

**Space of Production;**  
**Local and Global Effects on the Industrial Coordination in the MENA Region**

**Objectives of the Project**

With the increasing importance of informal activities in the global economy, non-factory forms of industrial labor have become a structural element of contemporary industrial relations. The factory system is no longer the major form, since the global economy gives rise to a *multiplication of the forms of industrial labor*. While this phenomenon in the high-income countries appears as ‘de-industrialization’, the role of the emerging non-factory forms of industrial labor for national and regional industrial coordination in developing regions is a matter of debate: is this an opportunity for *or* obstacle to the implementation of successful industrial strategies by developing regions?

Especially in the context of the non-oil producing Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries, we are deprived of a coherent framework in order to utilize the multiplication process as an opportunity for aggressive national and regional development policies. This project aims to contribute to the formulation of such a policy agenda through the investigation of industrial dynamics in the context of Bağcılar; one of the largest industrial and residential districts of Istanbul, Turkey.

The ethnographic analysis will compare the work practices pertaining to factory system, home-based work, and sweatshop system through the participant observations and in-depth interviews in textile sector. This analysis will be embedded in the overall investigation of the integrated employment strategies of households of Bağcılar. Accordingly, examination of the urban transformation of Bağcılar will analytically link the employment strategies of worker households with characteristics of target forms of labor. This empirical research about the local causes of the multiplication process will be

used for a cross-country analysis for the formulation of industrial policies successfully coordinating the unconventional forms of labor in oil-poor MENA countries.

Oil-poor MENA countries increasingly rely on the export-oriented manufacturing (Shafik 1998). This signifies a new role for informal industrial activities. In this new environment, women have become an integral part of industrial production (Tzannatos and Kaur 2003, World Bank 1998). Accordingly, members of the same household need to pursue coordinated strategies of employment (e.g. Singerman and Hoadfar 1996, Bugra and Keyder 2004). Similarly, as the subcontracting is a central dynamic of industrial production, agglomeration effects become strategic in urban areas. Within the last three decades, rural-urban migration urbanized the MENA region (Bonine 1997). Hence, the urban context itself is an effect over industrial relations. However, micro-studies on human capital, industrial dynamics, and urban transformation in MENA region are scarce (ERFACIT 1998, Salehi-Isfahani 2001). In this regard, this project has two objectives.

First, I will decipher the impact of local conditions on the industrial dynamics. To this end, the comparative investigation of three forms of industrial labor will take place in the same industrial district. Bağcılar is one of the major centers of garment production in Istanbul: this peripheral residential and industrial district has been a migrant-receiving and highly populated city quarter housing various industries. The method for sweatshop labor and factory system will be participant observation. Home-based work will be analyzed through in-depth interviews.

Second, I will synthesize my observations in Bağcılar with a macro-analysis on the industrial transformation of oil-poor MENA countries: similarities across these countries in regard to the labor force assign this study generalizability in terms of policy

suggestions about integrated national and regional industrial strategies. This comparative macro-analysis will investigate the sustainability of current state of industrial relations in the oil-poor MENA countries from a political economic perspective.

In other words, the empirical study on the interactions among different forms of industrial labor in Bağcılar will provide the basis of policy suggestions about the restructuring of relations between workers, employers, and the state. The literature theorizing the causes for the multiplication of forms of industrial labor points to the need for further studies investigating the local conditions of this phenomenon.

### **Theoretical Framework: Understanding the Role of the non-Factory Forms of Industrial Labor in the Global Economy**

In general, non-factory forms of industrial labor are more prevalent now than anytime in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (ILO 2002). This is a paradoxical situation for conventional organization theories of the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as Alfred Chandler's 'Visible Hand' (1977) or Harry Braverman's 'Labor Process Theory' (1974). Contrary to their predictions, the prevalence of non-factory forms of industrial labor reveals a new phenomenon in the history of industrial capitalism: concentration of capital can be realized without its centralization (Harrison 1994, Lash and Urry 1994). Thus, the multiplication process signifies a structural transformation of world economy: industrial capital needs to utilize the hitherto excluded segments of population and regions.

