

# Job Search And Occupational Gender Segregation In The Informal Labour Market: The Case Of Beypazari, Turkey

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# ABSTRACT

In the 1980s, especially in the developed economies, tourism became a viable strategy to be competitive. The tourism-led local economy of Beypazarı (Turkey) is an important case, which has faced a booming of the traditional food production sector, that in turn led to the gender based segregation of the female within the sector. This study is designed to explain how social contacts influence the matching of jobs to female workers with respect to gender structure and spatial and social relationships. The in-depth interviews show that job search processes, especially community based social contacts, together with active role of municipality have further segregated older, less educated, less skilled and cheaper female labour.

Key words: Beypazari, informal female labour, job segregation, social networks, traditional food production, Turkey

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The issue of occupational gender segregation has been clearly documented and discussed over the last 30 years (Bielby and Baron, 1984; Jacobs, 1989). Occupational segregation refers to the unequal distribution of men and women in different jobs with different wages, working conditions, and opportunities for advancement. In general, women are employed in a narrower range of jobs that are female dominated. Compared to nonfemale dominated jobs, these jobs have lower wages, limited training, fewer opportunities for advancement, less autonomy, and limited authority.

While previous studies agree that many economic, social, and psychological factors contribute to occupational gender segregation, research on the processes that facilitate this segregation offer mixed

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results (Hanson and Pratt, 1991; Major and Konar, 1991; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993; Compos-Soria et. al., 2011).

Occupational gender segregation has been studied in various areas and disciplines. Economic explanations of occupational gender segregation are based on the characteristics and preferences of individual workers and employers (Kanter, 1977; Anker, 1997; Brown and Corcoran, 1997; Preston, 1999), focusing on the demand and supply sides of labour market variables. The neoclassical theory, more specifically, the human capital theory, emphasizes supply side factors including worker characteristics such as education and experience and workers' ability to assess employment opportunities. This theory points out that differences in earnings and occupations stem from differences in human capital investment. According to this theory, women receive lower pay than men because of their lower productivity. In addition, other supply side factors including socialization and discrimination in access to job training limit women's choice of employment (Marini and Brinton, 1984; Olfert and Moebis, 2006).

institutional Meanwhile, and labour market segmentation theories emphasize demand side factors in the emergence of gender-segregated workforce (Anker, 1997; Preston, 1999). Institutional economists point out that institutions, such as unions and large enterprises, play an important role in determining who is hired, fired and promoted, and how much they are paid. Gender differences in promotion opportunities, especially in internal promotions, depended more on initial job assignments than on discrimination after hiring results from occupational segregation. Meanwhile, radical economists argue that labour market segmentation benefits from the divisions among workers because it enables them to take advantage of the social divisions between men and women in a segmented workforce (Gordon et al., 1982; Preston, 1999). The dual labour market theory related to labour market segmentation proposed by Doeringer and Piore (1971) distinguishes 'primary' and 'secondary' sectors (Preston, 1999). In the primary sector, labour requirements are defined according to technological needs and in order to sustain employing labour with appropriate skills they are taken under a social security system. Whereas in the secondary sector, workers that are not able to find employment in the primary market accept low wage levels and work conditions without social security payments. In short, jobs in the primary sector are relatively better than those in the secondary sector in terms of pay, security, opportunities for advancement Moreover, and working conditions(Anker,1997). according to this theory, men are more likely to be hired for good jobs in more monopolistic and unionized sectors, while women tend to be hired for poor jobs that are more likely located in competitive industries. Other theories related to labour segmentation focus on employers' preferences for workers of one gender over the other ('taste of discrimination') (Becker, 1971) or on employers' beliefs that workers of one gender or the other are more costly or less profitable to employ ('statistical discrimination'). The statistical

discrimination theory provides an explanation for how some occupations are almost entirely male even though many individual women may have greater ability, education, and other key characteristics than many individual men.

Another explanation for occupational segregation is the differing roles that men and women play based on biological factors. According to this theory, occupational segregation would decline in industries where the physical attributes of workers become less important (Olbert and Moebis, 2006). Jobs such as fishing and mining, which require physical attributes based on muscle strength and endurance, determine segregation of males in certain occupations.

In contrast to economic theories, feminist and gender theories mainly focus on non-labour market variables. These theories emphasize the roles of patriarchy and women's subordinate positions in society, stereotyping, and systemic discrimination in occupational gender segregation (Anker, 1997; Olfert and Moebis, 2006). Anker (1997) pointed out that common stereotypes of women's responsibilities (household work and childcare) contribute to gender-based discrimination against women. The stereotypes mirrored in female occupations result in women's acquisition of less human capital and less labour market experience. Gender theories also point out how cultural restrictions contribute to the establishment of what is acceptable work for women and how, in some countries, they effectively bar women from certain occupations. This is an extreme form of gender stereotyping. For example, in many Muslim countries, the practice of the 'purdah' effectively forbids women from interacting with unknown men in public. As a result, many Muslim women are strongly discouraged from taking sales jobs except in shops where the customers are all women, and are excluded from factory jobs except where the entire workforce is female. Cultural restrictions on women's freedom of movement are enforced through social sanctions, which often include sexual harrasment on rule behavior by men (Anker, 1997).

