



International Journal of Social Sciences

ISSN:2587-2591

DOI Number:<http://dx.doi.org/10.30830/tobider.sayi.15.25>

Volume 7/3

2023 p. 439-459

A RELIGIOUS AND SOCIOLOGICAL OVERVIEW OF THE ATTITUDES OF EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS TO MAKE SENSE OF THE EARTHQUAKE PHENOMENON

DEPREMZEDELERİN DEPREM OLGUSUNU ANLAMLANDIRMA TUTUMLARINA DİNÎ VE SOSYOLOJİK BİR BAKIŞ

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the earthquake that struck Türkiye on 06.02.2023 and 20.02.2023 and the attitudes of earthquake victims influenced by this disaster toward perceiving and making sense of the earthquake phenomenon. As Türkiye is an earthquake country, this natural disaster, which it has constantly faced throughout its special history, causes great destruction in the geography where it occurs and threatens the functioning of social life. In the context of this research, where we tried to analyze the views and attitudes of disaster survivors about the earthquake, in-depth interviews were held with earthquake survivors who came to Giresun from the earthquake zone. In this study, which is basically a qualitative study, some quantitative data were also utilized and the earthquake phenomenon was tried to be analyzed from a hermeneutic perspective. In the study, Türkiye's earthquake history and the reality of earthquake as a risk factor were discussed through the literature, and the different ways of interpreting the earthquake by different individuals were analyzed based on the conducted interviews. In this context, even though the participants had different views on the perception and interpretation of the earthquake, they mostly attributed religious and divine meanings to it. However, a large majority attributed the cause of the collapse of the buildings to the irresponsibility of the people themselves and the lack of professional ethics. Most of the participants argued that the earthquake was

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triggered by the sins/evils committed by people, while a smaller number of participants believed that the breakage of fault lines caused the earthquake.

Keywords: *Earthquake, Earthquake Victims, Fate, Sin, Ethics*

ÖZ

Bu çalışma 06.02.2023 ve 20.02.2023 tarihlerinde Türkiye’de meydana gelen deprem ve bu felaketten etkilenen depremzedelerin deprem olgusunu algılama ve anlamlandırma tutumlarını konu edinmektedir. Türkiye’nin bir deprem ülkesi olması hasebiyle kendi özel tarihi boyunca sürekli yüzleştiği bu doğal afet, meydana geldiği coğrafyada büyük yıkımlara sebep olmakta ve toplumsal hayatın işleyişini tehdit eder hale gelmektedir. Afetzedelerin depreme dair görüş ve tutumlarını analiz etmeye çalıştığımız bu araştırma kapsamında deprem bölgesinden Giresun’a gelen depremzedelerle derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Özünde nitel bir çalışma olan bu araştırmada bazı kantitatif verilerden de yararlanılmış olup, deprem olgusu hermeneutik bir perspektiften irdelenmeye çalışılmıştır. Araştırmada, literatür üzerinden Türkiye’nin deprem tarihine ve bir risk faktörü olarak deprem gerçeğine değinilmiş ve yapılan görüşmelerden yola çıkarak depremi farklı bireylerin farklı yorumlama biçimleri incelenmiştir. Bu kapsamda katılımcılar depremi algılama ve yorumlama hususunda farklı görüş benimsemiş olsalar da bile daha çok dinsel ve ilahi anlamlar yüklemişlerdir. Ancak büyük bir çoğunluk binaların yıkılma sebebini bizzat insanların sorumsuzluklarına ve meslek etiğinin zafiyetine dayandırmıştır. Katılımcıların çoğu, insanların işledikleri günahlar/kötülükler depremi tetiklediğini iddia ederken daha az bir katılımcı da fay hatlarının kırılması depreme sebep olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Deprem, Depremzede, Kader, Günah, Ahlak*

Introduction

In addition to being a natural phenomenon, earthquake is a sociological phenomenon in terms of its negative effects on social life. Although scientific explanations of the formation process and causes of earthquakes are available, it is not possible to forecast when they will occur considering the opportunities available at the moment. This impossibility of knowing the future raises the level of anxiety of human beings and forces them to take precautions, even to the point of abandoning their geography. This phenomenon, which has many sociological consequences such as positive discrimination against earthquake victims, acclimatization problems, unemployment problems, disruption in education, etc., and interrupts the routine of social life in the geography where it occurs, is perceived and interpreted differently by people. Our research reveals that these techniques are generally religious practices and can be functional in eliminating fear at the time of an earthquake.

The reality is that we live in a risky society. In Türkiye, earthquake is one of the most important risk factors. In fact, although earthquakes are a natural disaster that people will always encounter, people ignoring the fact of earthquakes and not building houses and

living area suitable for earthquakes have led to more loss of life and property. Of course, the main reasons why people face such losses/disasters are rent, lack of control, legal gaps, etc. In short, there is a moral problem here. However, whether the earthquake victims associate this phenomenon with 'fate' or not constitutes another problem of this research.

