CHAPTER 8

MAPPING A NEOLIBERAL TRANSITION: THE CASE OF SULUKULE*

Elif Kevser ÖZER¹

¹ PhD candidate, Boğaziçi University, Department of History, Istanbul, Turkey
e-mail: elifkevserozzer@gmail.com

DOI: 10.26650/BS/SS41.2021.001-4.08

ABSTRACT

This study aims to fundamentally discuss neoliberalism using the concepts, the state, and volunteerism, and cover the subject of the process of localizing neoliberalism through examining one of the state's neoliberal policies, the urban transformations projects, as well as the volunteer work undertaken by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) towards this. By focusing on a Roma district that lies beyond the borders of society, Sulukule, this study examines the urban transformation projects carried out as a result of these neoliberal policies and the reasoning behind them. During this localization process of neoliberalism, Sulukule moves away from being an underclass urban land and becomes a commodified urban place in Istanbul. On the other hand, this study points out NGOs and their activities, the result of these urban transformation projects, and the resulting web of power relations, as the main underlying problem. It focuses on the methods and efforts of volunteers to turn the people of Sulukule into neoliberal subjects via various technologies. The study carried out with the multi-sited ethnography research, which lasted for about two years, concludes: "State" and "civil society" are in the position of stakeholders in the localization of neoliberalism; volunteers operating locally complete the process initiated by the urban transformation. In the case of Sulukule, the tendency of the state and volunteers to try to normalize the Roma, under the banner of "empowerment", can be read as the localization of neoliberalism.

Keywords: Urban Transformation, Volunteerism, Civil Society, Neoliberalism, Romani Studies

ÖZET

Bu çalışma temel olarak neoliberalizmi devlet ve gönüllülük kavramları üzerinden tartışır ve neoliberalizmin yerelleşme sürecini, devletin neoliberal politikalarından biri olan kentsel dönüşüm

* This article is a summary version of my MA thesis that I submitted to Istanbul Şehir University Cultural Studies Program in 2014. For detailed information about referred chronology, case results, laws and regulations, letters, reports, the research, and the map please see the thesis with reference no 10051370 through The Council of Higher Education Thesis Center in Turkey.

projeleri ve buna eşlik eden sivil toplum sektörünün gönüllü faaliyetlerine odaklanarak değerlendirir. Bu çalışma, toplumun geri kalan kesimiyle sınırları olan bir Roman mahallesini, Sulukule’yi merkeze alarak kentsel dönüşüm projelerinin uygulanma sürecini ve bu projelerin mantığını sorgular. Neoliberalizmin yerelleşmesi süreci zarfında Sulukule sınıfaltı bir kent mekanı olmaktan uzaklaşır ve globalleşen İstanbul’un metalaşan bir kent ürünü haline gelir. Bir diğer taraftan, bu çalışma uygulanan kentsel dönüşüm projesi sonucunda yeniden oluşan güç ilişkileri ağı içinde yer alan gönüllüler üzerinden sivil toplum sektörünü ve bu sektörün faaliyetlerini sorunsallaştırır; Sulukulelilerin gönüllüler tarafından neoliberal öznelere dönüştürülme yöntem ve çabalarına odaklanır. Yaklaşık iki yıl süren çok-yönlü (multi-sited) etnografi yöntemi ile gerçekleştirilen araştırma şu sonuca varır: “Devlet” ve “sivil toplum” neoliberalizmin yerelleşmesinde paydaş konumundadır; Kentsel dönüşümün başlattığı süreci yerelde faaliyet gösteren gönüllüler tamamlamaktadır. Sulukule örneğinde, devletin ve gönüllülerin “güçlendirme” adı altında Romanları normalize etme eğilimi aslında neoliberalizmin yerelleşmesi olarak okunabilir.

