the ability to be self-sufficient in completing tasks. Unionization, however, necessitates collective action rather than the individualist work often seen in the sector. Workers gained their skills through education and self-learning, leading many to proudly emphasize the importance of certificates and credentials. When workers are self-sufficient, they have less perceived need of an organization to do things for themselves. This heightened sense of individualism worked in tandem, and is reinforced by, the freedom of self-evaluation of project outcomes, to develop a critical sense of self-sufficiency, even outside their official working environment.

Reputation Loss: How would it be to be a unionist?

Among IBM Turk workers interviewed, there was a strong doubt in their ability to maintain their reputation as respected professionals in the event of union membership. The acute perception of unionized workers as blue collar worker was, among many, seen as a depreciation of their

worth and transitively would reflect on themselves should they unionize. A senior IBM Turk worker explained this situation critically as follows:

> If they unionize, they will have a conflict with themselves. For example, those with 'marketing manager' on their business cards. They wonder how a marketing manager can be on the same level as a factory worker in a union. (Selim)

Union membership was avoided only because unions belong to other sectors, but also because of the perceived loss of reputation for IBM Turk workers. The emphasis on professional values and education was also associated with social status. The differences in education level allowed IBM Turk workers to create hierarchies based on their qualifications. An IBM Turk worker stated sharply that:

> I wouldn't work in a place if I am at the same status with a primary school graduate. I know that this person doesn't have the same level of knowledge as I do. A primary school graduate cannot have my qualifications. There must be differences with respect to education level, even with the foreign languages that you can speak. (Berke)

Union membership, as exemplified above, brought the risk of equalizing the status of an IT worker with other pedigrees of worker. Qualifications obtained by education are stressed in order to clearly differentiate the IT worker from others. This finding of perceived superior labor market status is similar with those of Noronha & D'Cruz (2006) on Indian call center agents. Imagining themselves as union members was believed to depreciate their status to the level of

blue collar workers (Noronha & D'Cruz, 2006; Remesh, 2004). The words of a young IBM Turk worker explain their anxiety of reputation degradation clearly:

> Are we working in the mining sector? Why would we join a union? What would we say to our customers? We would lose our reputation and image. (Berke)

This impediment stemmed from what IT workers associate with unionists: "They fight against police. Police use tear gas, these kinds of things." Below, the differences between the social status of an IBM Turk worker and a unionist are stated evidently. A unionist, according to the interviewee, has an image of a demonstrator, shouting on the streets or regularly in conflict with society. This image of a unionist did not fit with their social status. An experienced IBM Turk worker said:

> I hate shouting on the street or those kind of things. I don't know how you struggle against that. But for me, shouting on the streets never fits with me. It is not my style. But when you meet with people who can understand your problems, who don't act for their own interests, who are well educated, then they can get people together for a common purpose. (Nilgün)

All in all, being a union member was seen as a clear rejection of professional values, loss of reputation and elite status.

7.2.3 The Role of Beliefs about Labor Unions: "*For me, union is something directly related to factory, manufacturing or heavy industry.*"

Labor union perceptions of IBM workers had significant effects on how they perceived themselves and how they wanted to be identified with labor unions. The role of beliefs about labor unions is presented in order to have a clearer view of how identification and stereotyping processes function. The relevance, legitimacy, and compatibility of unions for IBM Turk workers is examined in depth.

Unions as Irrelevant

IBM Turk workers, generally speaking, thought of unions as first and foremost for the working class, not for themselves as professionals. Accordingly, for them, labor union formation would never take place in this sector. The activity of such a unionization process was therefore seen as an unexpected, momentary fluke. A young IBM Turk worker described a typical IT worker with those words:

> When I think of an IT worker, I think: young, highly-educated, probably has a master's degree, well-dressed, multi-lingual, has a taste for music or cultural events. But when I think of a union, I don't associate those features with it. For me, a union is something directly related to the factory, manufacturing or heavy industry. When I read on the internet about what happened at IBM-Turk, I was very surprised and thought that there must have been really big problems. (Alp)

Unionization was considered as an unexpected situation for this IBM Turk worker. As Klandermans (1986) suggests, individuals must perceive social change as possible with labor unions. This makes an important difference to an individual's willingness to participate. Existing

unions were regarded as incongruent to the interests of IT workers. IT workers in Turkey are organized under the title of service branch no.10 and include office workers, workers of fine arts etc. Therefore these workers believed that unions were not relevant to the IT sector and IT specific problems, or that the solutions unions propose are not appropriate for them. They had difficulties to find a labor union which fits to their expectations or which can be helpful to resolve their particular issues. An ex-IBM Turk worker said:

> IT workers have various demands; rather than wages, like factory workers. One demands retirement, the other career, salary, child care or consensus and so forth. That's why, instead of focusing on one demand, we need a new definition of labor unions as a platform, as an application mechanism where different demands are consolidated. Blue collar work is different. You work for payment. This is the demand of every blue collar worker. But here everybody is individualistic and has different agendas. (Orhan*)*

Unions as Standardizer

Unions are perceived as overly concerned with standardizing salaries even though workers vary in their skills and ability to contribute to organizations (Milton, 2003). Believing in the relevance of merit as the means of career progress, IBM Turk workers feared that the presence of unions would introduce a leveling effect through attempts to protect the less capable and equalize salaries (Noronha, 2009). Unions advocate for provisions in wages. However, IT workers are

more prone to prove themselves and be competitive with their skills and credentials (Youngblood et.al, 1984). In their opinion, unions were anti-creative and contrary to the meritocracy system. An IBM Turk worker emphasized the significance of performance for himself as follows:

> I am not a member of union because the conditions which labor unions provide do not fit with me. Labor unions are not on the same level with me. For example, in the IT sector, supply and demand balance is determined by the market and it changes all the time. Because the sector market is high, I would prefer not to have an annual wage increase based on the consumer price index. I prefer having performance based salary increases. Labor unions cannot provide this increase for me. There are performance measuring systems in IT, such as group relations, projects, profits from projects, premiums, etc. These motivate me more than consumer price indexes. (Berke)

A system based on individual performances was, in this view, not compatible with labor unions. On the other hand, professionalism necessitates relying on individual skills. IBM Turk workers preferred mechanisms for the arrangement of salaries in opposition to the collective salary arrangements associated with union decision processes. This desire for individualized assessment based on skill and ability made the acceptance of union strategies inconsistent with workers' immediate desires.

Unions as Political Entities

The feeling of being as privileged IT workers often comes with a hostile refusal of labor unions, which are frequently seen as archaic, undemocratic and undesirable (Brophy, 2006). Unions are associated with political parties instead of protecting workers' rights, often carrying a lingering subjective link with Communism. Joining a labor union, therefore, would endow participants with the stigma of conflict prone or seeking. Union trust in Turkey is, needless to say, less than favorable, with unions often linked to either communist or interest seeking organizations. This stigma is detrimental and creates dissonance with IT workers are uncomfortable with classical leftist jargon associated with labor unions.

Union participation is possible only if unions protect workers' rights, abstain from self-interested activities and do not operate like a communist organization. This reference with communism and the antipathy between IT workers and unionists is explained from another senior IBM Turk worker perspective:

> Some people from the Turkish Communist Party were in our platform. They said 'We should first educate white collar workers. We will start with the Paris Commune'. I say: 'the employers take the money from the pockets of the workers, that's why these people elevate their voice, you are talking about the Paris Commune! Let's not start with the Paris Commune. Let's first convince these workers that they deserve that amount of money for their labor'. When you

> talk about the Paris Commune, they already go too far. If you come there with the red flag, they run away immediately. (Selim)

Another dimension of opposition towards labor unions was derived from the absence of collective memories regarding the existence and functioning of labor unions in the IT sector (Brophy, 2006). Due to the lack of existent or anticipated union activity within the Turkish IT sector, IBM Turk workers developed their opinions about labor unions from heavily stereotyped descriptions. Their views, when expressed, were more opinions based on prejudice than information. An activist IBM Turk worker states that:

> I don't think that IT workers even know about the differences between Turk-Is and DISK [the two biggest labor confederations]. They just don't want to hear anything about labor unions. They don't have a culture of labor unions. There was only one worker who asked us about our decision to join Turk-Is. He was a Marxist. But he was the only one out of 250 workers. (Ayse)

Unions as political institutions do not fit with the IT worker identity. IBM Turk workers were opposed to politics intervening in their work life; unions were seen as organizations to be avoided. This prejudiced view based less on information than on societal misconceptions is detrimental to union support amongst the typical IT worker.

Concluding remarks

The results presented so far indicate that self-, union and union member perceptions of the IBM Turk workers were largely based on calculative relations rather than attachment to the idea of a union or membership to one. Self-perceptions always referred to perceptions of other (labor union and union member). IBM Turk workers' feelings towards unionist ran parallel with their attitudes towards labor unions. Their notions of professionalism strongly influenced their perceptions of labor unions as irrelevant and union members as incompatible with themselves. Professional identity creates hierarchies, sets cultural differences, and produced a heightened sense of social status. There is evidence that high educational attainment, qualifications, and the ability to speak foreign languages helped these workers to discriminate themselves from unionists as illiterate or under-educated individuals. The general opinion of IBM Turk workers equated the world of the labor union as primarily for the protection of the factory worker. The lack of conceptual understanding of the purposes or uses of labor unions, as relates to their sector specific concerns, has left many with little reason to support unions and more reasons to avoid them.

7.3 Perceptions of Workplace Context on Group Identification

This section discusses how the workplace, as social context, impacts on collective action decision making. Working in a prestigious company mainly leads workers either to have more or maintain their present holdings. Working at IBM Turk brings employees a sense of high social status. Working at IBM Turk provides better careers for some in other companies; however, due

to the context of Turkish labor relations, it may also lead workers to develop a reaction to preserve their status in order not to lose their benefits. This section focuses further on the specific characteristics of working in IBM and in the IT sector.

First, career expectation is described with a tolerance for poor working conditions, building one's CV, and diminished risk aversion due to family-life circumstances and as well as management tactics against unionization. On the other hand, status preservation is related to privilege accumulation over the course of employment and the fear of losing economic comfort and privileged status outside the workplace. Final section examines how the specific characteristics of IT work, such as the use of non-standard employment forms and intensive working, is perceived with respect to workers' decisions on unionization.

7.3.1 Willing to have more: Career Expectations

The self-affirmation of having sub-optimal working conditions was propelled by expectations of career advancement either inside or outside the company. Because of this, depressed rights, insecure working conditions, and union stonewalling was tolerated due to skill advancement and reputation building which enable workers to increase their career possibilities. A young IBM Turk worker said:

> A work experience at a major company, such as IBM or HP, appearing on my CV is definitely prestigious. You have to pay the price first and a labor union is not really in my agenda. (Alp)

As such, the attainment of sector recognized certificates, and occupational training were advantageous for career progression. Unionization was seen as a factor which negatively affected this. Young workers were more in need of improved career opportunities or higher salaries than of security and protection. A senior IBM Turk worker criticized the younger worker perspective:

> [Young workers] think like: 'I will hop on this boat, and will hop off when I have enough experience'. That's why they think labor union is useless. (Orhan)

From their perspective, they saw their workplace as a reference, but not as a permanent place of employment. That is, younger workers saw working in IBM Turk as a contribution to their career and CV's rather than a lifelong project. They had "things to prove" at the company and were more concerned with their own situations and futures at the company.

The length of time for the official procedures to unionize was seen as another reason not to unionize from the perspective of young workers. Since they did not have expectations of long-term employment in one place, they did not see a tangible reason to be involved with labor union activities.

> People think that the minimum unionization process takes 2-2.5 years, and they do not think about working more than two years. Then they think unionization is not relevant to them. While I was trying to convince them to vote, many of them replied that they were going to leave their job in 3-5 months, so it doesn't interest them. I tried a lot, not for unionizing them, but just to vote; can you believe? (Ayse)

Moreover, family status was also observed as a factor directly related with risk-taking decisions. The largely single and childless younger workers saw themselves more prone to take risks owing to the relative flexibility of their lives; in contrast to the settled family, middle-class lives of older workers. A young IBM Turk worker clarified his position regarding unions:

> It is not the same for a single young person and an older married person. Since you have more responsibilities, you prefer taking fewer risks. For example, if you have a mortgage, you have to be careful with your actions and take fewer risks. So I can say, the older you get, the more responsibilities you have. Then you prefer fewer risks and a more stable life and working conditions. So, labor unions might be more useful for senior workers, but not for younger ones. We are young, we want to take risks and see what happens. (Berke)

While for a senior worker, a labor union was necessary for job security, younger workers less preoccupied with the importance of job security. The perceptions of risk taking in their lives were related with the responsibilities they had to deal with. They did not have big investments in the company, compared to, for instance, the retirement benefits which senior workers logically sought to protect. When IBM Turk decided to cancel retirement benefits in 2005, it did not cause a strong reaction amongst younger workers, in part due to the novelty of such benefits in the sector.

The IBM Turk management directly influenced workers' career also by offering rewards or providing salary increases for the ones who did not sign up for the union. For example, higher

positions were offered to non-unionized workers to drive home the message that unions are not necessary. Workers who refused or declined to participate in the union were in some cases promoted to a managerial position or regular worker, in the case of interns. For the sake of their career prospects, IBM Turk workers knew that they should have nothing to do with the idea of labor union. A union supporter IBM Turk worker explained that:

> A friend of ours was working with us like a union representative. Then one day he came and he told me that he might become a 'manager', so he wanted to withdraw his membership. Another said that he had some targets in the company. There was another who said he would go to US for a job, so he didn't want to be with us. Now he returned from US after two years and became a manager. (Selim)

Unionization did not only affect the present status of a worker, prospective work opportunities also impacted worker attitudes towards unionization. Having a good reference before leaving the company was important for IBM Turk workers, as HR departments across companies are in contact with each other. One IBM Turk worker pointed that:

> Workers simply think that "if I don't unionize, then I will have better relations with my manager. If I move to another job, then I will go there with a good reference. (Mehmet)

While career advancement was considered as an aspect of workers' non-unionization decisions, maintenance of present economic and social status also plays a significant role. The following section deals with the demotivating aspect of "having things to lose" for IBM workers.

