

Securing “Security” amid Neoliberal Restructuring: Civil Society and Volunteerism in Post-1990 Turkey

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The 1980s and 1990s have generally been considered to mark the beginning of a new period of extensive restructuring, which inaugurated intense economic, political, and sociocultural transformations in many countries across the globe. It is widely held that these transformations fundamentally entailed elements of “liberalization”—a range of “neoliberal” policies that promoted fast-forward privatization of the public sector, relatively sustained dissemination of market structures, and the retreat of the state apparatus from the provision of “public services” (Clarke 1991, 2004). Notwithstanding the glorification of this restructuring, the “retreat” of the state and the ensuing “liberalization” have also been associated with a range of “vested fragilities” that emerged alongside: increased unemployment, widespread social and economic inequality, and a structural inadequacy in meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups in many societies. Diverse civil initiatives have been promoted to fill the gaps that threatened socioeconomic integrity in various countries. Sometimes overtly and sometimes through more ingenious ways, civil society has been called in as a stakeholder to manage and govern these vested fragilities in the new spaces of intervention that opened up after the retreat of much of the bureaucratic mechanisms of the state from social service provision.

This chapter focuses on how the retreat of the “over-burdened” and “cumbersome” state carried civil society organizations (CSOs) in Turkey to the forefront as the new and celebrated stakeholders in the management of the vested fragilities produced by accelerated marketization.¹ On the one hand, it

is no doubt futile and pointless to seek a clear breaking point in the way social services were provided in Turkey, and it is difficult to show how the bureaucratic apparatuses have been replaced by civil initiatives in recent decades. On the other hand, this article nonetheless points to a historical reconfiguration of the roles of stakeholders in the Turkish polity. This reconfiguration implies a new political rationality deployed through specific measures in order to maintain the social and political security of the Turkish nation.² In other words, the Turkish state does not have a monopoly on securing and governing the socioeconomic security of Turkish citizens against vested fragilities any longer, since it is joined in this by civil and private parties.

I focus on one of the striking implications of this reconfiguration. With the ongoing social restructuring and “liberalization” at hand, the Turkish state started to share not only the *requirement* of social service provision, but also the *duty* to manage and govern the insecurities that were perceived as threatening the Turkish nation. The latter were widely perceived by public opinion as divisive social conflicts centered on religion, ethnicity, and class. They were frequently called “social evils” that allegedly arose out of the insufficiency of the bureaucracy in providing social services, thus alienating segments of society from one another. Social security was reformulated in public discourse as a problematic register that figured as the root cause of all social conflicts in Turkish society. The clunky bureaucratic mechanism had to be transformed toward a shared sense of civic duty to assist the state in securing the integrity, and hence the security, of the nation. Along with what appears as a standard debunking of the cumbersome bureaucratic apparatuses (globally enforced by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund), we also see the emergence of a new political yet “civil” rationality of governing and securing security in the rise of CSOs in Turkey. This political rationality rests on the emergence of a new field or agency of intervention and governance that is mediated through a civic sense of duty to protect the nation against “social evils.”

Based on the observation that it is less the substitution of state with civil society and more the emergence of a shared field of collaboration that defines this transformation, I claim that civil society is no less an agent of governance in contemporary Turkey than the debunked bureaucratic apparatuses. In other words, it is not the erosion of the centralized state in favor of civil society as a “liberal force” that defines the neoliberal transformation in Turkey, but rather the emergence of a wide range of civic governmentalities that

call public and private parties alike to undertake the task of guaranteeing security against social evils (Foucault 1991, Berry, Osborne and Rose 1996, Dean 1999).³

Widely crowned as the novel catalysts of a postbureaucratic transformation toward civic liberties in Turkey in the 1990s, CSOs were engaged in unique governmental relations, programs, and projects within the framework of assisting the state through a series of collaborations. CSOs provided new governmental means for citizens to assist the “paralyzed” and unwieldy state apparatuses in confronting the “risks” and “threats” that were haunting the country. They became “fundamental civil elements”⁴ of initiating social transformations in Turkey by providing a new platform of volunteering for and undertaking the task of guaranteeing the security of their nation. What I seek to elucidate in here is, first, the ongoing process that is defined by the particular socioeconomic, political, and subjective vicissitudes and upshots of this “collaboration”; and second, the subjectivity of volunteerism that spans concrete local practices, formative articulations, and disruptions in actually providing services to people. Focusing on these practices, articulations, and disruptions eschews the predominant over-schematic portrayals of global shifts in state-society relations. To that effect, I aim to provide a perspective which replaces the abstract idea of global changes with a focus on emerging political rationalities and performances of local subjectivities in their particularities. The third and most fundamental theme of this article is the emergence of civil society as a governmental plane or register of social action that calls in specific sets of agents to secure the security of the nation by assisting the state. In that regard, it is vital to understand how CSOs and volunteers became the indispensable agents of “acting upon” society and governing the social evils or problems haunting it in the form of “divisive threats” and “risks” (Fisher 1997, Beck 1992, O’Malley 1996, Dean 1999).

I analyze here the governmental projects of one of the most important and powerful CSOs, TEGV (The Educational Volunteers Foundation of Turkey), and the narratives of volunteers working with TEGV in Istanbul with whom I conducted several in-depth interviews.⁵ Although TEGV explicitly focuses on education as a specific problem, it was striking to see that TEGV volunteers were consistently reconceptualizing the problem of education as being part of a larger register of risks and threats. Unless so-called responsible Turkish citizens urgently intervened in these problems, uneducated and undercivilized youths were destined to become dangerous subjects, that

is, possible perpetrators of all the social evils we know, ranging from petty crimes to ethnic or religious terrorism. In that sense, what defines TEGV volunteers is much less a preoccupation with education than with the civil subjectivity of prudence that “responsible citizens” are being called upon to adopt.

I look at civil society in contemporary Turkey and the political rationalities involved in this novel “civil subjectivity” from an ethnographic vantage point. I focus on how the discourses championed historically by the state (such as modernization and nationalism) could be reasserted and rearticulated by volunteers in everyday practices, along with glorification of civil liberties against the bureaucratic state. The fresh perspective provided by this ethnographic vantage point and the rearticulations it delineates complicate the dynamics of what we wish to call neoliberal transformations. In Turkey, the IMF prescriptions popularly known as structural adjustments do not merely consist of a set of macro policies that restructure the “economy” (if there ever were such a separate space at all). Structural adjustments also comprise a dynamic re-formation of the temporalities and spatialities of everyday lives, leading diverse segments of society to reconceptualize social security and seek their own means to access services like health and education. As a result, the rearticulation of social security as a civil and postbureaucratic political rationality relies as much on the contingencies and subjectivities of local populations affected by the “retreat” of the state, as on macrolevel policies. In that sense, my focus on the shifts in political rationality in Turkey is grounded in an ethnographic perspective on local contingencies and juxtapositions on the level of subjectivity. These contingencies and juxtapositions pose mostly unforeseeable syntheses of diverse ideas, ideologies, or concepts, and they are essential to understanding how neoliberal projects are contested and reinterpreted at different historical moments (Simone 2004). Nothing seems to be neoliberal *as such* before its local articulation and contestation.

