

FROM THE EDITOR

According to international reports, 7000 natural disasters have occurred in our world in the last 20 years and nearly one and a half million people have lost their lives. In fact, it has been published in the United Nations "Human Costs of Disasters" (UNDDR ;2020) reports that while four billion people are affected by natural disasters, material losses reach three trillion US dollars.

In the 1999 East Marmara Earthquake, one of the most important disasters Turkey has experienced in the last 25 years, 30,000 people lost their lives. According to the report published by Yıldırım Beyazıt University Migration Policy Centre in April 2023, more than 50,000 lives were lost in the earthquakes with continuous aftershocks that started on February 6, 2023 in Kahramanmaraş. On the other hand, 37,000 buildings were destroyed and more than two million people started to live in tents and containers. In addition, at least three and a half million of the 14 million people living in 11 provinces in the region have forcibly migrated to other cities of Turkey.

On the other hand, half of the Syrians under Temporary Protection who came to Turkey by forced migration since 2010, as well as other foreign nationals, in other words nearly two million immigrants in total, live in provinces where earthquakes occurred. In this context, among the immigrants, there are as many people who returned to Syria as those who lost their lives. Therefore, the population directly affected by the earthquake, both local and migrant, is very large and is almost over 16 million. Moreover, the earthquake affected and continues to affect all of Turkey with its humanitarian, social, economic and political dimensions.

In the light of all these experiences, it is possible to say that due to the earthquake that turned into a disaster in Turkey, publications based on research to be conducted not only on international but also on domestic forced migrations will have priority for our Journal.

The presence of different approaches used in explaining disasters in the relevant literature also shows the changing character of the subject over time. Since each of these approaches plays an important role in disaster damage reduction and risk management, it is necessary to know the differences between them and to consider them in future research.

The first of these is that people use God to get rid of their individual responsibilities (Act of God). The concept used to explain that God punishes societies, especially when explaining disasters starting from the Enlightenment Period, is "divine retribution". The phrase "divine providence" is also used a lot in Turkey to describe the resignation and silent acceptance in people's view of disasters. Unfortunately,

the high votes of the conservative party in the region shows us that there are not few people who think this way.

The second approach is to explain disasters with natural causes (Act of Nature). For example, heavy rains, hurricanes, floods, forest fires or earthquakes are caused by mother nature. It is nature instead of man that causes great loss of life and property. In fact, nature is blamed instead of God, and the responsibility is placed on nature.

A third approach attributes disasters to the interaction of humans and nature. For example, making heavy industry investments in these regions, as well as opening loose agricultural lands for settlement, inevitably increase the loss of property and life, causing the population to be concentrated. Thus, disasters caused by humans occur. As a matter of fact, A. Giddens is one of those who brought the distinction between natural and human-made disasters to the literature.

The point we try to underline here is that individuals' perceptions about disasters have the power to influence their actions. For example, those who hold God responsible for disasters need not take any action. Because there is not much for them to do. Those who attribute disasters to nature, on the other hand, mobilize money power and engineering services as well as using technology to control natural events. Those who see disasters as a joint product of nature and humans make plans and projects to prepare the society, manage risks and reduce damages. They take various actions to prepare for landslides and ground slides such as floods and earthquakes.

In fact, the point that should be underlined in the light of all this information is how managers will reach their goal of increasing social psychological resilience in emergency situations. In other words, how to reduce disaster risks for the poorest, who are fragile, have weak social support networks, and are politically weak.

This is actually the necessity of decision makers to use both moral and scientific approaches together in their strategies to combat social injustices. Because, as well as the most vulnerable victims, it is necessary to consider together the approaches of the powerful who cause these grievances, which cause disasters in the capitalist accumulation regime. In fact, this means working without neglecting both subjective and objective dimensions, and taking action without blaming anyone.

In the light of the information given so far, it is now more important than ever that cultural sociology and disaster sociology work together. Because risk management and mitigation are no longer just a technical issue.

When disaster sociology first emerged in the US in the 1940s, it was mostly trying to be institutionalized around civil defence and the military. However, while state support is considered important in these first rescue efforts, non-Western countries and different cultures are ignored. However, radical changes occur in the approaches of studies conducted in academia for the last 20 years. Increasingly, interdisciplinary studies that care about regional and cultural factors gain priority.