7.3.2 Status Preservation: *"I can vote for the union, but I cannot strike."*

Preservation of their current social status was also important for many IBM workers due to their individual accumulations to the company throughout the years as well as due to the anxiety of losing economical comfort. Higher salaries meant higher social class, social status and living conditions. For these workers, the gains they had acquired at IBM Turk would be directly jeopardized by being against, or even being perceived to be against, management. Interestingly, the enhanced necessity of money might be a reason not to strike for those who earn more. Credit card payments, private tuitions for children, vacations abroad, and so forth, are counted as expenditures which prevent them taking risks with unionizing. It is not a matter of survival, but rather a matter of losing comfort in general. An ex-IBM Turk worker explained:

> We have a lot of things to lose. We earn relatively good incomes. We have a kind of life order and we don't want it to be messed up. We don't have the fear of hunger. But a simple worker always has the fear of hunger. We will lose our comfort; this is what we are scared of. (Orhan)

This higher, exceedingly materialist standard of living necessitates its own needs and expenditures, rather than, say, fear of hunger. Therefore, the IBM Turk worker experiences the anxiety of participation to a strike in a different way than other workers. The difference between IBM Turk workers and other workers was stated clearly from another experienced IBM Turk worker. Workers who have little or nothing to lose are willing to fight for their rights more than

others who have more "needs" at stake. An IBM Turk worker compared their own situation with the tobacco workers who were striking at that time:

> The tobacco worker is striking, because it is a matter of life and survival for him. Even though he only has a primary school degree, he knows that he should own his and his family's future, and fight for that. We have higher salaries. The tobacco worker is thinking of his life, we are thinking of our payments, credits and so forth. We have more things to lose. The tobacco worker strikes because s/he doesn't have anything more to lose. We have credit card debts; we have apartment payments, whatever. The more income people have, the more selfish they become. (Sefa)

Economic well-being made workers weigh their individual actions, and the related prices they would have to pay, heavier. In the quotation above, higher income is associated with becoming selfish. Unlike the problems of other workers, their problem revolved around losing the privileges of a wealthy life. While the tobacco worker went on strike in order to survive, the reasons for an IT worker were mostly related with material belongings. The IBM Turk worker acted more to protect him/herself from the costs of unionization as opposed to the costs of not unionizing. This emphasis on the role of career expectations and the preservation of social and material well-being is important for understanding decisions to participate or not to participate in union activity. That said, there are those issues outside the individual's future and immediate material desires which play a role in their decision making process. Employment patterns (e.g.

atypical employment) and working environments have serious impacts on workers' attitudes towards union activity. The following section explores this issue in depth.

7.3.3 Perceptions of Working Conditions on Group Identification: "*People start living asocial since there is no time to do anything, but just working.*"

The restructurings in the IBM Turk had profound effects on the working conditions in IBM Turk. The influence of atypical employment forms on union decision manifests itself in its temporary and uncertain nature and creating job insecurity. Among those atypical employment forms, home office working, outsourcing and employing interns for longer periods were most prevalent. Intensive working conditions are, in addition to atypical employment patterns, noted as a characteristic of the IT sector which decreases the opportunity for workers to collaborate and discuss work-related grievances.

Home office working, or working with client as a form of atypical employment, is reported as a factor limiting unionization and the possibilities of worker solidarity. Even with emergent social media technologies, solidarity belongs more to face-to-face interaction and sharing than remote interactions over the internet. As happened in the IBM Turk case, home office working made people ignorant to their problems and isolated from collective grievance voicing. A former IBM Turk and now current IGS worker explained the situation about home-office working:

> When I started at IBM-Turk, we were working in 10 floors, now IBM Turk has 6 floors. They rented out the other floors and made the offices smaller and let you work with the customer. They want to send the message that: 'If it is not

> compulsory, don't come here'. They introduced it as a favor, as an attractive opportunity. For instance, when you work from home, you don't receive a break, you dedicate all your time to work. The entire day becomes your work day. You may think that you gain something, but actually you lose out. (Hasan)

The success of the company lay in the promotion of home office working and working with clients. It was introduced as an attractive opportunity to hinder group formation and sharing of work related problems, this is in conjunction with the use of interns and outsourced workers. Outsourcing was beneficial for the company as outsourced workers are paid less, are entitled to fewer benefits (health, retirement benefits) and are signed to "loose" contracts, despite performing the same work. IBM Turk had previously employed outsourced workers, typically employed on a temporary basis, via a multi-national staffing agency until warnings from the Ministry of Labor forced the company to cease such operations. To circumvent this issue, IBM Turk found another way to employ people with less expenditure in the form of internships. Interns were employed more than the legal period of working with the expectation of potential full-time, regular contract work at the company. These interns often work more hours than their contracted counterparts for sub-standard salaries and without social benefits. Unionization was seen as a risk for intern workers in as much as their participation or affiliation with such activities may decrease or even eliminate their chances to work at IBM Turk in the future. A woman IBM Turk worker explained their situation as:

> Those interns continue with their master's education, and the rest work for IBM-Turk afterwards. Even in our department we are 6 or 7 regular workers, and we

> have 5 interns who work like us, or even more than us. IBM-Turk's mentality is that 'we will continue to exploit people and their labor until we receive a serious warning.' They know for sure that it is illegal. The management says 'You are an intern! We don't extend your contract. You cannot become permanent staff.' They are just fresh graduates, they are searching for a job in the market and they, of course, decide not to vote for the union. (Nilgün)

For interns, working in excess of the regulated hours is seen as normal. The possibility of future employment at IBM Turk was much more valuable than union membership. Intensive work acutely decreased opportunities for the discussion of work conditions or engagement in political activity. Within work centered conversations, workers did not develop the necessary interpersonal relationships, allowing them to compare their situations and coalesce around issues that could support collective action. IBM Turk workers work long hours intensely to complete projects before their deadlines. According to one senior IBM Turk worker:

> The company puts you in such a mood that you are unable to think about anything other than the project that you have to finish. You do not have time for yourself or your family. People become reclusive because there is no time to do anything, just work. It is then more difficult to convince people to fight for their own and other people's rights. (Mehmet)

The elimination of regular working hours and intensive work condition caused IBM Turk workers to focus exclusively on work and project deadlines. Such conditions, while unsurprising

to many, reveal particularly troubling facets of this industry as regards unionization and collective activity.

Concluding Remarks

Outcomes indicate that working at IBM Turk provided increased career opportunities for workers which ultimately undermined collective solidarity. Prospective career advancement or employer migration led to lower propensity for union action. In the context of labor relations, however, the desire for increased benefits was tempered with maintaining the status quo. A cost and benefit analysis was made between the risk of unemployment and engaging in collective action; as opposed to not taking the risk of unemployment and maintaining the status quo. While workers who had vested interests (e.g. accumulated benefits) in the company chose to preserve their status, workers who do had no such interests chose to pursue better career options. In both cases, unionization was not evaluated as an alternative. In addition, the role of working conditions prompted individualism rather than collectivity and also appeared as a factor that hindered collective action in IBM Turk.

Summary

In the preceding chapter, shifts in attitudes of IBM workers from collective to individual action were presented. IBM workers were initially able to engage in collective action; however, during the unionization period, the cohesive action of workers was replaced by individuality and personal interests over collective aims. The aspects behind reluctancy towards collective action

were described in conjunction with perceptions of threat, perceptions of conflict in intra- and inter-group relations, and perceptions of workplace context.

Managerial abuse appeared to be the most significant dimension of declining interest in union activity. In the cases presented, individualistic behavior is associated with employer pressure and the declining possibility of the realization of professional expectations in case of unionization. These factors negatively affected weakly identified group members so that career expectations were considered more important than collective goals. IBM Turk management used the threat of dismissal and the hindrance of union activities in order to prevent unionization.

Moreover, when workers felt threatened, they chose to behave in accordance with their individual interests rather than collective goals. Career expectations and the prevention of social or material loss supplanted the desire for collective action. However, the situation was perceived differently among the workers. Workers with seasoned job tenure were more likely to participate in 'voice' behavior than younger workers. This was due to the higher salaries and acquired social and financial benefits of those senior workers.

The role of social beliefs regarding union members and labor unions were essential for IBM workers. Stereotyping and depersonalization occurred more in this conflict situation as workers were obliged to define themselves in a social context. As seen in the IBM Turk case, the individual response predominated reactions. The IT work culture does not belong to the tradition of union activity, nor is the social environment complimentary for labor union development.

Unions are considered as irrelevant in the IT sector. The world of IT workers and labor unions, at least from the results herein, appear to lack commonality.

Chapter 8

Exploring Union Action in the UNIBEL Case

The following chapter examines the UNIBEL case and the processes which produced the wholly opposite outcome than that witnessed in the IBM-Turk case. The first section, following the work of Fantasia (1988) on collective action, explores the sources of solidarity in the interactions amongst workers to achieve collective goals. The action of the UNIBEL workers' union is evaluated, focusing on the collective deprivation that created feelings of injustice and unfairness based on salary inequalities (8.1). The group identification in the workplace, which enabled the successful strike action of UNIBEL workers, is described through the lens of their perception that union action was possible (8.2). Strong group identification was developed by a variety of mechanisms. The central features consisted primarily of: activist workers, the political ideologies of workers, and a history of union activity.

Part three explores the significance of UNIBEL as a public, municipal company in Turkey as a factor impacting on perceptions of threat (8.3). The specificities of working in a public company are interrelated with employer attitudes and workers' conceptions of career opportunities. Moreover, country specific factors impacting the union action decisions of workers' are outlined in greater detail. Finally, the role of beliefs regarding unions and union members are examined (8.4). The manner in which UNIBEL workers perceived themselves and union members was directly linked to their decisions to participate in collective action. Similarly, perceptions of labor

unions constituted the union-related component of how individuals categorize and define themselves in a union context.

8.1 Perceptions of Collective Deprivation: *"We knew that we could trust each other if we started acting together."*

The decision to strike by UNIBEL workers stemmed primarily from two motivations: 1) injustice in wages compared workers of other municipal and private IT companies, and 2) differential treatment of workers based on their employment status within UNIBEL. The wages of UNIBEL workers were not only comparatively less than those of private IT firms; they were also less than those of other municipal companies. Even though IT sector workers earn relatively higher wages than those found in other sectors, a system programmer at UNIBEL, for instance, earns approximately four times less than his or her counterpart at IBM-Turk. The second dimension of perceived injustice concerns salary differences between workers in the same company, UNIBEL. UNIBEL workers struggled to balance salaries internally. UNIBEL has technical workers as well as service staff. As mentioned before, UNIBEL workers asked for matching salary increases for both groups. The first dimension stresses perceived collective deprivation; the second, intra-group cooperation. Both dimensions serve to strengthen in-group identification and out-group (management) stereotyping.

The social identity perspective states that when the current situation is perceived as unjust, or the action of management is perceived as wrong at the group level, individuals are more likely to mobilize for collective action (Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Kelly, 1993; Klandermans, 1986). Low

salaries created the necessary collective deprivation and became a unifying factor amongst the workers en masse. Experiencing common issues, sharing the same economic fate and a perception of *'we-ness',* persuaded workers to act collectively. The general motivations of UNIBEL workers about the reasons why they were able to hold a strike is reflected below by two workers:

> The problem for everybody concerned the salaries. We earn even less than other municipal workers. It was obvious that there was an unjust distribution of salaries. (Tamer)

> Our salaries were already low enough. We didn't have anything to lose. So, we didn't consider the negative consequences of striking, such as not receiving our salaries or being threatened by the management. (Mehtap)

In accordance with theory, feelings of deprivation were shared widely amongst workers and motivated them to become involved in collective action (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Blackwood et al., 2003). The UNIBEL case also illustrated that a rational analysis fails to explain worker collective action behavior. The perception of injustice went beyond calculations of costs and benefits. This is stated clearly in the words of ex-union representative:

> People were saying that 'I rather prefer to be hungry instead of getting this salary.' That's why we were successful. (Beyhan)

An important sign of how individual deprivation was converted into collective deprivation can be found in UNIBEL workers' effort to defend each other against management. Workers acting collectively, in defense of another worker, underline the boundaries between workers and management (Klandermans & de Weerd 2000). Insisting on equivalent salary increases was a clear example of this mutual defense. A technical UNIBEL worker explained their situation, stressing intra-group cooperation:

> We didn't accept their offer because they offered less salary increases to non-technical workers. We insisted on having a more balanced increase for all. For example, the management offered us an increase of 100 liras, and 30 liras to the rest; but we didn't accept it. We tried to be very careful to maintain solidarity and balance for all people. (Tamer)

This UNIBEL worker did not act according to his economic self-interests. Indeed, he would have received a more desirable salary than the others. However, they acted in a 'one for all, all for one' manner. Poor salaries, compared to other municipal companies, constituted a major common grievance. Correspondingly, workers rejected salary inequalities with co-workers in general.

The reasons for such strong commitment are related to personal feelings of morality; that is, of doing the "right thing". The foundation of their solidarity was demonstrated in a common view, that "we knew that we were doing something right. We were doing our jobs well. So, we were sure about ourselves." The self-affirmation of their action was fostered through this perceived

righteousness. Perceptions that they had been wrongfully denied their just rewards represented a major motivation for such strong expressions of dissatisfaction. This sense of collective deprivation is best illustrated in one worker's statement that:

> We are working a lot. We had to strike because we saw the [low degree of] value given to us. We could not accept that. (Mehtap)

An important part of this perceived deprivation is to attribute that shared injustice to management. In accordance with SIT, this 'us' and 'them' distinction is reinforced through intergroup conflict against management. In the eyes of UNIBEL workers, management was clearly stereotyped as the responsible agency for their low salaries. Certainty about the liable agency (i.e. management as the source of grievance) provoked collective action.

The most important factor prompting collective action in the UNIBEL case was the experience of mutual grievances. The primary motivating factor towards solidarity was their comparatively low levels of salary in relation to other municipal and IT workers. The following section describes in detail how solidarity dynamics in the workplace among UNIBEL workers developed and how they were able to develop in-group solidarity.

8.2 Aspects of Group Identification in the Workplace

As indicated in the previous section, work-place dissatisfaction or work-related grievances may raise worker mobilization; however, this is not a sufficient reason for group solidarity and collective action (Kelly & Kelly, 1994). Economic problems do not necessarily develop into

collective action (Klandermans, 2002; Hornsey et.al, 2006). In the UNIBEL case, collective action was made possible due to the formation of worker solidarity. Critical to the construction of solidarity was the ability of workers to identify themselves with each other in the workplace. Aspects of group identification in the workplace are examined with group socialization, the role of activist workers and the role of union legacy.