The sociological approach also differs from that of economists in recognizing gender segregation as a causal mechanism that give rise to other differences between women's and men's careers (Marshal, 1992; This emphasis Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993). on segregation reflects sociologists' interest in the ramifications of societal-level systems of differentiation and stratification. According to this approach, by concentrating men and women in different jobs, segregation exposes them to more or less similar employment practices and reward systems that can, in turn, exacerbate or moderate gender differences in other work outcomes (Reskin and Bielby, 2005). In other words, a variety of gender-linked work outcomes arise primarily from the gender composition of jobs and firms rather than the gender of individual workers. The more similarly the genders are distributed across positions within a firm and across firms, the more likely women and men are to enjoy equal opportunities and rewards (Reskin and Bielby, 2005).

On the other hand, psychologists emphasize the differences between men and women in their values and views when analyzing their expectations of earnings and their subsequent occupational segregation (Major and Konar, 1984; Thomas and Velthouse, 1990). In comparision to males, females have significantly lower pay expectations. Since expectations are an important determinant of job satisfaction, women are more likely to be satisfied with their remuneration even after receiving a pay that is lower than or equivalent to their male counterparts. Sex differences in career paths, comparison standards, and job facet importance were potentially important explanations for these sex differences.

Several studies have examined how occupational gender segregation can be reduced. Reskin and Roos (1990) provide a conceptual framework, building on Thurow's (1969) conceptualization of the labour market as a labour queue in which employers rank prospective employees (Preston, 1999). According to their study, the interaction between employers' preferences for workers and workers' preferences for jobs determines the gender and racial composition of an occupation. Changes in the racial and gender composition occur when modifications in conditions affecting queue come into play. The number of female workers increase in the shortage male workers because of a reduction in wages or a decline in autonomy. In this case, employers may rerank men and women in the labour queue with a new perception of the value of employing women workers, recognizing that the stereotype of women as unproductive is unjustified. Hence, employers would hire women into a number of predominantly male occupations and thus reduce occupational segregation.

In sum, economic theories depending on either supply or demand side factors do not sufficiently consider noneconomic and non-labour market variables in the explanation of occupational gender segregation. The consideration of other perspectives such as the feminist and gender, sociological, and psychological views would provide a more rounded picture of the phenomenon. Most of the existing research in this area analyzed the role of factors such as wages, job status, and social networks in the matching process. In addition, most studies on occupational segregation have been conducted in the context of developed countires (Hanson and Pratt, 1991; Mattingly, 1999; Mencken and Winfield, 2000; Yodanis, 2009). Therefore, this article contributes to the current body of literature by examining occupational gender segregation from various perspectives in the context of developing economies.

# 2. OCCUPATIONAL GENDER SEGREGATION

The concept of occupational gender segregation was first introduced by Edward Gross (1968) in his article, 'Plus ça Change . . . ? The Sexual Structure of Occupations over Time' (Preston, 1999: 612). Occupational gender segregation is present in most countries and regions regardless of their level of development but is most persistent in the regions of Latin America, the Caribbean, and North Africa, followed by developed countries and the Asian and sub-Saharan regions to a lesser extent (Anker, 1998). Its persistence has been attributed to several factors including women being employed in worse jobs, their lower educational levels, and the amount of training needed for jobs considered more appropriate for women (Anker, 1997, 1998; Mencken and Winfield, 2000). Recent studies have shown that while the degree of occupational gender segregation has been declining in the case of highly educated female workers, it has remained steady for their less-educated counterparts (Dolado et al., 2003; Ricardo and Ruiz-Castillo, 2003).

Recent studies show that there is significant occupational gender segregation in some sub-groups in the informal labour market (Del Rio and Alonso-Villar, 2010). In their study of European countries, Dolado et al. (2003) found greater segregation in part-time workers and those between 55 and 65 years of age. Similarly, in their study of workers in Spain, Alonso-Villar and Del Rio (2008) reported greater occupational segregation in labourers who were older, less educated, and those in temporary, part-time, and poorly paid jobs. They predicted that segregation is likely to increase in the near future as part-time and temporary jobs increase in labour markets.

Throughout the 1990s, tourism-led local economic development began to spread beyond Western Europe and North America and into metropolitan areas in the Asia-Pacific including Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, and Hong Kong. By the end of the 1990s, tourism-led development has also begun to spread to developing economies such as South Africa and Turkey (Aydın, 2007). Informal employment, in particular, has dramatically increased (Portes and Sassen-Koob, 1987; Pahl, 1988; Portes and Castells, 1989), attracting mostly female and migrant workers. Informal employment has a number of disadvantages such as the lack of government, union or private sector regulation; limited opportunities for formal training and advancement; and limited avenues or forums for improving employment conditions.