Keywords: Kentsel dönüşüm, Gönüllülük, Sivil Toplum, Neoliberalizm, Roman Çalışmaları

1. Introduction

The Neslişah and Hatice Sultan neighborhoods, better known as Sulukule, the most famous Romani neighborhood in the center of Istanbul, faced a process of implementing an urban transformation during the years 2006-2009. Since the neighborhood was located within the walls of the ancient city, which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and was known as the earliest Romani settlement in the world (Marsh & Strand, 2005), Sulukule received enormous support from local and international agents and campaigns. However, the neighborhood was completely demolished. The inhabitants were provided with, as compensation, the option to purchase new flats in the area of Taşoluk, which was approximately 30 km away from Sulukule in the outskirts of the city. However, the people of Sulukule¹ could not live in Taşoluk, because neither were the houses suitable for the previous living culture of the residents of Sulukule nor were the prices of these houses affordable. As a result of this, most of the Sulukulelis moved to Karagümrük, close to the demolished Sulukule site.²³

1 In this study, I will call people who were forced to leave their home the people of Sulukule, Sulukule dwellers, or Sulukulelis (Sulukuleli is a word in Turkish which means “the person of Sulukule” and in English with the plural suffix of -s, Sulukulelis gains a plural sense as/of “the people of Sulukule”). However, in some parts, I prefer to use Roma, Roman, and Romani people for indicating the political discourse.

2 I conducted the fieldwork between April 2012 and June 2013 in Karagümrük where most of the Sulukulelis had been living since the destruction. Since I aimed to conduct a multi-sited ethnography, in order to elucidate different points of views and explore the attitudes of the different sides, Karagümrük provided a fertile ground for me to reach the Sulukulelis, the volunteers of several NGOs, the municipality officers, the mukhtar, business owners in Karagümrük, the documentarians, the academicians from various universities, and the reporters and professionals of the international funding agencies.

During the demolition, various non-governmental organizations and volunteers came to Sulukule to resist the transformation project based on promoting housing for the Sulukulelis. The NGOs made declarations concerning the activities in Sulukule and forged public opinion at the national and international level both. They also participated in civil activities such as collecting the garbage of destroyed houses left behind by the municipality, preparing alternative urban renewal projects, sending letters to European responsible recourses, presenting many cases from revocation of the project to illegal destructions of historical buildings under UNESCO protection, opening children's atelier for music education, and organizing an international festival as a means of protesting against the demolitions. After the demolition of Sulukule, volunteers did not leave the neighborhood and their main focus shifted from *saving the neighborhood* to *helping the Sulukulelis who were evicted*.

By taking Sulukule as a case, this study aims to discuss neoliberalism using the concepts, the state, and volunteerism. In the first part, this study encourages a definition of the state not as the one that has retreated in the passive sense, but rather, one that has expanded the areas of intervention concerning these issues and has become a vehicle for neoliberal rationalism through new laws and applications. In the second part, this study problematizes the concept of volunteerism and the activities carried out therein.

2. Neoliberalism and Neoliberal Urbanism

Neoliberalism, the new form of capitalism, is a political rational that penetrates every level of society by reshaping the structure of political organizations, nation-states, and international institutions, and recasts the subjectivities of individuals as well. It is widely accepted, during the last few decades, neoliberal globalization has been announcing its dominance all around the globe by the regulation of politics, the economy, the space, and all grounds of power relations on the basis of profit maximization and the circulation of welfare beyond the national boundaries. It also attempts to expand its rationality by means of these regulations and multiple techniques (Dardot & Laval, 2014).

As a reflection of neoliberalism and its policies on urbanism in Turkey, the 2001 economic crisis resulted in radical structural reforms in the policies of urban governance (Öniş & Şenses, 2010). With the effect of the crisis and the new structural adjustments, which the crisis caused, the government abandoned the prevailing populist housing policies, created a neoliberal regime that resulted in commodification of land and housing in low income and informal settlements and the amalgamation of these settlements' residents into the formal market. During the globalization of neoliberal urbanism, transforming the cities into the center of attraction for new investment sources and assertive competitors in global

competition, namely “entrepreneurializing the cities”, has become the main target of local authorities (Harvey, 1989). In this sense, urban transformation projects are presented as the only solution for overcoming the obstacles to entrepreneurialize the city: (1) Legislating new structural adjustments for consolidating the authority of local governments for preparing and implementing projects wherever they chose; (2) public-private partnership in urban transformation projects and housing markets; (3) discourse of urgency; and (4) gentrification of especially historical places in the inner city,³ which are the manifestations of neoliberal urban policymaking, could be listed as the *sine qua nons* of urban transformation projects (Jessop, 2002; Hackworth, 2007). In the end, it has become possible that the public bodies, metropolitan municipalities, local municipalities, and state-led organizations cooperated with private subcontractors to establish real estate companies and implement urban transformation projects under the cloak of a potential earthquake.

