
PART 3

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RISKS AND UNCERTAINTIES

CHAPTER 3.1.

COVID-19 INDUCED UNCERTAINTY AND LABOR MARKETS: RISKS AND INSIGHTS DURING THE EARLY STAGES OF THE PANDEMIC IN TURKEY

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Abstract

The global spread of COVID-19, presenting both economic and social shocks that cause severe impacts on labor markets, has led to a crisis worldwide. These impacts differ among countries depending on the structural features of their labor markets and the scope of the measures taken. Based on the preliminary literature on COVID-19, we assess that the negative consequences of the current crisis are particularly harsh for disadvantaged and vulnerable labor groups, informal workers, low-income occupations and the youth. And hence, we claim that the unequal character of the risks posed by the pandemic is mainly due to inequalities associated with the segmented structure of the labor markets and also sharpens its long-existing negative features. We discuss that the major risks of the Turkish labor market are the high level of informal workers, the disadvantaged position of young people and the domination of the service sector. These structural characteristics of the Turkish labor market are likely to deepen the pandemic induced crisis in the long run.

Keywords: COVID-19, Turkish Labor Market, Labor Market Segmentation, COVID-19 Induced Uncertainty, Labor Market Inequalities.

1. Introduction

The new coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which has infected more than 11 million people and caused the death of more than 5 hundred thousand since its emergence in December 2019, has led to a crisis that requires an urgent intervention worldwide. Besides the public health crisis, the socio-economic effects of the pandemic also threaten societies all over the world, revealing the need for a multi-dimensional struggle against the pandemic and its consequences.

The primary agenda following public health is the economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic and measures taken to prevent it (Baker, Bloom, Davis, & Terry, 2020). With an optimistic forecast, even if a second wave will not occur, the economic destruction caused by the pandemic is expected to reach dramatic dimensions and it is stated by many institutions and scientists that the world economy is under serious risks that require a series of urgent measures (Baldwin & Weder di Mauro, 2020).

The COVID-19 induced economic crisis, triggered by both supply and demand shocks, has brought the world to an unprecedented challenge (Rio-Chanona, Mealy, Pichler, Lafond, & Farmer, 2020, p. 67). The primary impact of the COVID-19 crisis is the rapid drop in labor supply. Due to the measures taken in order to slow the spread of the disease, a large part of the workforce withdrew from the labor market. Many companies in various sectors stopped their activities following lockdowns, travel prohibitions, border closures and quarantine measures. In addition to the serious drop in labor supply, demand shocks have also increased the risks posed by the crisis on the labor market. Social restrictions have led to a significant contraction in the service sector, especially in areas such as food and beverage, tourism, accommodation, and retail.

The restrictions on social mobility, income losses and future uncertainties have also triggered a serious drop in the consumption of goods and services. Since the labor market is a derivative one, economic fluctuations affect the demand for labor. Therefore, millions of people have already faced layoffs and income losses, meaning additional millions are at risk.

According to the April report of the ILO, the COVID-19 pandemic will result in a significant contraction in employment and a decline in labor markets in terms of wages and access to social protection. It is predicted that more than 25 million people will lose their jobs globally. The increasingly stricter restraint measures taken to slow down the spread of COVID-19 also affect 2.7 billion employees, currently representing about 81% of the world's workforce (ILO, 2020a, pp. 1, 4). There is no doubt that the extents of this effect will differ

among countries depending on the structural features of the countries and the scope of the measures taken. For this reason, each country needs to take long-term measures, according to the structure of their labor markets.

2. COVID-19 Induced Economic Uncertainty and Turkey

The most challenging aspect of the current crisis is the high uncertainty, which is likely to cause deep and probably long-term economic, sociological and psychological impacts. Since it is not clear when and how the pandemic will be totally controlled, predictions are made under various scenarios to mitigate its socio-economic effects.

In an optimistic scenario, the OECD expects a 6% contraction in the world economy for 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The projection for a scenario of a second wave is that the contraction will reach 7.6% (OECD, 2020a). Therefore, the OECD calls on governments for urgent interventions with rapid and coordinated policies against its economic effects (OECD, 2020b, p. 1). The IMF also projects a sharp contraction (3%) in the global economy as of 2020. According to a forecast for 2021, the growth rate might increase to 5.8 % if the pandemic ends in the second half of 2020 and the economy normalizes with policy support (IMF, 2020, pp. 1, 8).

The literature on the economic uncertainty indicates that, such bad times in the economy triggers high uncertainty (Bachmann, Elstner, & Sims, 2010, p. 28) and in addition to its consequences on output and productivity, uncertainty shocks typically result in a rapid drop in employment (Bloom, 2009, p. 624). Firms halt new investment decisions and freeze recruitments while individuals postpone their consumption plans. In other words, both macro and micro uncertainty rise during such bad times in the economy (Bloom, 2014) and this deepens the effects of the crisis.

Researches reveal that the rapid spread of COVID-19 has led to a severe increase in overall uncertainty (Bloom, Bunn, Chen, Mizen, & Smietanka, 2020). The level of uncertainty shock created by COVID-19 is already beyond the financial crisis of 2008-2009 and is more similar to the Great Depression of 1929. The current crisis, on the other hand, is unique in many ways. Even though it is possible to compare its demographic impacts with the Spanish Flu of 19th century, the latter had completely different social, political and economic context (Baker et al., 2020, p. 7). Therefore, it is believed that contemporary societies are facing a crisis that they have never encountered before.

On the other hand, labor markets all over the world, were already in a process of change and transformation even before the pandemic. Starting from the 1980s, world societies were

experiencing a process in which uncertainty and precariousness prevailed, as Ulrich Beck puts it, evolving into risk societies (Beck, 2014). Notions of uncertainty and insecurity characterizing risk societies are closely related to the transformation of working life. Risk societies are societies where uncertainty is widespread and full employment disappears in labor markets (Strangleman, 2007, p. 84). The proliferation of temporary, insecure and flexible working models bring along an uncertain and risky appearance of working life (Standing, 2011). Also, the rapid increase in technological developments has made the future of working life the most important agenda especially in the past two decades. It was one of the most highlighted topics of discussion that technological developments such as artificial intelligence and robotics would eliminate many of the professions and therefore labor markets would need to be restructured considering the requirements of the future of work. We argue that the current crisis has accelerated all this transformation and has made the effects of the negative course deeper and visible. Besides, it is known that the global economic uncertainty rates have been increasing rapidly since 2012 (Ahir, Bloom, & Furceri, 2019, p. 7). The current COVID-19 induced uncertainty has sharpened this ongoing process.

Currently, the extent to which COVID-19's effects on the labor markets remain uncertain, and uncertainty further deepens the risks and inequalities existing in the labor market. According to the OECD Economic Outlook Report released in June 2020, Turkey's economy is expected to contract by 4.8% in 2020 due to employment losses, income shortfalls and a rapid fall in external demand caused by the pandemic. In case of a second wave in the outbreak, this contraction is predicted to be by 8.1% (OECD, 2020a, p. 319). Moreover, the structural characteristics of the Turkish labor markets are likely to extend the crisis. Therefore, our analysis starts with the outline of the pre-pandemic structure of the Turkish labor markets below.