Tourism-led economic development promotes occupational gender segregation by increasing part-time and temporary jobs and increasing the usage of social networks in job search processes. Stobart and Ball (1998) found that tourism creates marginal, uncertain, and seasonal jobs characterized by low quality employment in unstable economic activities such as retail catering. Meanwhile, Immergluck (1998) have shown that local employment opportunities promote the development of networks among local enterprises and residents, and consequently, firms began using local networks and community organizations in recruiting workers.

Many studies on occupational gender segregation in Turkey have shown that economic and noneconomic factors on their own do not sufficiently explain the differences in jobs and wage rates. Despite efforts to promote gender equality, Turkey remains a male-dominated society where significant occupational segregation exists and women' jobs are still determined by patriarchal cultural values and gender stereotypes (according to feminist theories), and social discrimination (according to demand side economic theories) (Ecevit, 1991; Kasnakoğlu and Dayioğlu, 1997; Kardam and Toksöz, 2004; Rich and Palz, 2008). In Turkey, these patriarchal values and traditional norms view men as breadwinners and women as homemakers (Abadan-Unat, 1986), further perpetuating occupational segregation (Rich and Palaz, 2008). Furthermore, Turkish men are paid more than women (Ecevit, 1995; 86); the wage difference between Turkish men and women range from 20% to 50% (Koçak, 1999; Tansel, 2005) and may be attributed in part to human capital factors such as education and experience (consistent with human capital theories) but mostly to the discrimination against women in the labour market (Kasnakoğlu and Davioğlu, 1997).

Only a quarter of Turkish women earn wages or are self-employed, in contrast to 82% of men. Moreover, while three-quarters of the working women are employed in agriculture, the only female-dominated sector where they account for over 50% of all workers, majority of whom are unpaid family workers (Kardam and Toksöz, 2004). While there has also been significant growth in the share of female employment in the professional, administrative, clerical, and service sectors over the last two decades, this was not enough to change the traditional view of and mentality toward women's role in society; thus, women have remained in lower-paid occupations and industries such as textiles and traditional food production where informal relations are often used in the job search (İlkkaracan and Selim, 2002; Rich and Palaz, 2008). While 58% of total female employment in Turkey in 2008 was in the informal sector, only 38% of total male employment was in this sector (Turkish National Statistics Institution [TÜİK], 2008).

## **3. JOB SEARCH PROCESSES**

The gender segregated jobs reflect mechanisms of labor supply and demand that match people to jobs. As one aspect of the job matching processes, job search processes contributes to explanation for gender segregation of jobs. In this paper we focus on job search behaviour. In recent studies, job search model of Neoclassical economy has been largely criticized. The Neoclassical model depends on active job search and assumes that the worker is knowledgeable of the wage distribution and job opportunities in specific firms or labour markets (Lipmann and McCall, 1976; Kahn, 1978). The crucial component of this model is the "reservation wage" or the wage below which a worker will not accept a job offer. Main criticism about the model is portraying of the job search process as essentially separate from one's everyday social life (e.g.Granovetter, 1974).

Indeed, employment information is embedded in the myriad daily social interactions and differences in the information sources one uses in finding work can affect the nature of the jobs one obtains.

Thus, this article firstly introduces gender and examines the relative importance of different types of social contacts for women. Secondly, it considers the role of spatial factors in the job search process. Finally, it examines how job search information is evaluated.

#### 3.1. Type of Social Contacts

Men and women have different types of social contacts. Researchers have found that women's networks are less diverse, kin-centred, and contain more friends, family members and neighbours, while those of men consist of more colleagues and higher-status individuals (McPherson and Smith-Lovin, 1982, 1986; Fischer and Oliker 1983; Marsden 1987; Campbell, 1988; Moore, 1990; Hanson and Pratt, 1991). Two main approaches have been adopted in studying the influences of social networks on occupational gender segregation. First, the network structure perspective states that the structure of women's social networks essentially limits their access to helpful contacts that could help them find genderbalanced jobs. Women, in general, resort to other female social contacts during the job search process, which then reinforces gender-based occupational segregation (Mencken and Winfield, 2000)

The second approach includes the human capital theory and the feminist social closure perspective (Mencken and Winfield, 2000). According to the human capital theory, men and women's differences in human capital investment such as education, training, work experience, and job tenure motivate them to seek certain jobs that reflect their interests and family responsibilities (Kaufman, 1988; Tomaskovic-Devey, 1993; Mencken and Winfield, 2000). According to the feminist social closure perspective, occupational gender segregation results from the formal and informal barriers to skills, knowledge, and social networks which maintain men's social positions in society and in male-dominated jobs.

