REFRAMING FREELANCING FOR DIFFERENCE:

TOWARDS A POST-FANTASMATIC POLITICS OF CLASS AND WORK

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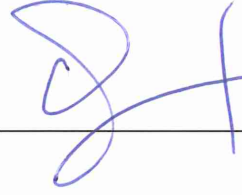
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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Özlem İlyas, certify that

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- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;

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ABSTRACT

Reframing Freelancing for Difference:

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This thesis studies freelancing as a distinct form of employment and provides a critical account of the reigning neoliberal discourses on freelancing, as well as of the working and living experiences of freelancers in order to rethink class politics under conditions of precarity. Freelancing condition is argued to be an overdetermined result of various processes, including neoliberal restructuring of the labor markets, neoliberal discourses on economic subjectivity, and the desires of freelancers to articulate and negotiate the variety of problems that they encounter in their workplaces and establish alternative ways of working and living. In the entrepreneurial neoliberal discourse, freelancing is imagined to involve having a sovereign existence in having control over one's working conditions, not bound by the constrains of time and place. The thesis also analyses the psychic impact of this discourse of sovereignty on freelancers, pointing to its political implications. Then, an analysis of freelancing experience is provided in relation to the debates on class and work. The study aims at not only contributing to a critical discussion of the neoliberal discourses on freelancing, but also opening up space for rethinking class politics under conditions of insecurity and flexibility. The final chapter gives an account of such an attempt by looking at the experiences of self-organizing freelancers in a common space called *Dünyada Mekân* (A Place in the World) and a network of solidarity called *Ofissizler* (The Officeless) in Istanbul.

ÖZET

Freelance Çalışmayı Fark için Yeniden Çerçevelemek:

Post-fantazmatik bir İş ve Sınıf Siyasetine Doğru

Bu çalışmada freelance (serbest) çalışma biçiminin kendine özgü koşulları ele alınmakta; egemen neoliberal söylemlerin eleştirel bir analizinin yanı sıra, freelance çalışma ve yaşama deneyimlerine dair aktarımlar da sunulmaktadır. Böylelikle güvencesizlik koşullarında sınıf siyasetinin yeniden düşünülmesi hedeflenmektedir. Freelance çalışma; emek piyasalarının yeniden yapılandırılması, ekonomik öznelliğe dair neoliberal söylemler ve freelance çalışanların işyerlerindeki çeşitli sorunları reddedip alternatif çalışma ve yaşama biçimleri deneyimleme arzularının da dahil olduğu çeşitli süreçlerin fazla belirlenmiş bir sonucu olarak ele alınır. Neoliberal girişimcilik söylemi, freelance çalışanı girişimci öznelliğin beden bulmuş hali, freelance çalışmayı da özgürlüğe giden bir yol olarak temsil eder. Freelance çalışmanın getirdiği özgürlüğün, kişinin zaman ve mekândan bağımsız, çalışma koşullarına hakim olduğu egemen bir varoluşu içerdiği tahayyül edilir. Tezde bu egemenlik söyleminin freelance çalışanlar üzerindeki psişik etkileri ve siyasal öznellik açısında sonuçları da analiz edilmektedir. Freelance çalışanların deneyimleri ise, sınıf ve iş üzerine yürütülen tartışmalarla ilişkili olarak ele alınır. Freelance çalışma hakkındaki neoliberal söylemlerin eleştirel analizine katkıda bulunmanın yanı sıra, güvencesizlik ve esneklik koşullarında sınıf siyasetini yeniden düşünmenin yolunu açmayı amaçlamaktadır. Son bölümde ise bu yönde bir çabaya örnek olarak, freelance çalışanların İstanbul'da *Dünyada Mekân* adlı bir müşterek mekânda ve *Ofissizler* adlı bir dayanışma ağında kurdukları öz örgütlenme deneyimleri incelenmiştir.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The variety of critical debates addressing the changes in the organization of labor in capitalist production processes designate a subject of social or class struggle, trying to determine the potential of those working under precarious and/or flexible conditions to change the conditions of their existence. There seems to be two main critical literatures engaged in this debate. One of them is focused on the quality of labor, which is argued to have gained prominence under post-industrialist relations of production. It argues that immaterial properties of labor such as cognitive and affective skills have become the predominant producers of value (Hardt and Negri, 2009). The immateriality of labor is argued to enable its self-organization, opening up the possibility of its freedom from the domination of capital. On the other hand, the other literature trying to understand the changes in the organization of labor seems to focus on the changes in the conditions of its existence, attending to its precarization and flexibilization and the changes in the way it is managed (Standig, 2011). When considered together, these accounts help us a great deal to question and look into the changes in the conditions of labor. However, the representations of labor in these accounts seem to declare it as either having gained the freedom to organize itself or as the slave of capital as the driver of precarization. These two representations may be found together as the opposite facades of the process of flexibilization as well (Standing, 2014).

What I would like to question in this thesis is the implications of such representations and the concomitant thinking of politics in historicist terms. Both

accounts seem to look for the emergence of a subject of history- the multitude, the precariat, the flexible- as the result of some self-explanatory processes (such as "neoliberalism" or "post-industrialism" etc.) and inquire into the political potential of this subject. So, they are interestingly both subjectivist and determinist accounts as to the relation between history and politics. These representations have two primary consequences. First, they shift the perspective from the overdetermined, contingent and conflictual social processes and relations existent in the social space to the question of the will of the subject. Then, the investment in the potential of this subject of history leads us to expect them to act in a particular way and if they do not do so, we end up disillusioned and confused as to the reasons why.[1] That brings us to the second consequence of thinking politics in voluntarist and historicist terms; we fail to understand the constitution of subjectivities, their investments in and disruption of the existing discourses and practices.

In relation to the current conditions of flexibilization, besides the critical discourses which try to determine whether freedom or slavery is the fate of the precarious, we have neoliberal discourses promising freedom in entrepreneurship and self-sufficiency. Everyone is posited to be an entrepreneur of oneself and is advised to see the variety of social relations they are implicated in as opportunities for gaining social and economic capital. In return for their entrepreneurial efforts, subjects are promised freedom from the conditions which have enabled their existence in the first place. On the other hand, a specific group of workers, freelancers, are especially targeted and promised freedom in seeking self-sufficiency

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[1] Jason Glynos (2008) argues that rather than the content of fantasy, the subject's investment in the fantasmatic content is important. He argues excessive investment in the ideal leads to disillusion and escape when the subject encounters contingency and refrains from experimenting with other ways of being due to her investment in the ideal. Similarly, I argue affective investment in certain figures as the subject of history may lead to failure in considering the overdetermined complexity and contingency of the conditions under which subjectivities are constructed.

and self-realization. In a variety of virtual and non-virtual media, freelancing is represented as freedom to work wherever, whenever, however and with whomever one wants. The material rewards of a 9 to 6 job, such as a stable income, pension, health insurance and fringe benefits such as free lunch and transportation fee are not to be mentioned when one is seeking such high values as freedom, self-sufficiency and self-realization.

So, from one side, the critical discourses on labor relations, and from the other, rather opposite side, the neoliberal discourse on freelancing confine the terms of the debate to being either in favor of, *or* against the current changes in the employment relations. In both approaches, the future of work is seen to reside in the nomadic work style of the freelancers, with freelancing carrying connotations of either freedom and insecurity, or subjugation and uncertainty.[2] The removal of the constraints of time and space is argued to have both liberating and enslaving potentials. However, instead of trying to settle the issue as to whether freelancing is liberating or enslaving, we may try to look into the multiplicity of freelancing people's relation to their time, space, working selves/bodies as well as to their work to have a more nuanced understanding of their conditions of living. I believe declaring freelancers as victims or slaves of some presumably self-evident processes of precarization may have a disempowering political implication, ignoring their own desires and relations as to what they do for a living. On the other hand, claiming that freelancers are always already free thanks to adopting an entrepreneurial approach to their work[3] also does not pay attention to the variety of the ways in which they relate to their conditions. The variety of class positions they inhabit, the various forms of

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[2] The concept of "digital nomadism" has gained much ground and tips are given on various sites about how to live as a digital nomad successfully. The freelancers' movement in EU conducted a survey on the topic as well: http://freelancers-europe.org/digital-nomad-survey/ (retrieved on 29 August, 2016).
[3] https://www.euractiv.com/section/social-europe-jobs/opinion/redefining-work-the-role-of-freelancers-policymakers-and-businesses/ (retrieved on 10 August, 2016).

communities in which they live as well as the variety of subjective relations that they have with their work would prevent us from making overarching or unifying claims as to their conditions. I think constructing a more nuanced map of the conditions of freelancers based on their narratives would give us a more solid ground as to imagining and enacting alternatives to the variety of exploitative and oppressive labor and non-labor relations.

The grey zone of freelancing and other forms of flexible and insecure forms of laboring is argued to be the result of neoliberal restructuring of labor markets by some (Dulroy and Cashman, 2013) while still others argue that flexibility was demanded by the workers in the first place (Bolantski and Chiapello, 2006). I believe the point is not to determine *the* cause of the transformations in question since it seems that a multiplicity of causes including these two overdetermined the emergence or expansion of this form of working in various industries. What I would like to do is to look into the multiple forms of relations of labor and subjectivities that may be referred to as "freelancing." My aim is not give an exhaustive or "realistic" mapping of the forms of production relations referred to by the term but to expound on the differences constituting the space of freelancing to see if it would enable us to rethink the social space in terms of difference and diversity, irreducible to the space of capital.[4]

To that end, in this thesis, I take issue with the conception of freedom promised in insecurity to freelancers while I also attempt to rethink class politics in

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[4] J.K. Gibson-Graham's proposal to use a language of diverse economy would be a prominent source of inspiration in that regard (2006, p. 60). Their project aims at destabilizing the hegemonic discourse which reduces the social space to a single, homogenous and immutable capitalist space and hence, the disempowering impact it has on engaging in political action. In their recent work *Take Back the Economy* (2013), they point to five points of intervention to counter such capitalocentric discourses and to enact alternatives. They refer to different ways of relating to work, different ways of organizing the production, appropriation and distribution of labor, different ways of exchanging the products of labor, different forms of property and practices of commoning and different ways to think of investment in life-sustaining ways.

non-historicist and non-identitarian terms. I scrutinize the form of freedom envisaged with regard to the "future of work"[5] and look into the impacts of this ideal of freedom and self-realization on the part of the subject. Then, I deconstruct the neoliberal representations of freedom in freelancing by giving a detailed account as to the class/non-class and work/non-work differences among freelancers. Following this deconstructive moment, I look into the practices of freelancers to organize themselves and forge alliances across those differences. To that end, I draw on the experiences of a common space in Istanbul, *Dünyada Mekân* (A Place in the World), and a community of freelancers, *Ofissizler* (The Officeless), and attempt to rethink class politics in a way which not only accommodates differences, but also turns them into creative points of intervention in the capitalocentric discourses and practices.

1.2 Who is a freelancer?

The question of who is a freelancer is difficult to answer due to the variety of differences mentioned above. First, the term is used to cover a variety of production relations and there are disputes as to whom to include in the category. Freelancers may work for the same employer most of the time or may work temporarily only on a project basis, may prefer to work part-time to pursue other non-work interests, may be full-timers who are high-end professionals in their market or may see freelance work as something to be done when one is unemployed; or still, they may or may not have legally defined work relations. So, there seems to be little positive commonality to define freelancing as a homogenous identity, referring to a clearly defined space in the labor market.

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[5] Freelancer's Movement in Europe also defines freelancing as the "future of work". See http://freelancers-europe.org/how-european-solopreneurs-are-creating-the-future-of-work/, retrieved on 29 August, 2016.

In the book prepared by the coordinators of the Freelancer's Movement in EU, there is given a summary of the sets of criteria used by the various freelance organizations as well as the policies of governments used to define who is to count as a freelancer (Dulroy and Cashman, 2013). To summarize, according to the book, disputes are over whether those who work regularly to a definite employer may count as freelancers. Working time is also another criterion of exclusion since some argue that those who work less than 15 hours a week cannot be considered freelancers. Some associations and researchers also exclude those who sub-contract work to other freelancers. Practitioners of liberal professions, self-employed crafters, retailers and farmers are also not counted among freelancers with the argument that they have their own associations.

In a similar vein, different terms are used to define those workers besides the term "freelancer". In EU, they are referred to as "independent professionals", "temporary workers" or "contractors", in US as "independent workers", in Australia as "own account worker" and as "self-employed workers" in the world in general (p. 10). In Turkey, there is no definition of the "freelancer" in labor code. Freelancers are often considered self-employed and expected to set up their own company and pay taxes as well as their own social security fees. Some argue freelancers could be classified as telecommuters with the amendment to the law on on-call work in May 2016.[6] On the other hand, many freelancers work without any legal identity or contract, which deprives of them the minimum guarantee relating to payment. The difficulty of defining their work in labor market also refers to the multiple and fluid

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[6] The details of the law could be found here, http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2016/05/20160520-24.htm (retrieved on 3 March 2019). In the law, telecommuting is defined as an employment relation in which the workers works from home or outside the workplace using technological communication tools. It is stated that the telecommuter cannot be treated any differently from the peers who do the same job in the workplace.

nature of the work relations in this segment of the workforce which is difficult to be

brought under formal categories.

1.2.1 Freelancing in Turkey

The second problem with the term "freelancing", specifically in the context

of Turkey, is that there is not much discussion in Turkey about who is to count as a

freelancer, neither is there any quantitative data about the number and conditions of

freelancers.[7] Many of those who may be considered to be freelancing may not self-

identify as freelancers. However, there is now an ongoing discussion among

freelancers themselves on the identity of the freelancer in the production process and

in relation to their employer in Turkey. The discussion is held among *Ofissizler* (The

Officeless), a network of freelancers in Istanbul, in relation to a workshop held on

the status of freelancers in law and the kinds of contacts they can make with their

employers.[8] In one of the preparatory meetings, a freelance lawyer explained that

there are three different forms of contacts freelancers can use in Turkish law: a

copyright contract, a labor contract, and a sales contract. The advantages and

disadvantages of these contracts are extensively discussed and in the meantime, the

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[7] In the USA, in comparison, the Freelancer's Union releases annual reports with quantitative data about the number of freelancers in the country as well as how they end up freelancing and under what conditions they freelance. The latest report was released in 2018 and included information about the increase in the number of freelancers in the country and the increasing tendency to choose freelancing in the workforce. To point to the gaining popularity of freelancing, it is stated that 1 in every 3 Americans freelanced that year. It also included data about freelancer's access and willingness for training, their lifestyle and political activism. For details, see
https://www.slideshare.net/upwork/freelancing-in-america-2018-120288770
(retrieved on 27 April 2019).
Ofissizler (The Officeless) also aims to produce knowledge about the conditions of freelancers in Turkey by conducting surveys and experience sharing workshops.
[8] The name *Ofissizler* (The Officeless) is an attempt to translate the English term "freelancer" into Turkish. The term "freelancing" originally referred to medieval mercenaries who fought for whomever paid them the most and, thus, could be argued to have the connotation of being unattached to a specific employer. On the other hand, the word "Ofissizler" refers to the lack of a specific workplace, which could be argued to have a more ambivalent connotation. As we were trying to come up with a name for the freelancing network, we discussed that being away from the hierarchy and surveillance of the office could have liberating consequences while being away from one's colleagues brings negative consequences such as isolation and loss of self-esteem.

differences among freelancers in terms of their employment relation, autonomy over working conditions, and social security are discussed and negotiated. In other words, freelancers were not only informed about the labor code, but they also discussed who is to count as a freelancer and which type of contract is to their advantage accordingly. Some were actually working from home to a company regularly and it was argued that they are actually remote workers and could benefit from the rights of a labor contract. On the other hand, other freelancers were working for their employers on a project basis. In that case, they could use copyright or telecommuting contract, depending on the content and regularity of the work. At the moment, *Ofissizler* also aims to develop contract drafts which could be adapted by freelancers in accordance with the unique relation they want to forge with their employers.

In addition, *Ofissizler* (The Officeless) aims to produce knowledge on the conditions of freelancers by conducting surveys and experience sharing workshops. It has conducted a survey on the needs and conditions of freelancers, another one on online freelancing platforms, and a final survey on the contracts used by freelancers.[9] The most important result of the first survey, which aimed at identifying freelancers' needs in Turkey, was the role of mobbing and stress in the workplace in causing the workers leave the workplace and start freelancing. As for the survey on online freelancing platforms, it revealed that besides competition and low pay, surveillance technologies used by employers to control freelancers during the production process

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[9] *Ofissizler* (The Officeless) initiated a survey titled "A Needs and Conditions Survey on Freelancers" on 18 January, 2018 and received 112 responses. The survey on online freelancing platforms was initiated on 4 December of the same year and received 41 responses. The results were presented in a workshop on those platforms held on 12 December in *Dünyada Mekân*. The survey conducted on freelancers' use of contracts was titled "Your Freelance Work Process" and was initiated on 4 February, 2019. The results of that survey were shared in the workshop titled "Contracts and Law for Freelance Jobs" held on 2 March in IDEA, a co-working space of the municipality of Kadıköy in Istanbul. Currently, the results of the surveys conducted so far are analyzed and will be reported in a guide to be prepared for freelancers. For detailed information about the workshops, see: https://ofissizler.com/etkinlikler/ (retrieved on 24 April, 2019).

were among the most important concerns of freelancers. Lastly, the survey on contracts showed that freelancers most often work without a contract, having no guarantee of payment and/or receiving no social security benefit.[10]

While the results of these surveys shed some light on the conditions of freelancers, given the lack of statistical and qualitative data, it is difficult not only to come up with a clear and empirically studied description of the freelancing identity, but also to provide comprehensive information about the working conditions and the socio-legal status of freelancers in the workforce. That is why in this thesis, I aim to produce and provide qualitative data about the conditions and laboring processes of freelancers, drawing on my long-term involvement with the self-organization of freelancers in Istanbul. While I primarily focused on the accounts of freelancers who self-identify as freelancers, I also look into the labor processes of people who do casual freelance work and do not identify themselves as primarily "freelancers". The reason is that I do not want to restrict my research based on an identitarian understanding of work and labor. Although there seems to be various identities constructed around the figure of the "freelancer", there are also cases in which people do not attribute a strong value to what they do for a living as the main defining feature of their selves. In other words, I would like to draw attention not only to the multiplicity of forms of work relations at stake in freelancing, but also to the multiplicity of forms of subjective relations which they have with the work they do for a living.

So, in this study, I look into the conditions of freelancers who work for themselves, work for a particular or various employers as well as those who sub-contract work on a project basis. In addition, those who do casual freelance work for

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[10] 214 freelancers have responded to the survey so far and 55% of those freelancers stated that they have never worked with a contract, while nearly 19% indicated that they rarely work with a contract.

any reason- to engage in non-work endeavors, to fund their studies, to look after children etc.- are also included in this study. I believe the fact that the term does not refer to a neatly delineated segment of the labor force does not diminish its explanatory force to refer to forms of labor relations which fall outside the established ones. In that regard, I would like to follow Janet Hotch's argument (2000) regarding the organizing of the self-employed. She puts into question the assumption that theorizing and recognizing differences among workers undermines the reason for organizing them (Hotch, 2000, p. 150). She argues that instead of emphasizing the unity beneath the facade of difference, we may establish common projects pursued by the self-employed with different interests, class positions, and theories.

1.2.2 Freelancing jobs

Another issue that creates diversity in freelancing experience is the type of occupations. Freelancing has been quite common in some occupational branches such as translation and the arts, while it is a relatively recent phenomenon in others such as engineering and marketing. Freelancers working in various occupations share some problems in common such as lack of social and job security, difficulty of managing work and non-work relations, and isolation. However, there are also sector-specific problems emanating from the nature of the work in question. In this thesis, I conducted interviews with freelancers mainly from the occupations of publishing, translation, journalism, IT and the arts.[11]

As for freelancers working in the publishing industry, the most common problem is copyright issues. In Turkey, many freelance translators barely earn the

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[11] For a full list, see Appendix B.

minimum wage for translating books of high academic and literary value.[12] They are

also dissatisfied about the quality of the translations thus produced. To have a decent

income, they have to be overly productive and sometimes translate texts from the

areas with which they are not familiar. So, freelance translators not only suffer from

low-income levels, but also their sense of occupational integrity is damaged by the

productivity imperative. On the other hand, translators of technical texts also

complain about the difficulty of meeting the basic needs of living and the imperative

of overproduction while also expressing worries about the future of their jobs in the

face of the development of translation technologies.[13]

As for journalists, the most common problems mentioned besides the low

wages are mass lay-offs and black listing of journalists in the industry. In Turkey, the

mainstream news sources were bought by corporations close to the government and

the journalists working there were laid off through time.[14] They had difficulty in

finding another job since blacklisting is a common practice in cultural industries,

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[12] This information was shared by freelance translators who participated in the workshop that was organized by *YEK* (Yayınevi Emekçileri Kolektifi- Collective of Laborers in the field of Publishing) on 29 October 2015.

[13] A freelance translator from *Offissizler* gives a brief account of the problems he encounters as a freelance translator of technical texts, https://ofissizler.com/ofissizler-anlatiyor-tunca-caylant-freelance-cevirmen/ (retrieved on 23 April 2019).
Burak, a freelance translator I interviewed, was quite concerned about the developments in translation technologies, suggesting it would lead to high levels of unemployment in the industry. Besides translation tools with term bases and memories, there is a growing use of machine translation in the industry. The effects of these tools on the labor processes and working conditions need thorough analyses.

[14] One such moment is the selling of the newspaper Sabah and the TV channel ATV to Turkuvaz Media Group in 2013. The media group is related to Kalyon İnşaat, which also undertook several controversial construction projects in Istanbul, including the building of the 3rd Istanbul Airport and pedestrianization of Taksim Square. For more information about the company, see http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/ekonomi/sabah-ve-atv-kalyona-satildi-25407253 (retrieved on 21 May 2019)
Another moment which marks the monopolization of the mainstream media happened in 2018 when several media companies of Doğan Media Group were bought by Demirören Holding in Turkey. Demirören Holding was founded by Erdoğan Demirören, who is also claimed to be close to the government, and expanded to several industries such as real estate, oil and construction during the rule of AKP (Justice and Development Party). For more information about the company, see https://www.bbc.com/turkce/haberler-turkiye-43501280 (retrieved on 21 May 2019).

including publishing and journalism.[15] Canan, a freelance journalist, claims that these journalists had to start freelancing, which normalized freelancing and turned it into a common mode of working in the industry. Meliha adds that technological developments also made it easy for the companies to outsource much of the journalistic work to freelancers, keeping only a limited number of editors in the office.

Idealization of the work was also noted as a common source of exploitation by both the freelancers in the publishing industry and journalists. Investment in one's work could have a silencing effect about the grievances emanating from working conditions such as low wages and lack of social security. In both industries, this affective investment is used against workers who are expected to sacrifice material compensation in return for the prestige and moral reward of producing cultural work. So, idealization of work is a discourse which works to normalize freelancing as a form of insecure mode of working in those industries. The Collective of Workers in Publishing Industry (*YEK-Yayınevi Emekçileri Kolekt*ifi) had named this exploitative discourse as "exploitation of idealism", claiming that they demand better working conditions to do their jobs "ideally".[16] In other words, YEK's intervention to this discourse did not involve a denigration of the work produced, but a demand for better conditions in defense of occupational integrity.

As for freelancers in the IT industry, it could be argued that they have comparatively more negotiation power over the terms and conditions of production

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[15] The issue of blacklisting in cultural industries was also mentioned in the workshop held by *Ofissizler* in *Dünyada Mekân* on 6 July 2018. The workshop was titled "What can a freelancer's network change?"

[16] For further information, see http://www.sabitfikir.com/haber/yayinevi-emekcileri-kolektifi-idealizm-somurusune-karsiyiz (retrieved on 23 April 2019). For further information about the collective, which is not active at the moment, see http://www.yayineviemekcileri.org/ (retrieved on 23 April 2019). Among their members were editors, translators, graphics designers, proofreaders and redactors and they also argued for solidarity with storekeepers, interns and people working in bookstores.

and autonomy over the production process, mainly emanating from the demand for their skills in the market. In addition, they can make use of the digital platforms to ensure self-development. They often argue that they are self-taught professionals, learning the work they currently do on their own, making use of the information their peers share on online forums and platforms. Compared to freelancers in other industries, they have more chance to find work and decide over its conditions, and develop themselves professionally on their own terms. As a result, freelancing could be more often a choice in this industry. The biggest problem they have mentioned is about the social and psychological impacts of isolation.[17]

Indeed, many freelancers state that freelancing actually affects occupational development and performance. Freelancers often work in the isolated space of home and have limited communication with colleagues. They often fail to see the totality of the production process, taking part in the completion of a limited task as part of a project. The lack of contact with colleagues and the fragmentation of work pose a hindrance to freelancers who need to constantly update themselves about the professional developments in their field. One can say that both the labor of managing production relations and the professional reproduction of the conditions of production are outsourced to freelancers themselves, who do not receive any compensation for these tasks in return.

It is no doubt that occupation is among the determinants structuring the freelancing experience and freelancers suffer from specific problems relating to their industry. Nevertheless, this thesis is a product of action-research focusing on the issues cutting across the variety of occupations and industries that freelancers work in. The interaction of the relation between sector-specific problems and the problems

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[17] This was shared by Ege, a freelance software engineer, during the workshop titled "How do we become freelancers?" organized in *Dünyada Mekân* on 9 June 2018.

of freelancing requires a much more detailed research. My engagement with the political organization of freelancers led me to focus on a variety of determinants which structure the freelancing experience, with occupation being one of them and determining what freelancers call the "negotiation power" of the freelancers.[18] So, I do not focus on occupational identity and experience specifically but consider it as among the determinants structuring the negotiation power of the freelancer in relation to her experience of class processes as well as her relation to the work/non-work realms of her life.

1.3 Reading freelancing for difference

Gibson-Graham's theorization of economic difference and diversity enables us to have a different approach to the economic difference in social space. With an affirmative notion of difference, she promotes the uncovering and revaluation of the otherwise invisible or unappreciated non-capitalist practices, pointing to the disempowering impact of representing the social space as singularly capitalist. Drawing on their deconstructive approach to the social space, I believe we may rethink class politics in terms of difference based on the experiences of freelancers. In this section, I would like to elaborate on what it could mean to consider difference for an ethic-political relation in and for the construction and sustenance of community (Gibson-Graham, 2006) as well as for an ethico-political approach to class processes defined in relation to the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus value (Gibson-Graham & Resnick-Wolff, 2000). This brief discussion, which will be elaborated throughout the chapters, informs the analyses I present on freelancing.

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[18] This term appeared in the workshop organized on networking with freelancers in *Dünyada Mekân* on 13 May 2016.

In *A Post-Capitalist Politics* (2006), Gibson-Graham draws on her previous critique regarding the hegemonic representations of the "economy" and capitalism (Gibson-Graham, 1996). She follows from her criticism of the established (especially left) theorizations of capitalism as homogenous and omnipotent to which all the non-capitalist spheres of social space are subsumed. She argues that a variety of non-capitalist economic practices, including non-market transactions, and communal and independent mode of producing and distributing surplus, are lost in such capitalocentric representations of the socio-economic space (2006, p. 56) that propagate a conception of economy as operating on "invariant logics and automatic unfolding" (p. xxi) and closed to political intervention. To disrupt this disempowering discourse, she argues for an ontological reframing of economy and economic practices, which would involve "reading for difference rather than dominance" (p. 54). The concept of community economies enables such a reorientation. She lays out a tripartite politico-ontological framing for community economies: "a politics of language", "a politics of the subject", and "a politics of collective action". These three conceptualizations of action have informed both my reflections on the experiences of freelancers and my participation with them in search for a class politics in forging alliances across differences.

As for "a politics of language", Gibson-Graham (2006) refers to the construction of a discourse about economy which dislocates its capitalocentric representations and illustrates the multiplicity of non-capitalist processes. With respect to this point of intervention, I inquired into both the dominant (utilitarian) discourses on freelancing and their constitutive effects on subjectivity. I argue that the dominant discourses assume a self-sufficient notion of the subject, which is posited to be outside the boundaries of time and place (i.e., finding its expression in

freelancers' ability and freedom to work wherever, whenever, and with whomever they want). At the same time, these discourses also produce a utilitarian appropriation of "networking" in which social relations are instrumentally promoted as the means to realize one's ends. The social space is imagined as operating on logic of market exchange between equally self-transparent subjects. I argue that the discourse on the freelancer as a sovereign self-sufficient subject and the sociality she is implicated in as a network of pure intersubjectivity involves a perverse structure which disavows the antagonism and interdependence that destabilizes and constitutes the subject, her relation to her community and her relation to the others in her community.

As for "a politics of the subject", Gibson-Graham argues that deconstruction is not enough for subjective transformation. We need to question the subjective investments that keep inequalities as well. I concur with this need to question our subjective investments in social ideals and hence, following my analysis of hegemonic discourses on freelancing, I provide an account of the psychic costs of these discourses on the freelancer. I argue freelancers are bombarded with both the fraying Fordist ideals of security and the current ideals of freedom and self-realization, which produce anxiety and guilt on the part of the subject. On the other hand, I argue that the fantasy of equality in market exchange, which underlies the discourse on networking, produces such responses as exclusion and withdrawal by the freelancing subject.

Gibson-Graham (2006) also suggests that subjective transformation could be enabled through an ontological reframing of the social space involving a variety of class processes, different market and non-market exchange, different forms of property and practices of commoning. Here, a different language on the socio-

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economic space as well as a different language relating to the skills and practices of the subjects is constituted to enable subjective transformation. I concur with this need for reframing of the social space for subjective transformation and my analysis on the class diversity and different ways of relating to work among freelancers is aimed at such a reframing, opening up ways for subjective and class transformation.

Finally, as for "politics of collective action", Gibson-Graham argues that reframing those differences is not enough; they need to be gathered around a coherent discourse so that they are not seen as serving the operation of the capital. She argues "community economies" is such a signifier, which not only provides a discourse of economic difference and diversity, but also enables a space for experimentation to subjects in transformation. They argue a politics of collective action involves "conscious and combined efforts to build a new kind of economic reality" (2006, p. xxxvi). In other words, community economies refers to the economy not only as a space of ethico-political decision making, but also as a space which is open to the creation of new objects, a different "economic reality."

My experiences in *Dünyada Mekân* (A Place in the World) have enabled me to dwell on the question of the "politics of collective action". I participated in its foundation in 2015 in Istanbul, following a series of forums and meetings about precarity, "white-collar" jobs, freelancing, and new forms of unemployment. These were a part of a still larger series of forums organized in the aftermath of the Gezi resistance within the framework of a politics of the common. The goal was to create a space, which was horizontally organized "without managers or bosses." Since then, I have been an active participant of the space, which is currently being used by different grassroots organizations involving white-collar workers and a consumer's collective (DÜRTÜK, which is an abbreviation for the "Collective of Resisting

Consumers and Producers") that operates as a clearing house to gather crops from various urban gardens in Istanbul for distribution to consumers in the city center. Recently, the encounters in this space have also led to the emergence of a solidarity network among freelancers called *Ofissizler* (The Officeless). The space also welcomes individual use and initiatives. It is striking that despite their conditions of increasing social, economic and political precarity in Turkey, freelancers, women, the queer and the unemployed have been the primary actors that struggle to create and sustain this common space. I believe this could be pointing to the embodied knowledge regarding the importance of the common and community that the precarious carry in common.[19]

1.3.1 Why class?: Accounting for immaterial labor

So far, I have attempted to raise the question of difference as an ethico-political question in relation to the organization of freelancers as a section of the precarious, which is comprised of workers working and living in quite different conditions. There is also a more sociological account of the blurring of the distinction between life and work, which is argued to have led to the emergence of difference and common as a political question under post-Fordism (Hardt and Negri, 2009). It is argued that production has become truly biopolitical as affects, and cognitive and linguistic skills have become the primary forces producing value in post-Fordism. As

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[19] Precarity has been deployed both as a category of analysis and as an empty signifier for political organization. Maribel Casas-Cortés' account (2014) provides an account of the various political significations of the term while Guy Standing (2014) attempts to utilize it to describe an emergent class structure, which lacks not only security but also occupational identity and refuses labor values in search of a meaningful relation to work. Standing's account attempts to point to the multiplicity that the term is to represent; however, he ends up with anthropologizing the various groups he identifies under this term and attempts to predict the emancipatory and regressive actions they could take. I believe attending to the multiplicity in terms of class processes could be a solution to this identitarian notion of difference. Maribel Casas-Cortés' account, on the other hand, inspired me to refer to the utilization of the term "freelancer", rather than attempt to give a sociologically "true" definition of a class that could be named as "freelancer". In this study, I interviewed and talked to anyone who called herself/himself freelancer to see the quotidian appropriations of the term.

a result, the social in its totality has become both the means and the end of production. The concomitant problematization of the relation between life and labor is important in that it carries the potential to rethink labor in relation to community without repeating labors, which may be defined as seeing labor as the fundamental determinant of the nature of social relations (Callari & Ruccio, 2010). However, I believe if we constrain our analysis to the quality of labor which is deemed to be predominant—like "immaterial labor"—we may fall into the error of positing an identitarian conception of difference. Then, workers whose labors conform to what is taken to be most productive of value are regarded as the driver of social change. Class politics ends up being conceived in terms similar to that of identity politics.

On the other hand, I argue that be it material or immaterial, labor and non-labor processes have always been in a complex relation and the important point would be to provide nuanced analyses on their interpenetration. I believe gaining such an understanding of social change would require an ontological conception of difference. Furthermore, this conception of difference entails the positing of antagonism as constitutive and disruptive of social processes. Drawing on the psychoanalytically informed accounts on antagonism, I understand that the latter ensues from the impossibility (qua *jouissance*) to stabilize for once and all the line that separates what is necessary from what is surplus, which brings forth a requirement for constant negotiation regarding ways of dealing with this impossibility. That is why there is no single and proper way to organize the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus (Özselçuk and Madra, 2007), as well as no proper way to relate to one's work.

Therefore, instead of a historicist reading of the proliferation of difference in the age of immaterial labor, I suggest a more ontological take on difference and see

laboring processes to have always been in a co-constitutive relation with other social processes. As a result, the object of scrutiny may be defined as aimed at analyzing the changes in the forms of their relation. The importance of adopting such a perspective would be that the blurring of the distinctions between life and labor would not be reduced to being the result of either the emergence of new subjects with new qualities as the subjects of history or the development of some self-explanatory processes (like "post-industrialism"), but as the results of overdetermined relations between labor and non-labor processes.[20]

In addition, I believe the argument as to the blurring of the distinctions between life and labor may also have a disempowering political impact. This argument is followed by claims as to the incalculability of surplus value with the immaterialization of labor and hence, the difficulty of detecting exploitation. This overarching argument seems to fail to take into consideration the existing practices of calculation which definitely have material effects. Calculation may be mobilized to build a ground of negotiation between various parties (the capitalist who appropriates labor, the various agents to whom it is distributed etc.). Ignoring the existing accounting practices as well as the potential of accounting for making claims would have a disempowering impact since it involves a conception of capital as ubiquitous, capturing all the value produced anywhere in the world, like a monster whose place is not identifiable, requiring us always to be on the watch. Besides reducing social space to capitalist space, this discourse also carries an image of unmediated sociality, without any accounts and measures, hence probably without

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[20] Callari and Ruccio's critique of the socialist imaginary which assumes class difference to be the only difference is crucial in this regard (2010). Instead, they argue for a rethinking of materialism in a way to re-introduce difference based on a multi-dimensional and polymorphous conception of social space. It involves paying attention to the "changing boundaries of human activity" (p. 409), the multiplicity of productive activities as well as forms of consciousness. This conception of social space seems to have a methodological implication in that it illustrates the limits of considering production process as a self-contained process independent of other social processes. That is one of the reasons why I would like to consider labor and class processes within the framework of community.

conflicts. In other words, it assumes that were it not for capital, we would not need to account for what we do in life. So, instead of claiming incalculability, we may look into the accounting practices in capitalist class processes and try to see whether we may develop alternative forms of accounting both to empower ourselves in negotiating in capitalist class processes and think about the possibility of founding alternatives to them.[21]

1.3.2 Class in overdetermination: Labor/non-labor and work/non-Work

It is for this reason that in this thesis, I adopt an analytical approach aimed at distinguishing labor from non-labor processes as well as labor from work and look into not only the class processes that freelancers undergo but also their subjective relations and ways of experiencing these processes. That is why I distinguish between work/non-work and labor/non-labor. I utilize labor as an analytical concept to scrutinize the relation of labor process to the processes of the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus value. On the other hand, I employ the concept of work in relation to the freelancer's subjective relations to what they do for a living, to understand what they define as work or as outside work and to understand the meanings they attach to both work and non-work relations, activities and spheres of their lives. However, this distinction I draw between work/non-work and labor/non-labor does not of course claim to represent the reality of the separateness of the domains referred to. Instead, it needs to be considered as analytical and performative, informed by the insight of the overdetermined relation among social processes (Gibson-Graham, 2008). The distinction is aimed at rethinking and

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[21] For instance, in *Debt to Society,* Miranda Joseph gives an account of how accounting practices of credits and debts "constrain too many people to go on trying in the face of failure" and calls for collective intervention and counter-accounting practices (2014, p. 90). I believe we may think of Marxist class analysis as such a counter-accounting practice which strives to render the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus value open up to questions of ethics and politics.

imagining alternatives to the existing discourses and practices as to freelancing and precarity.

To elaborate on these distinctions, I draw on Resnick and Wolff's and Gibson-Graham's (2000) conception of "class as process" which enables us to approach class with difference. Their account is based on a critique of the essentialist conceptions of class as a kind of social belonging based on one's position in relations of property and power. Instead, they conceive of class as process by focusing on the processes of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus value. In this way, they refrain from attributing certain class positions to certain subjects who are to recognize those positions, arguing that subjects may occupy multiple class processes through time. Their language of class reveals the variety of slave, feudal, independent, communal class relations that exist in formal, market-oriented, and legally regulated as well as in informal, domestic and non-market sectors (2000, p.13). They argue that these different class processes co-exist with non-class processes in an overdetermined relationship. In other words, none can be attributed the role of being the fundamental process definitive of social space. In this way, they refrain from seeing all class and non-class processes as serving the capitalist accumulation processes.

I understand that their use of language of economic difference in relation to the concept of overdetermination has the advantage of opening up different points for political intervention as well (Gibson-Graham and Resnick & Wolff, 2000). Considering the class difference as the singular difference determining social relations may lead to a conception of emancipation based on a total overthrow of what is deemed to be a uniformly capitalist society. Then, various interventions to social processes may come to be judged in terms of their power to overthrow

"capitalism" and those who do not live up to this ideal are considered as "reformist" or waste of time and energy at best. Instead of this disempowering discourse, pluralizing both class processes and social processes in general may enable us look for multiple points of ethico-political intervention.

In line with this perspective, we could also look at freelancing as involving different class processes and freelancers engaging in different class and non-class processes through time. Freelancers may self-appropriate— if they work directly for the client, work for a capitalist firm and receive a wage, while at other times distribute the work they have to complete for a project among their friends/colleagues and establish capitalist or communal production relations in the meantime. They may work for the same employer most of the time or may work temporarily only on project basis, may prefer to work part-time to pursue other non-work interests, may be full-timers who are high-end professionals in their market or may see freelance work as something to be done when one is unemployed; or still, they may or may not have legally defined work relations. The multiplicity of the class processes they go through as well as the multiplicity of forms of relations they have with their work may be considered not as a constraint for analysis but means to constitute a discourse as to pluralize points of intervention to the social processes.

In addition, I understand that the concept of overdetermination also carves out space for contingency and conjuncture and refers to the mutual implication of every social process in the other. This renders all identities to be seen as open to resignification and enables ethico-political intervention by different and constantly shifting subjectivities. So, not only spaces and grids of intervention are pluralized, but also the subjectivities which may participate in those interventions. This may be thought of one way to distance ourselves from politics defined on the basis of

definite subjects (*the* proletariat or *the* precariat for example). With regard to the aim of the project at hand, the term "freelancer" does not refer to a uniform subjectivity or freelancing does not imply a uniform process of subjectivation. As I mentioned, there is no singular discourse which could explain the relation that freelancers have with their work and non-work pursuits. If we continue to think of politics in terms of a definite subject, we may consider this as a problem of analysis. However, if we accept the overdetermined nature of relations existent in social space, we may adopt the strategy of pluralizing both the social space and subjectivities as sites of multiplicity from which we can both examine the conditions and imagine alternatives.

Lastly, in relation to the question of subjectivity, I would like expound on my use of the concept of work. To that end, I draw on the work of Kathi Week's problematization of work (2011). Her analysis is important in drawing attention to what attaches us to work, denaturalizing its place in our lives. She argues that we should not restrict our analyses to class analyses of exploitation and inequality. Instead, she argues for a theoretical reorientation questioning the place of work— both waged and unwaged- in our lives as a problem not only of exploitation but also of domination and unfreedom. To criticize our "work societies", she argues an analysis based on the perspective of labor runs the risk of productivism while with the concept of work, we may problematize the meaning of work from various positions not restricted to that of labor (2011, p. 14).

Weeks claims that the naturalization of work cannot simply be based on structural necessities or individual pursuits of satisfaction. Instead, we need to look into the different forms of work ethic which manufacture consent for work. While looking at Protestant, industrial and post-industrial forms of work-ethic, she argues

that in all these forms we may observe both historical durability and the perennial instabilities of the work ethic. She prefers to think of the source of instabilities in work ethic in terms of antinomies instead of contradictions since she does not assume that the tension between them will have a resolution (p. 42).

