

The Uneven Neoliberalization of Good Works: Islamic Charitable Fields and Their Impact on Diffusion¹

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Why is neoliberalization experienced unevenly throughout the Islamic world? This article explores Islam-inspired Egyptian and Turkish organizations' competing orientations to poverty relief. The study is based on interviews, direct observation, and comparative historical analysis. While there was a contested balance between neoliberal and communitarian orientations to charitable giving in Egypt, in Turkey neoliberal approaches marginalized communitarian ones. These differences can be traced back to a contrast in the combination of two factors: the religious movements and the links between benevolent organizations and the state. The relatively more unified Islamic field, which was thoroughly merged with the market-friendly state in Turkey, fostered the neoliberalization of charity. The fragmented Egyptian Islamic field, coupled with an unevenly cooperative (even if still market-friendly) state, led to the persistence of an embattled communitarianism. A field-based analysis allows us to extend the insights of the uneven diffusion literature to micro terrain.

INTRODUCTION

What limits the global diffusion of neoliberal norms? This article examines diffusion through the prism of voluntary poverty alleviation. Aid practices

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spring from and intervene in understandings of poverty, individual independence, and communal interdependence. Their analysis therefore leads to a comprehension of neoliberalism (and its limits) at the microlevel.

Some scholars assume that a standardized (world) culture will gradually disseminate individualist values and practices (Frank and Meyer 2002; Atia 2013). Even communitarian variants of charity, they argue, will reinforce individualization (Miller and Rose 2008, pp. 90–92, 104–5; Muehlebach 2012). Religious traditions, others contend, restrain individualization because of their commitment to community (Wuthnow 1995; Davis and Robertson 2012).

In order to test these claims, this article focuses on two Islamic contexts: Turkey, with its apparently more promodern Islamic movement, and Egypt, the birthplace of some of the most influential orthodox Islamic movements in the modern era. The article reveals that certain tendencies institutionalized by field structures, rather than Islam per se, limit and mutate neoliberalism in both contexts.

These fields are populated by neoliberal and communitarian actors. What I will call “communitarian charity” is more in line with (if not blindly reproductive of) traditional religious practices: it seeks to create a community of (interdependent) individuals who avoid deep wealth inequalities. “Neoliberal benevolence,” by contrast, desires to boost everyone’s wealth (with no attention to inequality) through transforming beneficiaries (and even donors and volunteers) into self-reliant, independent individuals. There is a fragile balance between neoliberal and communitarian charity in Egypt, whereas in Turkey, neoliberal giving has marginalized communitarian giving (which has taken a more redistributive turn as a response).

The contrasting histories of Islamic mobilization in Turkey and Egypt account for some of these differences. In Turkey a tightly disciplined and relatively united religious field controlled Islamic charity, whereas the Islamic movement in Egypt did not exhibit the same level of unity. At the same time, the Egyptian Islamic movement(s) had entrenched networks and visions of charity; the link between political mobilization and charity was relatively new in Turkey, which allowed new turns in politics to shape the charitable field more freely.

Moreover, the market-oriented turn of Islamic movements in Turkey also reinforced the near merger of some major Islamic benevolent organizations with the state. The state-benevolence merger was more restricted in Egypt. Hence, while the state encouraged the neoliberalization of good works in both countries, it did so in full cooperation with civil society in the Turkish context. The uneven neoliberalization of charitable practices, then, results

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from the asymmetrical interactions between histories of religious mobilization and state-society relations, which are both subject to thorough alteration themselves.

NEOLIBERAL DIFFUSION AND ITS STRUCTURAL LIMITS

What I call “convergence accounts” are influential across disciplinary boundaries. In sociology, the “world society” approach holds that Western organizational models “diffuse” throughout the planet, leading to the internalization of global values (Meyer et al. 1997; Meyer 2000).² In the world of aid and care, the Western model that spreads to the rest of the world is “active” and “entrepreneurial” citizenship mobilized through communities (Vogel 2006). As a consequence, the decline of traditional charity is inevitable (Strang and Meyer 1993, p. 502).

The Foucauldian “subjectivity” literature (developed mostly in political theory and anthropology) reinforces the main insights of the sociological world society approach, despite their quite different theoretical stances. Foucauldians define neoliberalism as the complete entrepreneurialization of all spheres of life (Brown 2003; Ong 2006, p. 501; Feher 2009, p. 30). One strand of this literature (Rose 1999; Muehlebach 2012) points out that really existing neoliberalism thrives by fostering nonmarket logics (the feelings of community and practices of reciprocity). People can still find community in our era through participation in benevolent work, but much of this involvement reproduces a broader philosophy that prioritizes individual self-reliance over communities and reciprocity (Rose 1999, pp. 249–50, 265–66).³

According to other scholars, convergence is unlikely to happen. The literature on uneven diffusion has explored the deep impact of historical context in topics ranging from the rule of law (Dezalay and Garth 2002) and trade policy (Chorev 2007) to bankruptcy law (Halliday and Carruthers 2009) and macroeconomic restructuring (Simmons, Dobbin, and Garrett 2006; Brenner, Peck, and Theodore 2010). This article builds on the insight of this literature to point out that the reception of individualistic (“neoliberal”) conceptions of poverty alleviation depends partially on the local strategies, interests, and competitions of receiving actors who are situated within particular “fields” (Dezalay and Garth 2002, p. 5).

Much of the literature on uneven diffusion, however, focuses on variations at a macro or meso scale. By exploring the liberalization of charity, I look at

² Yet other sociologists (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Galaskiewicz and Bielefeld 1998; Moody 2008) underline the standardizing effects of diffusion within the Western world, an emphasis I will evaluate elsewhere.

³ This argument resonates with Meyer’s idea that even “inconsistencies” produced by the “decoupling” between formal structures and activities are resolved in ways that produce further homogenization of formal structures (Meyer and Rowan 1977, p. 357).

how neoliberalism diffuses unevenly at a microlevel. This article unsettles the cultural assumptions of convergence accounts regarding individualism, which the uneven diffusion literature has left unchallenged.

Seen from this angle, religion (as a potential producer of non-neoliberal culture) deserves careful consideration. Some sociologists take community and religion as remedies to the rise of individualism and the destructive aspects of the market (Bellah et al. 1985; Casanova 1994; Wuthnow 1995).⁴ Sociologists have also argued that orthodox religions and their charitable organizations, rather than religion in general, harbor an antiliberal and egalitarian approach (Davis and Robertson 2012).⁵ Charity inspired by orthodox religion, they argue, leads to divergence from a purely liberal individualism.

This article expands the uneven diffusion literature by introducing the analysis of systematic variations at the microlevel: Rather than exclusively emphasize convergence or divergence, it brings in comparative fieldwork and historical analysis to study diffusion, as well as nonliberal tendencies that limit and modify neoliberalism. The empirical emphasis is therefore on the balances between neoliberal and communitarian actors in charitable fields and the historical determinants of these balances.

Islam and the Neoliberalization of Benevolence

Focusing on Islamic generosity gives us a unique insight into the transformation of the ethics of giving, since as a monotheistic religion with entrenched cultural practices, Islam could resist thorough neoliberalization. On the basis of some scholars' arguments regarding the anticapitalist nature of Islamic law (e.g., see Kuran 2004), one could even surmise that the charitable practices influenced by this law would spontaneously form a blockade against liberalization. Islamic aid associations have exploded in number and scope in the recent decades as a result of growing religious mobilization throughout the world, providing us with ample material to evaluate such possible hypotheses. Moreover, this has happened within a context of socioeconomic change, more specifically the liberalization of economies and welfare regimes.⁶ While

⁴ Some Durkheimian scholarship adopts a different tone and points out that markets and communities should be seen as complementary (Annette 2011) rather than contradictory. Communitarian participation counterbalances the inequalities perpetuated by markets (Putnam and Campbell 2010).

⁵ This approach to charity resonates with Mauss's ([1923–24] 1990) Durkheimian analysis of exchange. I will analyze the significance and analytical ramifications of this parallel elsewhere.

⁶ As Simmons et al. (2006, pp. 785–87) show, the Middle East and North Africa (henceforth MENA) region seems to be an (but not “the”) exception to the broad diffusion of macroeconomic liberalism. For instance, while many regions of the world have become more financially open from circa 1980–2000, the MENA region mostly stagnated in this regard. This article helps us to understand some of the microdeterminants of this partial exception.

Western-based (as well as Christian) transnational philanthropies have similarly expanded in the same time frame, they have followed a much more standardized (“empowerment”-oriented) ethics (Swidler and Watkins 2009): The kind of variation I am exploring in this article is less observable among them, if not entirely absent (e.g., see Allahyari 2000).⁷

Much of the scholarship on the rise of Islamic charities in the contemporary Middle East focuses on the transition from “traditional” (religiously based and sporadic) charity to “developmental” philanthropy, which is allegedly rationalized and cumulative (Sullivan 1994, pp. 67–69; Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003; Ibrahim 2008, pp. 2, 12; Baylouny 2010, pp. 113–15). The partial institutionalization of traditional charity over the centuries, however, makes an absolute distinction between “traditional” charitable organizations and “developmental” philanthropic ones impossible. Islamic giving has been undergoing systematization for quite a while (Singer 2008, pp. 176–77). The endowment (*waqf*) system demonstrates that much cumulative development (and partial rationalization) happened in Islamic history (Çizakça 2000).⁸

The more novel transformation today is the increasing centrality of “empowerment” or “responsibilization” (rather than simply development or rationalization).⁹ the singling out of the individual and his or her shortcomings as the real cause of poverty (Harb 2010; Atia 2012). Neoliberal Islamic charity not only holds the poor responsible for their poverty but introduces the hope that their inclusion in the market (as entrepreneurs and consumers) will resolve poverty. This understanding of poverty clearly differs from that of entrenched charitable institutions. Singer (2002) documents that 16th-century endowments distributed food to the deserving poor (those who had no family or household to support them) unconditionally. However, the institutional setup also reinforced existing hierarchies, even those among the beneficiaries (pp. 60–63). Singer states that “[charity] did not aim to change the social order but rather to preserve it. [It did not intend] to help people free themselves from dependence on aid but only to succor and sustain them” (p. 170). Doing

⁷ Transformations within the Catholic world provide partial exceptions to this generalization (Tuğal 2016).