Collaborative Subjects

A vital point that should be considered at the onset is that the rhetoric of “assisting the state” (which gradually paved the way for the widespread undertaking of the responsibilities of the state)⁶ and the ensuing sociopolitical agency of CSOs in Turkey correlates with the emergence of new subjectivities that glorified “civic responsibilities” of citizens. The state was no

longer considered as the paternal supra-agent of providing social services and governing the risks unleashed by social transformations that troubled the sociocultural life sphere of the population. The state apparatus was reimagined and discursively produced as just another initiative among others—it “obviously cannot provide everything for us”;⁷ we, as citizens, are obliged to intervene in the fate, security, and well-being of our nation through as many civil measures as we can come up with, and assist the state. I intend to elucidate here how this assistance has been ideologically, practically, and discursively articulated in Turkey in the form of a range of subjectivities that promote volunteering in CSOs and assisting the state as civic responsibilities of citizens.

Claiming to embody ideal citizens, the volunteers I met with commonly assumed a superior civil position that transcends the state, whereby “society” can be problematized as an object to be secured and disciplined as a whole (Foucault 1990). This problematization, moreover, seems to be deeply correlated with recent discourses in Turkey on the necessity of incarnating a homogeneous nation, while dexterously managing (or “governing”) the socioeconomic conflicts that are either unleashed or aggravated by a restructured and liberalized economy. As will be elaborated below in the section on volunteers, especially after the 1999 Marmara earthquake, narratives on the redundancy of state bureaucracy and red tape gave way to calls for more efficient governance, even among nationalist and Republican circles, substantially legitimizing the retreat of the state from the provision of social services. It was frequently argued that one “cannot expect everything from the state,” and citizens were enthusiastically called upon to join civil initiatives in order to assist the “paralyzed state”: they had seen that the state was not able to be there when they vitally needed it.⁸

Thus, a range of social conflicts and economic inequalities (which were acutely aggravated by the dramatic failure of the state to provide services after the earthquake to millions of affected people) became the elements of a novel scene of social action directed toward the dangers and risks that preoccupy (or are sometimes posed by) the “disadvantaged others” of Turkish society. Through civil interventions in the “other” (crafted by volunteer subjectivity for disciplining the “other”), the ideal vision of a homogeneous Turkish nation could be reinstated in a neoliberal context, in the form of securing society from risks and threats posed by a new epoch (Beck 1992). This especially seems to be the case in Istanbul, where differences among social

strata within society become intensely visible and agonistic in urban space, discursively crystallizing in the widespread portrayals of threatening (“disadvantaged”) classes versus the threatened (“well-off”).

Risks, threats, and dangers that encumber societies in divisive forms and weaken state apparatuses vary across geographies or histories. However, as most of the texts in this volume reveal, there was an increase in local unrest and violence during the decades that followed the 1980s on a global scale. Moreover, although these transcended the existing threshold of local conflicts and divergences (at least in form), we are not always able to reliably identify specific “causes” for them. Nevertheless, one does need to take into account the materially concrete complexity and diversity of these problems haunting societies and the unrest that crystallizes in different yet concrete forms of poverty, inequality, nationalism, exclusion, and so forth. I argue that the particular threats posed by these transformations in varying divisive forms in Turkey correlate with the articulation and dissemination of particular political rationalities of governing everyday lives: volunteerism, empowerment, and prudentialism. These political rationalities catalyze the emergence of new microregimes of “social security” in Turkey by calling the threatened segments of society to *volunteer* and act upon the threatening segments. The latter are *empowered* and responsabilized in order to govern the “threats” they pose to the former. Most fundamentally, the threats in question are supposed to be *prudently* discerned in order to secure the security of the Turkish nation.

Through my research on TEGV, I explored a range of contemporary civil mechanisms that provided the means to govern the “security” and “well-being of the population” in Turkey. Widespread among the volunteers of CSOs, these governing practices and strategies depoliticize a whole set of urban questions (like inequality and violence) by reproblematicizing them in personal or psychological terms—that is, in terms of self-development and self-responsibilization. Dramatically contradicting the promotion and idealization of civil society as a promising space of freedom and democracy, this chapter points at subjective mechanisms of governance inaugurated by and through civil society, whereby social insecurities are responded to or acted upon by the relatively well-off middle classes and elites in Turkey.⁹ Such an analysis will elaborate the concrete socioeconomic neoliberal conjuncture in Turkey through a particular emphasis on the modes of subjectivity that emerge along with it or even that makes it possible.

Turkey in the Post-1990s: Neoliberal Restructuring and CSOs

The 1980s have been considered a significant turning point in Turkish history. The pervasive effect of globalization as a worldwide trend with huge economic and political consequences (economic liberalization being the foremost) has been coupled in Turkey with the postcoup restructuring of the legal and social system under the aegis of the military establishment.¹⁰ In this paradoxical coupling of repressive and liberal transformations in state-society relations, new actors with new demands have begun to make their voices heard. Especially in the late 1990s, Turkey has undergone a rapid political and sociocultural change. As the political landscape has been forcefully and ruthlessly cleared of the intense struggles of left- and right-wing ideological movements of the 1970s, Kurds, Islamists, and feminists have become the new powerful actors of politics, tantalizing the established institutional political order with critiques of the authoritarian experience of modernization. Meanwhile, relations with the European Union set a particular agenda of democratization through which the proliferation of CSOs was further promoted. Due to the combination of several historical factors, the increasing dissemination of CSOs in the 1990s has been celebrated by almost the entire political spectrum in Turkey. It has been widely argued that the crisis of state-centric modernity has given rise to the elevation of civil society to the status of an extremely important actor and arena for the democratization of state-society relations (Keyman and İçduygu 2003). Representing different ideological interests and political demands, civic organizations are considered to be the “expansion of society” against the predominance of the strong nation-state.

Indeed, it would be erroneous to neglect the new spaces of social action that civil society opens. These definitely contribute to a more democratic social and political polity in Turkey, since they provide means of representing different voices that were repressed by Kemalist modernity (Toprak 1996, Keyman and İçduygu 2003). Yet in the new conjuncture that has emerged in the aftermath of the 1999 Marmara earthquake, a particular definition of civil society has begun to be prevalent in the public realm. This definition portrays civil society as a space of intervention in the fateful state of the polity for the sake of assisting and supporting the state, exactly on the points or areas where its legitimacy and effectivity has regressed, rather than as a space of action for the repressed voices to make demands and to pursue political activities.