2.1. Basic Features of the Pre-pandemic Labor Market in Turkey

More than being unprecedented and unexpected, COVID-19 related risks appear to deepen the long-existing structural weaknesses of labor markets in Turkey.

Before the pandemic, the population of 15 years old and over was 62,015 thousand and the labor force was 31,629 thousand. The employment rate was 44% with a 0.5-point decrease in January 2020 compared to the same period of the previous year. While the number of agricultural and construction employment decreased, employment in industry and service sectors increased by 366 thousand people. According to the distribution of employment by sector; 58% was employed in service, 20% in industry, 17% in agriculture and 5% in construction. The data depicts that the service sector has a dominant position in employment.

Table 1. Main Labor Force Indicators, 15 + age, (Thousand) January 2019, January 2020			
	2019	2020	Difference
Population	61,017	62,015	998
Labor Force	31,825	31,629	-196
Employment	27,157	27,266	109
Agriculture	4,618	4,376	-242
Industry	5,392	5,649	257
Construction	1,478	1,410	-68
Service	15,670	15,831	161
Unemployment	4,668	4,362	-306
Not in the Labor Force	29,192	30,386	1,194
Labor Force Participation Rate	52.2	51.0	-1.2
Employment Rate	44.5	44.0	-0.5
Unemployment Rate	14.7	13.8	-0.9
<i>(TURKSTAT, 2020a)</i>			

The unemployment rate was 13.8% with a 0.9 percent decrease. While interpreting unemployment, it is necessary to consider the labor force participation rate and the reasons why people do not participate in the labor force. The most striking group among those who don't participate in the labor force are the ones who aren't seeking a job (during the data collection period) but available to start working, and the number of these people was 2,786 thousands. The vast majority of them were discouraged workers who had given up looking for a job after a long period of unemployment. The data on the duration of unemployment shows that, there are 1,126 thousand people who are unemployed for one year or more and some of them can be considered as the discouraged workers of the near future. Indeed, the number of discouraged workers has increased by 53.1% compared to the same period of the previous year.

Based on the data announced in February 2020, the employment rate has decreased (43.1%), together with the unemployment rate (13.6%). This remarkable result arises from the decrease in the labor force participation especially due to the increase in the number of those who aren't seeking a job but are available to start working. Discouraged workers have also increased by 78.3% compared to the same period of the previous year (TURKSTAT, 2020b).

				Compared with the Same Period of the Previous Year	
		Number	%	Difference (Thousand)	Change (%)
Employment	Employment Status	27,266	100	109	0.4
	Regular or casual employee	19,058	69.9	352	1.9
	Employer	1,253	4.6	50	4.2
	Self employed	4,596	16.9	-92	-2.0
	Unpaid family worker	2,360	8.7	-201	-7.8
Unemployment	Duration of unemployment	4,362	100	-306	-6.6
	1-2 months	1,398	32.0	-374	-21.1
	3-5 months	1,134	26.0	-111	-8.9
	6-8 months	554	12.7	-41	-6.9
	9-11 months	150	3.4	-2	-1.3
	1 year and more	1,126	25.8	221	24.4
	Status before seeking a job	4,362	100	-306	-6.6
	Job was temporarily	1,783	40.9	-110	-5.8
	Dismissed	563	12.9	-27	-4.6
	Quit the job by own initiative	687	15.7	5	0.7
	Liquidated/Bankrupted	212	4.9	-27	-11.3
	Was working as an unpaid family worker	19	0.4	5	35.7
	Retired	109	2.5	-14	-11.4
	Was in education or training	459	10.5	-56	-10.9
	Just completed his military service	86	2.0	-7	-7.5
	Busy with household chores	364	8.3	-79	-17.8
	Other	80	1.8	4	5.3
	Previous activity	4,362	100	-306	-6.6
	Agriculture	291	6.7	-25	-7.9
	Industry	734	16.8	-47	-6.0
	Construction	657	15.1	-144	-18.0
	Services	2,253	51.7	-35	-1.5
	Those who quit job before the last 8 years	186	4.3	-5	-2.6
	First time job seekers	242	5.5	-48	-16.6
	The reason for not in the labor force	30,386	100	1,194	4.1
	Not seeking a job but available to start	2,786	9.2	475	20.6
	Discouraged	946	3.1	328	53.1
	Other	1,840	6.1	147	8.7
	Seasonal worker	129	0.4	-34	-20.9
	Household chores	11,438	37.6	126	1.1
Education/Training	4,644	15.3	34	0.7	
Retired	5,075	16.7	193	4.0	
Disabled, old or ill	4,138	13.6	156	3.9	
Other	2,177	7.2	245	12.7	

(TURKSTAT, 2020a)

When the previous activity of the unemployed people was examined, it was seen that 40.9% of them worked in temporary jobs, which shows that about 2 million people had been employed in temporary jobs and 51.7% of them worked in the service sector. Also, 186 thousand of them quit their job before the last eight years and 242 thousands were first time job seekers whose employability was very low.

Informal employment is one of the most important structural problems of Turkish labor markets. In February 2020, the rate of informal workers decreased 3.5 points compared to the same period of the previous year and reached 30% which means that more than 8 million people were working undeclared and unregistered to social security institutions and therefore not covered by the social security protection (TURKSTAT, 2020b). The highest rate of informal employment (2019 yearly) is seen in the agriculture sector, where 86.6% of all work is unregistered. Although informal employment is an exceptional situation for labor markets, it has almost become the basic feature of employment in this sector. In some fields of the service sector, unregistered employment is above 25% and in the construction sector, it is 37.7%. Within the groups of the professions, the highest informal employment rate is in the agriculture, forestry and aquaculture with 84.7%, followed by the jobs that do not require qualification with 49.7%, services and sales with 33.4%, and artisans and related jobs at 33.3%. The informal employment rate is lower for professionals (5.7%) and those working in office services (6.8%) (TURKSTAT, 2020c).

Investment plans of employers are an important determinant of labor demand in an economy. According to İŞKUR's (Türkiye İş Kurumu-Turkish Employment Agency) 2019 Labor Market survey, only 9.9% of the enterprises plan to invest in the next year. This rate rises to 17% in enterprises with twenty or more employees. The vast majority of the enterprises (90%) didn't plan new investments for 2020. The information and communication sector has the highest rate (19.7%) in all sectors and it is followed by mining and quarrying with 15.9%, and manufacturing with 15.7%. The lowest rates are seen in businesses operating in transportation and storage (4.9%), professional, scientific and technical activities (6.3%), and finance and insurance (6.8%) (İŞKUR, 2019, p.27). The employment predictions of the enterprises surveyed predominantly indicate that employment will remain stable (39.8%), only 14.5% of the enterprises expect an increase in employment in the next year, while 2.9% expect a decrease and 42% declared that they have no idea. (İŞKUR, 2019, p.110).

The pre-pandemic structure of the labor markets in Turkey seems to have many ongoing problems and contain existing and potential risks. With the spread of the outbreak, these risks are thought to bring greater burdens on employment and lead to more severe problems.

