



UNIVERSIDADE ESTADUAL DE CAMPINAS
INSTITUTO DE ECONOMIA

BILGE ÇOBAN

The Realm of Call Centers and Trade Unions:
A literature Review

Call centers e sindicatos: uma revisão da literatura

CAMPINAS
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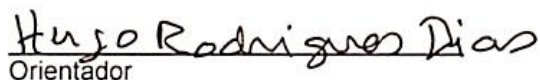
Call centers e sindicatos: uma revisão da literatura

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Dissertação apresentada ao Instituto de Economia da Universidade Estadual de Campinas como parte dos requisitos exigidos para a obtenção do título de Mestra em Desenvolvimento Econômico, na área de Economia Social e do Trabalho.

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The Realm of Call Centers and Trade Unions: A literature Review

Call centers e sindicatos: uma revisão da literatura

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation focused on the call center industry and its growing importance in developed and developing countries in respect to unionization effort in that area. Call centers are mostly located in developing countries. And it may be favorable for these countries because it might bring employment, but sure that it is not favorable for workers in respect to working conditions. Unfortunately, the sector predominantly offers low-skilled, low-waged and highly flexible jobs in terms of working hours and term of contracts.

As many countries around the globe provide call center service, type of the call center work, workforce, and quality of work life issues, and unionization of call center workers have become growing importance and growing interest both in the academic and union world. The objective of this study was to find out the interest on the activities of union organizing in the relevant academic literature. In this context this study attempted to examine the expansion of call centers, features of call center work and workforce as well as geographical distribution of centers and unionization in call centers through reviewing relevant academic literature.

Keywords: call center, union crisis, trade union revitalization, call center literature.

RESUMO

Esta dissertação foca a indústria de call center e sua crescente importância nos países desenvolvidos e em desenvolvimento no que diz respeito ao esforço de sindicalização nessa área. Call centers estão localizados principalmente em países em desenvolvimento. E isso pode ser favorável para estes países, pois pode trazer emprego, mas não é certo que seja favorável para os trabalhadores no que diz respeito às condições de trabalho. Infelizmente, o setor oferece predominantemente empregos de baixa qualificação, baixos salários e altamente flexíveis em termos de horas de trabalho e duração dos contratos.

Como muitos países ao redor do mundo oferecem serviço de call center, o tipo de trabalho de call center, a força de trabalho e a qualidade de vida no trabalho e sindicalização dos trabalhadores de call center têm se tornado cada vez mais importantes e gerado interesse crescente, tanto no mundo acadêmico como sindical. O objetivo deste estudo foi o de avaliar o interesse sobre as atividades de organização sindical na literatura acadêmica relevante. Neste contexto, este estudo procurou analisar a expansão dos call centers, características do trabalho de call center e força de trabalho, bem como a sua distribuição geográfica e níveis de sindicalização.

Palavras-chave: call center, crise sindical, revitalização sindical, literatura sobre call centers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABT	Brazilian Association of Teleservices
ACD	Automatic Call Distributer
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
ASU	Australian Services Union
BPO	Business Process Outsourcing
CEPU	Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union, Australia
CGIL	Italian General Confederation of Labour
CME	Coordinated Market Economy
CPSU	Community and Public Sector Union
CISL	Italian Confederation of Trade Unions
CWU	Telecoms Sector Union, United Kingdom
ÇSGB	Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security
ECB	European Central Bank
EU	European Union
FSU	Finance Sector Union, Australia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LME	Liberal Market Economy
MEAA	Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, Australia
NUW	National Unions of Workers, Australia
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Sinratel	Sindicato dos Trabalhadores em Telemarketing
TUC	Trades Union Congress
UIL	Italian Labour Union
UK	United Kingdom
UNI	UNI Global Union
UNIFI	Finance Sector Union, United Kingdom
UNISON	UNISON The Public Service Union
UNITES	Union of Information Technology Enabled Services Professionals, India
USA	United States of America
US	United States
WB	World Bank

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INTRODUCTION

Call centers have developed in the last decades and employ more than 11 million workers in the sector. They have brought about many changes as well. Not only do they represent a new form of work organization which deal with customer care by phone, but they are also a complex socio-technical system. Nowadays millions of people are working in call centers and it is considered that a new form of work has been emerging for hundreds of thousands of fresh university graduates, especially, in developing countries.

On the other hand, most scientific literature on the phenomenon of the rise of call centers from the 1990s onward agrees that the form of work organization in call centers is embedded in the constant strive for cost reduction and profit maximization that characterizes modern capitalism (Ellis & Taylor, 2006). In this literature, call centers are considered as the best sample of the twenty first century capitalist mass-production factories.

Work organization in call centers, apparently, is conditioned by changes in the structure of production system occurred after the economic crisis in 1970s. Neoliberal package (deregulation, privatization and financialization) is presented as a solution to the crisis. In line with these new developments in the economy, whole production process has been flexibilized according to the needs of markets.

Fragmentation, proliferation, flexibilization and feminization of work have brought about new challenges for trade unions. Nowadays, it is impossible for trade unions to keep and improve their social role without considering increasing number of non-standard working forms and feminization of labour force. A new course of action has to be determined by trade unions because of the enormous fragmentation of the working class. Indeed, this always firstly require an organizational re-structuring according to new conditions of working class. Therefore, these changes are not only warning for trade unions but they are also new opportunities for unions to cope with their new challenges.

This dissertation addresses the union organizing in call centers within this context. Needless to say, as one of the largest sector in terms of employment, call centers provide opportunities for trade unions in the face of declining union density to recruit new members. Eventually, union organizing in call centers can be important not just as a means of bringing nonunionized workers into the trade union movement, but also as a means of helping unions to figure out and redefine their role in the twenty-first century. Obviously, as call centers grew

in number, the nature of work, the workforce, quality of work life issues, and collective representation of call center workers have become growing importance and growing interest both in the academic and union world.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the dissertation is to examine academic literature on call center and trade unions. This study will investigate what type of literature do exist on trade unions in call centers.

Importance of the Study

This dissertation is mainly interested in literature covering subjects related to trade union activities in call centers. Firstly, the significance of this dissertation is to examine studies on trade unions that exist in the current literature of call centers. Secondly, it is important to analyze whether there is trade union interest to organize a new labour profile such as call center workers, and whether there is academic interest to do research into union organizing. The author seeks to make modest contribution to the call center literature on the problems and opportunities which can be presented to trade unions.

Limitation

The limitation is associated with secondary data used in this dissertation. Due to the recent development of the call center industry, most countries have not yet developed a specific classification for the call center as an industry. Therefore, the most important limitation of this study was to procure the latest data.

Content of Study

This dissertation is divided into three chapters:

Chapter 1: The Call Center Work: The study begins by defining call center work, and briefly examining the rise of call center industry in line with rapid growth in service sector, and reviewing existing literature.

Chapter 2: The Global Call Center Industry: This chapter focuses on the expansion of call centers as well as examining their characteristics of workforce, and their geographical distribution in the world.

Chapter 3 : Call Centers and Trade Unions: Firstly, focusing on the union organizing, it will be attempted to analyze the structural and contingent causes of union membership decline to get a better understanding of why unions should recruit in new sectors as call centers. The second part of this chapter reviews studies trade unions in call center literature.

Conclusions : This section briefly summarizes the findings in this study.

CHAPTER I

THE CALL CENTER WORK

The chapter is organized into two sections. The development of call center industry linked with the growth in service sector is going to be examined and the call center work related to new work organization is going to be defined in first section. The following part is going to provide an overview of the existing academic literature on call centers.

1.1. Growth in the Service Sector and the Rise of Call Centers

In today's world, importance of services and the service sector is increasing. In general, the transformation in the capitalist forms of production is explained by the expansion in the service sector (Akçay, 2008). Indeed, the most important feature of the new order is the differentiated market that depends on the competition of quality and the development of new types of production. The critical point for this study is the place of call center in the service sector within the world economy. Therefore, it should be mentioned how to define service sector.

Various definitions of service exist in literature regarding service sector and service quality. Hill (1977) suggests that a service might be defined as:

"A service may be defined as a change in the condition of a person, or of a good belonging to some economic unit, which is brought about as the result of the activity of some other economic unit, with the prior agreement of the former person or economic unit" (Hill, 1977).

Gadrey (2000) explains the service on the nature of service activities:

"Any purchase of services by an economic agent B (whether an individual or organization) would, therefore, be the purchase from organization A of the right to use, generally for a specified period, a technical and human capacity owned or controlled by A in order to produce useful effects on agent B or on goods C owned by agent B or for which he or she is responsible" (Gadrey, 2000).

The service sector can also be defined as information-production sector. People are interacting with people and serving the customer rather than transforming physical goods like

in the industry sector. In this sense, Gadrey (2000) underlines the relationship between producers and consumers, and suggests that in the case of services the direct contact is necessary, in his words:

"Service sector relates to the process and not to the final output, and "most importantly, one of the characteristics of post-Fordist manufacturing is that there are much closer links than in Fordist productive systems between producers, subcontractors and consumers as a result of the direct relationships between the various actors, including the producing organization itself, which in many respects resemble service relationships" (Gadrey, 2000).

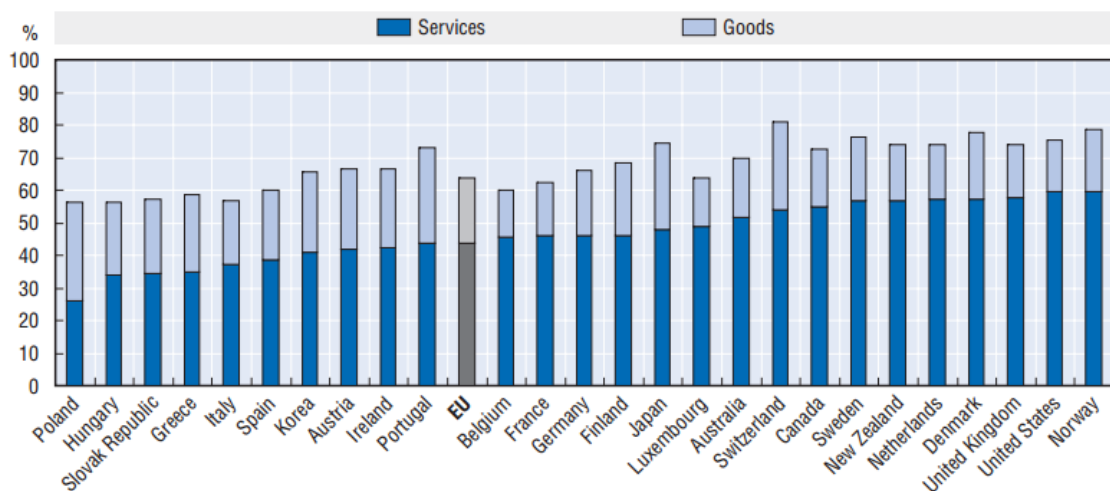
The service sector is traditionally identified as part of the tertiary industries, thus including all those industries other than primary (agriculture, fishing, forestry) and secondary (manufacturing, mining, construction) industries (Raj, 2008). Nowadays, there has been an apparent shift from the primary and the secondary sectors to the tertiary sector in most industrialized countries. Manufacturing and service sector may have some factors of production in common like labour, capital or land, even though technology and knowledge are more central in service than manufacturing (Raj, 2008). On the other hand, manufacturing lost its share in total economy and shifted from cities to territorial regions, Sassen (2001) asserts that manufacturing has a significant role in both supporting service growth and economic development. In this respect, Wirtz (2000) stated that there are three main reasons in the growth of the service sector. First the focus on core competencies by the firms leading to outsource, and service jobs in manufacturing firms that formerly were classified as manufacturing jobs became part of the service sector. Secondly, deregulation drives competition, leading to lower prices, better quality, and a wider variety of services. Lastly, rapid technological advances and falling prices in telecommunications and information technology services drastically reduced transaction and communication costs.

In most financial and economic papers and views, the service sector is said to be the most expanding and leading sector, which prompts the economy in many countries, especially United States, Canada, England, (OECD, 2005) Hong Kong, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan (Wirtz, 2000), China (Wang & Li, 2010). United States (US) is reported to be the world leader in the transformation to a service economy, while the Asian economies are clearly following the US. The percentage of GDP (Gross Domestic Product) accounted for by the service sector has been increasing since 1975, and it is reported that it may go up to 80% in countries such as Hong Kong which has the most developed service sector in Asia (Wirtz, 2000). Besides that, Wang and Li analyzed the relationship between the service industry and

economic growth in China by applying co-integration analysis (Wang & Li, 2010). Their results showed that a long-term equilibrium relationship exists between the service sector and economic growth. According to them, the service industry of China plays an important role in economic growth since "every 1% increase in service sector output will promote 0.97% economic growth" (Wang & Li, 2010).

The Figure 1 below which is taken from Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) shows the service sector accounts for most of the variation in employment rates. In the figure, the service sector covers all services, including community, social and personal services. As is apparent from the figure, service sector has made a large contribution to employment growth among all the OECD countries especially in Australia, Canada, Sweden and Norway.