I suggest that this is an essential point, since almost all the existing analyses and empirical studies focus on the contribution that civil society makes to “democratization” in Turkey (Heper 1991, Toprak 1996), thereby disregarding and even obscuring its emergence as an associational space where subjects *act upon* other subjects in order to assist the state in accomplishing its historic mission of modernization. By volunteering as loyal citizens and taking over the duties of the “weakening state,” individuals are increasingly participating in CSOs that are established to empower and responsabilize disadvantaged segments of society concerning “problems” like education and health. This process entails both the emergence of a middle-class elite that assists (rather than make demands on) the state and the ensuing depoliticization of civil society, whereby the CSO is posited as a depoliticizing public actor (Fisher 1997). Furthermore, despite various ideological differences with governments since 1980 and the episodic tensions between major CSOs and the current conservative Justice and Development Party (AKP) government, CSOs were always willing to assist the provision of services, avoiding head-on confrontation.¹¹ All governments (particularly after 1990s) have welcomed the CSOs working for public service provision, as several projects conducted by TEGV reveal. Similarly, the ideological clash between secularism and Islamism in the 1990s or the tensions between the secularist military establishment and AKP’s neoliberal conservatism in the 2000s hardly affected the institutionalization of state-civil society cooperation.

The 1999 Marmara earthquake was a momentous incident in state-society relations in Turkey.¹² The disaster sustained this collaboration between CSOs and the state, and maintained the existing associational definition of civil society as a space of intervention in the fate of the nation. It is primarily after this incident that the state has been questioned in its “conceptual” integrity by almost all social segments that were desperately seeking for other agents in providing social services.¹³ CSOs have begun to gain public visibility and legitimacy through widespread and appealing public campaigns organized since the earthquake. The media, academy, and even some state authorities have begun to portray CSOs as indispensable elements. To put it differently, it is only after the earthquake that the discourse of the retreat of the state has been both openly pronounced and acclaimed in the Turkish public. The discourse on the insufficiency of the state in providing social services (like health, education, or pensions) has been ingeniously sutured to various discourses that claimed the indispensability of CSOs. However, critiques of the

state were not only celebrations of its death as a cumbersome entity blocking the civil initiative of liberalization but also an acknowledgment of its rebirth as an administrative technician of digital governance, clearing the red tape for the sake of promoting civil society. The “public,” as the widespread CSO discourses basically claimed, were pretty convinced that the state was dilapidated in its institutions, and the time had come to get rid of its monopoly on public initiatives. An army of volunteer citizens in CSOs were ready to take over of the obligations that the state could not fulfill anymore.

Thinking through the series of concepts that form what Victor Turner calls social drama (“breach,” “crisis,” “redress” and “reintegration”) (Turner 1974), one can argue that the earthquake apparently opened a *breach* in the political stage. What is remarkable here is the fact that the political trauma exceeded the psychological trauma of well over ten thousand deaths, even transubstantiating it as a motive for promoting political change. This political trauma has become the hallmark of the subsequent phase of *crisis*. The breach that occurred with the earthquake also carried the risk of recurrence. The explicit fear that it was highly probable that such a disaster (or an even worse one) could happen again and that, as “we” have seen, the state will not be able to save “us” was very common among the public.¹⁴ Some even claimed that the state “died under the bricks” and would not recover again. The question that was widely circulated was: what will happen if another disaster emerges? Strikingly, the real specter of danger that haunted “us” was not the probability of a new earthquake, but the desperate vision of a vacuum of responsibility, which once belonged to the state—the responsibility of “prolonging life,” as Foucault would have put it. In the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault had articulated the shift from the sovereign’s power to “take life” toward the modern state’s power to “enhance life” (Foucault 1990: 139). The biopolitical production of life has been the ultimate source of state power that dissolved with the event of the earthquake. People lost their sense of security of life (as a provision of the state’s being there), thereby diminishing the biopolitical legitimacy of the Turkish state.

The breach that opened up with the earthquake in Turkey was gradually *redressed* through the emphasis on the success of the CSOs and on the necessity of collaborating with the state. Of course, many CSOs continue to exert pressure on the Turkish state and incumbent governments on different issues like human rights, working conditions, women’s rights, and so on. Yet one can hardly disregard the fact that the CSOs that pursue the reconstruction

of the social realm through the utilization of feelings of responsibility are much more publicly visible and influential in Turkey. In the debates that took place after the earthquake, civil society was conceptually reformulated as being in collaboration with the state. Many human rights defenders or CSOs that are related to the Kurdish problem, poverty, religious freedom, and women's rights have been marginalized and delegitimized for being "ideological." Moreover, the relationship between the CSOs and the state, which is reformulated along the terms of "better governance," requires a rethinking of the distinction between the state and civil society, as has been traditionally emphasized by the liberal understanding of civil society. What is at stake here is not merely the overcoming or sublation of this difference but also the striking culmination of a new sense of citizenship.¹⁵ The new citizen, both loyal to the nation and sensitive to the problems of the population, represents the subjectivity of being a part of civil society not for the sake of freedom and democracy, but to support the state and thereby serve society.

These CSOs assume a place in managing, circulating, and performing what Foucault calls a "conduct of conducts" in neutralizing risks and threats posed by perceived social evils by setting new norms and practices, and thereby acting out a new form of civic governmentality. This process is peculiar to the long and continuing metaprocess of *reintegration*, again in Turner's (1974) terms. In this respect, TEGV is among the most eminent CSOs that emerged as "saviors" after the neoliberal retreat of the state and the ensuing social crisis. However, before shedding some light on the terms of this reintegration through an analysis of TEGV's institutional discourse in comparison to the volunteers' discourse, I would like to elucidate what I understand from the "neoliberal juncture" in concrete theoretical and historical terms.¹⁶ In this way we can construe the historical specificity of the political rationalities that make up neoliberalism in Turkey and relate it to the neoconservative "moral tone" that weaves the social network of social service provision through local-communitarian terms.

Neoliberal Rationalities and Complexities

As Nikolas Rose points out in his early work, although neoliberalism is generally posed as a critique of political government, much of the neoliberal policies around the globe nevertheless retain the presupposition that "the real is programmable" by the authorities: "Neoliberalism does not abandon the 'will

to govern'. It maintains the view that failure of government to achieve its objectives is to be overcome by inventing new strategies of government that will succeed" (Rose 1996: 57). Despite the need for caution against deeply problematic portrayals of neoliberalism, imbuing it with an ambiguous form of agency beyond specific localities and temporalities, I underline the relevance of "the new strategies of government" to the local historical constellation of social problematizations in Turkey and elsewhere. These strategies (which are concerned with various issues ranging from health to education) portray actors as subjects of responsibility, autonomy, and choice, while, on the other hand, creating and maintaining a critical distance between formal political institutions and other social actors. The subject imagined by and practiced through neoliberal political rationalities dexterously harmonizes duty and responsibility with free choice and enjoyment. Similarly, Pat O'Malley also emphasizes how the novel technology of "prudentialism" (reducing collectivist risk management to the subject's responsibility of self-management) perforates all spheres of social life (O'Malley 1996: 199–202). He further points out how the emergent language of "working together" signifies a shift of responsibility. Risk management becomes an everyday practice of the self, a moral responsibility, or duty of the self. The individual becomes the main "responsible" agent for managing a series of macrolevel problems ranging from health to crime.