What concerns us more in this study will be professional ethics. Professional ethics is a set of principles and rules that regulate and guide the behavior of individuals practicing any profession (Arslan, 2018). In his seminal work "The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism", Max Weber linked the starting point of capitalism to the professional ethics of Protestants and discovered that capitalism is based on a system of moral values in his analysis from a hermeneutic perspective. According to Weber, the spirit of capitalism is not simply a winning instinct and economic greed, but a moral attitude that rationally and systematically aims at profit (Ritzer, 2012). This attitude, which preaches abstinence from the pleasures of life, suggests that it is people's duty to increase their wealth unceasingly (Ritzer, 2012). Being industrious, simple, punctual and just is like a call from God, and Protestants see an ascetic lifestyle and the accumulation of capital as a service to God. This kind of morality regarding work and labor is also called Puritan morality (Arslan, 2019). Again, according to Ritzer (2012), this takes the spirit of capitalism out of the realm of individual ambition and into the category of an ethical imperative. The "beruf", which occupies a prominent position in the German social system today, is essentially a result of Protestant ethics, as Weber analyzed. Beruf means profession. The "ruf" at the end of the word "beruf" is "rufen" essentially, which means to shout, to call. The use of this word in connection with profession is meaningful because professional responsibility and professional ethics still play an important role in the German system as a call from God. This kind of work ethic is also present in the Islamic creed and is expressed in the motto "Service to the people is service to God" (Arslan, 2019).

Another topic of discussion is the unrealized or unimplemented urban transformation projects. It should be noted that although there were many factors that led to the deaths of more than 50,000 people in the February 2023 earthquake, the foremost of them must have been moral weakness. Because, it can be said that moral degradation in the form of unsound construction of buildings, failure to fulfill duties and responsibilities during construction, stealing from materials (by contractor), or prioritizing purely individual interests caused great losses in this earthquake case.

The subject of our study is the different perceptions, especially religious and professional ethics, of individuals affected by the three major earthquakes that occurred in Turkey on February 6, 2023 and February 20, 2023, and their attitudes towards these earthquakes.

According to the scientific information provided by Boğaziçi University Kandilli Observatory and Earthquake Research Institute, there was an earthquake with an

instrumental magnitude of $M_w=7.7$ ($M_L=7.4$) at the epicenter of Sofalaca-Şehitkamil-Gaziantep at 04:17 local time on February 06, 2023, a second earthquake with an instrumental magnitude of $M_w=7.6$ ($M_L=7.4$) at the epicenter of Ekinözü-Kahramanmaraş at 13:24 local time on the same date, and a third earthquake with an instrumental magnitude of $M_w=6.4$ ($M_L=6.4$) at the epicenter of Büyükçat-Samandağ-Hatay at 20:04 local time on 20 February 2023. The focal depth of the first two of these very strong earthquakes was around 5 km, while the focal depth of the third earthquake was around 8 km (KRDAE, 2023). It is seen that all three earthquakes caused a great loss of life and property due to their shallow focus, that is, close to the surface. As of 14.04.2023, 50.500 people died in this disaster (İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2023), so it is a fact that the impact power of the earthquake was very high and turned into a disaster in a wide geography. In Türkiye, 11 provinces including Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep, Şanlıurfa, Diyarbakır, Adana, Adıyaman, Osmaniye, Hatay, Kilis, Malatya, and Elazığ have been recorded to have suffered a lot of loss of life and property (Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığı (AFAD), 2023).

Based on this case, the aim of the research is to conduct a sociological analysis of the earthquake phenomenon, which has social consequences as well as being a natural disaster, to understand how the disaster victims experience the earthquake, how they interpret it, their views on the future, how the earthquake has an impact on the social order, and to raise awareness about the earthquake phenomenon. Another purpose is to determine people's interpretations of whether they have any responsibility for the fact that the earthquake turned into a disaster and caused a great loss of life and property.

This study is significant in terms of understanding the attitudes of people in Türkiye, an earthquake country, towards this natural phenomenon and the individual and social strategies they develop in order to escape from its destructive effects and to develop appropriate policies in the context of preventing the negative consequences of earthquakes.

Literature review

Türkiye, which is located in an earthquake zone due to its geographical location, has repeatedly faced destructive earthquakes in the historical process. Fault lines are shown as the scientific explanation for the occurrence of earthquakes in Türkiye. There are 3 major fault lines in Türkiye. These are the North Anatolian Fault Line, the East Anatolian Fault Line, and the West Anatolian Fault Line. Türkiye is divided into regions on the basis of the severity of earthquakes and 5 regions are defined from the most severe to the least severe. Major earthquakes in Türkiye have generally occurred in the 1st earthquake zone. It has been reported that more than 90 thousand people died in 180 earthquakes that occurred between 1900 and 2014 in Türkiye (Bikce, 2015). When we add to this the recent earthquakes in Bingöl, Van, Elâzığ, İzmir, and most recently in 11 provinces, the death count exceeds 150,000. According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of

Türkiye dated 14.04.2023, 50.500 people lost their lives in the three major earthquakes that occurred on February 6, 2023, and February 20, 2023 (İçişleri Bakanlığı, 2023).

Earthquakes carry a risk in that they cause loss of life and property, social and individual traumas, and deep social problems that are difficult to close. Ulrich Beck, a contemporary sociologist, evaluates the concept of risk society on the axis of modernization. Beck, who put forward the theory of reflexive modernization as a prescription for the salvation of modern societies, thinks that modernity is experienced randomly and unconsciously (Çuhacı, 2007).