Accordingly, different forms of industrial labor have reemerged and increased their share in overall industrial production especially in low- and middle-income countries (Balakrishnan and Sayeed 2004). These new forms of industrial labor signify differential modes of labor control. For instance, control for sweatshop labor is established through close supervision of workers through patriarchal domination (Hsiung 1996). Or home-

based work is organized along with street networks establishing the surveillance over women (Balaban-1 2007). Each form of labor signifies differential organizational principles and unique relations with the urban space. Identification of these characteristics helps to decipher the contemporary conditions of industrial coordination.

Transformation in global capital markets (Sassen 2005), abolishment of trade barriers (Landau 2005), labor market segmentation (Saint-Paul 1996), and technological change (Castells and Hall 1994) are among some widely acknowledged factors leading to the multiplication of the forms of industrial labor. In this vein, other theories specifically focus on the emergence of new management perspectives (Nanette 2004) such as ‘lean production’ (Womack, Jones, and Roos 1990). Also, sub-contracting is regarded as a strategy, which boosts the multiplication process (Applebaum and Batt 1994). In these debates, the role of global commodity chains (Gereffi and Korzeniewicz 1994) became a central subject, since organizational diversity is theorized as the outcome of the replacement of hierarchical firms by production networks (Castells 1996).

These strands clarify some of the global dynamics yielding the multiplication process. However, they do not let us the impact of global commodity chains on local conditions of labor processes. On the other hand, other approaches clarify some methodological premises for this project and direct the research agenda:

i) The debates on the role of networks and hierarchies in industrial relations (Williamson 1975) reveal the need for new data on the bounded rationalities of the relevant actors such as firm managers, network organizers, and workers.

ii) While global dynamics account for macro-level phenomena, they do not explain the variety in labor processes among and within different localities (McKay 2006).

iii) Thus, “the embeddedness of economic behavior” appears as a central aspect of new organizational structures (Granovetter 1985). In fact, conditions of ‘the local’ shape the characteristics of the multiplication process. The analysis of urban space generates the data of the impact of these local conditions on labor processes pertaining to different forms of industrial labor and on their interactions.

However, studies on workplace dynamics generally do not investigate different forms of industrial labor in a comparative manner<sup>1</sup>. Nor do they particularly theorize the effect of urban transformation on different forms of industrial labor<sup>2</sup>: labor process of each form of industrial labor is transformed in relation with other forms. For instance, organizational characteristics of the factory system cannot be conceptualized without analyzing the sweatshop labor. Thus, the analysis of a particular form of industrial labor necessitates the investigation of other related forms.

Similarly, in the context of non-oil producing MENA countries, studies linking the local conditions with the labor process are relatively scarce. Overemphasis on conjunctural conditions such as oil prices (Shafik 1998), skill distribution (Karshenas 2001), or ineffective governance (Assad 2002) deflects our attention from the micro-level effects on the labor process. The de-emphasis on the actual industrial practices signifies a major obstacle to policy formulation. These explanations do not account for the industrial transformation of the oil-poor MENA countries (Yousef 2004): case studies in the region either investigate individual forms of industrial labor or analyze the informal sector

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<sup>1</sup> For emblematic studies for contemporary factory system, see Friedman 1977; Burawoy 1985; Sturdy, Knights, and Willmott 1992; Shehata 2000.

<sup>2</sup> For studies analyzing non-factory forms of industrial labor in historical perspective, see Jones 1971, Bythell 1978, Scranton 1984. For studies regarding non-factory forms of industrial labor for the contemporary period, Beneria and Roldan 1987, Lui 1994, Lee 1998, Salzinger 2003, Ngai 2005. Although these studies abstain from the handicaps of ‘factory studies’, they usually de-emphasize the impact of the urban space on the labor process. Accordingly, they fail to theorize the extra-workplace effects on the workplace/network dynamics.

without examining their respective labor processes<sup>3</sup>. The effects of changes in local conditions on modes of labor control should be investigated for policy suggestions.

### **Gap in the Literature: Lack of Micro-Level Analysis for the MENA Region**

In fact, recent social change reveals the need for micro-level analyses in the region: high growth rate of population, low average level of education, and limited role of women in formal economy are among some factors leading to this change (Salehi-Isfahani 2001). MENA region has the highest unemployment rates in the world and the pauperized population mostly lives in cities. This impoverished urban population boosts alternative work practices and deepens product diversification in exports (ERFACIT 1998). However, in comparison to other developing regions, the market share of the MENA region in manufacturing did not keep pace with the growth in world trade (Iqbal 2001, Olivia 2001). Four factors appear as central to this ‘relative failure’ of the region.