2.2. Measures Taken to Slow the Spread of COVID-19 in Turkey

The first COVID-19 case was announced on the 10th of March in Turkey. Spreading rapidly the outbreak reached its peak at the end of April in terms of contagion rate. Even though Turkey has a health care system with a comparatively low average number of doctors and hospital beds per capita, it was well prepared for the pandemic due to its strong intensive care infrastructure (OECD, 2020a, p. 320) and being a country in which the pandemic emerged relatively late allowed the authorities to take the necessary measures in time.

The first measure taken as of March was to suspend education at all levels across the country to slow the spread of the outbreak. Online education started for primary and secondary classes on National TV and the Internet on 23 March. Universities shifted to fully on-line education via their distance education centers and Higher Education Council's courses platform. The International Basketball Federation (FIBA) decided to stop all affiliated organizations. Football leagues were interrupted with all sports events. International and domestic air transportation was gradually limited and completely stopped on the 28th of March. City entrances and exits were closed in the metropolitan cities and Zonguldak province, so transportation in the country has been limited. In urban public transportation, the sparse seating arrangement was applied. In some cities, wearing masks has been made compulsory in public places. Culture and art events were stopped, hearings were postponed in all courthouses, except for compulsory procedures requiring detention, libraries and museums affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism were closed. With the circular issued by the Ministry of Interior, it was announced that theatres, cinemas, show centers, concert halls, cafes, night clubs, bars, coffee shops, cafeterias, internet cafes, all kinds of game halls, all kinds of indoor playgrounds, amusement parks, swimming pools, Turkish baths, saunas, SPAs and sports centers would be closed temporarily. All restaurants, patisseries and similar workplaces were restricted to serving only takeaway food. Barbers, hairdressers and beauty centers' activities were temporarily stopped. In April, a curfew was imposed for under-20s and over-65s, with certain exceptions. On weekends and national and religious holidays, the curfew was brought across the country. (DTR-İHK, 2020). Even though business activities had been suspended in many areas, the quarantine was not applied across the country. Since workplace closures and curfews were implemented at the level of special age groups, towns and neighborhoods, the sectors closed by administrative decision remained limited in international comparison. In other words, only 40% of the population was formally locked down (OECD, 2020a, p. 320).

2.3. Measures against the Socio-economic Impacts of the Pandemic in Turkey

Most countries have rapidly taken socio-economic measures to alleviate the negative effects of the pandemic on their economies and to speed up the economic recovery once the control measures are lifted. Developed countries provided direct liquidity support to companies and individuals who suffered from income losses, particularly for the sectors, which were hit by demand declines, such as the tourism and retail sectors and for the small and medium-sized enterprises because of their vulnerable positions in the economy (Bircan, Koczan, & Plekhanov, 2020).

Since Turkey was among the countries with the highest prevalence rates, the COVID-19 induced socio-economic crisis has spread rapidly as it has all over the world. This crisis is expected to have permanent sociological, psychological and economic impacts in the medium and long term. A wide range of support measures has been undertaken by the government. Primarily, measures against the economic destruction and its reflection on the labor markets, which is expected to affect all other factors directly or indirectly have started to be implemented. In this context, support mechanisms such as short-time work allowance, unpaid leave allowance and unemployment insurance have been put in place to prevent job and income losses. Also, dismissals were prohibited for 3 months (Resmi Gazete, 2020a).

Direct income support has not been provided to businesses. However, through increased state loan guarantees, mainly through public and private banks, as well as tax and credit deferrals and supplementary loans which are encouraged by lending and prudential regulations business were supported in order to avoid widespread bankruptcies. A low-interest credit mechanism was also run at the individual and household level by public banks particularly to self-employed workers and needy households. The Central Bank supports the lending capacity of the financial system through expanded liquidity windows, additional asset discounts for banks and an expanded export credit facility. In addition to loans and credits, 5.3 million households got income support of 1,000 TL as emergency aid (OECD, 2020a, pp. 321-322).

2.4. Practices Encountered in Work Life

Various practices were implemented in the labor markets within the scope of measures taken against the spread of the pandemic. The rates of job losses and income losses were also closely related to whether the jobs are suitable for distance working or not. In order to determine the framework of policies and measures to be developed for the labor markets, researches have been conducted to determine the extent of employment and type of

occupations that distance work is possible. Data from various countries indicates that 22 million people constituting 49% of the total workforce in Germany, 75 million people constituting 47% of the workforce in the USA and 11 million jobs that makeup 41% of the workforce in South Korea continue to work from home as of March 2020 (Statista, 2020, p. 10). Dingel and Neiman's study reveals the significant variation in distance working percentage across countries that lower-income economies have a lower share of jobs that can be performed at home. According to the classification of occupations, rather if it's feasible to work from home or not based on the "work context" and "generalized work activities" survey results, 41% of U.S. jobs can be done at home, while this share exceeds 40% in Sweden and the United Kingdom, whereas it is lower than 25% in Turkey. This difference between countries is closely related to the sectoral distribution of employment. The industries with the highest share of distance work are educational services, professional, scientific, and technical services, management of companies and enterprises, finance and insurance, and information, whereas the industries with the lowest share are transportation and warehousing, construction, the retail trade, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, accommodation and food services. In terms of occupation groups, computer and mathematical occupations, education, training, and library, legal, business and financial operations, management, arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media, office and administrative support, architecture and engineering occupations are more likely to be conducted at home (Dingel & Neiman, 2020, pp. 4, 5)

The share of distance work practices varies significantly not only between countries, industries and professions but also according to factors such as education level, gender, income and salary level, type of employment, seniority and age as well as occupational specific factors and characteristics (Adams-Prassl, Boneva, Golin, & Rauh, 2020a; Saltiel, 2020; Zhang, Wang, Rauch, & Wei, 2020). According to Kerr & Thornton's estimation on the South African labor market, only 13.8% of the employed could work from home and this share mostly consists of skilled workers (65% of senior managers and 56% of professionals could work from home) since the nature of their job tasks is adequate to be conducted from home. On the other hand, since low skilled occupations mostly require tasks to be done at the workplace, no workers in low skilled occupations could work from home (Kerr & Thornton, 2020, p. 2). There are several studies indicating that distance work ability is strongly associated with the workers' educational attainment, household wealth, gender, age and income level and vulnerable groups are more likely to suffer the negative consequences of the virus as their jobs cannot be done from home (Adams-Prassl, Boneva, Golin, & Rauh, 2020b, p. 2; Saltiel, 2020, p. 116).

During the pandemic, officially closed sectors were quite limited in Turkey. Even though it was suggested by the government to work from home as much as possible, practices relating to the execution of the job were left to the preference of the employers. While daily activities in some businesses continued as it was before, flexible work and distance working practices were preferred in others. In businesses that were closed down or suspended, practices such as paid or unpaid leave, annual leave, short-work and in a limited extent of layoffs are observed. Although there are some studies on the prevalence of these practices, it should be noted that these studies have limitations in terms of scope and method. Therefore, it is very difficult to make definitive determinations and comments for the moment.