8.2.1 Group Socialization

Socialization in the workplace is a strong predictor of collective action. According to Hodson et al. (1993), similarities in grievances, values, norms, beliefs, and so forth, pushes group members to respond in a similar way. Socialization was made possible due to the relatively small size of UNIBEL and the efforts of activist workers.

Generally speaking, union organizing is more difficult in small scale companies (Riley, 1997). Small companies depend more on informal and lateral relationships, rather than hierarchical institutional structures. Another perspective is that individuals identify themselves more readily in smaller groups than in larger ones (Ashfordt & Mael, 1989). Individuals may be more aware of their common problems in face-to-face groups, and more committed to collective goals (Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996). In the UNIBEL case, the possibility of successful collective action of

workers benefited from the advantages of working in a relatively small scale company. One UNIBEL worker, and union representative, explained it as:

> It is advantage for us that we work face to face. We see each other, we talk to each other. We were all aware of what was going on. Before and during our strike process, I was talking to all of our friends her; but if this place would have been bigger, I wouldn't have had time to talk to all of the workers. Moreover, writing emails is not a solution either. Sending e-mails is much less influential than face to face communication. (Mustafa)

The relatively small size of UNIBEL provided a conducive atmosphere for the development of firm social relations. Increased interaction between workers led them to share more of their work related grievances. A UNIBEL worker and ex-company representative confirmed the benefits of social interaction at the workplace and explained their success of organizing people; this was precisely due to the possibility of interaction and discussions of related issues at the office. As he says:

> I put a lot of importance on the workplace atmosphere. Chatting with other workers, exchanging ideas is very important. I can influence a person much easier if we work at the same place and have time to see each other. For example, we all know how much each of us is earning. We can discuss salaries. You don't see that in other companies. People share very little with their colleagues. Physical closeness brings positive relations. (Beyhan)

Social interaction acted as a factor enabling closer social ties and friendship networks which are essential mechanisms for the development and implementation of collective strategies (Hodson et.al, 1993; Ashforth & Mael, 1989). The significance of friendship and intra-group trust was emphasized among UNIBEL workers:

> We had good level of friendship. We all knew each other. We knew that we could trust each other if we started acting together. (Tamer)

Identification with each other provided an environment of trust-based relations. The trust between each other even surpassed their trust in the labor union. The quotation below illustrates that workers were even able to act in cohesion without the support of their union:

> In fact, we were thinking that the labor union would not be able to save us. So, we decided to save ourselves. Some friends worked hard to organize others. I can say they did more than the labor union. Union experts helped us only in organizing during the strike. (Mehtap)

Union success was partly attributed to the ability of union organizers to influence the workers' general union beliefs (Park et.al, 2006). Moreover, they were able to identify themselves with each other, leading to their decision to 'save' themselves. They shared the belief that it was possible to make a difference in their state of affairs through collective action. This belief in collective action can motivate others who do not share, or do not have, strong inclinations towards unionism. An important aspect of the success of the UNIBEL workers lies also in their

efforts to engage ‘peripheral’ workers (Hogg, 1992). That is, those who did not identify themselves with the labor union. The union representative explains:

> Other friends had the intention to join the majority. Ok, some of them were saying that ‘these people cannot represent me’, but they also acted with us. We managed to convince them to support us and acted as a group. (Mustafa)

Peripheral members, however, are a poorer fit than central members to the group prototype (Hogg, 1992). Central members succeeded in including those who were not in favor of a labor union to act in cohesion with them. Veenstra and Haslam (2000) argue that when individuals see their friends actively involved in collective action, that situation creates social pressure for non-participants to participate as well. Even if they may have shared grievances, they do not necessarily share the same reactions. However, the perception of shared grievance had an impact on support even if they did not identify themselves with the others. They showed concern for collective aims rather than individual aims.

8.2.2 The Role of Political Ideology and Activist Workers in Group Formation

It is more likely that people with a ‘leftist’ ideological commitment will be more supportive of union action as an instrument of social change (Blackwood, 2007). Kelly’s (1998) study provides evidence supporting this view, arguing that left-wing union militants occupy a central role in building and sustaining union organization. An individual’s perception of their world determines their identification within certain groups (Blackwood et al., 2003; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996). In the UNIBEL case, the existence of activist workers who came from a left-wing political culture

helped to set the stage to organize workers and convince them to strike. The ex-union representative explained their efforts by relating it to his political background:

> None of us were here when they established the labor union. Maybe we didn't do anything for the labor union in the first days; but we, me and some other friends, tried to get people closer to the union. I come from a politically left wing family. I live in the suburb area. I struggled with the people against the police, when they came to dispossess people. It is very normal for me to fight for the labor union. (Beyhan)

The perception of injustice, or conflict at the workplace, led very 'normally' to union action for that UNIBEL worker. Similar with the aforementioned activist worker, some workers were politically active in central-left or left wing political parties, or had some experience in unionization or demonstrations. As stated above, some mentioned slum areas and their struggle against police due to dispossessions. These individuals were, at least, familiar with conflict laden activities involving the police. This is not without its merits, as such experience is valuable in any potential confrontation with the police in case of a strike or demonstration. Political orientations show a strong positive influence on the degree of participation in collective action (Klandermans, 1986; 1992)

Johnson and Jarley (2004), following mobilization theory, see leadership as one of the most important aspects of workplace justice. The influence of leaders can be seen clearly in determining the level of solidarity and potential action against management, as happened in the

UNIBEL case. The union representative in UNIBEL explained his role in collective action as follows:

> If people trust me, then they will trust the union more. I became a union representative. So other people know that I will always be with them whenever they have problems, or at least they know that I am not going to do anything bad for them. People trusted each other more, and then they trusted the labor union. Trust in the labor union came after the trust that they showed to me. (Mustafa)

This leadership promoted group cohesion, legitimated their action, and reflected a relatively high level of solidarity as mentioned in Hodson et al. (1993). By the same token, the absence of union activists in the workplace makes it almost impossible for a union to prevail (Kelly, 1998). The activist workers in UNIBEL were more fortunate than their IBM-Turk colleagues. None were dismissed and workers continue to organize events and take actions in order to maintain solidarity.

8.2.3 The Role of Union Legacy

Union legacy is considered as an important element of worker solidarity (Dixon et.al, 2004; Roscigno & Hodson, 2004). Social movement organizational and union-centered perspectives suggest that union presence is essential for strike activity (Dixon et.al, 2004; Riley, 1997). A legacy of collective action is considered as particularly meaningful for future action through the establishment of interpersonal and organizational networks and identities. In social identity terms, it is defined with accessibility. Previous experience with unions will make workers more

likely to think and act in terms of their social category (Blackwood et al.2003). The Turkish IT sector, indeed, suffers from an absence of this history of collective action. In UNIBEL, however, the union was established when UNIBEL was functioning under other municipal companies and thus was affiliated with a labor union since 2003. A UNIBEL worker described their situation as follows:

> We were already unionized. We already had collective agreements before. That's why there is nothing to be shy about. Being a union member was not perceived as something negative. (Tamer)

In the UNIBEL case, the existence of a labor union provided an environment of self-confidence. Having already benefited from a labor union, their ability to foresee applicability of future actions is anchored. Fantasia (1998) emphasizes the significance of union presence, which makes collective action easier due to successful past experiences. Those previous experiences can be shared among workers and help them to establish interpersonal relations in cases of conflict or threat.

Concluding Remarks

Results indicated that UNIBEL workers were able to identify themselves with their group and had an agency to attribute their feelings of deprivation in cases of conflict. The sense of solidarity was not inherent, as explained in Fantasia (1988), but developed through perceived collective deprivation during the collective action process. UNIBEL workers considered their interest more at the group rather than at the individual level. Their friendship ties became

stronger. They believed that trusting each other would bring universally shared benefits. They gained not only trust for each other, but also strengthened their self-confidence for future activism. Overall, they not only knew, but also experienced, the significance of a sense of belonging and group membership. Existence of a group of activist workers and a tradition of unionism further motivated them to act in solidarity.

8.3 The Influence of Political Context and Company Characteristics: *Working in a Public Municipal Company*

The previous section focused on aspects of perceived injustice and group identification in collective action in the workplace. Perceptions of injustice ended with stronger group solidarity among UNIBEL workers. Formation of a cohesive group and mutual solidarity was possible due to perceptions of collective grievance caused by low salaries and intra-group cooperation, including mutual defense. In this chapter the main focus is on the perceptions of political context and workplace context.

In this part, the characteristics of UNIBEL as a public, municipal company are evaluated within the Turkish political climate with attention paid to the political characteristics of labor unions. The acknowledged relations between labor unions and political parties in the Turkish context also provided country specific outcomes to IT unionization. The political and economic context of unionism constitutes another aspect of how IT workers choose whether or not to participate in union activity. The following section examines in detail how union action is perceived by workers in a public and municipal company.

8.3.1 Perceptions of the Political Context

Union activity was greatly affected by the specific political characteristics of Turkey and the position of Izmir in Turkish politics. Before discussing the effects of political affiliation on unionization, two points must be clarified to fully appreciate the political context of unionization in Turkey. First, Turkish trade unions are split by employment sector and ideological bases. Second, labor unions are overwhelmingly, and almost exclusively, organized in the public sector. Keeping these points in mind provides critical background information about the symbiotic relationship between political parties and labor unions in Turkey; in this case, the People's Republican Party (PRP) and DISK. Since the general elections in 1973, DISK has been supporting PRP against right wing parties (Yildirim et.al, 2008).

Perception of the specific political context has an effect on individuals' attitudes on unionization with respect to the perceived threat in cases of union action (Blackwood, et al., 2003). PRP occupies a central-left political position. The general attitude of PRP against labor unions is more tolerant than other political parties represented in the Turkish parliament. Working in an environment which supports union action, or at least one in which there is not a serious ideological conflict, is beneficial for labor unions to continue action (Blackwood et al., 2003; Ashfordt & Mael, 1989). Such perceptions strengthen perceptions of union efficacy. One UNIBEL worker emphasized this point:

> Our management was not totally against us nor did it try different strategies to dissuade us. Both sides, I mean the unions and the municipalities, cannot act very

> strictly against the other. There are complicated relations. Since PRP has a more social democratic perspective, they try to be more flexible and have better relations with workers. (Mehtap)

In the UNIBEL case, the PRP ruling created a perception of tolerance towards labor unions. The UNIBEL workers also had the belief that the management would not be willing to settle into protracted conflict. Their thinking was that management would opt for consensus rather than the application of union busting strategies.

Another dimension of this point is related with political interests. PRP has always been the dominant party in Izmir. Even though the ruling right wing party, the Justice and Development Party (JDP), won the last general elections in 2011 with 49 percent of national votes, PRP dominated in Izmir with 50 percent of the votes there. Izmir is the third largest city in Turkey, after Istanbul and Ankara, and is the only metropolitan municipality ruled by the PRP. JDP has not stood on the sidelines regarding its lack of power in Izmir. On the contrary, JDP considers Izmir of particular importance. Notwithstanding, the leader of the Izmir metropolitan municipality, as well as leaders of several small towns of Izmir, have been imprisoned for periods of time due to claims of corruption. These events underline the apparent political strategy to create an environment of fear against the PRP and its supporters. In this political context, the PRP municipality did not favor negative relations with the union in a municipal company. One UNIBEL worker explained the situation as:

> PRP is now the main opposition party. JDP is trying to uncover its fraud. You know, now the media is in the hands of JDP. So, if we go on striking and if these disputes between us and the municipality grows, then this will be an opportunity for JDP and the media to say that 'look, these people [UNIBEL workers] are striking because the municipality pays them almost the minimum wage'. That's why the management chose to find a consensus rather than maintaining disagreements. (Beyhan)

The employer did not fully attempt to apply pressure on workers. UNIBEL workers were convinced of a victory and with disputes lasting a relatively short amount of time. As Klandermans (1989) argues, when expectations of success are high, individuals perceive their situation as less costly. It is more likely that individuals maintain their action despite the costs of the action if they have the belief that the successful union action is possible.

As shown above, municipalities and labor unions are both political institutions. Therefore, unions have always found places for themselves to organize municipal workers. Again, country-specific factors play a significant role. There is an unambiguous relationship between the left-oriented confederation DISK and the People's Republican Party (PRP). Illustrating this relationship, the prior general secretary of the union was elected as a deputy from PRP in the general elections in June 2011. Many workers emphasized the same point:

> I remember 3 or 4 years ago, the general secretary of DISK told us that 'DISK supports Aziz Kocaoglu in Izmir'. If there is PRP, then you see DISK in the

workplace. If the municipality is ruled by JDP, then you see HAK-IS or TURK-IS. Labor unions change depending on the ruling party in the municipality. (Tamer)

Aziz Kocaoglu was the candidate of PRP for the Izmir Metropolitan Municipality (see Figure 15). The photo below taken during a visit for the interviews and shows the relation between DISK and PRP clearly.

Figure 15: Union's bulletin board in UNIBEL

Translation: "The workers are supporting Aziz Kocaoglu." Aziz Kocaoglu is the mayor of Izmir from PRP (Photo taken March 2011 in the UNIBEL building)

8.3.2 Perceptions of Working in Public Sector

In this section, public sector employment, and its influence on collective action decisions, is contrasted with that of private sector employment. Career expectations, stable employment conditions, and employer attitudes towards unionization emerged as key aspects of employment in this sector.