Whether the gender of the social contact influences the job matching process also depends on the strength of the relationship. In the job search process literature, weak ties such as that shared with colleagues or acquaintances have been found to be more beneficial in obtaining job information than strong ones. This is because these relationships serve as a bridge among various social groups and increase the amount of nonredundant job information. On the other hand, strong ties shared by socially similar individuals such as friends and close family members do not provide new job information than what job seekers already have (Granovetter, 1973, 1974; Mencken and Winfield, 2000).

#### **3.2.Spatial Factors**

Men and women's job search locations also differ owing to their different socio-structural locations. Women are more likely to work in paid jobs with less status and responsibility, making them more physically isolated from colleagues or superiors with higher status and more responsibilities. In addition, women are more likely to conduct their job search based on proximity to their residence and as such, are more attracted to employment opportunities closer to their homes than are men (Hanson and Johnston, 1985), which also contributes to occupational gender segregation and the concentration of female labour in certain jobs (England, 1993). Moreover, since women's wages do not vary much by location compared to men's, they are less motivated to expand their job search locations (Hanson and Johnston, 1985; Singell and Lillydahl, 1986; Johnston-Anumonwo, 1988).

#### 3.3. Job Attributes

The decision to accept a job offer depends in part on the individual's reservation wage (Stigler, 1962; Lippman and McCall, 1976). For women, however, income and wage considerations play a less significant role in the job search as they tend to value other job attributes such as work hours and job location (Hanson and Pratt, 1991). Women are more likely than men to bear the main household and child-rearing responsibilities, have less access to dependable transportation, and consequently, pay more attention to the non-wage aspect of jobs.

Beypazari is a historic district of Ankara which has an Ottoman heritage. It is located on the former Istanbul-Ankara highway and is 100 km away from Ankara (as in Figure 1). As of 2010, it has a population of 46,493 and spans 620,000 sq m. Its rate of urbanization is 76%, with 35,775 residents living in urban areas (TÜİK, 2010). Agriculture and services, especially tourism, are the two main sectors in Beypazari (see Table 1). Since 1999, it has experienced rapid economic changes initiated by a community partnership between the local government and various institutions to restore historical houses. During this time, tourists visiting the city also increased dramatically, from merely 2,500 in 1999 to 40,000 in 2002, and 370,000 in 2008 (TÜİK). Tourism positively impacted the city's economy; the rate of unemployment decreased significantly, from 13.6% in 2000 to 7.5% in 2006, while women in the labour force increased dramatically especially in traditional food<sup>i</sup> production which includes the making of traditional delicacies such as dolma, sarma, kuru, tarhana, hösmelim, baklava, and eriste.



Figure 1. A Map of Beypazari, Turkey.

Sector		Labour (%)	
Agriculture		61.37	
Industry		9.62	
Services tourism)	(including	29.01	

Table 1. Sectoral Distribution of Labour (%) in Beypazari.

Source: Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı (DPT), 2004

## 4. METHODOLOGY

This research, conducted in June and July 2009, evaluates the role of job search processes in the segregation of informal female labour in the traditional food production sector in the city of Beypazari. Although official numbers were unavailable for informal labour, according to the municipal government, labour in this sector consists almost entirely of females, numbering almost 2,000 during the 2009 peak season.

In depth, face-to-face interviews were conducted with 52 women working informally for traditional food production enterprises at their homes and workplaces, representing approximately 2% of the entire informal female labour in this sector. This sample was large enough for evaluating job search processes and the characteristics of the women employed in the sector. Out of the 52 interviews conducted, only 45 were used because some participants chose not to complete the interviews or did not answer most of the questions.

Given the invisibility of informal labour in this market, finding the sample for this research posed challenges. Thus, we first interviewed key contacts in the city including a public relations consultant in the municipality, the president of the Beypazari Tourism Association, the president of the Beypazari Chamber of Commerce, and the manager of a local restaurant operated by the municipality. These key informants provided referrals to female labourers, who then referred us to other female labourers. The initial interviews with the different stakeholders also gave a more complete view of the traditional food production sector and its informal female labourers.

The interviews lasted between 45 min to 1.5 hr depending largely on the willingness of the participants. They consisted of both closed-ended (e.g. 'How many hours do you work a day?') and open-ended questions (e.g. 'What do you think about your working conditions?', 'What are your hopes and fears about the future of your job?'). The questions were designed elicit important information on job-related issues such as how women decide where to work, how they ended up in this industry and their current employers, and how they evaluate their jobs and their current job situations, and

individual and household characteristics including their socio-economic status and residence. Most of the participants had similar characteristics in terms of income, age, education, and job search processes.