Apart from the mandatory workplace closures, some of the businesses that continue their activities have started to work from home depending on the structure and requirements of the jobs and technological facilities of the enterprises. In a study conducted with 102 managers from different sectors,¹ it has been determined that 96% of the enterprises completely (48%) or partially (47%) started to work from home and 20% of these firms had been using the method of working from home on certain days for more than a year before the pandemic while 71% have applied this method for the first time. Field and operation employees are excluded in the enterprises where partial distance work is performed. In addition, more than half of the enterprises that participated in the research are large enterprises, which facilitates the transition to distance work, especially in terms of providing technological infrastructure (Gürdil & Kavak, 2020, p. 8). In another study² conducted in Turkey, 40% of the participants completely and 29% partially started to work from home. On the other hand, 26% of those who do not adopt distance work send their employees on compulsory paid leave and 23% on unpaid leave. Furthermore, those who didn't start working from home and continued to work in the workplace stated that they went to the workplace alternately on certain days. There is also a difference between global and local enterprises. While 63% of the global enterprises completely and 22% partially adopted distance work, 36% of the local enterprises began completely and 30% began partially working from home (egirişim, 2020). It was stated that distance work depends on the infrastructure and digital facilities of the businesses as well as the requirements of the jobs. In a nation-wide survey³ conducted on a large scale, 51% of the participants declared that their

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- 1 Enterprises within the scope of the research were operating in various sectors, such as 22% in finance, 11% in manufacturing, 8% in service. The number of workers employed in the enterprises were: 20% between 0-50, 29% between 51-500, 51% 500 and above.
 - 2 The study, conducted with 800 interviewees (67% male / 33% female) between 26th of March and 9th of April, 57% of the participants were working in the private sector, 18% in public and 13% was self-employed.
 - 3 The research was carried out between March 23-27 with 780 companies in various sectors. 36% of the companies were micro, 33% were small, 20% were medium and 11% were large companies.

company's infrastructure and digital facilities aren't suitable for working from home, while 39% declared that they are sufficient. There are also differences observed in the transition to distance work, depending on the regions and the size of the businesses. While 52% of the firms in Istanbul state that, they have adequate facilities, this rate descends to 45% in East Marmara, 40% in the Aegean and 16% in Southeast Anatolia. The ratio of enterprises with adequate infrastructure and digital facilities is 70% in big size enterprises employing 250 or more workers and 32% in small enterprises (Hedefler için İş Dünyası Platformu, 2020). Distance work has been highly discussed during the pandemic, but as can be seen from the results, the size and the digital infrastructure of the enterprises are important factors for transition to distance work. It should be taken into account that these researches are mostly concentrated in certain sectors and regions where distance work is more applicable. As a matter of fact, 54% of the employment in Turkey was in micro (1-9 workers) and small (10-49 workers) enterprises before the pandemics, while only 27.8% was in large (250 and over workers) enterprises (TURKSTAT, 2020c). Therefore, considering the overall labor markets, the practice of distance work can't be so prevalent as mentioned in the studies above.

Starting from April 17, dismissals were banned for 3 months (Resmi Gazete, 2020a), but layoffs were encountered to a limited extent before the regulation and this regulation was not considered for workers in the informal sector. Also, according to the data announced by İŞKUR, it's seen that 220,656 people in March and 308,968 people in April applied for unemployment pay (İŞKUR, 2020a).

Annual leave (paid or unpaid) seems to be the most prevalent practice in the areas where economic activity was suspended or decreased significantly. In fact, compared with dismissal, unpaid leave has a similar outcome for the worker in terms of income, except suspending the labor contract and preventing unemployment. Another measure taken to prevent unemployment throughout the pandemic was short-time work. By the end of April, 268,717 firms and 3,044,420 employees had applied for short-time pay. The manufacturing industry was the first sector with 40%, the second one was wholesale and retail trade (15%), the third one was accommodation and food sector activities (12%) and the fourth one was education with 6% of all applications. Also, the distribution of the applications varied according to the size of the enterprise. Of all applications, 51.3% were made by the micro enterprises employing 3 or less worker, 28.3% by enterprises with 4-9 employees, 10.8% by enterprises with 10-19 employees and 6.4% by enterprises with 20-49 employees. In total, 97.3% of the short-time pay applications were made by micro or small firms (İŞKUR, 2020b). This data on short-time pay also provides an indication of which businesses are at risk.

3. Turkish Labor Market: Risks and Insights

In order to determine the impacts of the pandemic on labor markets and to develop appropriate policy recommendations, researches on labor markets have been carried out in many countries. These studies mainly focus on the prevalence and sectoral distribution of COVID-19 induced job and income losses and identification of the groups that were most adversely affected in this period. According to these studies, the pandemic is expected to lead to an unemployment increase that exceeds the Great Depression in terms of its effects on employment volume. In the USA, for instance, it is estimated that 20 million workers have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 outbreak (Coibion, Gorodnichenko, & Weber, 2020). It is understood from the researches that job and income losses are commonly observed in the retail, entertainment, tourism and accommodation sectors that mainly consist of small businesses in which self-employed, temporary and unregistered employment models are widespread (Bircan et al., 2020). In particular, it is stated that small businesses bear the burden of the COVID-19 crisis (Bartik et al., 2020, pp. 2-3) that the majority of the small businesses are at risk due to quarantine measures and loss of demand and income, and accordingly, most of them have laid off their employees or anticipate doing so (Small Business Investor Alliance, 2020, p. 2). Therefore, it is thought that the negative economic consequences of the pandemic and its chain effects are particularly harsh for informal workers, younger workers, women and other disadvantaged groups, low-income households, self employed and precarious workers, those with unstable employment relationships and lower labor income (Adams-Prassl et al., 2020b, p. 2; Yeyati & Sartorio, 2020). Also, researches reveal that the effects of the pandemic on labor markets vary from country to country within the framework of country-specific structural differences (Koczan & Plekhanov, 2020) and draw attention to the risk of further deepening inequalities in countries where problems such as poverty, unemployment and insecurity are already intense (Adams-Prassl, et al, 2020a; Adams-Prassl et al., 2020b). Therefore, the risks on the Turkish labor market should be evaluated considering its specific conditions and structural characteristics.

In Turkey, the unemployment rate was 13.7% as of 2019. The OECD projects that this figure will increase to 15.6% in 2020 and 14.2% in 2021 if the outbreak does not recur. If the outbreak erupts in a second wave, it will reach 16.8% in 2020 and 16.1% in 2021 (OECD, 2020a, pp. 320-321). The most recent unemployment rate was declared in April 2020 at 12.8%, but this ratio should be evaluated from a broader perspective, because of the decrease in the employment rate; (There is a 4.9 point decrease compared to the same period of the

previous year) (TURKSTAT, 2020d). The main reason for the decline in unemployment together with the employment rate is the decrease in labor force participation, which is an ongoing problem of the Turkish labor market. During March and April, social and economic life was suspended because of the pandemic and people were afraid even to leave their houses, they were shocked by the uncertainty. Besides, many businesses were closed or suspended their activities; the employment opportunities were also limited. In such circumstances, it is quite natural that people don't make any attempt to seek a job, which pushes them out of the labor force according to the statistics. Analyzing the reasons for not participating in the labor force becomes more important, in such a case. The number of people out of the labor force who aren't seeking for a job, but available to start working was 3,207 thousand in February, which increased to 3,728 thousand in March and 4,460 in April (TURKSTAT, 2020e; TURKSTAT, 2020d). More than 1,200 thousand people have been pushed out of the labor market. Most of these people should be counted in unemployment figures. Also, since dismissals are officially banned starting from the April 17, job losses have been postponed for registered employees, but the risk remains. High levels of job losses are expected in the near future, especially in the sectors for which demand drops are harsh due to the outbreak.