It is interesting to note that although she criticizes approaches which look for a final resolution of conflicts in society, Weeks ends up giving a negative conception of freedom as freedom from work in total. She also looks at demands for lesser hours and basic income not as different ways of organizing work but as demands for freedom from work itself. I believe these demands, which do not attend to the existing conditions of workers in different class and non-class processes, lead to imagining a future without the constraints of having the duties to reproduce material life and existence. I think this is similar to some Marxist accounts, which imagine the reconciliation of all conflicts with the abolishment of class conflict. This perspective also may lead us to ignore the practices of freedom engaged in the world of work by workers themselves. For instance, in accounts of freelancers who account for having chosen freelancing willingly, we see various strategies of time and self-management as well as community practices which they argue to pursue to open more space for themselves or for other pursuits of life. This exemplifies the fact that we do not have to wait for the total overthrow of the work and freedom from the "constraints" of worldly existence to engage in practices of freedom. Therefore, I believe a critique of work needs to be thought together with analyses of practices of freedom informed by ethico-political concerns of the class process analysis I explained above. Weeks' account as to the problematization of work and our relation to it is crucial but needs to be compounded with detailed analyses as to class processes and daily experiences

and strategies of workers utilized to change their conditions or increase their negotiation power.

So, in this thesis, I look into the narratives of freelancers to understand what they define as work and how they relate to it. The relation between work and non-work relations is important in trying to analyze the forms of communities in which freelancers work and live as well. What is the place of work in their lives? What is the place of non-work relations of interdependence and community in their relations of work? Does relating to work and non-work mingle to form something different? What do the different forms of dealing with work and non-work relations render visible and invisible in relation to power relations? What kind of practices and imaginaries of communities can we trace in relation to their accounts as to work?

1.4 Towards a post-fantasmatic conception of class politics

In this thesis, I try to reframe the differences in relation to class and work to lay the ground a post-fantasmatic conception of labor politics which could not only enable alliances across class/non-class and work/non-work differences, but also render those differences the basis of creative acts of intervention into the capitalocentric discourses and practices. To understand the vitality of such a rethinking, I argue we may first need to conceptualize subjective and political the implications of the current discourses on freelancing as an insecure form of laboring. That is why I supplant Gibson-Graham's framework for ethico-political intervention with a psychoanalytical take on the question of subjectivity. The reason is that while Gibson-Graham provides us with several grids of intervention and points to the importance of questioning subjective investments in social ideals, their account seems to fall short when it comes to understanding the reasons for subject's

investment in such ideals. I argue understanding the psychic economy behind the capitalocentric discourses as well as the impact of them on the subject is a crucial step towards creating tools of intervention in such discourses and enabling disinvestment from them. The subject's co-implication in social processes needs to be extensively explored to prevent a voluntaristic conception of social change. That is why in this thesis, I extensively draw on psychoanalytic accounts on subjectivity to explain both the structure of hegemonic discourses and narratives on freelancing as well as the their psychic and political implications for the freelancer.

The following analysis on the diversity regarding class processes and subjective relations to work is aimed at enabling a post-fantasmatic conception of class and work. Fantasmatic conception of social space involves an imagery of social space where there is no conflict or ambiguity (Byrne and Healy, 2006). There may emerge problems in the realization of social ideals; however, these problems are imagined as obstructions the overcoming of which will bring forth resolution. Fantasmatic investments in social ideals involve an attempt to settle the issue of desire. They cover over the constitutive antagonism that emanates from the impossibility to settle issue with the question of desire and destabilizes any social process and requires their constant re-negotiation and re-organization. So, a post-fantasmatic re-orientation to sociality would require an ability to live with the ensuing ambiguity and the constant possibility and need for the re-organization and negotiation of social processes.

Post-fantasmatic re-orientation to class involves an approach to the processes of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus as moments open to intervention, conflict and negotiation (Madra and Özselçuk, 2015). So, I argue class transformation could be regarded as any transformation which involves intervention

into those moments. Therefore, it does not need to take the form of moving from capitalist class process to non-capitalist class process. Instead, it requires recognition of those moments in class processes as open to subjective and collective intervention. In addition, a post-capitalist conception of class posits no class that would solve the problem of the organization of the process of production, appropriation and distribution once and for all; but instead, reframes the social space in a way to illustrate the diversity in terms of their organization. I argue this could enable a post-fantasmatic conception of class politics across class and non-class differences.

Finally, in this thesis I argue, a post-fantasmatic class politics also requires a post-fantasmatic relation to work. The reason is that while countering the psychic and political impacts of the social ideals relating to work, we need to refrain from positing any other ideal and prevent any moralistic and exclusionary claims during political organization. Therefore, I provide an analysis of the diversity in freelancers' relation to their work in relation to the non-work realms of their lives. Like class, I situate "work" in the interval between need and desire, arguing that work can be reduced to neither. That causes the multiple ways of relating to and narrating one's relation to work, the acknowledgement of which would save us from positing any moralistic claims as to how to go about with one's work. In addition, it could also provide multiple points of intervention into the way work is organized. In other words, I argue both loving one's job and wanting to do it properly and seeing work as a simple source of income can be sources of resistance to the claim work makes in our lives. However, the important point is not to impose any form of relation to work as an ideal to determine class politics.

1.5 Research method and design

My arguments in the following chapters will be based on my participatory observations during the political organization of freelancers in *Dünyada Mekân* (A Place in the World), a common space founded by freelancers, white-collar workers and the unemployed in Istanbul in 2015, and *Ofissizler* (The Officeless), which is a network of solidarity of freelancers initiated by the participants of *Dünyada Mekân* in the summer of 2018. I draw on the several experience sharing workshops and meetings we held with freelancers.[22] In addition, I have conducted semi-structured in-depth interviews with more than 20 interviewees since 2015.[23] During those interviews, I mainly asked about their work history, how they ended up freelancing, their current working conditions, their daily routines, and the effect of freelancing on their non-work lives. Finally, I draw on the interviews I conducted in commercial co-working spaces in Istanbul, which provide office services to freelancers and start-uppers and promise networking opportunities in return for monthly payment. I talked to the managers of two co-working spaces and interviewed three start-up owners to understand the operation of such places. Some of the freelancers I have interviewed also had the experience of using such spaces and gave some account of the practices and discourses on freelancing circulating there.

The inspiration for this thesis came from my participation in the foundation of *Dünyada Mekân*. It was established after two forums and several meetings and was imagined as a space of encounter and solidarity. I have participated in the foundation of this space as a freelance translator fighting with issues of isolation. There was no single aim or a pre-defined agenda of the space; it was imagined as a space in which

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[22] For a list of the workshops, as well as the details of the fieldwork, see Appendix A.
[23] For the profile of interviewees, see Appendix B. For a list of the interview questions, see Appendix C.

freelancers, white-collar workers and the unemployed could come together to overcome their isolation, find people with whom they may work or simply chat during the breaks. It is actually imagined as a space in which different problems, needs and desires can find expression. During the preparatory meetings everyone offered their skills; some promised to hold permaculture workshops, others wanted to do yoga and Pilates together while still others simply wanted to watch movies, go for a walk or picnic together. We could realize some of these requests while others are on the agenda. We have held experience sharing workshops for freelancers, video editing and graphic design workshops for activists, screened many movies and organized talks with artists and researchers interested in such topics as insecurity, indebtedness and white-collar workers. So, the space was founded to address the problem of isolation of workers; however, it did not simply become a space of labor in which work is the only definition of one's identity.

So, this thesis is a product of the interplay between action and research on freelancing. The interviews I conducted informed not only the writing of this thesis, but also my participation in the political organization of freelancers.

1.6 Overview of chapters

In the following second chapter, I investigate the hegemonic neoliberal representations of the "future of work" and the freedom that it promises in relation to the form of "entrepreneurial subjectivity" that freelancers are expected to possess. This discourse of freedom involves particular imaginaries about time, space and flexibility; about the relation that freelancers are to have with their work, selves and communities to become self-managing and sovereign individuals. In the third chapter, I argue that the freelancer is fraught between this neoliberal fantasy of

sovereignty and the fantasy of security of the Fordist period. I expound on the

psychic impacts of these fantasies on freelancers and explore their political

ramifications.

In the fourth and fifth chapters, I adopt a more reconstructive approach to

open up space for a different language of class and work. I draw on Gibson-Graham

& Resnick-Wolff's conceptualization of "class as process" to unravel and revalue the

variety of class processes freelancers go through in time and to account for the

production, appropriation and distribution of surplus value. In the fifth chapter, I

attend to the issue of work, which is a concept employed to show the variety of ways

in which freelancers relate to what they do for a living. A discourse of multiplicity in

class processes as well as the meanings attributed to work is provided to lay the

ground for a post-fantasmatic approach to class politics across class/non-class

work/non-work differences.

In the last chapter, I give an account of what a post-fantasmatic approach to

class politics is. I argue it involves an acknowledgement of the fundamental

antagonism, which ensues from the impossibility to settle the question of desire and

renders any social or subjective process impossible to settle once and for all.

Therefore, class processes and subjective relations to work are to be seen as

processes which are always up for negotiation and open to contestation. I argue such

points of antagonism need a space of encounter so that they can be expressed in

creative ways and can be turned into multiple points of intervention in the

capitalocentric discourses and practices. I suggest *Dünyada Mekân* has been such a

sublimated space of the common, which enabled the emergence of a variety of

creative tools to create alliances across differences among its participants. *Ofissizler*

is the result of the encounters in this sublimated space and focuses on establishing a

network of solidarity among freelancers. In this final chapter, I also point to the

challenges of organizing freelancers, which I hope could be a contribution to the

rethinking of class politics in the organization of the precarious in general.

CHAPTER 2

NEOLIBERAL DISCOURSES ON FREELANCING:

FREEDOM IN SOVEREIGNTY

2.1 Introduction

The neoliberal discourses on freelancing involve a specific imaginary that position freelancers as venturing entrepreneurs and the communities of freelancers as networks of mutual benefit. The operation of such discourses leads to the representation of the social space as uniformly capitalist and works by a discursive erasure of class and non-class differences with regard to freelancing. In this chapter, I aim at providing a psychoanalytically informed account of the structure of the fantasmatic discourses as to the sovereignty of the freelancer, which I believe to have important depoliticizing implications. I argue that the "freelancer" is attributed a form of sovereignty without worldliness, outside the bounds of time and place, when it comes to praising the freedom she is supposed to practice and possess. Yet at the same time, "network" seems to be proposed as the indispensable sociality that the freelancers are to possess to be able to thrive, or even more basically, to exist. So, dependency of the independent freelancer to her network is covered over, with the projection that she bears the sole or ultimate responsibility for her work and existence.

I scrutinize the implications of such representations of the individual freelancer and the forms of sociality involved in freelancing. I believe the responsibilization of the self-sufficient freelancer for her work and employability comes about with a conception of sociality as a network of pure intersubjectivity,

rendered free of conflicts or dependency.[24] A plethora of issues such as competition, inequality of skills, knowledge or various forms of social, cultural or economic capital or relations of indebtedness which ensue from the interpersonalization of employment relations[25] are covered over with a discourse which proclaims that the freelancer can work with anyone she wants; however, wherever and whenever she wants it. The spatio-temporal imaginary here attributes the freelancer the quality of reigning supreme over her conditions.

I argue that this thinking of the subject outside time and space involves an idealization of a perverse relation to sociality, marked by an indifference to one's surroundings and a disavowal of any form of lack in the subject or the social. I use the term with reference to its psychoanalytical appropriations in an attempt to understand the enforced sovereignty of the freelancer. The discourses of freelancing in a plethora of media suggest that the freelancer is capable and has the full responsibility for her self-sufficiency, which is a pre-condition of success. Yet, she needs nothing but one thing: network. Skills and knowledge are not enough for success. The discourse of network suggests that she needs to be in "contact" with certain people to get somewhere. In networks, she does not forge "relations" with a long-term commitment and an acknowledgement of the lack in oneself and one's

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[24] For a detailed account of the construction of employability norms, see Ebru Işıklı's thesis *The Role of the Private Employment Agencies in the Making of Employability in Turkey* (2016), which analyzes the role of private employment agencies in the construction and spreading of such norms in the context of Turkey. The unemployed are held responsible for their employability, which is measured by the behavioral characteristics of job seekers. Işıklı argues private employment agencies create norms for character formation and thus, determine whom to exclude from the job market, which has an impact on the job seeking strategies of workers. Besides checking whether the worker is "doing what she loves" as her job, Işıklı's thesis shows how the agencies use character inventories to evaluate the personality traits of the workers and modulate the conflicts in the workplace by employing people who would be neither in total harmony nor in total antagonism to the "company culture". Conflict is to be evaded while a "vital social environment" is targeted by the bringing together of people with different personalities (pp. 178-9).

[25] Freelancers often find work by means of other freelancers or find work for their friends and acquaintances, a process that makes the employment relation interpersonal. In the workshop titled "How do we find work?" organized with freelancers on 13 May 2016 in *Dünyada Mekân*, we discussed how this created a feeling of indebtedness and a difficulty of demanding proper and timely payment.

surrounding. Instead, others are to be approached strategically as potential or actual valuable resources.

I claim that the discourse on networking involves a conception of social relations in terms of "mutualism". I use the term "mutualism" since it points to the naturalization of the form of "relations" where no one lacks or could lose anything as thriving is the only process the subject is supposed to undergo.[26] Mutualistic discourse involves an imaginary of intersubjective relations without the weight of such entangling bonds as loss, debt, sacrifice or conflict. The parties of the relation are claimed to be more or less equal, making transactions in a relation of win-win. We have a disavowal of social interdependence and antagonism at stake here. The subject is imagined to be without lack and production and its organization is imagined to be a never ending but smooth process, the outcome of which is rationally dispensed with for further growth and/or development. I refer to it as a disavowal to illustrate the indispensability of the contribution of the others from the very beginning of the production process. Freelancers are dependent on their networks or communities to find work, to negotiate and manage the working conditions such as workload, deadlines or payment and to learn and be updated about the developments in their industry. In the absence of a definite boss organizing the workload and relations at the workplace, freelancer undertakes the work of forging the *relations* of production.

I first elaborate on the structure of the discourses which constitute the freelancer as a sovereign figure of the present, drawing mainly on the Foucault's work on neoliberal subjectivity. Foucault's conception of neoliberal subjectivity refers to the construction of the subject and the social in terms of entrepreneurship.

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[26] In *Burnout Society*, Byung-Chul Han (2015) terms this as an "excess of positivity", pointing to the overwhelming consequences of loss of negativity, such as depression, auto-aggression, and tiredness, in what he calls "achievement society" of the present.

Freelancers also occupy an ambivalent relation to the discourses and practices of entrepreneurship. For that reason, I want to think of freelancing in relation to the start-up entrepreneurs who also are posited to have undergone a break with the ordinariness of a 9-6 job. I will not give a detailed account of start-ups; however, I will think them in comparison with the experience of freelancing to expound on the specificity of the form of entrepreneurship promoted in the latter. A detailed scrutiny of start-ups and the experiences of their owners merit greater focus, which exceeds the scope of this thesis.

My point is that freelancing is a much more complex phenomenon than being the result of, or involving simple sovereign decision-making. Flourishing avenues to freelancing as well as to start-upping could be considered as responses to the problems of the ordinary work relations. Here, the agent of the response is not easy to define once and for all. One the one hand, non-standard work relations are claimed to work for the benefit of capital as it gets rid of many of the incurring costs. On the other hand, freelancers or start-uppers also seem to desire a break away from the tedium and fatigue of a 9-6 job. Yet, all freelancers do not want to freelance actually. At the same time, whether working from home is profitable for the companies is still being debated.[27] So, instead of seeing freelancing as a planned response by capital to its crisis or a conscious decision on the part of the freelancers, I would like to point to the messiness of freelancing for both agents considered. I believe this perspective could make the organization of freelancing open to ethico-political interventions.

In the second part of the chapter, I dwell on the presuppositions of the utilitarian discourse of "mutualism", which operates to naturalize the prevalent perception of networking as pure intersubjectivity in freelancing. I argue that

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[27] For example IBM, which has been famous for its remote work practices, has recently called its workers back to the office (see, https://qz.com/924167/ibm-remote-work-pioneer-is-calling-thousands-of-employees-back-to-the-office/, retrieved on 22 January 2018).

"mutualism" discourse works for the disavowal of social "interdependence", which requires an acknowledgement of the (class and non-class) antagonism inherent to sociality. The subject of disavowal here is advised to think strategically in relation to the people and resources in the network. The network is represented as open to the more or less equal participation of every aspiring freelancer, which also covers over the exclusionary mechanisms underlining the network most of the time.[28] I utilize the concept of "perversion" to understand the idealization of the kind of relating to the social at stake here.

2.2 Sovereignty of the precarious

2.2.1 Neoliberal subjectivity

Foucault argues that while classical political economy analyzed the structural relations of production, exchange and consumption, neoliberals argued for a theory of "substitutable choices" (Foucault, 2008, p. 222). This shift coincides with a shift of focus from exchange to competition (Read, 2009, p. 25). In liberalism, the subject was a subject of rights and freedoms and freedom was a possession of the individual to be protected as well as the foundation of his/her rational transaction in the market. Limitation of the state power was a question since the government needed not violate that freedom which was considered to be pregiven and needed protection as the "technical precondition for rational government" (Lemke, 2001, p. 200). However, in neoliberalism, there emerges a different conception of freedom and hence a different conception of economy and sociality. Freedom is not some pre-given natural, but something to be fostered and promoted with the purpose of cultivating responsible

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[28] One of the interviewees who had a start-up translation company expressed her disillusionment when she discovered that the network promised to her in a commercial co-working space was actually made up of people with similar class backgrounds.

actors who respond to incentives given in a non-random way (Foucault, 2008, p. 269).[29]

Thomas Lemke (2001) rightly asserts that in neoliberalism, freedom does not naturally reside in the subject but is to be promoted with governmental mechanisms. He also argues that in neoliberalism, economy is not simple a sphere among other spheres in society. It is posited to involve a rationality which structures all realms of life since neoliberal governmentality does away with the separation of the public and private, which was a founding notion of classical liberalism. The subject is deemed as a manipulable being in neoliberal thought; its reacts "rationally" to the changes in its environment (Lemke, 2001, p. 200). Hence, it can be rendered free and responsible via the utilization of certain technologies. Foucault's conceptualization of the "technologies of the self" refer to this governing of the subjects through "indirect techniques for leading and controlling individuals without at the same time being responsible for them" (Lemke, 2001, p. 201).[30] Freedom brings a heavy responsibility on the part of the subject; no one but she is now responsible for being ill, unemployed or poor.

The conception of freedom in question here involves a conception of competition as the organizing logic of socio-economic relations and a conception of the subject as capable and willing to act rationally to make the most suitable choice

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[29] Foucault's important point here is that the figure of the homo-economicus on which the narrative of neoliberal rationality is grounded need not be rational to be the object of economic analysis. In fact, any conduct which accepts the reality and reacts to the changes in it in a non-random way can be seen as rational conduct (Foucault, 2004, p. 269).

[30] In fact, Foucault's work points to the co-existence of three forms of power which could be operating in tandem in differing configurations in various settings. Nikolas Rose succinctly summarizes the mode of operation of these powers, claiming that while disciplinary power individualizes and normalizes, bio-power collectivizes and socializes. Finally, ethico-politics produces self-techniques necessary for responsible self-government and is concerned with one's obligations to oneself and others (Rose, 2004, p. 188). Freelancing also involves the co-working of disciplinary, bio-political and ethico-political discourses, which are scrutinized in the present and the following chapter. Briefly put, the discourse of freedom involves an individualizing function while the discourses on "networking" attempt to construct a utilitarian conception of sociality. Finally, the plethora of self-help sources on how to go freelancing offer guidance on questions of how to relate to one's self and the other.

in accordance with her interests.[31] Consequently, we are to analyze labor in terms of how the person who works uses the means available to him/her. We will have to study "work as economic conduct practiced, implemented, rationalized, and calculated by the person who works" (Lemke, 2001, p. 223). "What does working mean for the person who works?" Here, wage is not the price of labor power but a source of income, simply a return on a capital. Capital is anything that can be a source of future income (p. 224). The worker here is a machine/stream of earnings, the value of which changes according to a set of variables (age, skills etc.). Here, labor power turns into "capital-ability". The worker is a sort of enterprise for herself. Economic analysis is not to focus on individuals, mechanism and processes but enterprises: "An economy made up of enterprise-units, a society made up of enterprise-units, is at once the principle of decipherment linked to liberalism and its programming for the rationalization of a society and an economy." (p. 225)

Drawing on Foucault, Jason Read argues that both neoliberal discourse and Marxism respond to the need to look into the question of the creation of capital, "the hidden abode of production". However, no sooner the neoliberals introduce the concept of labor than the difference between labor and capital is effaced via the theory of human capital (2009, p. 31). Quoting Etienne Balibar, he argues that "the capitalist is defined as worker, as an 'entrepreneur'; the worker, as the bearer of a

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[31] Lemke rightly asserts that in Foucault's narrative, the question of competition concerned the Ordo-liberals for the most part, who were concerned with the monopolizing tendencies under capitalism. On the other hand, the Chicago school of neoliberalism focuses on the question of *homo economicus* as it involves the spread of economic rationality to spheres of life which were considered non-economic. Recently, Madra and Adaman (2014) argued that post-war neoliberalism had a more complex and heterogeneous "interdiscursive horizon", with positions varying across a spectrum of pro-market to post-market approaches. They argue that the multiplicity at stake here refers to the increasing hegemony of the neoliberal logic which is now taken for granted despite its failures. They claim that the debate among the three fundamental approaches- Chicago, Austrian and post-Walrasian- have had different responses to the crisis we have been living in since 2008 but they all share the premise that individuals respond to incentives and opportunity in a non-random manner.
I do not aim at a thorough analysis of the school(s) of neoliberalism operating in the sphere of freelancing. I focus primarily on the subjectivity of freelancers and the specificities of the freedom they are promised and utilize the concept of *homo economicus* as an enterprising figure to that end.

capacity, of a human capital." So, the difference between capital and labor is effaced. The kind of subject portrayed in these accounts is to be independent, self-reliant, motivated, ready to take risks, constantly seeking self-transcendence and managing itself. In Foucauldian terms, the self is to be an entrepreneur of herself; we need to treat ourselves as enterprises and keep investing rationally in ourselves. The neoliberal promise seems to suggest that no one is actually a worker anymore. We are all entrepreneurs. There are no bosses or workers. Class conflict has been resolved.

2.2.2 The freedom of freelancing

The question at that point is: what makes us overtake this responsibility? How have we come to accept responsibility for things for which we were not held fully responsible before? In current discourses as to freelancing, freelancers are not simply made to believe that they are always-already free. Freedom under the neoliberal conditions of freelancing seems to be both a pre-condition and an object of enjoyment promised in return for sacrifices specific to the post-2008 crisis era. *Homo economicus* is a not simply a grid of intelligibility in hegemonic neoliberal discourses of freelancing. It involves a grid of hope as the previous notions of "good life" seem to fade away.[32] As freedom, instead of security, is promised in return for

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[32] Lauren Berlant (2011) scrutinizes the affective reorientation of subjects under neoliberal conditions of insecurity, attending to the way they relate to the fraying fantasies of "good life". The good life fantasies of the post-war era involved "enduring reciprocity in couples, families, political systems, institutions, markets and at work" (2011, p. 2). She argues that with the crushing of these fantasies, adjustment becomes accomplishment enabled by what she calls "cruel optimism".
On the other hand, Berlant also claims that the fraying of such fantasies of good life result in "a mass dissolution of a disavowal" as "the good life no longer masks the living precarity of this historical present." (p. 196). She seems to suggest this as the ground for a reinvention of political practice, based not on heroic conceptions of resistance but on the quotidian scenes of survival in the present (p. 262). I find her account of the subjects' relation to precarity inspiring in that regard. However, I suggest we now have a different conception of "good life", marked by partly new disavowals, with a different conception of time and space. So, I suggest the freelancer as a figure of precarity that inhabits the anxiety ensuing from the waning of fantasies of reciprocity and the enforcement of sovereignty as a way to freedom. The cost of this being torn between two fantasies on the part of the subject will be expounded on in the next chapter.

work, it sounds plausible, or even desirable, to let go of the conveniences of a 9-6 job.

Freedom is an important promise in the imagery of the good life offered to freelancers. What kind of freedom is at stake here? It seems to be the freedom from the routine and tedium of an office job. The variety of problems at the workplace, such as heavy workload and unpaid overtime, insufficient payment, performance pressure, or mobbing, are worded into problems of routine. Freedom of freelancing lies in getting rid of the tedium of the office and discovering one's true potentials. It also means to discover the world, enabling the freedom to work wherever, whenever, however and with whomever. So, here freedom is not something that resides in the subject and needs protection, but is something that the subject is to build for herself with a lot of effort and sacrifices via navigating different insecure/flexible forms of working. Freedom here involves malleability; the malleability of the subject, work and the future. The subject's relation to herself, her work and the future are all open to constant shaping and innovation.

So, instead of a teleologically growing enterprise, we have various projects or work, the content as well as the form of which can be changed at any point. The self is a malleable being thanks to the variety of life-long learning and socializing opportunities. Investment in the self is still a pre-condition here, but we do not necessarily have a cumulative conception of investment at stake. The reason is that the freelancer is primarily a subject of risk; at any moment in life, she can as well take the risk to dispose of the skills or knowledge she has accumulated in life and start learning something new, realizing her dream to be someone else by changing the job she does or the city she lives and works in.[33]

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[33] A variety of such stories could be found in blogs and vlogs run by freelancers as well as co-working spaces. Here is an example story about an engineer becoming an illustrator, interviewed by another

Imre Szeman claims that entrepreneurship constitutes a new "common sense", constituting the neoliberal subject par excellence (2015, p. 473). In the absence of formal and informal security, it makes the existing situation not only bearable but also exciting. I understand that insecurity is here embraced and demanding security is implicitly equated with conformism. As this discourse constitutes a common sense, Szeman argues that it does not exist only in Silicon Valley, but also in the informal economy, do-it-yourself currents; "the hawkers, importers, bootleggers, market merchants, restaurateurs, scavengers, mechanics" etc.[34] We could see freelancers as among the figures supposed to carry that entrepreneurial spirit. However, I believe the freelancers does not simply carry, but is expected to spread the entrepreneurial discourse, functioning to promise freedom in insecurity. The reason is freelancing is frequently represented as a consciously planned choice, not something that could arise out of necessity- for e.g. when you are laid off or need money for your studies. To "go freelancing", you should invest in your skills and take the risk, abandoning the comforts of your 9-6 job.[35] Instead of demanding reparations for, or even complaining about the routine, the workload, unpaid overtime or the lack of recognition in the workplace, you should pursue your freedom. On the path to freedom, Szeman argues, not only risk, but also failure is

freelancer who blogs about the liberating experience of quitting her office job: http://elvedaofis.com/2014/09/ilham-verici-roportajlar-11-muhendislikten-illustratorluge/ (retrieved on 22 January, 2018).

[34] For an example that portrays the life-building activities of the poor as "entrepreneurship", see "Barefoot entrepreneurs", Imas et. al, in *Organization*, *19*(5) 563-585, 2012. The authors account for the stories of the "marginalized" people of Ghana, showing how they start small and with persistence, end up running their own business. This survivalist success story is framed as an alternative to postcolonial narrative in which " the rich stay rich and the poor continue to stay marginalized and invisible (in the economic system) (579). The lack of a critical scrutiny as to the neoliberal discourse of entrepreneurship leads to a romantic portrayal of those the authors deem to be the marginalized.

[35] There is a vast self-help literature giving advice as to how to "go freelancing", which gives the feeling that it is similar to "setting up business". While individual freelancers also venture into writing books or setting up blogs to give advices on the various aspects of freelancing, accounts of freelancers from a variety of industries are also put together, possibly to show that freelancing is "going mainstream". For a recent example to the latter, see *Anywhere* (2017), which is claimed to have been published as a free e-book with the contribution of more than 100 remote workers.

embraced in the entrepreneurial discourse. "Try, fail and try again and fail better" is the motto.

However, despite sharing many similarities with the figures Szeman mentions in terms of the entrepreneurial spirit, the discourses on the freedom of freelancing bear some specificities. There seems to be two narratives regarding the relation between investment in the self and freedom at stake here. In the first narrative, freelancing is yet another form of enterprise, expected to grow into a start-up company or business.[36] In the second narrative, the freedom of freelancing is supposed to involve a form of nonchalance with respect to the world and indulgence in one's passions and desires.[37] The first narrative seems to involve a classical example of teleological growth narrative under capitalism, while the second promises a seemingly novel form of sovereignty in the freedom of being outside time and history.

So, besides the embracing of risk and failure, we have an erasure of time and history in the hegemonic neoliberal representations of the relation of the freelancer to the world around. Freelancers and their relations are assumed to take place "freely", outside the constrictions of time and place. There seems to be an assumption that

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[36] The statements of one of the managers of a co-working space in Istanbul are exemplary in this respect. He claims that freelancers can be seen as crawling babies and when they start their own companies, they start to walk. The next stage is to look for an investor who will enable the company to grow. So, the imaginary is that everyone can actually start a company and grow if everything goes well. He argues that their space is aimed at contributing to the development of such start-ups especially, rejecting the request of large corporations to join the co-working space to prevent the closure of the space to smaller ones. However, he still argues that the aim should be to grow all the same. Creativity is posited to be possible in smaller collaborative networks but the imperative to grow still reigns supreme as a sign of success.

[37] This comparison was brought to my attention by an entrepreneur who has a start-up company doing semi-structured research on new lifestyles to provide design consultancy for various organizations and businesses. Our conversation revealed that both freelancers and people who start their own businesses could be escaping from the limitations of the corporate life on one's work and body. She stated that she was happy to leave the corporate politics behind, working on real problems, making her own decision and contributing to the economy directly. She claims that working for one's account, she could take hold of the quality of the outcomes and work ethically at the same time.

On the other hand, she stated that she had less mobility than freelancers as she has a legal personality, which has tax responsibilities and has the possibility to grow. She claimed that freelancers had a more "individualistic lifestyle", while entrepreneurs had broader commitments, though still being able to work wherever they wanted.

freelancers can work wherever, whenever, however and with whomever they want.

Furthermore, their relations are not hindered by the weight of personal and collective

histories or places either. The city in which she works is not important either; she

could simply move to another city and work and have a life-long holiday if she

desires.[38] No strings attached to personal relations or the city, which could be

destroyed by the forces of capital. Nonchalance seems to be the target as cities and

people are rendered disposable on short-term contracts.

2.3 The sovereign indifference of the freelancer

So, in the reigning representations of freelancing, freedom is regarded as being freed

from temporal, spatial or relational idiosyncrasies. To achieve such a sovereignty

over their own spatio-temporal existence, freelancers are to adopt an objectivizing

attitude with regard to their selves and an indifferent approach in relation to their

surrounding world.[39] Here, I specifically name it "indifference" since I see it as

different from "disinterest". Freelancers are advised to attend to the opportunities

surrounding them. That means they should show an interest to the people they meet

or the places they need to visit to establish specific networks.[40] However, this interest

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[38] Besides "co-working" spaces addressed at remote workers, there seems to emerge a "co-living" current as well. Located in a coastal town in Spain, Sun-Co.- coliving and coworking community is an example to it. It offers both accommodation and co-working spaces, enabling networking by "workation", to work on vacation. CoWoLi (www.cowoli.com/coliving) and Nomad List (www.nomadlist.io) both rank and review many such places across the world.

[39] Jones and Murtola's argument as to the expropriatory function of the entrepreneur is relevant in that regard. Arguing that production is constituted in and constitutive of the common, they argue that the figure of the entrepreneur and the discourse of innovation work to expropriate it by individualizing and attributing the outcome of any production to the entrepreneur (2012, p. 647). In this way, they argue the entrepreneur functions as an "apparatus of capture" of the flows of labor, consumption, communication and desire, which make up and are productive of the common (p. 645).

We understand that the entrepreneur in their account represents a transhistorical process of primitive accumulation in capitalism. I believe this subject is not only represented to be outside time and place, but also is to see herself as such. In other words, she can be successful insofar as she extricates herself from time and space, from the commitments and memories of entanglement.

[40] One of the interviewees put the cost of this imperative to network pertinently, "you need to visit certain places to sustain certain networks. The big names of the industry go to that bar after the

assumes that the freelancer reigns over her conditions. In other words, she is assumed to be in control of her conditions, meaning that the specificities of the material conditions do not necessarily have an impact on them. I prefer to call it "indifference" to refer to the condition of being inattentive to specificities and differences of subjectivities and conditions, differences "not mattering". To realize her goals, freelancer could anyway work wherever, whenever and with whomever she desires.

How could we understand this indifference? I believe we may deploy a psychoanalytical take on perversion to understand the kind of subjectivity idealized and promoted in such hegemonic neoliberal discourses on the sovereignty of the freelancer. Lacanian accounts of perversion point to the mechanism of disavowal as its distinctive quality, which involves the co-existence of denial and acknowledgement in the subject. Octave Mannoni famously summarizes this split of consciousness as "I know very well, but just the same . . ." (quoted in Copjec, 2002, p. 221). Similarly, I propose we see a simultaneous acknowledgement and denial of interdependence and difference in the hegemonic neoliberal discourses as to "networking", addressed at freelancers and start-up entrepreneurs. This disavowal calls the freelancer to sovereignty, which involves an imperative to exercise freedom regardless of the spatio-temporal complexities. The reigning insecurity and constant state of crisis seem to be covered over as stability is sought in the myth of the self-sufficient freelancer.

To understand the implications of this disavowal, we need to have a further exploration of its operation. Bruce Fink argues that in perversion, the subject is

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exhibition and it is an expensive bar. You just buy a beer, acting as if you don't like drinking. After hanging around there for an hour, I would go to the cheap bar and continue drinking." Here, money becomes an intimate issue and its lack is interpreted as a sign of weakness, hence disrupting the image of sovereign independent worker.

alienated in the symbolic but does not undergo separation from the mOther because the desire of the Other is not symbolized. Fink argues that this has to do with the inadequacy of the paternal function, which produces an anxiety-ridden relation with the Other on the part of the subject (2003, p. 48). Once named with various possible objects, the desire of the Other gains a metonymic quality and hence, opens up a space of relief on the part of the subject. However, for the pervert, the Other's desire is not named and hence, he is left with the anxiety of being engulfed by it. To put a limit to it, Fink argues that the pervert subject constantly attempts to pronounce the law or puts himself in the position of the law in an attempt to bring about anxiety-relieving separation (p. 48). He argues that the Other's desire/lack is anxiety-producing and the pervert's response to that is to offer himself as the object *a* for it, and hence covering over the lack (p. 50).[41]

Fink claims that the weakness of the paternal function could have to do with the change in gender norms in contemporary world, which he argues to be helpful in understanding the prevalence of perversion. However, I do shy away from making such overarching and historicist claims as to the causes of perversion; instead, I limit the analysis with respect to its operation as one of the different ways of responding to

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[41] To understand the specificity of perverse structure, we need a brief account of Lacanian conception of the subject in relation to the fundamental clinical structures in psychoanalysis. Bruce Fink (1997) provides a systematic Lacanian account of the moments related to the emergence of the subject of desire. The subject of language and desire emerges in relation to the Other, as a result of what Fink emphasizes to be two distinct moments: alienation and separation. The first moment of alienation occurs when the child perceives that it is not in contiguity with the mOther as a result of the prohibition of the father. The child comes to the conclusion that the mOther is lacking something, but what she wants is not yet named. This naming occurs in the moment of separation with the institution of father's name, which refers to the moment of the pronouncement of law.

Clinical structures have to do with those moments of negation. Psychosis is a result of foreclosure, in which the subject undergoes neither alienation nor separation. The unsuccessful establishment of the paternal function leads to the "imaginarization" of the symbolic, and an inability to create metaphors. As a result, while both the neurotics and psychotics can report hallucinations, what distinguishes the psychotic is the certainty, which marks their account while the neurotic's is marked by doubt. On the other hand, perversion has to do with the inability to name the mOther's desire, resulting in the lack of a lack, which generates anxiety for the pervert. The pervert constantly tries to deal with this anxiety by propping up the law, and hence, setting limits to *jouissance*.

insecurity in contemporary capitalism. The previous narratives as to "good life" seem

to fade away; many of the freelancers I have interviewed could not imagine being

retired or state a more or less teleological narrative as to the present and future of

their lives.[42] So, the symbolic order and the signifiers offered to justify going to work

every day and doing one's job properly seem to be ambiguous if not totally non-

existent. In that case, maybe it is the subject that has to assume the function of the

law and produce her own reasons and justifications. The subject has to produce

answers to "what does the Other want from me?" in her own way if not enough

objects are offered to that end. Therefore, in their narratives, some freelancers also

sounded as if they were the creator or planner of their lives, explaining their

condition of being a freelancer as having been the result of their more or less

deliberate choices.

On the other hand, the psychoanalytical accounts on perversion also make us

question whether the sovereignty promoted here could cater for the production of

some subjectivity.[43] The reigning discourses on freelancing and other insecure forms

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[42] Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman's critical debate as to the fantasmatic structure of teleological narratives could be helpful to understand the problem with such accounts. They argue the structure of teleological narratives invokes "optimism", which Edelman defines as "orientation toward a future, toward something always yet to come, conceived as bestowing a value on life by way of the future anterior, by way of the life one *will have lived"* (2014, p. 2). In that regard, they both agree that teleological narrative "silences and immures" and we need an alternative orientation to narrative (p. 108).
However, they diverge in their approach to narrative and optimism. While Edelman claims that "story" and narrative itself always already involves a form of optimism, which covers over the radical negativity of drives and creates subordination, Berlant argues she is not that radical in her critique of optimism. She suggests the narrative form may be used to utopian ends and she says she is a utopian while Edelman is not (p. 5). She also claims she is interested in optimism as a mode of attachment to life, which I understand could be among the affective potentialities which can serve radical purposes here and now.
[43] The question of subjectivity is at stake in this case. There is disagreement as to whether the current hegemonic discourses lead to subjectivation or an objectivation of the subject. Matthew Flisfeder (2015) has recently criticized the Foucauldian conception of human capital as the grounds of subjectivity, claiming that we have actually an objectivization of the self with the spreading of social media. The hegemonic discourses on freelancing promoting sovereignty also seem to involve a waning of subjectivity. However, we could also exempt from attributing too much of an intentionality as well as power to the circulating discourses on freelancing. Attending to the complexity of the experiences of freelancers convinced me as to the co-existence of both tendencies at varying intensities. Such details of the freelancing experience will be laid out in the following chapter.

of employment involve a promotion of the kind of sovereignty that ensues from this imperative to be a self-fashioning and self-sufficient subject. The sovereignty of this subject is based on a disavowal of the lack in the Other, which involves the coexistence of contradictory ideas in the same subject. Copjec argues that this actually involves an attempt to avoid the very status of the subject by avoiding the very split that characterize the neurotic subject. I understand this understanding of forgoing of subjectivity in perversion has to do with the psychoanalytical conception of the subject in the first place. Psychoanalytic accounts position the subject in the non-correspondence between the symbolic and the real, and hence, open up a space of action on the part of the subject. The subject of desire is never totally subsumable to the symbolic as its being cannot be stabilized in the field of representation. The untamable *jouissance*, which attaches itself to the subject as an "inalienable alienness" (Copjec, 2009, p. 178), renders any attempt of subordination of the subject into the symbolic (culture or social order in general) only tentative at best.

In perversion, however, there is no antinomy between law and desire or conscious and unconscious, which seems to involve a foregoing of subjectivity (Copjec, 2002: 221). So, instead of an ethico-political *subject* who questions the Other and attempts to navigate its relation to it, we have the promotion of being a *sovereign* with all sorts of answers, strategies, rules and regulations as to how to thrive or survive in freelancing. It is no wonder that this sovereign needs the self-help literature, which involves a constant attempt to regulate the chaos of navigating work and life under crisis-ridden conditions of survival. Copjec argues that the pervert abhors the uncertainties and vagueness of the symbolic, and hence, relates to the others in terms of contracts, which spell out ambiguities, enabling him to maintain his unquestioning relation to the law (p. 222). We could say the plethora of

blogs, vlogs and self-help work produced by and for freelancers serve to cover over the very lack of any clarity as to what the present or the future holds for the freelancer.[44]

This abhorrence of the ambiguities of the symbolic results in a seemingly transgressive relation to it on the part of the pervert. The reason is that the pervert supposes to have a direct access to truth, "dispelling all the ambiguity of speech, he is able to act directly as the instrument of the big Other's will" (Zizek, 2006, p. 127). This seems to be at the root of accounts that identify perversion with transgression. On the other hand, Kirsten Hyldgaard (2004) aptly explicates how the disavowal of lack in perversion results in a conformist relation with the Other. She claims that the pervert covers over that lack both in the Other and the others with knowledge. He does not desire but knows, evading the question "What does the Other want?" by pretending to know the answer already. Hence, she claims the pervert could be a humble savant serving science as well as a political leader, "an abject tool in the hands of the Other". Hyldgaard suggests that is why instead of seeing the pervert as a subject of transgression, we are to problematize his conformism.