According to Beck, risk society is equivalent to the second stage of social change, the reflexive modernity stage (Beck, 1994). In this period, society has been blind and deaf to the effects and threats brought by modernity (Yıldırım, 2008). However, according to Beck, risk can be measured scientifically and methods such as observation, measurement, and calculation can be used for this (Yıldırım, 2008). British sociologist Anthony Giddens, on the other hand, divides risks into natural and man-made risks and claims that all negative situations experienced under these risk situations change lifestyles (Çakır, 2007). In Giddens' sociology, risk is manifested in societies toward the future (Yıldırım, 2008). The risk of an earthquake somewhere in the future creates anxiety in societies and can have consequences up to the point of changing the geography where people live. Although earthquakes are natural, their destructive effect is actually very much related to modernity, as Beck emphasizes. When evaluated in this context, earthquakes that turn into disasters as a result of political, economic, and social processes can be categorized as man-made risks (Yıldırım, 2008).

When we think in terms of manufactured risk, an earthquake can become a question of survival for a country or a society. For developing countries like Türkiye, which have problems with urban transformation, earthquakes are a concern and a source of uncertainty about the future. The fear of dying under poor-quality buildings that are not built in accordance with the law in order to satisfy selfish desires can be a nightmare for the people of a country, most of whom are at earthquake risk. The main reason for this concern stems from the inability of human beings to control nature, and the current state of uncertainty threatens daily life, but it can also assume a functional role in the formation of a new order (Çakır, 2007).

We consider Ibn Khaldun's analyzes important, which illuminates today's problems from a sociological perspective. According to Ibn Khaldun, urbanization brought about by civilization corrupts human values and deteriorates the virtues and morals of individuals (Arslan, 2019). Ibn Khaldun, who also establishes a meaningful relationship between moral deterioration and economic deterioration, declares that at the stage when the economy of the city is insufficient to satisfy the unlimited desires of the city people, people will resort to illegitimate means to satisfy their desires (Arslan, 2019). According to Ibn Khaldun, there are some reasons for moral degeneration and these reasons can be

listed as social environment, climate, nutrition, domination, luxury/debauchery, obsession with lineage, education, and trade (Özmen, 2022).

Another concept that should be mentioned in the context of preventing or minimizing loss of life in earthquakes is engineering ethics. According to Kumbasar (2023), the vast majority of ethical rules regarding professions are related to the general rules of morality or only to problems of being a good person.

However, the relationship between earthquakes and religion is an important issue that has been discussed for a long time. It is a known fact that people seek refuge in religion towards the problems they face in their lives and try to make sense of and explain the problem in a religious context. With this mission, religion becomes a tool used to explain the source of the problem. Societies have been attributing religious and divine meanings to the natural disasters they face since human history. Natural disasters, which are tried to be explained or made sense of in the axis of both mythologies and heavenly books, can be perceived as a divine fate by societies, and their effects can be eliminated with an approach of submission to both nature and God and acceptance of the event. People still feel the need to take refuge in a divine being when facing the uncertainties of nature and life.

The Holy Qur'an, the main source of Islam, contains many earthquake-related verses (al-A'râf 7/77-78; al-Shuarâ 26/155-159; al-Qamer 54/23-39) and a special surah on earthquakes. Both Surah 99, called Surah Zilzal, and other verses explicitly mention the shaking and destructive effects of earthquakes and describe the destruction of some disbelieving peoples by earthquakes. There are populist discourses, especially among the public, that earthquakes occur because of the sins people commit. According to Karataş (1999), who thinks that earthquakes are not related to sins, earthquakes cannot be a punishment given by God as a result of apostasy from religion because earthquakes are a natural phenomenon

Method

Model of the Research

Our research was planned as a case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs. According to this model, it is aimed to obtain in-depth information on the determined subject. One or several situations are examined according to the variables they are related to, and it is tried to reveal how they affect these variables or how they are affected by these variables (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011). In this context, the earthquake phenomenon in the memories of earthquake victims was analyzed from a hermeneutic / interpretive perspective. According to Karapınar (2018:104), hermeneutics is the methodology with the broadest boundaries among all methodologies, and Max Weber developed it as a method to reveal the objectivity of the results of cultural sciences (Harvey, 1994).

Research Area - Participant Group

The population of this study, which focuses on the social consequences of a natural phenomenon, is Giresun city center. The reason why Giresun city center was chosen as the population is that it was not affected by the earthquake as a city and it is one of the cities where some disaster victims come/are brought and stay as guests either by their own will or by the authorities. According to the official statements of the Governorship of Giresun, as of 24.02.2023, 6.194 earthquake victims (Giresun Valiliği, 2023, February 24), as of 28.04.2023, 8.216 earthquake victims (Giresun Valiliği, 2023, April 28), as of 05.05.2023, 8.423 earthquake victims (Giresun Valiliği, 2023, May 05), and as of 23.05.2023, 8.451 earthquake victims were registered as guests in Giresun. Some of them stay in student dormitories and guesthouses under the coordination of the Governorate in the city center, some of them stay with relatives, friends, etc., and some of them stay as guests in the districts (Giresun Valiliği, 2023, May 25).