First, as a result of the slow restructuring of the national industrial strategies, structural adjustment programs (SAPs) increased the fragility of the industrial environment (Tuma 2000, Pfeifer 2000): despite the emergence of a lively entrepreneurial class capable of using the local networks (Kavoossi 2000), their industrial operations are mostly informal and cannot be coordinated through a national or regional

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<sup>3</sup> For Egypt, Posusney (1997) and Shehata (2000) investigate the factory system, while they primarily focus on state enterprises. Ecevit (1991), Cam (1999), and Nichols and Sugur (2004) investigate the factory system in Turkey, yet the interactions of this form of labor with sweatshop system and home-based work remain obscure. Loza (1992), Stauth (1992), and Elyachar (2005) examine the informal economy in the Egypt, though they do not link their discussion with the modes of labor control associated with informality. MacLeod (1996) in Egypt, Cinar (1994) in Turkey, Khuri-Tubbeh (1995) in Jordan, and Moghadam (1998) in the overall MENA region analyze the home-based work, while the systemic role of this form of industrial labor in national industrial production is not thoroughly analyzed. These anecdotal examples demonstrate the need for prospective studies in different oil-poor MENA countries comparing different forms of industrial labor in terms of labor control and industrial coordination.

industrial strategy (ERFACIT 1998). The macro-level data does not generate the knowledge of the recent developments in this ‘hidden economy’.

Second, rapid urbanization creates its own problems in terms of industrial organization: the MENA region is experiencing an ‘urbanization crisis’. Urban growth rates in most cases exceed the national population growth rates. Except for Yemen, Oman, and Sudan, as of now, the MENA region is now an urbanized part of the world (Bonine 1997). The primary outcome of this ‘urbanization crisis’ is the increase in urban poverty (Berberoglu 2000). This urban ‘surplus population’ is ready to work for lower wages and depreciated working conditions. Thus, non-conventional forms of industrial labor such as home-based work and sweatshop labor prevail. However, it is not clear to what extent and under which circumstances this segment of urban population is actively incorporated into industrial dynamics through informal forms of industrial labor.

Third, textiles represent the fastest growing industrial sector and the largest group of exports (Carkoglu, Eder and Kirisci 1998). Possibly it also employs the biggest segment of the recently urbanized sectors of the population. However, oil-poor countries in the MENA region are not agile players in this competitive sector. They should convert the difficulties deriving from the local conditions into elements of competitive advantage. Non-conventional forms of industrial labor play a significant role in the industrial organizations of textile production. Thus, this project will focus on the textile sector.

Fourth, the low participation of women differentiates this region from the rest of the world: in the MENA region, the participation of women is by far the lowest in the world. We do not know the exact contribution of women to the growth of export-based manufacturing sector. It is obvious that liberal economic reforms materialized in SAPs

assign women both a relatively central and/but also degraded role in industrial life. Similarly, export-oriented economy does not generate income inequality between genders (Pfeifer and Posusney 2002). Official statistics do not yield a realistic picture of the role of women in industrial relations: although export-oriented policies especially in Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey boost the informal employment of women through sweatshop labor and home-based work, the extent of female non-regular employment is especially in the textile sector unclear (Moghadam 1995). The role of women in the growth of export-oriented manufacturing should be analyzed closely, since their hidden role is significant. Thus, the analysis of home-based work will constitute the backbone of the project with the investigation of factory system and sweatshop labor.

The question is at what level these factors can be transformed into potentialities for an aggressive industrial policy for the development of the region. Apparently, current opportunities are not utilized and this accounts for the ‘relative failure’ of the region in pursuing an integrated industrial policy. With these motivations, different labor processes pertaining to the textile sector in Istanbul, Turkey, will be investigated.

### **Industrial Transformation in the MENA Region: the case of Istanbul**

As an ‘early reformer’, Turkish state has been striving to enhance the role of private enterprises in export-oriented manufacturing (OECD 2006). Similarly, as in other oil-poor MENA countries, the female participation has been increasing (Moghadam 2003) and the leading manufacturing sector is textile (Chapin Metz 1996). Besides, Turkey suffers from ‘the urbanization crisis’. Turkish urbanization is mostly realized in its primate city Istanbul. Thus, industrial districts of Istanbul represent the industrial transformation of this country.