This explanation of the relation between transgression and conformism could guide us to understand the conformity of the entrepreneurial subjectivity as well. Andrew Pendakis claims that the entrepreneurial subject is also expected to have a transgressive attitude towards his/her self and the order of things in general. The entrepreneurs are not simply to bring novelty, but are to found a new order, to invent something totally new (Pendakis, 2015, p. 601). However, Pendakis claims that they

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[44] Lauren Berlant and Lee Edelman (2014) also associate the status of the subject with nonsovereignty. They define nonsovereignty as the subject's "constitutive division" which prevents her from "fully knowing or being in control" of herself and lead to her misrecognition of their own motives and desires (p. viii). The subject's encounter with her nonsovereignty is marked by negativity, which they define as "psychic and social incoherences and divisions, conscious and unconscious alike that trouble any totality or fixity of identity" (p. viii). They claim negativity is the force which unsettles the fantasy of sovereignty and hence, allows for the possibility of change.

end up with producing forms or relations changed in barely detectable extends. Similarly, freelancers are advised to offer unique services and bring a unique approach to their work. But mostly importantly, they are promised, or actually impelled, to build a unique lifestyle, a life outside the life bound by time and history. In this way, they are not to attend to the concomitant problems, conflicts, lacks or losses that the existing order contains. They are encouraged to make the laws of their own life, fashion it as they wish. They are then supposed to share the rules they follow to achieve a sovereign form of freedom with fellow freelancers in the form of self-help books and blog articles, giving other freelancers tips about how to supreme over one's conditions. In other words, the transgressive attitude freelancers are encouraged to adopt in reigning supreme over their conditions actually operates to adapt the freelancer to the constant condition of crisis emanating from the lack of income and social security.

Hyldgaard's account (2004) is also informative in terms of the pervert's relation to others. While he practices sovereignty to cover over the lack of the Other, I understand he engages in a utilitarian indifference towards others to cover over the lack structuring their as well as his desire. Hyldgaard claims that the pervert, unlike the neurotic, does not experience a conflict between law and desire. Instead, in his pursuit of happiness, the only conflict he experiences is the one between other subjects' equally self-transparent pursuits of happiness. In other words, the only conflict is conflict of interest between rational subjects who are in control and aware of what their interests entail. So, the subject of disavowal supposes to know what the Other wants, she himself wants as well as what the others are after. There are no questions, and hence, no source of conflict or ambiguity to worry about.

The brief account here could guide us to paint a tentative picture of the kind of sovereignty that the freelancer is expected to embrace and practice. Freelancer is to regard herself outside history and place, has a strategic and utilitarian relation to the world, the others and her very self and seeks constant self-transcendence. This sovereignty is possible based on the operation of the disavowal of the lack on the part of both the subject and the Other. So, we do not have an ontological take on difference which emanates from the lack and the concomitant impossibility to stabilize the subject's relation to her self, or her community. Instead, we have a specific conception of difference in terms of possession. Here, differences are like things to be possessed and things which can be quantified or qualified in terms of skill-sets, can-dos and know-hows, which are valuable as long as they have market value.[45] This taming of difference involves the fantasy that differences can be stabilized in clearly definable signifiers.

I believe this possessive conception of difference works to cover over two kinds of difference. First, it covers over class differences. Freelancers inhabit a variety of class positions and could undergo a variety of class processes, which involve different ways to organize the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labor (Resnick and Wolff, 2006, p. 135). They could be self-employed, with negotiation power over the surplus. They could be workers working by the hour for an intermediary company. They could be hiring or working together with other

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[45] Esra Erdem's critique of a city marketing campaign in Berlin is inspiring in that regard. Erdem argues that the diversity that the campaign claims to represent is articulated in terms of firm size, product range or ethnic composition of the work force and reduces heterogeneity to variations within capitalism (2014, p. 65). This renders non-capitalist forms of production and non-market exchange invisible. Similarly, the discourse of freedom as to freelancing seems to open up space for difference in terms of our being able to work wherever and whenever we want and under terms and conditions which we could arrange differently. By attending to this discourse, I attempt to illustrate how it effaces class differences as well as different subjective relations to work. However, I also look into our affective investments in the promises of this discourse of freedom which contributes to the invisibility at stake.

freelancers in temporary projects. They could be both full-time workers and doing freelance work on the side. In all these positions, they could inhabit capitalist, independent or communal class processes.

So, the discourse of indifference provides a homogenizing representation of the socio-economic space as fundamentally capitalist. The need to see one's relations with others, one's skills as well as one's relation to space in terms of possession requires that we take it for granted that the market logic is the organizing logic of sociality. It involves seeing one's self, skills and relations with others as one's capital, and investment in them a way to make profit. In other words, freelancers are imagined not to be workers laboring under conditions of insecurity and instability to earn income, but as entrepreneurs of themselves who invest in their selves and relations to make profit.

The discourse of indifference also involves a homogenizing discourse as to the desires of freelancers. In freelancer's accounts, we actually see a multiplicity in terms of their relation to what they do for a living. However, the mainstream representation of freelancing provides a teleological narrative, which posits freelancing as the beginning of becoming an entrepreneur. To that end, the freelancer is to invest in herself to develop the necessary or distinctive skills needed to increase its market value. Furthermore, she needs to sacrifice her self or relinquish many of the all-too-familiar comforts of a 9-6 job.[46] All her efforts are to serve the accomplishment of whatever project she has in mind. In this endeavor, both her self and the other selves with whom she is to engage in networks of mutual benefit are

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[46] The familiar comforts of a full-time job are also argued to be a thing of the past with the precarization of white-collar work in general. The feeling of security of a life-long career is replaced by the anxiety produced by the obligation of "life-long learning" (Gregg, 2010, p. 251). However, the discourses on freelancing seemingly attempt to keep such a fantasmatic image of full-time job as secure to praise the risk taking attitude of freelancers and other flexible/insecure employment conditions.

imagined in possessive terms. Here, the self seems to be imagined as a self-contained property and the way in which it will be dispensed with is at its own disposal. In networks of freelancing, people are supposed to engage in "business transactions", putting their skills and knowledge together in a harmonious and conflict-free manner to accomplish a project.

2.4 The discourse of mutualism in network

I believe the imagery of pure intersubjectivity we trace here involves a disavowal of "social interdependence". [47] It is consequential to the production of a discourse of indifference in that the discourse of "network" treats subjects as nodes to benefit from in the realization of a project. The enterprising subjects are to focus on the skills and knowledge of the others they encounter, and hence, take relief from the question of the singularity of their desire. This utilitarian objectivizing attitude towards the others not only results in an erasure of their differences, but it also leads to a disavowal of the subject's co-implication with them. I propose, in discourses as to networking, there is a simultaneous acknowledgement and denial of the need for a relation with others. This contradictory discourse of socialization ends up with the further responsibilization of the subject in insecurity. The reason is that the network is not actually responsible for the subject's well-being; instead, it is the subject's responsibility to carve out a space in it. So, the need for others is acknowledged but is put as a responsibility, denying the dimension of entanglement in any community.

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[47] I draw on Gibson-Graham's conceptualization of interdependence in their work on community economies in that regard. It is not employed to suggest a positive ontology to sociality; rather it is used as an empty signifier aimed at keeping the space of decision open in the realm of economic practices (Madra and Özselçuk, 2015, p. 135). In this space, abilities and needs do not coincide, are always up for negotiation and redistribution.

I believe the disavowal of social interdependence can be traced in a specific discourse of "mutualism" I have encountered in the account of a manager of a co-working space in Istanbul. He argues that they have created an "eco-system" in which different agents- such as investors, creative agencies, corporations, service provider professionals, start-ups and freelancers- are always open to collaboration and benefit from each other in relations of win-win. He says, "Imagine it like the ecosystem in nature, all living beings, all those who live in it feed on each other." He claimed that this ecosystem would be unaffected by the crises or transformations of the economy in Turkey as well, as it is relatively autonomous with respect to the national economy. The connections of the agents with each other and their connections with the global markets in general would render it immune to the depreciatory effects of national crises or economic/political problems. "Networking" as a fundamental link which seems to be replacing formal securities is imagined as such a relation of mutualism. Freelancers are to establish relations and engage in networks which would benefit them in finding gigs, projects, establishing contacts, ensuring the security of payment etc. The parties of such relations are claimed to all benefit from each other as if it were an "eco-system", in the words of the manager above.

To begin with, we need to distinguish mutualism from interdependence to understand the working of the disavowal at stake. In mutualism, subjects are taken to be pre-constituted individuals without lack. The engagement with the other takes place for the further improvement of the subject who is imagined to be not lacking. The subject is complete in its potentials and knows what she wants as well as what is required to realize her project. Furthermore, there is an assumption of pure intersubjectivity as conflicts, the risks involved or the relations of debt are not

mentioned. The co-working spaces I have visited think about the issue of how to mediate those relations of networking; however, still the imaginary is that bringing people together in "social events" would suffice for them to build the necessary relations. Or, they establish directories which are open to community members and which represent the members based on their skills and knowledge. This gives the impression of immediate accessibility to any person that could be needed.

So, in this discourse of mutualism, subjects are pre-constituted and identifiable in terms of their knowledge and the relations take place on a frictionless plane of immanence. This discourse is based on a disavowal of the neoliberal discourse of competition. The striving together of individuals is assumed to produce growth, which is taken to be a good for the society in general. In mutualism, we see a similar representation of the relation between subjects; there is assumed to be no conflict when striving is an end in itself. Mutualism represents both nature and society as non-conflictual spaces in development, which is taken to be endlessly productive. Similarly, in co-working spaces, it is acknowledged that problems might occur but they are taken to be mere disturbances, which could be solved by "correct communication".

2.5 Social interdependence and antagonism

What are the implications of this naturalizing discourse as to the sociality of insecure forms of work? I believe to expound on that question, we first need an elaboration of the two aspects of social relations disavowed by it: social interdependence and antagonism. As mentioned above, the discourse of mutualism posits the subject as sovereign and the community as based on pure intersubjective links without conflict. Co-working spaces seem to employ this discourse to relieve the subject from the

anxiety she experiences in her attempts to survive outside what could be posited as the familiar rules and questions of the corporate life. It works to cover over the lack of ground for the subject as well as the excesses of entanglement disruptive and constitutive of social links by a promise of "network", which is imagined to involve a community of subjects who are self-transparent about questions pertaining to their being and wants, needs and abilities[48].

2.5.1 *Excess* at work

To elaborate on the fallacies of the utilitarian representation of the sociality here, we could again seek recourse to the psychoanalytic take on social bonds. To that end, we need to look into the relation between the concepts of lack and excess, which are employed to understand the relation of the subject to her self as well as to her community. The lack of the subject actually ensues from a surplus of *jouissance*, which emerges with subject's entrance to the symbolic, the field of the Other. It is consequential to the emergence of the subject in the disjunction between nature and culture at the moment her body comes to be overwritten and overridden with signifiers. At that moment, there is a disjunction between need and desire as the subject is that for whom there is no need to be satisfied with definable objects. Object *a* seems to "symbolize" this breach or disjuncture, the real that cannot be assimilated to either culture or nature and exceeds every attempt for mediation. The

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[48] Ceren Özselçuk and Yahya Madra's take on interdependency informs my point here. They argue that like community economics, Marx's communist axiom also involves interdependency as it involves dependency of all those who need on all those who are able (2015, p. 135). However, they argue we cannot assume equality between the two as it would point to economic moralism. Their psychoanalytically informed account emphasizes the no relation between abilities and needs, which they claim to ensue from the impossibility to unambiguously pin down abilities and needs and make up the constitutive antagonism of any community (p. 136). I argue the discourse of network disavows this impossibility by imagining subjects to be unambiguous and self-transparent about their needs and abilities, which are imagined to operate unproblematically in the context of network together with equally transparent others.

lack of the subject actually does not denote anything that the subject lacks or the lack of an object, but rather refers to the lack of *the* object of desire which could be defined and enable full enjoyment once and for all.

This lack of the subject foregrounds the lack of an ultimate ground for the social as well. Psychoanalytical accounts illustrate that the subject exists in an impossible relation to others. There is no subjectivity outside the symbolic, yet the untamable and undefinable quality of *jouissance* renders her existence inassimable to it as well. Consequently, any ground of sociality could be tentative at best and this could have an anxiety producing function on the part of the subjects in relation. To cover over this lack, there could be either totalitarian attempts to define a positive and ultimate ground for the community and/or utilitarian attempts which end up disavowing the lack with a fantasy of community involving legible sovereign subjects seeking self-realization in a harmonious exchange with each other.

Yahya Madra and Ceren Özselçuk's psychoanalytically informed account refer to the concomitant impossibility to define the subject's very being as well as her needs and abilities as the reason for the constitutive role of antagonism in sociality (2015, p. 136). They see a homology between the psychoanalytical term surplus *jousissance* and the Marxist term surplus labor and argue that as there is no definable way to dispense with surplus *jouissance*, it is also impossible to have a pre-given knowledge as to what to do with living labor (Özselçuk and Madra, 2007, p. 91). That means the production, distribution and appropriation of surplus labor is to be always up for negotiation, marking the social space with a fundamental antagonism. Özselçuk and Madra's approach help us envision class differences in non-identitarian terms, as processes open to constant contestation and intervention.

We could supplant Madra and Özselçuk's reading as to the organization of surplus labor in class terms with attending to the organization of the subject's relation to that surplus in relation to their work and community. The reason is, beyond the irreducibility of surplus labor to a definite class structure, we have surplus *jouissance* as a question in relation to work, a question seeming to gain prominence in contemporary relations of labor. It is argued that in post-Fordist era, production does not simply denote "economic" production, namely the production of commodities for exchange (Hardt and Negri, 2009). It is argued that the production itself becomes the production of social life in its totality, rendering labor truly "biopolitical" with the affective, cognitive and communicative forms of labor gaining prominence in the production of surplus value. However, I believe instead of a seamless production of social life in purely intersubjective relations, the surplus *jouissance* of labor merits further attention.

Furthermore, it is argued that the lines separating work from leisure has also been effaced to a large extend[49]. Work tends to spill over our non-work time and what we take to be leisure activities end up having productive outcomes for the capital. If that is the case, we need to attend not only to the subject's experience of class processes, but we also need to question her relation to the non-work spheres of life and how she navigates the distinctions between work and non-work. In that case, the operation of the excess could be traced at three different levels: the subject's relation to her work/non-work self, her relation to working/non-working others in her community and her relation to the common of the community. The mediation of the excess at these different levels is to be open to constant negotiation and reflection for a conception of community economy of interdependence.

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[49] For detailed analyses as to the implication of this interpenetration, see *Work, Play and Boredom*, *ephemera: theory & politics in organization*, 2011, volume 11(4): 329-500.

First, the subject's relation to her work/non-work activities could involve an affective surplus and the discourse of "doing what you love" could be argued to draw on this surplus. So, the utilitarian discourse of neoliberalism forces to render this surplus productive, forcing it to function for the production of ever-greater surplus value. However, as will be explored in following chapters, the surplus enjoyment at stake does not have to serve the accumulationist demands of the capital.[50] It could even form a line of resistance to the utilitarian-accumulationist logic. For example, some freelancers argued that they enjoyed the work they did and wanted to do it meticulously; however, the employer did not want a perfect job. They just wanted the job to be done. Freelancers argue that they would like to slow down the process of production and resist the demands of deadline as much as possible to be able to do the job as they like. Affective attachment to the work here could carry for the subject the potential to desire alternative modes of production.[51] Or, alternatively, the subject could be producing surplus in non-capitalist class processes (for e.g. voluntary work, activism, hobbies etc.) in non-work realms of her life, while engaging in primarily capitalist class processes in her freelance work(s). In other words, the surplus *jouissance* in production could be implicated in the formation of different (affective)

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[50] Madra and Özselçuk's criticism (2007) to Zizek's use of surplus *jouissance* is inspiring in regard. They argue that Zizek establishes a homology between surplus value and surplus *jouissance*, rendering the operation of surplus *jouissance* to be phrased as the accumulation drive of capital. They claim that the homology is to be formed between surplus labor and surplus *jouissance*, which could rephrase the question as the administration of *jouissance*, for a redefinition of class as "the organization of different affective relations to the surplus labor, in which the relation to surplus value, the capitalist form of surplus labor, becomes one relation among many" (2007, p. 85).

[51] Chistophe Dejours' work on the relation between affect and work is very inspiring in that regard. His work is yet to be translated into English but Parisa Dashtipour and Benedicte Vidaillet's account (2017) on his work helps us get a glimpse of it. They account how Dejours criticizes psychoanalytical accounts, which reduce the functioning of affects to one of domination in organizations. Instead, he suggests looking at its operation in the work process itself, proposing work to involve "ordinary sublimation". He argues we do not have sublimation only in great works of art, but also in ordinary practices of working. The conditions of ordinary sublimation are heavily dependent on the existence of a work collective. The authors conclude that recognizing the significance of work in the affective life of the subject requires resistance strategies aimed at not refusing but reclaiming work.

relations to work as well as in the proliferation of class processes inhabited by a single worker.

2.5.2 *Excess* at interpersonal level

Secondly, we need to attend to the operation of excess at the intersubjective level, simultaneously constituting and destabilizing the relevant relations. Instead of a rational, complete and self-transparent subject who stands in relation of exchange to others, here we have the subject of *jouissance* which constantly exceeds, destabilizes such relations while constituting the very possibility of community at the same time. The surplus constituting and destabilizing the community here is all the more crucial in that with the precarization of employment relations, we see workers depending on their communities for survival. As mentioned before, freelancers also depend on their friends, acquaintances or relatives to find work, secure its payment or pay their social security fees. Here, freelancers' relation to each other is actually not reducible to the logic of exchange since their community takes over the function of providing a sense of security for them. The interdependence of the subjects at stake here is disavowed in hegemonic neoliberal representations of networking and co-working spaces. The directories created or the networking events organized seem to be aimed at giving the sense that the excess is dispensed with, somehow mediated and the subject could be relieved.

In other words, the interdependence of subjects in community is dependent on some excess, which cannot be reduced to exchange of things equivalent in value. We could conceptualize this excess in terms of gift, to understand the concomitant weight of entanglement that merits attention for its alternative mediation. By this weight, I actually refer to the anxiety that the surplus of entanglement produces in

relation with the others and which is covered over by means of disavowal of lack on the part of the subject as well as the community in the hegemonic neoliberal representations of networking. I believe looking at the logic of gift could help us envision an alternative mediation of such anxiety-ridden relations.

Mark Osteen provides a list of principles of gift, which could enable us to distinguish it as irreducible to relations of exchange. The principles he mentions are disinterestedness, risk, spontaneity, pleasure and superfluity (2010, p. 570). Disinterestedness refers to the irreducibility of the gift to logic of equivalence while risk refers to the possibility of loss. On the other hand, spontaneity refers to the lack of prior calculation in gift giving, with the pleasure being its guiding principle. Finally, superfluity refers to the complexity of the gift in its troubling relation to existing social and economic categories. He argues that in the reciprocity of gift exchange, we give more not to incur more obligations but due to the nature of the practice itself. He argues this absent cause of gift is succinctly summarized by Caillé as gift affirming "participation in the universe of 'without cause'" (2001, p. 37, quoted in Osteen, 2010).

Although Osteen's account aptly points at the messiness of gift exchange, his account does not seem to attend to the question of the mediation of such possibly anxiety-ridden relations. Laidlaw's (2000) account of free gift brings up some questions in that regard. He criticizes the commonly accepted opposition of gift to commodity exchange as accounted for by Gregory (2000, p. 619). In that account, gift is claimed to involve an exchange of inalienable things for the reproduction of relations in community via reciprocal dependence, while commodity exchange is claimed to involve the exchange of alienable object, establishing a quantitative relation between things (p. 620). To criticize this neat anthropological opposition, he

follows Derrida's account as to the paradox of free gift, which illustrates that free gift is impossible since it is impossible to totally get rid of reciprocity. For a gift to be free, it has to incur no debts or obligations and to that end, it has to involve no reciprocity. Otherwise, it involves a return to "economic cycle", marked by calculation, interest and measurement (p. 621). So, neither the recipient nor the donor should recognize the gift as gift as it would result in a sense of indebtedness for the first and symbolic gratification for the latter.

Laidlaw's account shows that inalienability of the object cannot be a point of separation between gift and commodity. His account on the practices of gift giving among Jain believers illustrates exactly how alienability is a condition of free gift. In this case, non-reciprocity is still not totally realizable but there are mechanisms which attend to the anxiety-producing weight of entanglement by rendering the gift alienable. It is exactly this alienability that enables the prevention of the "inevitable" transition from gift giving to economic exchange (2000, p. 622). Their attempt is to prevent relations of indebtedness and obligation that would emerge from reciprocal gift exchange since it leads to the entanglement of subjects and objects, brings the dangers of demeaning or demanding connections, debts, obligations to do things for other people's benefit (p. 630).

So, reciprocity could be seen as a point of antagonism in gift debates and rather than attempting a settlement of this unsettling excess of entanglement implicated by it, we could encounter and avow it as a question, which would open up space for its creative mediation. The utilitarian modeling of intersubjective relations on the logic of the market seems to be founded upon the disavowal of this excess of entanglement, which ends up putting its weight on the subject. "Networking" discourse involves such a disavowal, which leads to the further responsibilization of

the subject in line with the neoliberal discourse on subjectivity. She is to adopt a utilitarian approach in her relations to people, open her eyes to the opportunities in her encounters and manage the affective as well as pecuniary ambiguities involved in "networking".

The disavowal of the ensuing anxiety in community could even turn the subject away from those relations. At a workshop organized on networking with freelancers, we noticed that the indebtedness we feel towards our friends who find work for us weighs heavily on us.[52] It may also keep us away from demanding payment or wording the problems we face during production. Some also argued that this was the reason they quit or thought about quitting freelancing. It seems that the lack of formal mechanisms in contemporary relations of production does not result in a peaceful, anti-hierarchical community of intersubjectivity. To the contrary, it requires the freelancers to work more to produce those relations as well as to deal with the anxiety-producing excesses of this entanglement at the same time.

2.5.3 *Excess* at common

Finally, the gift that destabilizes and constitutes intersubjective relations is also constitutive of the common of the community. So, I argue contemporary relations of labor are not only heavily dependent on personal intersubjective relations, but it is also dependent on the impersonal common of the community. It is impossible to give a final account of who contributes to how, and how much, or who takes what, and how much from the common as it is based on the constitutive and disruptive operation of the gift.[53] The messiness of the gift would require a constant

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[52] The workshop was titled "How do we find work?" and was organized with freelancers on 13 May 2016 in *Dünyada Mekân*.
[53] The operation of the gift at the impersonal level of the common can be observed in the virtual networks of freelancers and the alternative co-working spaces. An example for the first could be

process of accounting and negotiation, which would involve all those in the making

of the common. However, the operation of the gift economy at this impersonal level

is disavowed in the existing discourses of "network". In commercial co-working

places, this excess of the gift in subject's relation to the common is covered over by a

discourse of service. There seems to be an assumption that the users of such spaces

are service recipients. They pay for a certain amount to benefit from services such as

desks, lockers and meeting rooms as well as to become a member of a network and

found their own networks. Payment seems to be seen as a way to dispense with the

excess of entanglement. The subject pays for "sociality"; not only for the means of

production, but also for relations of production.

On the other hand, the subject could also be involved in this disavowal of the

excess of entanglement. In *Dünyada Mekân*, we thought that the weight of this

entanglement could have a role which keeps people away from joining community.

We had discussed in great length that we were not to become service providers,

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"Çeviride Kaybolanlar" [Lost in Translation], which is a facebook group in which only translators can be a member. Translators consult each other about any translation problem they have and they pass work to each other over this page. It could be argued to be based on a gift economy in that people can contribute as much as they like and they can benefit from the community of freelancers as much as they need. However, there are certain unwritten norms about the use of this linguistic common. In our private conversation, Tarık, a translator from *Ofissizler,* stated that those who ask too many questions and do not respect other translators do not receive enough answers and are exluded at some point. Another important norm is not to discriminate users based on their linguistic capacities. He argues that people who belittle other translators for asking "simple questions" are also excluded from the group. So, overexploitation of the common and breach of the norm of equal access to the common are constantly watched out for, which illustrates the constant process of accounting that organizes the functioning of this linguistic common based on gift.

In addition, gift economy supports the production of freelancers in such non-commercial co-working spaces as *Dünyada Mekân* and the spaces founded by the municipalities of Kadıköy and Şişli. There is no attempt to establish equivalence in value between contributions to and utilization of these spaces. However, there are certain implicit and/or explicit rules to follow during the processes of contribution and utilization. For example, in *Dünyada Mekân*, there are certain criteria regarding the terms and conditions of the use of the space for meetings. Groups to use the space are requested or encouraged to make a certain amount of financial contribution. However, the amount is not specified, every group/person contributes as it suits them. This indetermination requires a constant accounting relating to the kind of utilization of and the contribution to the making of the common. Another important source supporting this common is the regular monthly donations from the members who founded the space. Most of them do not use the space any more but believe in the importance of preserving such a common. Finally, a lot of people do not pay anything but spend an important amount of unpaid labor, which sustains and replenishes this common space.

attempting to leave the space open for construction based on the initiatives of the participants. However, the habits of receiving service could hinder this attempt. For example, our space is a small one and you have to chat with the people, somehow get to know them to work there as part of a community. However, in a coffee shop you do not have to really chat with others. A friend told that it is easier to go to a coffee shop since you are not bothered there but still live with a sense of having defeated isolation. On the other hand, we also figured that another response of freelancers to the weight of this entanglement could be to demand re-formalization of work relations, formalization for the sake of "fairer" processes of recruitment and payment.

To sum up, this excess and the concomitant problematic of interdependence and antagonism is disavowed in much of the discourse on networking and co-working. This disavowal is based on a conception of personal as well as impersonal relations as operating based on an exchange of things equivalent in value.[54] Relations are to produce more relations, which would bring pecuniary or other benefits to the parties involved. However, the practices of freelancers as well as their accounts illustrate that it is not that easy- or, we could argue that not desirable- to dispense with it. The surplus of entanglement produced in social encounters or the affective surplus created in relation to one's work destabilizes this clear narrative of network as exchange.

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[54] We could argue that there are two main types of co-working spaces dominating the discourse of the field: one operating as service providers, certain elements of the infrastructure such as office space, lockers, secretary service etc. and the other operating as provider of a community. They both can promise "network" to their members but while the first claims membership to be open to anyone who can buy it, the latter claims that it is a privilege to be a member of the community, being not open to those who do not share the "spirit".

One of the workshops held with freelancers was about networking.[55] In this workshop, we asked the question, "How do we find work?" and figured out that the interpenetration of work and non-work relations had ambivalent results. Finding work through friends/acquaintances/relatives could open up space for negotiation; we can feel more comfortable to request extension of the deadline, or feel more in control of the output of the process. However, we figured that it could also make it more difficult to demand payment, to inquire about new projects or force us to work for lower fees. The gratitude we feel towards our friends for finding work may prevent us from making demands. We tend to ask ourselves, "Do you get the job for being a friend or for doing your job successfully?" The ambiguity of who gets the job for what reason forces us to think on our relations all the time. At this point we also noticed that the work of managing and producing relations of production is now on our shoulders as well, which is phrased in the imperative to "be social".

This ambivalence as well as the weight of entanglement here may lead the subject to withdraw from the relations of networking totally, or continuously see herself as incapable and hence guilty. Still further, she could call bureaucracy back, demanding the formalization of work relations in terms of duties and rights. We also noticed that as the weight of socialization weights on our shoulders, the more isolated we become, the less debt we prefer to assume both emotionally and financially. For that reason, we may for example prefer buying credit from a bank to demanding a loan from our friends.[56]

At the end of the workshop, we figured that we do not want our work relations to be based on unmediated bilateral relations (like friendship) or to be governed by formal posts. Instead, we argued that there is a need to "collectivize

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[55] The workshop was held in *Dünyada Mekân* on 13 May 2016.
[56] For the financialization of indebtedness, see Ferda Nur Demirci's thesis (2016), which analyzes the strategic utilization of "need" in the financialization process in Turkey.

work relations", to render them not interpersonal but impersonal. I believe this desire for impersonal relations need not be conflated with a desire for the return of bureaucracy. Instead, we could envision it as involving an avowal of the simultaneously constitutive and destabilizing working of surplus labor and surplus *jouissance* in the work-communities, seeing their mediation as always open for creativity and negotiation. In the workshop, we deliberated on such ways in the form of establishing skill and work pools, or collectives working like unemployment or retirement funds.

2.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to have an account of the disavowals and contradictions in the reigning discourses on the freedom promised in freelancing as the "future of work". I argued that the freedom that freelancers are promised is based on a fantasy of self-sufficient sovereign subject and a fantasy of network constituted by non-antagonistic, pure intersubjective relations. The first fantasy as to the subject involves a disavowal of the lack and the concomitant non-transparency of the subject's desire, while the latter disavows the excess of entanglement constitutive and disruptive of any social relation. In the following chapter, I attend to the subjective and political cost of these fantasmatic discourses as to the future of work and working subjects on freelancing subjectivity.

CHAPTER 3

PSYCHIC COSTS OF SOVEREIGNTY:

EXPERIENCES OF FREELANCING

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I draw on the accounts of freelancers to sketch out some of the symptoms of the weight of neoliberal subjectivity. First, I attempt to see the implications of the fraying fantasies of "good life" as well as the enforcement of sovereignty as the key to the new good life. Then, I look into the impact of this fantasy at the level of community, attempting to see how the subjects respond to the anxiety-ridden relations at the workplace as well as in their networks. Finally, I look for new avenues for a post-fantasmatic relation to one's self, work and community in the accounts of freelancers, to lay the affective ground of relating to class/non-class and work/non-work differences differently.

3.2 "Goof Life" Fantasies: Old vs. new

As discussed extensively in the previous chapter, under the neoliberal conditions of working and living, for freelancers, the organization of the totality of work and non-work relations becomes a question. There are little or no pre-given rules to follow or securities granted for the undertaking of such a responsibility. So far, this has been termed as the "responsibilization" of the subject, which came with the loss of the securities of the Fordist period (Lemke, 2002, pp. 49-64). The subject becomes the primary and the ultimate responsible for her employability, physical and psychological well-being, or managing collegial, occupational or familial relations. These responsibilities are to open the gate to freedom, which is imagined as being

outside the constrictions of time and place, being capable to change and supreme over one's conditions. Encouraged and enforced to take care of her social relations and being, she is paradoxically promised freedom from them in return.

The kind of sovereignty the subject of precarity is promised here involves a new fantasy of good life. Lauren Berlant's work *Cruel Optimism* proposes that subjects come to form optimistic attachments to their conditions of insecurity with different "good life" fantasies. She claims that conventional good life fantasies involve enduring reciprocity in couples, families, political systems, institutions, and markets and at work (2011, p. 2). Lower classes attempted to pass on such fantasies to their children as instigators of upward mobility, the only form of justice promised to them. I understand that the fantasies of reciprocity and meritocracy she elaborates on involve a fantasy of social order where positions and dispositions are distributed fairly and logically, sacrifices made are rewarded with things of higher value and hence, keeping the subject try to "make it", "to expect that this time, nearness to this thing will help you or a world to differ in just the right way" (p. 2).

On the other hand, Berlant also claims that under conditions of insecurity, fantasies of good life that kept inequalities in place started fraying as well, especially among the relatively privileged who are "now closer to living the affective life of those who have never been economically and institutionally secure" (2011, p. 195). She claims that the promise of good life cannot cover over the living precarity of the historical present anymore (p. 196). As a result, we see the loss of gestures that maintained certain disavowals and contradictions "that sustained so many social democratic good life fantasies" (p. 200). She takes precarity as an affective class and claims that in the cinema of precarity, the present is represented as "a transitional zone where normative forms of reciprocity are wearing out, both in the world and

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aesthetically—barring the reproduction of inherited fantasies of what it means to want to add up to something" (p. 201). How do these subjects relate to the present then? To that end, Berlant draws on Hardt and Negri who argue that security became less an aspiration for classes who had less access to it and this may produce a sense of freedom and potential (p. 193). She concurs with the idea that instead of upward mobility, the precariat value lateral freedoms and creative ambitions, the consequences of which remain to be seen.

The workshops and the interviews I have done with freelancers point to such an endearing of lateral freedoms and relative disinvestment from security. It is not only that freelancers are subjected to the blurring of the distinctions between life and work, but also they also actively attempt to challenge the relevant familiar divisions to practice freedom to care for a variety of things such as their selves, their interests or communities. Their practices in that regard will be expounded on in the fifth chapter on work. In this chapter, what I would like to look into is the emergence and the impact of the new good life fantasies on the subjects, which are based on an enforcement of sovereignty on the subject of insecurity. So, I propose the subject is fraught by the anxiety of the fraying of fantasies of reciprocity and meritocracy while being enforced to practice sovereignty to live the new fantasy of freedom.

Berlant is also critical of the form of agency that the idea of sovereignty promotes as based on dramatic acts. She proposes a non-mimetic relation between political and personal sovereignty, criticizing its conceptualization as an exceptional event, which leads to a militarist-melodramatic conception of agency. In discussions on sovereignty, Berlant claims that violence and governmentality are separated while procedures of managing life's wearing out are missed (p. 96). So, she is more interested in the quotidian practices of agency and personhood, which is to be

understood "not only in inflated terms but also as an activity exercised within spaces of ordinariness" (p. 99).

I certainly concur with such a rethinking of agency and the practices of self. However, I am rather interested in the impact of the circulation of such discourses of sovereignty as "dramatic acts" on the subject addressed.[57] To survive and/or thrive under conditions of insecurity, subjects are encouraged to take the responsibility of the course of their lives, seeing them as something they can craft however they want. If a sense of belonging was promised in the previous fantasies of good life involving reciprocity, here freedom is promised in return for letting go of many of the familiar securities of a 9/6 job. Subjects are supposedly let free to organize their work and non-work relations as they wish, leaving them with too many questions with no definite addressees.

The practice of sovereignty expected from the subject here has important ramifications, which could impel us to substantially reconsider our understanding of responsibility and security. To understand them, we need to repose the question of the kind of subjectivity envisioned here. As mentioned before, the entrepreneur is the one without lack; she is to be self-conscious, self-transparent, self-transcendent and

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[57] Berlant and Edelman's (2014) discussion on the subject's encounter with negativity which has a destabilizing impact in her relation to social order also revolves around the question of how to deal with drama. Berlant argues for a dedramatization of ruptures and "seeing dramas in their ordinariness" while Edelman claims this can have a normalizing effect and can prevent encountering the ruptures in the logic of fantasy (p. 65). Their disagreement seems to ensue from their different conception of the relation between structure and fantasy. While Berlant has a more phenomenological and integrated conception as to the relation between the two, Edelman seems to think of the constitutive/disruptive antagonism of the structure on a different level than the logic of fantasy (p. 67).
As for my research agenda, I am interested in both the disruptive moments which undo the subject's ordinary ways of being as well as the alternative stories they tell after that undoing. I take the discourse of sovereignty to be a fantasmatic discourse, which need not be confused with the "drama" of encountering one's undoing. In other words, the "drama" of being undone and the "drama" of enforced sovereignty need not be conflated since while the first could open up to the proliferation of alternative stories, the latter is a fantasmatic discourse aimed at the adjustment and adaptation of the subject to the existing conditions of insecurity. For example, quitting one's 9/6 job in search of a different way of working and living would be an indeterminate dramatic moment, which could be followed by a questioning of consumerism and productivism or entrepreneurship. On the other hand, a conception of oneself as sovereign would involve seeing one's story in exceptional terms and seeing oneself as the maker of one's own story. Then, "going freelance" is narrated as a sovereign decision-making moment.

self-reliant. I believe this representation involves a covering over of the anxiety produced by the non-existence of a ground for the subject. This lack of ground is nothing new but is something that could be felt all the stronger by freelancers now that the Boss is not in sight or direct reach.[58] By the lack of the ground, I do not suggest that the subject is actually "free", but that there is no pre-determined way to define how to govern oneself. There are of course various representations and discourses as to how to go about with one's business, as could be found in thousands of self-help books, blogs, newspaper articles, suggesting freelancers to keep track of their sleeping hours, eat healthily, do sports, respond to emails on time, keep a tidy portfolio etc. However, the very impossibility of these narratives to cohere around a single discourse could leave the subject with a big question: "What do I do now?" "Am I doing it right?"

Freelancers do not only produce surplus value but they are also mostly responsible for forging and maintaining the relations of production as well as the means of production. So, managerial work is also outsourced to the freelancer; she is not only to "socialize" to make the necessary networks all the time but she is also the primary responsible for the flow and organization of work. She also has to keep investing in the necessary technologies and skills to do her job. There is a deadline she is to meet but when and where to work or from where to begin to work is a question for her. She is also to make sure that work does not seep into the totality of her life, that she has time to spare for her "personal" relations and her psychical and

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[58] Brett Neilson and Ned Rossiter's criticism of economic determinist appropriations of precarity is important in that regard. They argue that precarity is not to be thought as a new economic condition, reminding us that we need not ignore the various social agents, like women and the black, who have always already been living under precarious conditions. Claiming that Fordism was actually an exception in the history of capitalism, they argue for a political appropriation of the concept as long as it "contributes to the invention of new forms of political organization that stretch across the divisions and apartheids established by the speeded-up and flexible conditions of contemporary capitalist accumulation." (2008, p. 58).

psychological well-being as well. So, we could say the organization of whole her life is at stake here.[59]

3.3 The underside of sovereignty: Anxiety, guilt and shame

3.3.1 Anxiety and freelancing

So, as everything turns into a question for the freelancer, we could see her fraught with anxiety, which is covered over in different ways. To understand the operation of various affects in that regard, we first need to attend to the significance of anxiety for subjectivity. Tracy McNulty argues that anxiety is *the* affect of psychoanalysis, in response to the question of the desire of the Other (McNulty, 2009, p. 10) and is the affect of freedom (p. 32). The subject experiences anxiety when she encounters the lack in the Other, the fact that there is no definite object of desire. McNulty's account illustrates that the subject may ask "What does she want from me?" to the Other, assuming that there is an object that could satisfy desire (p. 8), or she may preemptively offer sacrifices to avoid the confrontation with the lack (p. 14). In addition, she argues that the desire of the Other, which is in opposition to the existing order and hence, unbearable, could also provoke aggression. McNulty argues that this is the reason why betrayal and assassination are common motifs of social movements (p. 6). The leader who refuses to lead, to provide consoling answers to the question of desire and hence, maintains lack in the Other runs the risk of violence.

On the other hand, Todd McGowan (2016) associates anxiety not with the lack in the Other, but with an encounter with the "overwhelming presence" of

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[59] Freelancing— or rather in laboring under conditions of flexibility and insecurity— could hence leave us with the question of the organization of life in general, accompanying the question of the organization of class processes. That is also the reason it could be helpful to think in terms of community, keeping in mind the interpenetration of class and non-class processes.

enjoyment of the other. McGowan associates the lack of ground for the subject with freedom and argues it makes desiring possible. He argues that in anxiety there is not a lack of *the* object, but a lack of its absence. Anxiety is provoked when the absence produced by castration ceases to be an absence (McGowan, 2016, p. 113). In that case, social authority seems non-lacking and ubiquitous, which does not allow the subject a space to desire (p. 113). He claims this has to do with the transformation of the paternal function. There is now little distance between the Other and the subject; figures of authority claim to be our friends, "with intrusive familiarity, bombarding us with sexual innuendos, inviting us to share a drink or a vulgar joke", which deprives of the "private space of irony and mockery, since the master is on both levels: an authority as well as a friend" (p. 104). He argues that the most common strategies to escape this anxiety-provoking encounter with the enjoyment of the other are cynicism on the one hand, and recourse to prohibition and violence on the other (pp. 114-15). While cynicism tries to deal with enjoyment by trivializing it, radicalism deals with it by calling back the reign of traditional authority.

So, we have two different causes of anxiety: the lack of *the* object on the one hand, and the lack of privacy, the lack of lack on the other. They both point to the unbearable quality of enjoyment and the possibility of violence it could provoke. Both McNulty and McGowan relate anxiety to the desire of the Other and both claim that the encounter with this desire could induce aggression as it destabilizes existing ways of being. I believe anxiety could be experienced both due to the non-existence of *the* object and as a result of the bombardment of the subject with questions and objects of desire. It could be the case that the subject tries to deal with the anxiety of the lack by turning to the Other for somewhat clear answers as to what to do and desire. However, this move to get rid of anxiety could end up producing more

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anxiety as the subject could be overwhelmed by the answers provided, and become even more paralyzed. Both the encounter with the lack of *the* object and the bombardment of the subject with objects could frustrate the subject, who may constantly complain about the injustices of the other (e.g. the Boss) or seek retaliation, in the absence of a political organization which could mediate this traumatic encounter with enjoyment.

I argue in freelancing, this aggression could turn up on the self in the form of guilt. Instead of facing the question of "What do I want?", freelancer could look for ideals in the symbolic order and judge herself based on those ideals. Freelancers are caught up in anxiety both as they lack definite cues about how to lead and organize their working and non-working lives and as they bear witness to some other freelancers who enjoy, work and travel around the world in virtual and non-virtual milieux. In the absence of a leader/boss/colleague to be held accountable for the ensuing anxiety, the freelancer could hold herself accountable and can end up with an aggravated form of guilt, which is basically a form of violence on the self. We may have a further understanding about the freelancer's anxiety by McGowan's conceptualization of the change in the paternal function. He argues that in modernity, we have a "spiritualization of God", which means it never again has a substantial place as a ruler. People continue to believe in God but it is not the master signifier in capitalist universe. He argues that the true horror of the spiritualization of God or the Other's non-existence is not that we do not know what the other wants, but that the Other comes to bombard the subject with questions about desire because the Other itself ceases to know (p. 124). It is at this point that the subject experiences anxiety. For McGowan, freedom involves "lack of guarantees to guide subject's choices" in the "absence of reliance on the Other as a substantial figure of authority" (2016, p.

117) and claims that the subject tends to seek respite from the horror of this freedom. Capitalism feeds on this response of the subject to anxiety by providing guides as to consumption and occupational choices.