⁸ Kuran (2004), the most prominent critic of the endowment system in current scholarship, disagrees with some scholars (e.g., Singer 2002) regarding how flexible the system was. But Kuran (2005, pp. 819–23) and some prominent sympathizers (e.g., see Çizakça 2000, pp. 45–51) agree that the endowments reproduced a noncapitalist system rather than paving the way for protocapitalist accumulation or credit mechanisms.

⁹ While it is true, as the analysis below will show, that neoliberal Islamic charity is much more professionalized and rationalized than communitarian charity, this is arguably a result of contingent processes rather than an essential component of the difference between neoliberalism and communitarianism.

away with this dependence (and, more broadly, interdependence) became the core goal of neoliberal benevolence.¹⁰

The interdependence-based understanding of benevolence was transformed, but also partially reinforced until lately, despite the centralization or confiscation of the historical endowments. As Tripp (2006) has shown, 19th- and 20th-century Islamists were highly influenced by Durkheimian thought. One reason for this, according to Tripp (chap. 1), was the resonance between the Durkheimian ideal of a tightly knit, interdependent, nonindividualist community at the national level and the entrenched Islamic notion of the (transnational) *ummah* as an integrated, quasi-organic body. On the basis of this permeation of late 19th- to late 20th-century Islamic currents with Durkheimianism, we can call the back-then-dominant strand of Islamic economic thought “modern communitarianism.”¹¹ Islamic communitarian thought, which characterized the major intellectuals of this era, envisioned a society of cooperation, where everybody knew his or her proper place. Communitarianism led to the entrenchment of a charitable ethic that seeks to minimize wealth differences and solidify the community against individualism. Much of (pre-neoliberal) 20th-century Islamist-led charity was fused with this Durkheimian and traditional Islam-influenced ethics.

Against this historical background, the neoliberalization of charitable ethics is remarkable: Neoliberal benevolence seeks to replace not only “traditional” forms of charity but also an anti-individualist ethics further reinforced by modern communitarianism. Despite the apparent difficulty of displacing such entrenched moralities, some scholars emphasize that even among charity organizations that had their roots in Islamic movements, credentials have started to replace commitment to ideology (Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan 2003, pp. 75–80). Curricula vitae and degrees (esp. MBAs and degrees in banking, finance, etc.) have come to be central to recruitment of staff rather than the applicants’ ideological formation.¹² While Clark (2004) has also documented

¹⁰ Geremek (1994) and Kochuyt (2009) show that both Islam and medieval Christianity assumed the rich to be dependent on the poor too: the former needed the blessings and prayers of the latter to secure a place in heaven. These authors also show that this explicit recognition of interdependence was part and parcel of a broader philosophy of interconnection. The moral well-being of the good (well-to-do) Christian/Muslim depended on a proper relation with the poor.

¹¹ This position could be called “solidaristic communitarianism” (a cumbersome term I chose to avoid for purposes of legibility), since the same intellectuals also adapted conflict-free, tamed versions of socialist criticism. The same concept would also more clearly differentiate the associations called “communitarian” in this article from neoliberal ones, as the latter do incorporate communitarian elements but deliberately exclude all traces of solidarism.

¹² In contrast to previous work, which emphasized how Islamic charity changes the religious lives of the poor (Zubaida 1989), these analyses shift the focus to the economic conduct component of charity work. In parallel fashion, Clark (2004) argues that Islamic charity has no influence on the religious lives of the poor and the beneficiaries but involves a transformation of the middle-class providers (also see Bayat 1997).

similar moves in Yemen and Jordan, scholars have observed clearer expressions of neoliberal charitable ethics in Turkey, Egypt (Atia 2013), and Lebanon.¹³ Hezbollah, for instance, is among the organizations that combine direct aid with microfinance-based development that seeks to foster financial discipline, personal responsibility, and self-reliance among the poor (Roy 2010, pp. 173–77). Most of these findings lend credibility to convergence accounts.

Despite these trends, Davis and Robertson (1999, 2012) give us reasons to doubt the omnipotence of neoliberalization. They draw attention to an egalitarian ethos in orthodox religions and single out the charity networks of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood as an exemplar. Given Kuran's (2004), Singer's (2008), Tripp's (2006), and other scholars' work, there are scholarly grounds to believe in the persistence of such forms. Davis and Robertson's (2012) work on charities aligns with (what I call) "divergence accounts" in broader sociology.

Turkey and Egypt provide informative cases in this regard. Scholars have taken Turkey as an ideal case of the marriage between Islam and liberalism (White 2002; Yavuz 2003). Studying charity will allow us to gauge if such liberalism is internalized by society at the microlevel. In slight contrast to Turkey, scholarship both points out liberalization in Egyptian Islam (Baker 1991) and highlights the fact that Egypt is the birthplace of some of the most orthodox, antiliberal Islamic movements of the modern era. Studying two such contexts will give us leverage to analyze uneven diffusion rather than unduly focus on convergence or divergence.

Turkey has witnessed a relatively straightforward transformation in a neoliberal direction, though this was counterbalanced by the development of more redistributive forms of communitarian giving. Such innovative twists complicate any smooth extrapolation from the macro indicators (e.g., the possible hypothesis that more integration into world markets necessarily leads to a straightforward, uncontested liberalization). In Egypt, there was a sustained chasm between communitarian and neoliberal understandings of giving. Being a hotbed of orthodoxy slowed down, but did not terminate, neoliberalization. Through investigating two Muslim contexts with different patterns of good works, we can get a deeper sense of the multiple forces at play in the negotiation of neoliberalism.

METHODOLOGY

The arguments of this article are based on fieldwork and comparative historical analysis. I conducted a total of 87 interviews for this research. For the

¹³ The reason (for the abundance and clarity of proof only in these three cases) is perhaps that the academic exploration of neoliberal charity is a rather new phenomenon. A recent scholarship focuses on neoliberalization of Islamic practices in other venues of life, too (e.g., for Indonesia, see Rudnyckij [2010]).

Egyptian part of the project, I interviewed 52 people (during 2009 and 2010) and conducted research on 17 aid organizations. These associations were located in Cairo and one other major Egyptian city (not named for anonymity). I visited the headquarters, branches, and premises of some of these organizations and observed their activities on site. I conducted 35 interviews in Istanbul for the Turkish part of the research (during 2011 and 2012). In parallel fashion to Egypt, I studied 12 Turkish organizations (in Istanbul). The interviewees were contacted through snowballing. I aimed to talk to people of various ages and backgrounds, though high and middle socioeconomic status interviewees constitute the majority of the sample because of the nature of benevolent work.

In deciding which organizations to include, I first came up with a list of organizations that were most frequently mentioned and discussed in the mass media, academic publications, and unpublished master's and doctoral theses. Second, I relied on interviewees' guidance on whom to include in further research. Like Dezalay and Garth (2002, p. 9), I used interviews to explore "how [actors'] points of view and strategies define their possibilities, who their competitors are, and what capital they can mobilize." In-depth interviews provide strong tools to "examine and decode the complex fights and divisions that characterize a particular field at a particular time" (p. 10) and therefore are suited to study field dynamics.

Nevertheless, interviews are limited in terms of their generalizability. The snowballing technique can also skew the representativeness of the sample. Specific points of entry lead to specific networks, and a researcher with different networks could end up with a different story (Dezalay and Garth 2002, pp. 10–12). In my case, this was a more serious problem in Egypt, where I entered the field primarily as a foreign academic (even if still with several points of entry), whereas in Turkey I have multiple identities and therefore quite diverse networks (academic, former teacher of a poor district, activist, friend, etc.). In order to deal with these problems, I resorted to insiders and outsiders of the Islamist movement, academics and activists, locals and non-locals, and so forth as points of entry to diversify interviewees' points of view and field positions.

In both countries, I tried to contact all of the nationally prominent or visible (Sunni Islamic-inspired) benevolent organizations. Because of the environment of the last two years of the Mubarak regime, I was not able to access the charity networks of two major (Egyptian) Islamist political organizations. All other organizations that have become household names were contacted and studied (hence, the universe of the Egyptian and Turkish fields of large organizations was covered with two exceptions).

The smaller, more local associations were included in the study to get a broader sense of the variation in orientations. This was seen as necessary since (according to the assessments of the participants as well as the publicly avail-

able numbers) smaller organizations mobilized huge amounts of resources and reached significant numbers of people. However, as these organizations were contacted through snowballing, no claims about representativeness can be made. In contrast to the United States and some other Western countries, there is no official category for religiously inspired benevolent organizations (such as FBOs, or faith-based organizations): As one scholar has noted, “the universe of the [smaller] organizations is not known” (Göçmen 2011, pp. 137–38). Given these restrictions, my selection through snowballing was structured by the way the actors in the large organizations mapped out the field and classified the associations they knew. The analysis of smaller associations allows us to gauge the pressures on entrants to the fields and thus draw inferences regarding the fields’ implicit expectations, though further research on smaller associations is needed to reach more rigorous conclusions.

The main goal of data collection was to understand how the associations differed with respect to their dispositions to benevolence and religion. Along these lines, I asked the managers and staff about organizational structures, recruitment strategies, provision techniques, the weight of each benevolent activity in the overall budget, the criteria with which the beneficiaries are selected, expectations from beneficiaries, and cooperation with state agencies. I also asked all of the interviewees (managers, staff, volunteers, and beneficiaries) about their own personal history of involvement in benevolent activities, their understanding of the reasons behind poverty, and the changes in their understanding of poverty and the poor throughout the years. Questions about the interviewees’ religious lives, their religious upbringing and involvement, and the religious motivations behind their benevolent work were asked too. Most interviews were recorded and lasted between half an hour and an hour and a half. In addition, I had structured conversations with journalists, academics, and government representatives, who ranged from being sympathizers to opponents of pious charitable organizations.

The labeling of organizations as dominant, subordinate, or marginalized was based on their size of personnel, number of volunteers, the number of beneficiaries they reached, and the amount of funding they received. Since the real numbers were hidden behind a thick cloud, I had to partially rely on the interviewees’ assessment of the relative dominance of actors. My partially qualitative and partially quantitative assessment regarding which organizations had more weight in the field accorded with other scholars’ assessments (e.g., see Göçmen 2011).