I use the term "neoliberalism" in a similar sense in the Turkish case, denoting an advanced yet loose and dynamic form of political liberalism, which involves the rearticulation of some of the central concepts of liberalism with respect to societal self-responsibilization and risk management that is, a reconstellation of both new and old technologies of subjectivity and political rationality (Foucault 1990, Foucault 1991, Foucault 2001, Burchell, Gordon and Miller 1991, Berry, Osborne and Rose 1996). I consider this rearticulation in Turkey as relying upon the agencies of a diversity of social actors who effectively seek to engineer particular forms of social governance for a variety of purposes, which are mostly irreducible to (or even contradictory with) each other. As many ethnographic studies also demonstrate (Comaroff and Comaroff 1999; Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Rutherford 2004), the analytical concept of "neoliberal governmentality" is heuristically useful in making sense of this and similar instances of rearticulation, since it satisfactorily captures a form of social governance (or a wider political rationality). It pinpoints techniques of discipline that

are juxtaposed with technologies of self-government that function as what Foucault calls “conduct of conducts.”

One should also note the increasing relevance of the proliferation of new psychological techniques for “marginalized” segments of society (ranging from cheap self-help booklets to engaged NLP seminars) as a basic pillar of the political rationalities that are loosely associated under the banner of neoliberalism. The striking proliferation of these techniques is acted out not by providing salutary services or benefits, but rather through the active involvement and engagement of the marginalized people who are targeted in a whole array of programs that are technically designed to reconstruct them as “active citizens.” They entail restoring a sense of self-worth and self-esteem, and engaging people in a continuous process of self-promotion (Cruikshank 1996). Frequently guided by the expertise provided by social, educational, and psychological sciences, these discourses of “acting on the self” redefine a very wide array of problems (ranging from child abuse to educational failure) as being based on the psychological states of people—and especially the urban poor to whom most of the social problems are attributed.

The critique of empowerment projects, however, often points at how these focus on the individual capacities of the poor and consequently minimize the social and political causes of poverty. The poor are encouraged to be entrepreneurial subjects and to find solutions for their livelihoods through changes in lifestyles that they are supposed to bring about themselves. Hence, the poor are posited as both the problem and the solution to poverty (Kamat 2004, Brin Hyatt 2001). In her study on empowerment programs on Indian women, Aradhana Sharma critically analyzes how the discourse of empowerment is effectively deployed to integrate subaltern women into the middle-class terrain of rights and citizenship, turning these marginalized women into law-abiding, self-responsibilized subjects (Sharma 2006: 80).

Moreover, the very portrayal of the advent of these technologies (by works loosely gathered under the banner of “governmentality studies”) suffers from a deeply problematic lack of sensitivity to local variations and articulations that make it possible for these technologies to be circulated through a wide range of spaces. However, many ethnographic researches from different parts of the globe reveal a diversity of trajectories in the operation of NGOs and/or CSOs. A number of recent studies on problems of urban poverty and marginalization in Latin America, for instance, emphasize that a major change is the emergence of the new intermediate sector of nongovernmental organizations,

shouldering increasing responsibility for the delivery of social goods (Gonzales de la Rocha et al. 2004). In the Latin American case, researchers usually observe a larger rate of social and political participation by popular classes in social movements that challenge the state on concrete issues and problems, reflecting various forms of collective interests that are rooted in gender, race, and ethnicity. These researches further demonstrate that “the poor” do not blame themselves for “failure” and instead experience a sense of entitlement, recognizing their rights as citizens more than ever (188). Studying AIDS service NGOs in north India, Kavita Misra also notes the increasing acquisition of the language of rights by common people (Misra 2006). Thus, part of the ethnographic data on empowerment programs informs us that empowerment might create an awareness of social inequality and mobilize collective action. Being mobilized by employing the rhetoric of rights and entitlements against forms of social domination, these programs focus more on social change than on improvement of individual capacities. Misra’s work in north India competently exposes how the discourse of empowerment is transposed into a discursive strategy that represents a desire to create a transformation from below. When articulated by advocate groups, the discourse of empowerment may open up progressive spaces of political action for disadvantaged groups.

Similarly, the rhetoric of empowerment is redefined by several competing actors with a diversity of political agendas in major urban centers in Turkey. There are CSOs that try to promote human rights, increase political freedom, and demand economic equality, yet there are also other CSOs enacted by nationalist concerns and by desires to ensure security and order in urban space. Obviously, the playing out of this competition does not take place on equal or pluralist terms. Some organizations and projects not only have more salient economic and social resources but also inhabit and speak from a strikingly forceful political and/or ideological terrain, which facilitates an even more perverse and institutionalized hegemony in Gramscian terms. TEGV, for instance, displays a well-established historical alliance between the ideological (modernist/Republican) and economic elites, and vast institutional power. The founders and the executive board of the organization consist of well-established business figures, industrialists, and corporate executives with strong ties to the main economic, social, and educational institutions in Turkey. In my research, I explored the mechanisms through which the well-being and security of the population is “governed” through empowerment projects enacted by CSOs *beyond* the welfare regime of the nation-state. I argue that

it is through these mechanisms that the Republican modernist elites of Turkey responded to the haunting social insecurities, which were accelerated and deepened by neoliberal processes of restructuring. It is striking to see that the ideological, discursive, and institutional frameworks associated with the modernist welfare state of the preceding century are not debunked totally, but instead are reutilized in very peculiar juxtapositions of nationalist Republicanism and neoliberal political rationalities and technologies of subjectivity that craft novel governmentalities of civility. Consequently, this analysis elaborates the concrete socioeconomic junctures of neoliberalism in the social realm through a particular emphasis on modes of subjectivity. I elaborate on this through a comparative analysis of TEGV's (institutional) discourse and the volunteer's discourses.

TEGV's Institutional Discourse: Containing Danger and Educating the "Self"

TEGV was founded in 1995 by fifty-five "leading names" from business and academic circles. The foundation provides a comprehensive program of non-formal educational activities aiming to develop personal and social skills in children between the ages of seven and sixteen. Programs are organized in five learning areas, supported by a curriculum and implementation guides, volunteer manuals, and student materials. The books are prepared in collaboration with scientific advisory committees and taught in the foundation's centers, parks, and mobile units throughout Turkey during eight-week terms throughout the year. Since its foundation, TEGV has reached more than one million children with the active support of over 20,000 volunteers at eighty-six locations all over the country. It has considerable public visibility, more than any other CSO in Turkey.