Similarly, we could argue that we have a "spiritualization of the capitalist" for the freelancer.[60] They may often work for capitalist companies; however, they do not share the same space with them. Many freelancers I have interviewed argued that they preferred this form of work so as not to see "the boss". They also said that they did not like being directly involved in the hierarchical relations in the workplace. Computer technologies are rightly argued to lead to enforced accessibility for the worker; however, it also puts a distance between the worker and the manager for freelancers, providing some relief from the performances of working from an office. However, this relief has a cost, it leaves the freelancers with many questions about how to organize and lead their work and non-work lives. In the meantime, they are bombarded with advices on a variety of topics such as self-care, self-exploration and self-realization.

3.3.2 Guilt as violence on the self

How does the freelancer respond to ensuing anxiety? Copjec (2006) argues that anxiety is rarely experienced in its pure form. It is mostly experienced as the social affects of guilt or shame, which she defines as "two socially differentiated forms of anxiety accompanying two different organizations of our relation to our potentiality and to our past" (Copjec, 2006, p. 22). Her account of anxiety is similar to that of McGowan in that she also associates anxiety with the desire of the other and she also

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[60] Hardt and Negri argue (2009) that the capitalist turns into an apparatus of capture as it does not function to organize or oversee the production process. Here, I do not attempt to see the shift in the position of the capitalist, but rather attend to the image of the boss that the freelancers have and the consequences of the image at stake.

relates it with the change in paternal function in modernity. She argues that while previously the subject's relation to her past was "rigidly binding" and external, involving submission, now that such authorities are dead, we are unable to distance ourselves from the desires of our ancestors (Copjec, 2009, p. 170). She argues modernity was founded on a definitive break with the past; however, the undermining of our ancestor's authority did not bring relief, but "transformed the past from the repository of their already accomplished deeds and discovered truths into a kind of holding cell of all that was unactualized and unthought" (p. 169). The modern subject experiences anxiety in her encounter with this unfinished past; in her experience of being riveted to a culture, to "prehistoric Other that it is impossible to forget" (170).

Copjec (2009) argues that this experience of being riveted is an experience of being stuck to an "inalienable alienness", which is namely the disturbing encounter with *jouissance*. She argues this cultural inheritance qua *jouissance* provokes anxiety and needs to be mediated by society to be somehow accessed. Guilt and shame are different ways of distancing oneself from this inalienable foreignness imparted to us by our culture (p. 172). In guilt, the subject escapes to sociality seeking signifiers to represent herself in order to seek respite from the "unbearable opaqueness we are to ourselves" (p. 174), from the non-existence of *the* object of desire. She could assume various identities which would supposedly render her transparent both to herself and to the society. Copjec argues that in guilt, the subject denies herself any proper sense of privacy; judging herself with the social and ego ideals to relieve herself of "the responsibility of having to invent a future without the aid of rules or scripts" (2006, p. 24). She argues that this misguided belief in transparency provokes transgression since every ideal is sustained by a prohibition against achieving it

(Copjec, 2009, p. 174). So, the guilty subject does not only measure herself up to those ideals and blame herself at moments of failure, but sustains her belief in ideals by fantasizing that if she could "go beyond" herself or her conditions, she could achieve those ideals and be "successful". That causes the constant state of self-blaming of the guilty subject.

Laboring under conditions of insecurity, many freelancers also respond to the anxiety of the lack of pre-given scripts about how to organize their lives with guilt. In freelancers' accounts, even preparing breakfast for oneself could be experienced as a waste of time, to be compensated by working more hours.[61] In an experience sharing workshops organized in *Dünyada Mekân*, a participant had said that he knew a freelancer couple who turned their living room into an office and would put on "proper clothes" before starting to work.[62] So, self-discipline becomes an issue, a kind of violence that the subject has to carefully implement on herself. The disciplinary measures of the workplace offer a point of reference in that case. Her performance is judged as she is to constantly judge her performance, constantly asking herself whether she is living up to the expectations or providing added value in her endeavors. So, she not only holds herself accountable for her performance, but she also keeps believing in the possibility of "success" despite the constant constrains such as lack of proper compensation, lack of social and financial security or lack of resources to do the job properly, which impede the achievement of this ideal of success.

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[61] Müjde, a freelancer proofreader, had put it succinctly, adding to it the conflict that takes place between the paid and unpaid activities she engages in at home. She feels guilty while cooking or cleaning the house, scolding herself for turning into a housewife and procrastinating with things which do not "make money". On the other hand, she also says that one should have the right to prepare a proper meal for oneself, that it should not be a "luxury".
[62] The workshop was organized on 29 October 2015 with freelancers working in the field of publishing industry by a collective called *YEK* (*Yayınevi Emekçileri Kolektifi*-Collective of Laborers in the Field of Publishing).

On the other hand, freelancers also experience guilt when they encounter the desire of the other, namely the desire of the previous generation.[63] They do not live up to the ideals of security and stability valorized by their parents.[64] So, freelancers are bombarded with both the ideals of freedom and self-realization and the ideals of security and stability associated with a 9 to 6 job, which seemingly contradict each other. They are advised to seek freedom at the expense of security and measure themselves up with such ideals as self-realization, self-exploration and self-reliance; however, at the moment of the failure to live up to those ideals, they are also reminded of the ideals of security and stability which they were supposed to have forsaken.

3.3.3 Shame: Claiming privacy in freelancing

Having left or being excluded from the routine and stabilities of a 9/6 job, freelancing could also open up ways to relate to oneself and one's past differently. Instead of finding themselves surrendered to the superegoic injunctions, as is the case in guilt, freelancers' accounts also point the possibility of a different relation to enjoyment, which does not necessarily involve forgoing it for the sake of fitting to

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[63] Lauren Berlant (2011) accounts for the affective impact of the previous generation's fantasies of good life on the new generation of precarious workers. She argues "good life" fantasies such as reciprocity and meritocracy of the Fordist era are fraying due to the processes of precarization under neoliberalism. She argues that precarity is an affective class, which is now faced with the question: "What do they do next, after the good life, after patronage, after loving paternalism, and without clarity about what makes sacrifice and risk worth it?" (Berlant, 2011, p. 207). She argues the subjects left with this question experience the present as *impasse*, which she defines as "a space of time lived without a narrative genre" (p. 200). It is a decompositional experience similar to anxiety in that "one no longer knows what to do or how to live and yet, while unknowing, must adapt" (p. 200).
I concur with Berlant's claim that the fraying of fantasies of good life leaves the precarious with such questions. Yet at the same time, I argue that the precarious is also provided with a new set of social ideals including freedom in insecurity. This aggravates the guilt for freelancers since they are to deal with two sets of ideals— the Fordist one in their relation to their families and the post-Fordist ideal of sovereign freedom to be gained in return of sacrificing any comfort available of a 9 to 6 job.
[64] This was particularly striking in the account of a freelance editor. She said she felt guilty for living in the house which her parents bought and not being able to earn enough money to make a living. Another freelancer I interviewed claimed he dealt with the expectations of his parents by explaining them that he earns just as the same as a regular employee doing the same job.

the ideals of the social. In the narratives of freelancers, this different relation to enjoyment becomes tenable in the affect of shame. Copjec claims that in shame, that inassimable "inalienable alienness" of enjoyment which has *no image* comes to provoke not anxiety but "constitutes my sense of interiority, my sense of self as subject" (2002, p. 178). That is why, contrary to guilt in which the subject denies herself any privacy by judging herself constantly by social ideals, in shame there is an impulse to hide and conceal (p. 178). Copjec's account emphasizes that this impulse to hide is not a defeat in relation to the Other qua social ideals, but is an active submission of the subject to the passion of her attachments (p. 179).

What happens to society then? In shame, there is not a judgment of the self by the ideals of the Other, but an encounter with the lack of the Other. There is no comforting circuit of recognition in shame. Copjec argues the gaze in shame is a factor of limitation, which objectifies libido slightly and lends the subject some exteriority, which enables her to appear in public and preserve her privacy at the same time (p. 181). Copjec illustrates that the gaze which enflames desire is neither locatable in an actual pair of eyes nor corresponds to the ubiquitous Other. She claims the gaze looks back at me where I encounter its limit (p. 182). I understand the "inalienable alienness" qua *jouissance* which has no representation in the field of the Other points to its limit and shows the lack of the Other. Copjec argues that in shame, one experiences one's visibility but there is no Other who sees and that shame points to the non-existence of the Other (2002, p. 137). She also argues that at the moment of shame, the subject participates in the social as an independent being. So, I understand, in shame, the subject is visible enough to take part in the social and her visibility makes it possible to preserve her privacy. This points to the possibility of a disjunction or separation from the field of the Other and creates the possibility

an "independent" participation in the social, which does not simply involve submission to social ideals. So, the Other is not seen as complete, but open to challenge, negotiation and perhaps, the creation of new objects in sublimation. In other words, the social is not necessarily experienced as a complete set of ideals reigning over the subject. Instead, it becomes possible to participate in the making of the social as the subject attempts to carve out a space away from the ideals for the singularity of her enjoyment, which could as well be a space where alternatives to those ideals could be experimented with.

So, in experiencing guilt, freelancers are among the figures of precarity who tend to judge themselves ruthlessly. Here, the subject still attempts to practice sovereignty and the violence of its impossibility turns on the self. However, the same subject experiences shame when the singularity of her sovereignty is measured by the ordinariness of money. During the interviews, some freelancers brought up the issue of money and expressed shame or had difficulty in talking about money. They were also reticent about their position in their families, complaining about a certain lack of respect when it came to their job, which was not considered as the "proper" way of working. Unlike guilt, they feel shame not because they do not measure up to the ideals of the social, but because the things they value have no recognizable value in the logic of exchange.

As mentioned above, the subject of insecurity is bombarded by two different sets of ideals, which could provoke guilt. The first involves the ideals of security that the previous generation holds dear. Those ideals involve the familiar comforts of a 9/6 job and family based on fantasies of reciprocity and meritocracy that Berlant expounds on. The second involves the present ideal of freedom that is promoted in return for undertaking risks and sacrificing security. As they experience failure in the

face of ideals of security, they may resort to the new ideals of freedom in sovereignty. They could invest in a variety of new ideals such as creativity, freedom, or flexibility. In that case, they may not be able to escape from the economy of guilt.

However, another response to the anxiety could be seeking some distance from those two sets of ideals. Some freelancers' narratives and attitude during interviews pointed to this impulse to hide and conceal present in shame. For example, Ayşe, a freelance translator, accounted for this impulse to hide and how it is related to something unrepresentable in the existing discourses on work which assess the value of one's job and one's self based on the pecuniary rewards taken. She claimed there could be other things than money, which we can value, but shied away from defining what those could be. I believe this points to the enjoyment, which has no image among the social ideals. As a translator of books who simply earns to get by, Ayşe could be valuing the contribution she makes to literature, or as a freelancer, she could be enjoying having some space of her own outside the office. However, the important point is that she does not name those things. As a researcher, I think by not naming what she values, she keeps away from establishing yet another ideal (for example, an ideal of autonomy or "doing what you love"). She claims that she lies about her work and working conditions, which I believe has to do with her desire to secure some space for herself to preserve her unique relation to her work and non-working self.

This strategy of lying or keeping silent also came up in the narrative of Ali, who is a freelance journalist. He stated that he decided not to go to work and start a family at a very early age, noticing that these were the two things that made people unhappy. So, here we see a separation from the social ideals of the Fordist period. He was trying to construct himself a different life and stated that he tried to limit the

amount of time work took up in his life by refusing to do a full-time job. He stated

that he was not respected by his family members, who kept suggesting to him that he

should become a civil servant. He said that getting married gave him a modicum of

relief and dignity and he constantly lies about the amount of money he makes to

sustain that dignity. I believe lying here not only points to the subject's investment in

social ideals, but it could also point to the privacy that the lie attempts to secure for a

space of enjoyment, for the construction of "another life"[65]. So, as in many

freelancing accounts, guilt and shame accompany each other and they point to the

co-existence of the possibility of submission to the social ideals on the one hand, and

to the possibility of destabilizing those ideals on the other.

Berlant's account also points to such a possibility when she claims that it not

security but lateral freedoms that are valued by the precarious. She suggests it is

possible and urgent to reinvent new idioms of the political and belonging from "the

scene of survival" (Berlant, 2011, p. 262). So, she believes the fraying of the

fantasies of good life of the previous generation opens up new space to reinvent

politics, community and security. However, as proposed above, fraying of good life

fantasies based on reciprocity is accompanied by the emergence of fantasies of

sovereignty based on an indifference towards one's place in time and history.

Freelancers as enforced sovereign subjects are impelled to render their ambitions,

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[65] Demand for privacy was a strong theme of a workshop organized on online freelancing platforms in *Dünyada Mekân* on 08.12.2018. Freelancers shared the fact that some online platforms want to monitor freelancers as they work through digital surveillance technologies. There was a long discussion on the problems of this monitoring and what could be the reasons provided to oppose it. A participant claimed he feels as if someone is watching from behind him as his computer screen is monitored. He simply did not want to have this feeling. Another participant argues such technologies fail to measure the amount of time spent organizing, planning and coming up with ideas. So, it could not measure creativity and may even set limits to it. We concluded that we could oppose to such technologies by pointing to the damage of them on the production process. However, freelancers' opposition to surveillance and demanding privacy did not cohere around a specific set of reasons, which I think points to the fact that privacy is demanded not for the realization of certain social ideals, but for foregrounding the space of relating to one's work and non-work self differently.
For further information on the workshop, see https://ofissizler.com/freelance-is-bulma-platformlari-hakkinda/ (retrieved on 04.02.2019).

desires, or "lateral freedoms" intelligible, identifiable and justifiable in terms of the market. I believe this actually might mean a submission to the logic of exchange, a forgoing of the inassimilable enjoyment from the various "lateral freedoms" that the freelancers could carve out for themselves, with the privacy they could have in the distance from the surveillance of the boss. Freelancing could be seen to have the potential to provide such a privacy for the subject, enabling her to experiment with her enjoyment.[66] However, the logic of network based on the transparent and pure intersubjective relations of exchange devalues the singularity of objects of desire, which is a precondition of enjoyment. Then, the privacy as the precondition of dignity and freedom is denied to the subject as she is impelled to translate her desire into utilitarian terms to self-market and hence secure her conditions of existence herself.

On the other hand, the conditions of freelancers as subjects of insecurity fraught between two ideals could impel us to rethink security beyond the binary of freedom versus slavery. In other words, there is a need for an alternative to the double bind of security granted in return for wage slavery and denied if the subject searches for freedom from it. In an experience sharing workshop on networking conducted with freelancers, we have come to the conclusion that we do not want the return of the "loving paternalism" that promised security in return for so many sacrifices, which could be thought as sacrifices of enjoyment and questions relating

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[66] In a workshop organized with Lambda Istanbul, we had discussed the relief of this privacy for the LGBT people, claiming that this does not provide a steering away from the demand for recognition in the workplace. Similarly, we can see freelancing as enabling certain "practices of freedom" by opening up the space to negotiate the place of work in our lives as well as our subjective investments in it. For some freelancers working less is an option, which they take to pursue other non-work interests (activism, studying, travelling, caring for an other etc.). The others invest more in their work and need this space to do it "properly". The class and non-class multiplicity in that regard will be explored more in detail in the following chapter.

to it.[67] Many freelancers do not actually want to go back to working in offices, with definite hours and limited and pre-determined holidays. Instead, they desire to be able to organize their time, workload, and have some options as to the people they work with. On the other hand, this does not mean an embracing of insecurity in return for freedom. We need to have a say in the conditions of our security, rendering it open to constant debate and negotiation. To elaborate on how to enable this, we need to expound further on the question of the role of sacrifice in the working of the existing notions of security and community.

3.4 The underside of network: Exclusion and withdrawal

3.4.1 Network: Formal vs. informal

What about the psychic and political costs of the enforced networking as the proposed medium of security and belonging? The network is the social form proposed to replace the formal relations of production under conditions of flexibility in post-Fordism. As elaborated in the previous chapter, networks rest on a conception of sociality that is based on conflict-free and utilitarian intersubjective links. Here, the possibility of conflict of interest is disavowed as network is proposed as the means to security under contemporary labor relations. Networks are also celebrated in certain critical accounts for opening up ways for the autonomous organization of labor by workers.[68]

On the other hand, freelancers have a more complex and ambivalent experience of network as the means to their livelihood and security. They need to

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[67] The workshop was titled "How do we find work?" and was held in *Dünyada Mekân* on May 13, 2016.
[68] Hardt and Negri' work titled *Commonwealth* (2009) is an example to this approach. They claim that the becoming biopolitical of labor with the gaining prominence of the affective and cognitive forms of labor under post-Fordism opens up the way to the self-organization of labor in networks.

constantly build networks to find work, secure payment, check the reliability of the customer, follow the developments in their field or solve the problems encountered during production. Although online world seems full of possibilities when it comes to job opportunities for freelancers, freelancers rely heavily on face-to-face interaction to build their network, which tends to consist of friends, acquaintances, colleagues or former employers.[69] I have participated in a workshop on networking with freelancers and our discussion generally revolved around the differences between collegiality at workplace and formal relations of work and the informal relations through which many freelancers find work and negotiate its conditions. Freelancers tend to complain about the hierarchy and inauthenticity of the relations at the workplace; hence, working with friends outside the gaze of the boss generally sounds appealing. However, it has its own shortcomings in that there is high ambiguity as to the outcome of such relations as they are generally not mediated with terms or contracts open to negotiation. Some stated they preferred working with friends as it allowed flexibility with deadlines while others complained about the difficulty of requesting payment from a friend. The conclusion was that freelancers could feel indebted to their friends for finding or commissioning work to them, which could make demanding proper compensation all the more difficult.

On the other hand, at the opposite side of such informal relations of network stand the formal freelancing websites. Such networks are exemplified by the plethora of freelancing websites, which primarily work by bidding. Customers generally offer work and the freelancer who gives the lowest offer gets the job. Freelancers are to build strong profiles, prepare portfolios and fight with time and make many

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[69] The need to frequent certain places and attend certain events for networking is prevalent especially in creative industries. However, simply visiting events is not enough; befriending people is necessary to secure contacts. In a workshop on networking, Hale, a freelance illustrator, complained about the closed nature of the communities reigning in the industry. The workshop was held with freelancers in *Dünyada Mekân* on 13 May 2016.

compromises to get a gig, which actually leads many to burnout and withdraw from them. The logic of the market here is not simply based on meritocracy. Responding just-in-time, having good reviews by customers and meeting the deadlines strictly is the precondition of survival. There is little room for negotiation in that case. People who start freelancing tend to give such websites a try first, but they also have difficulty in figuring out who gets the job for what reason. There are too many criteria but meeting them all does not necessarily secure employment. So, websites that are based on a rationality of synchrony and capability turn out to be "irrational", having unpredictable and ambiguous outcomes for freelancers while providing security for employers.

As mentioned above, the result of such objectifying and competitive networks could be withdrawal on the part of the freelancers. Many freelancers I have encountered complained about the difficulty of finding work online, some claiming to have given up for that reason. In other words, freelancers burn-out and withdraw from such networks because they require a constant watching out for work and/or working a lot in return for lower payment to be competitive in the market. On the other hand, exclusion seems to be the problem that comes up in more informal relations of network. Freelancers claim it to be a necessity to frequent certain places and establish friendship with certain people to be able to secure work and payment in some industries. Those who fail to do so for one reason or another tend to be excluded from the industry, and have few chances to establish their own networks and sources of income. Separating work from non-work relations is desirable for many freelancers; however, it becomes a luxury in some cases.

Both exclusion and withdrawal are effects of the disavowal of the class and non-class differences, which undercut participation in network. As mentioned in the

previous chapter, network is imagined as based on a pure intersubjectivity, which fails to acknowledge the fundamental antagonism inherent in social relations. I argue this disavowal finds expression in a fantasy of equality in opportunity, which fails to acknowledge that network is not open to the participation of all, and those who participate in it are not doing so under same conditions. The concomitant non-recognition of class and non-class differences not only creates the conditions of exclusion and withdrawal on the part of the subject, but it also has a depoliticizing effect for political practice by rendering the question of justice interpersonal. To understand the psychic and political effects of this imaginary of network, we first need to have a look at the fantasy of equality in opportunity it is based on.

3.4.2 Fantasy of equality of opportunity in network

In the discourses on network, which can be observed in co-working communities, network is claimed to be open to the participation of every one. Such spaces claim to provide the basic utilities and social events necessary for the establishment an inclusive network. I argue this conception of network is based on a fantasy of equality in opportunity, a liberal notion of equality which presumes equality to come naturally following the providing of basic conditions (Copjec, 2002, p. 172). This fantasy of equality could be a symptom of the structural disavowal of the lack in the subject and the society, as analyzed by the concept of perversion in the previous chapter. The concomitant narrative of equality imagines subjects to have transparent and identifiable interests, which they can realize if they utilize the opportunities given in such communities. Furthermore, this fantasy of equality in opportunity not only covers over the inequality of the existing conditions under which subjects try to relate to the network, but it also ignores the fact that the question of equality and

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justice can never be settled for once and all even when the conditions are the same. The reason is that the fantasy of equality is based on a utilitarian conception of the needs and desire of the subjects. Instead of enabling the articulation of the singularity of one's enjoyment, this utilitarian conception of equality creates feelings of exclusion and withdrawal on the part of the subjects whose differences and desires are not representable within utilitarian ideals.

The fantasy of equality in opportunity is based on a sacrificial economy in our relation to enjoyment. It requires the subject to render her needs and desires intelligible and forsake those which cannot be represented in the logic of profit and exchange. The concept of utilitarianism becomes relevant here. In utilitarianism, we are to forsake enjoyment for pleasure, with socially validated objects of production and consumption. McGowan (2013) explains the operation of sacrifice in utilitarianism and how it is based on a dialectic of enjoyment and pleasure. He argues that the subject enters the symbolic via a primary sacrifice, which corresponds to the moment of alienation and emergence of the subject as such. He claims that the subject submits to a secondary sacrifice to join the social order, seeing that the others have also done so. McGowan argues that this sacrifice retroactively creates the fantasy of full enjoyment; by prohibiting ultimate enjoyment, society disguises its impossibility. Then, it offers certain objects with this promise of full enjoyment, which is never realized and hence, keeps the subject in the repetitive logic of pleasure.

As for the freelancers, whether voluntary or not, they are first to forsake the securities of a 9 to 6 job in pursuit of such rational interests or desires. Whether they quit their job to go freelance, or end up freelancing after being laid out, freelancers are expected to embrace insecurity in pursuit of freedom. The secondary sacrifice

here happens when the freelancer forsakes the singularity of her enjoyment and renders her desires intelligible in terms of achievement or passion. In the utilitarian fantasy of equality in exchange, subjects are expected to identify themselves with certain pre-defined objects and become self-transparent about their interests and ambitions. Everyone is imagined to be interacting with each other under equal conditions of exchange for self-realization. Formal or informal, freelancers are also encouraged to approach their relations in such utilitarian terms, seeing people around them as sources of income and opportunities. They constantly need to self-scrutinize and attend to the opportunities of networking to be able to find work and manage the workload.

This utilitarian conception of equality of opportunity in exchange covers over class and non-class differences, which causes exclusion and withdrawal on the part of the freelancer. This non-recognition of differences has both psychic and political ramifications. As for the subject, it causes guilt in the subjects who blame themselves in the face of exclusion and withdrawal that they experience in the network. Freelancers do not work under equal conditions in terms of economic and social capital; namely, they have varying negotiation power over their conditions of production. However, the utilitarian fantasy involves a conception of network that is open to the participation of all and success is imagined to be available to anyone who takes advantage of the opportunities presented to them. Then, when she burns out and withdraws from the network or feels excluded from it, the freelancer has no one else but herself to blame for. The non-existence and impossibility of seeking recourse to justice at that point leaves the subject with too many questions as well as fantasies as to the success of the others.

As for its political ramifications, utilitarian fantasy personalizes and depersonalizes the question of justice at the same time. It personalizes the question of justice by covering over class and non-class differences. Justice is needed when there is a conflict of interests, which can be remedied through interpersonal communication. This conception of justice was also quite prevalent among freelancers during the workshops organized in *Dünyada Mekân*. Many freelancers thought that the conditions in their industry were bad due to the low offers accepted by other freelancers. Or, other freelancers were sometimes condemned for not doing quality work, and dishonoring the occupational identity in question. So, in such accounts we see the effect of a conception of equality based in non-recognition of class/non-class and work/non-work differences. There is assumed to be a singular work-ethic to which everyone can and needs to abide by. In addition, it is assumed that all freelancers can have the chance to decline low payment.

Utilitarianism also depersonalizes the question of justice by conjuring up an Other who would read the needs and desires of the subject and secure the conditions of equality in opportunity. Copjec (2002) argues that this is a "leader" who would remain impartial to its subjects who sacrificed their enjoyment to be equal. I understand that when the question of justice becomes an interpersonal matter, the subject wants to complain to some big Other to settle the issues that come up. In this way, she disavows the fundamental impossibility of delegating the question of justice, security and responsibility to some figure of authority who would assure their proper functioning once and for all. In conclusion, the fantasy of equality of opportunity in exchange not only depoliticizes the question of justice, renders it a personal-interpersonal question and hence endangers the possibility of solidarity among the precarious, but it also could lead to a desire for repressive and/or

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utilitarian authorities which would attempt to establish a symmetrical alignment of desires, forcing differences into uniformity.

While elaborating on the shame that freelancers experience in relation to their close ones, I had remarked that freelancing actually does not fit into the existing imaginaries and fantasies of good life. So, freelancing could hold the possibility of enjoyment if the worker could gain some distance and privacy from the field of the Other. However, the reigning discourses as to the freedom of freelancing and many of the goods they promise in return for taking risks render this difficult. The variety of ways the freelancers could try to relate to their production and consumption are translated into the sacrificial/utilitarian economy of desire. This economy also produces fantasies as to the enjoyment of others as the subject comes to live with the doubt that the other did not sacrifice enough, the other enjoys something while they do not. So, the subject forgoes the anxiety-provoking enjoyment with sacrifice, but still ends up in anxiety as she constantly has to measure herself up against others to see if she had a fair deal.

3.4.3 Network: Shame and guilt revisited

To sum up, freelancers tend to be fraught with an all the more intense anxiety in response to conditions of precarity. In the absence of a shared office with colleagues and somewhat structured work relations, they need to constantly look for cues as to the proper ways of negotiating with the client or co-workers and they need to craft those relations themselves. No contract binds them to these parties; hence, the outcome of such relations is not in their full control. However, the reigning discourses on freelancing enforce a sovereignty of control to the freelancer, and by responsibilizing her for its failure, such discourses produce guilty subjects.

While guilt could be seen as the violence of the society turning up on the self, exclusion and withdrawal could be seen as the result of the utilitarian fantasy of equality in opportunity in network which covers over class/non-class and work/non-work differences. The freelancers who do not, or fail to adopt the utilitarian approach to their surroundings end up feeling excluded, or they withdraw from the network. So, utilitarian fantasy of equality in exchange also has punitive consequences for those who try to carve out a space for themselves out of the logic of exchange. This discordance between the freelancers' desire to work and live differently and the networks operating on the logic of market exchange becomes tangible again in the affect of shame. The reticence to talk about the problems encountered while finding work was quite remarkable among the participants of a workshop held on networking in *Dünyada Mekân*.[70] I argue that the reason is that the way they relate to their work and the people with whom to work are not translatable to the terms of utilitarian exchange.

This fantasy of equality in exchange also produces guilt by holding the subject responsible for her conditions and success. It also renders the question of justice an interpersonal matter of conflict among equals, the settlement of which is the job of some higher authority. The workshop on networking mentioned above pointed to two important political implications of this fantasy. First, it undermines the possibilities of solidarity among freelancers as it personalizes the question of justice, rendering it a matter which could be solved if individual freelancers demanded fair payment and worked properly. Secondly, it would result in delegating the question of justice, security and equality to a figure of authority. Demanding the

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[70] The workshop titled "How do we find work?" was held in *Dünyada Mekân* on 13 May 2016.

return of the formal relations of work, imagining them to have been "fairer" and more comfortable could also be related to this sacrificial economy of utilitarianism.

3.5 Rethinking freedom and security

In the workshop on networking to which I participated as a freelancing translator, we had problematized both the formalization of the networks based on logic of competition on online freelancing websites and their informalization in networks of "friendship". Both mechanisms are based on a fantasy of equality in opportunity, which covers over the differences between freelancers in terms of economic, social and cultural capital as well as differences with regard to their affective relation to work. The various websites for gig-seeking freelancers posits themselves to function on the basis of fairness as the one who gives the best offer gets the job.[71] The competition in these quasi-formal "communities" comes to be mistaken for justice. On the other hand, we had figured that some feel excluded from the informal networks that freelancers forge in certain niche industries and to become a member of these networks. You need to visit the same places, have similar tastes or political views etc. In both cases, the freelancer is expected to think of herself and her relations to others in utilitarian terms based on the logic of sacrifice explained above.

With regard to the need to "collectivize security", we need a rethinking of security to disrupt the ensuing economy of guilt and enable the subjects to enjoy the singularity of their enjoyment. Security is not to be based on an imaginary Other which could bestow equality on us provided that we forgo our singularities. A rethinking of security would respect the singularity of enjoyment, enabling the

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[71] *Upwork* and *Freelancer* are the largest examples of these websites, which are based on a fierce process of bidding, in which the freelancer who requests the lowest fee in the shortest amount of time gets the job.

subjects to carve out a space for themselves out of the logic of exchange economy.[72] Security is mostly lived and imagined as something bestowed upon us in return for a sacrifice, a sacrifice of our time, labor and enjoyment. This definition clearly excludes the unemployed and the precarious. In rethinking security, we could envision it as a ground enabling doing experiments, experiments on production relations as well as the redistribution of skills and needs. As Copjec's account point, this would also necessitate allowing some privacy for the worker as well, a privacy she could enjoy away from the gaze of the boss.

Here, privacy is not to be thought as a "right" to be possessed by the self-enclosed individual, as something that she is supposed to enjoy away from the field of production, phrased in the opposition of private vs. public self. Instead, it could be envisioned as a space enabling the subject to experiment, hopefully providing her some relief from the superegoic injunctions as to production and consumption. The existing practices of freelancers provide a ground for such a rethinking of security. For example, they forward the work they cannot take to each other, they help each other over virtual communities to solve the problems they encounter while working, or they also ask each other about the client before accepting the work. The problem is that if such quotidian collaborative networks are not given an impersonal institutional form, they are not recognized as part of the "economic" practice.[73] Then, the anxiety ensuing from the lack of an institutional ground and dependence on

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[72] Walkerdine and Bansel's (2010) comparative account on the impact of deindustrialization in two different cities, Sydney and Steeltown, is inspiring in that regard. Their analysis show that the narratives of the workers in Sydney are structured by a discourses of entrepreneurialism, centred on the "self-management" and the promise of a better future. In Steeltown, on the other hand, the union supported the reskilling of workers and encouraged them to think of their hobbies as the ground of their new jobs. The authors suggest that the workers in that case did not have an aspirational discourse for upward mobility, but rather seemed to experience the process as "the opening up of a world of work previously unknown", as is obvious in the account of worker "I didn't realize there were jobs like this".

[73] This point will be elaborated more in the last chapter on community and economy.

intersubjective links involving entanglement could turn back to the subject as violence in the form of guilt.

Besides a space of privacy that would enable experimentations with freedom, we also need to disinvest from the idea of security as something to be bestowed upon us in return for sacrifice. We cannot delegate our security to some big Other which does not exist. Encountering its lack, we need to think of security as a process involving our involvement, and constant conflicts and negotiations.[74] So, what are the grounds of a reorientation towards freedom and security? I think the answer lies in adopting a different approach to the existing practices of freelancers themselves. To rethink the freedom in freelancing, among other flexible forms of labor, we need to attend to class and non-class differences in the field of freelancing, and see how freelancers navigate and negotiate such differences to practice freedom. Freedom to be based on such practices defies the notion of freedom based on sovereignty and sacrifice. On the other hand, to reorient ourselves with regard to security, we need to revalorize and render visible the multiple forms of communing practices by

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[74] Freelancer's Union in the USA, which was founded in 1995 by Sara Horowitz, claims to represent 57 million independent workers and is an example where freelancers take charge of the question of security. It provides health insurance, networking opportunities, advocacy and resources for freelancers. However, it has been criticized for operating yet another service provider for freelancers, rather than as politicizing the conditions of freelancers as a union would do. For the relevant debate see, Paul, Ari, "A Union of One" in Jacobin, 2014. https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/10/freelancers-union/ and Abraham Ian, Atossa Araxia, "When 30% of Workers are Freelance, How Do They Build Power on the Job?", 2012, https://www.alternet.org/story/154590/when_30_of_workers_are_freelance%2C_how_do_they_build_power_on_the_job (retrieved 23 May 2019)
There are some industry-specific associations and institutions where freelancers organize themselves; however, they do not attend to the specific conditions of freelancing itself. In the context of Turkey, Çev-Bir has been an inspiring example in discussions relating to the organization of the freelancers I have participated in. This association of freelance translators set some basic standards and minimum rates for copyrights, organizes workshops to enable sharing of knowledge among translators and provide legal assistance to its members. There is also a union of actors/actresses in Turkey, which is very proactive in demanding the alleviation of working conditions in their industry. Artists also have had a similar venture in organizing themselves, being inspired by Çev-Bir's story.
So, sector-specific organizations exist in some fields; however, in these sectors, people have long been working as freelancers. The growing phenomenon of freelancing in industries where full-time employment was the norm may require asking new questions and rethinking of occupation based labor organization. How to relate the occupation-based problems with more general problems of freelancing is a question needing further discussion and political engagement.

freelancers. For such a reorientation to freedom and security, I look into the freelancers' experiences of class processes and community in the following two chapters.

3.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I attempted to look into the heavy toll of the sovereignty the freelancers are expected to assume with regard to their selves and conditions as well as the cost of networking as the proposed solution to the organization of production. It was argued that the subject is fraught with guilt as she is bombarded with the social ideals of security and freedom at the same time. The affect of shame, on the other hand, point to the fact that the freelancer needs a modicum of relief from such ideals, in the privacy she tries to procure away from the gaze of the boss, to experiment with different ways of living and producing.

On the other hand, network as the new procurer of security in freedom was argued to involve a fantasy of equality of opportunity. It was claimed that this fantasy leads to exclusion and withdrawal on the part of the subject as it covers over class/non-class and work/non-work differences among freelancers. The political implication of those fantasies is that they render the question of justice an interpersonal matter, which could require the intervention of a higher authority. It was concluded that a rethinking of freedom and security in community is needed to disrupt the working of such fantasies, which requires a reorientation to the existing practices of freedom and communing by freelancers. Class differences and the different ways freelancers navigate work and non-work realms of their lives will be explored in the following chapters to lay the ground for such a reorientation.

CHAPTER 4

CLASS AND DIFFERENCE:

A CLASS ANALYSIS OF FREELANCING

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I attend to the variety of class differences covered over by the

hegemonic neoliberal representations of and discourses on freelancing. This class-

based analysis is aimed as a first step towards a deconstruction of the capitalocentric

representation of the social space with regard to freelancing. Many of the prominent

discussions of flexible forms of employment seem to reduce their emergence to the

developments within capitalism, whether for better or for worse. In other words, both

the accounts which argue that flexibility involves further exploitation through

precarization and the accounts which celebrate the freedom of freelancing end up

attributing "capitalism" the quality of being the singular cause of change in society.

The overdeterminist class analysis of freelancing I venture into aims at producing a

more heterogeneous representation of freelancing and hence, enable the proliferation

of discussions as to class transformation under conditions of flexibility.

To that end, I look into the variety of class positions freelancers could inhabit

in relation to their freelance work, the class processes they go through in time

(including the non-work realms of their lives) and the differences in the way they

experience these class processes. This class-based analysis with a particular attention

to difference is informed by a conceptualization of class antagonism as involving the

impossibility of pre-defining the organization of production processes. Hence, class

processes are understood as open to constant conflict, negotiation, and

transformation. The kind of class differences analyzed are regarded not as immutable but as existing on an unstable ground open to contestation.

On the other hand, having an insight into the conditions of freelancers requires moving beyond the question of production and class processes for two reasons. First, an overdeterminist conception of class would require us to look into the non-class processes overdetermining class processes. That is why non-class questions of power and subjectivity will inform my class analysis as to the differences in experiencing class processes in freelancing. The second reason is that in freelancing, among other flexible forms of employment, we see that the lines separating work from non-work are not stable, could be open to negotiation and change through time as well. So, not only class processes, but also non-class processes could be seen as up for contestation and their overdetermined interaction has important impacts on the experiences of freelancers. The wider ramifications of non-class processes in relation to the class experiences of freelancers will be elaborated in detail in the next chapter. The scope of this chapter will be limited to the differences considering the class processes and experiences of freelancers.

4.2 Class as an entry point of analysis

In this section, I elaborate on the specificity of the conception of "class" I utilize to set the scenes of freelancing and then proceed to argue for the necessity of compounding it with a conception of class antagonism as the empty ground of the various class processes existent in those spaces. To that end, I draw on Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff's conception of "class as process", which they posit as co-existing in a relation of overdetermination with other processes in society. They claim to have a surplus theory of class and distinguish their take on class from

those which put emphasis on power and property as definitive of class (Resnick and Wolff, 2006, p. 118). In line with that, they put a specific emphasis on the processes of the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labor. I believe unraveling the multiplicity of capitalist and non-capitalist class processes with a conception of "class as process" which emphasizes class antagonism could be helpful in illustrating not only the complexity of the processes of exploitation at stake, but also in opening up discursive as well as practical space for alternative class processes. In other words, we could employ their conception of class for a more heterogeneous representation of social processes as open to intervention.

4.2.1 Determinism vs. overdetermination

For such an employment of class as a grid of analysis as well as intervention, we need to first attend to the specificity of Resnick and Wolff's take on Marxian epistemology and ontology. Their Althusserian take on Marxian theory thinks of social space as constituted by various class and non-class processes which overdetermine each other. The concept of overdetermination is key here in that it enables them to distance themselves from mechanistic and deterministic explanations of social processes. Their account points to fundamentally two forms of determinism, which could be found both in Marxist and non-Marxist discourses. Following Althusser, they point to theoretical humanist and structuralist discourses as the two fundamental discourses that various determinist analyses employ. From their account we understand that theoretical humanism involves attempts to designate subjects of history—for example, the proletariat, the precariat, the immaterial labor etc.—or explain social phenomena as reducible to observable and understandable rational human actions. On the other hand, the determinist employment of structuralism

involves a search for self-evident rational causes explaining social phenomena. Discourses that attribute the "entrepreneur" the task of changing the future of work/business/technology could be seen to involve such a theoretical humanist assumption while discourses that regard "capital accumulation" as the self-explanatory singular cause of every development in society could be seen as examples to the structuralist fallacy.

To understand the fallacies of theoretical humanism and idealism at stake, it would be helpful to return to Althusser's development of the concept of overdetermination, which Resnick and Wolff draw upon. Althusser's criticism problematized the claim that Marx simply "inverted" the Hegelian dialectic, replaced idealism with materialism. Althusser disagreed with this reading of Marxist dialectic and claimed that Marx changed both the terms and relations of Hegelian dialectics, as he had a different conception of contradiction. In his article, "Contradiction and Overdetermination", Althusser claims that "overdetermined contradiction" is different from Hegelian notion of contradiction in that it does not involve a "*cumulative internalization*" of these multiplicity of contradictions, which are deemed to be mere moments in the development of consciousness whose past moments remain as mere *echoes* in its present (1969/2005). In Hegelian dialectic, the past images do not affect the consciousness as effective determinations different from itself: "these images and worlds concern it only as echoes (memories, phantoms of its historicity) of what it has become, that is, as anticipations of or allusions to itself." (p. 102). The presence of the past in the present does not have any external determination on it, this presence is only the presence to consciousness of consciousness itself in that the past is nothing other than the internal essence of the future it encloses. Then, if we simply invert Hegelian dialectic and claim that instead

of the Idea, the material (e.g. "Economy") is the essence of the phenomena (political and ideological), we do not do away with essence vs. phenomena separation, hence with the Hegelian dialectic itself. What we get for Althusser is economism, or even technologism (p. 108). So, this historicist conception of the past takes the present to have been pre-determined by some logic, which is retroactively constituted as the organizing logic of events. The present becomes a necessity and the past events are reduced to moments serving its realization.

In Althusser's reading of Marxist dialectic, we see different social processes having distinct effectivities, which are not governed by an exterior logic. These processes overdetermine each other and thus cannot be closed up on themselves. Resnick and Wolff draw on this notion of overdetermination and claim that it involves the rejection of attributing any single cause for any social process, emphasizing the multiplicity of effectivities in their constitution. Furthermore, they criticize the attribution of qualitative or quantitative significance to any determinant as well. The reason is that all processes are effective in the constitution of the conditions of existence of any other. In line with that, they claim that a dialectical conception of overdetermination entails rejecting claims to the "truth" for "irreducibly different truths", "determination for determinations; certainty for uncertainty; necessity for contingency; order for disorder; and conservatism for deep change" (2006, p. 51).

In accordance with this overdeterminist conception of contradiction, we see in Althusser's take on Marxism that there is a dialectical instead of a reflective relation between the concept and the object. Theoretical practice is a practice overdetermined by and overdetermining others and it cannot claim to represent the truth. Following this, Resnick and Wolff emphasize the impact of various processes

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on theoretical practice as well and hence, refute any claim to singular cause explanatory of any social process. Relativity of truth does not claim that they are not "true" enough, but that the truths produced are overdetermined by a variety of economic, political and cultural processes. In line with that, they argue that theoretical practice is a distinct, overdetermined process irreducible to the other processes in society. The importance of this claim is that it would inform us not to claim to provide a "true" picture of the society or any social process, encouraging us to acknowledge and attempt to account for the conditions of existence of our analyses. They argue that an overdeterminist notion of complexity rejects any idea of "order" in social processes. They claim that no ordering exists yet "a theoretical act performed upon a complexity as an intervention designed to add yet another determination to that complexity, hopefully to move it this way instead of that" (2006, p. 64).