Figure 1 The service sector accounts for most of the variation in employment rates across OECD countries (Share of the working-age population employed in goods and services, 2002, percentages)



Source: (OECD, 2005)

The service sector has been becoming large in reflection of a more highly specialized economy as firms specializing in specific services such as accounting, banking, tax advice, insurance (Wirtz, 2000). In particular, during the 1980s, business became more aware of the potential of information and communication technologies to increase the efficiency of their operations and to provide a wide range of customer services (Richardson & Gillespie, 2003). Contacting customers via telephone thus supplying a competitive advantage to companies, especially where similar services were provided (Richardson & Marshall, 1999). Furthermore, quality of service is crucial in attracting and maintaining customers, as a result call centers are gaining increasing importance. The rapid growth of dedicated call centers dealing with "mass

communication" began in the 1990s and very rapidly reached a widespread phenomenon that fundamentally changed the nature of work in a number of fields (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014). In this sense, Taylor et al. (2002) state:

"It is now widely acknowledged that the spectacular growth of call centers, since the early 1990s, represents one of the most significant developments in the changing structure of service employment in North America, Western Europe and Australasia" (Taylor et al., 2002).

Even though call centers have increased in 1990s, the first type of call center was established in the late 1960s when the Ford Motor Company and AT&T developed the '800' number to facilitate the recall of faulty cars in order to comply with a legal obligation (Bagnara & Marti, 2001). The fundamental innovation that paved the way for the mushrooming of call centers as a dedicated unit was the Automated Call Distribution (ACD) system (Ellis & Taylor, 2006). After that, call centers were developed in the USA in early the 1980s and a few years later in the UK and Australia due to the dramatic rise in consumer demand thus call centers started to increase in number in the UK around 1990 (Raj, 2008). As a result, the banking and finance sector were always the pioneer of the call center industry.

These days, call center is regarded as the main venue that differentiates between "*being in business*" and "*not being in business*" especially in some industries such as financial services, GSM operators, catalog retailing. In some other industries call center is the first corporate step offering more efficient service to their customers as well as improving their image in the business world. Besides that, call centers represent an emerging sector as no clear industry boundaries exist, they compete against each other in a defined market space. The product market occurs of managing service and sales transactions between provider firms and their customers (Batt et al., 2009).

Call centers offer insights to new economy service and high tech activities that have emerged in the current period of "*heightened international competition*" (Batt et al., 2009). As a result, call centers have been moved to deindustrialized regions where large labour pool was attractive for profit maximization. For instance, the Highlands and Islands of Scotland were 'discovered' as an ideal call center location in the United Kingdom and the number of call center workers in the region increased from 300 to 2,300 during the 1990s (Richardson & Gillespie, 2003).

The early 2000s have witnessed a move of call center activities to periphery countries due to companies using the technological advances to relocate service sector activities internationally (Holman et al., 2007). The rapid growth of call centers and their extending activities in periphery or semi-periphery countries are related to these recent management strategies. Twenty-first century capitalism manifests restructuring business processes and not only for manufacture sector, but also for service sector, the cost reduction and profit maximization logic paves the way for a new international division of labor in the case of call centers. Bristow et al. (2000) clearly state that the two distinct facets of corporate organizational change lead to the mushrooming of call centers: First, the process of decentralizing back-office or routine corporate functions in-house to sites away from the corporate core and second, the process of contracting out of noncore corporate functions to a third party outside the firm, that is, outsourcing. Furthermore, Ellis and Taylor (2006) strongly emphasize the role of the political and economic environment of neo-liberalism, deregulation and privatization, the financialization of markets and the growth of the new economy in the expansion of call center industry. It is important to note that in this climate, not only business but also state or local governments have noticed the importance of call centers. Some governments have begun to make generous offers to companies such as tax reductions, forgivable loans, and incentives to locate in specific areas. Consequently, state and business cooperation in establishment and expansion of call center industries in many national contexts is evident (Cantrick Brooks, 2005).

After this brief of evaluation on rising call centers, now the focus of this dissertation moves on to define call center work. A call center can be defined as a mechanism of service provision, in which employees using the computers make or accept the calls which are ordered and controlled by the ACD system (Taylor & Bain, 1999). Work operations in the call centers are managed by a group of workers who spend most of their time doing business by telephone, and working in a computer automated environment.

The call center worker usually sits at a table in front of a computer, using a headset for communicating with the customer, leaving his or her hands free in order to input data into the computer if necessary. Depending on the business, a call center worker talks with about 60 to 250 clients per shift of 8 hours (Dieckhoff et al., 2002).

A call center could be any one or all of the following (Raj, 2008):

- a telemarketing center

- a teleservice center
- a help desk
- a reservation center for airlines or hotels
- a catalogue retailer
- an e-commerce transaction center
- a fund-raising and collection organization

Call centers can be part of the company or external services usually working on behalf of several companies. The ways call centers get in contact with customers may differ. Two types of call centers can be mentioned: Inbound call centers and outbound call centers. Inbound calls are those initiated by customers calling into the center to obtain information, report a breakdown, or ask for help and outbound calls are initiated by employees calling customers for selling a product (Taylor & Bain, 1999). However, there are also call centers with both inbound and outbound activities.

A further distinction can be made between in-house and outsourced services. Some call centers are parts of larger public or private organization while others are independent units. The former is defined as in-house call centers, the latter as outsourced or "service supplier" call centers. Outsourced call centers refer to the subcontracting of a service to a different company. For example, company A commissioning company B to run a call center, staffed with employees from company B to deal with customer services on behalf of company A. The decision to choose this model is usually motivated on the part of the outsourcing company by the expectation that it is going to save costs and spare the company the need to deal with issues such as call center. In the literature, Paul and Huws (2002) separate outsourced call centers as large and small centers. Large outsourced call centers are often partly owned by large companies in the telecommunications, computer or banking sectors, while small outsourced call centers carry out work for private or public clients across a variety of sectors. Outsourced call center activities can be made within national boundaries, a practice called onshore, or companies can make "*Service Level Agreement*" with companies overseas, defined as offshore (Taylor & Bain, 2005).

1.2. 21st Century Factories

The employment and investment in call center industry has risen and reached millions. This development of the call centers has also led to increased academic interest on this new

source of employment. In this sense, call centers have been the subject of academic studies over twenty years and examined from various perspectives. It can be mentioned that there are numerous special journal editions, collected books and hundreds of articles, special reports related to call centers in the academic literature. The maximum capacity of research on call centers has been theoretical-empirical in nature with the main focus being the managerial strategies, labour process, working conditions and labour organization within the industry. There has also been studies on union organizing in call centers which will be examined in Chapter 3.

In the literature, the high degree of organization and control has led to call centers being described as *"the new sweatshops"* (Ferne & Metcalf, 1998), *"white collar factories"* (Ellis & Taylor, 2006), or *"an assembly line in the head"* (Taylor & Bain, 1999). All these expressions compare the call center to a modern form of the mass-production factory. The first studies on call centers were concerned with the surveillance practices which are evident in the call center environment and by a Foucauldian approach. In this context, Ferne and Metcalf (1998) argued that the *"electronic panopticon"* a more modern version of the ideal prison design originally put forward by Jeremy Bentham in 1785, and later applied to modern society and workplace by Michel Foucault in his 1977 work. *Discipline and Punish, "truly [was] the vision of the future"* for call centers, and that *"these organizations are the very epitome of what Foucault had in mind"* (Ferne & Metcalf, 1998). In other words, from their view, the managerial usage of information and communication technologies make the call centers *"archetypical organization to represent Foucault's application of Bentham's Panopticon to the workplace."* This Foucauldian evaluation of the call center was criticized by many scholars. Among others, Bain and Taylor (2000), who, while agreeing that the modern call center is characterized by a high degree of surveillance and control, and this maintains that the panopticon is in fact imperfect and that there are indeed ways of resistance and escape open to call center workers.

One of the common approaches on the call center labour process is Taylorism which took its name from the studies of Frederick Taylor, and led to *the Scientific Management Revolution* in the capitalist production system. Taylor et. al, (2002) claim that call center as a unique labour process exemplifies various features of twenty-first century capitalism. In light of the critical labour process theory of Braverman, they put the call center labour process as *"an assembly line in the head"* and showed Taylorist elements that are *"embedded"* in call centers (Taylor, et al., 2002). Braverman (1998) emphasized that an inherited tendency of

capitalist production have led workers to lose their autonomy in the production process and have been deskilled. In this sense, many scholars agree that the call center labour process represents "*new developments in the Taylorization of white collar work*" (Bain et al., 2002). In other words, Braverman matched the twentieth century capitalism with Taylor's "*scientific management*." Taylorist management seeks to find "*one best way*" to perform a job. It separates mental work from manual work and has a monopoly over planning and organizing the work execution. Taylorism insists that workers perform every single task in a determined "*one best way*" and workers are controlled by close supervision and monitoring. In addition, Taylor (1947) suggests that workers' salaries are motivating tools, therefore, to increase productivity, performance related pay should be put into effect.

The managers' fixed attempt to control labour and the labour process in every possible way is central to Braverman's analysis of the capitalist mode of production. In Braverman's view (1998), managers tend to control the organization of work, the pace of work and standardize every single movement of the worker in the workplace to maximize productivity. Since the managers insist on controlling labour, the separation of work execution and work conception is unavoidable. In this sense, workers are expected to follow determined ways of doing a job which is forced organizationally and technologically. This separation leads to deskilling on the workers' part, and the execution of work is demoted to acting like a tool or a part of machine. In this way, workers are transformed into changeable objects of the labour process and as long as the execution of work is standardized and routinized, labour and training costs are reduced significantly (Taylor & Bain, 1999).

In the case of call centers, Bain et. al (2002) claim to what degree call center managers use "targets" as controlling tools and make workers accountable objects. In this sense, many scholars stress the development of the ACD system, which routes the incoming call to the first available worker, lies at the heart of call center work and the capitalist exploitation of new communication technologies defines what a call center is (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014). Nevertheless, scholars carefully have avoided technological determinism and paid attention to putting their analysis in a socio-economic context. As Ellis and Taylor (2002) strongly stress that call centers' rise cannot be fully understood without taking into consideration the social, political and economic context in which it occurred: "*Growth is inexplicable without reference to the broader political and economic environments of neoliberalism, deregulation, restructuring and financialisation of markets*". This political and economic environment was characterized by the impact of "*deregulation and privatization, restructuring at industry*

and/or firm level, the intensification of economy-wide and sectoral competition, the growth of the new economy and, underpinning everything, the system-wide compulsion to maximize profits and reduce costs" (Ellis & Taylor, 2006). In other words, heightened competition led to increased pressure on companies, including former state monopolists, to cut costs and maximize profits. So the new technology and organizational form of the call center evidently offered great opportunities for just that (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014).

Working conditions of call centers have always been one of the main subjects on call center research, especially, in developed countries. In general, call center work has been characterized to be routine, to have low task variety and complexity, and low utilization of qualifications in terms knowledge, skills and abilities (Broek et al., 2004; Ellis & Taylor, 2006; Frenkel et al., 1998). In Holman's view (2002), call center work is often underlined as especially stressful, and by implication, that it is more stressful than any other comparable forms of employment. The usage of scripts in the labour process is one of the controlling tools for the call center workers which seriously affects the working environment. Workers have to hold on to scripts during conversations with clients, usually in inbound services. In this way, labour becomes fragmented and can be measured by the highest sales as well as length and quality of phone calls, and the number of customers attended to on the phone. When workers do not meet these criteria, first they are warned, and the second stage is dismissal. Thus, performance evaluation becomes a method to control labour productivity in this process (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014). This is also a way of standardizing call center work. At this point, Taylor and Bain (1999) claim that the use of scripts *"is an attempt to structure the very speech of workers into a series of predictable, regulated and routinized queries and responses"*.

The typical layout of a call center consists of a large open-plan office with workstations separated from each other in rows or in groups, controlled by managers and supervisors usually at the end of one of the rows or on one side of the room. Furthermore, most call centers operate an organizational system whereby workers are divided into teams that are headed by team leaders or team managers. At this point, Baldry et. al. (1998) use the term *"team Taylorism"* to define team working as a controlling strategy in the call center environment. Besides this, Van den Broek and colleagues (2004) stress that the hidden logic behind team-working is to create competition among workers. From this point of view, it can be said that call center work is very individualized and cannot be related to team working in any meaningful way.

The case of the Indian call center environment can be given as an example for the clear understanding of the working conditions. Research carried out in India by Raj (2008) that Indian call center workers usually have problems with their vocal cords due to the frequency of calls and inadequate breaks. While workers always using headphones during their busy working hours face hearing loss and compliance problems between ears. Lots of physical health problems regarding eye, waist, neck health, etc. are among the daily problems of call center (Raj, 2008). At this point, Raj notes that working nights and sleeping during the day upset the biorhythm, leading to health problems. Not only is family and social life disrupted, but psychological difficulties also appear. Besides that, it may cause some problems for women in a society that may not easily accept women being out of the house at night. The typical shifts of Indian call centers are from 10 am to 7 pm for Australian processes; 6.30pm to 2.30 am for the UK processes; and 7 pm to 10 am for the USA. As a result of all these problems, turnover rate is generally very high in Indian call centers which is higher than 50 percent annually (Batt et al., 2005). This also means that most workers do not see the call center job as a long-term career prospect but rather as an opportunity to make good money before moving on to something else that may pay less, at least in the beginning (Raj, 2008).