Therefore, the sample of our research consists of earthquake victims residing in Giresun city center. In this context, a sample of 20 earthquake survivors was taken between 05.05.2023 – 30.05.2023 among men and women over the age of 18 who stayed as guests in various dormitories.

Data Collection Tools

In the first step, a literature review was conducted to collect data for the study. In the second stage of the research, the infrastructure of the research was created by obtaining legal permissions from both the Giresun University Ethics Committee and authorized units. The data of the study were collected through a semi-structured interview form. In this context, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were organized with participants who had experienced the earthquake. An Informed Consent Form was also prepared during the interviews. The audio recordings taken based on consent were transcribed and subjected to content analysis. The participants were asked 12 semi-structured questions.

Findings

Demographic findings

Within the scope of our research, we stated in the method section that 20 earthquake survivors residing in Giresun city center were interviewed. Of these 20 people over 18 years of age, 7 were men and 13 were women. Of those interviewed, 5 participants came from Adıyaman, 4 participants from Hatay, 4 participants from Kahramanmaraş and 7 participants from Malatya province. In this study, men were coded as M1, M2... and women were coded as W1, W2...

Table 1. Distribution of participants by age

Age	N	%
18-29	2	10
30-39	5	25
40-49	5	25
50 years and older	8	40
Total	20	100

Table 2. Distribution of participants' educational status by gender

Gender	Education level					
	Primary education		Secondary education		University graduated	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Female	4	57,1	9	75	-	-
Male	3	42,9	3	25	1	100
Total	7	100	12	100	1	100

First group

The first interview we conducted was in the form of a focus group interview and all 4 women included in the interview belonged to the same family and consisted of 1 mother and 3 daughters. All 4 women gave different answers to a metaphorical question about how the participants defined the earthquake. These responses included God's punishment, manipulation, negligence, fate, and little apocalypse.

The family gave a historical explanation for the cause of the earthquake; they stated that Hatay has collapsed 8 times in the historical process because it is geographically located on a fault line and that this is the fate of Hatay. Participant W1 (mother) stated that we are in a world of tests and that Allah says that He will send destruction if His creatures go too far and that one of the causes of the earthquake is the sins committed. W2 stated that these earthquakes are artificial earthquakes and are created as a manipulation.

Participants stated that the first thing that came to their minds during the earthquake was their children and W4 stated that one of their sisters sacrificed herself to save her child and died.

All 4 participants attributed their getting out of the building alive to their calmness and desire to return to their children. Additionally, the participants who declared that their death time did not come said that they survived because their building did not collapse and Allah showed them a way out.

Each participant in this group also attributed the reasons for the collapse of the buildings to stealing materials, negligence, cutting columns, etc.

All of the participants also stated that they rely on prayer and seek refuge in Allah to cope with stress and fear. In addition, the earthquake survivor mother (W1) stated that she coped with the stress and fear during the earthquake only thanks to her husband's

calmness and comforting attitude and the consciousness of reuniting with her grandchildren.

Stating that they were the first earthquake victims to arrive in Giresun, the family stated that they came to Giresun entirely on their own will. Our earthquake victim family, who were worried about the possibility of an earthquake in Giresun due to its proximity to Erzincan, which is on the earthquake fault line, said that they definitely wanted to go back to Hatay. Among the reasons for this, they cited problems such as the climate and food culture they could not get used to, the unemployment problem the limited social life in Giresun, and the high prices compared to Hatay. In addition, W3, one of the 4 participants who stated that they enrolled their daughters in school in Giresun, reported that because her child went to school in civilian clothes, she was mistaken for "rich" and was subjected to discourses that she was not an earthquake survivor.

Our earthquake survivor family, who said that the local people recognized them by their faces, stated that the people donated clothes and that they became a new family with the locals. Among the other aids received by this family staying in the student dormitory is the 1000 TL cash aid given by the governorship per family.

Second group

The second interview we conducted within the scope of our research was also in the form of a focus group interview and was conducted with a total of 6 women of different ages and educational levels. Participants generally defined the earthquake in terms of different concepts. They defined it as a test, a natural disaster, a little apocalypse, fate, and a warning from God so that people would wake up.

All 6 participants attributed the cause of the earthquake to almost the same reasons. These were listed as sins committed, injustice, unfairness, punishment for cruelty to children, and a warning from Allah. What draws our attention at this point is that the earthquake was largely attributed to divine causes.

Almost all of the 6 participants said that the first thing that came to their minds during the earthquake was to run away from home, to say the word of testimony, and to seek refuge in Allah.

When we asked them what caused them to survive the earthquake, they attributed it to the strength of the building, the fact that their death time had not yet come, the fact that their sustenance in the world had not ceased, etc., and stated that Allah was the main cause of their salvation.

In addition to the participants who thought that the buildings collapsed due to negligence, cutting columns, stealing materials, and lack of control by the inspectors, W7, who put

forward a different opinion, stated that the buildings purchased with interest and loans collapsed.

The 6 participants who said that they could not cope with the fear and stress at the time of the earthquake also reported that they generally turned to prayer in this context and that they made spontaneous movements at that moment.

All participants except W9, who came to Giresun voluntarily, stated that they had relatives in Giresun and that they came to Giresun on this occasion. According to an interesting finding we obtained, all participants stated that their fear of earthquakes in Giresun still persists and that they think that an earthquake may occur in Giresun. The possible reason behind such thoughts may be that they have the feeling of motherhood or the proximity of Giresun to Erzincan.