My analysis of class differences in freelancing is aimed to be such a theoretical intervention to the discussions around flexibility and insecurity. I do not claim to provide a "true" account of the emergence and development of freelancing among other flexible laboring forms. Instead, I aim for a heterogeneous representation of the scenes of freelancing in a way to disempower the discursive hegemony of the homogenous capitalocentrist narratives, which can be seen both in those which celebrate the freedom of freelancing[75] as well as in those accounts which focus their critiques on the "losses" of the working class and its disintegration with

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[75] Here, I have in mind both the neoliberal discourses which posit freedom as attainable through the self-initiative of the freelancer and the autonomist Marxist discourses which posit an increase in autonomy on the part of the worker as a result of the immaterialization of labor. I think both reduce the present to be operating on the logic of the capital. While the first posits a subject which takes the profit motive and investment in the self as granted, the latter posits a subject which owes its autonomy to the immaterialization of labor under capitalism.

flexibility.[76] Both attribute agency to some macro-economic processes, which are reduced to the working of capitalism, unfolding regardless of other social, political or cultural processes. This ends up having a disempowering impact on political practice as it allows no space or grid of intervention and covers over the existing ones. A representation of the variety of class processes in freelancing is a starting point for an overdeterminist account of flexibility, aimed at disempowering the existing neoliberal representations and empowering class transformation under conditions of flexibility in favor of a post-capitalist future.

4.2.2 Class as entry point

The question at this point is: if the social processes are non-totalizable and overdetermined by a complex array of other processes, how is social analysis possible? How can we make sense of this infinity of processes if each is overdetermined by all the other processes? To venture into an exhaustive analysis seems to be impossible. In regard to that problem, Resnick and Wolff claim that the Marxian theory privileges certain "entry points" for social analysis, "a particular concept a theory uses to enter into its formulation, its particular construction of entities and relations that comprise the social totality" (1987, p. 25). They claim that these entry points ("class" in Marxian theory) do not denote epistemological or ontological essences. In other words, what is privileged is the conceptual entry point, not the knowledge thus produced. When seen in this way, theoretical practice, which is itself an overdetermined and overdetermining process, is to remain an incomplete

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[76] For a psychoanalytically informed account of the relation between loss and class transformations, see Özselçuk, C. (2006). Mourning, Melancholy, and the Politics of Class Transformation. *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society*, 18:2, 225-240.

practice. Then, why is class taken as the entry point specifically? They claim that their decision itself is the result of an overdetermined process (p. 27). This reason is not outside the theoretical process; in other words, there isn't a cause outside the theoretical process which would provide a justification for it. Resnick and Wolff refer to Saussure to make this claim that theories justify themselves while also establishing their own truth criteria (p. 28). Like there is no referent in language which is independent of all the other terms— since "language is a set of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of others" (p. 28)- there is no cause outside (and as the foundation of) the mutual effectivity of processes constituting the social process and justifying our entry point once and for all.

4.3 Class as process

So, for Resnick and Wolff, class is a privileged entry point for the analysis of the non-totalizable sociality, which is continuously being overdetermined by a variety of processes. Here, neither class is a structure determining the other subjective or objective processes, nor individuals can be regarded as expressions of a class structure. In line with that, they criticize a conception of class as involving subjects occupying stable positions and acting or expected to act accordingly. In line with that, they open "class" to overdetermination with the concept of "class processes". Their conceptualization of "class as process" involves a critique of theories which tried to define a single and/or fundamental determinant for the definition of class. Resnick and Wolff (2006) argue that the Marxist theories produced so far based their definition on three main criteria: property, power and surplus labor. They argue that there has been much emphasis on property and power in class analysis; however,

surplus labor was not taken to be the distinctive contribution of Marxism. The concomitant debates came to revolve around whether certain groups of people could be allies of the working class or not, mostly with the presupposition that class struggles come out of one's position in property relations or relations of power.

On the other hand, Resnick and Wolff argue that property and power are important but the specificity of Marxist analysis comes from its emphasis on the processes of the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labor. Instead of trying to determine the potential of "middle" class or any other group of people, they prefer to look into class processes in their constitution, reproduction and disruption in relation to other social processes. Their dynamic notion of class processes is based on the distinction they put between fundamental and subsumed class processes and the concomitant distinction between productive and unproductive labor. Second, they distinguish class processes from non-class processes. They criticize the accounts which erase these distinctions for a more "inclusive" definition of working class as well as the accounts which exclude certain groups based on their position in the production relations or property for a "pure" definition of working class. Instead, they defend an analytical utilization of the distinctions "to determine both the actualities of and potentialities for alliances among fundamental and subsumed classes, alliances always overdetermined by the whole range of natural and social processes" (2006, p. 105).

To begin with, Resnick and Wolff draw on Marx's writings to elaborate a surplus labor theory of class. The reference to surplus is based on Marx's definition of necessary labor, which is the socially abstract labor required for the reproduction of the labor power. What is "needed" for this reproduction is overdetermined by social, cultural and economic processes. Surplus labor is the amount which exceeds

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that socially designated amount and class processes are distinguished from each other in terms of the organization of the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labor. The fundamental class process has to do with the organization of the production and appropriation of surplus labor while subsumed class processes have to do with its distribution for the reproduction of the conditions of its existence.

Accordingly, in capitalist fundamental class process, the direct producers who produce surplus labor do not appropriate it; the capitalist is in the position of the appropriator. On the other hand, in independent fundamental class process for example, the person who produces surplus labor appropriates it at the same time. Resnick and Wolff argue that in Marx we see primitive communist, slave, feudal, capitalist, and ancient are among the fundamental class processes (Resnick & Wolff, 2006, p. 93)[77]. In accordance with their conception of history based on the concept of overdetermination, they do not posit that these class processes "logically" followed each other and capitalism outgrew the other class processes. Social formations are defined based on the fundamental class process prevalent in them; however, its prevalence is overdetermined and does not prevent the co-existence of other class processes (p. 95).

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[77] Jack Amariglio's (2010) conceptualization of the relation between subjectivity and class provides a historical and nuanced approach to the designation of class processes. He argues that the subjectivity which appropriates the surplus labor is to be considered in historical terms. He illustrates how the notions of collectivity and individuality are the results of historical and political processes and attending to them is important for a nuanced understanding of class processes. Therefore, he argues that in cases where the patriarch appropriating the surplus is part of the community or rather, has a constitutive role in community-, we can say a communal class process is at stake. The reason is that the appropriator is not defined as the "individual" patriarch; there is claimed to be a collective subjectivity appropriating the surplus. He argues if the commune dissolves and the same patriarch continues to appropriate, we can speak of private appropriation. I understand, in that case, we would have not a communal but a feudal class process.
Informed by this reminder on the importance of subjectivity, we could argue that independent and capitalist class processes involve the conception of an "individual" appropriator who is relatively separate from the community as well. In independent class process, this individual produces and appropriates surplus at the same time, while in capitalist class process, the individual direct producer does not appropriate the surplus she produces. Finally, we could argue that in slavery, there is no free labour power, or a separation between the individual labourer and her labour power.

On the other hand, subsumed classes receive a share of the surplus from appropriators; they are both dependent on and constitutive of the fundamental class processes (p. 94). They provide the conditions of existence for the reproduction of the economic, cultural or political conditions of existence of the fundamental class process. The relationships between fundamental and subsumed classes are also conflictual, contradictory and open to class struggles much like the one between the producers and appropriators of surplus labor (p. 94). In line with that analysis, capitalists and workers could be claimed to make up the fundamental class process while the managers could be seen as a subsumed class since they receive a share of surplus labor to ensure the reproduction of the conditions for its production. Merchants and their employees are also counted among subsumed classes since they do not produce or appropriate surplus labor but obtain a share of it for the reproduction of its conditions.

In this account, it is possible for an individual to occupy a variety of capitalist and non-capitalist fundamental and subsumed class processes through time as well. Accordingly, a worker who both manages other workers and participates in the production process undergoes both capitalist fundamental and subsumed class processes. Or, a person who works as a manager at a company undergoes subsumed capitalist class process at work could participate in feudal fundamental class process as she produces surplus labor if she cooks for the household members in the evening. Or still, a freelancer who mostly works for different clients on project basis could be argued to have an independent class position but when she hires another person for a bulky project and appropriates her surplus labor, she comes to occupy the position of the capitalist appropriator. On the other hand, if he works together with other freelancers on a project and collectively appropriates the surplus labor thus produced,

she could be argued to undergo a communal class process. Details as to the variety of class processes freelancers undergo in time will be elaborated in the following part of this chapter.

4.4 Re-orienting to class with antagonism

Before we move on to look into the diversity of class processes that freelancers participate in, I believe it is important to supplant this process-based outlook to class with a conception of class in antagonistic terms. By emphasizing the antagonism constitutive of and constituted in class processes, we come to think of class not as an immutable structure or a random playing out of processes but as a terrain of difference, conflict and negotiation. This perspective could guide us as to the terms of class transformation and the possibilities of intervention for different class becomings. Resnick and Wolff (2006) argue that power and property are important in class processes but that we need to begin our analysis on the appropriation, distribution of surplus labor. But then, how are we to make sense of the class transformation, which I argue could involve a shift from one class process to another or a different way of relating to the class processes one participates in?[78] Do class processes evolve on a plane of immanence? I believe an overdeterminist conception of class antagonism which attends to questions of subjectivity and power need to be elaborated along with this class process approach for a better grasp of both the

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[78] Besides a shift from one class process to another, I think a post-fantasmatic way of relating to class processes, which involves an acknowledgment of class antagonism explored here, could also be termed as "class transformation". The post-fantasmatic move I argue for would involve rendering the processes as to the production, appropriation and distribution more transparent and open to contestation. So, for example, there could be class transformation even if the fundamental class process remains to be capitalist. If a post-fantasmatic relation to class processes take place, we could say workers in a capitalist firm could see the processes of production, appropriation and distribution open to their intervention. This would be the moment of political action. In the next chapter, I illustrate how this post-fantasmatic relation to class is tied up with a post-fantasmatic relation to work and the political implications thereof.

complexity of the class and non-class processes existent in any social space as well as their transformation. To that end, I first elaborate on two different conceptions of class antagonism found in Marxist literature and then, question their contribution to understanding class transformation. The reason is, I think an analysis of the different class processes that freelancers go through in time needs to be supplanted with an understanding of the class transformations that are existent or have the potential to be realized as well.

To begin with, we could argue that antagonism is on the agenda of many political thinkers, some with class, others with broader concerns. To limit the analysis to diversify the scenes of freelancing in class terms, I constrict my analysis to class based conceptions of antagonism. To that end, we could look into the conception of antagonism that could be found in Hardt and Negri's as well as Özselçuk and Madra's work. While the first provides a historicist yet informative conception of antagonism with the gaining of hegemony by "immaterial labor", the latter argues for a more ontological take on antagonism in relation to class processes. I believe that both accounts could help us understand the complexity and heterogeneity of the class processes at stake in freelancing as well as the potentials for and impediments confronting the creation of alternatives.

4.4.1 Class antagonism in common

To start with, in Hardt and Negri's work, we find claims as to the aggravation of class antagonism in Post-Fordism, which they explain as involving immaterialization of labor. In their trilogy, the subject which is posed against capital in this antagonism is referred to as "the multitude". They claim that the multitude emerged with the changes in production processes in post-Fordist era. They argue that production does

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not simply denote "economic" production anymore, namely the production of commodities for exchange. Production itself becomes the production of social life in its totality, rendering labor truly "biopolitical". This also means that the distinction between the producer and the produced (between the subject and object) changes as the production becomes the production of social life (subjects producing subjects). All the vital affective, cognitive and communicative activities are now deemed to be productive of surplus value, and hence nearly everyone "who lives" can actually be included in the multitude. In line with their take on production, they argue that the distinction between life and work is effaced, with work being completely socialized on the one hand, and tending to colonize our lives, time and the future on the other.

In this narrative, capital becomes a "parasite" feeding on the labor of the common, the common created mainly by the affective, communicative and cognitive labor of the multitude. The common is both the conditions of existence of the socialized labor they argue for as well as the product of this labor in common.[79] They underline a change in the function of capital, claiming that it is now becoming more and more external to the production process. While it used to have a somewhat internal function in the production process— to oversee the production process, to provide the means of production and to discipline the workers for e.g., now its primary concern is claimed to be to *capture* the value produced in the social factory and hence, expropriate the common (Hardt & Negri, 2009, p. 141). This emergent antagonism is marked by a contradiction between the capital's means of controlling

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[79] The common that Hardt and Negri propose as the precondition and product of labour refers more to the immaterial processes such as affects, language or intellect, which cannot be attributed to the possession of a specific group or individual and which are not exhaustible as they are not subject to the logic of scarcity of the natural resources held in common.
Jason Read conceptualizes this shift from material to immaterial resources gaining prominence in the production processes as a move from formal to real subsumption. In formal subsumption, he argues, there was a conflict between the singularity of labour and the abstraction of it by the capital. On the other hand, in real subsumption, the conflict is over the singular and the common. Following Hardt and Negri, Read argues the capital no longer wants to subordinate the singularity and commonality of social relations, but directly appropriates them (2003, p. 151).

and capturing the value thus produced and the productivity of the biopolitical labor (p. 145). The reason is that the common produced by the relationalities in the social factory always exceeds the hold of capitalism (p. 152) since it has to do with the production of the social life itself and has a tendency to become autonomous from capitalist relations. Capitalist relations, however, try to feed on its creativity but diminish this creativity and productivity via its attempts to control, discipline, privatize and make flexible the biopolitical labor. This is the new regime of exploitation of capital. Hardt and Negri (2009) argue that as the distinction between production and reproduction is effaced, it is no longer possible to approach exploitation as based on the appropriation of "surplus value". The new regime is based on the expropriation of commons, which are defined not only as the dispossession of the people and expropriation of the common "natural" resources, but also as the expropriation of the relationalities, immaterial and hence unlimited sources of common (e.g. language) by the capital which tries to capture the value produced by these commons.

Hardt and Negri's account is informative as it elaborates on the changes in capitalist class processes. The changes in the processes that the capitalist undergoes, the changes in the composition of surplus value, the organization of production as well as the relation between capital and common are very significant and need further elaboration. On the other hand, the lack of an overdeterminist notion of social change seem to lead to a homogenous representation of the social space, contrary to their aim to propose "multitude" as a way to rethink class with difference. Firstly, they reduce the totality of social space to production, and claim that any activity in it has the potential to serve capitalist value creation. The lack of analytical distinctions between fundamental and subsumed class processes, the differences between

fundamental class processes as well as class and non-class processes could be argued to lead to this representation of any activity as potentially capitalist.[80]

In line with that, in Hardt and Negri's account, we could see a historicist conception of class antagonism. It involves a reduction of the overdetermined complexity of a variety of fundamental and subsumed class processes as well as their relation to non-class processes into the conflict between two parties: capitalist vs. labor (multitude). Furthermore, they end up having a determinist account as to the emergence of this antagonism in that they attribute it to the changes in "production", as the "immaterialization" of labor with the spreading of value production to the totality of social space. This involves a productivist notion of social change in that it reduces the cause of change singularly to "production", which is loosely defined and deemed to carry more prominence than other social processes. They end up having a teleological account as the resolution of this class antagonism as well, since the self-organization of labor is argued to emerge out of the changes in the capitalist production and it is expected to gain enough power to shed the parasite still feeding on it.

I believe Hardt and Negri's account is important in referring to some of the changes in capitalism and in pointing to the increase in the self-organization potential of labor. Translated into class process based perspective, we could argue that this could point to the proliferation of independent or communal fundamental class

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[80] Resnick and Wolff gives the example of education while pointing to the importance of establishing such distinctions (2006, pp. 94-5). They argue education, as one of the conditions of any fundamental class process, could be a non-class process, for example, if it involves children playing. On the other hand, education may be delivered under subsumed class processes if, for example, it is delivered by educators who are paid by extracted surplus labour of tax-payers in state schools. Or, education is performed under capitalist fundamental class process if it is sold as a commodity by an enterprise. If we continue with their scenario, we could say this enterprise may be run by teachers who produce and appropriate the surplus value together. Then, we would have a communal class process in the education of children. Or, in the case of private tutoring, we could have an independent class process. Hardt and Negri's account reduce this class and non-class heterogeneity in the production of immaterial labour to the working of the "common", which seems to be imagined in classless terms and opposed to the working of the capital.

processes in some parts of the world. However, it fails to give an overdeterminist reading of these changes. It ignores the subjectivities of those who undergo or constitute these changes as well as the historical, social, political processes enabling or hindering those changes. An overdeterminist perspective would consider the conditions of existence of self-organization as irreducible to capitalist production processes and would entail referring to other social processes overdetermining the experiences of self-organization. This overdeterminist account would also need a consideration of the temporal and spatial specificities of the conditions enabling or impeding self-organization of labor. The reason is there is no "capitalism" which is lived and experienced in the same way across the world. That is another reason why the analyses as to class processes need to be compounded with analyses of non-class processes to make claims as to the present and future class transformations.

4.4.2 Class antagonism and *jouissance*

To that end, we would need an overdeterminist conception of class antagonism in the first place. Madra and Özselçuk's (2010) ontological conception of antagonism is an example to an overdeterminist approach to antagonism. They first criticize the historicist conception of class antagonism in various Marxist discourses, including the post-Fordist literature on immaterial labor. They claim that this notion of antagonism leads to the expectation that antagonism could be resolved and class relations can be stabilized once and for all in some future social formation.[81] Their conceptualization of class antagonism is a critique of this historicist expectation for

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[81] The problem with this imagery of imminent resolution of contradictions is that it could have a significantly disempowering impact on political practice. It could lead to an image of social change requiring total and sudden upheaval after which all kinds of antagonism will disappear. This expectation of total change renders any "quotidian" practice in favor of class transformation insignificant and even as "loss of energy" which could otherwise be expended for a revolutionary change. Furthermore, it could lead to bigger disillusion and guilt when the attempts to produce alternatives to capitalism fail, stemming from the inability to see the constitutive role of antagonism in any—including activist- community, rendering all such attempts unstable and open to contestation.

resolution as it takes antagonism to be the fundamental constituent of sociality. They draw on the Lacanian conception of *jouissance* to explain the impossibility of resolution of antagonism as well as the productive and disruptive constituency of it in any social formation. *Jouissance* is the remainder which emerges with subject's entrance to the socio-symbolic order and which this order attempts to domesticate via institutional mechanisms but can do so at best partially and temporarily. Madra and Özselçuk suggest that attending to the working of *jouissance*, one cannot see any institution or the subject's relation to those institutions as stable and fixable (2010, p. 490).

This conception of *jouissance* foregrounds their conception of antagonism as the impossibility of pre-defining or fixing the organization of any social process, including class processes. In line with that, they define class antagonism as "the irreducible impossibility of instituting harmonious and fully reconciled organization of the production, appropriation, and distribution of social surplus (whether it takes the form of labor, the value form, or use values)" (p. 489). Their reading of Marx's forms of the commune is based on this conception of class antagonism. They argue that different forms of the commune are different ways of organizing class antagonism in society. In other words, they see different class processes as responses to the fundamental class antagonism and they argue that forms of the commune "stand for the institutions, mentalities, interfaces, social technologies, and narratives that attempt to provisionally stabilize the production, appropriation, and distribution of surplus" (p. 489). [82] So, we cannot posit any means of organizing class relations as immutable, ideal or stable. Class antagonism is to prevail in all, including

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[82] This conceptualization of the commune is more in line with the conception of the common which has no positive being held in common but instead, is an expression of singularities which play out on a relatively negative and unstable ground, as a "half yes and a half no" (Curcio & Özselçuk, 2010, p. 308). Therefore, we could say this conception of the commune stands in tension with the ontology of production found in the autonomist account on immaterial labour of Hardt and Negri (2009).

communist, class processes.[83] This notion of class antagonism is in line with their argument that we need to take communism as an axiom, not as a blueprint to be realized. In that case, an ethico-political re-orientation to class could be understood as involving an opening up of processes of production, appropriation and distribution of surplus to collective decision-making processes. The terrain of appropriation of production and distribution of surplus as well as needs and abilities would be up for constant negotiation.

However, the realization of such a re-orientation to class requires a different way of relating to class antagonism. In other words, subjective investments play a great deal of importance in their account as to class transformation. They argue that there are two different ways of relating to *jouissance*; one based on the male logic of exception and the other feminine logic of non-all. The first involves a constitutive belief in the existence of another, exceptionally noncastrated full *jouissance*. For example, the entrepreneur is posed as such an exceptional figure in bourgeoisie economy. Such exceptional figures sustain the false promise that full jousissance can actually be restored in so far as we obey "the superegoic injunction to strive toward reaching this ideal state (e.g., the development of human capital, efficiency, attainment of wealth, consumption of the correct commodities)" (p. 491). However, the feminine way of relating to *jouissance* involves no exception; foreclosing the phantasy of reaching an exceptional point in the future. The feminine is inscribed in the symbolic, hence her being is actually undividable in the set. It could be argued that Madra and Özselçuk propose such a feminine way of relating to *jouissance* for an ethico-political re-orientation to class antagonism. The reason is that there would

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[83] The impossibility of a stable, clearly definable blueprint of communal class process could be seen in the detailed account of Resnick and Wolff (2006) on different forms of communal class processes and classlessness.

be no blueprint, no ideal or exceptional status guiding the set. The socio-symbolic order including the class processes would be approached as undecidable, and hence requiring constant decision-making processes.[84]

What is the importance of this conception of class antagonism for a class analysis of freelancing? It informs us that the class processes that freelancers participate in time cannot be stabilized once and for all either. There is to be found a disjuncture between the subject and the class processes organizing her place in production relations. The irreducibility of the subject to class or any other institutional formation requires it to be counted as one of the moments overdetermining class processes and class transformation. Resnick and Wolff's process focused class analysis is important in providing us with analytical tools to see the diversity of social space as made of multiple class processes in an overdetermined relation with each other as well as other non-class processes. However, it seems to be lacking in terms of opening up an account for class transformation. Attending to class antagonism with questions of subjectivity and power in mind will hopefully allow us to lay out the instability of class processes and the points of class transformation.

The form of class antagonism we could trace in Hardt and Negri's account on biopower and contemporary capitalism is informative in pointing to the changes in capitalist class processes. It could be seen to bring up the issue of power back to the

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[84] Curcio and Özselçuk (2010) conceptualize this ethico-reorientation to class as the "commune of non-all". In such pre-capitalist forms of the commune as Asiatic and Germanic, we have the household head or the despot who appropriates surplus labour on behalf of the commune. I understand Curcio and Özselçuk's account point to them as the forms of the commune based on the male logic of exception. The exception—the leader, the patriarch etc.- is there to establish uniformity in the set. In a feminine conceptualization of the commune, there would be no exception to the set, no privileged point which would represent and stabilize the commune, creating "an inconsistent whole of diversities, a *non-all*" (Curcio and Özselçuk, 2010, p. 310). This would make the commune open to difference and antagonism. Consequently, I think it would require a committed and post-fantasmatic subjectivity which would not evade conflicts and antagonisms and would be open to the ensuing necessity of making decisions and negotiations all the time. The importance of this subjectivity is expounded on in the last chapter.

agenda of class analyses. However, they end up reducing class antagonism to a

singular moment between capital and labor and seem to presuppose that it derives

from changes in the organization of production. On the other hand, the

overdeterminist conception of antagonism we find in the psychoanalytically

informed account of Madra and Özselçuk points to the importance of subjectivity, of

our investments in the present hegemonic discourses of capitalism and the

preconditions of our disinvestments from them for class transformation.

4.5 Class processes in freelancing: Capitalist, independent, communal

In this section, I draw on Resnick and Wolff's utilization of class as process for a

more heterogeneous representation of freelancing in class terms. The hegemonic

representations of freelancing take it for granted that social space is homogenously

capitalist. It works by reference to the freedom promised to freelancer based on the

exceptional figure of the entrepreneur. If she takes the risk of quitting her 9-6 job,

follows her dream and does the job she loves, she will be free and happy. To that

end, one needs to be able see one's self, skills, interests, one's relations to other

people as assets to be valued in one's enterprise. Every aspect of one's life could be

attributed a direct or indirect market value in that representation. The work/enterprise

is in the center of one's life and one is to organize all other activities or relations in

consideration of it— whether they benefit it or not.

Attending to the differences in class among freelancers as well as the

different class processes they go through in time would help us question this

hegemonic capitalocentric representation.[85] In this way, I hope to unravel both the

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[85] Gibson-Graham and Resnick and Wolff (2000) argue that a critique of capitalocentricism involves a critique of representations of the social space as singularly capitalist, which renders non-capitalist practices invisible and disempowers political action. They conceptualize "capitalocentrism" as

changes in the forms of exploitation in class processes as well as the potentials of

class transformation. To that end, I supplant this class process analysis with an

antagonistic perspective on subjectivity, attending to the subjects' experiences of

working as well as the power dynamics at work, in both office work and freelancing

in the next chapter. I refer to the question of subjectivity for an understanding of

class processes themselves as well as to dwell on the question of class

transformation.

4.5.1 Capitalist class process in freelancing

To start with, I would like to point to the three different forms of class

processes that could be observed in the field of freelancing. It could be argued that

freelancers go through mainly independent, capitalist and communal class processes.

They could go through all three of them in time or may be inhabiting those processes

simultaneously in various realms of their lives. There is much debate within Marxist

literature as to how to designate non-capitalist class processes as well as their

relation to capitalist fundamental class process. In certain veins of Marxism, the

variety of non-capitalist class processes was considered as "forms" which were to

disappear when capitalism developed enough and their survival were justified with

such concepts as "uneven development" (Gibson-Graham and Resnick & Wolff,

2000, p. 13). The teleological conception of class processes posited that these

backward forms were to be replaced with "capitalism" and then later, with advanced

communism. So, the variety of feudal, slave, independent and communal class

processes were associated with different periods in history. Their contemporary

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follows: "Whenever noncapitalist economic processes (such as independent commodity production) are seen, for example, as obsolete remnants of a precapitalist "traditional" economy, or as seedbeds of truly capitalist endeavor, or as ultimately "capitalist" because they involve commodification or markets, we confront the operations of a discourse that places capitalism at the defining center of economic identity" (p. 16).

existence was considered either transitory or insignificant, having not much impact on the fundamental class relations.

Resnick and Wolff's frame of class processes enables us to question this historicist conception of non-capitalist class processes, which end up representing the social space as singularly capitalist. Their surplus value theory of class gives us the tools for a more heterogeneous mapping of the economy in general. Their definition of class rests on the processes of the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labor. Taking the risk of a too neat representation, we could argue that in capitalist fundamental class process, the surplus labor produced by the worker is appropriated by someone else, the capitalist. The worker is separated from the surplus she produces. Distribution is a distinct and prominent process in their definition of class processes in that it involves the reproduction of the society and the fundamental class process at stake. In capitalist class process, capitalist shares some part of the surplus labor with different agents (managers, landowners, political/religious leaders etc.) to ensure the reproduction of the fundamental capitalist class process. The parties involved in this distributive moment are in subsumed capitalist class process. As I mentioned, this is a very neat sketch of capitalism, aimed at illustrating the positions occupied by different agents in the processes of production, appropriation and distribution. The fundamental and subsumed class processes should be considered as terrains of conflict and negotiation as well. The reason is that the parties in capitalist class processes could all have claims to the surplus labor. The processes of the production, appropriation and distribution cannot be totally pre-defined and hence, their organization is to be considered up for constant contestation.

Freelancers who more or less regularly work for a company which sells the products of their labor in the market could be seen as involved in a capitalist fundamental class relation.[86] It could be advantageous for companies to send the workers home and thus, reduce the cost of production.[87] It could be seen as a further commodification of labor in that labor turns into something purchasable for short-term when needed. In that case, freelancers have to procure the means of production such as electricity and computer. This could be seen as a cut back on their share of surplus labor in that the freelancer takes responsibility for both the reproduction of her labor and the means of production. Freelancer could request a higher pay than the workers in the office in return. Whether that request is met or not would depend on a multiplicity of factors, such as the skill set of the freelancer, the shortage/abundance of labor-power in the market, the existence/non-existence of standards of payment in the market or legal rights which the freelancer can refer to or the interpersonal relations with the employer (for e.g. whether she is a friend or an acquaintance). As

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[86] In many cases, on the other hand, it is difficult to settle whether there is an independent or capitalist class process when the freelancer is working for a capitalist enterprise. If the freelancer is selling a final product, for example a piece of design, which is directly utilized by the company, we could say that the freelancer undergoes an independent class process. On the other hand, if the capitalist company does not utilize but sell this final product to a customer and thus, make profit over it, we could say there is an appropriation of surplus labour by the capitalist firm and thus, a capitalist class process. So, a designer who produces designs for a design webpage which acts as an intermediary for the selling of the final product participates in a capitalist class process. In contrast, a designer who designs the whole webpage for a construction company participates in an indepedent class process. In the meantime, the freelancer who works for a capitalist firm as part of a project which would be sold by the company in the market is also involved in a capitalist class process. The important point which would distinguish them is not whether what is sold is a final product or labour power. The point of distinction could be related to the subject appropriating surplus value.

[87] This argument is very common in debates regarding freelancing. It is assumed that companies "send" their workers home to cut the costs of production. This claim presupposes that "working from home" is a phenomenon reducible to the profit seeking attempts of the capital. The overdeterminsit account I would like to present in this thesis comes from a belief that "working from home" has a variety of overdeterminants which cannot be reduced to the rule of capital and workers could demand to work from home for a variety of reasons. It should also be seen as a site of contestation in that capital is also trying its hand in the profitability of permitting the workers to work from home. The recent examples suggest that companies could regard it contrary to productivity, call their workers back to the office. The recent examples of such companies were IBM and Yahoo, which called their workers back, claiming they need to work in "small, self-directed agile teams in these fields together." (see, http://money.cnn.com/2017/05/19/technology/ibm-work-at-home/index.html, retrieved on 9 August 2017).

seen in this scenario, the capitalist and the freelancer would be in an antagonistic

relation in their claims over surplus labor. Here, we could see conflict and

negotiation over the share of surplus labor. On the other hand, the same contestation

could be over the conditions of production as well. For instance, a full-time wage

worker working in a capitalist firm could request to go freelance for a variety of class

and non-class reasons (such as taking care of someone in the family, sparing time for

other activities, preventing burnout in the long term, higher pay she could get by

working for others as well etc.).[88] Or, she may request to work from home for a

couple of days a week, whether to reduce the workload or to take freelance work on

the side.[89] In both cases, the company she works for may or may not see it to the

benefit of productivity and may or may not welcome the request.

In the account given above, we see cases which would involve negotiation

and conflict in the moments of production and appropriation in capitalist class

processes. Looking at the distributive moment, we could see that the transformation

in capitalist class processes that comes with freelancing has impact on other class

processes as well. When working from home, the freelancer also could start cooking

her own meals, buying less from service providers and thus, affecting the share of

surplus labor they appropriate by selling ready-made household commodities. In

other words, when the freelancer consumes less of the commodities provided mainly

by the service sector, she affects the subsumed class processes in capitalist class

relations.[90] In addition, to secure the conditions of existence of labor power without

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[88] One of the interviewees accounted for how he went freelancing by negotiating with the company he was working for. The networks he forged during his time in the company enabled him to directly work for the clients, hence enter independent class processes as a self-appropriating freelancer.

[89] In the workshop held with freelancers in the publishing industry in Istanbul, two participants told how they could negotiate working from home on a couple of days a week. Their account indicated that the skills they had played a significant role in their negotiation power.

[90] Ali states that he opts for freelancing to be able to consume less commodities. By consuming "less", he says that he gets the opportunity to work less as well. Or, Zeynep claims that when one goes to work, one buys things for breakfast, gets on the bus, meets friends in fancy restaurants and consumes

resorting to commodities, she could end up producing more at home and the products of her labor in the household could be enjoyed by other household members as well. In this case, she could be undergoing feudal or communal class processes, depending on the organization of the production and appropriation of surplus labor in the household.[91] If she produces together with other household members and appropriates the product collectively, we could argue that she is in a communal class process. However, if the products of her labor are appropriated by others, she could be seen to be involved in a feudal class process. This illustrates that the co-implication of the transformations in capitalist class processes with non-capitalist class processes, which render them sites of contestation.

4.5.2 Independent class process in freelancing

On the other hand, freelancers do not have to go through fundamental capitalist class processes while freelancing. They could be working directly to an individual client, appropriating the surplus labor individually and hence, going through an independent fundamental class process. We could refer to two different accounts of this class process, which are informed by the process-based outlook of Resnick and Wolff. The first is that of Satyana Gabriel (1990), who accounts for the specificity of the self-exploitation at stake in independent class processes, drawing on the account of Marx on exploitation. On the other hand, Janet Hotch (2000) analyzes "self-employment" as involving a variety of class processes, including independent class processes and looks into the conditions and potentials for its organization. Both accounts could be

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more. But freelancing disrupts the reproduction of the service economy and is not really to its profit since we come to consume less when we work from home.
[91] In their class analysis of the household, Resnick and Wolff (2006) claim there to be a wider shift from feudal to independent and communal class processes in households. The specific dynamics overdetermining the class and non-class processes in the household in relation to freelancing will be elaborated in the next chapter.

referred to in order to elaborate on the importance of distinguishing between class

processes to provide an account of freelancing as involving class diversity.

First, we could work on the specificity of the independent (ancient) class

process drawing on Satyananda Gabriel's account. Gabriel argues that independent

class process has mostly been analyzed in an essentialist and teleological frame of

reference in which it was seen either as "transitory" or as "residual", existing in the

interstices of societies dominated by other class processes (1990, p. 88). Or, it was

considered as a transitive form between feudalism and capitalism. Some Marxian

theorists acknowledge the existence of self-employment but do not think self-

exploitation is an important matter. Or, they underdetermine self-exploitation,

reducing it to some finite set of determinants, such as property ownership or the

existence of a specific form of state (p. 90). Gabriel refers to Paul Sweezy's account

as an example as Sweezy distinguishes feudal from ancient class based on whether

the producer owns the means of production or not.[92] In that case, the existence of

private property and small commodity production is taken as a precursor of the

emergence of capitalist commodity production. Gabriel disagrees with this

essentialist and teleological definition and looks into the work of Marx for an

overdeterminist reading of this class process. He argues that in Marx, we cannot find

an elaborate account of this form of exploitation in particular. However, he argues

that the conditions of existence of non-capitalist processes is the condition of non-

existence of capitalism and this could guide us to work out a specifically Marxist

account of ancient production.

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[92] Freelancers could possess the means of production but may not be self-appropriating and hence, undergoing a capitalist class process. On the other hand, possessing individual private property or having access to public or communal property (for example free co-working spaces, libraries etc.) could support the freelancer to start to self-appropriate. In other words, property cannot be the distinctive determinant of the class process but is to be considered as one of the factors overdetermining class processes.

Gabriel claims that independent class process is a type of private appropriation of surplus labor in which the direct producer appropriates her own surplus labor. The existence of this class process is overdetermined by many factors such as property relations and conceptions of selfhood and community existent in social formation. Gabriel points to the existence of forms of property other than capitalist private property, such as individual private property (*property-in-labor*) and communal property open to individual usufruct, both of which could enable private appropriation by the direct producer (p. 99).[93] On the other hand, the conceptions of selfhood are also an important determinant of the conditions of existence of this class process. Gabriel argues that the form of individuality required for the existence of this class process could lay the ground of the individuality necessary for capitalist exploitation but it does not have to be that way. He argues that in independent class process, the worker is not alienated from the products of her labor but is alienated from her community. However, he argues that the actions of these "fragmented" individuals cannot be predetermined (p. 103) and hence, we could conclude that individuality does not have to serve capitalist class processes but could work for the endurance or proliferation of independent ones.[94]

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[93] The municipality of Kadıköy in Istanbul converted a two-floor restaurant into a co-working space, with one floor requiring paid membership and the ground floor being open to the use of the freelancers free of charge. The upper floor of the building called IDEA has a reasonable membership fee compared to other co-working spaces in Istanbul and has a nursery room open to the use of member freelancers. There is a café and bistro open on the ground floor, which also has meeting spaces open to the use of collectives and NGOs free of charge. The existence of such public spaces could be seen as supporting the conditions of existence of non-capitalist (independent and communal) class processes for freelancers. The request to have access to such communal spaces could be on the agenda of a class politics under conditions of flexibility, seeing that it involves a communization of means of production.
For more information of this space, see http://ideakadikoy.org/ (retrieved on 24 February 2019)
[94] Amariglio and Callari's work (1989) is inspiring for drawing attention to the role of subjectivity in the overdetermination of class processes. Their account emphasizes that what we take to be "individual" is not a "natural" consequence of capitalism, but is an overdetermined and overdetermining result of a multiplicity of social processes. They underscore the role of economic rationality, the prevalent notions of equality as well as private proprietorship in the constitution of this subject called "individual". Their account is very informative for enabling an overdeterminist account of the role of subjectivity in class processes; however, they tend to associate self-exploitation with

The kinds of individuality that overdetermine the existence of capitalist and non-capitalist class processes in freelancing require further elaboration. They could be working for the sustenance, transformation or disruption of the capitalist fundamental process. Bearing in mind that subjectivity is only one moment overdetermining class processes, we could argue that the desire of the freelancer to work from home could work for the transformation of capitalist class processes. Freelancer could desire to be away from the gaze of the managers or arrange the time she allocates for different activities and relations as she desires. Not having to get up early in the morning and commute to work is found desirable by some freelancers. On the other hand, the capitalist could profit from this relation of production in that he could cut labor cost as well as the cost of production as the freelancer procures her own means of production. In this scenario, we see the desire for freedom working for the continuance of the capitalist class process through its transformation.

On the other hand, having gained some "relief" from the grip of the workplace, freelancer could take the promise of "freedom" seriously and attempt to pursue it further by establishing various networks and working directly to the client. In that case, she could start self-appropriating in an independent class process. Here,

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capitalism as they do not provide any account of the "individual" outiside market and property relations. I argue that the discourses and practices of "individuality" change through time and cannot be deemed only supportive of capitalist class processes. The practices of self that the different kinds of "individuals" engage in could lay the ground of non-capitalist practices and class processes as well. This also points to a moment of antagonism between Gabriel (1990) and Amariglio (2010). Both stress the social, cultural and economic conditions in the emergence of the conception of the individual. On the other hand, Amariglio's attributes individuality the quality of being a "historical conceptualization" in societies where, as Marx says, "separation, not unity of selves, appears as normal relation" (Marx, 1969: 409, quoted in Amariglio, 2010: 341). Then, as I understand, Amariglio posits the ontological condition of the subject as of being in community, in relation with others, and the variety of social processes come to produce a conception of individuality which render this sociality invisible. Gabriel's account do not posit any such ontology for the subject and emphasizes the unpredictability of the "individual", pointing out that the private appropriation of surplus by this "individual" could have a destabilizing impact on the conditions of existence of capitalist class processes. Amariglio and Callari's account (1989) did not seem to have any place for the expression of the "individual" other than is found in relations of property, exchange in the market or conceptions of equality. It seems in his later writings, Amariglio (2010) still associates individuality and possibly "individual appropriation" with processes having to do with capitalist class processes.

it is important to note that subjectivity is only one overdeterminant for the conditions

of existence of a class transformation from capitalist to independent class process.

The relations she could forge, the situation of the labor market, the significance of

her skills etc. are among the variety of overdeterminants which could bring about

class transformation. The important point here is that "individuality" does not have

to serve capitalist class processes. It could be implicated in class transformation in

favor of independent, or even communal class processes. For instance, the freelancer

who self-appropriates could start working together with other freelancers in the same

project and come to appropriate the surplus labor collectively. In that case, they

undergo a communal class process which involves collective appropriation. If this

collectively appropriating group of freelancers grow their business and employ some

others as wage earners, they initiate a capitalist class process within their enterprise,

which would render it a "hybrid" (Levin, 2014).[95]

     Besides the varieties of class processes, we see *differences in class* among

freelancers as well. This could follow from their "negotiation power" in the class

processes over surplus labor or the terms and conditions of work. A variety of non-

class processes could also have impact on the differences in experiencing class

processes. Janet Hotch's account on self-employment is very informative in that

regard. She accounts for the multiplicity in the variety of class processes involved in

the form of production relation referred to as "self-employment" as well as the

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[95] Kenneth M. Levin (2014) argues that we need to distinguish between "complex class structure" elaborated by Resnick and Wolff and "hybrids" to have a better grasp of the question of class transitions. He argues that Resnick and Wolff's conceptualization of fundamental and subsumed class processes enables a more complex understanding of class; however, we need to have a distinct conceptualization of the co-existence of different class structures in a single space. His analysis looks into the co-existence of capitalist and communist class processes in start-ups, in which founders first produce and appropriate their surplus collectively but then employ others as wage earners and hence, initiate capitalist class processes. He argues that hybridity should be an entry point of analysis, with specific attention paid to its conditions of existence and contradictions, effects. This would also require a reworking of previous conceptualizations, "a reconsideration of how one looks at capitalism, communism, class struggle, and societal transition" (pp. 104-105).

multiplicity of different experiences of self-employment. While some live self-employment as offering the chance to choose when and how to work, for others it means continually looking for a job or not being able to turn anything down and being overwhelmed by work.