Addressing the Turkish public, TEGV maintains that the state is unable to fulfill its duty in education and asserts that "voluntary institutions, the private sector, and ordinary citizens should share the state's responsibility by supporting the ministry, improving the existing educational system, and creating efficient and applicable educational programs."¹⁷ In this call, the problematization of education becomes central, along with the discourses of "danger" and "lack." The discourse of danger, which is central to the decades-old republican and secularist Kemalist imaginary, is among the fundamental pillars of TEGV's discourse, since it portrays TEGV as a savior akin to the position of the earlier

Kemalists. This is not the least coincidental, since elites and committed supporters of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's doctrine perceived themselves as guardians of the Republic ever since its first decades. There is a constant yet ambiguously articulated theme of "danger" stemming from some parts or segments of society, against which TEGV appropriates a self-image of protector and savior. Nevertheless, the concrete sources or causes of these dangers, as well as their peculiar nature, are never properly addressed and articulated in unequivocal terms. Interestingly, this ambiguity and representative indeterminacy concerning the specific dangers points at the issues that TEGV refrains from dealing with directly. Naturally, it is futile to expect a civil initiative engaged in nationwide education to address and properly articulate the political traumas of the Turkish polity. However, it is striking that despite the very absence of overt engagement with these "problems" and "social evils" haunting society, the latter are insistently articulated in a wide range of TEGV booklets, brochures, and websites, and equivocally represented as "harm's way" from which the coming generations should be protected.¹⁸ This "harm" interestingly merges the Kemalist perception of threat (frequently attributed to the minorities and Islamists) with the neoliberal problem of risk (unleashed by the increasing socioeconomic inequalities that become visible particularly in urban space).

Looking at the places where TEGV builds its centers, and drawing from the formal and informal interviews that have been conducted, the organization seems to have three broad target concerns. First, the poverty of marginalized segments in the metropolises: this is considered to be creating its own "degenerate" culture, through which it produces "discontent" that is productive of other "dangers." The second concern is immigration from the southeastern provinces and ensuing immigrant activism: this comprises the emerging Kurdish activism among immigrants and different radical-leftist politicizations of social problems in other segments of the population. The third concern is with the rise of Islamism and especially that of "Gülen schools," which provide an alternative means of education as well as other facilities to urban dwellers, yet cause a reactive discontent among the secular elite.¹⁹ These concerns are all interconnected for TEGV. Since the present conservative government no longer wishes to carry on the Kemalist mission of modernizing the nation and cannot struggle against these "dangerous elements" efficiently, TEGV assumes the position of savior.

The education envisaged by TEGV is obviously related to the earlier Turkish modernist mission of creating a homogeneous nation, which entails

“generating and sustaining our societal culture,” in TEGV’s words. TEGV official documents contain abundant claims to its leading, enlightening, and savior role for the entire nation—the typical role assumed by the modernist state in its historiography in Turkey (Zurcher 1993). Yet, beyond the fact that TEGV acts within the framework of modern nationalism and, in a way, sustains or proliferates it, the CSO has a very distinctive discourse that is irreducible to modern nationalist discourse—the discourse of empowerment. For instance, the “abilities” or “talents” prioritized in TEGV centers for development are: first, “personal strategies” such as self-confidence, analytical-critical thinking, self-discipline, and creativity; second, “social strategies” such as communication, empathy, collaboration, problem solving, responsibility, and emotion and stress management; and third, “universal strategies” such as perceiving values, implementing them, and creating a difference. These talents, which connect the personal, the social, and the universal, become the expressions of a new subjectivity. Words that are employed in expressing these talents put a strong emphasis on the “self,” on “being active,” and on “responsibility.” In this sense, the term “individual” is overloaded with qualities, which simultaneously make it self-reliant and self-responsible. Moreover, the task of developing social talents emphasizes the problem-solving ability of individuals, as is strikingly implied in “emotion and stress management.” Controlling and directing emotions and stress becomes a social quality that one has to acquire to make life more manageable.

Hence education has been systematically redefined and reproblematicized in a particular way throughout the discourse of TEGV. Within this particular problematization, multiple programs are designed in order to create citizens and individuals who are “conscious” of both their own nation and the changing parameters of the globe. Values like “consensus” and “harmony” are emphasized alongside individual responsibility and competition. TEGV overtly emphasizes that its systematic and planned efforts are geared toward achieving specific effects on children. These effects revolve around themes such as autonomy, creativity, responsibility, and cooperation.²⁰

The idea that one can shape one’s own life is also prevalent in many TEGV’s projects. This involves exalting “life strategies” as the fundamental form of knowledge that an individual should acquire. To give an example, the activity dubbed “I can nourish myself” teaches children the “proper” ways of nourishment. This project, an outcome of the cooperation between TEGV and Nestlé on the basis of TEGV’s concept of “endowing the children with

life strategies,” reformulates the problem of nourishment in terms of “consciousness,” thereby obscuring the structural inequality that deprives the masses of access to resources of health and nutrition. Through these and similar activities, the problem shifts from lack of access to resources toward lack of knowledge on proper nourishment. There is an explicit concern with the well-being of individuals and their future. However, the chief and sole agent responsible of sustaining this well-being appears to be the individual himself or herself. This project is only one among many collaborative projects enacted through complicated alliances between state institutions, CSOs, and the private sector.

Volunteers as Ideal Citizens: Seeking the Future

Volunteers are the most essential agents through which this discourse (which reproblematises social problems in specific ways) is articulated, instantiated, and spread. My interviews reveal how complicated forms of power, desire, and fear are embroiled in the volunteer subjectivity. Volunteers are very careful to convey the message of the organization appropriately, and hence quite often seem to identify with its aims. Despite momentary lapses, hesitations, and occasional desperation, they are in a continuous and overt attempt to convince me of the value and importance of volunteering in TEGV. Yet, not surprisingly, their entire narrative also reveals ambiguities and perplexities which confirm that they are not uniform implementers of a similarly conceived homogeneous project. Although they share common social and educational backgrounds and are motivated by similar concerns and desires, they face difficulties in performing their activities with children in marginalized neighborhoods and presenting themselves as “models.” Narrating their own performance, they often complain about the “ungovernability” of the children’s lives in the face of multiple forces pulling them in different directions. This ungovernability may at some points reinforce their desire to govern, yet at other moments produce unease and self-examination. This elicits practices that are not propounded or even approved by the organization.

Taking for granted the recent retreat of the state from providing welfare provisions in Turkey, volunteers overtly present their aspirations to “support” the state by participating in CSOs. This aspiration makes a continuous and insistent call on the middle class, and demands an efficient governance of society. Middle-class volunteerism reveals how some urban residents can

build a particular emotional field in the city, reflecting a desire for cooperation through a micropolitics of alignment (Simone 2004: 12). This fervently expressed demand for an ordered reintegration of the marginalized into urban structures that have been fragmented through neoliberalization reproduces the Kemalist project of top-down modernization through the dual construction of “capable citizens” and “needy *halk* [commoners].”²¹ This distinction, which also blames the “educated and capable but insensitive citizens for being irresponsible,” presents volunteerism as an ideal space of citizenship and education as the ultimate medium of modernization. Therefore, volunteers commonly believe that many more individuals, or “citizens,” should become a part of CSO projects.

By perceiving education as the fundamental cure that will decisively solve all the other problems, and therefore becoming active in relation to the future of the nation, volunteers respond positively to the call of the foundation, which emphasizes “future” and “hope.” Therefore they transpose the passivity of “watching” and “worrying” to the necessity of “doing something” and render themselves part of a project that works in professional ways. The discourse on “doing something” also creates a self-responsibilizing effect, leading the volunteers to think that the problems of the country will be solved when all the people become volunteers and do something themselves, and that they can (and indeed should) do something. This pseudocollective way of thinking individualizes the problems, while the representations thereof result in a discourse of “individual responsibility.” Within this discourse, problems are technicalized, as a result of which there emerges the expectancy that technical projects will complement where individual efforts fail. This newly emerging space of power summons all the responsible citizens to resolve the problems of their society, while, in the discourse of volunteers, certain families and their children are problematized in such a manner that their life-spheres become spaces of intervention.