Especially since 2018, a situation that we can call a cultural turn arises. Qualitative studies such as narratives, life stories and biographies gain as much importance as positivist surveys.

It is noteworthy that disaster sociology, enriched by cultural studies, is critical of the consumption and development-based discourse of modern society. However, neo-liberal policies and their economic growth programs try to make such new approaches largely worthless and even marginalize them.

Cultural values and individual responsibilities are now given great importance in disaster resilience studies. In addition, narratives, biographies, daily life practices, public information resources are frequently used for emotional healing. Now, developmental state approaches are gradually moving away and cultural sociological studies are gaining more priority.

There are other factors that play a role in making disaster studies more effective and reducing vulnerabilities. The first of these is to reduce the fight against disaster to a technical issue, for example, to environmental engineering. This approach ignores the effects of human, social, economic, cultural, regional and all other factors. It neglects pre-existing vulnerabilities in a society. However, it is inevitable that buildings with poor construction projects, especially those in urban or rural poor areas, will be destroyed immediately in any disaster.

Second, risk-blind planning studies are common. What is ignored here is that developmental approaches not only provide economic growth but also create hazardous effects on the region. Opening stream beds or forests to resettlement or issuing permanent zoning amnesties are some of these dangers. For this reason, studies are being carried out to prevent the opening of forests to construction in Western countries. It is necessary to fight especially in order to prohibit construction on fertile agricultural lands and to prevent profits. Because there is a risk of collapse of the buildings built on the fault as well as the fires of the houses in the forest.

A third factor is that local and central administrators and politicians are more concerned with economic gains, ignoring potential losses. However, vulnerabilities and resilience are not independent of each other.

A fourth factor that is important in reducing disaster damage is the unequal distribution, and sometimes even non-existence, of resilience capital. Resilience capital includes both physical (public and private buildings) and social (networks, trust, social relations) and political and institutional (organizational capacity, expertise, normative frameworks) and financial issues (bank accounts, savings, funders). For this reason, weak public-private cooperation for "building resilience" as well as "vulnerability management" can have negative effects.

In fact, both public and private organizations need to collect together historical disaster-related information of the region. In addition, important questions can be listed as follows: What are the sources of the most basic losses in the region? Because if it is an earthquake, flood or landslide zone, different preparations will need to be planned. Likewise, who are the most vulnerable individuals and groups? What are the different options for reducing potential losses? Who are the segments that will play the most active role in the activities to be implemented in the region? Also, what are the sources of vulnerability capital? How can particularly vulnerable groups access these resources? Where and how will the evacuation of the people be carried out in the event of an earthquake? If there are assembly points, where are they?

The fact that detailed information on the above-mentioned issues is not systematically collected will adversely affect the risk management policies that managers will plan to reduce losses. For this reason, it is necessary for urban planners, sociologists, economists and geoscientists to conduct research together in an interdisciplinary manner.

In addition, subjective risk perception, as well as objective risk information, are extremely important in risk management for vulnerabilities and hazards reduction. Likewise, the coordination of the public and private sectors and NGOs at the spatial scale is vital. The major disadvantage of decision-making managers is that they do not have access to the risk information of the region and that they do not know the risk perception of the society. As a matter of fact, Turkey has fallen into this extremely unfortunate situation in the earthquakes in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023.

In fact, the problems experienced by the forced migration of the nearly three million Turkish indigenous population need to be investigated both to make a note of history and to develop valid and appropriate policies.

It should not be forgotten that the rights and supports to be granted to local or foreign immigrants are a "political philosophical" issue as well as an economic one. For example, even the local immigrant population, who are citizens of the Republic of Turkey, caused reactions by raising the general price

level, especially the rents. In this context, it is necessary to consider the conditions under which foreign immigrants live or how much they are deprived of their human rights. All summarized information actually deserves attention as potential topics for research and publication.

The founder of our university and the Chairman of the Supreme Council, Prof. Dr. Mehmet Haberal, undoubtedly, deserves the greatest thanks as our guide in the publication of this scientific journal and in all other activities we are involved in.

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