Career trajectories or chances of alternative employment opportunities impact on the unionization decisions of workers (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2006). Workers with less job alternatives or fewer career expectations are more likely to keep their positions at their workplace. These workers also rely on their union more to maintain their status, social securities and benefits (Johnson & Jarley, 2004). On the contrary, higher future career possibilities lead to lower propensity towards union behavior (Remesh, 2004; 2010). UNIBEL, as a small public company, is not perceived as an attractive step towards a better career. An UNIBEL worker stated that:

> Since UNIBEL is a public company, it is less risky. People start working here and they think that they will continue here. No one thinks that this is [just] a step in their career. Even though people are very qualified here, UNIBEL doesn't provide the type of reputation that [mobile, career minded] people would like to have in their CV's. People who would like to have regular weekend holidays, regular working hours and less risk prefer working here. I can say we have the mentality of state officer. We prefer to have stable employment. (Beyhan)

Individuals are working at UNIBEL largely due to the secure working environment and clearly defined working hours. Workers who looked for a stable life or did not have particularly high career expectations typically preferred to work at UNIBEL. Two other UNIBEL workers added to this by emphasizing the differences between working in the private sector with respect to job security:

> Even though the salaries are lower, I have relatively comfortable working conditions and more social securities. If I would work in a private company, and if there would be a situation that I don't like, I would probably leave the job. Here, even if we sometimes have problems, we don't react sharply because of the securities. I know if I took risks I would earn more; but it brings stress, insecurities and ambiguities. Even in big companies, it is a problem that you don't get your salary on time. That happens everywhere. Taking risks or not taking risks, this is your choice. (Zeki)

> I have job offers. I am earning less here, but I am not working on weekends, it is very central here. We have three weeks of annual leave. In the private sector it is two weeks at most and you cannot even take two weeks of annual leave. I worked in the private sector before and if you have deadlines you have to work into the morning [very often]. At least here I don't have that kind of work rhythm. (Tamer)

UNIBEL workers felt greater security about their jobs and felt less unemployment anxiety working in a public company. Such job security and the relatively comfortable situation of unionism were perceived as a reason to work in public companies. It was also interesting to observe that while talking about securities, UNIBEL workers stressed having their salaries paid on time. Even receiving salaries on time can be seen as an advantage of working in public sector.

One of the most important differences between public and private companies is the capital and profit relation. The public sector is not based on profit making, but rather providing a public service. UNIBEL is doing a public service, which is different than the capital, profit maximization mentality of a private company. A public company can make a financial loss, but a private company would go bankrupt in that case. The attitudes of bureaucrats or governors are not the same as private company employers. A public company has a budget and resources, and their reactions are different than private company employers. A UNIBEL worker and the union officer explain:

> In private companies, the more you work, the more your employer earns money. Therefore employers force you to work more. Here, I don't feel this pressure. (Tamer)

> In the private sector, the most important thing is: how much profit does the company gain from a worker? How good is the performance of a worker? Public companies have a different logic. Since we are a public company, our first aim is not to make a profit. So the money they spend is not out of their pocket. That is

> different than how things are in the private sector. No one wants to have losses for their own company. If you work in a private company, and if you make your company to lose money, then you don't have any chance to continue with your job. (Osman)

Another aspect of differences between working in the public or private sector is the employer's attitude on unionization. Union organizing is easier in municipal companies compared to other companies in the sector. Municipal companies have a pre-existing tradition of unionization, or at least greater tolerance towards unionization without regard to any specific government. They can be more flexible and choose to have a consensus with workers. In private companies on the other hand, unions and strike actions are rarer.

> In public companies, you are not a trouble maker just because you are a unionist. Public companies are used to unions and strikes. (Beyhan)

The only employer strategy used against unionization was the 'out-of-scope' strategy, a tactic used by employers to employ people as consultants. The purpose of the out-of-scope strategy is to create different categories among workers and prevent solidarity among them through setting diverse salary arrangements. This out-of-scope worker strategy is becoming popular among Turkish employers as an anti-union strategy (Celik, 2006). A UNIBEL worker explained the meaning of out-of-scope workers:

> I taught these guys how to do the job, and they are earning more salary than me. Indeed, they are not doing a different type of work. They have just graduated as

> engineers. We earn 700, they earn 1800. We are team mates with those people, we do the same work. (Tamer)

Even if the limits of out-of-scope workers are presented clearly within labor legislation, employers can decide on the determination of 'out-of-scope' workers arbitrarily. Only an employer, or an authorized signatory of the employer, can have the category of 'out of scope'. Yet, in practice, not only university graduates, but also a person who works as an accountant was employed with out-of-scope category, as happened in the UNIBEL case. The employer aimed to increase the number of out-of-scope workers since they cannot be union member.

Concluding Remarks

The perceptions of the political context and workplace characteristics impacted the UNIBEL workers positively to engage in collective action. The aforementioned aspects rendered lower levels of perceived threat and provided a less hostile environment for union action. The general political climate and the PRP ruling in Izmir served for a union action without major difficulties. Moreover, the secure working conditions also increased the in-group identification to maintain the perceived advantages of working in a municipal company. Weaker career outlooks or absence of job alternatives contributed to a protectionist reaction and union support. In addition, public service instead of profit making decreased the employer pressure on union activity as well. The following section examined the role of beliefs regarding union members and labor unions. The self-perceptions of UNIBEL workers and their attitudes towards, unions and union members are significant for understanding the link with their identification processes.

8.4 The Role of Beliefs on Group Identification: Self, Union Member and Labor Union Perceptions

In this section, the focal point is on the personal and union related factors and how they impacted the decisions of UNIBEL workers for engaging in collective action. First, the self perceptions of UNIBEL workers as 'professionals' or 'workers' formed an important aspect of how they defined themselves and how they categorized their position with respect to union action. Second, the relevancy, benefits of labor unions and ideological commitments are discussed from an individual and group level. Union supportive behavior is more likely produced in an environment where the individuals have a salient 'worker' identity and perceive labor unions as an institution that can lead to social change and provide intended outcomes. The outcomes emphasized the role that social influence played in self and labor union perceptions.

8.4.1 Perceiving Self: UNIBEL Workers vs. UNIBEL Professionals

Self perceptions are an important part of considering oneself as a member of a group or an individual. IT workers, or more generally white collar workers, have difficulties with unionizing due to the way they perceive themselves as workers or as professionals.

According to social identity perspective, perceived similarities increase identification. The more individuals have things in common with the 'perception of workers or unionists', the more apt they are to be affiliated with them (Milton, 2003). There were contrasting ideas among UNIBEL workers, who perceive themselves as professionals or workers.

UNIBEL Professionals: "While people were sleeping, I was studying"

Notions of professionalism were an important determinant of perceiving themselves as members of the in-group acting for the union, or consider themselves as individual IT workers. In the UNIBEL case, professionalism was directly linked to level of education, complexity of IT work, self-management, self-sufficiency and self-confidence.

Being an IT worker is perceived as esteemed due to the complexity of the work itself. In the UNIBEL cases, it was observed that even if individuals perceived themselves as workers, they emphasized the distinctiveness of IT worker values based on education and credentials:

> Mine is brain power, the others are using their physical power. We have the same status, but I think we should be treated as a different group and with higher salaries. (Tamer)

> I have an academic career. While people were sleeping, I was studying. I live with my computer. Most of the IT workers are like that, they live with their computers (Zeki)

In these two cases, the common point was the emphasis given to self-development and self-investment rather than to certificates or intelligence. The difference between an IT worker and other workers was justified by 'studying while others were sleeping' and 'living with the computer' or being able to use a high-tech machine. This signifies a different perception of their

identities. The complexity of IT work and dealing with software, programs or codes, serves to build self-confidence as well. The ex-union representative pointed toward this situation:

> It is not easy to have a one-to-one meeting with the general manager. I can go and talk to the general manager of Izelman[6], for example. Why? Because I will manage the whole process. I will listen to their wishes. The general manager has to explain to me. I can say, "No, we will not do in that way." I can reject what the general manager says. This instills self-confidence. I am the expert and they don't know the job. (Beyhan)

As mentioned before, education and credentials are important aspects of self-confidence. Being an expert brings self-confidence, creating a feeling of distinctiveness of values. Another critical point concerns self-sufficiency. Self-sufficiency is defined as independency in the management of one's individual processes. Unionization is a matter of necessity as well. If an individual has enough power to be able to discuss important work-related issues, then that individual would be unlikely to act in cooperation with a labor union. A union expert from DISK and another UNIBEL worker emphasized this same point, primarily during the organization of workers:

> First of all, we begin by reminding them that they are workers. They see themselves as privileged; they have different statuses and conflicting interests in their workplaces. Those reasons require more effort from us to organize them.

[6] Izelman is another company which is operating under Izmir Metropolitan Municipality.

> Since they are qualified, they have the understanding that they can discuss their own issues about salaries and status. So, instead of a mediating institution like a labor union, they prefer to discuss their own issues by themselves. That creates an individualistic culture as well. (Osman)

> It is more difficult to convince us [IT workers]. We can access any source, database, Supreme Court decisions on the internet. We don't need a union to get consultancy about our problems. Moreover, we can find other jobs in any other place. That means we don't have such anxieties or expectations from any kind of organization to protect our rights. (Zeki)

If workers have the ability to do things on their own, then the necessity of labor unions would disappear by itself. The general opinion of IT workers is that they can handle their own problems and tend to have more confidence in themselves than in labor unions regarding the resolution of their work related grievances. In this case, individual confidence and the power to converse on their own issues created an individualistic perception of self and less need of a labor union.

UNIBEL workers: "If you are selling your labor, you are a worker"

The majority of the UNIBEL workers were able to perceive of themselves as 'workers' rather than 'professionals'. Union action was pursued mostly by those who strongly identified themselves as workers. A worker was defined as the person who sells his/her labor and receives money from the management for his/her living. The union representative stated:

> For me, it is very clear. If you are selling your labor, then you are a worker. It doesn't matter if you are in a factory or in an office. Maybe office workers earn more money, but they are still workers. (Mustafa)

They were able to distinguish between themselves and management by noting the difference in selling labor. In other cases, despite an emphasis on advanced qualifications and different work definitions, individuals still considered themselves as workers. An activist UNIBEL worker mentions about his qualifications, but also highlights his position as worker:

> I don't want to offend anyone, but I am different than a worker who waters parks. I have graduated from a university. Maybe that man left school, but I invested in myself. I developed myself. So I would say, am I different than those other workers? Yes, I am. Is that important? No, it's not. Indeed, I would even prefer to be in the same labor union with those park watering workers. They are workers, like I am. In the last instance, we are all workers. I have no problem with that. (Tamer)

The quotation above makes it clear how UNIBEL workers were able to have collective action, showing a clear awareness of their own situation. As IT workers, they differentiated themselves from other classes of workers, however this did not prevent them unionizing.

After realizing the use of professional titles and the feeling of 'being a manager of something', as in the IBM-Turk case, it was interesting to observe that the business cards of UNIBEL workers also illustrated differences between the cases. On these cards, titles specifically addressed the

type of work performed. Titles were written as ‘software expert’, ‘software developer’, ‘programmer’ or ‘editor’, and so forth. They had only one general manager and three managers, in contrast to the plethora of ‘manager’ titles in the IBM Turk case.

Perceptions of one’s self as a worker or a professional were also related with how UNIBEL workers perceived labor unions. It is also vitally important how the labor union perceptions were constructed within UNIBEL workers. The following chapter examines the suitability of IT worker identity with perceptions of labor unions.

8.4.2 Perceiving Labor Unions

The image of a labor union that people have in their minds influences their decision to participate in a labor union. In the UNIBEL case, there were conflicting ideas about the uses of a labor union. Reasons for union support do not need to be a strong identification with the labor union. However, union perceptions of workers were much more complicated than they seemed. This chapter provides a detailed description of how the labor union was perceived amongst UNIBEL workers.

From the field work, the evidence revealed that there are three main views regarding union trust. In the first scenario, individuals have trust and satisfaction with the labor union about solving their problems and support the labor union. In the second scenario, individuals have less trust in their labor union, but still have support stemming from lack of alternatives to collective action, or that the labor union is seen as instrumental for their interests. And in the final scenario, individuals clearly stated their distrust to the labor union.

Unions for the Interests of Workers

The first category of UNIBEL workers believed in utilizing union action to improve their socio-economic situation. These workers were satisfied with union action and also had trust in the union. The concept of trust is critical for collective action. The role of trust has rarely been studied within the context of trade unions (Goslinga & Sverke, 2003), yet it is expected that the perceived reliability of the union has important implications for unionization. Union trust is evaluated with the belief that unions act for the protection of worker rights and resolution of worker issues. The more IT that workers see unions as protecting their rights, the more likely they are to join. A young UNIBEL worker emphasized on the trust relation with the union:

> We knew that we could do it with the help of the labor union. They [the union experts] gave us the feeling that we would decide on issues about us. This is something important for me. (Mehtap)

Union trust was related with the ability of the labor union to act collectively. A labor union is an organization which can act in the interests of workers. Those workers would accept union decisions even if the outcomes were not immediately favorable. As Goslinga and Sverke (2003) mentioned, union trust is based on past and present experiences with the union and union image; and refers to perception that union treats workers fairly.

Another point is that, according to the research, union satisfaction contributes positively to the worker's decision to unionize (Gallagher & Strauss, 1991; Fiorito et al., 1988). It is about contentment with union representation and performance (Barling et.al, 1992). In the UNIBEL

case, there was a group of people, headed by activists who believed and also experienced the uses of labor unions. An activist worker emphasized the role of labor unions for them:

> The labor union led us to act collectively. Moreover, we had the feeling that the labor union is with us. There is an organization which is acting with us and for us. (Tamer)

The UNIBEL workers had already seen the use of the union previously in their collective bargaining agreements. This presence bolstered their trust in the power of the union and their confidence in participating in the union.

For the second group of workers, despite dissatisfaction with the actions of the labor union, individuals still saw the union as the only viable solution to their issues. In the UNIBEL case, they retained the belief, in spite of their doubts regarding representation and performance, that the union was capable of solving their problems.

> I am a member of union, that's also because of my interests. I believe the union will help me to have a regular salary. It didn't start like that, I believe it was really about a reaction against inequalities, but now it has degenerated. (Zeki)

> We don't have any other alternative. We only have labor union, and what else? Nothing. (Mehtap)

As seen, the UNIBEL workers also supported their unions and union membership even if they were not completely satisfied with their union. There existed a lack of confidence that their

expectations will be fulfilled and effectively resolved in an efficient manner via unionization. For these workers, there was a greater degree of individual cost-benefit analysis; having a union was perceived as better than having no other alternative. However, unions were still perceived as organizations that can improve their conditions and provide a level of job security. Individuals therefore have a calculative or utilitarian relationship with unions (Goslinga & Sverke, 2003) based on an assessment of their costs and benefits (Youngblood et.al, 1984; Tetrick et.al. 1992). Understanding unions in Turkey are therefore reduced to mere economic reasons rather than acting as a group for the protection of workers' rights.