Classification of organizations as neoliberal or communitarian depended more on my own qualitative findings. The confounding factor was that religiosity and community were summoned across the board. But this was still done in a distinct way among the neoliberal organizations: these two were instrumentalized for the cultivation of individual self-reliance. An organization was classified as neoliberal if its main goal was cultivating individual

responsibility. This could be gauged from respondents' assumptions about poverty: neoliberal interviewees assumed that the fundamental cause of poverty was the individual characteristics of the poor, which needed to be changed for an effective resolution of suffering. The apportionment of funds also provided a window into these assumptions: neoliberal organizations aimed to channel relatively more funds to the market-oriented training of the beneficiaries.

I classified an organization as communitarian when its affiliates assumed or argued that the fundamental cause of poverty was the moral deficiency of society as a whole. Hence, for them, the main goal of charity was cultivating Islamically inspired modesty (rather than individual responsibility) among both the rich and the poor, which would purportedly result in a community with a balanced distribution of wealth. Consequently, communitarian organizations poured more of their funds to Islamic education and relatively little to career training.

A final way to gauge whether an organization was neoliberal or communitarian was to look at its expectations from donors, managers, staff, and volunteers. While neoliberal organizations expected quantifiable career success from these categories of people, communitarian charities anticipated selfless dedication based on piety.

Since the national contexts have deeply shaped benevolent orientations, a comparative analysis of histories of benevolence is also integrated into the article. This analysis does not simply provide a background. Rather, I point out that the contrast in the paths of Islamic mobilization (in the context of changing welfare regimes) is among the factors that account for the different structures of benevolence fields in the two nations. Moreover, in similar fashion to Dezalay and Garth (2002), this article uses in-depth interviews to link the biography of actors to the analysis of fields and nationwide movements (by focusing on the individuals' networks, expertise, and dispositions). In this way, the fieldwork and the comparative history are methodologically integrated.

GOOD WORKS, WELFARE REGIMES, AND ISLAMIC MOBILIZATION

Changing Welfare Regimes

The recent increase in the significance of aid organizations in Egypt and Turkey is linked to the state's (uneven) withdrawal from social provision. The understanding of how this withdrawal is experienced in the two cases gives important insights into how their overall neoliberalizations differed. Even though Turkey has been on a path of neoliberal growth ever since the 1980s, centrist parties mismanaged the economy throughout the 1990s, which ultimately led to the financial meltdown of 2001. Kemal Derviş, a top-level World

Bank figure, created the blueprint for deregulation and privatization (i.e., neoliberalization) measures that gripped Turkey for the coming decade. Turkish growth rates have been incomparably higher than Egypt's between 2001 and the global crisis of 2008, rendering an already wealthier Turkish society even more affluent in comparison to Egypt. However, Turkish unemployment and inequality (measured through either the Gini coefficient or income percentiles) have been significantly higher, too. Similarly, whereas absolute poverty is much lower (and keeps decreasing) in Turkey, relative poverty was still higher than in Egypt in the 2000s.

Egypt has been home to extensive privatization and deregulation from the 1970s to the 1990s. These reforms brought with them sustained growth in the first half of the 1980s along with declining real wages and increasing unemployment and poverty (Kienle 1998). These developments were reinforced by deep cuts in the state's welfare provision (Salevurakis and Abdel-Haleim 2008). After Sadat's Open Door policies, cuts in government credits to farmers increased poverty in the countryside (Bush 2007, pp. 1603–5), transformations that were comparable to those Turkey underwent in the 1980s onward. However, neoliberalization (deregulation, privatization, and the shift of emphasis from industry to services and finance) was inconclusive for two decades. The decisive neoliberal shift came in the mid-to-late 1990s under Mubarak. Several ways of measuring poverty all indicate that the last quarter of the century led to a sharp impoverishment (Ibrahim 2004, p. 482).

Unlike the Egyptian state's substantial cuts in social provision, the Turkish state has restructured welfare to respond to the needs of the most vulnerable (rather than organized labor and civil servants), such as the disabled. The Justice and Development Party (henceforth AKP) government (2002–present) has restructured the health system, too, dismantling corporatist privileges and liberalizing health provision, hence attacking formal employees but serving the informal workers and peddlers (Buğra and Keyder 2006), in an overall context of higher health spending when compared to Egypt.

Turkey and Egypt have relied on expanding civic charity (as well as micro-finance) as one of the main solutions to the problems associated with the retrenchment and readjustment of the welfare state (Elyachar 2005; Atasoy 2009, pp. 131–35; Roy 2010). The welfare debate in both countries has also witnessed a discourse on “teaching people how to catch fish” rather than “giving them fish” (Buğra and Keyder 2006; Atia 2008), the Chinese proverb reinterpreted in our times to imply the necessity of making the poor self-reliant (Swidler and Watkins 2009). Hence, a neoliberal “welfare governance” based on government-charity partnerships that mobilize poor people's entrepreneurial skills (Buğra and Candas 2011, p. 522) tended to replace the formal welfare system in both cases. The Turkish and Egyptian states intervened with similar motivations, but with quite unequal capacities, as the following pages will further demonstrate.

Islamic Movements and the Charity Fields

The history of Islamic mobilization in each case had a deep impact on good works. After the 1970s, benevolence came to be more central to Islamists' activities as a response to increasing impoverishment in both Egypt and Turkey: the restructuring of the welfare state and increasing pietistic activities coincided to give a boost to charity. In Egypt, some members and affiliates of Islamist organizations split from the main body in the 1990s to establish less religiously oriented aid organizations, leading to a fragmented charity field. These joined the largest complexes of aid provision in the region, one of them boasting around 100,000 volunteers a year in the 2000s. In Turkey, despite the proliferation of competing aid organizations, the Sunni Islamic ones gradually converged on accepting the political leadership of the AKP in the 2000s. This created a still competitive but ethically more unified charity field.

A field is composed of a competitive set of actors. Each actor (whether an individual, group, or organization) wields power based on its differences from the others (Bourdieu [1971] 1991, 1994, pp. 15–16). The actors distinguish themselves not only through certain resources (such as financial assets, distinct organizational forms and capacities, etc.) but also through contrasting dispositions regarding how the competition should be performed. The structure of religious fields varies cross-nationally (as well as on other scales) on the basis of how unified or fragmented they are, that is, whether one major organization can claim to speak in the name of religion (or one kind of religion, such as Sunni Islam) in the whole country. This can happen, for example, through absorbing the major religious (or Sunni) players into a mass party.

For the purposes of the current discussion, I restrict myself to Sunni Islamic (religious and charitable) fields and their monopolization and fragmentation. This focus is analytically possible and meaningful, given that Sunni religious organizations compete over the monopolization of a certain kind of pious capital (i.e., the legitimate representation of orthodox Muslims). Similarly, Sunni charitable organizations compete over a specific kind of benevolent capital (i.e., funding by pious Sunnis). Even though Christians, secular actors, and sizable non-Sunni Islamic communities (more specifically, the Turkish Alevis; see Massicard 2013; Tambar 2014) also run benevolent organizations in both Turkey and Egypt, they are not a part of the competition for the same pool of funding and resources. The boundaries of fields are frequently porous (Massicard 2013), but this is less true of the boundaries between the Sunni charitable fields on the one hand and the Christian and secular ones on the other.

The relative unification of the Turkish charity field was based on the overall unification of the Sunni Islamic religious field. In Egypt, by contrast, the Muslim Brotherhood, official Islam (mainly represented by the vast, modernized seminary al-Azhar), and other (relatively more puritan) Islamist po-

litical organizations all sought to represent the true version of Islam. The latter two rejected the Brotherhood's spiritual and political leadership.

Such divisions remained central even as the Egyptian Sunni field as a whole gained vigor. It is therefore crucial to note that the point about fragmentation is not a point about overall weakness. During the last four decades, interactions between the states and the fields produced fragmentation in Egypt and unification in Turkey. Starting with the 1970s, Islamists strengthened within the student body, and the public influence of al-Azhar was bolstered. Sadat mobilized both Islamists and al-Azhar against the left (Zeghal 1999). The Muslim Brotherhood tried to help the regime prevent Islamist students from taking part in demonstrations and strikes; but since it was not organized as a professionalized political party, it could not control the students completely (Baker 1991). This provides an important contrast to the Turkish Islamic political party, which had considerable control over Islamist students even in the divisive 1980s. Such control helped build a unified field.

Furthermore, urban middle-class and peasant elements were poorly integrated into the Muslim Brotherhood, which prevented a monopoly of the organization over the Islamic field and reproduced influential violent Islamist organizations. Even though violence was mostly removed from the repertoire of these organizations by the 2000s, Egypt remained divided among them and the Brotherhood. This provides a contrast to Turkey, where the pious in the east and the west of the country were relatively more integrated through Islamic associations, as well as party patronage. Even though the countryside and the fringes of the cities were home to poverty also in Turkey, the poor were connected to official institutions (including welfare agencies) through the main Islamic political party's patronage networks.¹⁴

The occasionally brutal repression of Islamists reproduced the Egyptian fragmentation but did not single-handedly create it, as a comparison with the Turkish 1997 coup suggests: this secularist military intervention bolstered the further unification of an already less fragmented Sunni field. The divisions that plagued the Islamic field ever since the rise of Islamism in the 1970s were brought under control with the rise of the AKP, since this post-coup party promised to fight effectively against anti-Islamist forces (and ultimately delivered on this promise). These processes resulted in popularized visions of what Islamic charity stands for in Turkey, whereas its meaning was more starkly contested in Egypt. This account draws attention to the centrality of effective state action (here, military repression) in aiding neoliberal diffusion, while also demonstrating how field structures interact with state actions to produce the observed results.

¹⁴ See White (2002) on the historical roots of these patronage strategies in the AKP's Islamist predecessors.

There was also a contrast between the two nations' Islamists in terms of their official approach to neoliberalism. As early as 2002, the AKP incorporated neoliberal benevolent ethics into its official program. The party committed itself to investing in human capital, fostering self-reliance among society's members, and empowering the poor at the economic level (in individualized fashion; Atasoy 2009, p. 111). By contrast, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's commitment to neoliberalism, while growing ever since the 1970s, was always riddled with doubts, internal criticisms, and resistances and many qualifications (Utvik 2006). In the post-2011 scene, too, the instability of this commitment was reproduced because of pressures from the political left, workers' strikes, and less neoliberal Islamic circles (crucial players in a fragmented field; Tuğal 2012). In sum, field fragmentation led to foot dragging with respect to neoliberalization in Egypt, whereas field unity in Turkey allowed the leading Islamic party to send unequivocally neoliberal messages to the whole nation.