All 6 participants stated that they would like to go back to their hometowns due to the differences in climate, culture, and food, and the problem of adaptation to the city, and that the people in Giresun recognize them by their accents/names. Noting the friendliness of the people, the participants said that they were even invited to their homes.

The earthquake survivors, who were provided with free accommodation in state student dormitories, including three meals a day, stated that they received 1000 TL aid per family and one-time shopping from the social market without paying any fees.

Third group

The third group we conducted in-depth interviews with consisted of 6 male participants of different ages and educational levels. The information provided by them is presented comparatively below.

According to the data, while all 6 male participants described the earthquake as a natural disaster, M4 and M5 also interpreted it as a punishment from God. More precisely, these two participants expressed an opinion similar to the discourses of celestial religions by including the power of God.

The causes of the earthquake are interest or sins according to M1, not being a sin but a disaster according to M2, being inevitable because it is a natural disaster according to M3, and sins committed by people according to M4, M5, and M6. M6 says "So we were worthy of this" and exhibits both submission to this natural disaster and belief that they deserve this punishment for the sins committed in the society.

Participant M1 stated that the first thing that came to his mind at the time of the earthquake was to say salawat and lie down on the bed leaving himself to Allah, while M2 stated to run outside, M3 to go to a safe place, M4 to think that the world was coming to an end, M5 to wait for the shaking to end and M6 to pray and say Takbir.

When asked about the reason for surviving the earthquake, M1, M2, M4, M5, and M6 attributed it to the fact that their death time did not come, while M3, who has the highest level of education and is a university graduate, attributed it only to the soundness of the building and stated that they paid extra money to get the building made sound. Besides, M2, M4, and M6 put forward the durability of the building as a second reason, while M5 emphasized the reason for salvation as "a blessing of Allah".

Among the reasons for the collapse of the building, only M3 drew attention to building on the wrong geography/land, while the other participants put forward different reasons. These reasons are negligence, stealing from the material, cutting columns, authorities not conducting proper inspections and easily giving soundness reports, being a contractor by anyone (glassware, bus driver, greengrocer, jeweler, etc.), irresponsible workmanship, etc. Furthermore, one of the participants, M6, stated that in the past, municipal engineers used to carry out building inspections, but now they are carried out by private companies and there is no deterrent.

In response to our question focused on understanding how to cope with fear and stress, M1 and M6 stated that they were scared but not very scared, while M2 and M4 stated that they prayed during the earthquake. On the other hand, M3 stated that focusing on the survival of the household calmed him and eliminated fear and stress, while M5 stated that the desire to be reunited with his family was effective in postponing fear and stress.

M2, M3, and M5 stated that they came to Giresun through relatives, while M4 and M6 stated that they came randomly and finally M1 said that he preferred this city because he had been to Giresun before.

M1, M4, M5, and M6 stated that they did not have any fear of earthquakes, while M2 and M3 said that their fear of earthquakes still persisted despite being in Giresun.

M1, M2, M5, and M6 stated that they would return to their hometowns, while M3 said that they would not return. M4, who made a different comment, stated that he would settle wherever fate would take him.

All participants except M3, who expressed discomfort with the climate and weather conditions, stated that they did not experience any adaptation problems.

Most of the male participants reported that they did not receive any help from the public, while M3 reported that they received help from associations, M1, M2, and M5 from the governorship.

Fourth interview (W-11, W-12)

W11, with whom we conducted a separate interview, defines an earthquake as a natural disaster and cites natural causes as the reason for its occurrence. W12, with whom we also conducted a separate interview and who expressed an opposite view, stated that the

earthquakes that occurred in 11 provinces were definitely artificial earthquakes caused by foreign powers. Both W11 and W12 likened the moment of the earthquake to doomsday.

While W11 stated that the first thing that came to his mind at the time of the earthquake was to take refuge in God, W12 stated that the first thing that came to his mind was his daughter living in a loving home.*

W11 attributed his survival to the sturdy building they had built by spending extra money, while W12 attributed it to the fact that the building did not collapse and his love for his daughter. At this point, W11 shared with us the technical details of how a quality building should be constructed. W11 said that they spent as much as the cost of 1 apartment on the foundation of the house, and underlined that her husband used the best quality iron, hired the best mold masters, used a lot of cement, used the best-washed sand, and watered the construction for 3 months without exposing it to the sun.

In terms of coping with stress and fear during the earthquake, both participants stated that they took refuge in Allah. While W11 stated that he does not have any fear of earthquakes at the moment, W12 said that he still has a fear of earthquakes. While W11 stated that they were randomly brought to Giresun by AFAD (2023), W12 stated that he came after his daughter, who was staying in an orphanage, was brought to Giresun by the State and he followed her on his own will. While W11 did not plan to return to his hometown, W12 said that he would return when the opportunity became available. Although both participants stated that they did not experience any adaptation problems, only clothing aid was received from the public.

Fifth interview (M-7, W-13)

The last interview with the earthquake survivors was conducted with a middle-aged high school graduate male (M7) and the primary school graduate aunt of the same earthquake survivor (W13). Both participants (M7, W13) defined the earthquake as a "natural disaster" and stated that the earthquake occurred due to natural causes. M7 stated that the real test is after the earthquake and that there is no relationship between earthquake and sin.