Unions as unreliable organizations

The third group of workers asserted their distrust of the union. Distrust of union members manifested itself in how they perceive of and distinguish themselves from the others. While professional values necessitate being responsible and doing work on time, unions are described as organizations protecting people who earn money without doing anything or without working as hard as IT workers. A young UNIBEL worker explained it as follows:

> The labor union protects people who are not doing work, but just lying down. Labor unions should, rather, protect the knowledge and experience. Even if a person loafs around, the labor union protects that person. For example, one person is a member of a labor union and earns, let's say, 10 liras and is not qualified. In Turkey there are many people who want to get that money and work ten times more than that person.(Sarp)

Emphasis was put on working hard in the IT sector, with labor unions presented as protecting the lazy. The underlying belief is that since the IT sector is rapidly changing and based on up-to-date performance, IT workers must adapt to those changes in order to be able to stay in the market.

Unions as irrelevant to IT

Some of the UNIBEL workers also stated their concerns about the instrumentality of labor unions for them and for the IT sector as a whole. Theories of union instrumentality suggest that workers will unionize when they perceive of issues as important for them (Newton & Shore, 1992; Youngblood et.al, 1984). In addition, workers' aspirations for unions will reduce if they begin to identify labor unions as incompatible with their identities (Kelly, 1998; Milton, 2003). Union instrumentality was evaluated by how IT workers defined it, their expectations from the union and the perceived (in) compatibility between themselves and labor unions. IT workers may not believe that unions address issues that concern them; and, even if they do, they may not see unionization as the most effective way to resolve these issues (Milton, 2003). UNIBEL workers emphasized the illiteracy of unions on computer based technological skills. A UNIBEL worker stated that:

> I expect a labor union to have its own webpage, portal or active channels that they communicate with each other. As far as I know, they don't have these. Imagine, we work the entire day behind computers, but the people who will protect our rights live in a different world, nothing to do with computers. Of course, that will not attract my attention to a labor union. For example, if they have a kind of

> portal, then people can join interactively, inform people or get feedback, collect complaints, try to find solutions etc.; they can do those kinds of things. Unions can use those channels. Most [blue-collar] workers don't even have computers. They don't work with computers. Maybe their children know about computers, but they still don't. (Zeki)

The irrelevancy of unions for an IT worker stems from the large disparity between computer skills. Computers are an important part of an IT worker's life, to say the least. Workers spend the majority, if not all, of their day behind computers, leading many to draw deep seeded distinctions between themselves and people like them, and those who have little if any knowledge of computers. The manner in which IT workers resolve their problems and the way labor unions approach issues are not compatible with each other.

> Labor unions do not know about the problems of the IT workers. Labor unions have traditional structures. They don't have solutions for IT specific problems. The needs of IT workers are not projected by unions. (Sarp)

From the perspective of IT workers, unions propose solutions which are not appropriate to the high tech sector. However, this is a double-sided issue. The irrelevancy of labor unions to IT workers should also be considered. In the Turkish context, labor unions ignore white collar workers as well. Illustrated in the Indian cases, it is difficult for labor unions to mobilize those who work in flexible work arrangements (Remesh, 2004). Turkish labor unions did not significantly attempt to organize IT workers, possibly due to the lack of appropriate strategies

necessary to organize them. Union background and union culture in Turkey does not have an inclusive approach to IT workers. The DISK union expert, and the head of the labor union in Izmir, emphasized the same point and explained the situation as:

> Unions basically recruit members from real sector and public sector. Union politics, union discourse, union culture, union consciousness -they all grew up in those places. White collar unionization is a new field for us. We don't know about that yet. Moreover, when you try to approach them with classic methods, you receive negative feedback. Then unionists also ignore them. (Osman)

Labor unions organize workers more in traditional sectors. The IT sector is a new phenomenon and they are not well equipped or informed about IT worker organizing. Since IT is a new sector for labor unions, there is lack of information from the both sides. The organizational ability of traditional trade unionism does not match with the unique requirements of the IT sector.

Unions as standardizer

According to D'Cruz and Noronha (2006), IT workers consider unions as a standardizer in order to shield poor performers, discriminating against good performers. Correspondingly, the findings of this research overlap with Noronha & D'Cruz (2009) that such developments signified a regressive move, deterring IT workers from participating in collectivist action. There is an emphasis on the fact that, for many IT workers, predetermined salaries are undesirable. Younger workers stood out in that sense by focusing on performance, as one young UNIBEL worker stated:

> Labor unions put everyone on the same level as if we are all equal. This is contrary to competition. A hard working worker does not want to be evaluated the same as a lazy worker; or an efficient worker doesn't want to be evaluated on the same level as an inefficient worker. This is the nature of human beings. If you work more, then you expect better conditions. But I do believe that a union can bring people together in some respect, such as working hours, allowances, food, assistance etc. These are universal for everyone. People should know that they can be punished or awarded according to their performance. However, a labor union removes this punishment-reward mechanism. That's my problem with a labor union. (Sarp)

As explained before, the IT sector is individualistic and workers rely more on their own skills than collective production. The esteem with which IT workers see themselves in relation to their skill sets makes it undesirable to be treated the same as those who are seen as having inferior or different skill-sets. In this view, labor unions are considered as antithetical for professional ideology.

Unions as Conflict Generating Organizations

Unions are seen as conflict-generating organizations, more prone to conflict than negotiation (Milton, 2003). Union membership, in such a perspective, would attach a negative image to participation and cause workers to be viewed as trouble makers. Further, there are perceptions that unions particularly advantage those who avoid work and protect poor performers, which in

their view was being unprofessional (Noronha & D'Cruz, 2006). Individuals with this viewpoint have a picture of unions as adversarial or imposing work rules that will limit workers as well as management (Van Jaarsveld, 2004). A young UNIBEL worker stated that:

> Those people who were involved with the communist stuff, they couldn't do anything in life. They try to get more people [to join] them. I cannot talk everyone, but this is what I observed. We need problem solving people, we don't need people who always criticize, who always say: "here there is a problem, here is another". If you see a problem, then you should find a solution for that as well. There is this kind of logic with leftists; okay better to say communists or unionists. They don't appreciate but always ask for more. They ask for their rights, they get their rights, but still ask for more. I never say that there is a problem. I would say this problem might be because of this reason. Shouting on the streets has no use. I see people everyday shouting on the streets. So, what happens? Nothing. If I am right, I would go and find people, explain my problem. (Sarp)

The ways in which IT workers seek solutions is considered incongruous with the ways the methods employed by unions. From the perspective of this young UNIBEL worker, demonstrating or criticizing served no purpose in the resolution of problems. He made the distinction with himself and with unionists, or communists. This stereotyping of unionists as communist or leftist is both common and apparent among many workers and society at large.

Unions as Political Organizations

Unions were associated with political parties instead of protecting workers' rights. Unions were seen as collaborationist and, indeed, counter-productive in the effort for the fight for worker rights. Among UNIBEL workers who supported union action, many also criticized the union's stance with politics and political parties. Two of them stated:

> No union has seriously struggled against a government. They always try to find a way to agree with governments. They appear to protect workers' rights, but this is not the truth. Unions have a bad image in Turkey. If a union leader resigns from his post, and applies to be a deputy, I would say it is abnormal. They have to have distance from politics. (Zeki)

> If unionism is a social service for people, I support it. But I don't want to be with the people who use unions as a step in their political career. (Mehtap)

The main reason seemed to be the political division of labor unions in Turkey. As previously noted, the close relationship between labor unions and politics decreased the belief that unions work in the workers' interest. Rather, unions are perceived as seeking political power or as a career step for future politicians.

Summary

In the UNIBEL case, positive or negative perceptions of labor unions were not translated directly into action. The perception of labor unions did not contribute to strengthening of union identification, even though UNIBEL workers were able to strike. Union trust, union instrumentality and union satisfaction seemed to be very low. There was only a small core group of workers who trusted the union and believed in the power of the union and collective action.

However, despite negative opinions about labor unions in general, many workers participated in collective action and gave support to the union activity. In-group identification with each other was stronger than their identification with the union. This was made possible with the actions of leader figures who maintained a firm belief in union activity. Additionally, union identification provides a stronger background for future action. A legacy of unionism was important for UNIBEL workers to have confidence and perceive of the union as an agency able to bring about solutions to their grievances. The UNIBEL case illustrates that workers can have successful union action even in the face of low unionist self-identification. Therefore, other factors might play more significant roles than union identification in determination of union activity.

Chapter 9

Comparative Analysis of the IBM Turk and UNIBEL Cases with Respect to Collective Action

This chapter is a systematic comparison of all factors which contributed to workers' decisions for or against participation in collective action in the IBM Turk and UNIBEL cases. This study argues that the union actions of IT workers are consequences of complicated interrelations between individual, group level and contextual factors. Comparisons are based on two major sets of relevant factors, namely those related to social identification processes and those related to social and political contexts. First, perception of collective deprivation and injustice is analyzed as the starting point of collective action behavior (9.1). It is followed by examination of the conditions for union action (9.2). Here, the legitimacy of a labor union, the ideological considerations of workers, the role of activist workers, and characteristics of IT work are emphasized. Next, the role of perceived threat (9.3) is analyzed as a factor which influenced and contributed to particular reactions. Self, labor union and union member perceptions are examined with respect to compatibility between the perceived self identity and the prospective union member identity (9.4 and 9.5). Finally, company characteristics are discussed in reference to political context (9.6).

9.1 Perceptions of Collective Injustice and Group Identification

In general, findings revealed that there is strong evidence of the instrumentality of workplace relations for solidarity and collective action. If individuals perceive current status relations as illegitimate and unstable, they will be more likely to engage in collective action (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). However dissatisfaction or work related grievances are not sufficient to become collectivized (Kelly, 1998). Workers must identify themselves with the same perception of injustice. In accordance with Blackwood, the main argument is that identification of workers with each other increases their solidarity and the probability of collective action. Separation between workers will most likely lead workers to take individual rather than collective action. Perception of collective injustice was perhaps the most important reason that created differences between the IBM Turk and UNIBEL cases. In the UNIBEL case, all workers shared the same feeling that their salaries were very low. For the UNIBEL workers, it was apparent that this was unfair and they were decisive to act collectively against the unfair situation. IBM Turk workers, in contrast, looked for individual mobility options in cases of conflict. They took the issue more from a cost and benefit perspective. However, as Klandermans (1993) pointed, worker mobilization does not have to happen due to instrumental calculations of individual self-interest and collective action means more than cost-benefit analysis (Ashforth & Mael, 1989).

In the current study, the results indicated that *mutual defense* in the workplace leads, in all probability, to successful strike activity. Cohesion is a necessary component of solidarity for mutual defense. Without taking the risk of being against management with collective action, cohesion might be disrupted easily and replaced with individualistic forms of behavior. If the

interaction inside the group is strong and identification with the group is high, union participation is more probabilistic, as in UNIBEL case. It has an influence on participation of others even though they did not particularly identify themselves with the values of the group, exemplified by the anti-union workers in the UNIBEL case.

Mutual defense provided the basis for collective action at critical moments. The IBM Turk case faltered when workers could not act in unison against their employer. IBM Turk management utilized a variety of suppression and substitution strategies effectively. The role of dismissals, in particular, heavily affected worker behavior and discouraged them from defending their co-workers. In their analysis of worker behavior, Roscigno and Hodson (2004) showed that abusive practices of managers, or conflicts between manager and workers, would most likely provoke a reactive collective action. This might is true to some extent; however, the findings of this research do not completely corroborate their findings.

The attitudes of IBM Turk workers are more in line with Hirschmann's (1970) exit, voice and loyalty framework. 'Voicing' can be seen as the expression of the whole unionization process. The strongest factor which motivated IBM Turk workers to unionize was the result of cohesive action towards their mutual dissatisfaction with their employer's behavior. Organizational identity, in other words, being an IBM'er created a consensual behavior related with the values of the IBM, but it also produced common feelings and expectations among IBM'ers. Identification with the company, indeed, prepared the background of worker collective action as well. Organizational identification, being an IBM'er, formed the basic component of solidarity. Long histories of personal acquaintance, and the sharing of grievances related with their

workplace, allowed IBM Turk workers to rally and organize. In line with social identity perspective, the organizational identity engendered protective feelings amongst workers and the image of their company. Workers acted in terms of their salient social identity, attempting to defend their IBM'er norms. Workers were able to experience grievances collectively and identified themselves with the feelings of protecting themselves, their colleagues as well as their company with a belief to be successful in collective action. Mutual defense, however, was soon replaced by fear of dismissal and insecurity, mainly on account of management strategies. This can be explained with 'exit' or 'loyalty' due to the high costs of leaving, having trouble with voicing.

According to social identity perspective, people who strongly identify themselves with their group are expected to be in agreement with engaging in collective action (Turner, 1999). If it is low, then a cost-benefit analysis becomes important for workers' decision. Klandermans (1984; 1986) highlights that disillusionment is possible when the intended goal is not reached, particularly when participation in collective action is based on weighing the costs and benefits of participation. As happened in the IBM Turk case, low union identifying workers showed increased support in cases of threat, and distanced themselves from the union in cases of conflict with management. IBM Turk workers acted cohesively only in the case of others acting cohesively as well. Nevertheless, there was a lack of workers willing to take the risk of defending their rights against management without considering others' decisions. Those episodes of collective support were not sufficient to bring workers into a strike action. This might be related to their expectations. The IBM Turk workers were not sure of the number of pro-union

workers, the significance of their own contribution to the probability of success and also the probability of success if other workers participate. However, it is also interesting to observe how those workers, who organized a large number of people and affiliated to a labor union only with their own efforts, can give up the idea and efforts towards unionization after a rather short time period.

9.2 Conditions for Union Action

Union Background: The results of this study also showed that a legacy of collective action does not have any obvious effect on striking, although the absence of this attribute appears to be important, as observed in the IBM Turk case. It is doubtful that strikes will occur where there is no union organization or legacy of collective action. Workers without a strike history may still have collective grievances, such as in the IBM Turk case; but, without any organizational support, resistance strategies may be limited. In these cases, worker reaction would most likely turn into individualist strategies.

Resignation is the most visible reaction and many IBM Turk workers indeed resigned their positions as a result, uncommon for the IBM Turk history. On the other hand, a historical legacy of unionization or shared memories motivates workers to take collective action, as happened in the UNIBEL case. The labor union DISK, to which the UNIBEL workers are affiliated, is closely associated with left wing, militant unionism; a reputation established in the 1960's and renowned for resistance activities. Contrary to the legacy of the collective action model, IBM Turk workers were not successful in holding a strike. A possible explanation for this might be the militancy of

the labor union. As Kelly (1996) suggests, union militancy is significant and they are more likely to arrive at intended outcomes in contrast to moderate unions. As expressed before, IBM Turk workers had already a sort of union which established in 1967 but not operating since 1980. The tradition of having a union had an impact to lead IBM Turk workers to take an action and struggle for unionization. Yet, it was not strong enough to mobilize workers to hold a strike action.