Hotch's account starts off with a critique of those accounts which underline the similarities between the self-employed and employees and argue that self-employment is a consequence of precarization. Hotch's criticism is against the presumption that we need commonalities for political organization and hence, including the "self-employed" in the "working class" would require an emphasis on commonalities. Hotch's account is a prominent claim in favor of the acknowledgement of differences *of* class as well as *in* class as a precondition of sound political organization which problematizes instead of covering over class antagonism. Attempting to underline the distinctive features of self-employment, she starts off her analysis with a definition of the self-employed as involved in an independent class process. However, she then seems to consider the role of subjectivity in the definition of class and proceeds to include in her definition the multiplicity of workers who call themselves "self-employed" even though they are in capitalist class processes (for e.g. freelancers or the part-time/temporary workers).[96]

Besides reflecting on the importance of such differences *of* class among the self-employed, I find her account distinctive for paying attention to power dynamics in experiencing class processes. In her account, we could see that the experience of class processes is overdetermined by a multiplicity of class and non-class processes. She claims that the differences among the self-employed follow from their rate of

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[96] I have a similar encounter with class difference during my interviews with freelancers. I told friends I was looking for freelancers but some of those who accepted to have interview with me turned out to be start-up owners. However, they called themselves or were called "freelancers" for not being wage-earners and working independently. That is yet another reason why I included start-ups and the different class processes they could involve in my analysis of freelancing.

self-appropriation, which is defined based on the rate of necessary to surplus labor. Then, she goes on to argue that this line of differentiation between necessary and surplus labor varies among all workers, including the self-employed. If we see class struggle as struggle over surplus labor which is overdetermined by a multiplicity of processes, we can see in her account a commonality between the self-employed and wage-earners at this point. However, this very commonality in class struggle marks a point of distinction in Hotch's account as well. She illustrates how those who call themselves "self-employed" have differing "negotiation power" over their surplus labor.[97] I would prefer to conceptualize it as involving a question of power as it is overdetermined by class and non-class processes and hence, creates differences as to the experience of class as well as one's perspective of class struggle, considered in terms of expectations from a political organization.[98]

To illustrate, the conditions of living of a self-appropriating freelancer may become more expensive due to high inflation rates or an increase in taxes, both of which would increase the rate of necessary labor with respect to surplus labor. Or, suppose a freelancer who uses free common spaces such as libraries or free co-working spaces, using free wi-fi, electricity, water etc. and having "free" access to the her co-workers and hence, networking for free. When such spaces are closed or

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[97] In all the workshops organized by and for freelancers, we have seen that freelancers feel disempowered due to isolation brought by the individualization of work relations. Their isolation which stems from not having access to the workplace has many consequences. For instance, they do not have much chance to meet their colleagues and learn about the condition of the market, skills needed in line with the developments in their industry as well as the means to develop those skills. We have held quiet lengthy discussions as to the ways to empower freelancers, which informs this conceptualization of "negotiation power" in class processes.

[98] Hotch (2000) argues that the interests of different groups of self-employed could conflict. Self-appropriating self-employed could benefit from communal services such as free child care or free access to means of production but these need to be met by an increase in taxes which would not be considered to the benefit of the wage earners. I agree that such conflict of interest may ensue from the class differences among freelancers as well and pose a challenge to the organization of freelancers. However, I suspect that this involves an assumption of a rational subject operating based on and pursuing her self-interest. Rather than thinking in terms of conflict of interests, we can think of the differences among freelancers (as well as of self-employed) in terms of "negotiation power", which could be based on collectivity.

become unsuitable for work, the costs of ensuing the reproduction of her working conditions fall upon the freelancer, which would cut back on her share of surplus labor. She may find it necessary to join a co-working space or start paying certain institutions membership fees to be able to network and sustain her relations of production. To compensate for her loss, the freelancer in both cases could increase self-exploitation, accept more work than she can handle and under terms (for e.g. for lower pay or short deadline) which she could have otherwise declined. In this case, we see a decrease in the "negotiation power" of the freelancer.

The "negotiation power" of the freelancer depends on a variety of other non-class processes as well. She may possess certain skills which are in high demand in the market, or the work she is to create could have distinctive qualities which are sought after. Or still, she could have networks which help her to find job or share job when the workload is overwhelming. A variety of factors such as skills, relations or experience overdetermine one's negotiation power, which could be seen as the power to make claims over surplus labor and negotiate the working conditions.[99] When I asked the freelancers about what would be a solution to their problems, some of the most common demands were a standard of payment, training opportunities and sharing of knowledge about different clients. The reason is being isolated, lacking the necessary skills or experience could make one accept lower pay, become overwhelmed by work which one feels not to have the right to turn down and go

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[99] Lacking the required skills and networks could force the freelancer to undertake an unbearable degree of self-exploitation. One of the interviewees stated that she would get up in the morning and start working and would not stop until she went to bed. The reason was she was new in the job-translation- and felt herself incapable and to learn it on her own, she forced herself to work more than she could handle. The result was that she left the industry altogether, feeling exhausted and thinking that she would not end up receiving a decent pay and working conditions in near future. She shifted to another industry, video-editing, and works for free at the moment to learn the job and hopes that the same will not happen again. The lack of on job training and networking opportunities for freelancers could have grave consequences, which needs to be addressed if we the negotiation power of freelancers is to be increased.

burnout or still, constantly look for a gig and end up feeling guilty for being unemployed.

4.6 Conclusion

To sum up, when we look at the class processes in freelancing, we could see difference in two realms: differences with respect to the class processes freelancers-like most workers- go through in time and the differences in their experiences of those class processes emanating from their different negotiation power. Understanding the conditions of existence of these differences would enable us to understand the conditions and dynamics of class transformation as well as see the pre-conditions of a political organization of labor under conditions of flexibility. Class process analysis is a good start to that end; however, it has to be supplanted with questions of subjectivity, which will be the aim of the next chapter. Having looked at the variety of class processes freelancers undergo at work and at home, we could have a closer look at the different relations freelancers have with the work and non-work realms of their lives. The reason is the subjective investment in the variety of work/non-work activities also overdetermine the class experience and needs elaboration for a complex rethinking of class politics and the organization of freelance labor.

CHAPTER 5

RETHINKING WORK AND FREELANCING

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I aim to supplant my class analysis of freelancing with an analysis of the "work" in the lives of freelancers. First, I use the concept of "work" since I believe that its variegated uses could help us attend to the questions of experience and subjectivity, which could be difficult to expand on with the concept of "labor". The concepts of exploitation and fundamental and subsumed class processes could guide our ethico-political reorientation with respect to class; however, they could end up falling short with regard to the non-class differences in relation to class, which could be attended to with a questioning of power and subjectivity under conditions of flexibility and insecurity. Furthermore, a mere analysis of class processes seems to be inadequate when it comes to understanding the mechanisms and prospects of class transformation. That is the reason why in this chapter, I first attend to the different conceptualizations of "work", its various appropriations as well as the accounts of freelancers on how they relate to it.

I argue the non-localizability of meanings created around work has to do with the destabilizing role of *jouissance* in its operation, which makes it impossible to stabilize the meaning of work as an expression of either need or desire. I argue the recognition of this impossibility is a pre-condition of having a post-fantasmatic relation to work, which would enable a post-fantasmatic relation to class and community and enable a politics of class, which could accommodate the class and non-class heterogeneity under conditions of insecurity. On the other hand, since I believe class is not reducible to work and subjectivity is not reducible to production,

in this chapter, I also attempt to put an emphasis on the different ways in which work and non-work interpenetrate in freelancing and how freelancers navigate the differing realms of their lives. I argue acknowledging the impossibility of stabilizing both the meaning of work and the lines demarcating work and non-work should enable a post-fantasmatic relation to community and inform our political practices.

5.2 Work in post-industrial framework

In contemporary discussions on new forms of work, it is commonly argued that various cognitive and affective capacities of workers have come to be productive of value in laboring processes. In other words, subjectivity is not seen as something external to the production process, reproductive of the production relations. Instead, it is now claimed to be directly productive of value and relations, producing both itself and other subjectivities with or without the mediation of commodities imbued with "culture".[100] The reason is that the transformations led by the antagonism between capital and labor are argued to lead to changes both in the forms of work as well as the composition of labor productive of value in such work relations. It is argued that we live under conditions of immaterialization of labor, with affects, knowledge and cognition being both the means of production as well as end products to be sold in the market.

There are two primary strands of critical literature on the conditions of the workers in the age of flexibilization and insecurity. They both could be criticized for attempting to define a subject of history whose conditions, problems and potentials are regarded as of highest importance with regard to their impact on change in

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[100] For an elaborate account of this claim see Hardt and Negri, *Commonwealth,* 2009. Cambridge and Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.

society.[101] However, they diverge in terms of the different emphasis they put on the emancipatory and the enslaving conditions of existence of the workers. The literature on immaterial labor emphasizes the emancipatory potentials of immaterialization and the increasing capacity of self-organization on the part of the worker. On the other hand, the literature on precarity argues that the current processes of flexibilization have a primarily enslaving impact on the conditions of existence as well as on the subjectivity of the worker. The interesting point is that both the accounts of freedom and those of slavery seem to attribute such results to the functioning of capital, and hence leave little room for a nuanced understanding of subjectivity in relation to work and class transformation. Before we dwell on this point further, we first need an account of what is regarded as liberatory and what is enslaving in such accounts on the conditions of immaterial labor.

The discourse of liberation is based on the idea that this form of labor is assumed to have more chance to self-organize, owing the means of production in its own self and body. Previously, capital had a function in the production process by means of managing it and providing the means of production. Now, these functions are rendered obsolete as cognitive and affective capacities put themselves to work and hence, the capital turns into a parasite, which is hoped to make it easy to get rid of (Hardt and Negri, 2009, p.141). Here, the assumption is that "networks" seemingly imagined to involve a kind of pure intersubjectivity could be the principle

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[101] For instance Gill and Pratt (2008) point to the criticisms to this autonomist definition of "immaterial labour". Their main criticism is that "immaterial labour" is not a concept sharp enough to see the differences among the various kinds of works referred to. Furthermore, focusing on the positive and transgressive aspects of affect, autonomists fail to see how affects could also function for the reproduction of capitalist production relations. They argue that we need a more nuanced understanding of the working of affects by attending to the "specificities of different industries, workplaces and locations, and attend to the meanings that workers themselves give to their labour" (2008, p. 37). I agree with the importance of having a more elaborate account as to the operation of discourses on work as well as of affects in binding to and unbinding from exploitative class processes and hence, hope that the present chapter is a contribution to that end.

of the self-organization of the immaterial labor. On the other hand, others claim the conditions of immaterial labor to be enslaving, referring to flexibility as a problem and precarity as a state of existence without a foreseeable future (Standing, 2011). It seems the incalculability of the value of such intangible processes is implicated in the flexibilization of labor, which is claimed to be the response of the capital to the resistances against the drudgery of work on the part of workers (Gorz, 1999; Ross, 2009).

These attempts to determine whether liberation or enslavement is the fate of immaterial labor attributes to the present the quality of being an era, which has certain definable characteristics, the analysis of which will inform us as to the scope of what can be done or what could be expected to happen. The implicit historicism here has important ramifications in that it attaches the conditions of struggle to the possibilities of a unifiable present. This could lead to overinvestment in the present conditions if they are seen to be full of potentials of emancipation and in that case, failure could lead to big disillusionments. On the other hand, if the present is seen to be enslaving and suffocating, political practice could be regarded as futile.

When it comes to the relation of the subject to her work, narratives of slavery seem to have the upper hand in the existing critical discourses. It is argued that in post-industrial economy, the affects and the conceptions of self of the worker are subsumed to the expropriation of the capital. Interestingly, both positive and negative affects experienced are attributed to the functioning of capital. It is argued that the life of the worker "is not one of dying . . . but neither of living" (Cederström and Fleming, 2012, p. 37) and the end of work is what they are working for. On the other hand, Frederic Lordon's account (2014) claim that feelings of "happiness" or "hope" can also be attributed to the working of capital as the very deep desires of workers

for a meaningful life is now aligned with the interests of the capital. The argument goes that we are expected to love what we do or do what we love if we are to succeed.[102]

Analyses which herald submission of subjectivity to work as well as those which see emancipation in loving one's work both fail to account for the multiplicity of the forms of relations people try to, are encouraged to or are forced to establish with what they do for a living. Attempting to define a subject of history, they both could end up drawing a capitalocentric picture of the social space and hence, inhibit the initiatives for subjective transformations needed for class transformation. It is not possible to exhaust the multiplicity of the ways in which subjects relate to work. However, in this chapter, I will attempt to have a glimpse of it by introducing the stories of some of the freelancers I have encountered during interviews. So, by attending to the diversity in the narratives of freelancing, I aim to push for a rethinking of class politics, with the hope that it could help us go beyond looking for the "subject" of politics, and focus instead on the multiplicity of processes and subjectivities which need to be attended to for class transformation. The subjective transformations will hence be a component among others in class transformation.

5.3 What is "work"?

5.3.1 Work and *jouissance*

Before we dwell on the issue of subjectivity in relation to work, we first need an elaboration on the different appropriations of the concept of "work" and the

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[102] Peter Fleming (2015) criticizes Lordon (2014) and Dardot & Laval (2014) for taking the neoliberal discourses as to worker happiness seriously. He claims they write as if capitalism really could capture the desires of the workers. He argues there is nothing like a relation of love or commitment in the workplace as propagated by the managerial discourse. He states that despite all the attempts for the subjectification of the new "enterprsing" worker, only the 13% of the workeforce is defined as actively engaged in their work.

concomitant proposals as to the ways of managing or coping with it. Work has mostly been associated with waged labor, marking the division that emerged between the household and the workplace with capitalism. However, this has not always been the case. The historicity of this notion of work could be seen in the accounts on early capitalism, during which working at factories was not considered as work, but as a sign of being poor or as "public work". Instead of waged work, working for one's own account was actually considered as "work".[103] As waged work becomes the primary means of receiving income, the work done at the household comes to be excluded from the definition of "work". Even in cases in which women do income-producing work at home, they are assumed not to be working but simply "contributing" to the household economy, working for "pocket money". Although it is a 7/24 work, housework is still not recognized as "work".[104]

The class analysis of freelancing also gives us further insight into the multiplicity of forms of work that freelancing implies. Freelancers could be in

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[103] Steven Peter Vallas (2012) illustrated how the conception of wage labour as "work" is a recent phenomenon. For example, Jacqueline Dowdhall (2000) illustrated how working in cotton mills was not deemed as proper work by people who worked for their own account. However, later on, wage work became "work", rendering other forms of work invisible (2012, p. 4)

For a recent historical account of the concept of work as well as the work ethic in different historical stages, see Komlosy, Andrea. (2018). *Work: the last 1,000 years.* London and New York: Verso. Komlosy illustrates how the separation of the home and the workplace took place and gives an account of the different forms of work ethic promoted in different periods in history. She also illustrates how prior to the work's establishment as paid employment in the 19th century, lexical field of work consisted of much broader associations.

[104] Wages for Housework campaign in 1970s was an attempt to render the unpaid labour of women in the household visible. Kathi Weeks claims that we need to recover three aspects of this campaign for a post-work imaginary: their analysis of family in relation to capitalist development, their questioning of the values atrributed to domestic work and the demand for wages for housework (2011, pp. 119-20). The invisibility of the domestic work inheres in the discourses which naturalize and romanticize domestic labour as a labour of love (121).

So, I understand, household is no longer considered a unity of production as was the case in pre-capitalist era. It is now considered a private space of reproduction and consumption, and this conception not only renders the surplus labour produced by women and appropriated by the household members invisible, but it also trivizalies the paid work done in the privacy of the domestic space. The accounts of freelancers also point to such a trivializing discourse on the work they do from home, which has been mostly imagined as a site of consumption and leisure so far. So, their family do not take their job seriously and even sometimes think of them as unemployed or earning pocket money, while the freelancer is "seriously" struggling with securing sources of income and work for considerably longer hours. However, the accounts of some freelancer also point to a change in this conception, with the gaining popularity of freelancing and normalization of working from home.

capitalist, independent or communal class processes but all could be called "work" for generating income. This should inform us for a redefinition of work as being not limited to waged work, but involving the variety of activities as well as class processes undergone to make a living. Furthermore, a redefinition of work attempted here aims to include the multiplicity of relations one could forge with what they call "work". I argue that this multiplicity ensues from work's relation with *jouissance*, which renders it impossible to stabilize work as ensuing from the imperative to satisfy one's needs or to realize one's desires. As a result, there can be no moralistic claims as to the proper way of relating to work, whether it takes the form of loving or refusing it. I argue acknowledging this destabilizing role of *jouissance* at work could enable a non-moralistic and post-fantasmatic relation to work and political practice. To understand the significance of such an acknowledgement, we need to have a look at the existing discourses which try to stabilize the meaning of work and thus, suggest political imaginaries in line with the meaning they attribute to work. It seems that the questions revolving around the place of work in contemporary discussions could be clustered around two poles: Is work to be gotten rid of, or to be cherished as a means to meaningful life? Before attempting a redefinition of work based on freelancers' accounts, it seems plausible to attend to the arguments provided with respect to these questions.

5.3.2 Loving or refusing work

The hegemonic discourses of freelancing represent it as involving love. You either love the work you do or the life that your work enables you to enjoy. This representation has been criticized for laying the ground of further exploitation of the worker by means of subsumption of subjectivity for the interests of capital

(Tokumitsu, 2015). These critical accounts are very crucial and informative for illustrating how the hegemonic representations of freelancing aim at a subjective investment on the part of the freelancers so that proper compensation for work is not brought to the agenda. However, the problem is that they conflate representation with reality, not referring to the accounts of the workers such representations claim to speak on behalf of. The scope of the affective grip of reigning discourses which advise us to love what we do or do what we love are not elaborated on and the reality such discourses claim to represent are taken to be real. I believe in the possibility of formulating a more empowering discourse on the part of freelancers by questioning the grip of this discourse of love by referring to freelancers' accounts of what they do for a living.

Another stain of criticism of work is based on the autonomist literature on the "refusal of work", which seems to involve both a questioning of the part of work in our lives as well as the claim that workers have always already refused work in a variety of ways, and hence, has been the primary driver of change in the mechanisms of control in capitalist production processes. Kathi Weeks' account of refusal seems to be more of a criticism of the variety of work ethics employed in capitalism to ensure the reproduction of the conditions of work. Her argument is that it is not enough to question and criticize the organization of labor, but it is also crucial to question the meaning of work and the unfreedom it produces (2011, p. 25). She prefers to base her analysis on the concept of "work" rather than "class" since she believes that class and class composition is an outcome even when considered in terms of process (p. 19). In other words, class is not the basis, but a result of class struggle. Her utilization of the concept of "work" as an entry point of analysis sees it as a terrain of struggle with the aim to "make class processes more visible, legible,

and broadly relevant and, in the process, perhaps provoke class formations yet to come" (p. 20).

Weeks' account and suggestion of "work" as an entry point of analysis is very significant for opening up space to the question of subjectivity and class transformation. Her account illustrates how class transformation is not thinkable without a questioning of the subjective investments in work and the meanings created around it. She argues that work ethic has changed over time and lays out the variety of antinomies the discourses of work ethic carry.[105] Her discursive analysis is important in informing us as to the role of subjective investment in work. However, I believe for an analysis of class transformation we need a nuanced account of the subject's relation to such discourses as well. Otherwise, we still would be reducing subjectivity to the functioning of discourse, which is taken to be functioning more or less despite the "antinomies" it carries.[106]

Furthermore, Weeks' suggestion in the face of such glorification of work is its refusal through the shortening of work hours. She argues that questioning work values does not mean that work is not without value (p. 13), claiming that we need to struggle against both labor's devaluation as well as its moralism (p. 14). She insists that there could be other ways of organizing activities than as is done via "work" and there may be also other ways of having pleasure than the ones we are expected to have with work (p. 12). These are very important and inspiring claims as they draw attention to the meanings around laboring practices and their power over the

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[105] Kathi Weeks (2011) writes about three forms of work ethic developed throughout the history of capitalism. She claims that the Protestant work ethics was marked by a conception of work as duty, and the industrial work ethic drew on it to formulate a new one, which promised social mobility. The post-industrial work ethic, on the other hand, involves a conception of work as a path to individual self-expression, self-development and creativity.

[106] The antinomies that Weeks mentions in relation to these forms of work ethics are between production and consumption, independence of labour and dependence required by the obligation to obey orders, work ethic having the possibility to serve subordination and insubordination at the same time and finally, work ethic promising to include every labourer based on her labour but end up excluding by means of hierarchization.

reproduction of exploitative production relations. However, my question is regarding the idea that refusal is *the* way to challenge the reigning discourses as to the meaning of work. If as is claimed, work values dominate our lives and if we invest so much of our selves to work, then is calling for subjective disinvestment an effective means of defying it? What are the terms and conditions of questioning and challenging work? Is refusing to work the only proper means of challenging the work ethic?

To question both the power of discourses on work on the subject as well as the propositions to "refuse" work, we need to turn to the accounts of freelancers themselves. It seems Stephen Shukaitis also is concerned with such questions and claims that there is no single way of "refusing" and that refusal cannot be thought of as an individual act, but is to be regarded as a "compositional" practice with affective dimensions. According to Shukaitis, a compositional approach to refusal would consider the technical, political and affective conditions of existence of refusal, instead of seeing it simply as an individualized "dropping out" of work by the worker (2014, pp. 196-7). Refusal is not to be taken for granted either, but is to be seen as requiring a "zero-work training" which would teach how not to labor in a way to socialize refusal (p. 203). Understanding the class composition of the practices of refusal is important to have a firm grasp of the multiple forms of refusal and their preconditions. He argues that if we do not look into the political and technical composition of refusal, we could end up giving an idealist account.[107] That is why he draws on a Madrid-based collective of precarious workers which categorizes different forms of refusal based on the kind of job at stake. It is argued that the act of refusal takes the form of absenteeism in the case of jobs with repetitive content while

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[107] Shukaitis (2014) does not provide a clear explanation of what he means by technical and political composition of labour. However, I understand the technical composition here actually refers to the divison of mental and manual labour. The political composition of labour, on the other hand, seems to refer to the degree and form of autonomy the worker has over work.

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in vocational/professional work, conflict is expressed as critique of organization of labor, its logic of articulation and the ends towards which it is structured. Further still, refusal takes the form of a demand for recognition and dignity in cases of jobs with content stigmatized such as domestic work and sex work.

A similar analysis of the various class processes freelancers go through in time and the various relations they form with their work is required for drawing a more diverse and hence empowering discourse as to the possibilities of "refusal", which may involve class transformation. However, instead of thinking in terms of "refusal", I prefer to look into the variety of relations freelancers have or try to have with their work as involving a question of subjective transformation and class transformation. The reason is I believe we still act with ontological assumptions as to subjectivity and a specific conception of "work" when we look for "refusal" in the variety of ways people relate to work. To have a more nuanced understanding of the processes of transformation at stake, I believe we need a more nuanced and polyvalent conceptualization of "work" in the first place.

5.4 Rethinking work: Beyond loving vs. refusing

I believe to pluralize the meaning of "work", we first need to have a more polyvalent conceptualization of "work". The first attempt was to suggest that it is not simply waged labor under capitalist class processes; work could take place in a variety of class processes. The second attempt could be to pluralize the meaning of work for the worker, going beyond the options of loving, bearing with or refusing it. Finally, the third attempt could be regarding the multiple meanings of the term "work", which could be seen to carry the ambiguity of denoting luxury and necessity at the

same time.[108] This last attempt involves a reconceptualization by going beyond the existing meanings of work, which see it either as a problem of "worldly existence" or as a means to "self-fulfillment". The subjective investments in work seem to require such a rethinking as the contemporary discussions on the blurring of the distinction between work and play impels us to rethink the divisions between "enjoyable activity" and "necessary work".

5.4.1 Work: Beyond need or necessity

My proposal to rethink work by attending to its multiple meanings is inspired by Roberto Esposito's claims as to the philosophical treatment of political concepts. He criticizes modern political philosophy for reducing the "horizon of sense" to its most immediate and obvious meaning, claiming that "while the manifest meaning of political concepts is always univocal, monolinear, and self-enclosed, their underlying sense is more complex, often contradictory, and capable of containing reciprocally opposite elements, antinomic characteristics" (2013, p. 48). Similarly, I suggest we do not need to make do with the existing definitions of what "work" is and attend to its multiple meanings, which I hope will help us have a different look at the experiences of working under conditions of flexibility.

It seems there are two obvious meanings of "work" which are employed for differing purposes in different contexts. First, it is seen as something we have to do, a "necessity" we have to bear with for being of "worldly existence". Weeks' work is a significant critique of this denaturalizing discourse on work. On the other hand, in a

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[108] Arendt's (1958/1998) distinction between labour, work and activity seems to have informed many of the analysis operating on the premise of the separation between need and luxury. In her account, labour corresponds to meeting the basic needs of human existence, work involves going beyond a mere satisfaction of needs to build a "world" for human use and action involves activities which go between human beings without any intermediary. Here, we see an example to notion of work as beyond the satisfaction of needs.

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variety of discourses, "work" is also proposed as an activity where subjects could seek self-fulfillment; give meaning and value to their lives. While the first seems to refer to it as "necessity", the second seems to aim at blurring the distinction between work and play. Work could also be seen to denote a "luxury" in our lives, something more than necessity in the sense of "work of art" or some "accomplishment".[109] What I suggest is that we do not need to decide whether work is necessity or luxury, or rather hold our judgment as to whether we should love it or refuse it and we need to rethink politics of work based on this indetermination. In other words, we could make room for the possibility of having differing relations with work, which I believe could strengthen rather than undermine the negotiation of a politics as to working conditions.

5.4.2 Interpenetration of work and non-work

In contemporary discussions, we see accounts as to the interpenetration of work and play, work and life and work and leisure.[110] The concomitant critical discourse

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[109] The discussion as to whether art is work and artists are workers does not seem to be any easier to settle. While some artists insist on distinguishing art and work, others insist that artists are to be recognized as workers, question their investment in their work to be able to gain the right to proper remuneration. For an example to the first position, see the Arendtian piece by Anton Vidokle, "Art Without Work?" (2011, e-flux Journal n. 29). He claims that art involves the production of new forms of life, operates among subjects and does not need to involve the production of objects and hence does not have to involve work or labour. On the other hand, activists working in the field of precarity point to the problem of idealizing art "work", which they claim to be lead to the lack of proper compensation for cultural producers in the market. The variety of work of the Precarious Workers Brigade set an example to this position (see, https://precariousworkersbrigade.tumblr.com, retrieved 2 September, 2017).
Dieter Roelstraete (2013), on the other hand, provides another interesting critique as to the impact of the opposition of art and work on contemporary art, which he claims to serve the art industry by turning art into something done with the strike of inspiration, not requiring heavy work on the part of the artist. He argues that this "lightness of art" involving veneration based on the genius of the artist is good for the business but bad for the "art work".
[110] The editors of the ephemera issue "Work, Play and Boredom" argue that in classical industrial theory, work was completely separated from leisure and in line with that Adorno pointed at the "purposeless play of children" as a rehearsal of the "right life" (2011, p. 329). However, in post-industrial work contexts, play has been utilized as a solution to the boredom and anxiety at the workplace. Play is expected to bring creativity and productivity to work, which can produce resentment, cynicism and alienation or could also open the way to disrupt the managerial control at the same time.

focused on the invasion of life by work; the variety of activities and relations are claimed to serve work now. Such critiques could be helpful for reminding us the importance of self-care in the face of the overwhelming expectations with regard to work. However, I believe instead of reducing all activities to work or separating them so as to claim for a world of activity to come, we could look into their interpenetration and question how workers negotiate between the multiple forms of activities and works they engage in. I believe this could also help us rethink the division between work as necessity and activity as leisure, given that needs are not predetermined and leisure/activity will always require negotiation.

Keeping in mind the polyvalence of "work" as well as its interpenetration with other non-work activities, we could have a look at the multiplicity of experiences of freelancers have with freelancing. My questions are: what does it mean "to work" for freelancers? What does it mean to be "freelancing"? How do they relate to their work? How do they negotiate its place in their lives? When does freelancing involve subjective transformation and is that related to class transformation? And if so, how?

5.5 Working as a freelancer

Standard work is still deemed to be a full-time 9-6 job. This has both some problematic consequences for freelancers and could be telling with regard to their relation to working. As for the problems, the non-recognition of work done in freelancing seems to normalize the lack of proper compensation on the part of freelancers. Freelancers face difficulty in collecting payments or other benefits such as health insurance and pension that ordinarily comes with working. Kemal, a freelance editor and translator, had a striking remark considering this difficulty to

collect payment. He states that employers make many calls as he does the work; however, when he submits the work and the time of payment comes, it becomes the duty of the freelancer to make constant calls. He points at the absurdity of the condition saying that no one tells salaried workers "go and work, we will pay you sometime in the future".

Besides employers, it seems family members could also fail to recognize that freelancers are actually working during the time they spend at home. This could lead to higher expectations and claims as to the amount of labor that freelancers are to put to domestic work. When not negotiated, this could lead to exploitative and/or oppressive relations at home. For example, Gamze, a freelance translator living in Urla, told me that her family members wanted to chat with her, thinking that she was always available and free to do so. On the other hand, Özge, a freelance translator, pointed to the impossibility of being a freelancing mother, suggesting that housework would prevent her from doing freelance job. That is why she could freelance only after she retired and her daughter grew up. The experiences of freelancers and freelancing women in particular require further detailed research in that regard.

Whether freelancing is claimed to be a deliberate choice by the freelancer or a necessity, freelancers are often held accountable for not meeting such Fordist ideals as social and job security, especially in their relation with their families for whom these ideals are still valid. As it is not considered "proper work", freelancers also feel the need to justify why they do freelancing. They are suspected to be "lazy" or too "laid-back" to actually "work", as there is ambiguity regarding what they do for a living and the amount of income they receive in return. The concomitant questioning of freelancers' industriousness and employability has a silencing effect. Ayşe's account relating to money issues among freelancers can set an example to this

silence. She claims that freelancers shy away from talking about the amount of money they earn, how they find work and manage work relations. She argues this silence comes from the feeling that one has to be a self-sufficient subject without defects or failures since "freelancing" is something that she has chosen:

> There is already an ambiguity regarding how much you earn. In that case, the only way to say that you can do it [freelancing] becomes not to say anything at all, not to talk about work. The reason is that if you do, you are a failure. You are not a freelancer; you are poor. You are unemployed. You do not actually work. Can't you work? Do you have problems? You need to perform something else to people. (…) That is something I perform to my relatives. My friends already know how I am. But I go to bairam visits in good condition. I go there as a translator. That is what they want to see.
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> <div align="right">(Ayşe, freelance translator, see Appendix D, 1)</div>

To avoid this stigma, Ali also takes advantage of his occupational identity. He stated that he draws a rosy picture of his job as a journalist when among family members. He says that he lies about being paid for the articles, which he actually brings him little or no income. He also claims that getting married brought him some respectability, soothing the worries of the family members that he was not going to be able to start his own family. Negotiating relations with family members can also be a big part of negotiating the conditions of freelancing.

> You have no respectability [as a freelancer] in the family or in other places. But how do you overcome it? You tell a variety of lies. I tell them I get that much money from that job. Or, they do not know that I freelance. Or, marriage brought me a great amount of respectability because it was something that is not expected of you. The biggest concern of my family was that I would be a burden on them. We did not do that. And when we did not do that; that brought a relief. And, to be honest, in publication industry, even if you do not get any money, they say 'our son writes for that newspaper'. They do not know that I earn nothing. But I tell them I earn that much for each piece. Then, they also say 'he does a visible job'. When I did other kinds of jobs, I did not have that respectability. There was a constant pressure. My mom used to keep telling me to become a government officer.
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> <div align="right">(Ali, freelance journalist, see Appendix D, 2)</div>

This stigma co-exists with discourses which represent freelancing as freedom, the freedom to choose where, when and how to work. The degrading and idealizing discourses on freelancing co-exist and regardless of their sources, they weigh upon the freelancer as it becomes her responsibility to make it. While the degrading discourse hails the freelancer to go and find proper work, the latter promises the freelancer that freelancing will be a way to escape the drudgery of going to work every day. They both seem to deny the fact that "working" takes up a considerable and sometimes overwhelming amount of time in freelancers' life.[111]

On the other hand, freelancers could also tend to see themselves as "unemployed" or "not really working", suggesting that waged worked done in an office is still commonly perceived as "work". However, the fact that freelancers may not regard what they do as "work" should not be seen as an "inability" to see the reality or as "false consciousness" on the part of the freelancer. There are also freelancers who may be claiming that they are not really working as a kind of resistance to the existing discourses on the importance of work or for a desire to go beyond simply "working". That is why Ali states that what work he does as a freelancer is of little significance as long as it enables him to work less and consume less. He tries to keep the amount of time he allocates to work at minimum as much as possible:

> Then, I noticed that if I can survive with that little amount of money, the solution is not to consume. Since that day, I try not to consume. (...) When you do not consume, you do not need money and when you do not need money, you have time. For example, I get a job to film a place. It takes two months. Then, they give me the money. I do calculations and let's say it makes a

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[111] Freelancers often complain about this non-recognition of the fact that they actually "work". In a TV program which *Ofissizler* (The Officeless) joined, Melis, a freelance translator, puts it succintly "The labour of freelancers is invisible. We cannot even prove our families that we are actually working. They say we are studying. They tell us to go and do something, find a job. But actually you have a job." For the full programme, see
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aSfXiWjH3vc&feature=youtu.be
(retrieved on 3 May 2017).

thousand per month. I think it is enough for me to get by for a year. Then, I do nothing for a year. I read and wander around. That is my mentality.

(Ali, freelance journalist, see Appendix D, 3)

Or, further still, freelance work may not be seen as work since one could be really looking for a full-time job and hence, see freelancing as a temporary phase. Or, they could be students, stay-at home parents or activists in whose life work may not be the central activity. In other words, the fact that freelancing is not seen as "working" has many preconditions as well as meanings for freelancers, all of which needs to be reflected upon if we are to have a grasp of freelancers' conditions and ways of transforming them for good.

Finally, full-time freelancing is also sometimes regarded as an ideal to be realized in the future by some freelancers, who do freelance work on the side. Freelancing is seen as something to be done when one gains enough experience and expertise as well as "network" to secure the flow of income while freelancing. In such cases, there could be a fantasmatic investment into freelancing as something to save one from the sufferings of having to commute and spend 10 hours at work every day. For example, Neşe, a freelance graphic designer, had such a teleological narrative regarding the trajectory of her career. While saying to have a considerable amount of experience in the field, she argues that she had to build on her skills and create a network to go freelance. Doing freelance on the side, she estimates that she needs minimum 5 more years to start freelancing full-time. In the meantime, she desires to move to the countryside and escape the hectic work life that she associates with the city.

Similarly, full-time freelancers could also tend to idealize full-time office work, claiming that office workers' lives are more organized; they can leave work at

the workplace and have some relief outside. One of the participants of the workshop

organized with freelancers succinctly explained the tensions that such fantasies

create in the subject:[112] He quits office work for freelancing with the hope of having

some relief, but then is overwhelmed by work and goes back to office work again.

Then, he is again overwhelmed by the drudgery of the office work and goes back to

freelancing. He moves back and forth in freelancing, hoping it to open up some space

for him to live the life as he likes. So, he idealizes freelancing while doing full-time

office work and does the opposite while freelancing. Such fantasmatic conceptions of

freelancing as well as office work to cover over the grievances of "working" itself as

it involves a promise or exception regarding the existence of "good work".[113] This

could lead to an inability to face such grievances and make claims on working

conditions in both cases.

5.5.1 Relating to work in freelancing

The experience of the "work" one does as well as the experience of freelancing are in

an overdetermined relation. The same work could be related to differently when done

freelance, or the kind of work in question could require/enable freelancing and

hence, freelancing could be an important determinant of the experience of work. For

the first case, we could argue that freelancing enables some autonomy over the

content and/or terms of work for certain freelancers, while others experience it as

leading to further exploitation, working for long hours without proper compensation.

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[112] The workshop was organized with freelancers in *Dünyada Mekân* on 17 April 2016.

[113] This affective investment to "good work" seems to be similar to the fantasies of "good life" which Berlant writes about in *Cruel Optimism* (2011). Among the fantasies she claims to be fraying are upward mobility, job security, political/social equality and lively, durable intimacy. When these fantasies are crushed, we seem to have adjustment as accomplishment. This adjustment is enabled by what she calls to be "cruel optimism". Similarly, freelancers could tend to have an optimistic attitude towards the present or future conditions of work, trying to adapt to the ordinary problems of freelancing.

As for the autonomy over work, some of the freelancers interviewed have stated that they prefer freelancing because it enables them to do their job "properly" or as they like it. For example, in a workshop held in *Dünyada Mekân*,[114] Ege, a freelance software developer, counted having autonomy over work as among the advantages of freelancing:

> In the workplace, you take orders. When you work freelance, you can manage the work much better. They tell you "I want a website like this, do that part like this." Then, I say, "If we do it like that, we will have problems, we could have this or that trouble." Or, I can even say, "I won't do it. If I do it so, you will get mad at me." But in the workplace, it is not like that. As in the example I mentioned before, the boss can tell you "That is how it will be, get used to it." Or, she can say "I did not like it [the work], throw it away."
>
> <div align="right">(Ege, freelance software developer, see Appendix D, 4)</div>

Some freelancers also stated that it opens up space for their creativity, enabling them to produce creative content at work or to have the chance to choose work based on the amount of creativity it requires. For example, Yakup, a freelance photographer, claims to prefer freelancing to be able to photograph as he likes. If he is to work full-time at a company, he needs to take photos of things that the company wants. He said that he worked for such a company for 8 months and then quit, started to do documentary photography and has been working as a freelancer in the field ever since. He says he prefers it because it opens up space for creativity:

> When you work for a production company, they expect a photo from you, a standard photo. I think when something is expected of you, your creativity, human creativity dies. I mean of course the matter is not as simple as that but when the work is routinized, there is inevitably an ordinariness. This kills creativity; you do what is expected of you and creativity dies. Working independently has an advantage; you are not affiliated with an institution, a company or a person. For every work, I mean of course there are expectations, but this expectation changes constantly as you do different kinds of work. The content of the work changes, so you can be more creative.
>
> <div align="right">(Yakup, freelance photographer, Appendix D, 5)</div>

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[114] The experience sharing workshop was titled "How did I become a freelancer?" and was held on 9 June, 2018. It started with Ege's story about how he started freelancing and then, other participants commented and shared parts of their own stories. For more information about Ege's story, see https://ofissizler.com/ofissizler-anlatiyor-ege-freelance-yazilimci/ (retrieved on 12 May 2019)

Others on the other hand, freelancers emphasized the importance of developing one's skills and how freelancing contributes to it. Working full-time for a company is argued to lead to a loss of skill on the part of the worker as she does only a specific set of tasks and does not have time or reason to dev3elop marketable skills. This ties the worker to the company and loss of one's job comes to have a much heavier toll, especially in older ages. For example, İlker claims that working for himself, he has the chance to develop his engineering skills. He argues that prospects of engineers are not very bright at companies where the highest position one gets is to become a manager, which ends up deskilling the worker and reduces her employability at other companies. So, by staying at the company, he says that you actually sell your whole life to it. He says he did not want to lose his skills, and, hence, has always done freelance work on the side, and when he had the opportunity, he quit his job and started working on his own project, which turned into a start-up company later.

On the other hand, when lived as a prolonging of work time and increase of obligations, freelancers could end up with feelings of incompetence, which could lead to a questioning of the value of the work one does itself. For example, at a workshop organized in *Dünyada Mekân*, Melis, a freelance translator, stated that even though she likes her job, she does not enjoy it anymore as she is overwhelmed by work.[115] She mentioned that she sometimes thinks of changing the industry she works in. Similarly, Müjde also questions the value of the work she idealized so much. She was working full-time at a publishing house but could not bear with the load of work as well as the relations at the workplace. After being laid off, she

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[115] The workshop was held in *Dünyada Mekân* on 17 April 2016.

started freelancing but keeps blaming herself both for not being able to manage it as well as for having idealized the publishing work itself.

So, the increase in the rate of exploitation—whether as self-exploitation or exploitation in capitalist class processes- does not simply mean an increase in the surplus value extracted, it also leads to a loss of belief in oneself or worth as the job loses its meaning. In that case, "loving one's job" cannot simply be regarded an ideological statement capturing the subjectivity of the freelancers. In the stories of the freelancers mentioned, it is something they care about and try to keep up as much as possible in negotiating the conditions which would enable them to do their job as they "like".[116] So, traversing the fantasy of "ideal" or "meaningful" work does not mean denigrating the meaning of work. When the worker starts to question the meaning of work, the result is not necessarily a post-fantasmatic relation to work in which the instability of the meanings attributed to work is acknowledged. Instead, the subject could end up in another fantasy which trivializes the place of work in one's life and thus, leads to a depoliticization of the meaning of work.

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[116] Christophe Dejours' work on the "centrality of work" could be helpful to understand why it is important to go beyond a mere ideological conception of work. His psychoanalytically informed theory argues that work is an experience of the real, which means to"experience the breakdown of technical know-how, even when the technology has been mastered" (2010, p. 170). He suggests there is always a gap between the task given and the activity, which requires practical knowledge, and even the violation of the rules when necessary. In other words, there always emerges some hinderance to the realization of a given task, and the frustration ensuing from this hinderance can be both a grave source of suffering and a fundamental source of pleasure if dealt with properly (p. 170). In the narratives of freelancers, hinderances to the accomplishment of work as one desires is among the important sources of concern as well. The accounts of freelancers also point to the possibility of both suffering and enjoyment in the face of hinderance, in cases where work done in paid employment is valuable to the worker. This also points to the fact that contrary to the accounts which claim that loving one's job is a source of exploitation; freelancers opt for or want to quit freelancing to be able to do their job as they like. So, loving one's job can be a source of resistance and demand for change as well.