Both participants perceived the moment of shaking as a normal earthquake and opposed the apocalyptic analogy. Both participants, who attributed their salvation to the strength of the building and the fact that it did not collapse, stated that they "involuntarily" resorted to prayer (دعاء/du'a) during the earthquake.

* Love homes are nurseries and orphanages for 10-12 children whose care is provided by the state. In the homes of love, there are orphans and children in need of care.

Both participants, who stated that they coped with stress and fear because they acted calmly at the time of the earthquake due to their character, indicated that they waited patiently for the shaking to end.

According to both participants, the reason for the collapse of the buildings was stealing from the material. According to the participants who stated that the supervisors are also responsible at this point, the real reason for this is the character problem.

Our participants, who declared that they came to Giresun on their own will, stated that they did not have any fear of earthquakes and that they did not want to return to their hometowns. Our participants, who did not experience any adaptation problems, stated that they did not receive any help from the public or any institution.

Summary of all interviews

The data obtained from all participants were combined and summarized as follows.

Table 3. Summary of interviews

Summary of Data from All Participants	
Earthquake definitions	Natural disaster (n=10), little apocalypse/doomsday (n=4), man-made disaster/earthquake (n=2), fate (n=2), a punishment from Allah (n=2), Allah's torment (n=1), a warning from Allah (n=1), test (n=1), negligence (n=1).
Earthquake cause	A punishment for sins committed (injustice, unfairness, interest, cruelty to children, etc.) (n=11), natural causes / the region being on a fault line (n=9), a warning for sins committed (n=6), the fate of the region (n=4), people artificially breaking the fault lines (n=2), a view that sins do not have a price (n=1).
The first one that comes to mind	Saying the Shahada, Salawat, and takbir, taking refuge in Allah and praying (n=11), running away from home (n=7), life of children and family members and being reunited with them (n=5), calmly waiting for the shaking to end (n=3), thinking that the world is coming to an end (n=1), moving to a safe place (n=1).
Reason for salvation	The soundness of the building (n=18), non-coming of fate (n=15), Allah's grace and help (n=11), non-interruption of sustenance in the world (n=6), calmness, love for their children, and the desire to be reunited with them (n=5).
Causes of building collapse	Stealing from materials (n=17), negligence (n=15), cutting columns (n=15), lack of inspection by inspectors (n=13), giving unrealistic soundness reports to buildings (n=5), unqualified people being contractors (n=5), irresponsible workmanship (n=5), lack of deterrence due to private companies conducting inspections (n=5), character/morality problems (n=2), buying houses with interest and loans (n=1), building on the wrong geography or land (n=1).
How to cope with the terrible horror of an earthquake	Relying on prayer and taking refuge in Allah (n=14), focusing on reuniting with family members and their survival (n=3), composure and patience (n=2). spouse's calmness and soothing demeanor (n=1).
Reason for changing cities and coming to Giresun	Own desire (n=9), the suggestion of relatives (n=8), random (n=2), randomly brought by AFAD (n=1).
Fear of earthquakes	Fear of earthquakes still persists (n=15). No fear of earthquake (n=5)
Willingness to return	He wants to go back (n=16), He does not plan to return (n=4).

Compliance problem	There are problems of adaptation (n=11). These problems are climate (cold and rainy weather), differences in food and culture, and high costs. There are no adaptation problems (n=9).
Received aids	They received assistance (n=18). These aids included clothing aid from the public and non-governmental organizations, cash aid of 1000 TL per person, food aid from the Governor's Office, and free shopping at the social market. No aid was received (n=2).

The answers received about the 'earthquake' metaphor are listed in descending order as natural disaster (n=10), little apocalypse/doomsday (n=4), artificial disaster/earthquake (n=2), fate (n=2), a punishment from Allah (n=2), Allah's punishment (n=1), a warning from Allah (n=1), test (n=1), negligence (n=1). Earthquake survivors associated the earthquake with other things besides its literal meaning and even tried to express this disaster in a more effective way by making analogies. As it is understood, the most commonly used phenomenon in this metaphor is "natural disaster". It should be noted that, as in the other answers, even though the number of participants was 20, some participants were not satisfied with a single answer/opinion and added a few more factors.

The total number of answers given about the causes of the earthquake by all participants is 33. While 17 of the 33 opinions received from the participants about the causes of the earthquake were associated with religion as "a warning for the sins committed" and "a punishment for the sins committed", 13 opinions were based on natural causes such as "the fact that the region is on the fault line" and "the fate of the region", and 2 opinions were based on artificial causes, i.e. that fault lines were broken by artificial techniques. On the other hand, 1 participant stated that the sins committed cannot have a cost in the world and that the earthquake event cannot be interpreted as a cost for sins. According to the majority of the participants, although the earthquake has the appearance of a natural disaster, Allah caused this disaster as a punishment or a warning for people's bad behavior. According to them, the sins/evils committed by people caused the earthquake. Indeed, there are some verses in the Holy Qur'an about the destruction of some tribes who persistently continued to commit sins despite all warnings. There are even academic studies on this subject. Therefore, it is understood that earthquake survivors who expressed such opinions attributed religious and divine meanings to this disaster.