Given that neo-liberal policies are in effect in most oil-poor MENA countries, the intended micro-study provides generalizable insights about the characteristics of different forms of labor in the MENA region. The major motivation is to understand the effect of the local conditions on these labor processes. Thus, the urban transformation will be the focus framing the observations in different workplaces. I will describe urban transformation along the lines of changes in social topography and changes in physical topography of urban space. Istanbul experienced a serious transformation in this regard.

### **1) Changes in Social Topography**

Successive waves of migration transforming the human geography of cities have differential impacts on the urban economy (Bayat 1997, Davis 2006). Current trends in internal migration ease the utilization of non-factory forms of industrial labor. Three major changes in the conditions of internal migration contributed to a massive transformation of the social topography of Istanbul in general and Bağcılar in particular:

i) Change in the characteristics of pull factors: simultaneously with many other MENA countries, export-led growth (ELG) policies replaced import-substituting industrialization (ISI) during the 1980s in Turkey. Accordingly, industrial activities in Istanbul were increasingly connected to global commodity chains. This transformation contributed to the dispersal of industrial activities from the city center to peripheral city quarters (Keyder 1987) and to the reduction of real wages (Boratav 2005). Thus, migrants of ISI and ELG periods experienced different pull factors.

ii) Origin point of migration: since 1975, urban-to-urban migration in Turkey has become more important than rural-to-urban migration (Icduygu and Sirkeci 1999). As in

many other MENA countries, modes of participation of urban-to-urban migrants in the labor market are different from modes of participation of rural-to-urban migrants.

iii) Change in the characteristics of the push factors: with the 1990s, internally displaced Kurds from South Eastern Anatolia constituted an important segment of internal migrants (Erdem, Ozevin, and Ozselcuk 2003). Similarly, the changing structure of agricultural subsidies in the same decade worsened the living conditions of agricultural workers and pushed them to the cities (Koymen 1999).

To recapitulate, agricultural workers pushed from rural areas, urban-to-urban migrants, and internally displaced Kurds mostly account for the recent migration to Bağcılar. They and earlier migrants have conflicting interests thanks to the differentials in their skills and assets relevant in the job market. Chain migration does not necessarily have a positive effect on the experience of recent migrants. Thus, Bağcılar's current human geography is more heterogeneous than the ISI period. This causes different tensions among workers and between workers and management.

## **2) Changes in Physical Topography**

Thanks to the recent transformation of the global economy, the distinction between industrial and residential areas in contemporary cities is no longer easy to describe (Soja 2000, Dear 2002). Neither can certain neighborhoods in contemporary cities be associated with rigidly defined 'tasks' in the urban economy. In the case of Istanbul, two respective changes in urban space contributed to such a transformation of the physical topography. This transformation turned Bağcılar into an industrial and residential district having its own economic dynamics, which cannot be understood from without:

i) Conversion of squatter settlements into apartment buildings: with the 1980s, the state increased its efforts to eradicate squatter settlements in Istanbul, while it also allowed dwellers of former squatter settlements gradually to convert their squatters to multi-story apartment buildings (Keyder 1999). Favorable conditions for migration to Istanbul such as chain migration provided early migrants with some saving capacity to convert their squatters to multi-story buildings. This tremendous transformation in the urban plan generated two socioeconomic groups in industrial districts: early migrants as home owners and recent migrants as their tenants (Balaban-2 forthcoming 2007).

ii) Increasing population density: in the absence of centralized urban planning, these multi-story buildings were built adjacently and gave rise to an enormous density of population. As in Cairo (Elyachar 2005) and Tehran (Bayat 1997), population density turns neighborhood dynamics into a constituent of industrial relations: home-based work can be organized through neighborhood networks and streets operate as ‘workplaces’ for home-based work. Similarly, ground floors of the apartment buildings house sweatshops. Male workers work as jobbers for their factories and help their wives organize other homemaker women on their streets. Social spaces such as coffee houses fulfill the role of ‘waiting rooms’ for male sweatshop workers, whenever their sweatshop waits idly for a new order. This urban plan enmeshes the industrial and residential places. Hence, the current urban plan of Bağcılar eases the multiplication process.