5.5.2 Relating to freelancing in work

Secondly, freelancing is an important determinant in the experience of working for some freelancers. Some claim to have chosen or like their job as it enables them to work as freelancers. So, instead of the content of the work, they are more interested in the fact that their work enables them to be able to get away from the workplace. A common problem mentioned in office jobs was the long working hours. In that case, freelancing is imagined to open up the potential to organize one's own working hours and spend more time for non-work realm of one's life:

> In the last places I worked, especially in the HR and newspaper, it was too busy. The working hours did not have an end. In the newspaper, you finish the work and in the evening, you go to a press conference, or to a concert, or you write something. At the weekend, you have to work definitely, either on Sunday or Saturday. Human relations company was the same too; they never get off your back. You have to write or translate something all the time. In the end, I got crazy and left. I was working for a big human resources company. Especially not being able to leave work at six, asking for permission, begging for permission was the biggest problem for me. That was the reason especially. Then, I thought I could try working independently.
>
> (Burak, freelance translator, see Appendix D, 6)

Besides the length of working hours, the insufficiency and rigidity of time allowed for non-work realms of life in office jobs was also a common source of complaint and reason for becoming a freelancer. Tülin states that the content of the work is not that important as long as she could do it freelance and refers to the possibility of organizing one's time in freelancing and counts it as an advantage:

> The workflow may not be regular and give you a break. But let's say you take a job for ten days. You are a translator or whatever, you work project-based. Then, you can give yourself a break for a couple of days. It can be a long or tiring thing. That is the good part; you can give a break and then take another job. (…) After all, when you work full-time, everything is pre-determined. Your days, your hours, where you will go and when you will come back. You holidays are set. You have a very short little holiday already, it is so short, very short. What they call the annual holiday, the annual leave … That has a big effect. Or, let's say, you have to go to the hospital, or your friend needs help. It is a big problem to ask for permission in the workplace. Freelancing is good in that respect. I go to the doctor twice a month now, I have follow-up

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examinations, or I go to the therapist. I mean, if I work full-time, it will be very difficult for me. These are the things I cannot do. It [freelancing] has this advantage.

(Tülin, freelance translator and video-editor, see Appendix D, 7)

Another factor that overdetermines the freelancing experience is health. Several freelancers stated the negative impacts of doing office job on their mental and physical health and thus, stated that they resorted to freelancing to avoid them. For example, Burçin, a freelance author, defines full-time work as "psychological violence".

> For me that is not the case; there is a huge difference between working full-time and freelancing. For me, working set hours is psychological violence, a great source of unhappiness. To gain harmony between body, mind and soul, I need to manage my own time. I wake up very early in the morning but finish work in the afternoon. If you work set hours, you do everything whenever they want. On the other hand, I want them to tell me the deadline and leave me alone. I can set a deadline for myself. You can show yourself the compassion that your employer does not show you.
>
> (Burçin, a freelance author, see Appendix D, 8)

Bodily health was a prominent source of complaint with regard to office jobs and among the reasons that makes freelancing itself, rather than the content of the work, desirable. Gamze states that she does not care much about what work she does as long as it is freelance. She was curious about why more people did not freelance, suggesting that it was a better employment relation. She counts not having to commute, wear work clothes and sit all day as among the reasons why she prefers freelancing:

> When you work in an office, you do not actually work for eight hours, but you have to sit there all the time. Physically, it is interesting. But now I do not have that because when I do not have a work to do, I do not have to sit here. In fact, while working in an office, you actually work for three or four hours. Now I also work for three of four hours but when I am not working, I can go out, I can enjoy the day outdoors. (…) In that sense, I mean when it comes to the routine, I have time to do other things. I do not get tired of sitting all day or I do not get tired of commuting. I do not spend the day wearing shoes. These things are energy draining.
>
> (Gamze, freelance copy-writer and translator, see Appendix D, 9)

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Another common source of problem mentioned is the relations with the boss or co-workers in the workplace. When not negotiated or mediated, conflict with the boss or co-workers becomes a reason to become a freelancer. Freelancing is preferred, experimented with or imagined as a sort of palliative to the problems of work encountered in workplaces. For example, Gamze also states lack of social security, mobbing and discrimination as among the reasons why she left the office. She says that her employer claimed to be paying for her social benefits but did not do so, which she learned after she quit that job. In her next workplace, the problem was that she witnessed mobbing and a discriminative discourse which was normalized in the office:

> The biggest problem in the PR agency was the people. Our department head was in the office where I worked. I also had two colleagues. Our department head was like "I am homophobic, what is the deal? I don't like it, they can do it at home." Then, another friend was from Bodrum. He kept complaining that there were a lot of Syrians in Bodrum. He had no other job. He was a typical Kemalist nationalist type, and of course sexist. It comes as a package. I could not bear those two. It was possible to have conversations with my other colleague but she was really bad at her job and all the time… I mean she was being mobbed in front of my eyes. Because she got pregnant short after she started to work there and they could not fire her because I guess they would get a big fine in that case. So, they mistreated her terribly to make her resign. And because of the stress, she had started to work all the more poorly.
> (Gamze, freelance copywriter and translator, see Appendix D, 11)

On the other hand, some freelancers have stated that they like the work they do but the problem is they need to do it freelance. Among the problems counted by freelancers were the lack of regularity of workflow, which is either too intense or too intermittent, difficulty of receiving payment, lower fees, and the difficulty of managing time, with work spilling over the day. For example, Kemal stated that he likes translating books but the conditions of freelancing make it unsustainable for him. There are not enough full-time positions in publishing companies and he cannot find regular work as a freelance editor. Due to the difficulty of finding regular work

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and collecting payment, he said that he would prefer doing the same job full-time in an office if he had the chance. He also states that freelancing does not involve freedom to manage one's own time, claiming that it does not actually give the workers flexibility:

> I do not insist on working from home. I would actually prefer working outside. The reason is that working at home is overwhelming at some point. I want to work 5 days a week and write my thesis at the weekend. Or, I can work for four days and do it; that kind of work. What I mean to say, what they call flexibility is not flexibility. It is not flexible enough; we cannot organize it as we like. It is funny that they call it flexible because it is not. They give you a deadline, how can it be flexible? (…) If there is any freedom in it, we can call it as the freedom to be broke.
>
> <div align="right">(Kemal, freelance translator, see Appendix D,11)</div>

Many of those freelancers still argued that they would prefer freelancing if those problems could be solved. The reason is the experience of freelancing here is also overdetermined by a multiplicity of factors such as skill, experience, the content of work as well as the networks one could forge, all of which make up the negotiation power of the freelancer. However, still other freelancers insisted that they wanted to find a full-time position in an office, pointing to the need to separate home and the workplace, work and leisure and the enjoyment and the comforts of having people around in the office. For example, Meliha worked as a freelance journalist when she was unemployed but stated that she preferred full-time office work not only for the financial and social security it provides, but also for the social and collegial environment at the workplace. She complains about the social isolation that comes with freelancing:

> It is the same thing. You are prisoned within four walls again. The office work and freelancing… The difference between them is that we now have our laptops; we can go out. We do not need to be attached to a space. (…) You are at home, but I think that is the problem. You are prisoned in four walls. I mean you are being controlled.
>
> <div align="right">(Meliha, journalist, see Appendix D, 12)</div>

What are the implications of such diverse experiences of freelancing? In the workshops held with freelancers, it was taken for granted that freelancing worked to the benefit of employers as it enables them to cut off labor costs. However, the concomitant demand on the part of the freelancers was not to have full-time office work. Besides the need to formulate demands on social security and find ways to secure oneself under the present legal conditions, it was concluded that the strategies and demands should be formulated so as to enable freelancers to have more autonomy over the terms and conditions of their work. A booklet with legal and practical tips for freelancers was prepared by the freelancers in *Dünyada Mekân* with that aim in mind.[117] The legal tips involve information about the difference between labor and copyright contracts in Turkish labor code, tax liabilities of freelancers and the legal actions that can be taken in cases of non-payment or breach of contract. The practical tips involve tips on how to find work and empower oneself in one's relation with the employer. For example, one of the tips is to meet the employer in a neutral place instead of going to the workplace of the employer. Another tip is to keep track of one's working routine by writing work journals, and, hence, demand extra payment for overtime. Finally, freelancers are advised to discuss the terms and conditions of the work over written correspondences, which can function as legal proof even if there is no contract binding the freelancer and the employer. The aim of *Ofissizler* (The Officeless) is to build on that booklet and prepare a handbook for freelancing based on the experience sharing workshops that are organized so far.

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[117] The booklet was discussed in a forum organized in *Dünyada Mekân* on 25 September, 2016.

5.6 Negotiating work vs. non-work in freelancing

In the experience of freelancing, the overdetermination of multiple work and non-work processes is very crucial as well. The interpenetration of work and non-work is experienced differently, which still partly depends on the negotiation power of the freelancer. Those, who can navigate the amount of work, have the chance to decline job offers or share the workload with friends when overwhelmed by workload or have some financial or moral support when the workflow is meager, find it liberating to a certain extent.[118] On the other hand, those who do not have the negotiation power or community or family support find it difficult to manage the lines separating work and non-work.

However, "work" in terms of paid labor is not always the determining factor in the navigation of the time allocated in work and non-work realms of freelancers' lives. Sometimes, freelancers stated that it was some non-work activities that have led them to start freelancing. The weight of such non-work activities is sometimes based on preference while sometimes it comes out of certain obligations in family or community. As for the first case, some freelancers stated that they prefer freelancing for opening up more space to non-work activities, speaking in favor of flexibility in terms of when to work and how much to work. In this way, they said they could save time for non-work activities such as studying, doing artistic work or engaging in activism. For example, Burak states that being able to spare time for political activism is an important motivation to freelance:

> When I started it [freelancing], I did not do a lot of things but I re-started doing a bit of political activism in 2012. It was very helpful at that time. I mean you can go to a demonstration or visit a strike in the middle of the day. Other

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[118] Zeynep had claimed that if it was not for the support of her parents who bought her a house in Istanbul, she would have hard time deciding to go part-time and then freelancing. She also claimed having expertise on specific fields is an important component of negotiation power. But still it is difficult to navigate the line separating life and work since saying "no" has a certain limit in that case as well.

> people cannot do that of course. You can make your working hours more
> flexible and do political activism. I am happy in that regard. I mean that is a
> big advantage. It does me good.
>
> (Burak, freelance translator, Appendix D, 13)

Another non-work motivation to freelance is to take better care of oneself and the people one loves. For example, Tülin says she can visit a friend who is sick during the day, or Tarık counts it as an important advantage that he could go to the funeral of a friend. So, here, there is a questioning of the fact that in workplaces, such other-caring reasons are not even considered as legitimate reasons to take a break from work. Besides such other-caring activities, self-care is an important motivation that attaches workers to freelancing. For example, Gamze says she can take better care of herself as freelancing enabled her to move to Urla, a small town in İzmir, and have a more peaceful life. Ali also claims that he can take good care of himself, walking the city, biking, reading etc. as he thinks he has the liberty to decline working when he has enough money just to get by. In that case, we see freelancing enabling a visioning of life that is not centered around and defined based on work or production in general.

On the other hand, sometimes non-work realms of their lives could be experienced as bearing the obligation to go freelancing. As they could work from home, freelancers could be expected to care for family members, look after the sick, elderly or children.[119] When not negotiated, this domestic work could involve exploitative as well as oppressive processes. Inspired by the conditions of freelancers, companies also seem to expect their workers to work from home even

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[119] Freelancers with children present a more complex relation between working from home and domestic work. For example, Özge, a freelance translator, argued that she could start freelancing only after she got retired because freelancing with a child at home is impossible as children demand so much attention. On the other hand, Fatma and Şevket, a freelancer couple who participated in one of the meetings, stated that they opted for freelancing to take care of their children in the absence of child care. The relation between care work and freelancing needs further detailed research.

when they are sick and cannot make it to the company.[120] Actually, full-time workers

at certain companies demand and enjoy to work from home as well. So, working

from home is a terrain of struggle which could be occupied by work or non-work

demands on the labor of the worker, or alternatively, be experienced and created as a

space of relief from such demands.

An important caveat here is that it is not always preference vs. obligation to

go freelancing. For example, in the workshop we held with LGBTI people, we have

learned that freelancing is not something they deliberately choose but it enables them

to have financial security to some extent and thus, they also stated that they wanted

to learn more about the conditions of freelancing as well as the rights the freelancers

have or could have. Or, some freelancers of course end up giving priority to non-

work labor processes without actually feeling duty or preference. The reason is

freelancing is a result of a multiple processes overdetermining each other. For

example, Kemal claimed that he ended up being a stay-at-home parent as they

figured out that his wife's income was good enough to meet the household expenses.

He claims that he did not stay at home to care for the child or to be a freelancer. An

important thing he mentioned was that he had bad enough experiences working at a

company as an engineer and good enough experiences as a teaching assistant at a

university, which made him unwilling to accept working for long hours at a company

again. Furthermore, his friends offered him gigs at publishing companies and even

though they were irregular, he did not look for a "regular" job as he did not feel any

financial pressure. So, in his case, as well as those of many other freelancers,

freelancers do not necessarily explain "going freelance" as a conscious decision or as

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[120] That was the account of a friend who was expected to work while she had a sick leave for 6 weeks. When she declined the demand, her relations with her colleagues as well as her position in the company was changed.

a result of some stroke of fate. They mention a multiplicity of factors which bring them to the freelancing situation.

So far, we have dealt with the experience of work. But what about the experience of non-work? I have shortly mentioned that it could open up space for self-care, care for the others or for further exploitation in the domestic sphere. However, the experience of work has impact on what we do and how we relate to non-work realms of our lives. First, we could tend to evaluate the non-work activities we engage in in terms of the logic of efficiency we are expected to use when we consider our performance at work. Or, the question of what can be done outside work could be really confusing as work usually not only takes up too much time, but also is given too much meaning as definitive of one's identity.[121] Or, further still, the importance of non-work realms of life may not be regarded as highly as those of work, leading to a failure to see the value of the already existing activities engaged in when one is not working.[122] What are the conditions of valorizing non-work? I believe this question is related to a rethinking of our subjective relations to work as well since work takes up the central stage in most lives.

5.7 Affects at work in freelancing

I believe the conditions of valorizing non-work have to do with a questioning of the subjective investments in work as well as in freelancing as a specific mode of

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[121] These two concerns co-existed in the narrative of Yakup. He had stated his concern that he wasted his time without doing much when there is no work. When asked what he could have done, he was not very clear, but simply said that he felt guilty for not using the time outside work effectively. He said he worked 15 days a month at most but did not know what to do in the remaining time.

[122] As a researcher, I noticed this tendency in my approach when I was interviewing Ali. I asked him what he does when he does not work. He says "I read books, ride a bike or just walk around the city". Then, I asked, "what would you do if you did not have any financial concerns?" He replied, "I would do the same thing". I insisted whether he had any other dreams, failing to see the value of the things he already does and has outside work. He was a bit irritated by my insistence, saying that he would do more of the same. So, it is not only freelancers who may fail to valorize the non-work activities they engage in. Such self-caring or other-caring activities are not socially valorized enough, which also affected the way I approached Ali's lifestyle.

working. This also ties up with the opening up of the possibility of class transformation. The narratives of the multiple forms of navigating freelancing, working and non-working laid out above has hopefully opened up a discursive space of multiplicity. However, besides a discourse of heterogeneity, we need to problematize the affective investments we have in the reigning discourses of work and freelancing to be able to have a better grasp of subjective and class transformation. To that end, I draw on the psychoanalytically informed works on work, which elaborate on the fantasmatic forms of investments in work as well as the conditions of a post-fantasmatic relation to work and non-work activities for an ethico-political reorientation to class.

5.7.1 Fantasy at work and freelancing

To start with, we could draw on Glynos (2010) who claims that the logic of fantasy involves a narrative structure, which refers to an idealized scenario and promises an imaginary fullness/wholeness. Byrne and Healy (2006) argue that an imaginary of "ideal economy" operates with this logic of fantasy. In that imaginary, a utopic sociality is imagined where "fairness" reigns and there is no conflict or ambiguity with respect to the productive and social processes. They also argue that another feature of fantasy is that it also produces an obstacle, which hinders the consummation of this fantasy (p. 243). The logic here can be summarized as involving fantasy giving "a name to our desire and to why it is unattainable, without confronting or acknowledging the unavoidable lack" (Byrne and Healy, 2006, p. 243).

The subject's relation to work as well as the conditions under which it is realized could also involve a fantasmatic structure. Some freelancers argued that they

idealized the work they did and hence, failed to ask for proper compensation. The social, cultural or political meaning attributed to the work they did seemed to render asking for money something disdainful.[123] It seems work here is posited as a kind of object giving a sense of identity, a somewhat stable place in the world and hence, covering over the contingent and conflictual terrain on which it actually takes place. It is assumed that the work serves a mission, and hence, reduces any claim to negotiation or transparency of processes as to work to not being committed enough. On the other hand, fantasy could also take the form of "insignificance" of work, the claim that work is done "just for money" and identity could be secured somewhere else.[124] This trivializing discourse also ends up producing silence over the conditions of work, as it produces indifference as to what actually takes a great amount of time and energy.

Furthermore, a fantasmatic relation to freelancing as a mode of working could also undergird the perpetuation of silence concerning the grievances striking many freelancers. Such a fantasmatic relation could take the form of a belief in that freelancing would bring freedom from the multiple forms of unfreedom that office work or working in general brings. Many of the problems of freelancing can be worded into "personal" problems that ensue from the relations with the people one works with, or from one's incompetence, lack of skill, experience etc. So, it is imagined that in some future, once one gains enough experience, network, or establishes herself in the field, these problems will go away. On the other hand,

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[123] Meliha's claims as to the situation of journalists were striking. She stated that she had met unpaid interns who had been in the position for more than a year. Ali also has stated that his supervisor at a TV company had expected him to work for free for 3 years if he wanted to get a full-time position, which was the reason he quit the industry for good. Besides internship, freelancers have stated that it is difficult to talk about money not only in cultural industries but also while working for friends.
[124] Ali and Burak's accounts had such fantasmatic moments, which attempted to restrict the meaning of work to "earning money". Such moments could involve the desire to be more than "workers" and seeking recognition somewhere else. It could also be a kind of response to the problems encountered at work, trying to cover over such problems by trivializing the place of work in life itself.

fantasies as to freelancing could also take the form of total condemnation of freelancing as a mode of working. This involves a fantasmatic notion of office work as free from those problems of freelancing, and getting a full-time position is imagined as a kind of solution to the problems of working itself.

Glynos argues that fantasy protects against uncertainties, ambiguities, which evoke anxiety. He claims that it is precisely those ambiguities that enable a critical distance and alternative becomings. I concur with Glynos that the precondition of subjective transformation is encountering ambiguities. I argue that the impossibility of delimiting need from desire marks both class processes and work with a fundamental antagonism and creates ambiguities, which are tried to be evaded with fantasmatic narratives over the meaning of work and the mode of work. Both the narratives which idealize work and the narratives which denigrate it try to stabilize the multiplicity of relations one could forge with work. Work exists in the interval between the satisfaction of needs and expressions of one's most intimate passions as it has to do with *jouissance*. So, I argue, it is not enough to acknowledge class antagonism, which is the impossibility to define a way to organize production, appropriation and distribution of surplus once and for all. It is also important to acknowledge the antagonism of work for class transformation, if it is not to be based on moralist claims but is aimed at forging alliance across differences.

5.7.2 Towards a post-fantasmatic relation to work and freelancing

Then, our question is: how are we to start such an encountering of ambiguities relating to work and mode of working? Glynos suggests that we look into the "concrete alternatives residing in practices themselves" (p. 33). I also believe we need not think of post-fantasmatic moment as a complete move away from

fantasmatic moments as to the variety of processes we are engaged in. In other words, perhaps we need to attend to the co-existence of fantasmatic and post-fantasmatic moments in the discourses of freelancers to be able to conceptualize subjective transformation in the way to class transformation.

But first, what is denoted by a post-fantasmatic subjectivity? Ken Byrne and Stephen Healy argue that psychoanalysis is a subtractive discourse, removing us away from the old ways of being. However, as fantasy is not conceptualized as an illusion disrupting our reach to "reality", they argue that traversal of fantasy attempted in this subtractive discourse does not aim at a point free of or outside fantasy but at arriving at a different relation to it (2006, p. 246). It would rather involve an acknowledgement of the non-existence of any positive ground of sociality, which would mean the closure of its processes to decision making. They define the post-fantasmatic subject as that who "derives satisfaction from engaging with all the various antagonisms, conflicts, and contingencies" (p. 249) emanating from operating on the ground of negativity.

The diversification of freelancing is hence possible with a post-fantasmatic relation to work as well as to the mode of working. Some freelancers argued that they were not happy with their jobs at the office for many of the grievances caused by various sources of conflict at work. They argued that the concomitant disillusionment led them to decide going freelance. So, lack of mediating and compensating institutional mechanisms at the workplace could cause a fantasmatic conception of freelancing as a way to freedom. In the absence of political organization at the workplace, the worker could opt for deserting it, finding recourse in freelancing. This fantasmatic relation to freelancing seen as a freedom from conflict has tremendously political implications. It could lead not only to shying

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away from speaking of the problems encountered during freelancing— as it is put as a decision that one has made and is responsible for- and perhaps, end up feeling guilty for quitting the office work. But it could actually lead to an aggravation of the fantasmatic investment in search of non-conflict as the isolation of the freelancer at home could further diminish the subjective and institutional sources available to the worker to deal with cases of conflict. In other words, freelancing in that case, could be leading to a depletion of the political skills and desire of the worker.[125]

Then, what are the properties of a post-fantasmatic relation to work and freelancing? We could delineate some post-fantasmatic moments in the narratives of freelancers, which also could underground the class transformation they go through. Such moments involve acknowledging the incompleteness of the Other and hence, open up space for the act. The concomitant ambiguities and antagonisms would not be covered over but regarded as requiring to be worked through. In that case, the subject questions both the meaning of work, and like fantasy, instead of attempting to discard it, could come to have a different relation to it. Meaning is to be acknowledged to be something created and open to constant resignification, which renders it a terrain of struggle. Similarly, freelancing is not to be loved or hated, but is to be considered as involving a terrain open to contingency and constant determination. Accordingly, the variety of work and non-work activities as well as our relation to them would be open to negotiation.

Overall, in the interviews and workshops I attended, I noticed two moments in the narratives of freelancers which could be examples to a sort of post-fantasmatic relation to freelancing. One points to the conception of insecurity as a condition

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[125] In one of the workshops organized with freelancers with the aim of forming a political network of solidarity, Görkem argued that we need to be "solution-oriented" since freelancers already do not want to "deal with people" as that is the reason they "go freelance". The implications of this for political organization are dealt with extensively in the next chapter.

which is not resolvable with class mobilization. In other words, going freelance, starting one's company or securing a full-time position is not posited as a solution to the problems of working itself. This could be accompanied by a more structural analysis of the working conditions, which saves the narrative from being self-centered. So, at such moments, freelancer quits playing the self-sufficient, self-responsible actor in knowledge of the ways to make it. A breathing space is opened when the freelancer stops idealizing or demonizing freelancing and attempts to evaluate the situation she is in in an impersonal note. For example, Burak, a freelance translator, claims to prefer freelancing but emphasizes that it may not be for everyone and points to its challenges as well:

> I am really content with working freelance. But I do not know if it is for everyone. I am a translator. (...) Translation has a craft-like quality. (...) You need to concentrate. So, it is good to be alone to do it. (...) But sometimes you really feel like, you really isolate yourself. You do not see anyone all day long. You work in one cafe or another for three hours or at home. You go home without having seen anyone. So, it has an isolating effect, especially translation."
>
> (Burak, freelance translator, see Appendix D, 14)

Or, Meliha claims that she hated freelancing but it enabled her to study further and adds that the support of her partner at the time was an important factor as well:

> I cursed freelancing and it was an annoying period of my life but on the other hand, I could also do my masters on cinema which was my dream. But again, I had that advantage I mentioned before. My boyfriend overtook a large part of the financial responsibility for the house.
>
> (Meliha, journalist, see Appendix D, 15)

These are examples to the moments when freelancers could stop defending freelancing or not freelancing as a matter of individual choice. They hence open up space for different ways of relating to work and freelancing and these could be the moments where a post-fantasmatic relation to economy could be delineated. Both

accounts involved some reticence when it comes to the way they related to freelancing. Burak pointed to a variety of reasons that overdetermined his ending up freelancing and suggested some reasons which were "personal"—such as not wanting to give orders and take orders. He did not want to talk about his personal reasons a lot since he thought they needed not be generalized as an ideal. The distance Meliha and Burak establish between their "unique" reasons to or not to freelance and the general problems and advantages of freelancing they point to a post-fantasmatic way of accounting for freelancing as it recognizes the non-totalizability of the variety of overdeterminants constituting the freelancing condition.

Another example to such post-fantasmatic moments relates to the moments which involve an acknowledgement of class difference and diversity. One's experience of freelancing is not generalized to involve the others; instead, such factors as skills, experience, production relations which make up one's "negotiation power" as well as one's non-work activities and relations are evaluated to give an account of the advantageous or disadvantageous position one finds oneself in. This could underground a conception of freelancing which attends to the class and non-class differences, and the ways to mediate and alleviate them for the disadvantaged. For example, Özge, a freelance translator, argues that having children is a hindrance to the possibility of freelancing. She says she did not prefer freelancing but had to when she was laid off at the age of 45, with meager chances of re-employment in another company. She claims she likes freelancing and is content with it since she is already receiving pension. So, the class processes she participated in at home—whether communal or feudal—prevented her from going freelance, and possibly

participate in independent class process. Now that her daughter is grown up and she has a secure source of income, she could try her hand in going freelance.

Or, Zeynep also points at the differences among freelancers in terms of their negotiation power. She argues that especially those freelancers who happen to hold a place in niche industries could get the power to decline work, instead of constantly seeking work. She also adds that the fame she receives in return for the pain she endures freelancing increases her possibility of employment and this may not be true for other freelancers for whom fame is not a criterion of employability. That is why she claims she continues to freelance while it is understandable that other freelancers may want to work full-time in an office. So, acknowledgement of class and non-class differences among freelancers is crucial for a post-fantasmatic relation to freelancing as such moments point to freelancing as not a matter of individual choice, but as a result of various differences which could also be politicized.

On the other hand, a post-fantasmatic relation to their work could lead to demanding proper conditions for the execution of the work as desired. In that case, the speaker goes beyond a fantasmatic idealization or demeaning of work. It does not matter if one attributes greater value to work or other non-work activities; instead, the argument flows that working as one desires depends on the creation of suitable conditions. The arguments demanding such conditions could be based on one's investment both in work and non-work activities. In the first case, the freelancer could demand better working hours and payment with the claim to be able to continue producing "quality work". Or alternatively, subjective investment in non-work activities could also lead to demanding more time for oneself, and hence, again better working hours, payment and conditions. In other words, it is not loving or not

loving work that necessarily poses a hindrance to demands for better compensation or class transformation.

5.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I provided a critical account relating to the meaning of work in freelancers' lives and suggested an alternative way of approaching work which could accommodate different ways of relating to it. This alternative look is crucial especially if we are to imagine and enact alliances among freelancers, who differ a lot in terms of the meanings they attribute to work/non-work realms of their lives as well as to freelancing as a mode of working and living. I argued work is to be related to the operation of *jouissance* in the subject and hence, acknowledging the impossibility of defining work as either "necessity" or as an expression of "desire" could enable such a post-fantasmatic welcoming of differences across freelancers. The accommodation of differences among freelancers is not only a pre-condition of forging alliances across differences, but it could also render those differences multiple points of intervention into capitalocentric discourses and practices. I take issue with the possibilities of such interventions in the following chapter on political organization of freelancers.

CHAPTER 6

ORGANIZING FREELANCING:

RETHINKING CLASS POLITICS WITH FREELANCERS

6.1 Introduction

In this final chapter, I aim to investigate the possibilities of organizing freelancers

and to that end, I draw on the experience of a collective called *Dünyada Mekân*,

which was founded in 2015 by freelancers, white-collar workers and the unemployed

in Istanbul. I argue that *Dünyada Mekân* is a common space, which has enabled

experimentation with and creation of new objects for solidarity across class and non-

class differences among its participants. A recent outcome of the experimental

practices in *Dünyada Mekân* is *Ofissizler* (The Officeless), a community of

freelancers which aims to enable the recognition of freelancing as a distinct mode of

working, to establish a network of solidarity among freelancers, to investigate the

variety of grievances of freelancers and carry out advocacy campaigns and to

imagine and enact alternative economic practices. I claim a variety of creative tools

designed to those ends point to the possibility of a post-fantasmatic re-orientation to

class politics. On the other hand, I also attempt to illustrate the difficulties and

obstacles encountered during the attempts of organizing freelancers, which could

impede such a reorientation. I hope this chapter to be a contribution to a rethinking of

class politics under conditions of precarity.

6.2 The community of the working class

A rethinking of class politics entails a rethinking of the existing conceptions of class

identity and the sociality it is implicated in. I argue the concepts of the common and

community enable such a re-orientation to subjectivity and class politics by accommodating class and non-class differences. These concepts also enable us to trace the co-implication of class and non-class processes existing in a relation of overdetermination.[126] This implication of the different processes of our lives seems to demand more attention with the growing interpenetration of work and non-work realms of our lives as elaborated in the previous chapter. Furthermore, growing conditions and sense of precarity seems to turn community into a source of security. In the absence of legal mechanisms granting them basic income and health security, freelancers tend to rely on their communities in which class and non-class relations and processes may be interpenetrating. That is why I draw on accounts which take community as a space for the proliferation of difference, different class and non-class processes, relations, affects, needs and abilities (Gibson-Graham, 2006). But before I elaborate on the implications of this rethinking, we first could have a glimpse of the conception of community implicit in certain understandings of class politics. This account is aimed at pointing to the distinction of the accounts which attempt to rethink the community in relation to the common for a rethinking of class politics.

The identity of the worker has so far been considered as a crucial—or maybe the founding- component of class politics. The variety of identitarian conceptions of class seems to take a certain notion of community for granted. This notion of class thinks of it as involving "belonging", something that should be defined based on the specific qualities that subjects are to possess regarding their position in production and/or property relations. Class struggle was to be fought by workers who have the common property of being "workers". The identity they had in common was both the precondition and the source of struggle. Who belonged to the working class? The

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[126] For a series of articles written with this approach see Stephen A. Resnick and Richard D. Wolff and J.K. Gibson-Graham (Eds.). (2000). *Class and Its Others.* Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota.

debate on that question came to revolve around whether the working class is to be formed or whether it is something given based on one's place in production relations.[127] Whether thought of as construction or as something given, a natural that needs consciousness, "working class" identity formed the basis of the kind of community envisioned for class struggle.

The presupposition of a more or less definable and homogenous identity was also associated with having similar interests and aspirations. In that case, class politics runs the risk of being reduced to the pursuit of rational interests by subjects having more or less similar positions and identities in society. Here, I run the risk of reducing the variety of attempts to define working class and its experiences to attempts to define subjects of history; however, what I would like to venture into thinking is whether we could think of labor and class politics beyond an identitarian conception of class and a concomitant conception of community in terms of possessions and properties. The problem with the identitarian conceptions of class is far from obvious: it not only excludes those who lack the looked after properties, but it also reinforces a conception of class politics free of internal antagonism. The only antagonism is posited to be between the "capital" and the "working class", with the latter founded a common identity which enables unity against the capital.[128]

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[127] E. P. Thompson's work (1966) is a significant contribution to the line of thinking which regards class as something that is constructed. Thompson argues that class constructs itself as much as is constructed. Another line of thinking regarding classed subjectivity perceives it as some kind of "second nature", definable based on the subject's position in production relations. Lukács suggests an antagonism between the reifying laws of capitalism—logic of equivalence—and the inassimilable aspects of those subjected to these laws. This antagonism becomes all the more grave as the abstractions gain more and more independence from their material substratum to build neat and coherent theoretical categories. The proletariat is then argued to be *the* subject of history whose subjectivity is most targeted in capitalist production relations which commodify living labour. The concomitant resistance of the proletariat to this process of reification is argued to come naturally. What I would like to question is whether we could have a different approach to class beyond this constructionist and naturalist approaches, based on a different conception of community.

[128] The ensuing conception of class politics, based on a homogenous worker identity and an antagonistic relation with anything labelled as "capitalist" and "liberal", has been an important impediment to the organization of freelancers as well, which is the reason I would like to point to its problem. We have encountered this problem during the organization of workers in the field of

6.3 Reading class and work for difference: Encountering antagonism

So, I argue while countering the fantasy of self-sufficiency in entrepreneurial discourse, we need not recourse to a fantasy of unity which would erase class and non-class differences among freelancers. An identitarian conception of belonging is not the answer to the entrepreneurial discourses that hail an existence outside the constraints of time and place. The reason is that by covering over differences and antagonism, this identitarian conception of class would not only exclude those who do not possess the properties desired, but it also depoliticizes worker subjectivity by diminishing its capacity to deal with conflict, which is crucial for a post-fantasmatic relation to work and class. In that regard, I concur with Healy and Byrne's account of post-fantasmatic economy as one in which subjects do not evade but can deal with antagonisms in a creative way (2006, p. 249). It involves acknowledging the negative ground of any sociality, which I understand refers to the fact that there is no pre-determined way to organize the processes in any community. The concomitant need for constant negotiation of those processes requires the ability to deal with conflict, the loss of which has drastic depoliticizing impacts explored in this chapter.

That is why reading class for difference is more than a simple call for inclusion of all working selves in "working class". More importantly, it is crucial for the cultivation of political subjects who can deal with antagonism in a productive and creative way and hence, pluralize the points of intervention in the class and non-class processes in the community. Such a reading would both entail and enable a post-

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publishing in a collective called YEK (Yayınevi Emekçileri Kolektifi-Collective of Workers in Publishing Industry). A group of militant leftist workers kept preventing any discussion on alternative modes of producing and thinking politics, and finally expelled a member who kept sharing his different ideas. This move led to the dissolution of the group.

fantasmatic re-orientation to class and work, opening up ways to post-fantasmatic

class politics. In such a re-orientation, neither a specific class identity, i.e. being a

worker in a capitalist class process, nor a specific subjective investment in work, i.e.

"doing one's job properly," would be deemed as the precondition of being a part of

class politics.[129] The variety of class/non-class and work/non-work differences laid

out in the previous two chapters need to be seen not as a hindrance to class politics,

but as pointing to the necessity of rethinking it in a way to accommodate ensuing

antagonisms and to pluralize the points of political intervention.

6.3.1 Rethinking community with difference

To enable such a re-orientation, we need a different conception of community of the

working class which is not based on belonging. To that end, I draw on Gibson-

Graham's call (2006) which liberates the concept of community from a discourse of

common being, namely community understood as made up of subjects in an

immanent relation with each other for a higher unity. Instead of common being, she

suggests we need to define it as "being-in-common" in Jean-Luc Nancy's terms. This

conception of community involves not only a recognition but also a proliferation of

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[129] By a post-fantasmatic relation to class, I refer to a form of subjectivity which sees the processes of the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labour open to constant negotiation. In line with that, I see class transformation not simply as moving from capitalist to non-capitalist class processes. Instead, I see it as involving the challeging of the way these processes are organized. So, for example, when a worker demands to work less and produce less surplus labour, or when she demands free lunch in the workplace, I argue that we have a class transformation. The reason is that the relations and conditions of production are regarded as open to intervention and a demand is struggled for in line with that conception.
On the other hand, post-fantasmatic relation to work refers to a need to defy worker moralism. As elaborated in the previous chapter, there is no one way to relate to work as work exists in the interval between need and desire. The inability to see this multiplicity in relation to work and class has been an impediment in the organization of freelancers. Some freelancers blame other freelancers for not loving their jobs, not doing it properly and damaging the reputation of the occupation, or they argue freelancers who work for low payment are to blame for the conditions in their industry. While the first statement ensues from a fantasmatic investment in work, the latter ensues from an inability to see class differences among freelancers. Seeing class and work in antagonistic terms, namely as processes impossible to stabilize once and for all, is a pre-condition for post-fantasmatic class politics which could accomodate class/non-class and work/non-work differences.

difference and diversity. It requires an acknowledgement of interdependence as well as the recognition, revalorization, proliferation and sharing of needs and abilities.

What are the pre-conditions of such a reorientation to community in difference? Gibson-Graham argues that besides a politics of language based on the deconstruction of the capitalocentric discourses, we need a politics of the subject and collective action to open up spaces for community economies. With regard to the question of subjectivity, they point to the significance of affective investments in the reigning discourses and how they could produce resistance for transformation. Therefore, she argues in addition to discursive destabilization of the hegemonic discourses, we also need attempts of renarrativizing and reframing so that the subjects could see the value of the variety of activities they engage in and the processes they undergo. In other words, differences are not already-existent but need valorization and reframing so that they can operate as points of intervention against the hegemony of capitalocentric discourses and practices.

An example from Gibson-Graham's work *A Post-Capitalist Politics* (2006) could concretize what is meant by such a reframing and its political implications. In the chapter on cultivating subjects, Gibson-Graham gives the account of a town in which privatization had impact on the sense of self and community of the workers. The abandonment of the town by the paternalistic father/state produced a sense of disempowerment. Therefore, in the beginning of the workshop they organized with town members, the participants positioned themselves as "victims" of capitalism, expressing feelings of disappointment and powerlessness. Gibson-Graham's action-based research project aimed at destabilizing this investment in one's place in capitalist production relations as providing a sense of self and security in community. Their first move to that end was to ask about the strengths of the town and thus,

moving the participants away from a discourse of victimhood. Later on, workshop organizers asked participants to document their personal skills, gifts and capacities, and then complete a joint "Portrait of Gifts", which included "gifts of the head, hand and heart" (2006, p. 146). The exercise not only possibly produced positive affects and a sense of empowerment among participants, but it also enabled the emergence and reframing of a variety of non-capitalist processes as concrete points of intervention to the capitalocentric discourses and ways of being.

So, class and non-class and work/non-work differences need to be attended to for two main reasons: to encounter the antagonism that destabilizes any community and to intervene in and destabilize the hegemonic representations of community in terms of belonging. In other words, difference both destabilizes and re-orients the subject towards alternative ways of being. Encountering its relation with antagonism is important to enable post-fantasmatic conception of class politics, which is not based not on exclusionary identitarian terms or in moralistic terms which posit specific forms of conduct in relation to one's work. On the other hand, differences can also be a source of intervention by providing alternatives to hegemonic ways of being as seen in Gibson-Graham's account of Portrait of Gifts. In conclusion, difference denotes both a pure negativity to be encountered and an abundance of possibility to be harnessed for class transformation.

6.3.2 Reframing differences for ethico-political re-orientation

Framing of differences is also crucial for the formation of an empowering discourse on freelancing. It is mostly –and rightly- assumed that freelancing involves individualization of work and social isolation. The assumption is valid in that as freelancers leave the office which could enable spontaneous communication and

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sharing of information and undertake a variety of responsibilities such as managing the workflow, finding work, maintaining occupational relations, managing taxes, invoices and health provisions, they could and do end up feeling isolated and overwhelmed. However, an overarching emphasis on the isolation and individualization also runs the risk of covering over the social relations which actually enable freelancing. Too much emphasis on individualization could also possibly contribute to the fantasmatic narratives as to the need to be or become self-sufficient independent individuals. Instead of focusing on such narratives or the isolation of the freelancers, we could opt for looking into the social relations and communities they work and live in.

We can see the examples of the practices of sharing and valorizing of needs and abilities in freelancers' quotidian practices. There is a plethora of virtual/non-virtual platforms over which freelancers from a variety of fields share their experiences and knowledge. The important point is that such existing platforms are mostly industry-based; in other words, they do not cohere around an identity of being a "freelancer".[130] Besides such platforms, during the interviews I made with freelancers, I came to appreciate the importance of non-public networks, which I believe to involve certain communing practices.[131] The problem is since they are not recognized and valorized as such, we come to emphasize the individualization of work in freelancers and hence, produce a disempowering discourse as to their

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[130] For instance, graphic designers, translators and computer engineers are among the groups of workers often working freelance. Graphic designers have an association which was founded in 1978, for more information see http://gmk.org.tr/about. Translators have an association called ÇEVBİR, which was founded in 2003. Finally, computer engineers are organized under the Union Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects (TMMOB).

[131] In one of the workshops, a participant had said that there are many whatsapp groups over which people share information about how much to charge the clients, to pass work to each other or to ask for whether a specific company is good to work with. Gibson-Graham claims that many surplus generating non-market transactions and unpaid labour are lost in the hegemonic mode to represent capitalism (2006, p. 56). Similarly, I believe the hegemonic representations of the freelancer as a self-sufficient individual cover over the existing practices of communing that they are involved in.

potential to organize themselves. In addition, in the existing practices of freelancers, we see practices such as sharing work, knowledge and experience which I believe defies the idea that freelancers are totally isolated. The interdependency as well as the practices of commoning which could be traced in their narratives help us to elaborate on the question of community with freelancers.