The Egyptian religious field as a whole was gaining momentum, but a major result of its fragmentation was the reproduction of communitarian dispositions in the charity field. The tight linkage of political, charity, and *da'wa* (religious mission) activities throughout a century created a resilient inertia. What is more, this was not an unreflexive inertia: communitarians mobilized their resources in support of a comprehensive understanding of Islam (*fehm ed-din esh-shamil*, a key phrase that came up in many interviews).¹⁵ They controlled—through public and secretive, legal and illegal ways—civil society to a certain extent, preventing a complete shift in a neoliberal direction. Even though the religious field in Egypt was much more fragmented than the Turkish one, the melding of politics, charity, and religious mission was the shared and taken-for-granted assumption of one pole of the Egyptian field and the communitarian charitable associations under its sway. Actually, the fragmentation prevented any possible religious actor from intervening in either the religious or the charitable fields in a radically transformative way and shattering this assumption. As a result, communitarian tendencies were ingrained in both actors and organizations, rendering neoliberal diffusion quite difficult.

In Turkey, by contrast, neoliberal associations started to outpace communitarian charity by the early 2000s. Much like its communitarian counterparts in Egypt, the Turkish (communitarian-Islamist) Welfare Party also controlled charity activities in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet the Turkish chari-

¹⁵ This emphasis can be seen also in the texts of an Egyptian sociologist revered by and connected to both the communitarian and the neoliberal associations: Ghaanim (2010, pp. 13–14, 70) argues that a meticulous study and knowledge of Islamic law (as well as morality based on the knowledge of that law) is necessary for effective benevolent activity.

table field was not as united as it came to be in the 2000s, and this party's control of the overall field was consistent but feeble when compared to the AKP's neoliberal control in the 2000s. Welfare Party control did not have the same results for charity work as in Egypt (i.e., the entrenchment of communitarian ethics) for two more reasons.

First, mission-oriented Islamic mobilization in Turkey picked up pace only in the 1970s: it was of much shorter duration when compared to Egypt (where it was at least a century old). The reasons for this relatively late mobilization are complex, but a prominent one is the more solidly secularist legacy in Turkey and the concomitant submission of Islamic forces to the center-right, which seemed to be the only viable alternative to rigid secularism up until the late 1960s. Rather than working to build an independent Islamist line as in Egypt, most Turkish Islamists spent their energies to expand the power of the center-right against the secularists. This process trained them to be expert politicians but distracted them from mission and charity. Islamists found an independent voice only in the early 1970s (Çakır 1990). Rather than one movement being weaker or stronger, this resulted in the uneven development of the movements' capacities: until the 1970s, the Turkish Islamists were much more politically savvy but much less committed to building mission and charity organizations when compared to their Egyptian counterparts. It is telling how this uneven development of Islamism was linked to the uneven diffusion of neoliberalism: the stronger investment of Egyptian Islamists in communitarian charity made it relatively more difficult for them to adjust to the new times once the globe shifted in a neoliberal direction following the 1970s. This was among the factors that prevented them from emerging as the victors of the new world, unlike their (politically flexible and effective) Turkish counterparts.

Second, a successful (interestingly, nonfragmenting) split within the Islamist party as a response to the (secularist) 1997 military intervention led to the merger of the market-oriented wing of Islamism with the state. This split resulted in the formation of the AKP in 2001, but this wing's maneuvers against the communitarian Islamists and their strategic cooperation with the state go back to the mid-1990s. The neoliberal wing of the Turkish Islamic movement (formerly the less popular, if more resourceful, neoliberal flank of the communitarian Welfare Party) gained a lot of respect within the religious field, as well as among the benevolent actors. This rise to prominence was facilitated, among other things, by its unification of the competing Sunni factions (the relatively more puritanical Islamists, representatives of official Islam, non-Alevi Sufi communities, etc.) against the hard-liner secularists. Thanks to this unification, the AKP became the governing party in 2002. Its leadership contained the distrustful antagonisms of the 1970s–90s, whereas no such unifying actor emerged on the Egyptian scene. The AKP's rise spelled

the end of consistent communitarian influence on the charity field (up until 2013).

The party's effectiveness against the non- and anti-Sunni forces made its aggressive neoliberalism easier to swallow among even potentially anti-neoliberal actors, such as some aid associations. The AKP, the governing party of the Turkish regime from 2002 until the present, boosted the activities of the neoliberal benevolent associations (without facing any serious criticism from communitarian rivals, who came to be relatively weak, in stark contrast to Egypt). Consequently, one of the decisive developments in the 2000s was the explosive growth of two neoliberal aid organizations (Deniz Feneri and Kimse Yok mu) and the stagnation of a major communitarian aid organization, Cansuyu (Göçmen 2011).¹⁶ This latter organization remained loyal to the major (but now ineffective) communitarian Islamist party that was left behind after the AKP's split from the Islamic movement's main body. This party, now called the Felicity Party, fell from (popular) grace in the 2000s and dragged down with itself the largest communitarian benevolent organization.

Hence, the unification of the religious field created a more unified benevolence field in Turkey. While non-neoliberal dispositions could survive with relative ease in the fragmented Egyptian benevolence field, the Turkish benevolence field was more receptive to neoliberal expectations (under the impact of a unified, neoliberal religious leadership). Another consequence of these developments was that new entrants to the Turkish field unquestioningly took the neoliberal organizations as their model (as the communitarian ones were less visible throughout the 2000s), while those in Egypt had communitarian as well as neoliberal organizations to model themselves on (as both could be construed as stories of success).

Despite these qualitative differences, the growing significance of religiously inspired giving in both cases is unmistakable. While Islamic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), most of them involved in aid, made up 16% of all Egyptian NGOs in the 1960s, in the 1970s this ratio increased to 30% and then to 43% in the 1990s (Abdelrahman 2004, p. 138). Bayat (2002, p. 12) reports that Islamic aid organizations "accounted for one-third of all Egyptian private voluntary organizations in the late 1980s, and at least 50 percent of all welfare associations (or 6,327) in the late 1990s." The 4,000 registered *zakat*

¹⁶ The fourth major player in the Sunni Islamic benevolence field, the Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), will be handled elsewhere because of its complex mission, practice, and ethics (aggressively redistributive at the global level, decidedly neoliberal within Turkey), which complicate the analysis here. Nevertheless, before the end of the liberal era in Turkey (circa 2013), the organization not only was uncritical of the neoliberal benevolent associations but shared many volunteers with them. In this sense, its complexity did not disturb the unity of the field: the staff and volunteers of this organization shared the overall dispositions of the staff and volunteers at the major neoliberal organizations (as far as Turkey was concerned).

committees collected \$10 million in 1992 and provided health services to 15 million people as opposed to 4.5 million in 1980 (Kandil 1998, pp. 145–46). These numbers, it should be added, do not take into account the informal (as well as illegal) Islamic aid activities.

The numbers are more difficult to track in the Turkish case because of the relatively more secularist legal context: Islamic or religious organizations are not officially labeled as such (in most cases). Anecdotal evidence, however, hints that faith-based organizations have a huge impact in Turkey, too. For instance, one study (Göçmen 2011, p. 144) has pointed out that only 13 Turkish faith-based organizations have a total budget of \$66 million, a significant amount when compared to the budget of the biggest state aid agency (\$395 million). Of the 80,000 officially registered associations, more than 15,000 have provided religious services of some sort, according to another study (Şen 2011). More than 20% of these define their main aim to be social assistance and charity.

THE EGYPTIAN AND TURKISH FIELDS OF BENEVOLENCE

How did these macro-balances and field structures affect the practice of charity on the ground? In order to highlight the rifts between communitarian and neoliberal associations, the analysis below covers services to and expectations from the beneficiaries; the orientations of managers, staff, and volunteers (as well as their expectations from each other and from themselves); and, finally, the associations' relation to the state. Services and expectations are discussed by focusing on the main activities of each type of association, its overall goals and motivation, and its discourse on poverty. Orientations are explored by looking at the modes of distinction an association's members and affiliates deploy and at managers' and staff's status in the organizational hierarchies.

The Egyptian Field

Communitarian Mission Associations

The Egyptian communitarian associations aimed to build a religious and socioeconomically balanced society through works of provision and religious education. In line with their expectations from the poor and society as a whole, their managers, staff, and volunteers also pressured each other to become more pious and modest. They made heavy references to religious texts in their daily interactions, emphasized commitment to religion as the driver of their activities, and downplayed monetary gain and career expectations. In short, they emphasized communal piety and well-being over individual responsibility and training (unlike neoliberal organizations).

The Piety Association (founded about a century ago) was one of the biggest representatives of communitarian charity.¹⁷ This association's members and sympathizers claimed that its funding came from people of all income groups connected to each other through mosque networks, but its detractors argued that there was a lot of Gulf and Saudi money behind its operations. According to the documents of the association, it took care of more orphans than the government (close to 600,000). It allocated around 50% of its funds to *da'wa* (or religious mission, i.e., establishing and running Qur'anic schools, building mosques, organizing sermons and lessons, and shaping individual lives according to Qur'anic principles), 20% to medical services, 10% to other necessities and orphanages, less than 10% to administrative costs, and 10% to "development" (*tanmiyya*, which includes training and education, as in neoliberal associations). This apportionment of funds reflected its overall non-neoliberal orientations. The sheer size and historical rootedness of this association enabled the persistence of communitarian dispositions and a distinct vocabulary despite the winds of neoliberalization in its home country.