The number and names of firms in the sector were taken from the Beypazari Chamber of Commerce. As of 2008, 117 there were traditional food production establishments in the area. Approximately 20% (22) of the firms were interviewed. The employers consisted of five hardtack bakeries, seven traditional food shops with small manufacturing units, and 10 hotels with restaurants. The establishment owners were asked about their firm and labourer characteristics and candidate search processes. A limitation of this research is that traditional food production is usually conducted in production units within hardtack bakeries, hotels with restaurants, and traditional food shops that also operate in other sectors such as food, tourism, and retail. As such, it is very difficult to obtain a definitive number of firms and labourers for the traditional food production sector.

### 5. RESULTS

This article analyzed the relationships between job search processes, personal contacts, spatial factors, and job attributes of female labourers in Beypazari. The results show that 91% of the female labourers found their jobs through social contacts rather than active search, underscoring the important role of personal contacts in obtaining jobs in the district's traditional food production sector (see Table 2). Here we quote two of our respondents,

> "I found this job through my neighbour. We were talking in my garden when she asked me if I wanted to be a part of her daughters' business, "Miijgan Abla'nın Yeri". I needed a job so I accepted the offer, and I have been working for them ever since."

> "Mr Nusret, the owner of "Dostlar", visited us and tasted hosmerim cooked by me. He asked if I was interested in making these traditional sweets for his establishment, and that's how I ended up working for him."

Method	Female Labourers		
Impersonal (a)	2		
Personal contact (b)	41		
Municipality (c)	2		
Total	45		

Note:

a: through impersonal means including direct job application

b: recommended or hired by a personal contact

c: recruited with the help of the municipality

The city's small size and homogenous social structure, and the existing kinships and friendships therein, facilitate the development of these types of contacts. Major life events such as birth, circumcision, marriage, and other traditional social meetings further reinforce these social ties, which are then passed on to future generations. Indeed, the results revealed that 75.4% of the residents in the neighbourhoods where the female labourers live knew each other. On average, residents have been living in the same area for 14 years and in the same house for 11 years, indicating that they have established their roots in the community. These findings confirm the strength of the friendships and social ties in the district. When asked if they would move to a better neighbourhood given an opportunity, 56.4% of our respondents said 'no,' that they were already satisfied with their way of living and have gotten to know their neighbours, acquaintances, friends and relatives in the community.

The regulations set by the municipality reduce the wage variance in Beypazari, contributing to lower search

	Table 3.	Use of So	ocial Contac	ts in Rela	tion to 1	Birth Place
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	Female Labourers	Female Labourers Using Social Contacts	%
Born in Beypazari and surrounding villages	31	29	94
Born outside of Beypazari	14	12	86

Table 4. Use of Social Contacts in Relation to Years in the Same Neighbourhood.

	Labourers	Using Contacts	Social	%
More than 25 years	7	7		100
Between 5 to 25 years	27	25		93
Less than 5 years	11	9		82

The low costs of housing or rent (currently 243 TL on average) and living in Beypazari also contribute to the female labourers' spatial fixity or embeddedness, which

in turn, contributes to the development of social networks in the city's neighbourhoods. The education levels of informal female labourers were lower than the

rates in informal female labour for other possibly

higher-paying jobs, in other areas. Their average wage levels (390 TL) were lower than the minimum wage

level (527 TL in 2008). In sum, the lower reservation wages of informal female labour in the traditional food

production sector lead to fewer job searches and their

preferences for jobs close to their homes, which, in this case, are usually obtained through social contacts.

The passive search is also related to the higher levels of

embeddedness, which enable people to develop, over

time, more extensive informal social networks. The

findings showed that people who had grown up in

Beypazari were more likely to find jobs through

informal personal contacts (94%) than those who grew

up elsewhere (86%) (see Table 3). All the women who

lived in the same neighbourhood for more than 25 years

got their jobs through social contacts versus only 82%

of those who lived in the same neighbourhood for less

than 5 years (see Table 4).

city average (see Table 5). Female labourers in Beypazari have been known to be productive,

organized, and cheap.

Table 5. Education Level of Informal Female Labour (%).

Education Level	Beypazari	Female Labour	
Illiterate	0.6	4.5	
Literate	20.0	6.8	
Primary School	43.6	77.4	
Secondary school	11.4	6.8	
High School	13.3	4.5	
University	0.4	-	

Source: 2000 General Population Census, Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu.

Because of their low reservation wages, finding female labour is easier than finding male labour. Eighty-two percent of the business owners interviewed found their employees through friends, kin, acquaintances, and current employees working for them. In addition, 36% stated they have employed workers on the recommendation of their current employees, who could vouch for the character and work ethic of their referees. Not surprisingly, none of the employers used formal candidate search methods such as placing newspapers ads or enlisting employment agencies. The small business structures and strong social networks based on kinship also resulted in a high number of employers employing relatives or family members. E.g. one of our respondents, a fifty-three year old female labourer at the Değirmencioğlu hotel, mentioned,

> "This enterprise is owned by my son in law. When he needed a person for making "dolma" he offered me this job. He knew the 'dolma' I prepared was quite popular among our relatives. In addition, I was getting bored after the marriage of my children and getting this job was good for me. By this way, I am

not getting bored and I also earn money while spending my time with my friends here. Sometimes we work till late at night, but my husband does not mind, because he sees this place as our enterprise."