In line with working conditions, turnover in call centers is well-researched and well-documented in the call center literature. For instance, in a research carried out the causes of high labour turnover in call centers are (Rousan & Henderson, 1996):

1. Emergence of an available job alternative and changes in the unemployment rates,
2. Management styles,
3. Task specifications,
4. Reward systems,
5. Lack of authority in one's job,
6. Interest in one's job

A supporting study by Fleischer (2004) claims that "*call center workers turnover is the manifestation of conditions that render call centers vulnerable such as the flu*". As a live example, in a call center located in Canada, there has even been a turnover of 100% one time

in a year. Considering their usual turnover percentage, the president of the call center operations stated:

"That doesn't mean that you would lose all of your staff, but it may mean that you would have to fill a third of your positions three times a year...And people used to see working at a call center as something they did before they got a real job...But given the growth of the industry, businesses can't afford to be complacent about staff retention. This is especially true as the competition for people tightens up across different call centers...The demand for the same skill sets is growing. And that is what I see as a real threat for us. There are more people competing for the same talent pool and the pool is not getting larger" (Uyen, 2005).

The "skill question" in call center work has been well analyzed and discussed from different views in the call center literature as well. While some scholars insist on the term deskilling or deskilled work, others claim that not all call center jobs are deskilled, rather some forms of call center work create multi-skilling. For instance, in a very early study on call centers, Frenkel et al. (2008) claimed that call center workers are employed according to their strong interpersonal skills and they should have been considered "*semi-professional workers*". However, this approach has been criticized by scholars in later research. Houlihan (2000) writes that "*the agent job is mythologised as simple and routine, which is a surface fact beyond which there are many complex role and skill demands*".

On the other hand, Ursula Huws suggests (as cited in Baldry, et al., 2007) that call center workers are Taylorized, deskilled descendants of earlier forms of office workers, such as bank tellers, booking clerks, insurance salespeople and telephone operators. According to Taylor and Bain (1999), most jobs in call centers were characterized as "*unskilled work*" which is usually labeled as an advanced form of "Taylorism", especially with regard to high time pressure. Stressing job standardization and work intensification, Ellis and Taylor (2006) claim the deskilling issue in the case of British Gas' transition from traditional clerical work to a call center.

Besides that Taylor and Bain (2004), insist on the less skilled nature of offshore call centers in the developing world, particularly in India and claim that those which may be characterized as "*high volume, low value, routinized*" workflows. On the other hand, Russell and Thite (2008) argue that the locational and identity masking as well as accent neutralization in offshore call centers could make call center work more rather than less skilled. Therefore, they use the term "*semi-skilled work*" (Russel & Thite, 2008).

The technological developments that facilitated the rapid growth of call centers not only provided mass communication over the phone, but they also allowed unprecedented levels of organization, surveillance and control over the labour process. In particular, technology allows management and supervisors to monitor the workers during the workflow (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014). In call centers that apply a very strict measure of control, even short break times may be precisely defined by supervisors. For instance, in most of the call centers, workers have to raise appropriately colored cards in order to attract the attention of a supervisor to ask for a toilet or cigarette break (Taylor & Bain, 2005). The technology made it possible to organize and structure work very strictly by: setting targets for speed and amount of work to be done; measuring and monitoring output productivity and performance quality in real-time, even down to highly minute details (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014).

Emotional labour is central to the call center, where workers always have to *"smile down the phone"*, no matter how they are being treated by customers, and it creates additional stress. As Hochschild pointed out (as cited in Baldry, et al., 2007) *"emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value"*. Callaghan and Thompson (2002) claim that emotional labour is a characteristic of the call center labour process which transcends its deskilled and standardized features. As it is not possible to determine the customers' attitude, needs and behavior, managerial prescriptions cannot be adequate for every interaction. They claim that *"far from being passive providers of emotional labour, employees are active and skilled emotion managers in their own right"*(Callaghan & Thompson, 2002). In particular, considering the fact that the successful performance of emotional labour is measured by means of assessment of call quality in monitored calls, based on criteria such as tone of voice, choice of words, etc. As Hochschild stressed (as cited in Baldry, et al., 2007) that when the *"customer is king"*, *service workers are expected to remain polite and calm even when the customers are rude and abusive.*

The spatial dimension of call centers and their uneven distribution all around the world supplies a large research agenda for scholars. In this sense, scholars mostly study globalization, the new economy and the international division of labour. For instance, Bristow et al. analyzed the distribution of call centers in the United Kingdom regions and point out that low-cost advantages of peripheral areas are attractive for companies to locate a call center in the UK (Bristow et al., 2000).

In the case of call centers, the fact that, since the service is delivered over the phone, it is not important where the phone is picked up. Thus, companies are able to relocate their service functions in countries far away from their head offices and enjoy cheap labour with relatively high skills. As Taylor and Bain (2007) argue that the "*distance shrinking technologies*" give opportunities of locating their call centers any place where costs can be reduced. In particular, labour costs which constitute 60% or more of total costs. In this respect, Richardson and Marshall (1999) stated eight main factors considered by firms when locating call centers:

1. The availability of advanced telecommunications suitable for data and voice transmission as well as being capable of hosting intelligent network services;
2. Telecommunications costs are also important, particularly when the call center can be located in several countries;
3. A pool of labour of sufficient quality to carry out the particular tasks required in the call center;
4. Labour costs;
5. Financial incentives offered by governments;
6. An attractive living environment to attract management and other key staff;
7. Low occupancy costs, rents, rates, servicing and parking;
8. Access to good local public transport; and in some cases national and international transport systems.

As noted above, companies usually locate centers in the Global South rather than at home (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014). The best known example of offshoring in the call center sector is of course the location in India. These call centers serve the English-speaking market particularly in the US and the UK. The jobs in these centers are executed by people who are at least bilingual. These workers have refined their language skills so that the caller does not understand whether she or he has reached Hartford or Bombay. Most of them have had two or more years of university training. Moreover, they have been well trained on the job because all call centers train their workers in "*human-resource skills*". However, the wages for this work are "abominable", paid to highly capable people (Sennet, 2006).

Call center work and workers also have been the subject of the literature with a sociolinguistic perspective. The language demands of call centers and the standardization of interaction with customers with scripts were questioned. In her analysis of call centers in the United Kingdom with a linguistic approach, Deborah Cameron (2000) offers the term of "*styling the worker*" to define "commodification" of language in call center industry. She states that as long as the professional person of the call center is created entirely through speech. Therefore, call centers are a good example of service work as language work where the "commodification" and regulation of language are at their peak. She states that "*scripting standardizes what is said, but styling is an attempt to standardize how it is said*" (Cameron, 2000). Furthermore, she demonstrates that "*styling the worker*" policy is a reflection of popular consideration of "*female speech styles*" including expressiveness caring, empathy and sincerity. In line with Cameron, Monica Heller (2003) discusses how language turns into a marketable commodity on its own, rather than being a maker of ethno-national identity "*in francophone Canada*" in the case of the call center industry and also tourism.

In addition, scholars have paid attention to the nature of multilingual call center work and accent neutralization processes in offshore call centers in the developing world. Apart from Taylor and his colleagues' study on Indian call centers that serve in English and require a neutralized accent; philologists also have investigated the commodification of language in the offshore environment (Taylor & Bain, 2004). In her ethnographic study of a training agency which is responsible for neutralizing call center workers' accents, Cowie (2007) argues the interpretation of "neutral" and trainees' responses to accent training, and demonstrates the attempts to erase mother tongue influence and make workers' English a salable commodity.

It can also be mentioned that there are many call center studies with a feminist perspective which stress gender relations in the workplace. 69 % of employees in the average call center are women and this varied little across countries (Batt et al., 2009). In general, call center employment is considered a "*pink-collar*" field due to the feminization of employment is particularly noticeable in the call center industry (Patel, 2008). As stated by Hunt (as cited in Cantrick Brooks, 2005), call centers have also gained a prestige because of they employ a large feminized work force. One reason put forward for the high number of women in the call center industry is that women generally have the skills needed for this type of work (Belt et al., 2002). It is also associated with a part-time, flexible work schedule that allows women to do house work and still bring home an income. Belt et al. (2002) provide evidence for skills which call center managers demand from workers and how these skills are assumed as

internalized by women. They observe that "*good communication skills*" are absolutely crucial and "*women are recruited by employers in part because they are deemed to 'naturally' possess the kinds of communication skills required.*" Furthermore, their interviewees stated that work in call centers requires "*people skills,*" which are associated with team-working, "*team spirit*" and "*friendly competition*" (Belt et al., 2002). Most importantly, Belt et al. (2002) documented how employers are sincere about how they pay special attention to recruit people "*with the ability to deal with repetitive and highly pressured work*". The scholars claimed that in the call center environment, women were assumed to have the kind of personality suited to repetitive, yet high pressure work (Belt et al., 2002). Mulholland (2002) also claims that gendered relations are embedded in the call center environment in different ways such as flirtation, charm and sexual banter which are encouraged by the management floor in internal parts of the gendered labour process in call centers.

CHAPTER II

THE GLOBAL CALL CENTER INDUSTRY

Call centers constitute a very large economic and social phenomenon. The number employed in this industry and growth ratios are impressive. Therefore, the call center industry could be referred to as a "*new frontier*" of employment, and has been emerging as a new form of work (Cantrick Brooks, 2005). In this sense, Russell and Thite (2008) claim that call centers look like automobile factories or textile factories from the last century.

More phones are ringing across the world every day as the call center industry continues to grow. Figures by ÇSGB, the Turkish Ministry of Labour and Social Security, estimate that, in 2010, the call center industry had already reached a global market value of almost 340 billion dollars and employed more than 11 million call center employees (ÇSGB, 2013). There was a 20.9% growth rate between 2005 and 2009 around to world, while this growth rate is expected to remain above 12.2% for the period 2009-2013 (ÇSGB, 2013).

The call center industry is considered in four different regions in the ÇSGB Report; Europe-Middle East and Africa Region, North America Region, Latin America and Asia-Pacific Region (ÇSGB, 2013). North America Region accounts for the greatest market share in the industry 42% in 2012. USA has 90% of the call center market, and Canada has 10% of the market all over the world. Europe-Middle East and Africa Regions hold 29.7% market share, England and Germany have the largest share in this region, 23% and 13% respectively. On the other hand, Asia-Pacific Region have 19,7% market share; India has the largest share just over 30%, followed by China's 23%, and Japan has 21% market share in this region. Last, Latin America Region accounts for 8.6% of the world call center market, including Brazil with the largest share at 56%, and Mexico holds 24%. In addition, the leading sector in call center activities worldwide is financial services with 25 percentage followed by telecommunications with 18% and utilities with 9%.

Despite providing employment in many forms such as full time, part time, casual, and temporary offered through external employment agencies, no standard labour market statistic has been developed specifically for the call center industry (Cantrick Brooks, 2005). This also means that even the term call center "industry", has not yet been fully accepted. Most of the

countries do not have an industry classification for the call center work. Therefore, call center employment data is difficult to obtain, as many governments do not collect this data. This was also a major challenge to obtain the latest statistics for this dissertation.

First section of this chapter aims to present the dimensions and features of call center industries in the world. Because of the data limitations, the findings of the first major part of international call centers survey known as Global Call Center Project is mostly used in this section. The survey, which was a product of three years (2004-2007) work, covers almost 2,500 call centers and 475,000 call center employees from 18 countries. The participating countries are Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the US. In their global report, Holman and colleagues separate these countries into three categories; first, "Liberal Market Economies" such as USA, Canada, UK and Ireland; second, Coordinated Market Economies to refer to countries with relatively strong labour market regulations and relatively influential labour market institutions. These countries are Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. Lastly, recently industrialized or "transitional economies" such as Brazil, India, Poland, South Africa and South Korea. In this context, this section will be examining global call center industry in three subsection by following Holman and colleagues' classification. It should be underlined that not only a global report, but also individual country reports and research (Bain, 2001 ; Batt et al., 2004; Olivera Junior, et al., 2005; Cantrick Brooks, 2005; Frenkel et al., 2005; Sorensen & El-Salanti, 2005; Holtgrewe, 2005; Batt et al., 2005; Lee & Kang, 2006; Benner et al., 2007; Raj, 2008; Friginal, 2009; Holtgrewe et al., 2009 ; Çağrı Merkezleri Dernegi, 2009; Braga, 2012; ÇSGB, 2013; Torres, 2014; Pandya & Rogerson, 2014; Call Center Association, 2014; Pandya & Rogerson, 2014; Yücesan Özdemir, 2014; Cavallini, 2015 ;) constitute the main source of this chapter.

2.1. Liberal Market Economies

Data research showed that employment in call centers grew at an estimated 20% annually in the 1990s in the advanced economies, and the number of jobs continued to increase in the following years (Raj, 2008).