The Piety Association provided ample and quite specialized medical services. In many of its clinics and hospitals, services were provided for free (regardless of the patient's socioeconomic background). One of the doctors who volunteered for a major Piety clinic emphasized, "Even if we see a patient driving a Mercedes, we don't ask for proof of poverty," echoing the Catholic Worker's mode of operation in the United States (see Allahyari 2000). They pointed out that this would insult the patients, whereas they wanted to do everything "with dignity." Even though I kept on using the word "service," both this doctor and a director at the clinic insisted that "this is the beneficiaries' right, it is not a service." This unconditional provision, which did not differentiate between the deserving needy and the undeserving poor, distinguished the Piety Association from neoliberal associations.¹⁸ The latter emphasized the distinction between the deserving and undeserving poor, as they held that the behaviors of the undeserving poor were one of the root causes of poverty (see below). This nonconditionality demonstrates the association's distance from neoliberalism, a distance enabled by the fragmentation of the charitable field. The result is the obstructed diffusion of neoliberal criteria regarding the deserving poor.

Association members argued that their commitment to God was a guarantee of the quality of their services. One of the directors of the same Piety clinic explained, "When people encounter free services, they think: 'These should be low quality.' But we are doing this for God, so [what we offer] has to be

¹⁷ As far as the analysis of interviews is concerned, I will use pseudonyms for the associations and individuals involved in charity work.

¹⁸ Nonconditional on paper: critics frequently pointed out that this association expected its beneficiaries to adapt more conservative forms of religiosity.

better than the services provided anywhere else. People have to tell others that [the services provided for pleasing God] are better than services provided [with other motivations].” What is striking here was the insistence that religious motivation would create higher-quality services when compared to medical services motivated by cash.¹⁹ The managers and staff of neoliberal Egyptian associations derided such beliefs and pointed out, as any orthodox economist would, that “rational management,” not an abstract and scientifically immeasurable commitment to God, was the guarantee of superior care. Numbers and other claims to rationality were not absent from the accounts of Piety Association members; but these elements were subordinated to (numerically) immeasurable qualities. This approach to gauging the quality of care went hand in hand with the association’s (communitarian) orientation to invest in the piety of its members rather than their credentials.

Both insiders and outsiders of the association emphasized that its staff members were paid very little. The top managers were volunteers rather than paid staff (they had morning jobs as professionals). Significantly, they used a distinct, religious word for volunteer (*muhtasib*, rather than *mutatawwi*, which is the standard Arabic word for volunteer). *Muhtasib* comes from the verb *ihtasaba*, “to anticipate a reward in the hereafter by adding a pious deed to one’s account with God.” *Muhtasibin*, then, were “anticipators” of heavenly reward, not just volunteers. The word also implied that charitable actors had a religious duty to “inspect” society.²⁰ In short, the modus operandi of the managers was not individualized (as in neoliberal associations), but built on the (Islamic-communitarian) logic of communal responsibility and control.

The association’s director told me that whenever he went on a trip, he paid out of pocket. The managers of some other organizations confirmed that such self-sacrificing behavior was a pattern in associations such as Piety and was indicative of their unprofessional approach and low quality (from the neoliberal perspective). From the Piety Association’s point of view, by contrast, self-sacrifice was upheld as one of the utmost virtues. While these communitarian actors did not openly denigrate their neoliberal rivals, one could sense, in between the lines, a deep suspicion regarding the administrative costs of the latter. The insistence that they were “anticipators,” not volunteers, constituted an implicit strategy of distinction (and an implicit recognition of the field). Such distinct vocabulary was enabled by highly differentiated patterns of socialization of this association’s members (separate mosques, separate schools,

¹⁹ Lacking medical expertise, I could not test this claim. Still, for the purposes of this article, what matters is the “folk explanation” of what produces better care for the needy.

²⁰ In premodern Islamic societies, *muhtasibin* was the word used for public employees in charge of inspecting markets and crafts (as well as welfare and the religious correctness of people’s private lives) with an explicit Qur’anic duty to enjoin good and prohibit evil (Foster 1970, pp. 140–42). In some Arab countries such as Tunisia, it means “treasurer” in modern times.

familial inheritance of associational belonging, etc.), a hallmark of the fragmented charitable field.

A distinguishing feature of communitarian charities was the way they apportioned blame for social ills. In opposition to neoliberal charities, they did not see poverty as a result of individual characteristics, but of the oppressive and non-Islamic nature of Egyptian society and state. One of the managers of a small association (founded in the early 2000s), who attributed the responsibility for dire conditions to the better off and to power holders, exemplified this tendency: “[The cause of poverty is] *zulm* [un-Islamic oppression]. The responsible persons severed their links with the poor. They don’t hear the pain and the suffering. Poverty is increasing. . . . Islam is the solution. It is just rule: Rule based on God’s book (Islam, *huwa al-hal. huwa hakim ‘adil. Hukm bi kitab Allah*). . . . And whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed—then it is those who are the disbelievers. . . . Every leader has the responsibility to [take care of his group] and listen to citizens’ problems and complaints.”²¹ Finally, he got very concrete about how this should be done: “Every factory should build homes for their workers [*‘an kulli masna’ yebni sakan lil-‘umma*]. The public sector should be as it was under Nasser.” While the managers of neoliberal associations attributed corruption and inefficiency to state-owned enterprises, this manager perceived them as strong and efficient, at least during Nasser’s rule. He interestingly combined an allegiance to Muslim Brotherhood rhetoric with a yearning for “Arab socialism” (which the Brotherhood had subscribed to in the 1950s and early 1960s and then repudiated after Nasser’s anti-Islamist moves). Unlike neoliberal actors, then, communitarian actors were inclined to blame the rich and the powerful more than the bottom rungs of society for social ills. The fragmented structure of the charity field resulted in the lack of clear messages coming from a monopolized center; this enabled smaller, new entrants to the field to draw on a multiplicity of discourses (and in the case of this organization, even more redistributive ones when compared to the discourses of the organization’s main inspiration, the Muslim Brotherhood).

The Muslim Brotherhood (founded in 1928) was also among the biggest communitarian associations. Insiders’ and outsiders’ estimates of its number of volunteers ranged from hundreds of thousands to millions. Its beneficiaries were said to be in the millions too. Though this was possibly an overblown estimate, the manager of the Cairo charity networks argued that throughout the country they supported anywhere from 50% to 75% of the poor in each locality.

As a response to the question about the root causes of poverty, Brotherhood members emphasized the weakness of the “correct” understanding of

²¹ The saying “Islam is the solution” is the trademark slogan of the Muslim Brotherhood. “Whoever does not judge . . . are the disbelievers” is from the Qura’an (5:44), although the interviewee did not identify it as such.

religion among potential donors, attesting to the non-neoliberalization of their understanding of poverty. Hence, the Brotherhood's religious activities were not completely differentiated from its provision activities (a nondifferentiation that characterized all Egyptian communitarian associations). Living up to their high demands of strong piety and religious knowledge from society, Brotherhood interviewees backed their claims about Egypt and benevolence with several verses and *Hadith*. This speech pattern was enabled by their cultured mastery of classical Arabic, which is possible only after years of immersion in religious training. They cited classical sources frequently and most of the time without probing. Their use of language mirrored communitarian organizations' tendency to invest vigorously in the religious formation of their affiliates, a field-induced disposition that distracts from allocation of resources to career training (and hence prevents neoliberal diffusion).

The managers and foot soldiers of Brotherhood-related benevolent activity were not systematically rewarded. If benevolent activities were carried out within the informal networks of the Brotherhood, then these were done on a mostly unpaid basis. The benevolent actors received regular salaries only when they worked for the formal associations affiliated with the Brotherhood or for the associations and (official) welfare agencies the Brotherhood had infiltrated. Self-sacrifice, we observe again, is at the center of communitarian Islam.

Communitarian associations were not completely cut off from the state (as they were partially regulated by the state, and some of them, especially the Muslim Brotherhood, infiltrated official institutions). However, in contrast to neoliberal associations, they did not cooperate with the state on ambitious projects and did not receive the same kind of official support. Moreover, even when regulated, they retained their status as "suspect." As will be further explained below, this problematic relation with the state was one of the factors that impeded neoliberal diffusion.

Volunteer-Based Neoliberal Pious Associations

Volunteer-based neoliberal pious associations combined provision of necessities and developmental activities. In some, provision outweighed developmental programs. Yet, the Chinese proverb regarding the value of teaching people how to catch fish rather than giving them fish was a commonplace even among those that were relatively heavier on provision. While all of these associations agreed on the necessity to bolster "developmental" philanthropy as an alternative to charity, they differed with respect to how much emphasis they put on volunteer activity (especially for managerial functions). The desirable level of professionalization pitted neoliberal actors against each other.

The director of one of the largest associations in this group (Nour Association, founded in the late 1990s) differentiated the organization from com-

munitarian associations, specifically mentioning the Piety Association: “People are used to charity in the normal sense: collecting money and helping poor people. . . . Usually poor people wait in line in front of the charity organization to get help. We don’t do this. We have volunteers to go and knock on doors. We have the energy of young people. . . . This is different from the traditional way of Egyptian charity.” The managers of these associations frequently distinguished themselves as young and new, in contrast to the “old” and “traditional” communitarians, a discursive opposition that also came up in the Turkish field. However, in contrast to some of the neoliberal Egyptian actors, the Nour managers saw volunteer activity and spirit as an indispensable part of their novelty.

Religion was a part of their motivation, but not the goal of charitable activity. The Nour director explained that their volunteers were different from Islamists: they thought that charity moved them closer to God but did not desire to convert everybody to their position. Concomitantly, religion was crucial to the formation and sustenance of these associations but not a large part of their formal activities. The Nour director himself was a veteran of the Brotherhood. His and many others’ parting ways with that organization gave them a negative political identity (they were not Islamists anymore) but not an alternative unifying belonging.

This biographic trajectory further shows the effects of the fragmented charitable field. As a result of his past religious training and involvement, the director could claim orthodox legitimacy (and therefore attract Sunni energy and funding away from communitarian organizations). His (and other neoliberal directors’) biography was among the factors that broke communitarian monopoly over the field (but the persistence of huge communitarian organizations impeded neoliberal monopoly).

A board member of another major organization in this category (founded in the mid-2000s) used more indicators to underscore how they were different from communitarian organizations: professionals ran his own organization and they had systems and procedures, whereas the old organizations depended on mosques and verbal communication. Despite all of this, he thought that the communitarian organizations played a huge role in Egyptian society, worked with the grassroots, were able to garner a lot of funds, were “very smart,” and so would be able to adapt professional techniques in the longer run. “We cannot compete with them in many senses,” he concluded. This ongoing substantial presence of communitarian associations, put together with the split of ex-Islamists from the Brotherhood in the 1990s, fragmented the Egyptian field. The fragmentation, in turn, impeded the smooth diffusion of neoliberal techniques throughout the associations.