### **Research Questions: the Role of Local Conditions in Industrial Coordination**

With the aim to understand this transformation, this project focuses on two questions:

i) To understand how differences in migration patterns funnel different migrant categories into different forms of industrial labor and into different positions in the same

labor process. To describe how different outcomes of migration patterns in terms of home ownership, differentials in skill attainment, and chances in the job market differentiate positions of workers in different labor processes.

ii) To understand and compare how the physical location of factories and sweatshops and the spatial organization of home-based work networks affect their labor processes. To describe and compare how the urban plan affects the control of labor in different labor processes.

### **Hypothesis: Urban Transformation and Industrial Coordination**

In accordance with these questions, the hypothesis of this project will be composed of three interrelated arguments.

i) Different conditions of migration funnel individuals to different forms of industrial labor. The larger the differentials in the conditions of migration are in a given population, the stronger is the tendency to the multiplication of forms of industrial labor.

ii) The higher the density of population and the smaller the spatial proximity between industrial facilities/organizations and residences are, the stronger is the tendency to the multiplication of forms of industrial labor.

iii) The stronger the tendency to the multiplication of forms of industrial labor in the same locality is, the more significant is the role of local conditions of urban space in the control in labor processes and the less significant is the role of intra-workplace/organization mechanisms of control.

### **Structure of the Empirical Research: the Setting**

If the observations are made in the same city quarter, it is possible to see how similar dynamics of urban economy apply for different actors in relation to different forms of

labor. With this particular concern and as a result of my past research experience, I chose Bağcılar as the site for the dissertation. Istanbul is one of the largest industrial centers of the MENA region. Bağcılar is its fourth largest and second poorest city quarter (Ozbay 1999): it is 22 square kilometers in size and has a population of 850,000.

As a research assistant for two projects, I could make extensive observations in central and peripheral city-quarters of Istanbul in 2002 and 2003. The research in 2002 was funded by International Research and Exchange Board (IREX) in central neighborhoods in Istanbul. It focused on the shuttle trade between Turkey and Russia (Chaudhry forthcoming 2007). The UNDP-funded research project on urban poverty in 2003 enabled me to compare among six peripheral city-quarters of Istanbul in terms of their suitability for my dissertation project (Bugra and Keyder 2004). For this research, I conducted in-depth interviews with homeworkers in different industrial districts including Bağcılar. In the summer of 2006, I pursued my project funded by Social Policy Forum (SPF) specifically on home-based work in three city-quarters (Balaban-1 forthcoming 2007). Bağcılar was the only common site for both research projects in 2003 and 2006 and is apparently the most suitable setting for a comparative research of different forms of labor in Istanbul. There are three factors that led to this decision.

First, Bağcılar houses industrial establishments and organizations utilizing three forms of industrial labor subject to the current inquiry. These establishments and organizations employ the inhabitants of Bağcılar, given the fact that poverty is rampant here. Second, it has also been a migrant-receiving region for both ISI and ELG periods. Third, as a result of population density and an urban plan dominated by adjacent apartment buildings, the residential and industrial places are spatially enmeshed in this

overpopulated city quarter. Thus, interactions among factory system, home-based work, and sweatshop labor can be observed with less distortion.

I am in contact with some sweatshop owners and managers of factories, some of whom have already promised to let me do the participant observations at their facilities. I plan to choose a sweatshop and a factory in textile sector. My former observations about home-based work in 2003 and 2006 were also made in this sector. Participant observations and in-depth interviews will reveal workplace experiences of workers and help me decipher the impact of social topography on labor processes. In regard to the physical topography, the impact of population density on recruitment practices and the impact of the spatial proximity between residential and occupational places on the workplace dynamics will be investigated. In particular, conditions drawing the fuzzy line between ‘neighborhood’ and ‘workplace’ will be analyzed.

### **Structure of the Empirical Research: Level and Unit of Analysis**

The comparative analysis of different forms of industrial labor should be located within an analysis of local conditions and, hence, the investigation of urban transformation. There are two reasons for this: first, urban transformation links the global and local effects on labor process. As global capital flows provide an organizational frame for industrial relations, local living conditions of workers also determine the level of sustainability of those relations. This interaction takes place at the level of urban society. The rapid urbanization in the MENA region brings about a high density of population in cities. This enhances the role of agglomeration effects in industrial relations (Piore and Sabel 1984, Berberoglu 2000). Thus, the level of analysis will be the industrial and residential district.