Employment data show that in USA and UK, around 2.5% of the total workforce was employed in call centers at the beginning of the millennium (Raj, 2008). In this sense, it is

estimated that three percent of the total workforce in USA is employed in over 50,000 call centers in 2004 (Batt et al., 2004). In the United Kingdom, 790,000 people (2.8% of the total workforce) worked in call centers. 500,000 were employed in 14,000 Canadian call centers in 2004 (Holman et al., 2007). The numbers are significant; because, it also shows that in liberal market economies, call centers are one of the major sources of new employment.

Call centers in liberal market economies "*with more relaxed labour market regulations and less influential labour market institutions*" show similarities frequently (Holman et al., 2007). For instance, call centers in the USA, the UK, Canada, Ireland and Australia are dominantly in-house organizations, dealing with inbound calls, serving the national market rather than the international market. The majority of the workforce are female (percentage varies between 63 and 69, Ireland and Canada, respectively), and the leading sectors in the call center industry are always telecommunications, banking and finance.

On the other hand, the educational levels of employees change in national contexts. The percent of call centers that primarily hire college graduates is higher in Canada and Ireland, 54.1% and 40%, respectively (Holman et al., 2007). The participation of college graduates to call center workforce is below 20% in the USA, below 30% in the UK, and only 6.1% of Australian call center workers holds a three-year university education, degrees (Frenkel et al., 2005). This difference between the educational levels of employees can be understood according to target markets.

Although call centers in liberal market economies mostly serve national markets rather than international markets, Canada and Ireland represent different situations in this context. Call centers that serve internationally are much more common in these countries; 33.1% in Canada and almost 40% in Ireland are international call centers (Holman et al., 2007). On the other hand, only 1.4% in Australia, 5% in U.S. and 15% in the UK serve the international market (Frenkel et al., 2005). The Canadian and Irish experiences with call centers sample serving the developed world from the developed world. These two countries are the first destinations of call center offshoring, or as it is sometimes referred "*near-shoring*". In this sense there are many US and European companies which have found it "cost-efficient" to locate a call center in Canada and Ireland (Holman et al., 2007).

To conclude, call centers are one of the dramatically rising employment generators in liberal market economies. Since these countries have linguistic and cultural ties with the two biggest call center offshore countries, the USA and the UK, "offshored-outsourced" call

centers have grown significantly. Simultaneously the internationalization of call centers as well as the educational level of the workforce rises. Therefore, in the case of Canada and Ireland, multinational companies enjoy a more educated workforce with cultural and linguistic ties and governmental support in the developed world. The following pages will focus on the offshoring phenomenon in the developing world, but before that, call centers in more regulated economies should be examined.

2.2. Coordinated Market Economies

In this section, call centers in Coordinated Market Economies with an emphasis on the prominent countries' experiences will be examined. In the global report, Holman et al. (2007) use the term "*coordinated*" or "*social market*" economies to refer to countries with relatively strong labour market regulations and relatively influential labour market institutions. As noted previously, these countries in the report are Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Israel, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden. It is also possible to add other European countries like Belgium, Finland and Italy to this list by acknowledging the similar market conditions, employee demographics, organizational structures and regulations. Although their national experiences with the call center industry cannot be considered as uniform, call centers in this type of economies are quite similar to each other.

It is estimated that there are about 300-400 call centers and that the industry employed between 20,000 and 25,000 workers in the year of 2004 in Denmark. This number constituted around 1% of the total Danish workforce (Sorensen & El-Salanti, 2005). Their report shows that Danish call center workers generally hold permanent contracts. Only 5.5% of the workers work on a temporary basis. A typical Danish worker has some kind of vocational education. However, only 8% of call center managers report that they mainly employ university graduates.

Netherlands has the second highest percentage in Europe of its population employed in the call centers. Nearly 2.5% of the Dutch workforce is employed in almost 2,000 centers (Holman et al., 2007). Nevertheless, the most important feature of the Dutch experience with the call center industry is the high presence of international call centers in the country. As, one third of Dutch call centers handle international calls and 55% of subcontractors serve international clients (Bain, 2001). It is important to note that the main reason for companies to choose the Netherlands as a headquarters for their European calls is the country's multilingual

capacity. It is estimated that "no fewer than 77% of the population speak one foreign language fluently, with 44% speaking two other languages" (Bain, 2001).

As is evident in many other national contexts, there is a positive correlation between serving the international market and the educational level of workers. In the Dutch call center industry, 52% of workers have higher secondary education and 18% have tertiary education (Holman et al., 2007). Therefore, international orientation is more frequent in subcontractor call centers, the more educated workforce participation is higher in these workplaces; 24% of workers in outsourced call centers have university educations. Subcontractors mainly employ workers on a part-time basis at 77%. This can also be understood as high student participation in outsourced call centers. Students who do call center work often quit because they have finished their educations. In this respect, it can be said that international call center work particularly in English is considered as pocket money supplier by students. Furthermore, Dutch subcontractor companies enjoy local public funding for new developments in the peripheral areas where unemployment tends to be higher (Holman et al., 2007).

According to a German report which is presented by Ursula Holtgrewe (2005), there were 2,700 call centers in the country in 2005. The report is based on a sample of 300 centers, 53.6% of which are in-house. 33.1% is service contractors and as the report introduces a category of call centers that are legally separated, but with close ties to their mother companies, 13.2% of the centers are outsourced subsidiaries. The internationalization of German call centers is very limited, especially compared to the countries like the Netherlands and Ireland. Most of the call centers serve at the national level (58.8%) and only 13.7% of all centers are serving internationally; others are regional or local call centers. In Germany, on average of 42.5% of customer service representatives in the call centers work part-time, and most of the part-time workers in German call center industry are women.

The educational level of German call center workers cannot be considered to be low. An average worker has a lower secondary education (62.4%), 39.6% of workers have higher secondary education certificates (Holtgrewe, 2005). However, workers with university degrees are quite exceptional, 10% university students constitute 9.5% of the total call center workforce in the report sample. In addition, the great majority of students, as is evident in other national contexts, are employed as part time workers.

The Swedish experience with call center industry is typical as well. For 2004, it is estimated that 60,000 employees in 1290 call centers were working in Sweden; 73% of them

are internal, 24% are external and 3% are mixed organizations (Holman et al., 2007). Female participation in the workforce is very high, 70%, as is evident elsewhere. A typical Swedish call center worker has upper secondary education but only 2% of workers have a four year university degree.

To summarize, call centers in coordinated market economies epitomize the international trends in the industry. However, in these countries where relatively strong labour institutions and regulations are more influential, trade unions and other forms of labour interest representation can still affect working conditions. In this sense, the Global Call Center Industry Report provides documents relatively a high quality of jobs, low turnover rates and low wage differences across call centers in coordinated market economies (Holman et al., 2007). Companies in these countries, beyond any doubt, seek to extend flexibility in working relations and subcontracting/outsourcing seems instrumental to transcending tradition structure of industrial relations and regulation. Employment in call centers is significantly rising, in some cases with the help of governmental organizations, particularly together with the externalization of workforce by business process reengineering.

2.3. Developing Countries

In this section, call centers in the developing world will be analyzed with an emphasis on the growing tendency of multinational companies to move their call centers overseas. In this sense, call centers in India, Philippines, Malaysia, South Africa, South Korea can be given examples for these countries. Brazil and Turkey also can be examined under the call centers in the developing countries' list.

In the case of call centers, serving to developed world from developing world has a history of less than 20 years. However, as will be seen in numbers, employment and market size of call centers grow significantly in the developing world. In particular, former colonies have the advantage of linguistic and cultural awareness to call center-sending countries in the competition of attracting foreign investment. Besides that, multinational companies enjoy low labour costs and governmental support in terms of tax incentives and other means. As Holtgrewe et al. (2009) observe that "*lower cost is a central motive for international relocation in labour-intensive services specially, and that outsourced and offshored services are connected to a standardization of work and an intensification of monitoring*".

The Indian call center industry can be considered well-researched and well-documented. Having a pool of 20 million educated, English-speaking, unemployed youth, India could be considered the "*outsourcing capital of the world*" (Cantrick Brooks, 2005). In 2004, the call center industry employed 245,000 people in India. This number increased to 1.1 million call center workers in 2008 (Raj, 2008). The call center phenomenon continues to grow in the major cities of India, with New Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune and Mumbai being among the most favored locations.

In the largest study on Indian call centers existing, which covers 60 call centers in 6 cities and a total workforce of 34,289 employees, Batt et al. (2005) state that 74% of Indian call centers serve the international market. This situation makes the country the only one among 17 countries (Austria, Brazil, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Ireland, Israel, the Netherlands, Poland, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Sweden, the UK, and the US) that dominantly serve the international market rather than national market (Holman et al., 2007).

In India the leading sector in international call center activities is banking (41%), which is followed by telecommunications (19%) and utilities (10%). International call centers primarily offer sales (39%) and (9%) services. An important feature of international call centers is that they are seven times larger than domestic operations "*while international centers average 741 employees per worksite, domestic centers average 104 employees*" (Batt et al., 2005). Almost every international call center employee works on a full-time basis (99.1%). A typical Indian call center worker has a bachelor's degree. It is important to stress that India produces two million college graduates per year. However, unemployment among college graduates is as high as 20% because India cannot provide jobs for a quarter of its English-speaking college graduates (Raj, 2008). On the other hand, India offers significant opportunities in terms of improved client services and greater productivity. It can be said that India has become the major offshore destination for call centers serving the markets of the developed English-speaking countries due to the presence of a large, well-educated, comparatively cheap, English-speaking workforce. It is obviously related to India's long history as a British colony (Patel, 2008). Another important factor in attracting call centers to India was the encouragement of the development by the Indian government (Raj, 2008).

In India, most call centers have their own training program. Initial training takes six weeks on average in international call centers. Not only does a typical employee in these

centers deals with 90 calls per day, but also 41% of international call centers obligate their workers to rely on scripts. Furthermore, electronic monitoring systems are dominantly employed (92%).

Besides this statistical data, some case studies which are based on workers' experiences can provide a better way to understand the other aspects of Indian call centers. In their study, Taylor and Bain (2005) state that more standardized, routine and low-valued elements of the service sector are being moved offshore. "*India largely hosts an extreme version of the mass production model*". Although Taylor and Bain note that most Indian call centers hope to "*move up the value chain*" by first proving quality in very standardized operations and then applying for more advanced, more prestigious, less scripted work. In addition, India has higher than 50% turnover rate per year (Batt et al., 2005). According to a research carried out in India by Raj (2008), it shows that call centers are facing very high turnover rates due to the pressure on workers. Many of them are unable to manage a work life balance due to the unusual working hours.

As previously noted, the Indian case has been well-researched in the call center literature by numerous case studies, however, there are other national experiences with call center offshoring to the developing world which are equally important. In the following pages, the global picture of call center will be completed by using present studies that focus on different national contexts and epitomize different aspects.

Call centers in the Philippines are much more internationalized. In 2007, there were over 150 USA based call center companies and over 50 other international call centers from Australia, the UK and other European countries located in the country (Friginal, 2009). Outsourced call centers employed around 150,000 and 170,000 Filipinos in 2008 providing services to Americans (Friginal, 2009). According to current national data, the number of call center employees in the Philippines reached 900,000 in 2013 and it is expected to increase to 1.3 million by 2016 (Torres, 2014).

Obviously, "*Philippines is becoming a heavily-favored alternative to India*" in terms of call center offshore-outsourcing (Friginal, 2009). According to scholars, the most important competitive advantage of the country is the high number of English-speaking college graduates in the Philippines as well as graduating over 400,000 youth with English as a second language. In this sense, the Philippines can compete with heavily populated countries like India and China (Friginal, 2009). However, the cultural difference between costumers and

overseas workers is still a problem in the Filipino context. In this sense, Frigal (2009) suggests "*a well-designed language and culture training*" and programs aiming at building cultural awareness for call center workers.

The South African experience with call center industry is also typical. According to a survey, there are 80,000 workers in the South African call center industry, which is greater than the call center industries in Ireland, Scotland, Italy and Spain (Benner et al., 2007). South African call center industry has approximately 14,000 new employees in 2013 and this is expected to expand to 40,000 by 2015 (Pandy & Rogerson, 2014).

South African call center industry is distinct in many ways from other national contexts. Firstly, South African call centers only serve a domestic market (Benner et al., 2007). Second, there is still a race issue in employment. Black Africans are highly under-represented in the industry; only 27% of workers are black African who constitute the majority of total population (Benner et al., 2007). However, the white population is significantly over represented in call centers. For instance, overall while the white population makes up 9% of the total population, they comprise 35% of core workers, 33% of team leaders, and 22% of managers in the largest survey of the call center industry in South Africa (Benner et al., 2007). Besides that, female participation in the call center workforce and the educational level of workers are quite below global averages in this industry. Only 57% of call center workers in the survey sample are women. A typical South African call center worker is less-educated than his or her colleagues in other countries (Benner et al., 2007). Only 2% of the workers hold a university degree and a majority of them (84%) has a high school certificate.