According to the volunteers, the children’s families cannot provide them with proper means of living. Hence they see themselves as saviors of the poor children of slums. The family is discursively constructed as indifferent, ignorant, lazy, disorganized, and so on. This representation of the family as a bankrupt institution failing to meet the needs of children opens up a legitimate space for TEGV’s intervention in “the social” by providing the means for meeting these needs. Moreover, the endless reiteration of the same discourse homogenizes the space to be effectively intervened in. It provides

coherence among the subjectivities of different volunteers and renders complicated problems easily governable. The discourse of blaming the family, continuously being put into circulation among the volunteers, productively renders the representations it produces “real,” thereby creating a legitimate space of governmentality and its legitimate set of actors. Producing a discursive space of social intervention through educative and moralizing techniques against the “uncontrollable” and “unpredictable” mass of people, TEGV thereby approaches children not only with the courses offered in the education center but also with activities that are envisioned to affect the families and their social environment as a whole.

Parallel to the discourse of blaming the family, unemployment (of the fathers) is portrayed by the volunteers as a problem of lack of will. Fathers are generally portrayed as men who do not work or who invent reasons for not working. Through such representations of lack of will on the part of the poor families, the volunteers’ own will and resolution are portrayed as twofold, because they both earn their own money and help others who fail to earn. Moreover, unemployment remains a theme for which the neoliberal feeling of compassion and social responsibility has no place at all (Garber 2004, Berlant 2004). Since this action-oriented approach claims that there always is a job for everybody, the “slothful” are the ones to blame (Woodward 2004: 77). If you do not work, it is your own fault. In the neoliberal economy, where an entrepreneurial culture is becoming more and more widespread, unemployment is turned into a problem of lack of will or talent. In other words, it is reconfigured in terms of what the Comaroffs call an “entrepreneurial subject,” who has the task of cultivating and harvesting its will and resolution to empower, perfect, and market itself: You will find a job only if you really want to and are ready to do whatever it takes to get it. Similarly, compassion works only through techniques that are organized to initiate an entrepreneurial sense of self-empowerment in the children and to build the will to transform oneself (Garber 2004). In that sense, in the eyes of the TEGV volunteers, the failed families have either refrained from inculcating this will in their children or were lacking any sense of it. The Comaroffs’ work explores the rise of this entrepreneurial subject and, in reference to Foucault’s later writings, maintains that this development distinguishes neoliberalism from its historical precursors (Comaroff and Comaroff 2009: 51). In the emphasis on capacity and self-care, our entire existence is expected to serve the market, since the recent neoliberal fantasy demands the mobilization of each and

every aspect of one's individuality for the purpose of profit making; the most fundamental capital for an entrepreneur is subjectivity itself. Consequently, we are *all* entrepreneurs who are under a continuous market pressure to find creative means to utilize our most precious capital.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful as to whether all societies or groups around the globe understand the same thing from "entrepreneurialism." Rather than being a coherent systematic project, it is redefined in each specific context in relation to its particular history. What is more interesting is the particular entangling of entrepreneurialism as a current historical impetus with local historicity. Agents with different interests and desires reinterpret it in different ways. The volunteers I spoke to link entrepreneurialism to other projects in their attempts to govern poverty. In other words, they do not want to create an entrepreneurial subject as such, but entrepreneurialism becomes part of a broader heuristic set of complex governance projects to contain urban unrest. Moreover, not only is entrepreneurialism reinterpreted in local contexts but the very interpreters also express their confusion as to its promises.

In their valorization of will as the sole means of bringing success and employment, volunteers seem to feel uneasy at times when they suspect that will might be inadequate for the problems facing society. In fact, most of the volunteers vaguely address the economic destitution of the children and their families throughout the interviews. Nevertheless, when asked whether education is an adequate means of solving these "economic" problems, after a brief hesitation they insist on the primordial importance of education as containing bright potentials and consequences "to come," which will change the children's lives. This insistence on the future consequences of education emphasizes the change of point of view for the future generations. The children are expected to change (unlike their families, who could not), and the future generations are expected to change even more. This narrative of gradual change and development contains an urge to resolve the social problems associated with poverty, migration, and urban segregation, and to lead the children to integrate into the urban life within which they feel alien. The ultimate aim, phrased as "changing their points of view," is to direct and manage the children's subjectivities, especially their dreams and desires, as exemplified in the promotion of their wish to go to the university. When volunteers come to the point of realizing that they cannot promise by any means an immediate resolution of current problems (that is, poverty and many other problematic issues haunting the lives of the children that are not directly

mentioned at all), they begin to dream of a distant future in which the children they work with and their families will be in a better condition.

Remedies for a Haunted Nation: Securing Security, Guaranteeing the Future

In the critical literature on educational sciences, it has frequently been argued that “education” has proved to be one of the perfect means of preventing social danger and producing well-regulated forms of liberty by supervising working class children in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Hunter 1988, Popkewitz 2000). Similarly, TEGV’s relation to the children and to their “integration” takes place not only through having the children participate in “civilized society” by making them become eloquent and self-reflective individuals but also by preventing them from becoming social deviants posing immediate forms of danger. Reaching out to what the volunteers see as a “potential thief,” a “usurper,” or a “paint thinner addict” is supposed to be helpful in this respect. Through the role model of the volunteer, these potential criminals are to be transformed into obedient citizens who are respectful of the nation and the state. A certain sensibility toward “containing danger” is almost always evident in the discourse of the volunteers. They explain crime through personal traits such as the level of education or material destitution. The pronoun “we” refers to a particular social class that does not commit such crimes, yet will be negatively affected by them. The volunteers abundantly narrate how it has become much more dangerous to live in urban space due to risks that cannot be governed properly by governments and municipalities. If the “danger” that is represented by the “potential thief” is not contained, it will go on harming the class they themselves belong to, rendering the civil initiative of guaranteeing a “secure future” futile. Therefore “we” have to educate these children with patience.

The volunteers’ endeavor to take their own precautions against the problem of security by educating and empowering the children (whom they consider potential criminals) to become prudent subjects is itself a perfect instance of prudent subjectivity. Thinking that they can prevent the children from becoming criminals by educating them, volunteers thereby project their own assumed prudential subjectivities to the children. A derivative of entrepreneurial individualism, the prudent individual has to take the initiative concerning security. But the latter term transcends in meaning the usual focus on reduction of

crime, and refers more broadly to the biopolitical underpinnings of the political rationalities that make up civil society. It also shows the ultimate connection between volunteerism, empowerment, and prudentialism as the fundamental pillars of civil association in Turkey. This prudential subjectivity fuses the two basic constituents of governmentality: individual and population. The desire for a more moral individual reflects the desire for a more moral and more secure population, which is reflected in anxieties of securing security by articulating a civil sphere/model of conduct of conducts. Every individual who learns the norms of civility renders the ideal of a civilized society more possible. The well-being of the nation, state, and society become exchangeable in this discourse. The “saved child” and the “saved society” are jointly idealized by the volunteers. The fantasy of moralization and betterment spreads from the child to his or her social environment and hence to the whole of society. This line of reasoning feeds even more to the discourse of blaming the family, since it represents the true source of problems as lying in the families, who allegedly fail to initiate the moralization and betterment of their children.