Second, local conditions of social relations in industrial districts determine the characteristics of agglomeration effects binding different forms of industrial labor. In fact, a comparative analysis among different work organizations focusing on the occupational strategies of workers is necessary to understand the conditions of interactions among different organizations of work. A strategic assumption is that members of worker households determine their individual strategies in collaboration with other members. In the MENA context, it is reasonable to argue that household appears as a unit of production and reproduction (Salehi-Isfahani 2001). Thus, the unit of analysis will be the worker household.

#### **Structure of the Empirical Research: Phases of the Fieldwork, Methods of Data Collection, and Plans for Write-Up**

In this regard, empirical research will be composed of three interrelated parts between August 2007 and August 2008. First, workplace experiences of individual workers will be analyzed through participant observations and in-depth interviews. Participant observation and in-depth interviews for each form of industrial labor will reveal the impact of industrial urban dynamics on the conjunctural characteristics of each respective labor process. For home-based work, in-depth interviews will be the major means of data collection. Most of the homeworkers are women and I will possibly experience a ‘gender-gap’. Therefore, I will also use data collected with my female colleagues in 2003 and 2006 on the organization of home-based work<sup>4</sup>. Dynamics regarding factory system and sweatshop labor will be investigated with participant observation. Each participant observation will last four months. I will spend one month for in-depth interviews about the organization of home-based work to finalize my research on this form of labor. I will

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<sup>4</sup> The data generated in these research projects are analyzed in the following publications: Bugra and Keyder 2004 and Balaban-1 forthcoming 2007.

also conduct semi-structured interviews with factory managers, sweatshop owners, and home-based work jobbers at the target workplaces/home-based work networks in order to reveal their mentality in regard to the labor control and recruitment processes.

Second, this data will be supplemented with the investigation of the household strategies of employment. Throughout the research, I will rent an apartment in Bağcılar and interview with my neighbors to receive insight about oral history of Bağcılar. Within the first nine months of the research, in-depth interviews and focus groups will be conducted with my workmates and their families. This exercise will reveal the history of their rural-to-urban migration and occupational mobility. Analyzing both actual work dynamics and coordinated occupational strategies of worker households, this multidimensional research strategy will focus on the impact of the occupational strategies of worker households on the interactions among different forms of industrial labor.

Third, in order to understand the industrial and residential history of the target district, semi-structured interviews with local state authorities, with representatives of occupational associations such as transportation cooperatives and shopkeeper organizations, and with representatives of grassroots political organizations will be conducted. Complementing these interviews, official records regarding real estate development and industrial transformation will be investigated. I will use the official land and population records in order to generate mass data about migration patterns and urban development. Industrial and residential trends of the district in historical context will be investigated within the last three months.

For my observations at the factory and sweatshop, I will rely on my diary. Since I will live in the same neighborhood, the time gap between my observations and their recording

as data will be substantially reduced. I will record the conversations of focus groups with a tape recorder. For in-depth interviews, whenever the interviewee feels comfortable, I will use the tape recorder, while I will simultaneously take extensive notes on the content of interview and my visual observations.

I plan to collect the official records and library materials within the last three months of the fieldwork. Thus, I will start to write the dissertation right after the research. The writing process will be oriented not only to sum up the fieldwork findings, but also, as the second phase of the project, to use this data for a macro-analysis comparing between different oil-poor MENA countries in terms of the policy suggestions about an integrated regional strategy for industrial development in the global world economy. I will finish the final draft by August 2009. I am in contact with *TAREM* (Turkey) and *Rosa Luxemburg Foundation* (Germany) for the publication of the material in the book format.

### **Generalizability of Observations and Falsifiability of the Hypothesis**

The generic handicap of any ethnographic inquiry is the inability to know how generalizable our observations are. However, on the one hand, since the very aim of this research project is to understand the combined effect of global capital flows and local conditions of labor on the labor process, this problem does not devalue the project: a comprehensive presentation of the particularities of the target district will reveal an operational framework to be elaborated in different settings of other oil-poor MENA countries. On the other hand, I chose this particular setting as a result of research experience of the last five years in Istanbul. Thus, I am confident to argue that Bağcılar is a representative setting for this research. In fact, as the complexity of social networks

here is in itself a conundrum for the observer, it also increases the representativeness of Bağcılar and alleviates the inevitable problem of generalizability.