According to a national survey of Korean call centers, the call center industry is becoming an important service and employment generator in this country, as elsewhere (Lee & Kang, 2006). One of the important features in the Korean call center industry is externalization. The non-regular employment of call center workers constitutes 90.8% for in-house call centers, 39.2% at subcontractors. In this sense, 93% of total workers are externalized in various forms of non-regular employment. In scholars' words the employment of Korean call centers is "*externalized*" to an "*extreme extent*" (Lee & Kang, 2006). This situation also paves the way for a union-free environment in the Korean call center industry and scholars claim the feminization of workforce as another factor of the low unionization in Korea (Lee & Kang, 2006). It is important to note that the Korean call center workforce is the

most feminized one in the surveyed countries for the Global Call Center Project (Holman et al., 2007).

In general, there is a correlation between the internationalization of call center activities and the education level of the call center workforce, but the Korean experience with call centers represents an exception. Although only 1.6% of call centers in the country serve international market, workers in Korea are highly educated with 38.5% of them holding 2 year college degrees and 28.7% have 4 year college degrees and above (Lee & Kang, 2006). On the other hand, governmental support for Korean call centers is very low; only 7% of workers in the surveyed call centers had participated in government-supported training programs.

Brazilian call center industry is another example of the high externalization of employment. First of all, Brazil has the largest market share 56% in the Latin America Region of call center industry. According to Alava (2012), Brazil has the best labour skills in the Latin America Region, while Argentina has the cost advantage, and Chile has the best business environment. Therefore, Brazilian call center industry has been growing faster than the other Latin America countries. Today, more than 1.4 million workers are employed in call center industry (Cavallini, 2012). It was 1,200 million in 2010 (Braga, 2012). The number of call center employees has grown 15% between 1998 and 2000, and during the Lula government it has grown to 20%, resulting in an accumulated growth 182.3% in the period from 2003 to 2009 (Braga, 2012). The leading sector in call center activities in Brazil is financial services, following by retail, telecommunications, insurance, and healthcare. The banking service is the pioneer in the call center industry; 45% of telemarketers work in customer service, while 22% work in telesales, 23% in credit recovery and 10% in other activities (Cavallini, 2015).

According to the global report, 53% of call centers in the sample are subcontractors, unlike the global domination of in-house call centers. The sample of this survey represented a proportion of 53% of outsourced and 47% in-house call center. However, in the number of call centers, 89% of them are outsourced, showing a trend in the Brazilian market for "third-party call center" providers (Holman et al., 2007). On the other hand, the vast majority of Brazilian call center workers are employed on a full-time basis (87%).

Internationalization of Brazilian call centers is still low (2.6%), although 22% of workers hold college degree. In this sense, the large majority of call center workers has high school degree, representing 74% of total. When the analysis split the database in in-house and outsourced, the percentage of college operators is 33% for in-house and 12% for outsourced call centers (Olivera Junior, et al., 2005). This situation can be considered as a result of the language barrier. Portuguese-speaking world is very small comparing to English-speaking one and *"producing a sufficient number of English speakers remains a challenge for Brazil"* (Holman, et al., 2007). Brazilian call center workers are young and female; 76.2% of workers are women (Olivera Junior, et al., 2005). It is important to note that research carried out in Brazil by Braga (2012), Brazilian call center workers are predominantly black women with 70%. The great majority of call centers is in the most significant markets, especially in the state of Sao Paulo. But there are also call centers in several other states, and some great companies have call centers in several sites spread throughout several cities (Olivera Junior, et al., 2005).

Call centers in Turkey which have gradually increased in numbers in recent years, and have prevailed particularly in banking and telecommunication sectors. There are 1000 call centers where 80 thousand workers are employed in 2014 (Call Center Association, 2014). Economical bigness of the market is at the level of 374 million dollars in 2013 (Call Center Association, 2014). According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Security' report, the telecommunication and banking sectors are 40 percent of total call center activities in Turkey (ÇSGB, 2013).

Turkish call centers have grown by 4.1%, reaching to 979 in 2009 ; 948 of these centers are owned and managed by larger companies (Call Center Association, 2014). The growth of outsourcers has also been rapid which has grown from 18 to 31 in a two-year period. In this respect, it can be said that Turkey is one of the countries which mainly outsource their call center services. Such workplaces generally have large scale working organizations employing a high number of workers and providing services not only for one sector but for various sectors. The target of international companies about giving the service of call center to Europe and the Middle East over Turkey. The customers of companies such as Siemens Business Services, Siemens Mobile, and Toshiba who call from abroad have been responded from Turkey (Çağrı Merkezleri Derneği, 2009).

As in all over the world, in Turkey too, the call center workers generally consist of youth and women. The sources state that 69% of call center workers are female, and only one out of five of total workforce is over 30 years old. According to one source, 45% of workers are between 25 and 29 years old; 24% is between 18 and 21 years old. 45.5% of workers hold university degrees (Çağrı Merkezleri Derneği, 2009). In this sense, almost the half of the Turkish call workers is higher education graduate or university student. Considering that 50% of call centers in Turkey are active in banking and telecommunication sector, it is possible to say that current data on banking sector will be able to give clues to call centers. A report prepared by The Banks Association of Turkey, in banking sector, 22% of the call center workers have graduated from high school, 36 % have preliminary bachelor degrees, 40% have bachelor degrees and 2% have master and doctorate degrees. 71% of the call center workers are women, 72% are customer representative and supportive service personnel, and 66% are managers (Çağrı Merkezleri Derneği, 2009).

Considering the regional distribution of call centers, Istanbul can be claimed to be the city where the intensity of workplaces is the highest. Since call centers usually employ university students or graduates, Istanbul has the largest population with the university education in the country. In-house call centers are usually settled close to existing concentrations of allied activity or as a department in the company's head-office. Therefore, Istanbul as a trade, financial and industrial center is also a centre for call center activities. Additionally, the call center service supplier companies tend to locate their centers in Istanbul in order to be close to parent companies (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014). On the other hand, it is important to note that a lot of call centers have been recently set up in smaller cities, particularly in the eastern regions of Turkey. Erzurum, Erzincan, Diyarbakır, Malatya are some of these cities. Although it seems as if big companies want to create job opportunities by investing in these cities within the scope of social responsibility projects, the underlying reason is to gain cost advantage, which is the case all over the world (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014).

To summarize, call centers are one of the biggest employment generators in these countries. Using technology, organizational structure as well as workers demographics are quite similar in liberal or coordinated market economies. However, call centers and call center workers in the developing world have distinctive characteristics. In the case of labour force, workers in the developing world are more educated than other countries. Therefore, companies can take advantage of the more skilled, more "professional" and loyal workforce

when they relocate their call centers to the developing world. Governments in these countries also welcome call center investments in order to create employment and adapt their countries to global capitalism.

CHAPTER III

CALL CENTERS and TRADE UNIONS

The chapter is organized into two main sections. The first section is going to argue some aspects of the unions' crisis, especially the impact of neoliberal policies upon unionization rates. Studies on union organizing in call centers will be argued in the following section where this dissertation will be concluded.

3.1. The Crisis of Trade Union Movement

The "Golden Age" of the capitalist system from the Second World War until the late 1970s had led to a certain model of trade union. However, the golden age of capitalism faced a generalized capitalist crisis that appeared in the early 1970s. According to Dumenil and Levy (2005), the reasons of the economic crisis were the falling rates of profits which was an obvious fact in the 70s, brought about reduced growth rates, expanding wave of unemployment, and increasing inflation.

This overturn in the world economy was an over accumulation crisis according to Harvey (1992). In his crisis theory, capitalism ontologically needs a surplus for coming into existence and growing which makes the system systemically unstable (Harvey, 1992). If the surplus produced in capitalism does not find a way out to be reinvested so as to maintain the accumulation regime, capitalist system enters an over-accumulation crisis. There can be various constraints, trouble spots disrupt the accumulation process such as market constraints, labour constraints, technology constraints. According to him, capitalism needs a "spatial fix" to overcome the surplus absorption problem. The temporal and spatial displacements of the fixes surpluses were piling up at some parts of the world, and this displacement and accumulation fix processes has been the main tool of capitalism as a solution of over accumulation crisis (Harvey,1992). Therefore, an ideological structuration known as neo-liberalism emerged as a reaction to this crisis (Clarke, 2008). In other words, one of the most important strategies of capital is to seek the restructuring of the organization of production, as a part of the process of reorganization of class relations, favoring the capital via neoliberal ideology (Akçay, 2008). In this sense, neo-liberalism can be considered as an instrument

which breaks down the obstacles and restrictions that hinder the capitalist accumulation process.

In Harvey's view, conceptualizing neo-liberalism has developed in order to overcome the capitalist accumulation crisis while causing detrimental effects in the economic, social and political spheres (Harvey, 2005). Indeed, transformation of Keynesianism into neoliberalism required the reconstruction of a new relationship between state, society and the markets which is why a set of policy has been put into practice from the 1980s onwards. In this respect, concept of neoliberalism in western countries is associated with the government of Thatcher in the UK and the government of Reagan in the US which came to power in the late 1970s (Harvey, 2005). For instance, the development paradigm for Third World countries which was dominant during 1950s and 1960s came to end with the introduction of neoliberalism through the adoption of structural adjustment programs which were imposed by International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) (Harvey, 1992). In other words, neoliberal policies have been adopted by several key transnational actors, in particular, the IMF, World Trade Organization and the WB.

Recent developments in world economy based on neo-liberal policies such as the evolution from Fordist to Post-Fordist production, consumption and organizational structure have enabled the system to reproduce itself by renewing production and consumption patterns in spite of crises. Fordism brought about the concept of mass consumption along with mass production which had led to the commodification of life in every sphere. Post-Fordism, on the contrary, is consumption-oriented rather than production-oriented and its form of production is based on fragmented markets instead of mass production (Munck, 2002).

Fordism led to a fragmented division of labour by creating various detailed job tasks, and this fragmentation in occupational life constituted the basic characteristic of Fordist system of production. On the other side, Post-Fordism has carried out flexible production to have various commodities for various sectors and flexible labour to produce these. The production process can be inside the small workshops or outside the workplace when needed, following Post-Fordist production organization (Müftüoğlu, 2007). Thus, small teams of multi-tasking workers are present according to low-cost production demand, instead of rigid assembly line of Fordism.

Changes in technology meanwhile have had an effect on the worker's environment as well. Deskilling of labour in new automated environment of production has weakened the control of workers in the production process which undermine the strength of unionized workers in manufacturing sectors. Furthermore, the expansion of technology has made more direct, faster communication possible over greater distances. Fax machine, Internet, and cellular networks have greatly expanded the scope and speed of business decisions and have therefore deepened the possibilities for remote management and logistic coordination across large distances. At the same time, advances in technology have also allowed an increase in the human flows across borders, even though these numbers are low in comparison to those for information and financial transactions. Through enhanced logistical capacities, flexible production practices and the liberalization of capital flows nationally and sub-nationally, the dominant trend has been for capital to increase its mobility at the expense of labour (Castree et al., 2004).

As a matter of fact, since the mid-70's there has been a strong push from the US – operating largely through its unparalleled influence on the IMF and World Bank – for a global convergence towards an idealized, unregulated state regime founded on neo-liberal economic theory. As a result, countries whose economies are the most integrated into the global financial and economic system have often entered financial crises whose detrimental effects are getting more and more widespread. In last two decades, financial crisis firstly appeared in developing or transition countries or regions such as East Asia, Russia, Brazil, Turkey and Argentina and then in advanced economies such as in the United States and the EU in 2008 (Bakvis, 2009). In the last crisis, governments have played important role and realized the huge bail-outs which soars budget deficits. The huge budget deficits has led governments to follow austerity regimes characterized by cuts in public spending and in health care, reductions in pensions, freezing of the minimum wage, capping or holding back wage increases even covered by collective bargaining and massive lay-offs. Fundamental workers rights, particularly in the public sector, have also been targeted as part of austerity measures (Serrano, et.al., 2011). Evidently, increasing unemployment rate owing to austerity policies has undermined bargaining power of unions and workers, which brings about informality. As a result, increasing subcontractor activities and atypical employment models has dominated the labour markets (Yücesan Özdemir, 2014).

In general, there are two main factors, internal and external, for trade unions crisis. External factors, as noted above, affecting the union density rates negatively can be characterized by globalization, unemployment, flexibilization, sectoral shifts in production and increasing participation of young and female workers (Müftüoğlu, 2007). Trade unions, which are structured during the Fordist period have unfortunately had difficulty in adapting to new production environment. Transformation from Fordist to post-Fordist production system have brought about the fragmentation of workers like central and peripheral. Thus, while the number of workers has been increasing all over the world, the unionization rate has been declining in both absolute and relative sense.