The developmental techniques among some other organizations were stronger than in Nour and involved what could be called “the cultivation of the neoliberal subject” (a productive person with an investment mentality

and a sense of private property). A few benevolent actors told me that everybody already knows we should teach poor people “how to fish rather than giving them fish,” but their mission was teaching how to be clever fishermen, how to catch the fish with less cost, and even how to make a fishing net. These emphases underlined the deeper neoliberalization of both discourse and practice in some of these associations.

The biggest of these (more professionalized) organizations was founded in the mid-2000s. The major donors of this organization (wealthy Egyptian businessmen) also held managerial positions in the association. The association operated more than 200 primary schools, which served close to 6,000 students. It also supported (what it defined as) “productive families” (through means such as constant income, provision of livestock, and debt relief) with the neoliberal expectation that these families in the long run would be able to survive in the market on their own (and no longer need charity).

The association’s managers wanted to create companies along these lines and build up “a circle of stakeholders.” This heavy involvement in finance (another dimension of deep neoliberalization) raised suspicion in some Islamic circles, but the grand mufti’s involvement as a board member served as a shield against such doubts (or, alternatively, further reinforced some Islamists’ indictment that these associations were merged with the Mubarak regime).²²

The managers of this association were critical of volunteer activity (predominant in communitarian but even many neoliberal associations, such as Nour), which they associated with lack of awareness and commitment.²³ The organization recruited multinational companies’ employees in order to build a professional staff. (The salaries, as a result, were much more competitive when compared to those of other associations.) Demonstrating the deep neoliberalization of their mentality, the managers underlined the high returns such highly qualified professionals would bring to their associations when compared to volunteers.

The managers of all neoliberal associations verbally denied that they got any support from the state (especially during the interviews). Nevertheless, it

²² The grand mufti is the highest official authority in charge of issuing Islamic legal opinions. A prominent Islamic law expert brings credibility to the association, together with the complicating factor that the grand mufti is appointed by the (old) regime.

²³ The more developed professionalization (and caution regarding volunteers), along with financialization, indicated that some of the organizations I have included in this category could be put in yet another, third, category (perhaps the same category with the professionalized neoliberal associations in Turkey). But for the sake of the analytical clarity and brevity of this article, I am including them in the same category with those such as Nour. This categorization also draws attention to two interrelated facts: These more professionalized associations are not in a predominant position, even in their pole of the field, and they systematically cooperate with volunteer-based neoliberal associations.

became clear throughout the research process that the state provided assistance in several ways. For example, the governor of Cairo and the head of the Egyptian parliament donated (private and public) land to an association's hospital. The governor also removed some informal houses around the hospital. The minister of culture then painted the façades of the remaining informal settlements.

These associations cooperated with the state in other, more programmatic ways, too. After beneficiaries finished the literacy program at Nour, they got a Ministry of Education certificate showing that they had completed an equivalent of primary education. Another major organization in this category focused on the provision of food. It worked with hotel and other entertainment industries, mostly through cooperating with the Ministry of Tourism, to collect the excess food.

Such cooperation with the neoliberal state certainly helped diffusion in the Egyptian field. However, under fragmented field conditions, not only was the diffusion uneven, but many of the practices that resulted from cooperation with the state (such as fund-raising advertisements on state television) further bolstered the animosity of communitarian organizations, resulting in oppositional attitudes to such practices. Even though the Egyptian state aggressively neoliberalized throughout the 2000s (just like the Turkish state), the structure of the Egyptian charitable field prevented a productive openness to its prodding in a market-oriented direction (whereas the Turkish state's encouragements of neoliberal provision were warmly received). This contrast demonstrates that studying the impact of the state is necessary but insufficient in analyzing the intensity of diffusion.

Table 1 summarizes the findings in regard to the dominant and subordinate players in the Egyptian field of benevolence. Within the universe of the

TABLE 1
THE ORGANIZATIONS AND DISPOSITIONS OF EGYPTIAN BENEVOLENT ACTORS

| | Communitarian Mission Associations (Dominant) | Volunteer-Based Neoliberal Pious Associations (Subordinate) |
|----------------------------------|--|--|
| Main activities | Religious activities and provision of necessities | Provision of necessities and training |
| Overall goals and motivation | Religious society without immense wealth differences | The spread of volunteering mentality and the cultivation of the market subject |
| Modes of distinction | Heavy reference to Islamic texts; commitment to God and religion | Youth power; "novelty" and criticisms of traditional Egyptian culture; specialization, expertise |
| Managers' status in organization | Volunteers | Career professionals |
| Staff's status in organization | Underpaid employees | Career professionals |

large charitable organizations, the ratio of neoliberal to communitarian organizations was roughly even (four to three). However, the communitarian organizations had a bigger base of staff and volunteers. Two of the communitarian organizations had hundreds of thousands of volunteers each, compared to the 100,000 volunteers of the largest neoliberal organization. They also reached more beneficiaries (two communitarian organizations allegedly helped millions of people, whereas only one neoliberal organization helped more than 1 million). In all these senses, communitarian associations were the dominant players in the field.

The Turkish Field

Professionalized Neoliberal Associations

Professionalized neoliberal organizations mostly focused on the provision of necessities and the training of people for the marketplace. Among the larger organizations in this group, Islam had a central role as a motivator, but they did not seek to shape society along Islamic lines. In their recorded and non-recorded speech, the actors made very little reference to classical Islamic texts. These large organizations combined a few funding sources, ranging from the support of wealthy families to the encouragement of small donations through charitable television programs.

The Hope Association was one of the three largest benevolent associations in Turkey. It was founded in the 1990s. Even though its managers, staff, and volunteers thought that there were some structural reasons behind poverty (e.g., unemployment), they paid most attention to some inherent, some learned individual shortcomings, exposing their neoliberal assumptions. A top manager in the association was most adamant about this issue:

My mother used to work in a factory. We were three siblings. Our neighbors (a family with three children) had the same income. They looked very poor. Their life standard was very low. The place was dirty. . . . They didn't know how to manage their money! We [the Hope Association] call this the culture of poverty. [Some poor people] inherit this understanding from their families. We organized a symposium about this too. We need to struggle against this understanding, but this is the most difficult part of the struggle against poverty. You can give [this type of people] good employment and wages, but since they don't know how to manage their money, they are always needy [*muhtaç*]. It is hard to distinguish these people from the [real] poor, but they are different.

This manager's account implied that if a family with income was still (apparently) poor, the cause was not the amount of income. Entrepreneurial families (such as his working-class family of origin) could figure out what to do with restricted amounts. This distinguished his family from its "needy" neighbors. These semantic struggles (on what the very category of poverty meant) were also a conscious area of charitable activity. Neoliberal Turkish

associations sought to redefine poverty on the basis of cultural traits that made people poor (rather than the lack of certain goods and services, or in reference to distinction from social groups that lived in abundance), exemplifying the global diffusion of liberal-conservative norms.

Managers and staff employees of these organizations emphasized their scientific distinctness from the others. They also used scientific language to criticize traditional Turkish-Islamic culture. When asked “What differentiates you from other associations?” the same Hope Association manager responded,

We focus on a topic no one has paid attention to before: We take the scientific dimension of this work very seriously. Basic necessities will be provided to the needy; this is one dimension of our activities. . . . [We also focus on] career development [*meslek edindirme*]. We want people to earn their living on their own; this is our second dimension. But thirdly, we want universities to work with us to evaluate both our own projects and other aid projects throughout the world. In 2003, we organized a big symposium on poverty with 34 universities and 17 state agencies. After that, there was a jolt in scientific studies on poverty in universities and the public sector. There was an increase in the number of books, conferences, and articles on poverty. We did this again in 2008 at the international level. This is our difference. We don’t want to be stuck with sentimentality. We want to see [poverty] from a realistic angle in order to understand how people can be encouraged [*teşvik*] with good projects.

Hence, scientific-ness was expected to unite state, civil society, and universities to show people the way out of poverty. Science would serve through teaching people how to be self-reliant via “encouraging” them to take care of themselves, that is, become responsible individuals in the neoliberal mold.

Both managers and staff of these associations were paid well. The hierarchical structure was intricate. There were elaborate staff recruitment techniques. However, religious involvement also worked as a filter. Volunteers, staff, and managers had strong clerical school and theology faculty backgrounds. Some of them had also worked in the radio stations and newspapers of prominent Sufi communities.

The technical and scientific obsession of the larger organizations was not the only factor that differentiated Turkish market-oriented associations from the Egyptian ones. In contrast to Egypt, many small Turkish associations combined an intense sense of religious mission with neoliberal orientations. They used the word *tebliğ* (rather than *da’wa*) for their religious mission activities. These associations focused on religious mission (*tebliğ*) as well as provision of necessities and training. Their overall goals were the cultivation of the neoliberal subject and the furtherance of religion. Still, being “scientific” and “professional” was a part of their rhetoric, too. The contrast with Egypt is informative: When such mission-focused actors entered the field in Egypt, they adopted communitarian orientations to good works; by contrast, Turkish mission-focused entrants to the field embraced neoliberal orientations to

benevolence. This resulted from the unified structure of the Turkish charitable field: had there been successful and growing communitarian organizations in Turkey, too, new entrants with orthodox religious sensibilities could have taken them as their model. However, since the Sunni field was monopolized by neoliberal associations, diffusion of neoliberal techniques did not face such impediments.

The Candle Association regularly visited and took care of 300–600 households in adjacent neighborhoods. Through these periodic visits, the association had developed a vast knowledge of the surrounding areas. The monthly revenue of the association was approximately \$30,000. Religion and religious networks were central to the motivation of the association's members. Ahmet, the director, had entered activities of provision on the basis of feelings of Islamic duty. He was very willing to underline that they did everything for religious purposes: to receive the prayers of the poor, which would help them in the hereafter, and to obtain the consent of God (*Allah rızası*). As different from many other associations, the Candle Association was very explicit about its connection to a Sunni Sufi order (*tarikât*), underlining the integration of communitarian tendencies and neoliberalization. Ahmet argued that people could stay true to their religious motivations only if continuously disciplined: "If there is no spiritual authority [a Sufi master], selfish desires will take over."

