Disasters and Disadvantaged Groups as a Multi-Perspective Research Area in Sociology

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Disasters, which significantly alter the trajectory of social life, disrupt the operation of social institutions for a certain duration, and transform the individual's relationship with their social environment, constitute a fundamental area of study in sociology. The sub-discipline of disaster sociology, which has evolved since the 1960s, has gained increased prominence following global disasters such as climate change and the Covid-19 pandemic. Among its primary research topics, the issue of "disadvantaged groups" remains a central focus within disaster sociology. This study seeks to elucidate various sociological perspectives on the subject of disasters and disadvantaged groups. The theories and concepts explored within this sociological framework are confined to "social inequality," "stigma," and "solidarity networks", which also represents the limitations of the current paper. The article presents the concentrated findings of these theories and concepts within both general sociological theory and the sub-discipline of disaster sociology. Furthermore, while analyzing the concepts of stigma, inequality, and solidarity in the context of "disasters," the study adopts the perspective of contemporary integrated disaster management. This point represents the originality of the work, which is mainly based on systematic literature review and relies on critical and historical perspectives. As the main data source of this paper, theoretical works on stigma, inequality and solidarity in specific to the victims of disadvantaged groups before and after disasters are benefited. Consequently, the position of disadvantaged groups in both pre-disaster and post-disaster processes is examined. The study reveals the experiences of inequality, stigma, and solidarity practices encountered by disaster victims categorized as disadvantaged groups during both pre-disaster risk management and post-disaster crisis management processes. It was found that disadvantaged groups face challenges in meeting the expectations of a "disaster-resilient society," "disaster-prepared society," and "disaster-aware society," as well as in participating in such social engagement, due to the reasons aforementioned as the theoretical frame of this study.

Sosyolojide Çok Perspektifli Bir Araştırma Alanı Olarak Afetler ve Dezavantajlı Gruplar

Makale Bilgisi	ÖZET
	Toplumsal yaşamın gidişatını önemli ölçüde değiştiren, toplumsal kurumların işleyişini belirli bir süreliğine aksatan ve bireyin toplumsal çevresiyle ilişkisini dönüştüren afetler, sosyolojinin temel çalışma alanlarından birini oluşturur. 1960'lardan bu yana gelişen afet sosyolojisi alt disiplini, iklim değişikliği ve Covid-19 salgını gibi küresel afetlerin ardından giderek daha fazla önem kazanmıştır. Başlıca araştırma konuları arasında yer alan "dezavantajlı gruplar" konusu, afet sosyolojisi içinde merkezi bir odak noktası olmaya devam etmektedir. Bu çalışma, afetler ve dezavantajlı gruplar konusundaki çeşitli sosyolojik bakış açılarını aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu sosyolojik çerçevede incelenen teori ve kavramlar, mevcut makalenin de sınırlılıklarını temsil eden "toplumsal eşitsizlik", "damgalama" ve "dayanışma ağları" ile sınırlıdır. Makale, bu teori ve kavramların hem genel sosyoloji teorisi hem de afet sosyolojisi alt disiplini içindeki yoğunlaştırılmış bulgularını sunmaktadır. Ayrıca, çalışma "afetler" bağlamında

damgalama, eşitsizlik ve dayanışma kavramlarını analiz ederken, çağdaş bütünleşik afet yönetimi perspektifini benimsemiştir. Bu nokta, esas olarak sistematik literatür taramasına dayanan ve eleştirel ve tarihsel bakış açılarına dayanan çalışmanın özgünlüğünü temsil etmektedir. Bu makalenin temel veri kaynağı olarak, afet öncesi ve sonrası dezavantajlı grupların mağdurlarına özgü damgalama, eşitsizlik ve dayanışma üzerine teorik çalışmalardan yararlanılmıştır. Sonuç olarak, dezavantajlı grupların hem afet öncesi hem de afet sonrası süreçlerdeki konumları incelenmiştir. Çalışma, dezavantajlı gruplar olarak sınıflandırılan afet mağdurlarının hem afet öncesi risk yönetimi hem de afet sonrası kriz yönetimi süreçlerinde karşılaştıkları eşitsizlik, damgalama ve dayanışma pratiklerini ortaya koymaktadır. Bu çalışmanın teorik çerçevesi olarak yukarıda belirtilen nedenlerden dolayı dezavantajlı grupların "afetlere dayanıklı toplum", "afetlere hazırlıklı toplum" ve "afet farkındalığı olan toplum" beklentilerini karşılamada ve bu tür toplumsal süreçlerde zorluklarla karşılaştıkları tespit edilmiştir.