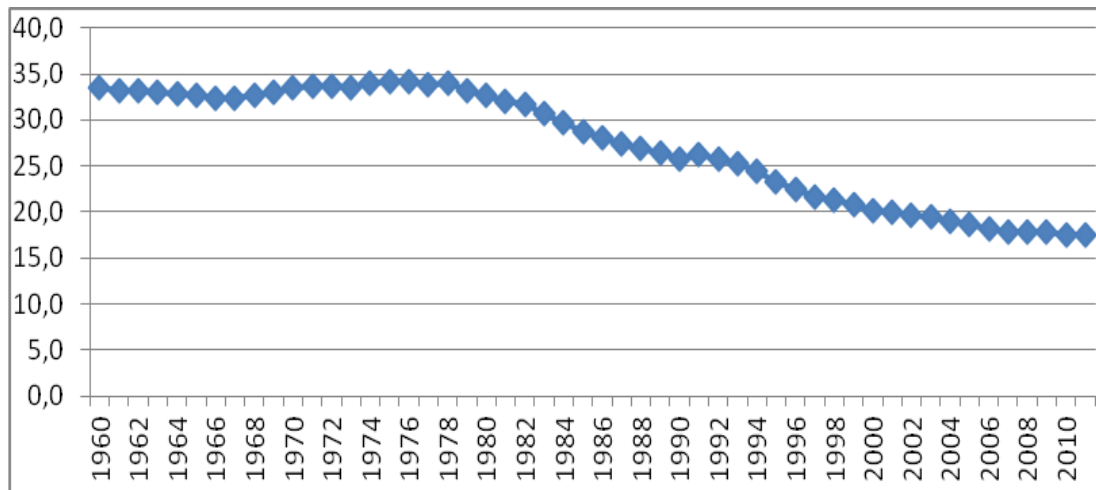
Internal factors that originate from union structure should also be contemplated to get deeper insight on union crisis. In this regard, Richard Hyman (1992) claims that crisis of trade unions arise from difficulties in adaptation to new working environment and their conventional way of functioning. In other words, the crisis of trade unions is not only limited with their weakening strength and impact but they also suffer from lack of ideology which unable them to join ideological debates (Hyman, 2001). According to Moody (1997), it is not simply matter of declining in unionization; the crisis of trade unions does stem from the ideologies and structures that determine their functionality. In this context, the primary internal factor endangering unions is the bureaucratic and hierarchic structure which keep workers away from decision-making. This is why workers are hesitating joining unions in which they are doubtful. For instance, Lerner (1998), in his study on trade unionism in USA, points out some aspects of the internal factors which debilitates union strength.

"some union leaders became complacent, satisfied with servicing existing members; others feared risking a serious drain on resources in protracted struggles if they lost and a shift in internal union politics with a changed constituency if they won; still others chose to focus on changing labour law to create a more favorable climate for organizing" (Lerner, 1998).

As a result of these external and internal factors, in many countries, trade unions gradually have lost their members while their traditional means of struggle at national level, including collective bargaining and strikes have become less effective. The most accessible way to track the impact of capitalism on organized labour in countries which are active in the global market is to look at union densities in these countries. In other words, as stressed by scholars, membership is a key power source for trade unions to negotiate collective bargaining and their relations with governments and society (Gall, 2003). In the following

figure, union density refers to the percentage of unionized workers to the total active workforce. In Figure 2, overall averages of union membership rates for OECD countries are provided for the period between 1960 and 2010.

Figure 2: Union Membership Rates Average in OECD Countries(1960-2010)



Source: Created from OECD Database, (<http://www.oecd.org/statistics/>, Accessed, 02.03.2015)

As shown in Figure 2, average unionization rate for 31 member countries of the OECD (except Iceland, Slovenia and Israel) was around 34% from 1960 to the end of 1970s, however, as of 1980 when neoliberal policies firstly introduced in the USA and the UK, that rate have declined dramatically and lowered to less than 20% in 2010.

Table 1: Union density in selected OECD Countries (1960-2010)

Countries	1960	1965	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010
Australia	50.2	47.9	44.2	50.1	48.5	45.5	39.6	32.5	25.7	22.3	18.4
Austria	67.9	66.2	62.8	59	56.7	51.6	46.9	41.1	36.6	33.3	28.4
Belgium	39.3	37.8	39.9	49.1	51.3	49.7	51.1	52.8	56.2	53.7	53.8
Canada	29.2	26.7	31	34.3	34	35.3	34	33.7	28.2	27.7	27.4
Denmark	56.9	58.2	60.3	68.9	78.6	77.5	74.6	75.9	73.9	70.7	67
Finland	31.9	38.3	51.3	65.3	69.4	69.1	75.5	80.4	75	70.6	69.1
France	19.6	19.5	21.7	22.2	18.3	13.6	9.8	8.7	8	7.7	7.7
Germany	34.7	32.9	32	34.6	34.9	34.7	31.2	29.2	24.6	21.7	18.6
Italy	24.7	25.5	37	48	49.6	42.5	38.8	38.1	34.8	33.6	35.5
Japan	32.9	35.3	35.1	34.5	31.1	28.8	26.1	24.4	21.5	18.8	18.4
Korea	no data	11.6	12.6	15.8	14.7	12.4	17.2	12.5	11.4	9.9	9.7
Netherlands	41.7	37.4	36.5	37.8	34.8	27.7	24.6	25.9	22.9	20.6	18.6
Norway	60	59	56.8	53.8	58.3	57.5	58.5	57.3	54.4	54.9	53.7
Sweden	72.1	66.3	67.7	74.5	78	81.3	80	83.1	79.1	76.5	68.2
Switzerland	31	28.2	24.9	27.8	27.5	24.8	22.5	22.7	20.2	19.3	17.1
Un. Kingdom	38.8	38.7	43	42	49.7	44.2	38.1	33.1	30.2	28.4	26.4
United States	30.9	28.2	27.4	25.3	22.1	17.4	15.5	14.3	12.9	12	11.4

Source: Created from OECD Database, (<http://www.oecd.org/statistics/>, Accessed, 02.03.2015).

As can be seen in Table 1, France has lost almost three-quarters of its trade union membership from 1960 to 2010; Germany, Japan and the US have lost half of their trade union members in the same period. In addition to the table, Portugal (from 1980 to 1990) and New Zealand (from 1990 to 2000) have lost almost half of their trade union members in only 10 years, according to the OECD (2015).

In terms of union density rates, there are significant differences between the Coordinated Market Economies and the Liberal Market Economies. Especially in the LMEs, such as the US and UK, have witnessed dramatic declines in union density. In these countries, collective bargaining level is another factor in rate of unionization because of the collective bargaining at enterprise level rather than the sectoral or national level (Thelen, 2001). For example, lack of sectoral bargaining and extension mechanisms has also played crucial role in falling collective bargaining coverage in the UK (Thelen, 2001). Moreover, unions' activities have been restricted by the government through legal arrangements which hinders union

representation and/or interrupts the collective bargaining (Bernaciak, et.al., 2014). Furthermore, challenges of unions have been aggravated since 2008 by the impact of the global financial crisis where governments have played decisive role to favor the financial capital against the labour rights.

As seen in the table, union density in Canada is considerably higher than in the United States, however it is still low comparing to countries in the EU. According to Bickerton and Stinson (2008), almost all of the reduction in union density in Canada took place in the private sector, which declined from 29% to 19%. For the past 25 years the union density in the public sector has remained constant at about 75% which shows the significance of public sector for the Canadian labour movement (Bickerton & Stinson, 2008). Although the major change in employment in Canada over the past few decades has not been the growth of the informal economy, existing working rights have eroded significantly such low wages, less hours of work, contract less than a year and cuts in social and economic benefits. The 1990s were marked by increases in self-employment, homework, on-call work, part-time and temporary work (Bickerton & Stinson, 2008).

On the other hand, the CMEs represented by states such as Finland, Sweden, Denmark were also affected by the union crisis. Although the institutional strength of labour in these countries has maintained in a system based on social dialog between the employers and the unions, conventional working relations have been changed either. Coverage and level of collective agreements has undergone a change in these countries, especially in Sweden and Germany since 1980 (Visser, 2006).

The picture of divergence in unionization rate can be observed from the results of time lapse surveys of Western Europe conducted by Ebbinghaus and Visser. Looking at 16 unions in Western Europe, they found out that union density in Western Europe declined from 40 to 34 percent from 1980 to 1990 (Ebbinghaus & Visser, 1999). According to their survey findings, with the exception of France, bargaining coverage has suffered from similar downturns. The sharpest fall was in Britain, where union density declined from 51% in 1979 to 33% in 1995. Some countries have seen very little decline (Sweden) or have had initial losses, followed by gains (Spain), while in a few countries (Denmark and Finland) that density rose slightly. Evidently, tradition of social dialog in these countries has led to much smaller fluctuations in unionization rates because the assured role of unions within the

bargaining system reduced the risk and increased the desirability of negotiating rather than imposing economic changes, and increased the cost of employers decentralizing the bargaining structure (Thelen, 2001) .

Obviously there was a significant influence of the last financial crisis exploded in 2008 on labour movements around the world. First of all, even though official statistics often understate real level of unemployment, there is clearly growing informality in working conditions usually associated with relatively low unionization. Spain and Italy as the members of the Eurozone were first countries implemented radical cuts in public expenditure and public employment and then to more systematic changes in the industrial relations regimes, coordinated by the European Central Bank (ECB) (Bernaciak, et.al., 2014). Greece and Portugal also suffered from brutal intervention of the Troika in national industrial relations. Decentralisation of collective bargaining, reductions in minimum wages and the removal or restriction of social provisions were some instruments for the Troika to put the burden of crisis on the people. The most dramatic outcome was in Portugal, where the number of workers covered by collective agreements fell from 1.9 million in 2008 to 0.3 million in 2012 (Bernaciak, et.al., 2014). Consequently, during the recent crisis, social and collective bargaining systems in the region have been inflicted seriously as a result of austerity policies coordinated by the Troika.

Trade union movements in developing countries also were not able to escape from the impact of recent developments in global capitalism. Especially there was a drastic change in unionization rate in South Korea and South Africa as the leading actors of *social movement unionism* (Waterman, 1993). As seen in Table 1, in South Korea, union membership levels increased from 14.7% to 17.2% between 1980 and 1990. In absolute terms, it rose from 1 million to 1.9 million between 1987 and 1989 due to the exploding of "social movement unionism" in South Korea (Chun, 2008). However, with the financial crisis in 90s and neoliberal flexible working conditions advised by the IMF, union density dropped dramatically from 17.2% in 1990 to 11.4% in 2000. According to official statistics, in South Africa union density steadily increased from 15.4% in 1979 to 27.6% in 1985 (Pillay, 2008). It reached a peak of 57% in 1992, before dipping and then rising to 57.5% in 1996. However, the South African economy started follow global trends since middle of the 1990s, which led to increasing unemployment and informalization of labour as well as increasing social inequality. In 2006, unionization rate in the South Africa is estimated 34% (Pillay, 2008).

Brazilian labour market during the 1990s transformed itself into a mechanism for shutting out the workforce, expanding the industrial reserve army and reducing dramatically the share of labour in national income from 42% to 36% , according to Jakobsen and Freitas Barbosa (2008). New forms of social exclusion emerged, and informality spread out to all sectors and regions. Unemployment has increased from 3% to 10 % between 1989 and 2001. Nevertheless, the level of union density has remained stable at 16.7% in this period (Jakobsen & Freitas Barbosa, 2008). Unionization rate in Brasil recently has decreased slightly to 15.7% in 2013.

In the case of Turkey, by 1980, Turkey joined the general global tendency of shifting to neo-liberal reforms and opening its domestic market. The coup d'etat and military government formed on 12th September 1980 acted very hard to suppress growing labour movement in the country in 1970s. By 1990s when Turkish labour movement revitalized at least in formal sense, encountered with neo-liberal reforms including privatization, changing the working regimes or flexibility in working relations, pressure on wage increases, temporary works and unemployment. In the 2000s, unionization rate has fallen from 10% to below 6%. According to the Ministry of Labour, by July 2015, there are 12 million 744 thousand workers covered by social security, as well as 1 million 429 thousand unionized workers which in turn corresponds to an overall unionization rate of 11.2% (ÇSGB, 2015). However, in Turkey there are only 750.000 workers benefited from collective agreements which makes 5.5% of registered workers. In addition to that, although there are 138 trade unions, according to the Labour Act, only 46 of these unions are eligible to make a collective agreement.

Finally, economics and social transformations undergone over the last few decades have globally challenged trade unions, but their local responses has varied greatly. As noted previously, while many unions saw dramatic declines in their membership, others experienced very little. However, institutional differences should be underlined to find the source of their continuing disparity.

3.2. Importance of Organizing

Although there is a decline in unionization rates, trade unions continue to represent millions of workers, remain the most influential voice of workers. Today, there are significant efforts to revitalize themselves in order to "provide more effective voices for changing workforces as well as regain their previous influence with employers and in public policy"

(Fiorito & Gall, 2012). This is why struggles of trade unions are characterized by efforts passing up the defense position, fighting back and getting reorganized.

Today, unions may well restate their identity and goals, and may substantially define again their role in society and politics according to Hyman (2001). Revitalization effort of trade unions has been an area of growing academic interest. In particular, in recent decades, a significant literature has emerged looking for trade union strategies for the revitalization. Out of these proposed strategies, Frege and Kelly (2004), in their book "*Varieties of Unionism: Strategies for Union Revitalization in a Globalizing Economy*" identify following six strategies:

- 1-Organizing among rank and file,
- 2- Organizational restructuring,
- 3- Building coalitions,
- 4- Developing social partnerships with employers,
- 5- Political actions,
- 6- Fostering international links

It should be noted that these strategies are deducted from experiences of union movements to recover their debilitated role in the society. Following to Frege and Kelly's view, this dissertation will be focusing on an organizing strategy predicated on all these six strategies. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate previous academic literature studied on union organizing in call centers in respect to this strategy.