The research process will be composed of such multiple methods of data generation as semi-structured interviews, in-depth interviews, focus groups, the formal and content analysis of official records, and participant observations. This multidimensional approach will provide me with a well-grounded insight regarding the concreteness of the hypothesis. Similarly, I will observe same individuals in different social positions such as workmates, family members, or residents of Bağcılar through these multiple observation techniques. Furthermore, as a part of participant observation, I will take part of the daily social activities of my workmates and my neighbors. Thus, I will be able to identify the gap between discourses and actual practices. In fact, the methodic multidimensionality of the project and the extent of my observations will enable me to judge the strength of the hypothesis and provide falsifiability for the research design<sup>5</sup>.

### **Methodological Toolbox: Complexities calling for a Methodological Synthesis**

Revealing the complexity of social networks in this chaotic environment lies in the ability to be an “insider researcher”: as Zavella (1996) argues, “the insider research” provides certain advantages for the social scientist such as having acquaintance with the nuances of language use and gaining easier access to the target community. My past research experiences in Bağcılar convinced me that I will be able to gain the status of “insider researcher” as a former resident of a similar neighborhood of Istanbul. Renting an apartment and accessing the family lives as a resident of the neighborhood will be a strategy that I use to gain further familiarity about home-based work dynamics.

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<sup>5</sup> See Siber (1973) for a comparative analysis of research methods: diversification of research methods provides falsifiability more successfully than reliance on an individual method.

Being aware of the ethical problems of ethnography in general and participant observation in particular (Kaplan 1964, Jackson 1983) and following Barnes's suggestions (1977), I will reveal my identity to the informants and provide them with the knowledge of the content of this research. I will also inform the informants of focus groups and participant observations about the content of my conclusions and ask for their approval at the end of the research. I believe this strategy will alleviate the ethical and moral questions, though it is impossible to eliminate them completely.

As an insider researcher, my methodological perspective can be regarded as in between grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967) and extended case method (Burawoy 1991). This project aims to read the global production relations through the microcosm of an industrial and residential district. Thus, the extended case method provides the opportunity of acting as 'a global ethnographer': to situate the global effects impacting the multiplication process in the local context is the major theoretical challenge.

However, my knowledge of the setting also provides me with a sober insight of how intertwined the production life and the social life in Bağcılar are. Furthermore, the scarcity of studies regarding this *problematique* in the MENA context leaves me with the task of theory generation. Different embedded networks of politics, employment, and housing function separately but interactively. Understanding this dynamic environment means trying again and again through disciplined induction in order to elaborate the initial hypothesis and, accordingly, in order to generate a grounded theory.

Thus, although these two approaches seem diametrically opposed, I will try to reach a synthesis: on the one hand, as 'a ground theorist', I will explore the world of the local by moving forward step by step through continuous modifications in the initial hypothesis

with new observations. On the other hand, as ‘a global ethnographer’, I will catch the nodes, where this world of the local is linked to the global, and keep the theoretical integrity through the extension of theory.

**Public Policy Implications:  
Understanding ‘the Local’ for the Industrial Development of MENA Region**

Observations comparing different forms of industrial labor, which employ different age, gender, and ethnic groups, will reveal the practical suggestions for a successful industrial coordination in order to improve the capacity utilization and to provide equity among different segments of workers. The complexity in contemporary industrial dynamics in non-oil producing MENA countries derives from the increasing embeddedness of the organizational structures of industrial production in the local urban context. Thus, the failure of the conventional national growth policies in our region can be compensated only through a solid understanding of those local conditions. This research partially fills in this gap with an empirical research in a residential and industrial district of Istanbul. The observations will be used to evaluate the mass data regarding oil-poor MENA countries. This evaluation synthesizing this research and the literature on MENA region will yield policy suggestions regarding the restructuring of the industrial relations in our region.

The active incorporation of non-factory forms of industrial labor has been a common strategy for late-industrializing countries such as Taiwan (Hsiung 1996) or Spain (Benton 1990). Their planned utilization appears as one of the key factors for the adaptation of our region to the global economy. Thus, this project, besides generating empirical data, will intend to initiate a debate on hitherto unidentified options for economic development of our region.

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