Indeed, the results show that 32% of business owners said they have employees who are also relatives, while 27% of employees mentioned that they are relatives of the owner. An employer shared the benefits of working with relatives: 'I know them well and I can trust them. I know how they work, and they are doing their job neatly and well'. He further emphasized that 'only people from Beypazari can prepare the traditional foods perfectly and appropriately, as they should be'.

#### Personal contacts

The findings show that 56% of the respondents' personal contacts came from other females (see Table 6), 58% of who were family and relatives (see Table 7). Including close acquaintances such as neighbours, this ratio increases to 85%.

Table 6. C	Gender of	f Personal	Contacts	Used ir	1 Obtaining	Current Job.
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Gender of Contact	Female Labourers	%	
Female	23	56	
Male	18	44	
Total	41	100	

	Female Lab	ourers
Origin of Contact		%
Family	12	29.3
Kin	12	29.3
Neighbours	11	26.8
Friends/acquaintances not specified as either work or community-related	6	14.6
Total	41	100.0

Table 7. Origin of Personal Contacts Used in Obtaining Current Job.

Moreover, contacts who were friends and acquaintances were predominantly female, while family and relative contacts were more likely to be male (see Table 8). These gender patterns in personal contacts have potential effects on gender-based occupational segregation.

Table 8. Type of Personal Contact.

Gender of Contact	Origin of C	Origin of Contact					
	Family	Kin	Neighbours	Friends/ acquaintances			
Female	2	6	10	5			
Male	10	6	1	1			
Total	12	12	11	6			

#### Role of spatial factors

In order to understand how the job search process influences gender-based occupational segregation, the role of spatial factors were also examined. Beypazari is a small, disconnected market, 1.5 hr away from the nearest city centre, Ankara. This distance makes it very difficult for female labourers to expand their job search because of the significant time and effort involved. Thus, female workers limit their search to Beypazari where most of the jobs in the city centre can be reached within 15 to 20 min by foot, thereby reducing the importance of job location attributes such as distance from home and transportation expenses in their job search (see Table 9).

Table	9.	Important	Job	Attributes	for	Female	Labourers
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Job Attributes	Female Labourers	%
Close to home	-	-
Good pay	-	-
Good benefits	-	-
The people you work with	11	30
Physical work environment	11	30

Easy to get to	1	3
Low transportation expense	-	-
Job is known previously	5	14
Job is easy	8	22
Job is suitable for women	3	8
Working conditions are flexible	2	5
There are no similar jobs in labour market	5	14
It is better than staying at home	4	11
There are no similar jobs in labour market	5	

The average age of informal female labourers in this sector is 44 years, with only 4% between 21 to 30 years of age. Because middle-aged women have lesser household responsibilities, they are able to work long hours and in less flexible working conditions, making them more desirable employees. Only two women in the study mentioned flexible working conditions as an important job attribute; they mentioned that household responsibilities including caring for their children and elderly family members force them to choose jobs that are closer to their homes.

Our study also found that the female labourers' embeddedness in their communities contributes to occupational segregation. As one of our respondents said, 'we find out about job opportunities in certain establishments from our neighbours. We all have the same jobs. Thus, it is important for me to live in this neighbourhood'. Another respondent also said,

"My neighbour works for a traditional food shop, preparing dolma for its customers in her house in two to three times a week. She informed me about the job. In a short time, I and five to six other female neighbours in the same apartment block were working together. In this way, we are able to both care for our children and earn money for our crucial needs without going to a job. Thus, living in this neighbourhood is important for me."

In sum, the nature of their job search has contributed to the segregation of these female labourers in traditional food production.

#### Job attributes

In general, most of the female labourers in this study hold these jobs for economic reasons, with almost half (49%) saying they work in these jobs out of their financial obligations and because job opportunities in Beypazari are somewhat limited. In addition, the earnings of these female labourers constitute a significant portion of their household's income, roughly 37% on average, with 8% earning 100% of the household income and 28% earning 50% and above. Twenty-five per cent of the respondents have also done secondary jobs such as sewing, embroidery, rug weaving, caretaking, dishwashing, and making pasta and tarhana at home. Because of the limited job opportunities available to them, these women have lower reservation wages and do not prioritize job attributes such as compensation or benefits as much.