Ahmet distinguished between his organization, which (he said) was based on "professionalism" and "data" (a word choice indicative of formal dedication to science), and other, volunteer-driven organizations. His organization's professionalism allowed the staff to easily differentiate between the deserving and undeserving poor. They indeed had an elaborate mechanism of eliminating people on the basis of the goods they had at home (such as high-definition televisions), truthfulness of their proclamations (tested through fact checking with other associations and government agencies), but also observation of behavior:

We take the innocence of people as our basis. When we see people who talk too much, who cry too much, and who play with words, we immediately withdraw. These types knock on the door of every foundation they can find. They start to whine before they start to speak. It's a habit. They concentrate on crying. An innocent person does not immediately cry. If you ask her about her situation, she remains quiet. When someone cries, we tell her to go out, wash her face and then come back. We primarily target people who cannot demand, who have a sense of shame. We *feel* that shame; we don't push them to talk and complain. When we see them swallowing their words, we interrupt so that they won't be insulted.

Submissiveness and shame were the desirable, even cultivated, qualities of the recipient. The organization not only picked beneficiaries on the basis of

the perceived existence of these qualities but actively fostered them. Together with inducing submissiveness, shame, and piety (unlike the Hope Association), the Candle Association also strove to instill individual responsibility. In its quest to constitute the neoliberal subject, however, it ran into many difficulties. Ahmet specified, “In the families we help, especially fathers have a very straightforward worker mentality. They don’t think in terms of self-development and education. The municipality has free lessons for career development. If they were patient enough, they would have a career at the end of three months. . . . This is the sickness of ‘learned helplessness’” (*öğretilmiş çaresizlik*). What Ahmet meant by “learned helplessness” was a propensity to prefer heavy jobs that come with daily payments to more stable, less demanding jobs with monthly salaries. The latter would require patience and a faculty of calculation. Not only the concept (psychologist Seligman’s “learned helplessness”) but also Ahmet’s explanation of it (e.g., the emphasis on calculation) draw attention to this heavily missionary association’s discursive investment in science. Ahmet also gave examples of poor people (even religious ones, he lamented) who declined their job offers because they did not understand the benefits of having stable jobs. This helplessness was so ingrained that nothing could be done once somebody got the “sickness” (again, his wording). Hence, their priority was not those with the sickness, but their children. The long-term goal was to obliterate “worker mentalities” and transform the poor into career professionals. In this association’s neoliberal understanding of the world, everybody could potentially have a career (and only cultural factors prevented them from fulfilling their potential).

The donors-cum-managers of these smaller organizations were businessmen and small merchants. The staff was mostly composed of professionals and recruited through personal, business, and frequently religious networks. However, despite all the talk of professionalism, there were no elaborate techniques of recruitment, in contrast to the Hope Association.

This complex totality of practices demonstrates the effects of the unified benevolence field. A discourse (if not always practice) of career professionalism was shared across the board among the Turkish neoliberal associations. Consequently, in contrast to Egypt, discourses and practices that systematically encouraged volunteer activity were removed (volunteerism was encouraged only as a subsidiary activity, not as the driving engine). The decoupling between formal structure and practice (e.g., formal commitment to science and rationalization but practical reliance on religious networks) was frequently observed in the unified Turkish field (as would be predicted by convergence accounts), whereas in the Egyptian field what was striking was the uneven spread of neoliberal formal structures themselves.

The Turkish neoliberal associations had quite developed relations with the local municipalities, as well as other governmental agencies. They car-

ried out (what they labeled as) “character education” not in isolation, but with the help of municipalities and the central government (e.g., they organized joint conferences and educational programs). The managers and staff saw it as the joint duty of the state and associations to raise the next generation according to a religious sense of responsibility. The unified charitable field therefore allowed an effective intervention by the neoliberal state (in contrast to Egypt, where the predominant charitable organizations did not welcome such cooperation). The state is indeed a crucial actor in the diffusion of neoliberalism, but its effectiveness depends on the structure of other fields.

As important as these operational links were the neoliberal associations’ biographical and historical connections to the governing (Islamic) party, AKP. The managers, staff, and volunteers of most of these associations either had actively worked in or had been affiliated with associations and institutions linked to the party (or its predecessors). In one case, the charitable association was an offshoot of a generosity-focused documentary series; the television channel that aired the series was affiliated with the governing party as early as the latter’s founding days. These personal and institutional attachments to the governing party formed the sociobiographical background for the relatively smoother diffusion of neoliberalism in Turkey: messages emanating from the governing party were not perceived to come from an alien source. Hence, the historical ties under scrutiny bestowed on the Turkish field a unifying spirit and vision, which was lacking in the Egyptian field.

Communitarian Associations with Redistributive Tendencies

As with the communitarian associations in Egypt, the overarching goal among Turkish communitarians was to establish a moral, virtuous community without immense wealth differences. Yet, the suspicion of wealth accumulation was much more frequently voiced than in Egypt: The Turkish communitarians spoke with an edge. Still, thankfulness for what one had and the balance between the richer and poorer sectors of society were the ultimate goals among some of them rather than the abolition of poverty (in parallel fashion to premodern Muslim benevolence). However, others criticized this type of communitarianism and called for a thorough redistribution of wealth. The robust diffusion analyzed in the previous subsection had led to an unexpected twist in benevolent ethics, hinting that neoliberalization could be seriously hampered in the future.

A director of one of the main communitarian organizations explained why they did not seek to abolish poverty (and hence resisted the redistributive tendencies of the organizations covered further below):

There is no way to abolish poverty. Actually, poverty needs to exist. This world is a place of [divine] examination, we should never forget that. People are composed of tribes of different . . . income levels. If we were all at the same level, that would go against the logic of . . . examination. But we also have a slogan: The real poverty and deprivation is lacking compassion [*merhamet*]. . . We have no intention to abolish poverty and we would not be powerful enough to do that anyway.

Q: Is poverty a part of fate, then?

Rather than fate, it is creation: We are all different. . . [The real question is]: Do people revolt due to their hunger, or are they grateful and patient? May people have richness of heart [*gönül zenginliği*]! We see many poor people who say, “Thank God, I have everything.” . . . But we see that they don’t have anything. And we see many rich people who complain all the time despite their wealth. Therefore, we should question who is wealthy and who is poor. The best is to be thankful [*hamd etmek*].

As a result of such commitment, this association put a lot of resources into not only provision of necessities but also *tebliğ*: the building and maintenance of religious schools, which would spread this ethics of modesty among the rich and poor. The goal, in short, was religiously inspired interdependence, the defining feature of communitarian Islam.

Volunteers, staff, and managers of this association were from clerical schools. A few of them were licensed clerics (*imams*). Volunteerism and managerial positions were not seen as parts of a developmental career: *Maneviyat* (spirituality, which is a binary opposite of “materiality” in Turkish Sunni discourse, not of organized religion) was the real goal. In this regard, the diffusion of neoliberal organizational structure was blocked. Despite this alleged commitment to causes rather than career, however, the pay scales were much better when compared to the communitarian organizations in Egypt. The comparatively more advanced neoliberalization of the overall field (and of society) in Turkey put pressure even on communitarian associations to neoliberalize (since, for instance, it would be quite difficult to retain any qualified personnel, whether staff or managers, without relatively better salaries than in Egypt). Again in contrast to Egypt, the top managers were not volunteers but paid professionals, even though not as career oriented as their counterparts in neoliberal associations.

Some relatively more redistribution-oriented associations focused on the provision of necessities, citizenship training, and protest activity. Religion tended to be a motivation rather than the goal of charitable activity among these, in contrast to less redistribution-oriented communitarian associations, which clearly emphasized *tebliğ*. (The focus on Islamic mission was thus far from being a shared attribute of Turkish communitarian associations, unlike the Egyptian ones.) The overall goals of giving included the cultivation of self-reliant, self-confident, but also sociopolitically struggle-prone citizens. These associations aspired to contribute to the establishment of an egalitar-

ian economic system. Their members harshly criticized other associations for neglecting the structural determinants of poverty. I now focus on one of these associations to suggest how neoliberalization might come under charitable attack.

The Equity Association, which exhibited these redistributive tendencies with the most explicit intensity, focused on the homeless. Five thousand homeless men were sheltered by the Istanbul municipality during the winter months but then were let go in March. The Istanbul branch of this small (but nationally visible) association housed 20 of those men. The major donor of the organization, also its founder, was a rare pious wealthy man who opposed the market-friendly policies of the government.

The narratives of Equity Association affiliates emphasized structural inequalities as the reasons behind poverty. They did not ignore individual variation or psychological factors but traced these back to structural dynamics. Since they did not disregard psychological factors, the Equity Association's members gave a lot of weight to the personal and cultural transformation of the poor, including an expectation of self-reliance from the poor, but did so in a markedly non-neoliberal way. This "alternative responsabilization" (or "alternative empowerment") of the poor was neither individualizing nor depoliticizing, as opposed to neoliberal discourse. In the case of this association, some neoliberal norms (more specifically, the expectation of self-reliance from the poor) have indeed diffused, but they have been appropriated in a collectivistic way.

The managerial structure was not neoliberalized. There was no paid and professionalized staff at the Istanbul branch of this association; everybody was a volunteer. Most of the midlevel managers came from within the ranks of the beneficiaries. These unpaid midlevel managers remained beneficiaries, since their home (and nutrition source) was still the association shelter. However, some of them also aspired to become higher-level managers of this association once they found jobs and homes in the outside world. These aspirations again attest to a novel mixture under conditions of neoliberalization: unpaid management (a communitarian practice) was combined with a typical neoliberal inclination (climbing up the managerial hierarchy).

These redistributive associations politicized giving: they fought on behalf of the poor so that they could exercise their constitutional rights. Fevzi was an unemployed man in his mid-50s and a manager of the homeless shelter. His first involvement as a "responsible" actor within this organization was carrying things (logs, etc.) around. But afterward, he also started to take his fellow beneficiaries to official institutions and demand welfare services. While residing at his first homeless shelter in a provincial town, he took a few diabetes patients to hospitals and had them treated. He took other beneficiaries without any identity cards to social work offices; he fought local directors so that the poor would be taken into senior residence facilities. When his

first attempts did not work, he called the press and complained that the offices were not doing their work. Using such methods, he claims to have placed 15 people in the relevant institutions.