The actual working hours data also reveal a decrease in working hours and a significant increase in the number of people who are employed but not at work by sector, occupation and employment groups. As in the statistics declared by TURKSTAT, 5,157 thousand people weren't at work in April 2020, compared with the same period of the previous year (633 thousand), which is a remarkable increase thought to be caused by the outbreak. With a slight increase through February (963 thousand), March (2,258 thousand) and April (3,362 thousand), the highest numbers were observed in the service sector. Compared to the figures in previous years, there was no particular difference in the agriculture sector, while there was a huge difference between April 2019 (77 thousand) and April 2020 (1,293 thousand) in the industry sector. An increase in the construction sector is also observed, although not very high (175 thousand). According to occupational groups, the vast majority of those who are not at work are service and sales workers (1,053 thousand), professionals (893 thousand), craft and related trade workers (642 thousand) and workers in jobs that don't require qualification (625 thousand) (TURKSTAT, 2020c).

In Turkey, the labor market risks have emerged as health risk and income/unemployment risk as in many other parts of the world.

Risks by Occupational Health and Safety

Occupational health and safety risks have become related primarily to the risk of contamination by the virus during the pandemic. Since the contamination risk is associated not only with the requirement of physical interaction but also with the potential of whether the job is feasible to be conducted from home, health risks differ between occupations and sectors -reflecting inequalities. According to a research conducted in this framework, managers and professionals have the lowest health risk in all occupation groups as well as agricultural workers with the lowest physical interaction required in the workplace. In terms of sectoral classification, it is understood that private households have the lowest score of physical interaction followed by the finance sector risk since it requires a lower level of physical interaction and has the highest share of workers who could work from home. By contrast, the health sector has the highest score for health risk because it requires the highest physical interaction and the lowest potential to be conducted from home. Food trade and the hotel and restaurant sectors also have a high rank of physical interaction (Bhorat, Thornton, Köhler, & Oosthuizen, 2020).

During the pandemic, especially the blue-collar, precarious workers and workers in the gig economy have been forced to make a choice between disease and loss of income all over the world. Although this dilemma is not felt much in European countries, it has turned into a crisis in the United States. While Instacart gig workers refused to accept orders from the delivery app, Amazon warehouse workers in some cities quit jobs and Whole Foods workers staged a sick-out demanding double pay and free virus testing. Trade unions all over the country are discussing a massive, nationwide strike (Gordon, Gurley, Ongweso & Pearson, 2020).

At the beginning of the outbreak, activities in some sectors were stopped and some enterprises started to work from home in Turkey. On the other hand, as the “voluntary quarantine” policy was adopted, while some people had the opportunity to isolate, many people continued to work during this period. Businesses that are not suitable for distance working due to the nature of the work, in manufacturing and enterprises providing direct service (markets, pharmacies, bakeries, municipal services, cargo, etc.) and those working in the health sector continued to work outside while some of the population was safe inside.

The first visible inequality appeared between white-collar and blue-collar workers, which came up especially from the nature of the work they were doing. Because the jobs of white-collar workers are more suitable for distance working, they could easily continue working from home while blue-collar workers were still in their workplaces, facing the risk of contamination. Moreover, this binary practice is sometimes observed even in the same workplace.

In a research conducted by DİSK among its members (130 thousand), it has been determined that production was interrupted or stopped in 56 workplaces where 13,754 DİSK member workers were employed. In other enterprises where the production continued (about 90% of the workers), as of April, 27,628 members were under quarantine, 535 member's COVID-19 tests were positive, 73 people recovered, while 4 people died (DİSK, 2020, p.6).

Businesses with the highest positive cases are metal (32 out of 123 unionized workplaces), general affairs (35 out of 375 unionized workplaces), food, defense and security, textile, ready-made clothing and leather (DİSK, 2020, p.6-7). Also, markets, grocery stores, bakeries, pharmacies that continue their activities despite the arrangement of working hours, municipal services (especially cleaning staff) and cargo workers whose workloads have increased significantly during the isolation period, face the risk of contamination.

Member unions reported that an increase in positive cases has been observed, since printing house employees are working without protective equipment and physical distancing rules are not observed, no occupational health and safety measures are taken in the mines, the measures taken in the construction sector are inadequate and in the food industry, masks and gloves distributed to overtime workers are inadequate, and physical distance measures aren't taken in either the protection area or the dining halls (DİSK, 2020, p.15-16).

As a matter of fact, while in some enterprises occupational health and safety rules are provided by making necessary arrangements, in most of them, none or half measures are taken. In case of insufficiency in occupational health and safety measures or detecting positive cases in the workplace, workers have the right to refrain from working due to Article 13 of Law No. 6331. Although such practices are rare but observed in unionized sectors, it's presumed that the fear of losing their job prevents workers from using these rights.

Risks by Employment and Income

The high uncertainty, which has arisen from the pandemic and the measures taken against the spread of it, create different risks in terms of employment groups (employees, employers and self-employed), as well as reveal some inequalities within these groups. During the pandemic, disease prevention mainly depends on the ability of being isolated, and isolation depends primarily on the financial means of individuals. Therefore, the inequality between the employee and employer, which is the basic inequality of the employment relations, becomes more evident during this period. The first risk posed by inequality is virus contamination, and the second is the loss of income. In both ways, workers are at a higher risk than employers.

On the other hand, there are also various inequalities among the groups of the employees who most commonly have no other income than the wage to make a living and have a high level of indebtedness. Arising from the segmented structure of the labor market, these inequalities emerge generally between the private/public sector, white/blue collar workers, secure/precarious work, unionized/non-unionized workers and at the sectoral level.

While public sector employees, except some of the contract workers, did not face any risk of income loss and employment during this period, they also had the opportunity to isolate and avoid disease to a certain extent starting from the flexible working regime implemented on 22 March with the Presidential Circular. On the other hand, private sector employees faced different implementations. These are continuing to work in the workplace, working from home, flexible/reversible work, annual leave, using paid or unpaid leave, short work practices and layoffs. These implementations, which are very difficult to determine the prevalence of during this period, present different risks. As mentioned, the risk of income loss is low for workers who continue to work, but the health risk increases. While the risk of income loss is high for workers who are on unpaid leave, switch to a short-working regime or lose their jobs, the health risk is reduced. Workers, who use annual leave and paid leave, are not exposed to both of the risks.

On the other hand, employers are thought to face less risk than the employees, but there are also some inequalities within this group. These inequalities can basically depend on business sizes as well as sectoral differences. According to a survey carried out early in the outbreak across Turkey, with the participation of 780 companies, 78% of micro and 77% of small enterprises, 61% of medium enterprises and 54% of large enterprises stated that they were greatly affected by the outbreak. While economic activity was completely stopped in 11% of large companies, this rate rose to 36% in small enterprises and 38% in micro-enterprises (Hedefler için İş Dünyası Platformu, 2020). When one considers the big share of micro (54%) and small (18.3%) enterprises in employment, the extent of the employment risk faced can be better understood (TURKSTAT, 2020c). More than half of the firms in the survey declared that their revenues have decreased by more than 50%. The worst impact is observed in the tourism, media, communication and advertising sectors, and the least affected sectors are finance, machinery and equipment, agriculture and livestock. According to the index⁴ developed based on the advantage and durability criteria of enterprises in terms of

4 The level of advantage includes elements (to what extent the sector and the supply chain has been affected by the negative effects of COVID-19) beyond the control of the company. Advantageous firms are firms that are less affected by the crisis. The level of durability includes elements that are under the control of the company (strategic planning, crisis planning, etc.)