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INTRODUCTION: A SHORT OVERVIEW ON DISASTER SOCIOLOGY AND THE ISSUE OF METHODOLOGY

Disasters have been the "destiny" of humanity. Since the beginning of history, human societies have been exposed to many disasters (Svensen, 2009). From floods to earthquakes, from fires to droughts, from famine to wars, many disasters have deeply affected different societies. This effect has been examined from different perspectives from religious and mythological narratives to contemporary literary or academic texts (Dilek and Kahya, 2023; Chester, Duncan and Sangster, 2025). In relation to this, in different periods of history, human societies and official or religious authorities have made different inferences about the source of disasters. From the traditional period to the modern period, disasters were considered as God's punishment for sinful societies. In the modern period, "nature" was pointed out as the source of disasters. In the late modern period, the cause of disasters was read as human error (Furedi, 2007, p. 483). This paradigm has brought with it the view that "there can be no natural disaster" today. Accordingly, there is no disaster that does not have human error, involvement or carelessness in its occurrence or effect (Kelman, 2020). For example, while an earthquake is a natural event in itself, the fact that an earthquake becomes a disaster is due to human error or lack of foresight in building construction. On the other hand, the issue of disaster and society has increasingly occupied the agenda of social sciences today. The new norms that emerged especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, radical changes in individual and social lives, and the negative impact of the pandemic on almost every "social institution" (Redbird, Harbridge-Young and Mersey, 2022, p. 2, 16) are among the main reasons for the academic interest in the subject of disaster and society. In addition, the reality of "risk society" as an outcome of the process of globalization and late modernity (Beck, 2011) is one of the main theoretical rationales of studies on disaster and society. The literature on disaster sociology, which has intensified with the developments of the 21st century, has been shaped by a number of ruptures since the 1920s. Samuel Prince's (1920) doctoral dissertation titled "Catastrophe and Social Change," written after the Halifax Harbor explosion in 1917 and submitted to the University of Columbia, is recognized as the first disaster sociology study. Prince's dissertation is theorized from a conflictual perspective, focusing on the struggles of the people of the region and the readjustment of social life in the aftermath of a disaster, which affected more than 20 percent of the city, killing more than 1,900 people and injuring more than 9,000 people (Scanlon, 1988, p. 213-214). By his work, Prince has brought a sociological insight to calamities and positioned disaster as the subject of social scientific endeavor (Can, 2020, p. 21). After two decades, Russian-American sociologist Pitirim Sorokin's "Man and Society in Calamity" (1942), in which he analyzed the effects of various types of disasters on human societies, has been published as the product of late classical sociology. The 1970s, on the other hand, brought about an important break in the sociology of disasters. The Disaster Research Center, founded by American sociologists Enrico Quarantelli and Robert Dynes at Ohio University in 1972 and later to be based at Delaware University, both clarified the theoretical basis of disaster sociology studies and mediated the publication of applied research conducted by the Center's experts. These ruptures that shaped the sub-discipline of disaster sociology from the 1920s to the present have also brought about an increase in applied field research on the effects of disaster on social life. This intensity has also brought to the agenda the "method" discussions regarding the relevant sub-discipline. Mileti (1987, p. 69) brought up the issue of context as a result of the qualitative approach that has occupied the agenda of sociology since the 1980s, and argued that variables such as the population affected by the disaster, the severity of the disaster, the damages it causes, and the socioeconomic structure of the region where it occurs should be considered as methodological variables for applied disaster sociology research. In connection with this, Stallings (2007, p. 55) argued that the issue of "period" should be considered as a methodological sensitivity in disaster research. According to him, the social reactions and findings to be obtained in medium and long-term researches tend to differ from the social reactions immediately

after the disaster. Tierney (2002, p. 359) advocated a methodological approach that considers the variables of "timing," "accessibility," and "generalizability" in disaster sociology research. Finally, Newman and his colleagues (2006, p. 35) brought up the issue of ethics in field studies conducted on disaster victims in the post-disaster period, stating that individuals who have lost their loved ones and suffered material damage may have difficulty providing authentic data to researchers due to the possible post-traumatic stress disorder they experience, and that this may cause the findings of disaster sociology studies to deviate from authentic ground.[1]

Within the theoretical framework presented above, this study attempts to problematize the conditions of disadvantaged groups who experience disaster. When analyzing this, the question of "how disadvantaged groups deal with the harms of the disasters and what are the drawbacks of being a member of a disadvantaged group before and after a disaster" –as the main research question of this paper- will be answered. As the sociological background and the unique part of this paper, the concepts "social inequality," "stigma," and "solidarity networks" will be highlighted within the scope of the works of disaster sociologists.