Table 2 summarizes the findings in regard to the dominant and marginalized players in the Turkish field of benevolence. Among the universe of the large charitable organizations, neoliberal associations outnumbered communitarian associations (three to one). Moreover, the communitarian associations were not simply subordinate. The largest communitarian association's annual budget was 10 million Turkish lira, dwarfed by a neoliberal association's (160 million lira). The former also had a significantly smaller staff: it employed dozens of people, compared to the hundreds that were on the payroll of the largest neoliberal association. Finally, it recruited far fewer volunteers (only 20,000, whereas one neoliberal organization boasted more than 100,000). In terms of the funding, volunteers, and staff they mobilized, communitarian associations were marginalized players.²⁴

THE DYNAMIC STRUCTURE OF RELIGIOUS MOVEMENT-CHARITABLE FIELD-STATE RELATIONS

The relationship between the state and associations was the second major factor emphasized throughout this article: more positive engagement with the state encouraged deeper neoliberalization. The state's impact on the neoliberalization of charitable dispositions, then, should be a core element of any study on benevolence, but this effect itself is shaped by religious movements.

Historical institutionalism highlights the state and its actions as the major factor behind neoliberalism's uneven diffusion (e.g., Chorev 2007). While this approach's unpacking of state complexity is useful, the trajectory of the state and its institutions cannot be taken as the sole variable explaining the diversity of charitable practices in Turkey and Egypt, since both states have become aggressively neoliberal in the 2000s. The time frame for the ethnographic component of my research (2009–12) constituted the peak of the neoliberalization of the state in both countries. Yet the state's intense push for neoliberalization created different results in the two countries as a result of their religious and charitable field structures.

The state's positive impact on neoliberalization was readily observable in both countries. The Egyptian neoliberal benevolent associations regularly used the Mubarak government's databases and funding. Some of their cad-

²⁴ The numbers provided here enable only a rough comparison with the numbers provided in the Egyptian case, since some organizations in both countries declined to provide certain numbers.

TABLE 2
THE ORGANIZATIONS AND DISPOSITIONS OF TURKISH BENEVOLENT ACTORS

| | Professionalized Neoliberal Associations (Dominant) | Communitarian Associations with Redistributive Tendencies (Margins) |
|----------------------------------|--|---|
| Main activities | Provision of necessities and training; conferences and research on poverty | Provision of necessities; citizenship training; protest activity |
| Overall goals and motivation | Cultivation of the market subject | Cultivation of social struggle-prone citizens; overall just economic system |
| Modes of distinction | “Scientific”-ness; “novelty” and criticisms of traditional Turkish culture | Activism and structural criticism |
| Managers’ status in organization | Career professionals | Volunteers and professionals |
| Staff’s status in organization | Career professionals (elaborate recruitment techniques) | Volunteers |

res also came from a governmental background. Especially the benevolent businessmen had personal links and even friendships with some ministers. Governors and ministers also sat on the boards of a few of these associations. These associations had structural links with the state too, such as food donation programs with the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism.

The Turkish neoliberal associations also had common projects and solid links with the state but went further. They not only got support from but built a neoliberal vision in interaction with the state. The ministries, local governments, universities, and benevolent associations (i) co-organized conferences that blamed the poor for poverty, (ii) created education programs that provided job skills and cultivated personal responsibility, and (iii) sustained projects that encouraged the use of charity money for profitable purposes. Although the Egyptian associations also held conferences and developed projects with state cooperation, they did not accentuate such activities as much as the Turkish ones, demonstrating how a fragmented charity field hampers the state’s push for neoliberal diffusion.

Yet the survival of communitarian dispositions in both countries prevented full neoliberalization, and even more so as they interacted with fluctuations in state structures. Whereas the Egyptian communitarian associations had the status of usual suspects, they did not attack the state like some Turkish communitarians. The field-like qualities of the Turkish charitable universe were much more marked in that the communitarian actors differentiated themselves from the neoliberal actors more explicitly than in Egypt. The Turkish communitarians’ (uneven) turn away from Islamic mission and their sharper criticism of wealth imbalances were a response to the stronger neoliberal turn of mainstream Turkish Islamists. Scholars such

as Rose (1999) and Muehlebach (2012) could argue that these restricted communitarianisms could only reinforce the mainstreaming of neoliberalization. However, communitarianism recently came to weigh on the Egyptian and Turkish fields in a discernibly different manner.

The fall of the Mubarak regime in Egypt further strengthened non-Brotherhood Islamist factions. Hardly visible on the political scene before 2011, non-Brotherhood Islamist parties became strong contenders. Despite a temporary merger of neoliberal Islamists with the state (through the rise of the Brotherhood's business wing to governmental power), the fragmentation of the religious field (reproduced in the religious charity field) was likely to curb a full blossoming of neoliberal orientations already before 2013: it was dubious whether charity could become as neoliberal as in Turkey even if the Brotherhood stayed in power. The military overthrow of the Brotherhood (Morsi) government only added to the uncertainty of the charitable environment. Even though the military regime started a seemingly all-out war on Islamic charities, it also supported certain non-Brotherhood Islamist organizations with more strongly communitarian tendencies. Yet others (such as the Piety Association covered in the preceding pages) maintained an apparently neutral position to further sink their feet as major players in the charitable field. This rich interaction between charitable and religious fields on the one hand and the state on the other cannot be conceptualized using an exclusively state-centric perspective.

Moreover, the post-2013 Turkish scene further complicated the contrast between Egypt and Turkey. One of the major religious circles absorbed into the AKP (the Gülen Community; see Yavuz 2003; Walton 2014) split from the regime by the end of that year. It is not clear at this point whether this split will result in fragmented (religious and charitable) fields: the governing party might still be able to marginalize this splinter group and preserve the unity of the charitable field. In case of fragmentation, however, Turkish Islamism and its charitable ethics could become much less neoliberal. The possible fragmentation of the field is only one part of the changing picture. As important, the regime started to deemphasize its neoliberal credentials circa 2013. Pro-AKP media adopted an occasionally anticapitalist, mass mobilizing language. An appreciation of the effects of this internal regime change on benevolent practices requires further research, but a surge of communitarian charitable ethics seems quite possible.

BEYOND CONVERGENCE AND DIVERGENCE: CUES FOR A SOCIOLOGY OF GIVING

These analyses allow us to suggest some paths for research on charitable activities in other contexts. In today's neoliberalizing world, giving for benevolent purposes risks being appropriated by an unremitting economism:

re-creation of every human activity in the image of market exchange and finance. Such economism marginalizes nonliberal forms of benevolence.

Certainly, community and giving are not essentially opposed to markets to begin with. Everything from solidaristic or corporatist forms of macroeconomic policy to the cases studied in this article should caution us against such simplistic binaries. Yet the ethics of reciprocity provides us with a possible way of thinking about how we could organize alternative ways of exchanging goods and services (cf. Mauss 1990). Further conceptualization of these ethics (and the documentation and analysis of their empirical manifestations, however hybridized they might be with other logics and orientations) would enable sociology to clearly argue for the sustenance, expansion, and revision of human relations that go beyond a market logic. The neoliberalization of good works, therefore, undermines sociological leverage for the criticism of economic ways of thinking.

Most convergence accounts tell, sometimes in between the lines, a story of inevitability. Neoliberalism is everywhere and there is no escaping it. Foucaultian approaches to benevolence reproduce this quasi fatalism. Either neoliberalism is invasive because it converts even caring into a promarket activity (Roy 2010; Atia 2013) or it is overpowering because even benevolent acts, practices, ethics, and associations that seek to escape market logic cannot but reinforce the structures of neoliberalism (Rose 1999; Muehlebach 2012). There is much to commend in these literatures, but they ultimately reinforce depoliticization under neoliberalism by exaggerating the latter's omnipotence. This article underlines that even while recognizing how pervasive neoliberalism is, we might catch glimpses of practices, ethics, and organizations that tread a different path, even if that path is currently beleaguered by neoliberalism and risks being appropriated by it.

After telling a rather dystopian story about how almost all acts of generosity reinforce neoliberalism in recent Italy, Muehlebach (2012, p. 228) closes her book by recognizing the oppositional potential of some contemporary reciprocal practices: "There are thus moments where ideologies of [neoliberal] charity coexist with the gift as truly reciprocal act. . . . The ability to discern the one from the other, and to have charity morph into solidarity, is a struggle. . . . And it is perhaps the beginning of another story." This article took up this promise and explored how politically situated actors seek to build non-neoliberal enclaves while being painfully aware that their non-market bonds are quite fragile in the current scene of neoliberalization.

We can reach a rigorous understanding of non-neoliberal generosity only if we accept that it is indeed fragile. As Halliday and Carruthers (2009) have argued, postcolonial accounts that exaggerate divergence (and nondiffusion) downplay the strength of neoliberalization. Their argument applies equally to recent studies of Islamic charity that emphasize its irreducible uniqueness

(Mittermaier 2014). However, the recognition of neoliberalism's global influence should not result simply in a "varieties of liberal charity" approach (which would be the charitable counterpart of the varieties of capitalism approach). We should rather focus on the constitution of charitable fields in which nonliberal actors might still be players. We have seen this in the fragmented Egyptian charitable field, which still cultivates strongly communitarian dispositions and actors, along with neoliberal ones (in contrast to Turkey, whose unified charitable field has resulted in a smoother neoliberalization of benevolence). Neoliberalism, then, is still strongly contested, a contestation that some of the uneven diffusion literature underemphasizes.

A revamped research program on good works would have one more contribution. This article has revealed the emergence of redistribution-oriented forms of communitarian charity, even if on the margins. Such forms of benevolence articulate many neoliberal techniques (and thereby defy divergence accounts) but deploy them to challenge neoliberalism (and hence problematize convergence accounts). The further documentation of such charitable trends could break the deadlock between the approaches that emphasize convergence and those that romanticize divergence. It could show that alternatives to individualism do not have to "violate . . . the norms of organizational rationality [and] basic principles of human rights," as some scholars assume (Frank and Meyer 2002, p. 102).

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