COVID-19, 59% of the enterprises are disadvantaged for natural reasons against the crisis and one out of three disadvantaged companies exhibit above average durability in terms of the measures taken against the crisis. It has been determined that 20% of the firms are disadvantageous/durable, 39% are disadvantageous/non-durable, 20% are advantageous/durable and 17% are advantageous/non-durable (Hedefler için İş Dünyası Platformu, 2020). The supports for small and medium sized enterprises, which are highly affected by the pandemic, are postponing their debts and trying to create new borrowing opportunities.

The self employed, craftsmen and artisans are other groups, which face a high-income risk, which could turn to employment risk in the future. The majority of approximately 212 thousand enterprises whose activities were stopped with the circulars published on March 16 and 21, constitute craftsmen/artisans and small businesses. It is estimated that approximately 1.4 million employees, including those working in these enterprises, were negatively affected by the cessation of their commercial activities (Yükseler, 2020). While the business owners bear the ongoing costs, they are also deprived of any direct income support within the framework of the announced measure packages. It is clear that craftsmen/artisans who have no alternative other than credit and private or commercial borrowing, will have difficulty in maintaining their activities in the upcoming period.

The long-existing unequal structure among the employment groups is also observed during the pandemic. In addition to these inequalities, risks also differ among economic sectors and specific labor groups in terms of labor market segmentation.

3.1. Most Vulnerable Sectors during Pandemic

At a global level, all sectors have been affected to some extent by demand declines and lockdowns due to the outbreak. In the early COVID-19 literature, directly (primarily) affected industries by the lockdowns were determined as follows: restaurants and bars, travel and transportation, entertainment (e.g., casinos and amusement parks), personal services (e.g., dentists, daycare providers, barbers), other sensitive retail (e.g., department stores and car dealers), and sensitive manufacturing (e.g., aircraft and car manufacturing) (Dey & Loewenstein, 2020, p. 2).

In the automotive sector, around 42% of direct manufacturing jobs and 13.8 million workers in the wider supply chain were affected in the EU (ACEA, 2020 from ILO, 2020b, p.3), at least 150 thousand unionized workers and a lot more non-unionized workers were affected in the US (ILO, 2020b, p.3). Many automotive companies all over the world repurposed production and began to produce medical equipment (masks, disinfectant, ventilators, protective gear, hospital

beds) just like BYD in China, General Motor and Ford Motor in the US, Volkswagen, FCA and Skoda in the EU, and Mahindra group and Mercedes in India (ILO, 2020b, p.4). The aviation industry, which supports 10.2 million direct jobs and 10 million indirect jobs worldwide, faced a high risk during the pandemic, and the recovery process of the industry is estimated to be slow (ILO, 2020c). Revenues decreased 40-100 percent in road transportation sector during the pandemic where most of the drivers in many countries are self-employed. These drivers are worried about the sustainability of their businesses because of the ongoing costs and decline in contracts (ILO, 2020d, p.2). Tourism is a labor-intensive sector accounting for 330 million jobs (direct/indirect) at the global level, which faced a high risk because of the measures taken to slow down the pandemic. Hotels, restaurants, tour operators, airlines and cruise ships have suspended their activities. After the restrictions are lifted, it is anticipated that people will continue to abstain from purchasing these services. In this case domestic tourism may recover faster than international tourism (ILO, 2020e, p.1-2). The decreases in production due to the raw material supply and drop in sales brought about by job losses have also been seen in the textile sector (ILO, 2020f, p.2-3). Public emergency, health and food retail sector workers have faced the occupational health and safety risk rather than unemployment and income risk (ILO, 2020g; ILO, 2020h; ILO, 2020i).

Demir has made an overall economic assessment for Turkey on sectoral basis using the data gained from the Ministry of Treasury and Finance, rating exposure levels of the sectors from COVID-19 and recovery time frame (2020, p. 8). Deloitte also made a similar assessment, using the interaction data gathered from digital platforms (Deloitte, 2020a, p. 2). The report gives a more detailed division of the economic activities but as mentioned, it only comprises the digital interactions not the whole (Deloitte, 2020b, p. 6).

Table.3. Sectors and COVID-19

Sector	% share in GDP (2018)	% share in employment (2019)	Exposure rate from COVID-19	Recovery process
Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing	5.82	18.15	Low	Fast
Industry	22.30	19.80	High	Slow
Mining and Quarrying	1.00	0.44	High	Slow
Manufacturing	19.05	1.01	High	Slow
Electricity, Gas, Steam, Air Conditioning Supply	1.35		High	Fast
Water Supply and Sewerage	0.90		Low	Fast
Construction	7.17	5.52	High	Slow
Service	54.26	56.53	High	Slow
Wholesale and Retail Trade	12.09	13.96	High	Fast
Transport and Storage	8.19	4.47	High	Fast

Accommodation and Food Service Activities	3.12	6.06	High	Slow
Information and Communication	2.47	0.83	Low	Fast
Financial and Insurance Activities	3.00	1.05	Low	Fast
Real Estate Activities	6.79	1.06	High	Slow
Professional, Scientific and Technical Activities	2.33	3.15	Low	Fast
Administrative and Support Service Activities	2.85	3.43	High	Slow
Public Administration and Defense; Compulsory Social Security	4.85	6.91	High	Slow
Education	4.17	6.41	Low	Fast
Human Health and Social Work Activities	2.49	5.31	Low	Medium
Arts, Entertainment and Recreation	0.91	0.61	High	Slow
Other Social, Community and Personal Service Activities	0.95	3.27	Unknown	Unknown
<i>TURKSTAT, 2020c and Demir, 2020, p. 8.</i>				

The most vulnerable sector seems to be the service sector where most of the sub-sectors are under high risk and recovery processes are slow. The sub-sectors highly affected by the pandemic are wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage, accommodation and food service activities, arts, entertainment and recreation and real estate activities. Although the estimated recovery process is fast in wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage, it is slow in arts, entertainment and recreation, accommodation and food services and real estate activities, which makes these sectors more vulnerable. The economic impact of the pandemic is low in information and communication, finance and insurance and education sectors.

The service sector has the highest share in employment and labor markets of risky sub-sectors, such as wholesale and retail trade, transport and storage, accommodation and food service activities, arts, entertainment and recreation, real estate activities with dual characteristics. These characteristics can also be observed widely in the construction industry, which is affected by the pandemic and the recovery process is estimated to be slow.

3.2. Labor Market Segmentation and Inequalities

Labor market segmentation⁵ refers to the dual structure of labor markets as the primary and secondary market in terms of working conditions, wages, promotional opportunities and market institutions for the groups of workers that are divided by various factors such as race, sex, educational credentials, industry, etc. (Reich, Gordon, & Edwards, 1973, pp. 359, 360).