On the other hand, according to slightly less than half of the participants, the cause of the earthquake is not any sin or evil committed by people, but rather the fact that the region itself is located on a first-degree fault line. According to scientific knowledge, existing faults eventually break and cause earthquakes. As a result, as the participants stated, this situation is not a fate of people, but a fate of the region or a natural situation.

On the other hand, 2 participants claimed that the earthquake, which was unique in the world in terms of its extent and affected a large geography such as 11 provinces simultaneously, was only created by breaking the fault line with artificial methods. In this context, it is possible to say that the earthquakes of February 6, 2023, and February 20,

2023, were artificially generated to influence the presidential and parliamentary elections planned to be held on May 14, 2023, in Türkiye. In addition to these, 1 participant stated that the sins committed cannot have a cost in the world and that a relationship between sin and punishment cannot be established, in short, it is not correct to interpret the earthquake through the phenomenon of punishment.

The first thing that came to the minds of the earthquake victims during the occurrence of the terrible disaster/earthquake was mostly "to say the word of testimony, Salawat and takbir, to seek refuge in Allah, and to pray" (n=11), even if it was different. It is understood that earthquake survivors, who were caught between life and death during the earthquake, mostly took refuge in Allah as a spiritual power, asked for His help, and embraced religious discourses. Others listed the first things that came to their mind such as escaping from home (n=7), the lives of their children and family members and reuniting with them (n=5), etc. The issue of prayer, which the participants most frequently turn to, is an important one. This is because prayer is an activity of sincerely begging Allah for the relief of helplessness, deprivation, and distress and hoping for help from Him. Prayers made in this feeling give the owner of the prayer peace of mind and heart (Temiz, 2019, 181).

Participants who survived the earthquake and did not die expressed 55 opinions about the reasons for their survival. The most prominent among these is the grace of Allah and His will. A total of 32 opinions were expressed in this context, such as the non-coming of the time of death, God's grace and help, and the fact that the sustenance in the world was not ceased. Others, on the other hand, see the reasons for surviving the earthquake disaster not in the divine will but in the strength of the buildings (n=18) and in the love for their children and the desire to be reunited with them (n=5).

According to the knowledge of the earthquake victims, the reason for the collapse of the buildings was stealing from materials (n=17), negligence (n=15), cutting columns (n=15), inadequate supervision by inspectors (n=13), giving unrealistic soundness reports (n=5), unqualified people being contractors (n=5), negligent workmanship (n=5), lack of deterrence due to private companies conducting inspections (n=5), lack of character/morals (n=2), building on the wrong geography or land (n=1) and buying houses with interest and loans (n=1). As can be seen from this data, each participant suggested many reasons for the collapse of the buildings. The overall total of these reasons is 84 and only 1 of them is different. If this different opinion is excluded, the reason for the collapse of buildings in earthquakes is almost completely attributed to the human factor. The different opinion is that houses bought with interest, which Allah considers a sin, collapsed immediately. As it is understood, this situation was interpreted in a metaphysical context by attributing it to the divine will and its punishment.

The participants who experienced the earthquake themselves, in order to calm themselves during this terrible event, adopted different attitudes and spiritual behaviors such as taking

refuge in the help and grace of Allah through prayer (n=14), focusing on reuniting with family members and their survival (n=3), being calm and patient (n=2), and listening to the calming attitudes of the spouse (n=1). At the moment of the earthquake, the most common thing used and said by the panic-stricken earthquake victims was to pray. According to psychologists, prayer is a religious activity that people in difficult situations resort to in order to get rid of troubles, illnesses, etc. Prayer, which in Islamic societies is manifested as turning to Allah and asking for His help, provides people with inner peace, lightness, and comfort. This stress-coping feature of prayer has entered the literature as "religious coping" (Temiz, 2019, 186, 201). As a matter of fact, the majority of the earthquake survivors tried to calm themselves down in the face of this terrible aspect of the earthquake primarily through religious coping, that is, prayer and seeking refuge in the help and grace of Allah.

When asked about the reasons why the families of the earthquake victims changed cities and came to Giresun, 9 participants stated that they came to this city voluntarily, 8 participants upon the suggestion of their relatives, 2 participants stated that they came randomly, and 1 participant noted that they were brought randomly by AFAD (2023). It is understood that the earthquake victims preferred this city because Giresun provincial center is located in the 4th-degree earthquake zone, more precisely, it has less risk and is among the safe cities.

Most of the participants who experienced the earthquake stated that they still experience the fear of earthquakes in their subconscious and that this fear still persists. We believe that psychological support should be provided to earthquake victims in this regard.

The majority of the earthquake victims who came to Giresun temporarily want to go back to their hometowns. While 9 participants stated that they did not have any problems in terms of adaptation to Giresun province and culture, 11 participants stated that they faced an adaptation problem. These problems were stated as cold and rainy weather due to the climate, differences in food and culture, and excessive cost.