The female labourers in this study also identified physical working conditions and ease of the job as important attributes. Twenty-seven per cent of these women have previously worked in agriculture such as in carrot and vegetable production. Many of these women have left their agricultural jobs, which have been taken up by the immigrants from the eastern cities of Turkey. They added that these jobs are easier and less tiring compared to agricultural jobs, where working conditions are tougher and working hours are longer especially during periods surrounding religious festivals, carrot festivals and weekends. In these circumstances, many of them worked 10.62 hours a day, 4.64 days a week. As one of our respondents, a 46 yearold female labourer working for Tas Mektep, shared,

> "working in a plantation is hard especially as I have muscle problems. Therefore, I needed to have an easier job. This job suits me and I have to help my sister financially. I work here from 8.30 am to 9.30 pm".

The ability to work with other women of the same age enables female labourers to enjoy these jobs. Based on the interviews, 'the people they work with' was shown to be an important criterion for 30% of the women. Indeed, being among peers creates an informal, familial environment where workers can eat food, drink tea, or take breaks together as they wish. This environment also helps them form a bond with their employer. One of our respondents said,

> "when the workload increases, we work harder and longer. However, we do not mind. On the contrary, we talk, laugh, and confide our problems in each other. We are not bored here, as opposed to just being at home", while another shares,

> "The main reason I hold this job in this business is my neighbours. Being with them makes me want to work here"

For these reasons, over half of the respondents (55%) said they were satisfied with their current working conditions, while 72% said their jobs meet their

expectations and preferences, and as such, would like to continue working in these positions in the future.

The results also showed that social networks play an important role in learning the skills and crafts, which families have traditionally passed on to their children. The results of this study show that 62% of female labourers learned how to make traditional foods before they were 18 years of age and 70% learned how to make these foods from their mothers. Sixty per cent of the respondents also said they have taught these skills to their daughters.

As mentioned earlier, informal female labour in Beypazari is comprised mostly of middle-aged women. There are two main reasons why young women often do not enter these informal labour markets. First, women working in informal jobs do not want their daughters to work in these same jobs, but instead want them to get more education so they can eventually earn more income. These women are aware of the benefits of education; the fact that the city is somewhat near Ankara where opportunities to get higher education opportunities are available also encourages families to educate their children. Second, people's opinions of young females working informally in this sector are generally not positive, as communities see these jobs as something more suitable for older women. In a small, traditional Turkish city like Beypazari, a man's honour is very vulnerable and is highly dependent on women's behaviour. By remaining inside the house or working within the immediate neighbourhood, a woman's virtue or namus as well as her male family members' reputation or honour is protected.

Prior to the last 10 to 15 years in Beypazari, women could not go to the city centre to run their errands, much less work there. A public relations consultant in the municipality said,

'In the beginning, the entry of women into these jobs is not easy. Women could not even travel to the city centre for their crucial needs. Thus, working in the city centre is out of consideration. For that reason, many bridal shops have been located in the edges of the city centre, so that women can meet their needs without entering the city centre'. He added, 'In the beginning, there were four to five women, whose husbands were working in the municipality, who began producing these foods with the encouragement of the municipality. One of them is my wife'.

In sum, owing to the economic development brought about by tourism, however, the boundaries between the public and private areas where women are allowed, have been blurred and gender relations reshaped. Although the social conservatism has been relaxed, opinions on young females entering the informal labour market have not changed much, which also leads to their segregation in the labour market as they become older. Even today, informal female labourers except for market stand owners generally work in the back areas of shops and mansion houses where they are not easily seen.

#### 6. DISCUSSION

This research on informal female labour in traditional food production in Beypazari shows that the women's use of social contacts and their job priorities reinforce both the localization of their job search and genderbased occupational segregation. Additionally, the city's small size and homogenous social structure and the existing kinships and friendships therein, facilitate the development of these types of contacts.

Meanwhile, the pioneering and active role of the municipality also plays an important role in the entry of women into and the regulation of the informal labour market. The municipality supports female labourers, especially those born in Beypazari, as it believes these women have the best knowledge of the local culture and food. It helps these female labourers secure jobs within its own establishments as well as with other employers. It has supported this sector's informal labour market using four basic instruments.

First, the municipality created effective business models for women entrepreneurs. To encourage entrepreneurship among its residents, it lowered its annual business fees (15 TL in 2009) and waived them for the most disadvantaged market stand owners. Over time, these women entrepreneurs thrived and began employing more informal female labourers as well. Second, Tas Mektep, a municipality-owned enterprise, provided raw materials such as egg flour to female labourers from low-income families who wanted to produce noodles, tarhana, and macaroni. This initiative encouraged housewives to undertake food production, and it was later adopted by other food production businesses. Third, the tourism association was established in 2003 to maintain standards and regulate wages and food prices in the sector. As a result, working conditions for women, even in informal jobs, have improved. Finally yet importantly, the municipality also encouraged the active participation of hotel owners in helping expand tourism-related production.