The problematization of the children and their families as constituting a space of intervention, as argued above, excludes many problems like the Kurdish problem, violence, structural unemployment, and so on. To reiterate, although a foundation devoted to education is not expected to address, say, the Kurdish problem, the way in which social problems haunting the security of the nation are associated with education, subjectivity, psychology, and so forth performs the discursive operation of cancelling out specific forms of addressing political problems. As the earlier arguments above hinted, such an exclusion can only be possible through the individualization of social problems. This works on the basis of two discourses: the modernist Kemalist discourse trying to civilize the children and the neoliberal empowerment discourse trying to teach them self-government. In TEGV centers, the volunteers attempt to overcome the basic problem of the “failure to modernize” through daily life practices of Kemalist pedagogy, which can be called codes of civility. Beyond the attempt to develop these codes, volunteers also attempt to induce certain emotions and behaviors in children through novel techniques. These techniques of building self-confidence and creating hopes about the future aim to initiate self-responsibilization among children. In practice, the two intertwine with each other: the children are expected to acquire qualities that will render them “modern” in the Kemalist sense and “self-reliant” in the neoliberal sense. They constitute the fundamentals of a

discourse that tries to overcome the insecurity of the neoliberal context by merging the desire for a stable market economy with the desire for a strong Turkey. In this hegemonic discourse, one is expected to be both loyal and responsible, that is, a citizen who is a harmonious part of the homogeneous nation and who is capable of settling one's own problems.

The distinctions and contrasts produced by the volunteers to represent their relations with the local community also reveal how educated and modernized middle classes conceive the migrant residents of poor marginalized neighborhoods. In their contradictory conceptions of the “needy” and “lacking,” volunteers reconstruct their own identities by means of their limited encounters with the urban other. It is through the production and reproduction of differences, such as the one between “modern/responsible citizen” and “premodern/needy population,” that complex relations of power and intervention can take place. As Timothy Mitchell (2000: 23) argues, the very act of producing differences symbolizes the “performance of the modern,” as a result of which the construction of modernity as a project is absolutely related to this incessant production. In their valorization of industriousness, orderliness, and modern art—in their very representation of urban culture and of civilized urbanites—the volunteers portray the poor migrants as “distortions.” The existence of the latter poses not only a physical security threat but, perhaps more important, a symbolic threat to the urban culture with which the middle classes identify themselves. Volunteers resort to contrasting representations while interpreting their encounters with the children and the neighborhood, because it is this very contrast that produces the differences between the volunteer and the poor migrant. The volunteer bears a subjectivity that is discursively articulated only in reference to these encounters between the “modern/responsible citizen” and “premodern/needy population.” The volunteer in that sense is not a ready-made subject who goes to his or her field (the poor neighborhood) equipped with certain prescriptions to be carried out, but a well-off urbanite with a particular history that attributes an “accomplished” middle class position to the volunteers, and a “lacking” position to the urban poor particularly via these encounters.

Conclusion: Contestations?

Contradictory processes of neoliberalization are at work at different levels, sites, and scales of CSO projects around the globe. As Anna Tsing suggests

about the concept of “globalism,” one also needs to rethink neoliberalism in relation to the complexity of local modernization and development projects by looking at particular encounters and translations (Tsing 2000). The historically contingent nature of neoliberal governmentality (Gupta and Sharma 2006) confirms that empowerment discourses may produce different consequences at the level of lived experience. This contingency also points at the need for further research on forms of power that are surfacing at the interstices between the state and the CSOs in order to see the dynamics of institutionalized power (Elyachar 2003). David Hecht and Maliqalim Simone (1994: 54) tell us how African societies are headed in many different directions simultaneously since there is no sense of a univocal logic, and how dispersion of social practices are in a constant process of reassembling. In a parallel fashion, they also argue that civil society can manufacture social changes through equivocal ideologies anchored in shifting alliances (102).

The ambiguity in the concrete spaces of “neoliberalism” might better be observed when we look more closely at the dynamics within the poor neighborhoods where TEGV centers are located. Even volunteers themselves mention “resistant” voices from marginalized communities that protest TEGV’s presence in the neighborhood. They refer to groups of youngsters who constantly annoy and abuse the volunteers verbally or by painting graffiti. This kind of story signals that there is a space of contestation out there, and not everybody in the marginalized segments welcomes the volunteers. To what extent this narrative of youngster protest can be generalized, or the levels and content of their activities, is worth exploring. The question of how the marginalized are capable of playing with uncertainty needs to be framed in relation to the issues of security technologies and state violence. It is reasonable to believe that “there is always a potentiality for change in cities” (Simone 2004: 213), but the forces restricting this potentiality also need to be addressed seriously. The contestation of urban space and the risks and threats associated with it, albeit variegated among different localities, often involve more dominant and more hegemonic players who seek to enforce order and consensus against chaos.

The enormous investments and huge budgets of large-scale CSOs such as TEGV disclose a desire on the part of economic and social elites to secure order against the increasing ambiguity in urban space. There obviously exist other CSOs, some of which collaborate or compete with TEGV’s projects. Yet TEGV not only has more powerful resources to enact its projects but also

has the privilege to act in the name of the state and with the support of the state, which further expands its space of legitimacy and intervention. Compared to, say, Hecht and Simone's portrayal of a pluralist space in African cities, the urban space in major cities in Turkey is much less open to contestation, unless backed up by militant ideological movements. Not surprisingly, therefore, rather than supporting resistant and marginal social movements, poor families usually prefer to ally with powerful CSOs, assuming that they would provide more opportunities, especially for their children. Nevertheless, how these relations produce interruptions and subversions in reply to the disciplining projects they are subject to is the topic of another enquiry.

Notes

- 1 Instead of the widespread term “nongovernmental organizations” (NGOs) I have preferred to use the term “civil society organizations” (CSOs) as a translation of the Turkish term *sivil toplum kuruluşları* (*STKlar*) in order to capture the conceptual reframing of civil society in Turkey in terms of its emphasis on civility as such. What defines CSOs is not a denial of the state apparatus or government involvement, but rather the positing of “another space” of social action that traverses politics, economics, and culture. For a conceptual analysis of the terminological and contextual differences about civil society in the Western, Eastern European, and Middle Eastern contexts, see Akşit, Tabakoğlu, and Serdar 2002.
- 2 Political rationality or “political reason” is a specific concept introduced by Michel Foucault for understanding the extension of government and the act of governing beyond the formal institutions of the state (Foucault 2001). Similarly, his use of the term “political” implies a novel insight beyond our usual association of politics with the central apparatuses of the state, since governing the population and territory is performed by a wide array of actors, institutions, mechanisms, and rationalities, according to Foucault. In terms of the historical emergence of the nation-state in its European form, he argues that it is not the incarnation of a centralized state or its bureaucratic apparatuses, but the “reasons of the state” (*raison d'état*) that define the modern form of government. In that sense, Foucault argued that the development of the doctrine of *raison d'état* in seventeenth-century Europe was an example of the emergence of a new rationality of government, or a new “political rationality,” which provides the larger framework in which actors, concepts, and mechanisms of government (which include but are not limited to the centralized nation-state) are defined. Similarly, this article conceptually extends its units of analysis by avoiding

an exclusive focus on the state and CSOs as separate actors and moves toward the “political rationality” whereby these actors are thought to be configured and interrelated.