In the workshops I have attended with freelancers (as a freelancer), we have discussed a variety of issues such as finding work, managing the amount of work, juggling between works or meeting deadlines. We have come to the conclusion that we are already embedded in certain relations which help us find work, support us when it is too much or too little and help us acquire the skills we need to get the work we want.[132] However, the problem was that such relations were not acknowledged and they were not taken as the ground for a collective imagery. We also discussed the forms of community which are structured around "common being" and end up functioning as mechanisms of exclusion in the industry.[133] Yet another problem was in the absence of mechanisms of mediation, the intersubjective relations which support us could also produce a relation of indebtedness which could weigh upon the freelancer. The weight of the debt could prevent the freelancers from talking about the problems encountered during the production process or asking for payment at the end of it.

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[132] For example, following the workshop on video-editing we had in Dünyada Mekân, a friend decided to take up it as a job and contacted the workshop organizer to learn about the industry. Another freelancer I had interviewed had said that he had learnt his craft from another photographer, without any formal education in the field. They both have stated that anyone could learn the craft and start working; so, skills are deemed to be not possessions but activities open to anyone eager to practice them. In the workshop titled "How did I become a freelancer?" which was organized in *Dünyada Mekân* on 9 June 2017, one of the participants who was a computer engineer stated that the sharing of information among peers brought a certain democratization of skill distribution. This approach to skill could also be important for a non-identitarian conception of class politics.
[133] A workshop participant had complained about the exclusionary social settings in the field of illustration in which she was working. Frequenting certain places and being "friends" with certain people were a pre-condition of getting a job for her.

To conclude, we have envisioned a form of organization which would mediate the variety of supportive as well as anxiety-ridden relations between freelancers and open up space for them to be negotiated and challenged. The problem is that, as Gibson-Graham has significantly pointed out, we do need subjective transformation for this envisioning to take place. It is not enough to deconstruct the reigning discourses that point to the isolation of the freelancers. We also need subjective re-orientation towards the existing relations we are involved in, the relations we have with our work as well as the subjective investments we have in the variety of activities we engage in.

Gibson-Graham (2006) argues that for such attempts of re-subjectivation to take place, they need to be structured around a coherent discourse or otherwise run the risk of being represented as co-opted, serving the operation of the capital. Therefore, they suggest that a counterhegemonic anticapitalocentric project requires a signifier around which the diversity of economic subjects may gather to disinvest from hegemonic identities and practices. They propose "community economy" as such a signifier which would provide a discourse of economic difference and diversity and enable a space for experimentation to subjects in transformation. Around this discourse of community economy, Gibson-Graham (2013) delineates five points of intervention: work, class, market, commons and investment.[134] In addition, she argues there is no model to be replicated when it comes to the ways to intervene in the operation of processes in these realms (2006, p. 172). So, I understand she proposes community economies not only as an ethico-political space of decision-making but also as requiring creativity in the way to enable multiple

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[134] By these points of intervention, Gibson-Graham (2013) helps us question the place of paid labour in our lives; rethink the production, appropriation and distribution of surplus labour as well as the exchanging of the producs of our labour in t market and non-market contexts; regard the diversity in forms of property and the see to the possibilities of commoning in relation to them; and re-envision investment in life-sustaining ways.

points and ways of intervention in accordance with the requirements and conditions of the context in question.

The important point to note here is that "community economies" is a discourse aimed at proliferating alternatives rather than a model to be promoted and applied anywhere uniformly. Gibson-Graham draws on Eve Segdwick for a "weak theory" of the social, instead of aiming to paint a "realistic" representation of it. The goal of theorization is not to elaborate on the knowledge we already have, but to look for new openings and potentials in what exists. Gibson-Graham argues doing weak theory requires refusing to know too much, "allowing success to inspire and failure to educate, refusing to extend diagnoses too widely or deeply" (2006, p. 8). This way of seeing requires a rethinking of power as not simply dominating, but as a more quotidian process we are implicated in. As a result, social change can be reconsidered as requiring creative acts involving a forgoing of pre-given conceptions of power, defying the fear of co-optation and failure haunting the leftist discourse (p. 8).

I believe the concept of sublimation can supplant this rethinking of social change in terms of experimentation. We may need to think of community economies in relation to the common as a space of encounter and sublimation.[135] The encounters enabled by the common can instigate the creation of new signifiers, objects and relationalities. I argue the experimentations in *Dünyada Mekân* functioned as such a sublimated space of encounter and enabled the emergence of different objects,

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[135] Özselçuk and Madra's conceptualization of sublimation in relation to politics is inspiring in that regard. They argue that we need to have an ethico-political approach to economy, taking into account the impossibility of defining needs and desires once and for all. Community economics is defined as a sublimated space in which we may disinvest from our fantasies as to the existence of the Economy in which all desires could be satisfied and start "wanting" to create new objects (2015, p. 140). They argue a dis-identification from the economic ideals is the minimum criteria for engaging in community economics. I argue the creation of various tools for experience and knowledge sharing in *Dünyada Mekân* could foster such dis-identifications and enable the emergence of alternative ways of being and producing.

relationalities and tools for subjective and class transformation. In the rest of the chapter, I give an account of those relationalities and objects and then, focus on one of them, *Ofissizler* (The Officeless), which is the network of solidarity among freelancers, established by the people who encountered each other in *Dünyada Mekân*.

6.4 *Dünyada Mekân*: A sublimated space of the common

Dünyada Mekân was founded in 2015 in Istanbul following a series of forums and meetings about precarity, white-collar jobs, freelancing and unemployment. These forums were a part of a series of forums organized in the aftermath of the Gezi resistance within the framework of a politics of the commons. The goal was to create a space of the common which is horizontally organized "without managers or bosses."[136] Besides problematizing the problems encountered in relation to the problem of precarity, the attempt was to create commonalities, different ways of relating, producing and living and hence, think of solidarity as involving the different realms of our lives. To that end, we have organized not only interviews and reading meetings on a variety of topics such as indebtedness, competition at the workplace or private employment agencies, but also movie nights and meeting salads. The space was designed as a co-working space for freelancers during the day and meeting place for various activities and groups in the evening.[137]

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[136] The space is introduced as follows on its website: "Dünyada Mekan is a space of solidarity for the freelance and white-collar workers with/without jobs. We have set off this journey looking for ways to produce together, to engender commonalities and find solutions to our problems together. We have imagined a collective space of solidarity where time slows down and space expands, without managers or bosses. Now, we are building it together… " (see, https://dunyadamekan.wordpress.com/bilgi/, retrieved on 17 October, 2017).

[137] The space has been collectively used by such groups as *Plaza Eylem Platformu* (Plaza Action Platform), and Kaç Bize Gel (Escape and Come to Us), which are platforms of white collar workers and *Dürtük* (Collective of Resisting Producers and Consumers), a collective founded by consumers buying groceries from the gardens around Istanbul, as well as numerous academic groups and grass-root initiatives. However, independent workers without any political affiliations— freelancers

In other words, the space did not have a clearly defined identity; it was open to the use of different groups as well as individuals but it did not endeavor to produce a homogenous identity with pre-defined or definable objectives. The space itself has been discussed and worked upon via forums open to public participation. To put it differently, it was not simply a meeting room for collectives either; instead, it was envisioned as an empty space open to the production and proliferation of different initiatives or self-expression. It has been a space in which we have shared both knowledge and experience. As for the first one, we have discussed that we come to repeat the same habits we have at the workplace and take it for granted that certain tasks are to be carried out by certain people. So, even in activist endeavors, we come to have certain "jobs", which could be overwhelming. Then, we have decided to organize video-editing and visual design workshops for activists, trying to redistribute skills and knowledge.

Besides knowledge, we have shared our experiences with each other. As freelancers, we have held more than five workshops to talk about our problems and how we deal with them and then, we have prepared a handbook with suggestions for freelancers. During the workshops, we have discussed a variety of issues such as competency and its role in the control over work and negotiation power, self-discipline, payment, work relations and networking, indebtedness (material and emotional), the imperative to be "social", isolation and political organization. As an outcome of these discussions, we have decided to produce a guide for freelancers in which we have both given information about the place of the freelancers in Turkish labor code, about the different ways to deal with tax issues, different kinds of contract and made some suggestions as to how to find work, how to manage

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especially- have been a considerable part of the space and decision-making processes have been based on individual participation. *Ofissizler* (The Officeless), the community of freelancers, is an outcome of the ensuing encounters in *Dünyada Mekân*.

workload, how and where to make job interviews and sign contracts, how to and how much to charge and mentioned some of the ways of developing one's own skills.

Finally, the space has involved initiatives to question the way we consume as well. There have been barter bazaars where we exchanged various things, questioning the imperative to buy as a means of rewarding ourselves, our overworked bodies. Furthermore, DÜRTÜK (Direnen Üretici ve Tüketici Kolektifi- The Collective of Resisting Producers and Consumers) has used the space from the beginning, bringing the vegetables of farmers producing in the gardens in the different districts of Istanbul to the consumers of the city. On the other hand, as for creating alternative production relations, the space has not so far achieved what was imagined in the beginning. In the forums preceding the foundation of the space, creating alternative networks, a collective or maybe a cooperative was on the agenda. This moment would be a further move from criticizing what exists towards creating further alternatives.[138]

6.5 The community of freelancers: *Ofissizler*

A recent outcome of the great deal of encounters, discussions and sharing in *Dünyada Mekân* has been *Ofissizler* (The Officeless), which is a new network of freelancers aiming at the recognition of freelancing as a distinct mode of working, advocating the proper compensation of freelance labor, establishing a network of solidarity among freelancers from different industries and imagining and enacting

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[138] Özselçuk and Madra (2014) refer to creative moments as moves from the hysteric to analyst's discourse. The hysteric questions the adequacy of the authority but the concomitant demand could be in favour of reinstituting ideals, a better master signifier (2014, p. 30). However, if the questioning is followed by an acknowledgement of the impossibility of a fully reconciled, harmonious order, and gets to the work of creating space for alternatives here and now, it moves towards the analyst's discourse.

alternative modes of working and producing.[139] As a participant of *Dünyada Mekân*, I have also been participating in the organization of this network among freelancers as of the beginning. We have created a variety of tools to explore the needs and desires of freelancers and to set forth ways of expressing and realizing them. A detailed look at those tools could be inspiring to see the possibilities for a creative exploration of difference, which is a precondition of a post-fantasmatic relation to class politics.

The first tool employed to that end was to formulate online surveys. The first survey aimed to understand the profile of freelancers in Turkey. At the time of the writing of this thesis, 112 freelancers have completed the survey, the results of which will be shared in a workshop aimed at exploring the experiences and problems of freelancers in a variety of fields such as health, law and finance. Conducting surveys has since then become an important tool employed by freelancers to relate themselves to other freelancers and produce knowledge on their conditions. We have conducted another survey on the use of online freelancing websites and shared the results in a workshop where we discussed the problems of finding work through such online platforms.[140] Finally, freelancers have carried out a survey on contracts, asking freelancers whether they use contracts and if so, what kind of contracts they are. During the writing of this thesis, 219 freelancers responded to this survey, the results of which were shared in a workshop organized with freelance lawyers to explore the place of freelancers in relation to the Turkish Labor Code and to delineate the fundamentals of various types of contracts that freelancers could use.[141]

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[139] These aims were delineated as a result of a workshop held in July, 2018 in *Dünyada Mekân*. The workshop was suggested during the first meetings by a new member of the community. She volunteered to use her skills as an NGO worker to organize the workshop and help us brainstorm about what freelancers want and plan to do with *Ofissizler*.

[140] For detailed information on the event, see https://ofissizler.com/freelance-is-bulma-platformlari-hakkinda/ (retrieved on 15 February 2019)

[141] For detailed information on the workshop, see https://ofissizler.com/freelance-islerde-sozlesme-ve-hukuk-atolyesi/ (retrieved on 15 February 2019)

Freelancers often work alone, away from the social and material resources of an office. In the workshops organized with freelancers, they have expressed the negative effects of this isolation both on their professional development and their emotional well-being. They are not only deprived of such material resources are free electricity, wi-fi, food, coffee or computer, but they also are also deprived of the knowledge and experience shared among colleagues and the emotional and social support they may provide. To defeat the material, professional and emotional impacts of their isolation, freelancers not only hold experience sharing workshops, they also regularly gather together on Wednesdays in *Dünyada Mekân* to co-work. Working, chatting and eating together, freelancers can recuperate from the loss of human connection in workplace.

On the other hand, all freelancers cannot participate in those face-to-face discussions. Having seen the variety of financial or emotional reasons why freelancers may not come to such gatherings, we have decided to try our hand in establishing an online platform to chat and discuss with freelancers. We are currently using an open source chatting platform called riot.me, in which we have separate rooms for freelancers from different industries as well as common rooms for discussions among freelancers from different industries. In this way, we are trying to defeat the isolation freelancers feel due to being away from their colleagues. They can ask questions relating to their industry, ask for advice when they encounter a problem while working or simply chat to connect with other freelancers.[142]

Finally, freelancers also attempt to have autonomy over their bodily and mental well-being. During the interviews I had with freelancers, wanting to work less and having more time for oneself was a common reason many freelancers choose to

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[142] For detailed information about the operation of the application, see https://ofissizler.com/evindeyken-de-yalniz-kalma-baloncuka-merhaba/ (retrieved on15 February 2019)

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freelance. The importance given to self-care also emerged in *Ofissizler* when a participant suggested doing yoga together. At the moment, Thursday has been designated as the day for yoga, during which freelancers connect both with each other and their bodily existence.

6.6 The challenges of organizing freelancers

Before I conclude, I would like to note some of the challenges that could be deduced from the discussions held in the workshops we did with freelancers on the question of organization. The challenges we have discussed could be mainly argued to issue from the problem of isolation, lack of social and financial security and the difficulty of managing the interpenetration of life and work. When it comes to organization, among the concomitant problems could be counted loss of social skills, inability to valorize existing commoning practices, experiencing problems of work as individual problems, interpersonalization of conflict or evasion of conflict ensuing from lack of mediating mechanisms, promotion of utilitarian relations with people for "networking", promotion of work as a creative/individual matter, and lack of sufficient time/space or resources for socialization.

Firstly, isolation of freelancers emanating from individualization of the work experience could also lead to a demeaning of one's experience and loss of certain social skills which are important for both professional and political purposes. In one of the recent workshops, a freelancer said that she did not want to go out and talk to people since she thought she had nothing interesting to tell anyone, sitting at home all day long. So, freelancing does not simply lead to individualization of work and the further responsibilization of the worker for her conditions, it could also be leading to a loss of certain social skills and hence, deprive the freelancer of the

language she needs to word her grievances. Furthermore, the creation of social relations is turned into a duty, something to be done in a planned and purposeful manner since there is no common space, like a workplace, where social relations could be forged both necessarily and spontaneously. As a result, forging social relations turns into yet another form of work, increasing the workload and the unpaid amount of labor to be expended by the freelancer.

Some freelancers "go freelance" to evade conflict at the workplace, but when they encounter even worse problems, they end up feeling responsible for them and hence, evade conversing about them. They also could be unable to see that they are not individual problems since they do not have the space to encounter their colleagues. This could add up to their feelings of guilt, and lead to withdrawal from the social space.[143] Furthermore, isolation could deprive the freelancer of the tools to deal with cases of conflict. In a workplace, there could be legal and institutional mechanisms that the worker could recourse to in cases of conflict. As argued in the previous chapter, when such mechanisms are absent or not satisfying, some workers I interviewed argued that they opted for freelancing. However, in that case, they could face interpersonalization of the conflict, and living and working mostly alone, could find themselves in even a graver situation.

An important effect of this evasion of conflict is that it could lead to a depoliticized conception of work/social relations.[144] The traumatic way of experiencing conflict could lead to a total evasion of any form of antagonism, and

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[143] One of the workshop participants puts the emotional cost of isolation as follows: "... work is also individualized a lot. For example, if you fail to do something, you experience it as a source of shame. If you miss a deadline at work, maybe it is a reality of the workplace, everybody misses a deadline (...) but if you experience it alone and if you are also a perfectionist, you experience it more dramatically and that is more difficult to share with others."
[144] In the workshop, Görkem, a freelance copywriter, argued that it is difficult to organize freelancers since the reason they go freelance is that they do not want to deal with people. He went at great length about how difficult it is to rely on people he works with and the discussion continued to be about the ethical values that needed to be observed in organization.

the desire to minimize social interaction. That is why organization of the freelancers is probably tied up with the organization of white-collar workplaces. Politicization of conflict is needed for a post-fantasmatic relation to work and collegiality. Disagreement and conflict are not to be covered over but enabled through various mechanisms in political organization as well.

Another problem caused by isolation is that it renders the existing commoning practices and social relation which enable freelancing invisible. As mentioned before, freelancers share work, knowledge and experience over a variety of virtual and face-to-face relations; however, in the absence of a more or less unified discourse which would valorize and systematize such practices, they could end up being worded as mere "favors" or in utilitarian terms of "networking". That is why overcoming isolation is crucial not only for the instigation of a post-fantasmatic relation to work and class, but also for the promotion of a more systematic post-capitalist conception of the socio-economic space. The language to be used to that end as well as the mechanisms to be forged is up for discussion. For the moment, freelancers have been holding "experience sharing workshops" held in *Dünyada Mekân,* which have helped us see the existence of these solidarity relations among freelancers. However, we need new communication tools to reframe these practices of sharing as strengths of freelancers, opening up ways to alternative ways of being and producing. In *Ofissizler*, we have been keeping record of the skills and professional needs of freelancers in a skill pool, which could be used to that end.

On the other hand, freelancers lack a space and time in common and may lack the resources to compensate for isolation. They do not work in an office together with their colleagues in a specific time period. Their work sometimes takes hold of what is socially designated as the time for socialization. In addition, mobility

has a cost; and the freelancers who may be promised it more than any other group of workers may be among the groups of workers who most lack it. So, freelancers may not only lack a common space, but also some time in common which could be allocated for non-work relations or organization. That is why digital media and virtual communities need to be employed effectively to have a more inclusive reach of freelancers. Freelancers have a variety of online communities where they share experience and knowledge.[145] The online chatting application used by *Offisizler* tries to compensate for this lack of financial and social resources that keep freelancers from socializing with their colleagues.

In addition, freelancers also demand spaces of the common which can be used by freelancers free of charge. *Dünyada Mekân* is such a space of encounter which was founded by an initiative including freelancers. However, freelancers demand such spaces to be provided by municipalities or other governmental bodies so that the lack of financial resources that impedes freelancers from interacting with their colleagues can be compensated. So, here we see the emergence of a new right on the part of the workers. Freelancers demand not only basic insurance and securence of payment, but also common spaces which they can use to work free of charge. After *Dünyada Mekân*, two new co-working spaces were opened by two municipalities in Kadıköy and Şişli, which can be used free of charge or for fees lower than paid to the commercial co-working spaces. In relation to those developments, freelancers discuss how demanding common spaces could also be

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[145] For a detailed account of the online communities of freelancers, see Wood, Alex J, Vili Lehdonvirta and Mark Graham (2018), "Workers of the Internet unite? Online freelancer organisation among remote gig economy workers in six Asian and African countries", in *New Technology, Work and Employment,* 33(2): 95-112. The authors suggest that while autonomy is a significant value of freelancer's identity, this does not lead to a total fragmentation and competition among them. To the contrary, they share work, knowledge and experience over various online platforms— social media and forums— and hence increase their security and protection.

among the demands to be expressed, which could be a step in the commonization of means of production.

6.7 Conclusion: Creating alliances across differences

In this chapter, I have illustrated the problems with the pre-existing conception of working class and class politics and pointed to the possibilities of re-envisioning class politics in a way to accommodate the class and non-class differences among freelancers. A class politics including freelancers need to respond to the hegemonic entrepreneurial representations of freelancers as self-sufficient subjects outside time and history. However, this response need not take the form of a call back to sociality in the form of communitarian ideals of belonging. Instead, it is to point to the interdependence constitutive of any community, including that of the freelancers, as well as the antagonisms which ensues from class and non-class differences among workers. I argued the creative mediation of differences would not only enable the emergence of post-fantasmatic subjectivities who are able to encounter and live with antagonism, but it would also lead to the proliferation of points of intervention in the capitalocentric discourses and practices.

The emergence of new objects enabled by such creative reframing of differences is enabled by the existence of such spaces of encounter as *Dünyada Mekân*. I argued the encountering of people from different class and non-class backgrounds in *Dünyada Mekân* has enabled the creation of a variety of objects to reframe differences, with one of them being the community of freelancers, *Ofissizler* (the Officeless). In *Dünyada Mekân*, we have attempted to share our knowledge and experience and created a space of the common at a time when the public space is re-occupied by government violence. In *Offissizler*, we are trying to continue with those

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practices with freelancers, adding new ones and exploring our needs and desires and trying to imagine, demand and create alternative ways of being and producing.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I brought under scrutiny the conditions of laboring and living in the insecure forms of employment that are called freelancing, in order to rethink the politics of class and work. In order to open up space for such a rethinking, I first provided a critique of the hegemonic, entrepreneurial representations of freelancing, which I argue to involve an imaginary of sovereign freelancing subjectivity existing outside the bounds of time and place. I also claimed that this subject is hailed to take an entrepreneurial approach towards herself as well as her social relations in the context of networking. I argued that the utilitarian discourse of networking involves a depoliticizing effect, involving a disavowal of antagonism and interdependence that are constitutive and destabilizing of any community.

After analyzing the entrepreneurial discourses on freelancing, I looked into the psychic and political impact of these discourses on freelancers, drawing on the interviews that I conducted and the workshops I participated with freelancers. My analysis revealed that freelancers are caught up in such affects as anxiety, guilt and shame as they encounter two antinomic sets of ideals: ideals of security of the Fordist period and the ideals of freedom of the entrepreneurial discourse. On the one hand, they are advised to let go of many of the conveniences of a 9 to 6 job and look for freedom in insecurity. On the other hand, the moment they encounter the failure of sovereignty in insecurity, they come to feel the weight of the social ideal of security which the previous generation held dear. The bombardment of the freelancer with these two contending ideals produce a paralyzing sense of anxiety and guilt that

could actually prevent the freelancer from establishing an autonomous relation with the social.

As for the discourse of network, I argued that it produces a fantasy of equality in opportunity, which has important depoliticizing effects on the freelancing subjectivity. I argued this fantasy covers over the class and non-class and work/non-work differences among freelancers, and hence, have such effects as exclusion and withdrawal on the part of the subject. At the same time, I argued that this fantasy of equality in opportunity also involves a simultaneous interpersonalization and depersonalization of the question of justice and politics. All participants of the network hold both themselves and the others responsible for their success or failure. This individualization of responsibility renders justice an interpersonal problem and the conflicts that emerge among equals could then be expected to be addressed by a higher authority.

Throughout this thesis, I followed Gibson-Graham's framework in *A Post-capitalist Politics* (2006) to arrange the flow of chapters and the relation between them. So, I understand she suggests that we first need to criticize the hegemonic capitalocentric discourses and scrutinize our investment in them before reframing the socio-economic space for difference, laying the ground for the imagining and enacting of alternative ways of living and producing. So, after criticizing the implications of the entrepreneurial discourses on freelancing, I proceeded with providing a more heterogeneous representation of the experience of freelancing, pointing to the diversity of class/non-class and work/non-work processes freelancers go through in time. Reframing freelancing for difference was aimed as a critique of both the entrepreneurial discourses on freelancing as well as the identitarian discourses on class and work. I argue that both discourses have a depoliticizing

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impact on the worker subjectivity as they promise a fantasmatic unity in homogeneity.

A post-fantasmatic re-orientation to class and work involves a recognition of differences with respect to both processes and a concomitant encounter with antagonism. I drew on psychoanalytical accounts on subjectivity to argue that the ability to deal with and mediate antagonism is the crucial skill needed in political organization (Byrne and Healy, 2006). I suggest that social change comes up with a questioning of the ways things are, and if politics is defined as belonging or conforming to this or that identity, we have a depoliticization of the subject. That is why I elaborated on the differences among freelancers and the points of antagonism which needed to be attended to if we are to re-orient to class and work, and hence, be able to create alliances across differences.

In the last chapter, I gave an account of my experience in organizing freelancers in Istanbul, pointing to the conditions which enable the formation of such alliances across differences. *Dünyada Mekân* (A Place in the World) in Beyoğlu has been a sublimated space of encounter among freelancers, white-collar workers and the unemployed and has enabled the creation of various tools to mediate the differences among them since 2015. A result of those encounters is *Ofissizler* (The Officeless), which is a network of solidarity of freelancers aiming to bring visibility to the conditions of freelancers and freelancing as a distinct mode of working, carry out advocacy campaigns for freelancers, establish networks to share knowledge and experience, and imagine and enact alternative forms of producing.

Lastly, I also pointed to the conditions of living and producing of freelancers which pose some hindrance to their political organization. As argued above, I take the ability to deal with conflict as an important political skill, the absence of which

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creates conformity, not politics. The workshops we held with freelancers point to a diminishing of this skill emanating from traumatic encounters with conflict in the workplace. Many stated that they did not want to deal with people anymore and that was the reason why they worked as freelancers. Freelancers also often work in the isolated space of the home, which contributes to the loss of this social skill. Other issues that pose hindrance to the organization of freelancers are the non-existence of a time and space shared in common and lack of social and financial security.

To conclude, in this thesis, I attempted to understand the conditions of working and living of freelancers as well as their different practices to organize themselves and think and live differently. I hope this thesis to be a contribution to the attempts to rethink and practice politics of class and work under conditions of precarity. The writing of it has been closely related to my political practice in the organization of freelancers, informing and challenging it at the same time. I present it not as a finished text, but as an incomplete process involving the interpenetration of thinking and acting for the creation of alliances across differences.

APPENDIX A

FIELD WORK

People interviewed	
16 in-depth interviews	with freelancers, 2 of them conducted online
3 in-depth interviews	with start-up owners, one of them conducted online
2 in-depth interviews	with managers of two co-working spaces in Istanbul conducted in person
Participatory Observation	
29.10.2015	Experience sharing workshop with freelancers working in the field of publishing, organized by *YEK* (Yayınevi Emekçileri Kolektifi- Collective of Laborers in the Field of Publishing)
17.04.2016	Experience sharing workshop with freelancers in *Dünyada Mekân* (A Place in the World)
13.05.2016	"How do we find work?" Experience sharing workshop with freelancers in *Dünyada Mekân*
09.06.2018	"How did I become a freelancer?", an experience workshop with freelancers in *Dünyada Mekân*
06.07.2018	"What can a freelancer's network change?", a workshop held by *Ofissizler* in Dünyada Mekân.
11.09.2018	"Freelance journalists are speaking!", an experience sharing workshop with freelancers organized by *Offisizler* (The Officeless)
08.10.2018	"Online platforms with freelancers", an experience workshop with freelancers in organized by *Offisizler*
02.05.2019	"Workshop on contracts and law for freelancers", organized by *Ofissizler*

APPENDIX B

PROFILE OF THE INTERVIEWEES[146]

Freelancers		
No	**Name**	**Occupation**
1.	Akın	Soft-ware Engineer
2.	Ali	Journalist
3.	Ayşe	Translator
4.	Burak	Translator
5.	Canan	Journalist
6.	Ekin	Translator
7.	Gamze	Translator
8.	İlker	Software Engineer
9.	Kemal	Editor
10.	Meliha	Journalist
11.	Müjde	Editor
12.	Özge	Translator
13.	Selin	Editor-Translator
14.	Tülin	Video Editor-Translator
15.	Yakup	Photographer
16.	Zeynep	Artist
Start-up Owners		
1.	Ayla	Owner of an e-commerce start-up
2.	Ebrar	Owner of a start-up translation company
3.	Güzin	Owner of a start-up working in industrial design
Managers of Co-working Spaces		
1.	Ata	Manager of a co-working space in Istanbul
2.	Kerim	Manager of a co-working space in Istanbul

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[146] Names of the interviwees and workshop participants were changed for the sake of confidentiality.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. İşle ilişkinizi kısaca anlatabilir misiniz? (Ne okudunuz, okulunu okuduğunuz mesleği mi yapıyorsunuz? Ne zaman çalışmaya başladınız? Şimdiye dek ne tür işler yaptınız? İşinizle ilgili değiştirmek istediğiniz, rahatsız olduğunuz veya memnun olduğunuz şeyler nelerdir?)

2. Freelance çalışmayı kendiniz mi tercih ettiniz? Yoksa şartlar mı freelance çalışmanızı gerektirdi? Tercihse, tercihinizin nedenleri nelerdir? (örn. öğrenim, çocuk bakmak, kendine vakit ayırmak, daha konforlu bir ortam aramak vb.) Koşullar gerektirdiyse de, ne tür koşullar gereği freelance çalışmak durumunda kaldınız? (işyerinde ayrımcılık, işten atılma, hastalık vb.)

3. Aileniz ve arkadaşlarınız freelance çalışmanız hakkında ne düşünüyor?

4. Freelance çalışmaya devam etmeyi düşünüyor musunuz? Neden? Aynı işi ofiste yapabileceksiniz tam zamanlı çalışmayı düşünür müsünüz?

5. Ofiste tam zamanlı çalışmak ile freelance çalışma arasında ne tür farklar olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

6. Çalışmak için ne tür mekanlar kullanıyorsunuz (örn. ev, kafe, co-working mekanları, dayanışmacı mekanlar)? Hangi mekanları neden tercih ettiğinizi açıklayabilir misiniz?

7. Nasıl iş buluyorsunuz? Mesela arkadaşlarınız aracılığıyla iş buluyorsanız veya iş yapıyorsanız, bunun avantaj ve dezavantajları nelerdir?

8. Bir iş gününüzü aktarabilir misiniz?

9. Çalışmanın geleceğini nasıl görüyorsunuz? Sizce çalışma koşullarında değişiklikler var mı? Varsa, bu değişiklikleri nasıl tanımlarsınız? Sizce bu değişiklikler hangi sektörleri kapsar nitelikte?

10. Bir freelance örgütlenmesine ihtiyaç duyuyor musun? Öyleyse bu nasıl bir örgüt olurdu?

ORIGINAL TURKISH QUOTATIONS FROM INTERVIEWS

1. Ayşe: Zaten hep bir belirsizlik var kaç para kazandığına dair. Ama bir yandan da şey işte yani yapabiliyorum bir şekilde demenin yolu dememek oluyor. İş hakkında konuşmamak oluyor. Çünkü o zaman failuresin. Sen freelancer değilsin sen fakirsin. Sen işsizsin Çalışmıyorsun sen, arada kalmışsın. Çalışamıyor musun sen? Sorunların mı var? Başka bir şey insanlara o şeyi performe etmen gerekiyor. Bu en çok akrabalara oynadığım bir şey bu benim. Arkadaşlarım halimi hatırı bildiği için. Bayramlara artık iyi gidiyorum. Çevirmenim.

2. Ali: Valla hiçbir saygınlığın olmuyor bir kere ailede şurada burada. Ama onu nasıl aşıyorsun? Ben işte çeşitli yalanlar söylüyorum, şu işten bu kadar para alıyorum. Ya da onlar freelance olduğumu bilmiyor, ya da evlilik büyük bir saygınlık patlamasına yol açtı. Çünkü senden beklenmeyen bir şey. Ailemdeki en büyük korku onlara yük olacağım korkusuydu. Onu yapmadık. Onu yapmayınca oradan bir rahatlama oluyor. Bir de açıkçası bu hani basın yayın mesela, karşılığında para almasan da "aa oğlan gazeteye yazıyor." O bilmiyor ki ben oradan bir şey almıyorum. Ama diyorum ki şu kadar para alıyorum yazı başı. O zaman diyor ki "Bak görünür de bir iş yapıyor." Birazcık ama öbür türlü işleri yapsam öyle bir saygınlık olmuyordu. İşte hep baskı oluyor. Annem hep diyor bir memur olsaydın keşke diye.

3. Ali: İşte ben o ara şunu fark ettim: ben aslında dedim bu kadar küçük paralarla da geçiniyorsam, bunun anahtarı şeymiş tüketmemekmiş, onu fark ettim. Ben o gün bugündür tüketmeme üzerine şey yapıyorum (...) Tüketmeyince paraya ihtiyacın olmuyor, paraya ihtiyacın olmayınca zaman kalıyor. Mesela bazı işler oluyordu, çekim işleri yaptığım zaman, bir yerin çekimi. İki ay sürüyor. İki ay sonra bana bir para veriyor ki mesela ben onu aylık düştüğümde bin lira gibi bir para oluyor. Ben atıyorum bana bir yıl yeter bir işin parası. Bir yıl hiçbir şey yapmıyorum, okuyorum geziyorum falan. Benim kafa öyle yani.

4. Ege: İşyerinde emir alıyorsun, freelance çalıştığında işi çok daha iyi yönetebiliyorsun, sen hakim oluyorsun işe. "İşte şöyle bir websitesi istiyorum, orası böyle olsun şurası böyle olsun diyor. Ben işte burada böyle olursa şöyle sıkıntı olur, burada böyle sıkıntı olur. Hatta bunu yapmam, bunu yaparsam bana kızarsınız diyebiliyorum ama işyerindeyken böyle değil. Biraz önce verdiğim örnekteki gibi patron bir yerden sonra böyle alışın falan diyebiliyor. Veya işte senin işini beğenmedim çöpe atın" diyebiliyor.

5. Yakup: Prodüksiyon şirketinde çalıştığın zaman sizden bir fotoğraf bekliyorlar, standart fotoğraf. Bence sizden bir şey beklendiği zaman yaratıcılık, insan yaratıcılığı ölüyor. Yani tabii bu kadar da düz değil mevzu ama ne derler iş günlük rutine döndüğü zaman ister istemez bir sıradanlık oluyor. Bir yaratıcılık ölüyor, sizden bekleneni yapıyorsunuz, yaratıcılık ölüyor. Serbest çalışmanın şöyle bir avantajı var, hani hem bir kuruma, bir şirkete bir kişiye bağlı değilsiniz yaptığınız her işin, tamam sizden yine bir beklenti var ama bu beklenti değiştiği için sürekli işler değiştiği için, işlerin içeriği değiştiği için orada biraz daha insan yaratıcı olabiliyor.

6. Burak: Hafta sonu mutlaka çalışman gerekiyor, ya Pazar ya Cumartesi.

Halkla ilişkiler şirketi de öyleydi, o da zaten hiç yakanı bırakmıyor, sürekli ya bir şey yazman ya bir şey çevirmen gerekiyor. En son bir dellenip çıktım çalıştığım yerden. Ondan sonra gerçekten dönmek istemedim 9-6 çalışacağım bir yere, bir şirkete. Özellikle benim için yani saat altıda çıkamamak, patrondan izin almak o izin için yalvarmak benim için çok büyük sıkıntıydı. Özellikle o yüzden yani. Bir süre serbest çalışmayı deneyeyim diye düşündüm.

7. Tülin: işler doğru düzgün gelip seni çok rahat ettirmeyebiliyor ama atıyorum bir on günlük bir iş alıyorsun, çevirmensen veya her neysen proje bazlı çalışıyorsun ya. Sonra birkaç gün kendine izin verebiliyorsun, çok uzun ve yorucu bir şey olabiliyor. Orası güzel yani, birkaç gün ara veriyorsun sonra iş alıyorsun. (…) Sonuçta tam zamanlı çalıştığında zaten her şey belli yani, bütün saatlerin belli, gideceğin geleceğin, tatillerin belli. Zaten tatilin çok az, çok çok az, yıllık tatil dediğin şey, yıllık izin. O yani büyük bir etki. Veya işte atıyorum hastaneye gitmen gerekiyor, veya bir arkadaşının yardıma ihtiyacı var ona gitmen gerekiyor, işyerinden izin almak çok büyük bir sıkıntı o noktada freelance iyi. Ben şimdi mesela doktora gidiyorum iki ayda bir kontrolüm var, veya terapiye gidiyorum falan, hani bunlar gün içinde tam zamanlı çalışsam çok zorlanacağım, yapamayacağım şeyler. Öyle bir şey avantajı da var yani.

8. Burçin: Benim için öyle değil; frilens çalışmakla mesaili çalışmak arasında dağlar var. Benim için mesaili çalışmak psikolojik şiddet, büyük mutsuzluk. Beden, zihin ve ruh uyumu için kendi zamanımı yönetmem lazım. Sabah çok erken kalkarım ama öğleden sonra bir saatte bitiririm. Mesaili işte her şeyi onların istediği saatte yapmanız gerekiyor. Bense deadline'ı söyle gerisine karışma diyorum. Uyanmak istediğim saatte uyanmak bana iyi geliyor. Ben kendi kendime deadline da koyuyorum. İşverenin vermediği merhameti kendine gösterebiliyorsun.

9. Gamze: zaten bir ofiste çalıştığınızda da sekiz saatin sekizinde çalışmıyorsun ama sürekli bir yerde oturmak zorundasın. fiziksel olarak da şey yani tuhaf bir şey. hani şu an öyle bir şeyi olmuyor, çünkü çalışmadığım zaman burada böyle oturmak zorunda değilim. zaten ofiste çalışırken de çalıştığın üç saat dört saat aslına bakarsan. şimdi de üç saat dört saat çalışıyorum ama hani çalışmadığım zamanlarda çıkabiliyorum dışarı, gündüz açık havada bulunabiliyorum falan mesela… o açıdan hani o rutinler açısından başka şeyler yapmaya zamanım kalıyor, oturmaktan yorulmuş olmuyorum günün sonunda, ve hani bir yere gidip gelmek gibi bir şey de yorulmuş olmuyorum. ayakkabı içinde günümü geçirmiyorum. bunlar insanın enerjisini alan şeyler

10. Burak: Bu PR ajansına girdim. PR ajansındaki en büyük problem insanlardı. Orada da benim çalıştığım odada bizim departmanın müdürü vardı, iki tane çalışma arkadaşım vardı. Departman müdürümüz homofobiğim işte ne var modundaydı. Sevmiyorum evlerinde yapsınlar falan. Hani böyle tuhaf bir insandı gerçekten. (…) Sonra bir arkadaşım bodrumluydu. Bütün gün yok Bodrum'da ne kadar çok Suriyeli var. Yani baya çocuk yemeyip içmeyip… onun böyle yani şey tam bir milliyetçi Kemalist bir tipti o da ve tabi ki cinsiyetçi.. O bir paket zaten. O ikisi de katlanamıyordum. Diğer iş arkadaşım da işinde o kadar kötüydü ki, o yine daha muhabbet edilebilir bir insandı ama işi çok kötü yapıyordu ve sürekli… yani hobine maruz kalıyordu gözümüzün önünde. Çünkü işe girmiş çok kısa süre içinde hamile kalmış işten çıkaramıyorlardı. Çünkü hani çıkarırlarsa sanırım cezası baya büyükmüş,

işten çıkaramamışlar kendi… Kendi çıksın siye kendisine korkunç davranıyordu o da artık stresinden iyice kötü çalışmaya başlamıştı

11. Kemal: evde yapayım gibi bir şey değil. ev dışı olsun hatta tercih ediyorum aslında. çünkü ev de bir süre sonra bunaltıcı oluyor. beş gün çalışayım ama akşam ve hafta sonu oturayım tezimi yazayım ya da 4 gün çalışayım bunu yapayım böyle bir çalışma. burada şeyi demeye çalışıyorum, esnek denilen çalışma aslında esnek değil. yeterince esnek değil aslında, düzenlemesini biz kafamıza göre yapamıyoruz. adının esnek olması çok komik çünkü hiç de esnek değil. sana de adline veriyor, nereye esnek. (…)k: bu bir özgürlükse bunu parasız kalma özgürlüğü olarak adlandırabiliriz.

12. Meliha: Evet ama mesela işte yine aynı şeyi yaratıyor. Seni bir 4 duvar arasına hapsediyor. Zaten ofis ve freelance denilen şey. İkisinin arasında ayrım var laptoplarımız var artık şey yapabiliriz, dışarı çıkabiliriz. Bir mekana da bağlı olmak zorunda değiliz. (…) Zaten mevzu o senin mesela dört duvar arasına hapsetmeleri. Evdesin ama bence sıkıntı bu. sürekli bir dört duvar arasına hapsedilme ve atıyorum şey yapılma ve kontrol altında tutulma.

13. Burak: Başladığımda aslında çok fazla şeyle uğraşmıyordum aslında ama 2012'den itibaren tekrar politik aktivizmle uğraşmaya başladım biraz. O dönemde çok iyi oldu, yani bir eyleme gidiyorsun, bir greve gidiyorsun günün ortasında kalkıp. Başka bir insan bunu yapamaz tabi. Biraz esnetip saatlerini politik aktivizmle uğraşabiliyorsun. O açıdan ben memnunum yani, o büyük bir avantaj yani. Bana gayet iyi geliyor yani.

14. Burak: Ya ben çok memnunum frilens çalışmaktan. Ama herkese göre mi bilemiyorum. Yani ben çevirmenim sonuçta. Frilens çevirmenlik başka frilens deneyimlerden muhtemelen biraz farklı çünkü çevirmenliğin yapısı gereği zaten çok yalnızlaştırıcı bir iş. Herkesin kaldırabileceği bir şey değil. Ama ben bunla gayet barışığım aslında. (…) Ama bazen gerçekten şey hissettiğin oluyor yani, çok kendini izole ettiğin, bütün gün kimseyi görmeden, şu kafede üç saat çalışıyorsun bu kafede dört saat veya evde. Hiç kimseyi görmeden eve gittiğim oluyor yani. Onun da yalnızlaştırıcı bir yanı var, özellikle çevirmenlik.

15. Meliha: o frilens çok lanet ettim ve çok sinirimi bozan o dönem ama bir yandan da o dönem çok hayalini kurduğum sinema yüksek lisans yapabilmemi sağladı falan. Tabi az önce bahsettiğim avantaj da vardı erkek arkadaşım evin büyük maddi olarak sorumluluğunu o aldığı için.

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