The findings of this article challenge the neoclassical job search model, which emphasizes supply side factors including worker characteristics such as education and experience and the workers' ability to assess employment opportunities in gender segregation. Our findings showed that most of the respondents found their jobs through informal social relationships, and their acceptance of job offers was not dependent on their reservation wage and potential long-term income. Because their social lives are dominated by other females, women's job information channels, spatial considerations, and job attributes differ from that of men. In addition, this passive job search contributes to higher levels of embeddedness in the communities, which enables people to develop, over time, more extensive informal social networks.

The regulations set by the municipality reduce the wage variance in Beypazari, contributing to lower search rates for other possible higher-paying jobs in the sector. This finding parallels those of Clark and Whiteman (1983) who observed that one's job search effort is directly related to one's reservation wage. This article also found a direct relationship between wages and skill level, as measured by the amount of formal education. The education levels of informal female labourers were lower than the city average (see Table 3). Coincidentally, their average wage (390 TL) is also lower than the minimum wage (527 TL in 2009). These findings are in line with human capital theory, which states that the men and women differ in their investment in human capital such as education and their job preferences owing to the differences in their interests and family responsibilities (Thomaskovic-Devey, 1993).

This article also found that the domestic division of labour and socialization processes excludes young females from the sector, which consists mostly of older, less-skilled, and less-educated females. This is also contrary to the traditional explanations offered by the labour segmentation theory, which overlooks the importance of social relations and socialization. The labour segmentation theory is incomplete in that it does not consider the role of one's everyday social relationships in his or her job search and employment.

The results showed that women who found their job through a male contact were less likely to be in a job in a female-dominated occupation compared to those who found their jobs through a female contact. This supports, to some extent, previous findings by Hanson and Pratt (1991), who discovered that women in femaledominated occupations in Worcester, Massachusetts were much more likely to have found their jobs either through formal search methods or through other women. This article also showed that if the informal female labourers obtained their jobs through their family- and kin-based social contacts, those contacts would most likely be male. However, if they found their jobs through neighbours or acquaintances, these contacts would most likely be female. These findings, to some degree, parallel those of Mencken and Winfield (2000), who found that women with strong male and female contacts had a higher probability of working in a female-dominated occupation.

These results support the network structure perspective, which states that the structure of women's social networks essentially limits their access to helpful contacts that could help them find gender-balanced jobs. In general, organizations and corporations are characterized by patriarchal cultural values, gender stereotypes, and social discrimination leading to gender inequality in the workplace, where women have less access to higher-status positions and are relegated to female-dominated jobs. The fact that female workers are also older, less educated, and less skilled also contributes to this outcome.

# 7. CONCLUSION

Previous studies (e.g. Shaw and Pandit, 2001) depending on developing countries show that informal agents (e.g. brokers, co-workers) and social networks play important role in regulation of labor market. As temporary jobs increase and formal employment decreases, informal labour will become an important driver of the local economic development in developing economies. Further research on this labour market's characteristics is needed to maximize its potential and guide formal agents in the regulation of this market on behalf of the labourers and their communities.

This study showed that women are not a homogeneous group, as is often portrayed in existing research. Rather, their preferences and motivations differ based on their age, interests, and life experiences. This article's analysis of informal female labourers shows that their job search processes differ from those of other women, that is, they are more likely to use personal and community-based contacts from both genders and have a different set of job priorities.

Consistent with previous research, this article found that informal female labourers in Beypazari value non-wage job attributes (Hanson and Pratt, 1991; Drentea, 1998) such as being able to work with friends, family, and women of the same age, and better working conditions compared to agricultural jobs, over traditional job attributes such as the job's proximity to their homes and suitable work hours. Results of the analysis also found that the informal female labourers' strong social, familial, and community ties contribute to their spatial fixity, which in turn links them to local information sources and places them in local labour markets. In general, female labourers in Beypazari place less importance on a job's location in their job search for several reasons: they have lesser household responsibilities at this stage in their lives; the district is a small, disconnected market with relatively limited job opportunities; and virtually every area in the district is easily accessible.

Traditional food production in Turkey is a new sector, originating from the tourism-led local economic development at the start of the millennium. As such, there has not been any study on the segregation of informal female labour in this sector. The findings of this article parallel those of other studies on the different sectors in Turkey (Ecevit, 1991; Kasnakoğlu and Dayioğlu, 1997; Kardam and Toksoz, 2004; Rich and Palaz, 2008) which show that occupational segregation and women's positions in the labour market are largely characterized by patriarchal cultural values, gender stereotypes, and social discrimination.

This research also highlights the characteristics of small, female-dominated labour markets: they have less household responsibilities and do not value job location as much as they do a job's social attributes. In contrast, in large labour markets, as shown by previous studies, spatial factors contribute significantly to occupational gender segregation (Hanson and Pratt, 1991; Mattingly, 1999). In order to understand the dynamic role of social relationships and spatial job attributes, further research on the different segments of informal female labour, especially according to their stage in the life cycle, in large labour markets and female-dominated jobs, is required.

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