1. *Some Selected Study Areas of Disaster Sociology*

In line with the academic/intellectual background and methodological considerations, sociologists have been studying disasters by relying on both some of the concepts/theories of sociology such as social institutions, social inequality, civil society, migration, disadvantaged groups, bureaucracy, solidarity, functionalist and conflict theory (Alkın, 2023, p. 18-20) and specific concepts/theories of disaster such as disaster-resistant society, disaster-prepared society, disaster-aware society, disaster response and recovery in societal life, etc. The theory of disadvantaged groups, which is the focal point of this paper, keeps a remarkable and multi-layered background that touches upon almost every concept/theory mentioned above. This will be detailed in the core sub-title of this paper after founding a theoretical basis of disaster sociology in the next part.

1.1. *Methodology of the Current Paper: Some Considerations*

Before a detailed examination on disaster sociology, some of the methodological considerations regarding this article can be highlighted. Among these considerations are the selection preference of specific theoretical outputs of this sub-discipline, which are social institutions and civil society, and basic methodological canopy for this article, which is mainly about thematic literature review based on functionalist theory.

To mention inclusion and exclusion criteria of theoretical part of this paper, it can be said that the most frequent issues regarding disasters and disadvantaged groups in the social scientific literature, which are social institutions, stigmatization and civil society approach, have been determined. Especially, papers published by Arcaya and her colleagues (2020), Frankenberg and her colleagues (2013), and Blake and her colleagues (2020) have provided this paper with an integrated aspect in terms of family, education, civil society and stigmatization processes experienced by disaster victims in disadvantaged groups. On the other hand, social institutions (education and family) have been incorporated in this paper due to the reason that these institutions have been shaping individuals' socio-economic status and life course in modern period. In this context, education and family as a theoretical frame are expected to present both strong sociological perspectives (so methodological consistency) and insights for the experiences of disadvantaged groups in the face of disasters.

In addition to inclusion criteria, some of the exclusions are considered for this paper due to methodological and theoretical limitations. Among these exclusion criteria are operational processes of

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[1] Stallings' (2003) edition, *Method of Disaster Research*, stands out as a comprehensive resource on disasters and methodology.

disasters for disadvantaged groups, technical and engineering phases, financial aids presented to the members of vulnerable people, etc. It can be reminded that these criteria seem belong more to technical examination of disasters. For example, operational phases, structural analysis of the buildings in a disaster area, geological/environmental features of the disaster zones or direct financial aids by governments or NGOs for needy people are generally evaluated by engineers, geologists, economists, etc. as academic outputs. However, because this paper is based on a social scientific approach, such technical dimensions have been excluded from the study.

Besides inclusion and exclusion criteria, the core methodological basis of this study is rooted in systematic literature review approach in the social sciences (Petticrew and Roberts, 2006). As one of the steps of this review, some of the keywords have been selected and scanned in databases. Among these keywords are "[disaster and] family, "[disaster and] education", "[disaster and] disability", "[disaster and] elderly", "[disaster and] gender". To remember again, these words are highly connected and related to the social scientific exploration of the disasters in specific to disadvantaged groups. Academic resources obtained through a search using relevant keywords were categorized, and articles published in journals indexed in relatively more reputable indexes were included in the text. Among these indexes are the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI), the Emerging Social Sciences Citation Index, and the Scopus index. On the other hand, in the light of both the selected subject context and the keywords, articles published in some journals scanned outside the above-mentioned indexes have also been included in the text. After downloading all the material, some of the papers that do not directly cover the specific background of the text have been excluded from the literature review.