2.1. Legal Arrangements

The gentrification of Sulukule became possible through a series of legal arrangements and all these arrangements share the same aim: to reorganize the local governments under the principles of neoliberal urban governance such as authorizing the local governors and accelerating the process of transformation of entrepreneurial cities. While Law No. 5216, Metropolitan Municipalities Law (passed in 2004) authorizes the metropolitan municipality with the right to determine in which areas urban transformation projects could be implemented, Law No. 5237, New Criminal Code, (passed in 2004) defines, for the first time, slum construction as a criminal offense to be punished by five years in prison, which shows the government’s ‘zero- tolerance’ approach (Kuyucu & Ünsal, 2010). However, it was Law No. 5366, Renovation and Utilization of Deteriorated Historical and Cultural Assets (enacted in 2005) authorizes the municipality, TOKİ⁴⁵, and its subcontractors for demolishing 300 Sulukule houses and building 620 new flats instead (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008).

2.2. Public-Private Partnerships

Since neoliberal rationality promotes being an entrepreneur, entrepreneurship reverberates in local government policies as an effort to create opportunities and maximize profits. In this

3 Although Sulukule was under the protection of the world heritage list of UNESCO, recently legislated laws on the authority of local municipalities and protection of historical parts of the city cleared the way for the gentrification of Sulukule.

4 Başbakanlık Toplu Konut İdaresi Başkanlığı - Mass Housing Institution. It was first established in 1984, but after the Laws No. 4966 and No. 2985 were enacted in 2003, TOKİ gained new responsibilities and semi-autonomous status due to taking on a private sector governance mentality by establishing enterprises and going in a partnership with private companies in the housing market.

sense, the entrepreneurship mentality encourages public-private partnership and posits the private sector mentality as the paragon for local governments. While the first dimension is to establish private companies bound to municipalities and governmental institutions that employ the private sector mentality, such as TOKİ (The Housing Development Administration), the second dimension is to collaborate with subcontractor companies undertaking the discarded responsibilities and services of local municipalities.

In the case of Sulukule, by the end of 2009, the municipality had completed its task, which was to clear the project area, it handed over the baton of the transformation project to TOKİ. After that, TOKİ authorized its subcontractor, which was a famous private company, for construction. While the judicial process of the request for a motion of stay was in progress, the subcontractor had already started to build the new site.

2.3. The Discourse of Urgency

The discourse of urgency is a public discourse, which emerged right after the 1999 Izmit earthquake, within a public debate on the potential massive earthquakes and the city's preparedness to deal with them (Bartu Candan & Kolluoğlu, 2008). In time this public discourse of imminent natural disasters has shifted from being discussed about the potential earthquakes to problematizing and criminalizing the disadvantaged populations of the city; while a potential earthquake in Istanbul poses a danger and creates an emergency situation, the "talk of crime" justifies any sort of intervention in the criminalized and problematized parts of the city.

In the case of Sulukule, according to Law No. 5366, The Fatih Municipality in accordance with article 1, which holds the municipality responsible for taking measures against risks of natural disasters, declared the quarters of Sulukule, Neslişah, and Hatice Sultan neighborhoods as renewal areas. Right after the agreement signed between the district municipality of Fatih and TOKİ for the rebuilding of the new houses in Sulukule, the Council of Ministers votes for an "emergency expropriation" on 13 December 2006. However, the report, dated 18 December 2007, had been prepared by The Istanbul Branch of The Chamber of Geology Engineers states

As a conclusion, the geological elements, on which the settlements in Hatice Sultan and Neslişah Sultan neighborhoods are located, do not have any inconvenient ground structure in terms of their supporting power and earthquake risk. The ground of the site does not feature any risk and there is not an event that requires any measures to be taken. (Özer, 2014, p.219)

Furthermore, within this urban transformation process, the Sulukule people under the name of Roman were stigmatized and criminalized in order to legitimize the destructions

and gain public support against resistance and declarations of the people of Sulukule who are indicated as *inherently dangerous* and *criminals*. In terms of criminalization, one needs to add that since the determination of the penalty in “the risk society” is not related to the consequences of the crime (Beck, 1992), the potential risk of the crime is enough to enslave a potential criminal, generally a marginalized minority community. Related to this, that crime is not perceived as something that should be punished after it had been committed brings about that the measure should be taken to obviate the potential of the crime. This situation ends with the “urgent” resolutions for supposed criminal tendencies of derelict parts of the city, in the case of Sulukule, it legitimizes ostracizing dwellers to the outskirts of the city in order to easily control them in a “prison city” (Murray, cited in Davis, 1996).