Organizing is a necessary action of unions that arises from their status in the production process. Luz and Finn (1998) addresses the main reasons why they need to organize:

"In order to represent a greater percentage of workers in a given industry, and thus to strengthen the union's hand at the bargaining table; to expand political power as a result of representing greater numbers; to bring the benefits of union voice and union contracts to workers who toil without them. In addition, union must also organize in order to build political movement capable of representing all workers" (Luz & Finn, 1998).

Likewise, Frege and Kelly (2004) link union organizing up with the membership dimension, in principle, create and reinforce workplace representation which has influences on "*mobilizing capacity*" and economic bargaining power of the unions. As it is strongly underlined in the literature, union organizing in rank and file is essential for their revitalization process; therefore, organizing practices has become principle point in the agenda of trade unions especially since 1990s.

In terms of organizing practices there are obviously differences between experiences of national movements, for instance, while organizing is the primary issue for some countries it is the secondary for others (Heery & Adler, 2004). The reasons why the revitalization strategies of the trade unions demonstrates a difference, indeed, is also related with the development level of countries. For instance, in the US and the UK, union organizing has become a priority for national leaders and a focus of policy, while in Germany, Italy and Spain recruitment initiatives has become a more central rather than organizing (Heery & Adler, 2004).

Union organizing has been a central issue among unions for more than 20 years in both the UK and U.S (Fiorito & Gall, 2012). In the case of USA, the AFL-CIO (*American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations*) has prioritized organizing and sought to direct resources towards it. The AFL-CIO fostered affiliated unions to allocate 30% of their resources to "organising new members and to develop comprehensive organising programs" (Gall, 2009). In 1989, The Organizing Institute was built by the AFL-CIO and later launched the Union Summer and Union Cities Programmes in 1996 (Frege & Kelly, 2004). In this period, American unions also set up organizing departments, and training programmes on organizing activities. However, despite these attempts, trade unions again found themselves on the retreat by the mid-2000s (Gall, 2009). As a matter of fact, in the case of USA as of 2000s, trade unions look like focusing on union organizing, however, the data display that only few trade unions are concentrating on the organizing activity (Hurd et al., 2003).

In the UK, British unions have set out focusing on organizing since mid 90s. As Frege & Kelly (2004) addressed, in Britain organizing activities are carried out principally in two ways; "*firstly by going further than just recruitment, involving the workers themselves in the process of collective organization and secondly be merely focusing on recruitment through representation offer and services*". Organizing Academy, established by the TUC (Trades Union Congress) in 1998, is another effort of British labour movement for organizing.

According to some scholars, organizing activities of British labour movement are influenced from the developments in the US for organizing like founding an organizing academy (Heery & Adler, 2004). Within this framework, organizing efforts of labour movements in Australia, Canada and New Zealand can also be counted as successful examples (Gall, 2009).

According to some scholars, organizing new group of workers should also be taken in consideration in order for the revitalization. Organizing these workers and tackling potential difficulties in representing their interests are attempts to *"enlarge the playing field of unionism"* (Gall, 2003). This is why Buchanan et al. points (as cited in Cantrick Brooks, 2005) the service sector to organize, and stress that one of the major and significant challenges for *"the future unionism is to successfully recruit and mobilize middle and low skill service workers"*. According to them, unions need to first strengthen their "heartland" industries and use this strong base to reach into non-traditional areas of employment such as call centers. As examined in Chapter 1, call centers can be considered as the best illustration of actual working conditions in workplaces where *"young, cheap, flexible and disorganized"* work is characterized the new type of work in 21st century (Akçay, 2008).

3.3. Union Organizing in Call Centers

Although call centers have been the subject of many academic studies around the world for more than twenty years, little attention has been paid to determinants of the union organization in call centers. In other words, the role of trade unions is still *"neglected"* and their influence is *"underestimated"* in the call center literature (Bain & Taylor, 2002). When looking through the call center literature on union organizing, most of the studies are focused on call center workers' perception on becoming union members (Cantrick-Brooks, 2005; Bain & Taylor, 2002; Russel, 2005; Braga, 2007, 2012), challenges on organizing workers from trade union perspective (Bibby, 2000; Noronha & D'Cruz, 2006 ; Bain & Taylor, 2002; Taylor et al., 2009 ; Braga, 2012), and detailed qualitative case studies of union organizing and unionization efforts in call centers (Sandhu, 2006; Fisher, 2004; Bain & Taylor, 2002). Besides that there has been little studies on formal and informal resistance practices of call center workers (Akçay, 2008; Mulholland, 2004). This will be also examined in this section. However, before going into the content and objectives of the current studies, it might be useful to summarize trade union representation in call center industry.

Holman and colleagues' research indicate that just under 50% of call centers in the international data base had some form of collective representation, namely, unions and work councils. 35% were covered by union agreements or unions plus work councils (Batt, Holman, & Holtgrewe, 2009). Collective representation is the highest in CMEs with 71%, the lowest in LMEs 22%, and in developing countries 36%.

In the CMEs, 71% of call center workers have some form of collective representation; 18% has union agreements only, 14% has work councils only, and 39% has union agreements plus work councils (Batt et al., 2009). These high levels reflect the fact that most call centers in CMEs continue operating in-house centers with collective bargaining agreements and interest representation.

The most important common feature of these countries is a high percentage of trade union representation compared to call centers in LMEs and the developing world. In the CMEs, collective bargaining has been established between unions and employers associations at the industry or sectoral level for a long time (Holman et al., 2007). 70% of call centers in a Swedish report state that workers are represented by trade unions (Holman et al., 2007). 68% of Dutch call center workers are covered by collective bargaining agreements. Half of the call centers in France are under union representation. Furthermore, labour market regulations like *"by law, any firm in the Netherlands with more than 50 employees is required to have a work council"* (Holman et al., 2007). Undoubtedly, the presence of unions has directly affects on job quality, pay levels and employee satisfaction. Therefore, turnover rate is low in these countries as well as absenteeism and quit rates.

The national industrial relations systems also influence presence and bargaining power of workplace representatives as work councils. In the call center sector, work councils or equivalent representatives are present in about half of the workplaces in Austria, Germany and Denmark, with higher proportions in France, the Netherlands and Spain. In this respect, Germany stands out, with only 22% of call centers having both workplace representatives and unions compared to 40% or more in the other countries (Doellgast et al., 2009).

Besides that, collective bargaining coverage in all countries is higher for workers in in-house centers than subcontractor centers. However, the difference depends on the national institutional framework as well. For instance, in Austria, 65% of in-house workers are covered by collective bargaining agreements compared to 55% of those in subcontractor centers (Doellgast et al., 2009).

The LMEs countries have the lowest collective representation rate (22%) in this industry. In the LMEs, industrial relations systems are quite decentralized and collective bargaining typically occurs at the firm level or lower. It causes large differences in wages across industries, across firms in the same industry, and even across worksites in the same firm (Holman et al., 2007). A further issue is the trend in these countries moving away from collective bargaining towards the use of individual contracts. This development fits well with the management style and work culture of call centers. It individualizes the nature of relationship between employer and employee and offers an extra challenge to the task of trade unions in organizing these workplaces. In discussing unionization of call centers in Britain, Gall, Bain, and Taylor (2001) state,

"Call centers have a relatively low level of union density, recognition and workplace organization". They go on to identify factors such as "composition of the workforce, often young, female and transient, the nature of the work white collar and relatively low skilled, the management control strategies deployed and the special location" (Gall, et. al, as cited in Cantrick Brooks, 2005).

Besides that, only 10% of call centers workers in the USA is covered by collective bargaining agreements while 16% of Canadian call center workers has collective bargaining agreements. It is important to note that Canada and the US have no work councils legislation. On the other hand, Ireland and the UK draw a more colorful picture comparing coverage rate within the USA and Canada; they have collective bargaining coverage 35% and 46% respectively (Holman et al., 2007).

In developing countries, 36% of call center workers has some form of collective representation. In the case of South African call centers, 25% are covered by a collective bargaining that is lower than international average (Benner et al., 2007). In South Korea and Poland, collective agreements cover less than 10% call center workers (Holman et al., 2007). In the Philippines, the call center situation is worse than the other countries. Reese and colleagues' research indicate that there is still not union recruitment among the call center workers (Reese & Soco-Carreon, 2013). In Brazil, 50.4% of call center workers are unionized workers; 42,1% of workers are unionized in subcontractor centers while this rate is 62,9% in in-houses call centers, according to the national report (Olivera Junior, et al., 2005).

In the Turkish case, collective organizing in labour relations has a limited power, especially, collective organizing practices among white collar workers as well as call center workers. Until the new Trade Union Law numbered 6356 in 2012 call centers had not been defined as a separate branch of work in the Turkish Industrial Relations system. Ministry of Labour and Social Security had put call center labour under the large category of "Commerce, Office, Education and Fine Arts"¹. As a result, some call center workers have been organized under a non-union workers' association since 2006, The Association of Call Center Workers. This association was founded as a web site under the name of "*gercegecagrimerkezi.org*" whose name is literally translated into English as "*call for truth*". This was no different from a standard forum where people sharing legal information, any injustice and negative things that employees encountered as well as meetings and protests organized by the association. As a result of the legal changes in 2012, the introduction of new Trade Union Law in Turkey, branches of work were re-defined and there was no longer a barrier to call center workers organizing under the umbrella of a union within the scope of the communication branch of work. Following this legal change, "*Progressive Communication and Call Center Workers Union*" (Dev İletişim-İŞ) was founded in May 2013, which is mainly managed by the founders of Association of Call Center Workers. According to official data, this new trade union has 56 official members although there are 61.945 workers in the communication branch (ÇSGB, 2015).²

Looking closely at academic literature to research on union organizing, individual and collective aspect of perceptions of the call center workers has been well-discussed and well-researched in relation to young people becoming members of unions. Some scholars claim that young people might have a negative idea towards collectivism and that they might have individualistic ideas about becoming union members because these young workers believe that their employment is temporary (Cantrick Brooks, 2005).

Field research findings also support this individualized character of the workers in this industry. For instance, a survey by Taylor and Bain showed that the profile of union members

¹ According to Trade Unions and Collective Labour Agreements Act No 6356, trade unions are being set up on the basis of industry (sector) principle. Although Turkish unions are organized on the basis of industry collective bargaining occurs at workplace not industry level.

² It is important to note that according to Law 6356, trade unions have to represent at least 1 percent of the total number of employees in the concerned sector to have the right to collective bargaining. Apart from the sectoral threshold, at the workplace level is at 50% plus 1; at the enterprise level this threshold is set to be 40% plus 1. At this point, Progressive Communication and Call Center Workers Union must organize more than 7 thousand workers to have collective bargaining right.

in call centers is *"the prototype of white collars those individualized, atomized and antipathetic against trade unionism"* (Bain & Taylor, 2002). They presented trade union experiences at six call centers in the UK finance sector. In their words,

"When one considers both the composition of the workforce and the extent of trade union membership, there appears to be an interesting polarity. These are largely female workforces, composed on the one hand of many young workers with little if any employment history and who, if they join the union, are doing so for the first time. On the other hand, there are sizeable cohorts of more experienced workers with a trade union past. Such a profile contradicts the oft-used 'Generation X' stereotype of the call centre worker. This crude caricature portrays the call centre workforce as composed wholly of young workers who are individualized, atomized and antipathetic to trade unionism" (Bain & Taylor, 2002).

Andrew Bibby's research (2000) for the UNI Global Union also indicates that the call center workers are quite young and lack class consciousness. As one German union stresses,

"Young workers often regard trade unions as overtaken by events and antiquated. They consider the unions have no solutions for the new conditions of customer-orientated service companies. Solutions from the industrial sector and union dispute settlement methods are considered inappropriate. Trade unions just disrupt flexible processes, it is felt" (Bibby, 2000).

Research also carried out in Brazil by Braga (2012) shows lack of political experience as these workers are young and new to the labour market organizational challenges. From unions perspective, his research points out that call center workers are very apolitical, and *"they don't understand the importance of unions"*, therefore, *"it is difficult to communicate with them"*. Besides that, a study by Noronha and D'Cruz (2006) in India indicates that many call centers workers do not know what the term union means and how they function. They claim:

"Call centre employees believed that union formation would never take place in the sector for several decades to come. For those who had some understanding of the word, union, the formation of a collective would be unfair, since the organisation had been upfront about the working conditions at the time of recruitment, it was not right for employees to later form a union, because they could not cope"(Noronha & D'Cruz, 2006).

As a specific example, Amandeep Sandhu (2006) examines two trade unions attempts to organize this industry in India. His study shows results why unions fail to organize call center workers. According to his findings, employment in the call center industry heavily

concentrates on private sector in the service sector. Workers in this sector which is called BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) speak English as new middle class members and the BPO work provides these identities with a professional image. From both trade unions' views, the BPO workers associate unions with "*old economy*" and "*blue-collar work*", therefore, their perceptions are one of the most important challenges (Sandhu, 2006).