One interesting result is that, compared to IBM Turk workers, UNIBEL workers appropriated the tradition of unionism in their workplace, even if none were involved with the establishment of the union. It would be expected that workers who actively participated in the establishment of the union under difficult situations would most likely defend their struggle. As mentioned in Park et.al. (2006), workers without a history of union background lack the direct experience of unionization and collective bargaining at their current workplace and hence draw inferences from elsewhere. This causes workers to have increased stereotypical perceptions of union members, such as in the IBM Turk case.

Ideological considerations: Drawing on the organizational literature, political affinity, positive perceptions of labor unions and union members are indicators of workers' decision to unionize (Milton, 2003; Newton & Shore, 1992). An important finding is that in-group identification and out-group differentiation are not only results of psychological processes, but also reflect social reality. How workers perceive the world is influenced by their personal thoughts, feelings and experiences (Haslam, 2004). While unions can be *'an institution to protect worker rights'*, or a

'must in the industry', they may also be defined as *'conflict generating'*, *'corrupted'* or *'political interest-seeking'* organizations.

Some of the UNIBEL workers had either sympathies to politically left wing ideas or a political family background. It is thus unsurprising that conflict at the workplace led directly to union action for these individuals. Even if ideological considerations seem like individualist values, one's own strong commitment to a union influences others as well. As Kelly and Breinlinger (1996) suggests, political efficacy and a willingness to participate in collective action might be better understood as an aspect of association and identification with particular groups rather than simply as a personality characteristic. This perspective brings us to the role of activist workers in formation of a cohesive group.

Role of Activist Workers: This study also confirms social mobilization theories, identifying the instrumental role leaders play in mobilizing workers and establishing the conditions of mutual defense against management. In both cases, during the unionization process in IBM Turk and strike process in UNIBEL, activist workers were able to make an influence and convince others to engage in collective action. As highlighted in the organizational psychology literature, the success of collective action is heavily dependent on the actions of leaders or influential people. These individuals are key to promoting group cohesion and identity for the realization of group goals (Subasic et al., 2011; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). The lack or exceptionally limited existence of unions in the IT sector makes the role of leadership even more critical for collective action. The existence of activist workers enabled the unionization process in IBM Turk and the organization of the strike in UNIBEL. A core group of activist workers in IBM Turk and

UNIBEL, representing the ideal values of their group as prototypes, successfully organized the union participation process. The success of these leader figures was due to a dynamically constructed link between the vision of leader figures and the actions of workers based on a shared social identity. By the same token, their absence made collective action almost impossible, as happened in the IBM Turk case during strike voting. The efforts of the leaders brought the collective action to some point in the IBM Turk case. After their dismissal, workers lost motivation and resolve for the union, culminating in its dissolution.

The attitudes of the IBM Turk workers were more ambivalent about the union to begin with. At the start there were sufficient numbers to support the union, yet the number of people and thus hopes for a collective action dwindled. This is because union support was a consequence of instrumental calculations, such as increases in salaries, or the identification of workers more with their co-workers rather than a labor union. Leaders emerged at that time when there was a necessity of mutual defense (Hodson et al., 1993). During the organization process, it was the activist IBM Turk workers who attempted to aggregate workers towards collective action. Following the establishment of the union, it was the union officials who the IBM Turk workers were not familiar with. IBM Turk workers were able to identify themselves with their co-workers; however, later unionists seemed out of place for them as they lacked a political affinity to labor unions.

In the UNIBEL case, the activist workers were more fortunate than their IBM Turk colleagues. Dismissals were absent and they continued to organize events and take actions in order to maintain solidarity among workers. Moreover, there was also a significant relation between

leadership and mutual defense. They encouraged confidence and convinced other workers to act for each other in order to have a collective action.

Interestingly, the absence of a leader at IBM-Turk profoundly affected solidarity dynamics. This is ironic, in fact, considering IT work is considered a sector which is organized laterally and team working is emphasized as characteristics of the new type of work. One might therefore expect less dependency on a leader figure from the IBM Turk workers. That might also lead us to think critically on the function of team work, frequently shown as an example of increasing democracy in the workplace.

Characteristics of Employment: According to Haslam (2004) the nature of the employment influences how willingly workers are to identify with the organization. The influence of atypical employment forms on union decision manifests itself in its temporary and uncertain nature. Some of the issues emerging from this finding relate specifically to job insecurity. It can be argued that job insecurity produces outcomes which might trigger collective action. At the same time, it might also result in competition rather than mutual defense; not to mention cynicism and individualism, rather than collective action. As happened in the IBM Turk case, workers perceived no necessity of union participation if they thought they would leave soon.

Job security, on the other hand, allows workers to develop ties among themselves and leads to a commitment to defending their co-workers. The UNIBEL case is a particularly suitable illustration of job security leading to the development of interpersonal bonds among workers. Job security was seen one of the most important motives for the UNIBEL workers to continue

working there and struggle to make their working conditions better. In Dickson et al.'s study on IBM (1988), job security was especially emphasized that IBM never dismiss its workers. However, in the last 25 years, IBM's policies became increasingly precarious. As mentioned in this study, job turnover increased just after the unionization process had begun.

Besides this, intensive work at IBM Turk reduced workers' time to congregate with co-workers and discuss working conditions, or engage in political activity as mentioned by Milton (2003). Becoming fully absorbed in their work leads workers not to notice what is going on around them. Within primarily work centered conversations, co-workers do not develop necessarily interpersonal relationships that could support collective action or compare their situation and coalesce around issues (Milton, 2003; Remesh, 2010). Routine working hours are eliminated, workers are forced into shifts and work time is extended hourly and into weekends (Noronha, 2006). Workers work for long hours intensely to complete projects before their deadlines. Again, the UNIBEL workers highlighted the importance of working in regular working hours as their motivation to continue in UNIBEL.

9.3 Role of Perceived Threat on Group Identification

Labor unions in Turkey are not institutionally well protected and union busting strategies lead to a decline in union influence by either de-unionizing organized enterprises or by making it difficult for unions to organize workers of unorganized workplaces. As Bugra et.al (2005) and Yildirim (2009) noted, fear of dismissal was the most important reason for workers to avoid joining a labor union. Union avoidance strategies created an important difference of the

perception of the social situation between UNIBEL and IBM Turk workers. The IBM Turk case confirmed that the more employer strategies applied in a workplace, the less chance the workers to unionize. The IBM Turk case provides specific examples of various kinds of suppressive and substitutive employer strategies with regards to union hostility. In contrast, the only employer strategy observed in the UNIBEL case was the introduction of personal contracts to reduce the potential of some members pursuing union membership and recognition, which is called out-of-scope.

IBM workers have already unionized in several developed European countries, Japan and Canada. However, the IBM Turk management showed consistent anti-union attitude against its workers and used loopholes in labor laws which are not possible in the developed countries. The main reason seems that unionization of IBM workers in Turkey would impinge on the profitability of IBM companies in other countries and possibly spur a domino effect of unionization. Therefore IBM Turk management circumvented a solution, instead choosing to close this issue as soon as possible. The intensive use of suppressive strategies by the IBM Turk management created an atmosphere of fear and decreased the workers' enthusiasm. Dismissal and dismissal threats seemed to be the most effective way of union busting strategy. Dismissals, in particular, constituted a double-edged sword. First, dismissals motivated other workers to organize against management practices. Second, subsequent dismissals de-motivated workers by spreading the fear of unemployment. The motivating effect of dismissals was, eventually, replaced by fear of dismissal during the entire unionization process.

In accordance with the social identity perspective the weak identifiers are more prone to act according to individual interests when there is perceived threat (Veenstra & Haslam, 2000). Since identification with labor union was low among IBM Turk workers, the perceived threat caused workers distancing themselves from the group and instead seeking individual alternatives rather than a collective option. Union organizing and union participation lost its power after the dismissal of activist workers. In addition, weak compliance with labor laws encouraged the IBM Turk management and caused despair among workers. Apart from the dismissals and dismissal threats, IBM Turk management successfully created a negative psychological atmosphere by making unions appear as unnecessary to workers. UNIBEL workers enjoyed relatively comfortable workplace conditions and did not seriously suffer from employer strategies.

9.4 The Role of Self Perceptions with Regard to IT Work

Derived from the social identity literature, the distinctiveness of the group values increase the likelihood to identify with an in-group (Turner, 1986). Distinctiveness differentiates the group from others and provides a unique identity (Ashfordt & Mael, 1989). It can thus be argued that the IBM Turk workers had more distinctive group values (professionalism) than the UNIBEL workers. An elite working environment, high incomes, prestige of working in a global company, or job definitions led IBM Turk workers to have a more distinctive professional identity than the UNIBEL workers. It was evident that workers who have strong professional identity were less supportive of union action.

It was, indeed, *the notion of professionalism* which made IBM Turk workers to think that they are not workers, but professionals. Speaking about unionization was like speaking a foreign language. IBM Turk workers hardly appear to have an imagination of themselves as union members. Instead, professional superiority is emphasized strongly by the workers. Self categorizations of IBM Turk workers were due to how they see themselves in a particular social context. As shared social identity or valued group membership becomes salient, individual self-perception tends to become depersonalized (Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Ashfordth & Mael, 1989). By this way, IBM Turk workers stress more on the prototypical representations of themselves and their colleagues as *'young', 'able to cope with stress', 'dynamic', 'mobile', 'well educated', 'able to speak foreign languages', 'self-controlled', 'self-motivated', 'self confident'*, etc.

As Ashfordt and Mael (1989) found, perceived organizational prestige was related to organizational identification. Organizational esteem indicates an individual's positive feelings about their company. Working in a multi-national, global, well-known company, such as IBM Turk, also had an important effect on workers' perception about unionization. It increases identification with work or to the company and renders feelings of being special. The IBM Turk case showed clearly the importance of fit between worker's perceptions of social context. Apart from a number of non-unionized workers in UNIBEL, the workers did not stereotype the out-group like the IBM Turk workers did. Even if they accepted that they were different than other workers, it was very important that they still saw themselves as a 'worker', rather than 'executive' or 'professional'. Even only the awareness of being a 'worker' had a profound impact on their identification to the labor union. Therefore, they were able to see unions and

union members as extension of their identities and as organizations where they would fit in and be able to sustain these identities.

In parallel with cases of unionization in Indian ITES/BPO sector (Noronha & D'Cruz, 2006; 2009; Remesh, 2004; 2010), an impressive range of professional titles have been used to send the message that IBM Turk workers are different than blue collar workers. The 'programmer is instead the 'program manager', 'supervisor' as 'production executive' and 'worker' became 'knowledge technologist', and so forth.

The results of the study also indicate the role of *income* played in self-perceptions. Unionism in Turkey is mostly perceived in economic terms and a labor union's function is or must be generally about increasing the wages for workers. Therefore income level was seen as the most important determinant for the workers to identify with or differentiate themselves from labor unionism. Since IT workers, in general, have higher incomes than average workers, unionization could hardly become an issue of discussion. With high levels of income, the instrumental basis for union membership may be eroded (D'Art &Turner, 2008; Robinson & McIlwee, 1989). The biggest difference between IBM Turk and UNIBEL workers lies there. In both cases, salary issues were the basic problem between the workers and the management. For the IBM Turk case, having no salary increases for the last five years was the triggering factor of everything in IBM Turk. Despite the lack of salary increases, their salaries were still above the average income level for IT workers in Turkey. High income level brings a higher standard of living. Maintaining this life-style necessitates acting professionally in the market rather than joining a union. Moreover,

unions create a leveling effect on incomes, so that unions may even prevent them from earning more, since unions do not arrange incomes on individual performances.

On the other hand, UNIBEL workers earn even lower salaries than other municipality workers. It is not so difficult, therefore, to suppose that the UNIBEL workers, who earn comparatively much less in the IT sector, would need the labor union more than IBM Turk workers. The low income levels of UNIBEL workers, force them to behave relatively the same as any other worker. They were aware of themselves that their work necessitates special knowledge and skills; but, due to their low salaries, this was insufficient to detach themselves from being a "worker". It was easier for them to identify themselves with the labor union rather than management. Another point is that UNIBEL workers knew about their salaries. In IBM Turk, it is perceived as an individual matter which should be kept personal, such that every worker is treated individually with their skills at work. The more aspects are individualized, the more professional this type of work appears to those involved. Promoting individualized situations has, however, lead to greater isolation and lower likelihood of establishing broader social networks of information and support (Remesh, 2004).

Credentialism was another aspect contributing to the distinctiveness of group values. High levels of education play a central part in increasing prestige and construction of professional identity, particularly relevant for those in this sector. It can be argued that IBM Turk and UNIBEL workers show great differences according to their level of education. According to fieldwork data, the differences in the levels of education have impacts on the decision of workers regarding collective action. Higher education is associated with low levels of courage, lack of protest or

spontaneous activity, or being critical. Many IT workers stated clearly that they would not like to be in the same category with less educated people. They prefer to segregate themselves from unionists owing to lower levels of relative education and a belief that they can, therefore, never represent or protect the rights of IT workers. Since the IT sector depends on brain power, credentials are the basic capital of a person who wants to have a career progress in the IT market. Education is seen to provide skills and knowledge that makes workers more productive, more attractive to employers and thereby more employable (Adams & Demaiter, 2008).

Since IT work is project based and requires workers to update their knowledge continuously, workers face pressure to learn and incorporate up-to-the-minute skills. Therefore, the level of education and credentials is extremely valuable for IT workers. This consequently leaves them prone to differentiate themselves from other workers. High levels of education and/or multilingualism helps them distinguish themselves from unionists. Few of the UNIBEL workers had degrees in computer engineering, whereas almost everyone has credentials in computer sciences at IBM Turk, except for some senior workers. Moreover, well educated workers prefer to decide their own terms instead of attaching their problems to an organization.

Individualism was also emphasized as a characteristic of professionalism and an obstacle to unionization (Noronha & D'Cruz, 2009). This carries a link with high education as well. IT workers choose to reconstitute themselves as self-managing and self motivated workers (D'Cruz & Noronha, 2006). Individual abilities and qualifications are important in terms of professional

development and career progress. It is clear that emphasizing the importance of performance will discourage workers to support the labor unions. In another case, IBM Turk workers judge the unionists with what they have done in their lives. There is an emphasis on the performance of workers and their performance defines their position in the market. A unionist's performance is considered to be very low compared to them.