5 Historically rooted in the era of monopoly capitalism in the 19th century, the dualist structure came up for discussion in the late 60's, establishing the segmented labor market theory (Dickens & Lang, 1988, p.129). Doeringer and Piore define the theory as, "... the labor market ought to be conceived as divided into two parts: primary and secondary market. Jobs in the possess several of the following characteristics: high wages, good working conditions, employment stability, chances of advancement, equity, and due process in work rules. Jobs in the secondary market, in contrast, tend to have low wages and fringe benefits, poor working conditions, high labor turnover, little chance of advancement, and often arbitrary and capricious supervision." (1970, p.271).

The primary market⁶ contains the “good” jobs that include both the upper tier of white-collar jobs as professionals, sales workers, clerks and the lower tier blue-collar jobs such as foremen and protection workers. The secondary market, on the other hand, comprises frequently repeated unemployment and unstable employment patterns in “bad” jobs which mostly require unskilled workers with no training and low wages. Occupations presenting these characteristics typically employ blue-collar workers such as laborers and operators (Anderson, Butler, & Sloan, 1987, p. 584). Also, migrants, minorities, women and young people typically comprise the disadvantaged workers of the secondary market (Doeringer & Piore, 1970, pp. 273-274; Reich et al., 1973, p. 359). The categorization of jobs as “good” and “bad” is reflected in the quality of employment and affects the income and productivity of those employed. Besides, socio-economic problems such as unemployment, discrimination and income distribution injustice are closely related to the segmented structure (Kumaş & Çağlar, 2017, p. 56). Distinguished by different labor market appearances and behavioral procedures among separate submarkets or segments, the division of the labor market and the differences among worker groups have not disappeared with time, in contrast, they have become the characteristics of labor markets. As Kalleberg notes, trends in labor markets are observed in two main axes: the spread of bad jobs which go along with higher polarization or increased inequality in labor markets, and more precariousness for all workers (Kalleberg, 2013, p. 703). The segmented labor market theory has also been adopted by the ILO as one of the approaches to observe in the recent developments of world labor markets. In a report by the ILO⁷ about the 2020 trends of employment, it’s stated that having paid work doesn’t guarantee decent working conditions and adequate income for more than 3 million people who are employed informally and have little or no access to social protection (ILO, 2020k, p.12). To the extent that stratification has been one of the main characteristics of the global labor markets, we offer that the dual structure of the labor markets is an appropriate approach to understanding the COVID-19 induced risks.

Following the segmented labor market approach, it is possible to categorize the Turkish labor markets as the good jobs of the primary market and the bad jobs of the secondary

6 The primary market is also segmented into upper-tier and lower-tier jobs. The upper-tier, which consists of professional and managerial positions, is characterized by higher pay and status, privately negotiated wages, economic and social security, greater promotion opportunities, and higher turnover and mobility associated with advancement. In the lower-tier of the primary sector, in which the wages are still high (typically negotiated by collective bargaining), there is lower educational attainment, turnover is slow and promotion is more closely related to seniority than productivity (Piore, 1972, pp. 2, 3, 7).

7 As highlighted by the ILO, the phenomenon of labor market segmentation may be caused from the particularities of labor market institutions, such as governing contractual arrangements (segmentation along permanent/temporary nature of employment contracts), from lack of enforcement (segmentation along formal/informal line), and types of workers concerned (such as migrant and non-migrant workers) (ILO, 2020j).

market. From this perspective, we interpret that the primary market covers the permanent staff of the public sector (since they have regular income on full-time employment patterns and job security with good working conditions) and both upper-tier white-collar workers such as professionals and managers, and lower-tier blue-collar workers with high advancement opportunities in large enterprises and finally those who work in enterprises with high-level unionization rates. On the other hand, contract workers, unregistered workers, temporary workers and subcontractors in the public sector and less secure jobs with atypical working patterns of the competitive industries and those who work in small enterprises in the private sector or non-unionized firms can be listed as the bad jobs of the secondary market. In addition, women, less-educated workers and young workers are more likely to be involved in the secondary labor market in Turkey (Kumaş & Çağlar, 2017, p. 82)

In this context, there are 3,103 thousand civil servants (4/c) and 1,608 thousand workers in a 4/a status working in the public sector in Turkey, which constitutes 16.8% of employment (Yükseler, 2020). Professionals and managers are 16.6% of the employment while 20.4% is employed as service and sales workers and 54% of employees are working in micro enterprises, while only 27.8% is working in enterprises where 50 or more workers are employed. Although it varies according to the sectors, the rate of informal employment is 34.5% and it is 49.7% for unskilled workers, which creates a double risk for these employees. The informal employment rate in micro enterprises is 58.4% while it's 2.9% in large companies (TURKSTAT, 2020c). The atypical forms of work, which provide flexibility to the labor markets, are limited in Turkey compared to other countries. Instead, market flexibility is provided by informal employment. Also, the unionization rate is low (13.8% in January 2020) and mostly limited by the public sector, industry and large enterprises (Resmi Gazete, 2020b).

The segmented labor market approach not only reveals the main inequalities in labor markets through the formal and informal sector, standard and non-standard workers, unionized and non-unionized sector, white-collar and blue-collar workers etc. but also provides a significant framework for understanding the inequalities related to pandemic induced risks. It is possible to specify that those who are involved in the secondary labor market are primarily affected by the negative consequences of the pandemic in Turkey as well. Probably, the risks faced by workers in the non-unionized workplaces of sub-industries or contract manufacturing enterprises with lower wages and non-social security were much more rigid and harsh than the mostly unionized high-income workers of core industrial sectors.

The unequal character of the risks posed by the pandemic is largely due to inequalities associated with the segmented structure of the labor markets and also carries the risk of deepening the existing inequalities. Thus, it can be stated that precarious, non-standard employees and disadvantaged groups such as young people, are the most at risk groups at the global level and also in Turkey.

Precarious Workers under High Risk

As researches in many countries reveal, even though the pandemic affects almost the entire labor force in many ways, the magnitude of this effect varies across the labor groups and leaves those at the most vulnerable such as women, the young and immigrant workers facing a higher risk. Starting from the early stages of the pandemic, the ones facing the highest risk of job and income losses were low-waged, low-skilled, non-standard, part-time or temporary employees with lower levels of educational attainment. These groups are likely very limited in their ability to distance work and are concentrated in occupations that suffer from high turnover and poor working conditions (Berube & Bateman, 2020). The most affected sector was accommodation and food services where predominantly female, low-skilled, young and immigrant workers are employed with part-time or temporary contracts. Also, those who have lost their jobs are mostly the ones in the low-income group (Byrne, Coates, Keenan, & McIndoe-Calder, 2020). Job losses and decreases in working hours are higher in lower-paying occupations compared to higher-paying occupations depending on whether these jobs are suitable for distance work (see Brynjolfsson et al., 2020; Dingel & Neiman, 2020; Saltiel, 2020) or in certain sectors with severe demand decreases (Cortes, 2020, p. 7). For example, in the education sector, after the school closures, unequal practices emerged among teachers and support staff (cleaners, catering workers). While regular teachers continue to receive their salaries, contract teachers and support staff have lost their jobs (ILO, 2020l, p.3).