2.4. The Gentrification of Sulukule

The gentrification of Sulukule can be read as re-imagination and reevaluation of urban land as an investment and profit-making resource. The advocacy for newly constructed buildings was based on saving the historical heritage by imitating the Ottoman architectural character with old-style traditional two-story Ottoman houses. Sulukule was reimagined by the effects of neo-Ottoman ideology contrary to protect to historical parts of the city as it is. Apart from the appearance of the houses, their plans give clues about how these houses are reimagined as modern houses for fulfilling the upper-middle-class expectations on what a “modern” house offers them. Moreover, at the beginning of the project, the first prepared plan was aiming to construct solely two-story houses, as the process proceeded, to *fulfill the increasing demand of the public*, it was decided to make some changes to the plan such as to erect three and four-story buildings that appear from behind the city walls (“Sulukule’de kuralar çekildi”, 2012).

3. The Unequal Encounters between Sulukulelis and the State

On 3 July 2006, the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, the Fatih Municipality, and TOKİ signed an agreement on their co-operation of the destruction of Sulukule and according to the agreement, a renewal area is determined as 86,760 m² large and included 571 families’ houses (Platform, n.d.). On July 13, another agreement was signed between the local municipality and TOKİ for the distribution of tasks. In conformity with this agreement, the municipality becomes responsible for destruction and TOKİ is tasked with the rebuilding of the new site. During the summer, residents, volunteers, various NGOs, and academicians came together and collectively made joint declarations to the press and sent letters to the cabinet of the ministers as well as international resources. According to my informants, these letters and declarations

to the press and institutions gave them hope for the cancellation of the project. However, contrary to the expectations on the cancellation of the project, the “urgent expropriation” decision was voted by the Council of Ministers on 13 December 2006. Right after the declaration of the decision to expropriate, even the municipality had not put into effect the decision, the expropriation threat caused panic amongst the Sulukulelis and created a selling spree. As mentioned above, the municipality had offered two options to the residents: (1) to sell off their property to the municipality and migrate or (2) to buy the new flats, which would be built by TOKİ and its subcontractors, and sold the prices well beyond the residents’ budgets. The expropriation threat of the municipality added a new dimension to the pressure of the municipality. The prices, which were suggested by the municipality for the houses in Sulukule, had decreased dramatically after the declaration of expropriation decision.

It should be said that the *strategy* was to force people to sell their houses for the price estimated by the municipality or expose them to condemnation and for them to leave. The residents, who could not afford the heavy burden of debt of the new flats by only getting a small amount of money in return for their deeded houses, mostly sold their houses to third-party individuals who paid slightly higher prices than what the municipality offered. With such a *tactic*, inhabitants thought they had made the most beneficial decision for themselves, yet they were mistaken. The real estate speculators, investors, and investment companies benefited from this situation by collecting the Sulukule houses at rock bottom prices – a little higher than expropriation compensation. The trick of the work was those speculators, investors, and companies could buy more than one house and benefit from the same rights of the locals in buying from the municipality and TOKİ.

At the end of this project, the neoliberal urbanism policies of the state turned Sulukule into a new welfare source and integrated it into circulation via an urban transformation project. However, it was not an end; the localization of neoliberalism continued by recasting the people of Sulukule as neoliberal subjects through NGOs.

4. The Unequal Encounters between Sulukulelis and the Volunteers

Volunteers and NGOs, who did not leave the neighborhood after the destruction ended, gained a hegemonic position by constructing their subjectivity as capable citizens, who are conscious, responsible, and conscientious people. At the beginning of the process, as mentioned before, volunteers provided legal assistance to the Sulukulelis; they presented a case for a motion of stay, organized a petition for the cancellation of the project, and invited academics and legists to the neighborhood to inform the residents and plan an alternative

project. As one of my local informants asserted “the legal assistance of the Sulukule Platform⁵⁶ was crucial, especially for those who could not read and write, even could not understand what the mayor talked about.” (Özer, 2014, p.93). Actually, the Sulukule residents were in a chaotic atmosphere. The mayor and municipality officers spoke with ambitious words such as “urban renewal project”, “according to law no 5366”, “restoration”, “long-term lease contract”, “in cooperation with TOKİ”, which do not make any sense for Sulukule residents who were hearing these words for the first time. Volunteers took part at first for informing the residents about the project and leading them to fight against the project’s implementation. Since the volunteers can speak the same language as the state, their education and networks provided them with a superior position relative to the Sulukule residents. This situation turned the volunteers into a kind of protector and opened the way for being governors as well.