Seniority was related to individualistic behavior in the IBM case. Interestingly, seniority appeared to be a clear cut determinant to describe the worker profiles that are 'for the union' and 'against the union'. Young workers were described as *'unaware of labor union'*, *'doesn't know the IBM culture'*, *'only thinking of earning money and prestige'*, *'doesn't feel any belonging'*, etc. On the other hand, senior workers described themselves as *'worked under a specific work culture'*, *'conscious about labor union'*, *'thinking of working permanently'*, *'has good level of communication among each other'* etc. As Blackwood (2007) put, individuals who had a long association with a workplace are likely to be confident in their union-related attitudes. Since long years IBM promoted working for longer term. It is almost impossible to find people working at the same company for more than 10-15 years in Turkish IT sector. Working longer years together impacted group socialization positively and acted as an aspect of union participation. However, the paradigmatic changes in the general understanding of work especially after 2007 led to short term employment and promote mobility; therefore workers have no time to develop a sense of belonging or loyalty to work or workplace. Moreover, the cost of searching for new employment is considerably higher for senior workers than for their younger counterparts.

Unsurprisingly, those who supported union action were mostly senior workers Therefore, unionization was perceived to be an alternative to protect their positions.

Those with more limited experiences are likely to be less certain about their attitudes. As happened in the IBM Turk case, younger workers regularly preferred to distance themselves from the group and behaved according to individual considerations. Thus, workers with less experience at the workplace have more things to prove there. They have things to prove at the company and are more concerned with their own situation and future at the company (Ashfordt & Mael, 1989). Thus, low identifiers (i.e. young IBM'ers) desired individual mobility more than strong identifiers.

Career is another critical aspect of professionalism. Career progression, and not collective protection, is seen as a central tenant of being professional in this significantly youthful workforce. Career trajectories or the chances of alternative employment opportunities have impacts on the unionization decisions of workers (Johnson & Jarley, 2004). In line with the social identity perspective, higher chances for a career in the future lead to lower propensity for union behavior. Moreover, the absence of alternatives gave UNIBEL workers a motive to choose the collective 'voice' option. Reason for the perception of striking as a matter of obstinacy might also be found in the lack of other attractive alternatives. In comparison with IBM Turk, UNIBEL was a, municipal company which did not provide significant career opportunities. Therefore they relied on their union more to maintain their status, social securities and benefits.

In addition to that, people who have less things or nothing to lose would act more courageous than those who have more to lose. In the cases presented, IBM Turk workers had more to lose in case of dismissal or strike activity. Therefore, a cost-benefit analysis for the IBM Turk workers would lead to non-participation, as unionization increases the risk factor 'to lose things' for them. Only those who achieve company targets will be rewarded with career promotion and progress (Evetts, 2003). Joining a union would almost certainly bring dismissal, an obvious negative event for those newly in their career tracks. An attractive CV in this sector should include a varied work experience of different companies, as opposed to a history of working in one company for longer years. IT workers, quite logically, attempt to increase their career chances by working for short durations in several companies. The question of unionization becomes automatically inappropriate for the ones who are mobile with little to no expectations of long-term work contracts (stop-gap engagement) in a company (Remesh, 2004; van Jaarsveld, 2004). In the case of work related grievances, quitting is considered to be a better option (Noronha & D'cruz, 2006). Therefore IBM Turk workers were more hesitant and anxious about doing something against the company's interest, while UNIBEL workers went on strike because they had little to lose.

9.5 The Role of Union and Union Member Perceptions on Collective Action

Via union attitudes, the legitimacy of the union and the perceived instrumentality of union membership are revealed. Consequently, these attitudes affect the decision of workers to participate in unions.

In general, expectations and perceptions of both UNIBEL and IBM Turk workers about labor unions and union members tended to be relatively low. Discussing unionization was akin to speaking a foreign language, as one interviewee stated earlier. Workers scarcely appear to have a conception of themselves as union members and appear to view unions as addressing irrelevant issues in ways that are hostile to their identities. Drawing on the organizational literature, positive perceptions of labor unions and union members are indicators of workers' decision to unionize (Milton, 2003; Newton & Shore, 1992).

In these two cases, however, it is observed that low levels of union instrumentality have implications for low levels of union satisfaction. Union trust is also relatively low as IT workers judge labor unions to be used for political aims and inadequate to resolve their specific issues. In addition, labor unions are associated with sub-standard professional self-image and conduct. They are described as irrelevant or unnecessary to them, more appropriate for industrial employment, and shields for poor performance in contrast to the merit system. It should be noted, however, that levels of satisfaction, instrumentality and trust differ slightly with UNIBEL workers. As Youngblood et.al (1984) argued, it is likely that those who stand to gain the most from union representation would be most supportive of the union. The reasons of the successful unionization of UNIBEL workers might are therefore not necessarily readily apparent with union and union member perceptions. It must be explained in conjunction with other dimensions of unionization rather than labor union and union member perceptions. Income levels were an important aspect of how individuals found commonalities between other workers.

Union member perceptions of UNIBEL and IBM Turk workers were also considered significant according to the aims of the research. As Turner (1999) emphasized focusing on comparisons between perceived similarities and differences, self-categorization provides a basis of how we perceive others (i.e. if individuals like or dislike, agree or disagree, cooperate or clash). While IBM-Turk workers unionized, the union participation process was strictly internal to IBM-Turk. Yet, after being unionized, union officers were also involved in the process. This was an important effect to render stereotyping about labor unions and union members. This indicates the significance of fit and explains how the collective action process changes with respect to individuals' normative beliefs about the group (Oakes et.al, 1994).

In deciding whether or not to become a union member, workers consider their ability to sustain their identities, commonalities with union members, and/or their affinity towards affiliation with members. It was difficult, however, for IBM-Turk workers to see themselves as union members. Interviewees saw union members as inflexible, interested in preserving the status quo, opposed to change, and as unable to cope with the turbulence of technology-based companies. A unionist is defined as *'someone who works in the factory, in manufacturing or heavy industry'*, *'bureaucratic'*, *'dogmatic', 'dinosaur', 'hairy', 'less educated', 'trickster', 'representative of certain political beliefs'* or *'old-minded'*. These beliefs were counterpoised to their perceptions about their own characteristics. Unionists are seen as representatives of particular political ideals, deflating worker motivation to unionize. Interviewees indicated that individuals who cannot cope with change and turbulence are not suited to the 'new' economy or technology professions. This process of categorization has often been considered in close association with prejudice and ill-

treatment. All in all, being a union member was seen as a clear rejection of professional values, loss of reputation and the elite status for the IBM Turk workers. This stands in stark contrast to UNIBEL workers, who were able to identify themselves as union members employed in the same sector.

Even if the IBM Turk workers had mostly negative beliefs about unions and union members, they were able to engage in union participation. The main reason, indeed, was not identification of themselves with union or union members, but rather due to the internal and organic organization process by IBM Turk workers, without external influences. Recruitment was greater when conducted by fellow workers compared to recruitment by union officers. Self-stereotyping rendered feelings of action in collaboration with others. The end of the unionization process was significantly related facing with labor union and union member during collective bargaining and strike processes.

9.6 Company Characteristics and Political Context

In this part, the characteristics of UNIBEL and IBM Turk are evaluated with respect to their relation with union collective action. First of all, IBM Turk is a well-known global and prestigious company. An omnipotent image of the company is reproduced so that each worker can see IBM Turk is able to handle or overcome any difficulty. UNIBEL, on the other hand, is a municipal company. Changes in UNIBEL would probably not influence workers in other companies. The relatively small size of UNIBEL appeared to be important for the development of social relations. It was especially crucial for the activist workers to be able to have face to face

communication with other workers. In the IBM Turk case, workers used alternative channels including internet forums, mail lists, and other technology based modes of communication without the same impact.

UNIBEL workers were more secure about their job and felt less unemployment due to their employment in a public company. Job security and the relatively comfortable situation of unionism were perceived as central reasons in the preference for public sector work. While discussing securities, UNIBEL workers stressed having their salaries on time. Even receiving salaries on time can be seen as an advantage of working in the public sector.

The employer's attitude toward unionization is another aspect elucidating the differences between public and private sector employment. In general, Turkish labor unions function in an ideologically hostile environment. However, private sector unionism is confronted with more difficulties compared to unionization in the public sector. Hostility is often shown in the charges of corruption against union leaders in order to erode the social legitimacy of unions (Adaman et al., 2009). Unionized workers are represented as a happy minority in the media who have the same job but earn more than their colleagues.

With reference to the social identity framework, a union supportive environment renders stronger attachment to unions as a basis for self-categorization (Blackwood, 2007). Union organizing is easier in municipal companies compared to other companies in the sector. Municipal companies have a pre-existing tradition of unionization, or at least tolerance towards unionization without regard to government. Their flexibility enables them the opportunity to choose consensus with

workers. However, unionization and strike activity are something extraordinary for private companies. Unionization in the private sector faces a greater degree of employer hostility in Turkey. In the IT sector, it is even more difficult. There are many structural problems in the IT sector, such as low payment of insurances, low wages, fewer salary increases, more working hours, no overtime payment, cancellation of annual leaves, and so forth. These are even the basic minimum standards of labor laws and are not implemented. So, the first task of a union in an IT company which is privately owned is to enable the implementation of those basic minimum standards before IT workers ask for more rights and securities. Even this would be considered as a big gain for a union. However, employers would take it as a big loss in their profits. Union organization must be secret; workers have to have strong solidarity and a high level organization in order to overcome the difficulties sourced from labor laws. That means a large degree of patience and belief in unionization. Then workers can sign a collective bargaining agreement.

One of the most important differences between public and private companies is the capital and profit relation. The public sector is not based on profit making, but rather providing a public service. UNIBEL is performing a public service, which is different than the profit maximization mentality of a private company. A public company can make a financial loss, but it would cause greater problems and losses to a private company in that case. The attitudes of bureaucrats or governors are not the same as private company employers. A public company has a budget and resources. As such, their reactions are different than private company employers.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

This study explores individual, group level and social contextual dynamics which led to different outcomes of collective action in the two Turkish IT cases. Based on fieldwork conducted in the two companies, the research findings hold a number of inferences about the possibilities of collective action in the Turkish IT sector. Overall, identity considerations and social contextual factors significantly led to negative perceptions of collective action and decreased the likelihood that IT workers would participate in union action. Returning to the research questions posed at the beginning of this study, it is now possible to state that IT workers are likely to unionize only when *being* and *acting* as a union member is compatible with their identity, and when they are able to maintain their reputation and fit with the social environment of unionism. In addition, even though collective deprivation may result in union action, union identification, the interpretation of threat, and political context play the most crucial roles in strike decisions.

On the whole, this study contributes to the analysis of sector specific interest representation in a late industrialized country. The Turkish IT sector was a late to develop, relative to many of its European counterparts. It was only towards the end of 1990s that the Turkish state enacted laws for the promotion of technological innovation policies. In addition, each year more graduates of computer and IT related fields join the IT workforce. Thus, today, Turkey shows a continuous growth rate of around 10 percent in the IT sector, making up the major driving force behind

economic change. Moreover, Turkey has significant growth potential on account of its relatively young and qualified workforce.

However, while the IT sector is widely encouraged and esteemed, problems related with working conditions and the social rights of workers are largely ignored in the name of growth. The relatively weak stance of labor unions against the state and employer organizations has contributed to worsening of working conditions for workers. Despite amendments, enacted under the military regime, the existing labor legislation regime still has some distance to travel to meet the demands of workers and international standards. The latest changes in the Turkish labor law, in October 2012, appeared to provide broader rights to workers and the removal of obstacles impeding the freedom of unionization; however this appears to be no more than a paper tiger. In reality, weak compliance with labor laws by employers constitutes a significant hindering factor. Dismissals and obstruction of union activities are still one of the basic factors which lead workers not to unionize. Compounding this issue is the non-existence of a specific IT labor union for IT workers. This lack of space to coalesce and come together significantly decreases the chances of IT unionization. The evidence from this study suggests that a specific IT union would notably contribute to the unionization of IT workers. First, from an identity perspective, IT workers prefer to see union officers as educated as themselves in order to identify themselves with the officers. Second, according to the labor laws, IT workers are included in Service Branch 10: covering commerce, office, education and fine arts. However, IT workers are dispersed around other service branches such as Service Branch 9 (banking, insurance and finance) and

Service Branch19 (defense and security industries). That entails that the categorization of service branches in the current legislation does not allow IT workers unify under a specific IT branch.

This study also highlights and reaffirms the necessity of analysis of the socio-psychological factors associated with collective action in order to evolve from individualistic approaches. Rather than considering individual, group level or social-contextual factors all alone, this study attempted to reconcile all those factors to provide a wider understanding of IT workers' attitudes and decisions about collective action. Convergence of all above counted factors is admitted as key for understanding the whole process of collective action decisions. As emphasized throughout the study, IT workers have more distinctive professional identities which construct their social identity. Therefore it necessitates a broader perspective to understand and analyze how the IT workers' attitudes are shaped, how group identity plays a role in identification processes and how the contextual factors influence union decisions. Reconciliation of all factors added a specific value on the use of social identity perspective as a theoretical framework.

In general, the research findings revealed that there is strong evidence of a relation between role of beliefs, social identification and collective action. Consistent with the limited prior studies (Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Kelly & Breinlinger, 1996; Klandermans, 2002; Veenstra & Haslam, 2000; Blackwood, 2007), the present findings demonstrate the significant effect of worker's identification with a social group (either identifying with labor union or elite professional) on their decision to unionize or not to unionize. Workers, who strongly identified themselves with the labor union, were more prone to act collectively than those who did not identify themselves with the labor union. Workers, who did not identify themselves with the in-group (labor union),

chose to behave according to individual concerns by considering the cost-benefit analysis of their own situation. Furthermore, professional identity became more salient and they acted in accordance with professional values, excluding labor unions and memberships with them. Taken together, the results of this study indicate that professional identity considerations reveal little space for the necessity of labor unions. It is because there is less congruence between the goals of labor unions and those of IT workers.