As in Türkiye in general, in Giresun province, all units of our state, especially the provincial governorship and district governorship, Giresun provincial and district municipalities, mukhtars, non-governmental organizations and institutions, and the public, etc. have provided much aid to the earthquake victims. The "Giresun Civil Will Platform (GISIP)", which was previously formed by 52 NGOs (associations, foundations, trade unions) in Giresun, organized most of these aids. These NGOs provided in-kind and in-cash aid to the earthquake victims, such as housing, furniture, food, and clothing. Likewise, earthquake victims were placed in higher education student dormitories through the governorship and provided with free accommodation. They were also provided with free shopping from the social market. The majority of the earthquake survivors (n=18) confirmed that they received this in-kind and in-cash assistance.

However, 2 participants who stayed free of charge in the student dormitory stated that for some reason they did not receive any in-kind and in-cash assistance.

Discussion and Conclusions

According to the conceptual discussions we made, and the findings obtained in the research, what makes the earthquake truly destructive is human unconsciousness, irresponsibility, and moral deformation rather than its naturalness. Almost all of the participants admitted that these casualties were caused by humans. Another reason why people act irresponsibly is the inadequacy of the deterrence of laws. Punishing criminals after thousands of people have died will not bring the dead back to life.

When we look at the answers received about "why" the earthquake occurred rather than "how", we see that according to the majority of the participants, the earthquake was caused by Allah as a punishment for the sins/evils committed by people or to warn them. According to them, people's bad behaviors and sins are the cause of the earthquake. Therefore, most of the participants attributed religious or divine meanings to this disaster. However, it should be noted that if the cause of the earthquake was the commission of evil/sins forbidden by God, then it would be concluded that other provinces where the earthquake did not occur were innocent in terms of committing evil/sins. The case of destruction or punishment mentioned in the Qur'an is directed against all those who do not believe in and obey Allah and His Prophet, and in this process, those who believe and obey are removed from the region. Therefore, it would be wrong to associate earthquakes and pandemics that occur today with Muslims since they are not similar to those mentioned in the Qur'an (Karaosman, 2020). However, these findings are important in terms of showing that we have a social structure that associates the earthquake in question or similar natural events with metaphysical fields and that we have a social structure that mostly carries such a belief. However, less than half of the participants attributed the cause of the earthquake to the fact that the region is located on a fault line and that the faults break, or rather that it is natural. This is the correct view, even if the respondents who defend this view are fewer than the others because this is the acceptance of positive science and scientists.

In Islamic societies, believers are advised to say the Shahada at the time of death. It is understood that the majority of the earthquake victims who faced death during the earthquake repeated this phrase in the first place and begged for help from Allah, who is a spiritual power and the creator of everything, that is, they sought refuge in more divine power. According to the Islamic belief, death is not a nothingness, on the contrary, there is a belief in the hereafter. This belief is also defended by some thinkers in the Western world. For example, according to E. Levinas (1993), nothingness is a reverse dogmatism that is considered "the sweetest opium of the people", whatever the sentiments of an entire generation who doubted the positive dogmatism of the soul's immortality.

More than half of the participants who survived the earthquake attributed the reasons for their survival to the grace/forgiveness of Allah and His will, while about one-third attributed it to the strength of the buildings and the rest to other factors.

As mentioned in the findings section, 83 of the 84 reasons given for the collapse of buildings were attributed entirely to the irresponsibility of people and the deterioration of professional ethics. More precisely, most of the participants confirmed the scientific fact that buildings collapse easily. The divergent view was that houses bought with interest, which God considers a sin, collapse easily, which is associated with divine will and its punishment. It is noteworthy that the research did not reveal any view that attributed the cause of the collapse of the buildings to fate or providence.

Most people who are in a desperate and difficult situation due to illness or other reasons pray to a divine being and ask for help and take refuge in the divine being as a last resort. According to scientific research, prayers give people great psychological peace of mind and comfort. As a matter of fact, the majority of earthquake victims prayed to God during the earthquake disaster in order to calm themselves down and cope with the difficult situation, and they sought refuge in His grace and help. It is concluded that the findings of previous studies (Temiz, 2019) on prayer and the findings of this study support each other.

Most of the participants who experienced the earthquake disaster stated that they still experience the fear of earthquakes and are anxious. We suggest that psychological support should be provided to earthquake victims in this regard.

The majority of the earthquake survivors who temporarily settled in Giresun province want to go back to their hometowns. Because more than half of the participants still have an adaptation problem. Some of these problems are climate-related, others are sociological. These problems expressed by the earthquake survivors are cold and rainy climate, differences in food and culture, and excessive cost.

As detailed in the findings section, many members of the society such as the people of Giresun, municipalities, Mukhtar offices, and NGOs, especially the Republic of Türkiye, mobilized to help the earthquake victims who came to Giresun province. The earthquake victims who participated in the interview also confirmed this fact of benevolence. On the occasion of the February 6, 2023, and February 20, 2023 earthquakes, when we look at this scene of solidarity and sacrifice not only in Giresun province but also throughout the country, it has been seen that the people of the country, regardless of their religion, sect, race, world, and political views, are united as one in the face of disaster. If a conclusion can be drawn from this situation, it can be said that Türkiye has a social structure in which citizens can integrate with each other, the benevolence index can increase and all differences disappear in the event of a major disaster or an extraordinary situation.

If a generalization can be made, earthquake victims mostly attributed religious and divine meanings to the perception and interpretation of the earthquake. However, they attributed the reason for the collapse of the buildings to the irresponsibility and moral weakness of people.

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