In order to create effective union organizing strategies, it is important to get to know new labour profiles and their demands. Apart from the unions methods to organize call centers, unions' marketing techniques and images as well as communication with their members and servicing members influence success (Bibby, 2000). Following this perspective, some successful union organizing activities can be given which may show union organizing efforts based on new recruitment methods. UNI Global Union has coordinated an "action month" as an organizing activity in call centers every October for 15 years. During this action month, UNI carries out actions in call centers on different themes every year. The themed idea in 2006 was focused on stress and "Stop the BOSS" (Burn-Out-Stress-Syndrome) was the slogan while the themed idea was compensation and professionalism in 2013. This action also includes direct meetings, visiting workplaces to have face to face contact with the workers, distributing leaflets, setting up information tables, organizing round tables as well as making contact with employers and policymakers (UNI Global Union, 2013).

In Australia, the ACTU has established a "Call Center Unions Group". Their aim is to coordinate unions that try to organize call centers, thus, increasing union memberships and improving workers' rights (Cantrick Brooks, 2005). Unions involved in this group are: Australian Services Union (ASU), the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU), the Communications, Electrical and Plumbing Union (CEPU), the Finance Sector Union (FSU), the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance (MEAA) and the National Unions of Workers (NUW). As part of the Call Center Unions Group, the ACTU (Australian Council of Trade Unions) has built a consultation service called "Call Central" as an organizing campaign. This group has also developed a "Call Center Charter" and a "Call Center Minimum Standards Code" in order to encourage employers and governments to provide clear working standards (Cantrick Brooks, 2005).

Some Brazilian unions' activities can be given as another typical example to organize call centers. As indicated in the previous chapter, Brazilian call center workers are dominantly black women (Braga, 2012). A study by Braga (2012) shows that the proportion of lesbian,

gay, bisexual, transvestite, transsexual and transgendered people is also very high. In this respect, the trade union Sintratel (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores em Telemarketing) has set up a new course to discuss the race issue as well as gender and sexual orientation. In order to "bring call center workers closer to the everyday life of the union", Sintratel has used the strong link between unions and social movements which has historically occurred (Braga, 2012). As a result of this course, the Sintratel has also participated in the LGBT Pride Parade Association in Sao Paulo. According to Ruy Braga (2012), this link between Sintratel and LGBT Pride has encouraged travestites and transsexuals to take part in the trade union movement as the delegates of "rank and file" which was new for the Brazilian labour movement.

Organized labour could be built through focusing on employment interests of workers and their day-to-day problems as well as paying particular attention to new groups of workers (Gall, 2009). In general, the fundamental demands of union members in call centers are wages, more effective representation and work safety (Bain & Taylor, 2002). In this sense, Çetin's researched (2005) shows that low job security coupled with low job satisfaction represent problems associated with call centers. She analyzes the workforce related issues in call centers including six different call centers in the Turkish banking sector. Beginning with recruitment, she outlines findings related to the call center work organization, work process, workforce demographics, training and development, task specifications, employee goals and career, several opportunities related to growth, performance appraisals, general working conditions, job satisfaction, job stress, worker motivation, shifts, worker health, customer-worker relations, relationships with supervisors, and finally, compensation and benefits. Having made an extensive analysis concerning the call center workforce, Çetin (2005) concludes that a type of Fordist-Taylorist work organization exists in call centers because of a routine and monotonous task which results of the high turnover rates.

A research conducted by Russel (2005) carried out in the 20 Australian call centers, working conditions that are offered, have an impact on the voluntariness to join a union. His survey shows that there are positive relationships between union function on employment related problems and union membership. In this context, Bain and Taylor (2000) claim that health and safety, commitment of the workers as well as tactical awareness play key roles among the reasons of union memberships. Therefore, first of all, trade unions should figure out fundamental demands of call center workers in order to create effective organizing strategy. For instance, The TUC in the UK has established free telephone help and support

services for workers in order to expose their complaints about their working life. This helpline has received over a thousand calls in two weeks. 70% of these calls were from un-organizing workers. According to context of the workers calls, the most frequent related were "excessive surveillance" (25% of calls), "lack of breaks" (15% of calls), "general health and safety (13% of calls), and more specifically "stress" (8% of calls).

As another example in Scotland, public service union UNISON guided a survey among their members in call centers which covered 46 thousand call center workers. As a result of the survey, the UNISON has launched six point "call center charter" which is called "Raising the Standard" as following (Paul & Huws, 2002):

- fair pay and conditions
- a positive approach to work life balance
- better job design
- the opportunity to join a trade union
- training and development
- health and safety at work

As an important example, Unions in Australia and the UK have had success in winning compensation for members who were affected by acoustic shock. The Communication Workers Union of the UK has won 100 cases and has brought the affected members more than £ 1million as a result of acoustic shocks. This illness is a result of loud bangs, short screams or high pitched tones (UNI Global Union, 2006).

In their research, Taylor and Bain have interviewed call center workers in their work environment. According to their study, call center workers "like" their job because of the colleagues and friendly workmates (46.7%), giving customers satisfaction (40.4%) and opportunity of flexible hours or part-time employment (30.7 %). On the other hand, the main reasons why call center workers dislike their jobs shown in Table 3:

Table 2 : The main reasons why call center workers dislike their jobs

	%
Targets, sales targets – unachievable etc.	39.5
Boring, monotonous, answering phone all day, repetitive, no variety	37.0
Management, supervisors – bad, dishonest, general treatment, lack of respect, understanding	34.6
Pressure – stress, not enough time between calls, overloaded, speed-up, understaffing	16.3
Hours, shifts – inflexible, expected to do overtime etc.	13.0
Breaks – not enough, not long enough	11.7
Lack of career opportunities/prospects/development	10.8
Monitoring, surveillance, having calls taped, big brother, scripts	9.6
Customers – difficult/abusive, contact with	8.1
Pay, basic pay, wages, salary	6.0

Source: (Bibby, 2000).

As seen in Table 2 workers' lack of the satisfaction about wages is very low down the list. However, in the same survey, Taylor and Bain asked the same workers what should trade unions' chief priority be. 60% of the workers answered priority should be given in problems of salaries and bonuses. This also means that trade unions are thought to be mostly concerned with pay issues (Taylor and Bain, as cited in Bibby, 2000).

Another research carried out in Indian call centers by Taylor and his colleagues (2009) shows that call center workers have joined the union because of the instrumental reasons which are related to salaries, working conditions and information about their rights. They have analyzed 879 active members of the UNITES (Union of Information Technology Enabled Services Professionals), whose aims are to organize employees in the BPO sector. In their survey, they investigated patterns behind trade union joining decisions. According to their findings, three-quarters of the workers joined the UNITES because of pay and working conditions (Taylor et al., 2009).

Unionization among temporary workers has also been one of the subjects in call center researches. In the case of the call centers, temporary workers are more difficult to organize than standard "breadwinner" employees. As shown by Russell's survey (2005) in Australian call centers, "length of service trumps the effects of casual and/or part-time work on union membership". In this regard, while short-term temporary work remains an important obstruction to union organization, the tendency to "regularize" impermanent work changes the scene for union organizing efforts.

Besides that, call centers are high-turnover workplaces which makes it difficult to keep a stable membership or collective activity (Bain & Taylor, 2002). Workers often do not stay long in this job, they may work irregular shift patterns. As a matter of fact, the high rate of casual workers, coupled with the temporary nature of call center employment, means that it can be more difficult than elsewhere to recruit and retain union members (Paul & Huws, 2002). In this context, some examples can be given which are addressed as new union strategies in order to overcome the negative effect of these challenges.

As a specific example, the finance sector union UNIFI and telecoms union CWU in the UK have offered "portable union membership" to call center workers switching between two sectors. In the UK, many workers change their working area from telecoms to finance call centers. As a result, large numbers of union members are "lost" to all unions in the union registration process. "Under the "Moving on" slogan, both unions have encouraged their members to make "a seamless switch" between these unions without waiting for benefits in their new unions. As a result of this campaign, unions have wanted to overcome challenges in organizing a "new economy" which results in low pay, hard working conditions, short-term and part time contracts, and high turnover rates (Paul & Huws, 2002).

Another example can be given in Italy, some large union confederations such as CGIL (Italian General Confederation of Labour), CISL (Italian Confederation of Trade Unions) and UIL (Italian Labour Union) have established special union structure to represent temporary workers including call center workers (Paul & Huws, 2002). A report by Doellgast and her colleagues (2009) shows that Austrian unions have targeted to organize subcontractor workers and have launched organizing campaigns. Dutch unions have also been quite active to organize these workers in order to establish and maintain sectoral bargaining. Furthermore, Dutch unions are leaders in Europe in negotiating agreements which cover temporary agency workers (Doellgast et al., 2009).

Some studies on informal ways of the workers resistance in the call center literature can be also mentioned. For instance, study by Mulholland (2004) in Ireland examined the formation of informal workplace collective actions and practices among Irish call center workers, and indicated an informal ways of the workers resistance. According to her study, call center workers have created their own resistance strategies in four forms; "Slammin', Scammin', Smokin' and Leavin'." Slammin' defines making fake sales against administration and supervision technologies. Scammin' refers to work avoidance and workers' sickness.

Smokin' and Leavin' define leaving work without permission before the shift ends and smoking during working hours. Research carried out in Turkey by Akçay (2008) indicates the most observed forms of protests in the call centers are:

- 1- Not applying to the workplace rules (arriving late for work, extending the time of breaks, speaking reluctantly)
- 2- Receiving less calls than the target
- 3- Quitting the work

In their early study which they display the "individual" ways of resistance in work place, Taylor and Bain (1999) note that the resistance is generally against the performance monitoring system and competitive structure of team work. They explain how the workers' individual reactions transformed into collective reactions: Where individual, oppositional practices are deeply embedded in workplace cultures and are supported, shared or emulated by other dissatisfied workers that adopt a "quasi-collective form".

CONCLUSION

This dissertation examines the call center literature in order to find out researches on union organizing. The present study analyzes the work in call center by using the findings of existing literature, and the place of call centers in world economy by using relevant databases.

As it is discussed in the Chapter 1, according to the existing literature on call centers, labour process in call centers is so routinized, standardized and tightly controlled that it does not require skilled workers. Beside this, as the turnover of workers in the sector are so high workers satisfaction levels are also very low in almost every country. The workers in the sector tend to see their work as a "just passing through job" owing to Taylorist production organization in the Liberal Market and Coordinated Market Economies. However, in developing countries, workers usually consider call centers as "life-long job" as the their alternatives in other sectors are limited.

The second chapter analyzed the global call center industry for understanding the geographical distribution of call centers and characteristics of call center workers. According to research findings in the industry, call centers are dominantly in-house organizations where workers handle incoming calls, serving mostly national market rather than international one. A typical call center worker is young and female. Call centers are dominantly located in urban areas but since the labour costs constitute the major costs for call centers, companies tend to go more peripheral areas where unemployment rates are traditionally high in order to exploit cheap workforce. This migration of call center activities began with going provincial cities in national borders. However, during 2000s most of the multinational companies relocated their call centers in developing world where they enjoyed not only low-cost and relatively educated workforce with frequently stressed "professional attitude" but also generous financial support from governments which consider the call center as an opportunity to overcome unemployment in their countries. In this context, India, South Africa, Philippines emerged as popular offshore destinations thanks to their linguistic and cultural ties that derived from colonial heritage.

After these observations on the global call center industry, the third chapter explored why trade union movement entered a crisis, and analyzed union's structural and contingent crisis. In the new economic and political structure, based on neoliberal policies, deeply

influenced trade union movement. Unions began to lose their influence and power as a result of series of economic, social and political factors which led to have weakened. Today, the answer for "how trade unions of which necessities are questioned for a long time will make their way" carries greater importance of all the times.

Our study showed that call centers have been the subject of academic studies over twenty years and investigated from various perspectives. As examined in the Chapter 1, the debate on call centers has generally focused on managerial strategies, labour process, regional development, work degradation, and working conditions. However, apparently the collective forms of organization in call centers have not been received widespread interest yet. In other words, there is a very small body of literature addressing the union activities in call centers.

Our study, moreover, showed that most of the studies on trade unions and union organizing in call centers focus on the practical challenges to organize the call center workers, and supply detailed qualitative case studies of specific union organizing efforts at call centers. For unions, the main challenge to organize the call center workers is that the call center work is new emerging sector in the labour market. As call center work is seen as a temporary work, high turnover makes difficult for workers to get organized. This is why unions have short and tough history in the sector. Call center workers are mostly young and female which are also an important 'barriers' for unions. As a result, the revitalization process of unions requires some sort of transition from the primary sectors to the tertiary sectors, and today, unions are in difficulty to find the right way to reach their potential members in tertiary sectors such as call centers.

Although trade unions encounter challenges arising from the nature of the work, their successful stories still provide a fertile and rich land, which is why there is a growing interest in the academy. Struggles of unions to cope with problems of 21st century factories promise at least decent working conditions for millions of workers in the sector. Their struggle would also serve to the debate on ongoing crisis of unions and their revitalization.

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