As mentioned above, identity considerations appeared to be the most crucial aspect. However, the research findings also indicate the importance of social and political contextual factors in both cases. Collective action was made possible even though union identification was not very strong. Company characteristics and specific political contexts, therefore, formed the most significant effect on workers' engagement in collective action in this situation. Turkey specific factors especially revealed in the differences between organizing in public or private sector, the symbiotic relationship between political parties and labor unions and the employer pressure sourced from the weak compliance of employers to the existing labor laws.

The research has thrown up some points in need of further investigation with respect to its limitations. First of all, this study is a primary attempt to explore IT unionization in Turkish context. The study covers empirical evidence from only two unique examples of IT unionization in Turkey. Prospective IT unionization cases in different social contexts will provide more information and certainly enrich the aspects of collective action. It should be noted that collective action is neither stable nor fixed. Rather, it is structured by interactive and interchanging processes, including socio-psychological realities. Therefore, it is imperative to

understand how these beliefs and behaviors are shaped, reflected and reproduced, as well as why they may change depending on social context. For example, the current study has examined only IT unionization with a multi-national large scale company and a relatively small scale, local company. However, the IT industry is overwhelmingly characterized by small scale, start-up firms. The exploration of unionization in those start-up companies would open-up new aspects which are either unmentioned or weakly emphasized in this study.

In addition, extension of IT unionization cases internationally, with respect to differences in public/private ownership, small/large size or multinational/local scale will no doubt contribute to existing literature. Comparative, cross-country cases will also have a significant value in understanding the role of social-contextual factors between countries. Another issue not addressed in this study is the perspective of management or employer organizations on collective action. Their perspective would also provide a different and valuable insight to the issue. The lack of this data in the present study is due a desire of non-cooperation from the concerned management sources, rather than lack of pursuit by the investigator. A further limitation concerns the existence of relevant research, sources, and implications of social identity perspective on the IT sector. Social identity perspective has rarely been incorporated into collective action; therefore no research has been found which directly links the social identity perspective with IT unionization.

A primary motivation of this study has been the gap in the research dedicated to the critical evaluation of the relationship between collective action and worker attitudes in the specific Turkish IT context. The present study shows that the decision to unionize should be considered

as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon which emerges from specific conditions and histories. The findings indicate that the impact of workers' beliefs and group behavior remain a decidedly complex issue. The issue of understanding collective action is an intriguing one, meriting further exploration in the industrial relations discipline. This research has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of the 'cultures of worker solidarity' in its attempt to explore the unionization dynamics in the Turkish IT sector. What questions remain to be answered will undoubtedly give future researchers room for exploration and investigation.

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Appendix 1. Amended Notes on Interviews and Respondents

Interview	Code Name	Profession	Notes
Expert	-	Unionist, collective bargaining and organization expert at DISK.	He was heading the strike in July in UNIBEL. I had interview with him in his office in Ankara. I gained information about unionization in Turkish context in general, unionization of white collar workers and difficulties of unionization. As workers explained me later, his efforts on organizing workers helped them a lot to trust each other and able to have collective action.
Expert	-	Professor at Ankara University, specialized in IT technologies	She is one of the leading academic figures in Turkey working on high technology and unionization issues. She published a book on the role of technology use in labor unions in 2010. I had interview in her office in Ankara. I had the chance to have theoretical discussions on unionization as well.
Expert	-	Economy professor, union expert, consultant	He is teaching part-time at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara. He has been working in and for labor unions for a long time. He was involved into the unionization activities of IBM workers in 1970's. He published recently two volumes of a book on the history of KESK (Confederation of Public Servant Unions). Our interview was mainly about Labor laws, union policies, union function
Expert	Osman	Leader of DISK Izmir Branch	I interviewed him during the UNIBEL strike in front of the strike area. I gained information specifically about the story of unionization in UNIBEL and problems of unionization in Turkey
Expert	Sema	Leader of IT branch in Tez-Koop-Is union	I interviewed her at the union office in Istanbul. She provided me information about the process from the union perspective.

In-depth	Mehmet	Union representative in IBM-Turk	After the dismissal of the activist workers, he became the union representative. I gathered detailed info specifically on IBM voting process, management strategies, restructurings and relations with the union.
In-depth	Ayse	Former IBM worker and union reprsentative, unionist in Tez-Koop-Is,	She is my gatekeepr in IBM. She was dismissed after 20 years of working at IBM due to her unionization activities. Currently she is working for the labor union. She was the leader of BIL-IS labor union for eight years. She provided very valuable information and helped me to find people to interview.
In-depth	Aziz	Former IBM Assistant Manager, dismissed	He was dismissed after working 22 years in IBM. He was the second top person in IBM. He provided valuable information about the history of IBM Turk and IBM'er identity. After the interview, he also sent me his diaries which he kept for the judicial process.
In-depth	Selim	Former IBM worker and union representative	He is one of the leading figures of unionization case in IBM. He was dismissed after working 17 years. After his dismissal, he continued working on IT unionization, organized meetings, gave speeches, published newspaper and journal articles, established the Association for ICT Workers
In-depth	Orhan	Former IBM, current HP worker, journal columnist	He is also one of the dismissed workers when unionization discussions started in IBM. He was dismissed after working 17 years. He writes articles about labor relations in a left-leaning newspaper and doing his Ph.D.
In-depth	Sefa	IBM Turk worker, current leader of the union BIL-IS in IBM	He is working in IBM for more than 15 years. Currently, he is the leader of BIL-IS labor union. He prefers to have a union only for IBM workers.

In-depth	Berke	IBM Turk worker	A young IBM worker, he is working in IBM since two years. I gained information on unionization from a young worker perspective.
In-depth	Alp	IBM Turk worker	He is an intern, currently working in IBM.
In-depth	Wesley	IBM Turk worker	He is a foreigner IT worker working in IBM. He provided comparative information about IT sector between Turkey and the Netherlands. Moreover, he had an outsider look to Turkish labor relations.
In-depth	Nilgün	IBM Turk worker	She has been working in IBM around 15 years. She supported union participation, but she was not willing to strike. She continues her job even though she is not satisfied.
In-depth	Hasan	Former IBM worker, currently working in IBM Global Services (IGS).	He was very willing to talk and touched many topics even before asking him. He was one of the transferred IBM workers to the newly established IGS. I had the chance to learn the new IBM policies via IGS.
In-depth	Beyhan	Former Union representative in UNIBEL	He is my gatekeeper in UNIBEL. I interviewed him twice. He was very helpful and helped me to find other people to talk.
In-depth	Mustafa	Union representative in UNIBEL	I had detailed information about the strike process and how they managed to have collective action.
In-depth	Tamer	UNIBEL worker	He is one of the activist UNIBEL workers. He helped the union representative to organize union activity in IBM.
In-depth	Sarp	UNIBEL worker (young worker, computer engineer)	He is young and one of the non-unionized UNIBEL workers. He had different ideas than other UNIBEL workers in general.
In-depth	Zeki	UNIBEL worker	He is a member of union. He has degree on computer sciences. He did not want to be on one side of unionization discussions.
In-depth	Mehtap	UNIBEL worker	She does not have degree on informatics or computer. She worked in other companies and was unionized before. She was also active in a left wing political organization.

In-depth	Serpil	IT worker, activist in IT Workers' Solidarity Network (BICDA)	She actively works in an IT worker association. She gave me information about other white collar unionization cases and difficulties of union organization in Turkey.
Focus-group	-	IBM Workers	I interviewed four IBM workers during a lunch break. Two of them were for the union, the other two did not support union.
Focus-group	-	UNIBEL workers	I interviewed four UNIBEL workers at the strike area.

Appendix 2. Interview Guideline

1. In-Depth Interview Guideline

Union and Union Member Perception

What does a labor union mean for you/an IT worker? How would you define a labor union?

What kind of a union would you rather like to join? Would you prefer participating to a union only composed of IT workers?

Do you think a union can make a difference/resolve your problems in your working conditions or career?

What are your expectations from your union? What did you find? To what extent was it helpful to you?

Can you describe me a typical union member? How does s/he look like?

What are the distinctive aspects of being an IT worker? How do you see yourself compared to workers in other sectors?

How do you feel about being a member of your union like many other workers from different sectors? Do you feel any closeness or sociability with other workers?

Conditions for Union Action

Role of activists

How do you see the influence of activists on your mobilization, strike and collective bargaining agreements? In which respects was the union helpful to you? (to UNIBEL workers only)

How was the situation of unionism in IBM when Nedim, Can, Elvan and Bilgehan were leading the struggle? How was their effect on other workers and on the management? What changed after their dismissal/leave? (to IBM workers only)

Demographic Characteristics

How important is your salary for you to be a union member? If you are satisfied with your salary, would you still fight for the union?

Do you think educational background has any impact on your decision to unionize/not to unionize?

Do you think you have different opinions about unionization depending on your age?

What does it mean to be an *IBM'er* now? What was it before? Which factors did play a role to the change of *IBM'er* identity? *(to IBM'ers only)*

How does/does not *IBM'er* identity fit with unionization? *(to IBM'ers only)*

How do you feel about the changes? Is there anything you dis/like? *(to IBM'ers only)*

Union background

Did your union help you to have collective action? Would it be different, if you did not have a union?

Self Perceptions

How do you define yourself?

Can you identify yourself with other unionists?

Do you mind to be a union member? Do you think it will affect your reputation?

Role of Perceived Threat

How was general the attitude of management to workers during collective bargaining process? Were there any differences in relations with management before and after the unionization process?

Were dismissals, threats or other kinds of repressions influential about your decision to unionize/not to unionize?

In which ways were the workers convinced in order not to unionize? What kinds of offers did you/your co-workers have from the management?

What types of feelings did dismissals create among other workers?

In-group Norms

How does unionization have an effect on you about reaching your career purposes or opportunities?

What are the opportunities that your company/IT work provides to you for your future prospect?

If you are not satisfied with your working conditions, what might be the motives to continue at your work?

What are the things that you venture even if you don't have fair working conditions?

Job Characteristics

Could you describe your typical regular work setting at home/in the office/with the client? How does it affect your relations with your colleagues?

Does your workplace provide an atmosphere of social interaction?

In your opinion, what is the relationship, if any, between mobility and the decision to join a union?

If you think that you are not going to work for a long time in your workplace, would you unionize?

Do you think working intensively has an effect on your ideas about unionization?

Do you have time to participate to other union related activities apart from your working time?

Think of a typical workday, how far do you interact with your fellow workers? How far do you work on your own?

Do you think that autonomy or its lack has an impact on your decision to become a union member?

How important is your work contract for being a union member?

Do you think union can provide a better employment contract for the workers?

Company Characteristics

How does it differ between working in a public or private company about union action?

Do you think working in a municipality ruled by PRP made an impact in your unionization process? (to UNIBEL workers only)

Do you think working in a global company brings advantages or disadvantages for you to unionize? (to IBM workers only)

Were you able to have a good level of communication with all others? Would it be better to be in a smaller company?

2. Expert Interview Guideline

2.a Expert Interviews with Union Representatives & Union Experts

Structure of IT Work:

Do you think the existence of non-standard working time arrangements influence organization of workers?

How often do the workers change their jobs in IT?

How many people left IBM after the unionization process has begun? What were their reasons to leave?

Do you think having a professional work environment is related with non-unionization?

What kind of communication mechanisms do the labor unions use? How successful are unions to use them and mobilize workers?

Perceived Impacts of Demographic Characteristics of IT Workers

Could you give me detailed information about the average level of education, income and age of union members?

Why are young people preferred for IT jobs?

IT Unionization

What are the main differences between organizing in IT sector and other sectors?

What are your main problems in organizing IT workers? What are the specialties of IT sector/IT workers?

Do you think unions need different strategies to organize IT workers? Why? What might be the alternatives?

Perceived Employer Strategies:

Could you tell me the attitude of management to the union and union members during collective bargaining process? What kinds of strategies were implemented by the management?

Were there any differences in relations with management before and after the unionization process?

How did the human resources react to the mobilization of workers?

Company profile:

Do you think is there any connection with being a member of DISK and working with CHP ruled municipality? (to UNIBEL representative only)

Were you in touch/solidarity with other unionized IBM workers in other countries? Was it helpful to you? (to IBM representative only)

In your opinion is there a relation between Unibel as a public owned municipality company and unionization? (to UNIBEL representative only)

In your opinion is there a relation between IBM Turk as a private multinational company and unionization? (to IBM representative only)

2.b Expert Interviews with Academicians

What is the relation between social, political and economic context of Turkey with unionization in IT sector?

How do you assess the specific characteristics and the recent developments of Turkish IT sector with respect to unionization?

What is the government's perspective to unions/IT companies?

Inhowfar do the Turkish labor laws constitute as a hindering factor to unionization?

Could you explain me the working conditions of IT companies/employment situation of IT workers?

Considering that IT workers use the latest technologies, how effective might be the application of new technologies in unionization?

Appendix 3. Coding Sample

Core category: PARTICIPATION TO UNION ACTIVITY

Main category 1. Beliefs about Inter-group relationship

1.1 Beliefs about labor union

1.1.1 Unions are unreliable

1.1.1.1 unions seeking political interest

1.1.1.1.1 collaborationist

1.1.1.1.2 representatives of left-wing ideologies

1.1.1.2 unions generating conflicts

1.1.1.2.1 trouble makers

1.1.1.2.2 don't agree with finding consensus

1.1.2 Unions are irrelevant to IT

1.1.2.1 unions for factories

1.1.2.1.1 union for low wage work

1.1.2.1.2 union for blue collar workers

1.1.2.2 unions are strange and alien

1.1.2.2.1 unions not existing in IT

1.1.2.2.2 unaware of its function

1.1.2.2.3 prefer to negotiate by own

1.1.2.3 unions are standardizer

1.1.2.3.1 against performance based-system

1.1.2.3.2 protecting less capable

1.1.2.3.3 protecting lazy

1.2 Beliefs about union members

1.2.1 not professional

1.2.1.1 dependent on others

1.2.1.2 does not have self-confidence

1.2.1.2 working but not managing

1.2.2 less educated

1.2.2.1 does not have a university degree

1.2.2.2 does not understand from computers

1.2.2.3 cannot speak foreign language

1.2.3 have low social status

1.2.3.1 demonstrators

1.2.3.2 fighting against police

Main category 2. Conditions for Union Action

Main category 3. Role of Perceived Threat at Workplace Context

Main category 4. In-group Norms

Main category 5. Political Context