By discursively constructing their higher position against the Sulukulelis, volunteers legitimized and proliferated their intervention fields. After the gentrification process, the main concern for the volunteers shifted from *saving Sulukule* to *empowering the Sulukulelis*. In order to integrate the marginalized Sulukule people into the system as capable and self-reliant citizens who could stand on their own feet without the need of the state, volunteers tried to mold the attitudes of the Sulukulelis about working and individuality. Through techniques such as capacity building seminars, opening workshops, audit, paying per piece work, standardization, and radically different ideas about work, choice, individuality, production, and power- the volunteers tried to turn the Sulukulelis into self-directed, self-activating, self-monitoring, self-regulating, self-responsible, flexible and agile, and thus self-enterprising individuals.

4.1. The New Intervention Areas

According to the volunteers, since the demolition of Sulukule poverty has doubled for the residents of Sulukule. Sulukulelis have needed to learn survival skills such as having professions or being enterprising. Therefore, volunteers, who had already positioned themselves as capable citizens and governors of the less capable Sulukule population, proliferated their intervention areas. Not only legal assistance but also educational programs organized to teach reading and writing to the children and the elders as well, vocational courses aiming to create productive people, ateliers where women producing handmade commodities, projects prepared especially for the Roma youth and sponsored by foreign funds are the obvious conduct areas and enclosures. For Foucault, the creation of functional and

5 The Sulukule Platform was the unique organization of the volunteers at the beginning of the destruction process. Then, the Platform was abolished, and various NGOs were established instead.

hierarchical places guarantees the obedience of the individuals and provides a better economy of time and gestures (Foucault, 1991). In this context, these conducting areas, ateliers, courses, projects, and every sort of assistance can be read as examples of enclosures that are operating through the technique of partitioning and creating functional sides.

When the volunteers' areas of action expanded, their unique organization, the Sulukule Platform, has spontaneously been abolished and been replaced with various associations, which were newly established by the volunteers. As these associations vary by the area of conduct, the discourse that they expanded has become varied as well. Instead of the discourse constructed by the volunteers on the basis of housing rights, discrimination, and urban poverty during the struggle against the demolition of the neighborhood, parallel to the proliferation of different areas of conduct, a new discourse was developed on neoliberal principles such as entrepreneurship, leadership, production/producer support, using the opportunities, self-confidence, self-enhancement, capacity-building, and empowerment. It is possible to bring together these values under the roof of empowerment discourse, which aims to transform the less than capable Sulukule population into capable citizens via various empowerment strategies.

4.2. Empowerment

Empowerment, within the course of neoliberalism, has become a central concern for NGOs throughout the world and for this very reason, it constituted a wide area of activities (Bandura, 1997; Biswas-Diener, 2011; Koelen & Lindstrom, 2005). In the book, *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook*, which defines the World Bank's approach to poverty, empowerment is addressed as increasing one's own capacity to shape one's life, and it is predicted that disadvantaged people can increase their power through local participation and access to information (Narayan, 1992). As many studies indicate, psychological betterment through positive emotions and self-confidence is central to the question of empowerment (Rose, 1996; Rose, 1999; Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008; Carver & Scheier, 2011). The NGOs in Sulukule were not exceptions; the main aim was to empower the Sulukulelis via psychological betterment.

4.3. Acting on "the Self"

Psychological betterment targets marginalized people whose self-esteem has been destroyed and who therefore need to self-improvement and to be empowered. NGOs, in this context, do not restrict their activities to providing benefits or services but expand their

intervention fields for active engagement in these marginalized people in programs for the reconstruction of their subjectivity as people who are rational, responsible, and able to control their life (İpek, 2006). Through various projects, activities, and psychological techniques, NGOs find a suitable ground for “acting on the self”.