- 3 Governmentality is a concept that Foucault introduced in his historical analysis of the definitions of government: “Government did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed: the government of children, of souls, of communities, of families, of the sick” (Foucault 1982: 221). In that sense, it refers less to a central node that determines conducts, and more to the emergence of a set of techniques and knowledges about how these conducts are to be conducted—that is, it is a conduct of conducts.
- 4 In Turkish, *toplumsal değişimin temel sivil unsurları*.
- 5 This chapter builds upon my ethnography of TEGV in Istanbul in 2004–2005, which included institutional ethnography, interviews with TEGV representatives and officials, participant observation on various TEGV centers around Istanbul, discourse analysis of the vast material published by TEGV itself, and semistructured interviews with volunteers.
- 6 Most of this rhetoric is enriched by novel contributions by the Turkish press, as well as columnists that advocate the “civic necessity” of “intervening” in the fate of society to their middle-class readers.
- 7 An anonymous sentence that was very frequently expressed in the aftermath of the 1999 earthquake by columnists, news editors, and “fellow” citizens joining live-feeds in a range of TV programs.
- 8 It is striking that the Turkish state was drastically short of providing most of the vital emergency services that were required to save lives in such a disaster. It was widely argued among the Turkish public at the time that the death toll could have been significantly reduced if there were adequate means and measures to reach the disaster sites with due haste and to rescue the individuals under the debris. Moreover, there were drastic shortcomings in providing tents, medicine, and food to the region, which was frequently expressed in Turkish media through dramatic video footages of individuals who were resentfully asking “Where is the state when we need it?”
- 9 Here I use the term “middle class” in the way Partha Chatterjee uses it, that is, to describe the national elite in India as a group that tries to be effective in forming the nationalist and modern culture of the country. They are in between the “governors” and the “population,” a situation which Chatterjee describes as being the mediator in assuming social authority. The middle-class subject “takes upon him/herself the

responsibility of speaking on behalf of those who were poor and oppressed. To be in the middle now meant to oppose the rulers and to lead the subjects” (Chatterjee 1993: 92). In assuming the responsibility of “saving the nation” and by claiming to represent the people living there, TEGV directors also function as a “middle class” that strives to lead the population.

- 10 On September 12, 1980, the Turkish armed forces, headed by the chief of the General Staff, General Kenan Evren, took control of the Turkish government. The National Security Council (MGK) declared martial law all over Turkey and dissolved the parliament. The constitution was also suspended. All political parties and trade unions were banned. The generals that carried out the coup frequently referred to threats against the unity of the Turkish nation and against Kemalism and secularism as a pretext, and lumped the various ideological currents of the time under the pejoratively perceived categories of communism, ethnic separatism, and religious extremism. The 1970s had been marked by right-wing/left-wing armed conflicts, which abruptly stopped in the aftermath of the coup. For the next three years the Turkish armed forces ruled the country through the National Security Council, before elections were restored.
- 11 In this regard, it is difficult to avoid the nationwide protest campaigns in 2007 against AKP and the party’s presidential candidate. The protests predominantly mobilized civil society under an overtly political cause against the government. But what is striking is that neither with these protests, nor with other political tensions in which leading CSOs were visible actors, was any aspect of the actual configuration of relationships between CSOs and the state changed. It would thus be safe to say that civil initiatives are relatively impervious to political hassles, however strong the ensuing tensions. Moreover, it is even possible to observe that the discursive integrity of the CSOs has been enlarged via these tensions, joining economic liberalism and liberal conservatism with Republicanism and nationalism.
- 12 The 1999 earthquake struck northwestern Turkey on August 17. It was centered in İzmit, the eastern neighbor of the city of Istanbul, and had a magnitude of 7.6. According to official figures, the death toll exceeded 17,000 people, while almost half a million people were left homeless. On the other hand, unofficial sources claim that the death toll exceeded 35,000 people.
- 13 There were many articles in leading newspapers about this issue. Prominent intellectual circles were highly interested in it. The socialist monthly journal *Birikim* and the famous quarterly journal *Cogito* also initiated open forums following the earthquake in their special issues to discuss the agency and responsibilities of the Turkish state.

- 14 For revealing instances of the expression of this fear in the mainstream Turkish press, see “Turkish Government Fails Quake Test,” *Washington Post*, August 29, 1999.
- 15 It is striking that this novel sense of citizenship transcends the classical separation of the political citizen (*citoyen*) from the private man (*bourgeois*) that finds its essence in “civil society.” Despite radical differences in the way political action has been conceived, it is common to portray civil society as a sphere or space that either resists or transcends the political sphere. Conceptually, the way CSOs in Turkey conceive of “citizenship” as a register of agency that could be realized in essence if and only if it is properly disassociated from politics, the state, and ideological convictions, provides a novel and ironical portrayal of civil society as a depoliticized sphere of government and intervention.
- 16 The data utilized in this chapter are derived from two basic sources: the institutional documents of TEGV, including periodicals, activity booklets, and information provided on their website, and formal and informal interviews I conducted with TEGV volunteers between 2004 and 2006.
- 17 “Our Reason of Existence,” in www.tegv.org.
- 18 In the text on their reason of existence, featured both in the website and in many of their published materials, TEGV volunteers portray TEGV centers as “magnets for children and parents. Children are drawn to the computers, activities, laughter, and bright colors while parents are comforted knowing their children are in the hands of caring role models learning in a safe, clean environment out of harm’s way.” There is a constant, yet ambiguously articulated “danger” in their discourse, located in some segments of society, against which TEGV appropriates a self-image of “protector” and “savior.”
- 19 These are the schools of one of the biggest Muslim religious sects in Turkey, the Nurcu movement, headed by Fethullah Gülen.
- 20 For a worldwide transformation of education, see Popkewitz 2000.
- 21 Although the word *halk* literally means “people” in Turkish, it is frequently employed by Republican elites to refer to uneducated and traditional masses that are not properly cultivated in Western (or, as is common in the Kemalist discourse, “contemporary and civilized”) values. It was a common discursive preference in the press of the pre-1950s Republican period to contrast the cultured “citizen” to the problematic mass of the *halk*, since the presence of *halk* threatens to undo the “cultural and civilizational progress” that was to have emerged after the Republican Revolution.

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