Early researches on COVID-19's impact on labor markets focus mainly on the changes in work arrangements of workers in the regular employment relationship. Measures against the economic consequences of the pandemic are also taken considering registered, standard workers. There has been less attention on those who are identified as self-employed, non-standard, independent workers, freelancers, or gig workers. Workers under the forms of subcontracted labor, such as temporary workers, temporary agency workers, zero-hours contract workers and gig economy workers who are assumed to be self-employed aren't even officially laid off. They have only heard, "Sorry, there is no more work available". In many countries, these workers are already excluded from social protection (Berg, 2020), and remained outside the socio-economic measures taken by governments during the pandemic.

In Turkey, a research about the quality of employment in the private service sector conducted before the pandemic (2017), determined that only 10.5% of those working in the private service sector work in “good jobs”. Of those who work in good jobs, 62.5% are male and 37.5% are female. When the ones working in bad jobs are examined by age group, it has been observed that 97.7% of the 15-24 age group are employed in bad jobs. There is also a correlation between education level and employment quality as it has been identified that about 75% of those who work in good jobs have an associate degree or more, while the share of primary school graduates is only 1.6%. The proportion of those whose education level is primary school or less is 42.6%, secondary education is 32.1% and higher education is 25.3% in employment up to 2019. Also, more than half of the ones working in good jobs are employed in medium and large (50 or more workers) companies while in 2019 only 30% of the workers were employed by these companies in the service sector. When the sub-sectors were examined, 98.8% of those working in accommodation and food services activities, 95.5% of those in real estate activities were employed in bad jobs while the ratio of good jobs is higher in finance and insurance, information and communication activities. Further, 98.3% of service and sales workers and 99.2% of unskilled workers were in bad jobs (Kumaş & Çağlar, 2017, p. 69-70; TURKSAT, 2020c). This segmented structure of the service sector doubles the COVID-19 induced risks, as the service sector was hit by a massive shock through the pandemic.

Since the mobility of employees in “good jobs” and better occupations is higher than those in “bad jobs” and low skill occupations, it is clear that the recovery from the COVID-19 induced economic shock will be faster and easier for them. As Kramer & Kramer noted, the ability of faster recovery and mobilization worsen the segmentation of the labor market and hence, the structural inequalities should be taken into account for the strategies for the socio-economic recovery following the pandemic. Otherwise, probably the polarization in labor markets will increase, while the distinction between good jobs and bad jobs, core and periphery jobs, and primary and secondary jobs expands and the gap gets wider to include segmentation by occupational groups of which the division is related to gender, racial and ethnic inequalities (Kramer & Kramer, 2020).

As A Disadvantaged Group, A Dark Future Awaits Young People

Young people are counted as a disadvantaged group in labor markets because of the high unemployment rates and the problems they face in entering the labor markets. Before the pandemic 67.6 million young people were unemployed and 267 million were not in employment, education or training (NEET). The unemployment rate was 13.1% among young women and 14% for men while 4.3% among adult women and 3.8% for men (ILO,

2020m, p.6-7). Furthermore, young workers are under high risk in labor markets, because of informal employment (77% of them, nearly 328 million young workers are in informal jobs). During the pandemic, over one in six young people stopped working and the rest's working hours have fallen by 23% (ILO, 2020m, p.2). The pandemic has multidimensional effects on young people as interruption of educational and training facilities can reduce potential employment opportunities in the future, job losses and the collapse of businesses cause unemployment and loss of income, therefore finding work and (re-)entering the labor market will be more difficult in the future (ILO, 2020m, p.6)

Youth unemployment is an important feature of the Turkish labor market and the most vulnerable sectors have the highest youth employment with 24.6% in arts, entertainment and recreation, 21.9% in accommodation and food service and 17.5% in wholesale and retail trade by the end of January 2020. At the same time arts, entertainment and recreation (2019 annual: 40.1%), accommodation and food service (2019 annual: 32.7%) have the highest informal employment rates among all sectors except agriculture, forestry and fishing which makes these sectors more vulnerable in terms of employment during the pandemic (TURKSTAT, 2020c). Most young workers are employed in temporary jobs in these sectors. Also, 52.7% of young unemployed workers had been employed in the service sector where employment opportunities are decreased because of the pandemic.

Young people face problems especially in the transition from education to working life and they work in temporary and precarious jobs before moving on to their first regular jobs. In a study conducted in 2016, only 14% of young people (15-34 years old) found a job within the first six months while 19% couldn't get their first job for more than three years. After their education has ended, 23.3% of the employees who have worked for more than three months in their first job have been found to be service and salesperson and 16.9% have been working in jobs that require little or no qualification (TURKSTAT, 2016). These pre-pandemic features seem to deepen the disadvantages of young people.

Due to the household income losses by the pandemic, young people in the education age may leave education for working. Disruption of education will reduce their employability and their opportunity of finding good jobs in the future. In January 2020 the ratio of NEET's were 25.7% and it seems to increase in the following months (TURKSTAT, 2020a)

Segmentation in the labor markets and secondary labor groups have always been the factors that ensure the flexibility of the labor markets. While these groups are the ready labor force for the markets, they can be easily charged off if not needed. These workers are the last

hired in economic growth periods and the first to be fired during the contraction periods (Stanford, 2019, p.166).

COVID-19 induced economic shock may have permanent consequences on employment. To prevent these impacts, it is an urgent necessity to implement support packages accordingly, covering both the precarious, informal and the discouraged workers as well as to develop further employment policies for young people.

4. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic is an unprecedented event for the world with social, psychological and economic dimensions as well as an enormous public health risk. However, it wasn't unpredictable in terms of its consequences. As in many previous economic crises, wars and chaos, its effects are closely related to current inequalities reflecting the structural features of the social order and main trends. The world has been in a transformation since the 1970s, driven by the rapid technological improvements and globalization process through a neoliberal perspective resulting in the privatization and deregulation of markets, which is characterized by uncertainty, precariousness and temporariness. While the scope of social protection is getting narrower in many societies, it has become less and less accessible to the broader segments of society. The pandemic period has revealed the existing risks, especially in terms of its socio-economic consequences, and made the social stratification related inequalities visible. These inequalities in labor markets differ according to the unique structures of the countries.

Considering the labor markets in Turkey, it's seen that the service sector has a dominant position in employment which is harshly affected by the pandemic. Also, this sector has the highest informal employment rate following the agriculture sector and the highest youth employment rate, youth being considered as the riskiest group. The prevailing character of bad jobs in the service sector makes the workers in this sector more vulnerable. It is anticipated that the problem of creating new employment areas for a long time will become impossible due to the uncertainty induced by the pandemic. In addition, especially the small enterprises that cover the majority of the employment in Turkey are seen to be under high risk, as they were unprepared for such a crisis and they weren't financially strong enough to handle various costs incurred during the pandemic. Measures taken to slow down the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic were immediate and temporary measures, that aren't enough to handle the current and potential risks. It is necessary to make an urgent and detailed risk and damage assessment of the labor markets, in line with these evaluations. Only after this comprehensive assessment, can appropriate policies be developed.

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