Before the gentrification, Sulukulelis were living within a reciprocal chain of gift exchange, which can be defined as the solidarity of the Sulukulelis in the narrations of the residents. This local culture based on reciprocity and mutualization actually defines a gift economy, and the web of gift exchange constructs the person as the plural and composite sites of ongoing exchange relationships and although separable from them if they fail to maintain them (Dunn, 2004, p. 125). Since the person shows up within a horizontal exchange relationship among a circle of intimates, it is embedded in a social context. The inherently “dividual” or socially embedded person acts upon the world by acting upon others (Dunn, 2004, p. 126). Sulukulelis were using personal connections for fighting against poverty, and through small amounts of debt, they attempted to know others and make themselves known to them. In the case of Sulukule, personal connections, in other words, to the world outside the self, were crucial for understanding the extension of the self, which is constructed in the gift society.

However, the new form of subjectivity, the entrepreneurial self, is a sharp contrast with the dividual self. While volunteers praise self-regulating, self-directed, self-activating, self-monitoring, self-responsible, flexible, agile, and self-enterprising individuals and expected the Sulukulelis to act through the radically different notions about work, individuality, choice, production, and power, they actually intervened in the field of the “self”. Through the techniques of volunteers, the socially embedded individual is the self by breaking ties with personal connections, in other words, collectivity, and the self becomes a kind of private property. In contrast to a dividual person, who acts upon the world by acting upon the others, the person as an individual, acts upon the world by transforming the self.

5. NGOs between Two Worlds; Locals and Internationals

As Gill (Gill, 2000) puts neoliberalism has changed the NGO climate from political opposition to accommodation (cited in Özden, 2013, p. 122), NGO industry, at least in Turkey especially in the case of Sulukule, functions to make global policies implementable on the local level by positioning itself as a bridge between state, international non-governmental organizations, and society. The transnational non-governmental organizations donate projects concerned about Roman rights for the sake of supporting the democratization of countries,

and these projects are implemented by local associations following the instructions of the donors. While all these projects donated by transnational organizations and implemented by local associations are legitimized with the discourse of the reduction of poverty, harmonization, integration, cultural rights, social responsibility, entrepreneurship, fight against unconsciousness, etc., they actually became the means of making the informal Roman community manageable.

Transnational organizations decide their policies, and through funding programs, local associations implement these policies on the local level. The basic decisions of these policies are given by the meetings of the World Economic Forum and G8 meetings where the politically and economically most developed countries gather and make an evaluation and future forecasting in the framework of what humanity needs. The constant tendency of the decision making process of this global apparatus is dominated by the neoliberal argument which meets the needs of global capitalist interrelations (Özden, 2013, p. 123). The granting process starts with the announcement of the programs which are donated by transnational organizations, and local associations are asked to purpose their projects in a local scale. Then, these applications are evaluated by assessors and professionals, the ones who fit best on the eligibility criteria deserve to receive the funding. The local associations that receive funding and operating their projects have to follow the policies and instructions of donor organizations and make a proper report on what they did with this money and how they are working parallel to the objective and expectations of the program. What is at stake here is that through this granting system, local associations are pushed to manage their problems to the programs dictated by the funding organizations and transform their policies for the requirements of the donors. Since the anti-political policies of funding transnational non-governmental organizations do not aim to take a radical critique of the very conditions of the communities face, the granting system does not work for towards democratization or integration of disadvantaged communities in society, but rather it serves to produce antipolitics in local level and absorbs the potential of producing popular politics (Ferguson, 1994).

The virginity of the Romani environment in Turkey,⁶⁷ has a potential market for this granting system and provides a suitable ground for local associations to construct their project proposals on the empowerment of the Roma community and democratization of the society. In this context, ROMFO (Roman Rights Forum) was founded for meeting the need for a negotiator position between the internationally operating funding organizations and the local

6 This virginity stems from the ban on establishing associations based on ethnicity according to the 1982 Constitution.

associations. Now, I will take a project proposal that was prepared by a local association and ROMFO as a base to discuss the main questions regarding volunteers, namely, how they paradoxically regulate subjectivities via psychological betterments and decontextualize structural inequalities by reducing them to technical problems.

5.1. The Fight against Early Marriage

The Fight against Early Marriage is a project funded by the European Union, coordinated by TACSO (Technical Assistance for Civil Society Organizations, an organization funded by the EU) with the proposal of one of the well-known Roma associations and guidance of ROMFO. In the proposal, early marriage is presented as one of the main problems of the Roma community which requires immediate solving. The reasons for early marriages are listed in the proposal respectively as lack of education, lack of role model, gender inequality, culture, social discrimination, peer pressure, economic powerlessness, and as the main reason, unconsciousness. After the problematization of early marriage based on the unconsciousness of the people, the project proposal suggests training programs, which focus on awareness-raising and self-empowerment of Roma teenagers, as a solution for the mentioned problem.

5.1.2. Training Programs

In the project proposal, several implemented training programs for fighting against early marriage, which are organized with the collaboration of other non-governmental organizations are mentioned. These programs are listed as capacity-building seminars, leadership training, youth training, advocacy strategy seminars, and a theater play for children on early marriage. Moreover, project planning, entrepreneurship, CV preparation seminars are also known as commonly provided training programs. Although all these training programs do not have a direct link to the solution of the problem of early marriage, the idea that if Roma teenagers integrate into society, they will overcome the social problems automatically, works here. The common points of all the training programs are (1) to change the psychological states of teenagers by restoring a sense of self-esteem and teaching self-promotion for better integration to the market economy under the name of the society, and (2) to make the teenagers believe in the necessity of being self-sufficient, even though these programs have no influence on their socio-economic status and current problems.

These training programs, which are proposed as a solution for the problem of early marriage, do not provide a radical critique of the very conditions that result in early marriages, but rather aim to recast Roma teenagers' subjectivity by using the techniques

of (1) responsabilizing them for their future, (2) and creating hope regarding the future. In practice these two intertwine with others: the teenagers are expected to acquire qualities that will turn them into self-entrepreneurial subjects such as demanding, attempting, and willing individuals who see the coming future as the solution for their problems. The optimistic expectancy of teenagers for a brilliant future turns them into individuals who are politicized with the desire of developing themselves more and more to become successful. In this context, to provide interest-based, profit-maximizing qualities by providing trainings, which prioritizes pragmatism and individual capacity, is suggested as the only solution for overcoming the problem of early marriage.

On the other hand, it is explicitly apparent that these programs are provided for recasting the teenagers' subjectivities, giving them pragmatic capabilities and the motivation that "you can do it if you want" and thereby these programs decontextualize the structural problems of the Roma community and redefines them on the will of teenagers. Moreover, by blaming families who encourage their children to marry at an early age as irresponsible unconscious individuals, early marriage which is actually a survival strategy that stems from structural inequalities, reduced to an individual fault, and a technical problem which can be corrected and solved by training programs.

To sum up, these training programs are neither solving the structural inequalities nor serving for ameliorating living conditions of Roma teenagers, but rather these programs are acting on the "self" of the Roma teenagers and consequently changing them into self-entrepreneurial individuals as job seeking and demanding subjects.

6. In Lue of Conclusion

I aimed to problematize the neoliberal rationality which spreads within the web of power relations that are formed around the state and volunteers. Within this problematization, the position of the state was so clear; as an abler implementer of neoliberal rationality, without any hesitation, I posited the state as a governor. However, while I was trying to conceptualize the position of the volunteers, I had to challenge those who maintain that the volunteers struggled against the capitalist state. During my fieldwork, I realized that although the volunteers have good intentions, they *paradoxically* serve for the formation of "modern" individuals under total neo-liberal politics. This is not just because of volunteers' personal ambitions, but rather because they have already become neoliberal subjects. So, within the web of power relations that emerged after gentrification, the already governed volunteers gained a governor position against "not yet governed Sulukulelis". Besides, this study neither ignores the existence or

the possibility of Sulukulelis resisting any kind of oppression and placing demands on the political arena, nor disregards the unexpected consequences of NGO activities. Nevertheless, I endeavored to draw attention to the recent developments on neoliberal globalization which encouraged not just the state but also individuals for implementing bio-political concerns on a historically discriminated neighborhood in Istanbul. Because I believe that interpreting and discussing the governmental strategies of the present are also significant.

References

- Aksoy, A., & Robins, K. (2011). Heritage, Memory, Debris: Sulukule, Don't Forget. In H. Anheier, & Y. Isar (Eds.), *Heritage, Memory and Identity*. SAGE.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. W.H. Freeman & Co Ltd.
- Bartu Candan, A., & Kolluoğlu, B. (2008). Emerging Spaces of Neoliberalism: A Gated Town and A Public Housing Project. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 39, 5-46.
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*. London: Sage.
- Biswas-Diener, R. (2011). *Positive Psychology as Social Change*. Springo.
- Carver, C., & Scheier, M. F. (2011). *Perspectives on Personality*. Pearson. Davis, M. (1996). Kentsel Denetim: Blaude Runeer'in Ötesinde. *Birikim*, 86-87.
- Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2014). *The New Way of the World: On Neoliberal Society*. Verso.
- Diener, E., & Biswas-Diener, R. (2008). *Happiness: Unlocking the Mysteries of Psychological Wealth*. Wiley- Blackwell.
- Dunn, E. (2004). *Privatizing Poland: Baby Food, Big Business, and the Remaking of Labor: Culture and Society after Socialism*. Cornell University Press.
- Ferguson, J. (1994). *Anti-Politics Machine: Development, Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991). Politics and the Study of Discourse. In G. Burchill, C. Gordon, & M. P. (Eds.), *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf.
- Gill, L. (2000). *Teetering on the Rim: Global Restructuring, Daily Life and the Armed Retreat of the Bolivian State*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Harvey, D. (1989). *From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The Transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism*. *Geographiska Annaler Series, B* (71), 3-18.
- Hackworth, J. (2007). *The Neoliberal City: Governance, Ideology, and Development in American Urbanism*. Ithaca: Cornell University.
- İpek, Y. (2006). *Volunteers or Governors? Rethinking Civil Society in Turkey beyond the Problematic of Democratization: The Case of TEGV*. (MA Thesis, Boğaziçi University). Retrieved from <http://www.sbe.boun.edu.tr/en/other-pages/2006>
- Jessop, B. (2002). Liberalism, Neoliberalism and Urban Governance: A State-Theoretical Perspective. *Antipode*, 34(3), pg. 452-472.
- Kuyucu, T., & Ünsal, Ö. (2010). Urban Transformation as State-led Property Transfer: An Analysis of Two Cases of Urban Renewal in Istanbul. *Urban Studies*, 47 (7), 1479-1499.
- Koelen, M., & Lindstrom, B. (2005). Making Healthy Choices Easy Choices: The Role of Empowerment. *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, 5.

- Marcus, G. (1998). *Ethnography in/of the World System: The Emergence of Multisided Ethnography*. In *Ethnography Trough Thick and Thin*. New Jersey: Princeton.
- Marsh, A., & Strand, E. (2005). *Reaching the Romanlar*. International Romani Studies Network (IRSN) Report. Istanbul: British Council/Consulate General of Sweden in Istanbul.
- Narayan, D. (1992). *Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook*. Retrieved from <http://www.mspguide.org/resource/empowerment-and-poverty-reduction-sourcebook>
- Öniş, Z., & Şenses, F. (2010). *Turkey and The Global Economy, Neoliberal Integration in the Post-crisis Era*. Taylor and Francis.
- Özden, Ö. (2013). *New Forms of Discrimination and Exclusion: Gadjofication of Romani Communities in Turkey / Ayrımcılık ve Dışlanmanın Yeni Biçimleri: Türkiye'deki Roman Toplulukların Gacolaştırılması*. (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Ankara. Retrieved from <http://etd.lib.metu.edu.tr/upload/12616577/index.pdf>
- Özer, E. K. (2014). *Mapping A Neoliberal Transition: The Case of Sulukule*. (Unpublished MA Thesis). İstanbul Şehir University, İstanbul. Retrieved from <https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/>
- Platform. (n.d.). *Chronology of Sulukule*.
- Rose, N. (1996). Governing 'Advanced' Liberal Democracies. In A. Barry, T. Osborne, & N. Rose, *Foucault and Political Reason: Liberalism, Neoliberalism and Rationalities of Government*. The University of Chicago Press.
- Rose, N. (1999). *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Somersan, S., & Kırca-Schroeder, S. (2007). Resisting Eviction: Sulukule Roma in Search of Right to Space and Place. *The Anthropology of East Europe Review*, 25 (2).
- Sulukule'de kurallar çekildi*. (2012). Retrieved from: <https://www.ntv.com.tr/turkiye/sulukulede-kurallar-cekildi,SUYAetM3iEGGqLKR10Dn7A>