1.2. Disasters and Social Institutions

Social institutions have been one of the main areas of interest for sociologists from the classical period to the present day. Education, family, politics, religion, economy and leisure are the basic social institutions that constitute the field of study of sociologists (Türkkahraman, 2009, p. 28). Social institutions have an important function in order to meet the basic needs of human communities in a healthy way and to ensure the harmony of the individual with society (Coleman, 1990, p. 334-335). These institutions are available for the individuals, keep continuity and their "functioning and effect" can vary over time and from society to society, so are the cornerstones of social order and integrity. In order to detail the importance of social institutions, the AGIL scheme formed by Talcott Parsons (1951), the founder of structural functionalist sociology, can be remembered. Accordingly, social institutions, as a field of existence of the social system, aim at the processes of Adaptation, Goal Attainment, Integration and Latency. This represents and includes the concepts of collective consciousness and solidarity explored in depth by Durkheim (1997).

This point can justify, in its most basic form, why "social institutions" are a field of study in disaster sociology. In their most general form, disasters cause great damage to social institutions and the functionality of these institutions due to the physical damage, loss of life and injuries they cause. After a disaster occurs in a city, a country or a continent, there may be radical changes in family life, education processes, economic activities and the provision of health services may be interrupted or completely stopped (Vollmer, 2013, p. 9). In addition, disasters can cause radical transformations in individuals' religious and god-design, and in the rituals of their religious practices in their social lives (Islam, 2012, p. 209-210). As a result, disasters can temporarily destroy processes such as reaching the goal and integration, which are envisaged in the AGIL scheme and are the basis of social functioning; through the physical destruction they create (Kreps, 1988; Stallings, 1998). In order to adhere to the limitations of the study, the connection of each social institution with disasters will not be detailed. However, it is thought that mentioning some disaster sociology studies conducted specifically on the smallest social unit, the family, will contribute to a clearer understanding of the subject.

The position of the family as a social institution in the face of disasters can be addressed in relation to the place, change and realization of this institution in both daily life practices and official processes. This content can be read in the light of concepts such as disaster and economy, adaptation, gender, psycho-social dimension, culture, disaster management and social capital.

Disasters force families to adapt to unexpected conditions. According to Hoffman and Kruczek (2011, p. 1088, 1093), families develop various adaptation mechanisms against traumatic events. During this process, family roles may change; children may take on responsibilities at an early age or parents may have to adapt to new roles. Especially in long-term disasters, family ties may strengthen or weaken due to traumatic experiences.

Bolin and Bolton's (1986, p. 120) studies emphasize the devastating effects of disasters on family finances. Job losses, property damage and health expenses can strain family budgets. This situation may change the balance of power within the family and require the redistribution of resources. Economic difficulties may lead to tensions among family members or trigger collective solution mechanisms.

Psychological problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression may be seen in families after disasters. Norris and his colleagues' (2002) meta-analysis study, sampling 6.000 disaster victims, shows in general that these effects can significantly change family dynamics. Traumatic experiences can weaken family communication or, conversely, shared grief can bring families closer together.

In addition to economic and psychological dimensions, in his book built on the theory of social capital and disasters, Aldrich (2012) investigates the critical role of social capital in the recovery process after a disaster. Families can provide material and spiritual support through kinship ties, neighborhood relations, and social networks. These support networks are vital in families' resilience and in the recovery process after a disaster. In relation to social capital, on the other hand, disasters let us observe the cultural background of the community and their effect on disaster management. According to Bolin (2006), strategies for coping with disasters are shaped by the cultural context. In some societies, religious beliefs and rituals provide moral support to families and strengthen collective solidarity. Belief systems can help families make sense of the disaster experience and overcome trauma.

For an integrated disaster management and its reflection in social sphere, family can be recognized as an advantaged platform in terms of pre-disaster preparedness phase. Peek (2008, p. 5) states that families play a central role in disaster preparedness. Family-based disaster education programs improve families' risk perception and increase their level of preparedness. These programs enable family members to act in coordination during and after a disaster.

Lastly, family roles and the position of women and men in the face of a disaster can be highlighted. Enarson and his colleagues (2007, p. 137-141) emphasize the gender dimension of disasters. During and after disasters, women may experience greater challenges due to increased caregiving burdens, resource constraints, and security risks. Rates of domestic violence may also increase following disasters. Therefore, a gender perspective is critical in disaster management and disaster sociology.

1.3. Disasters and Civil Society

The concept of civil society, which philosophers and thinkers have attributed various meanings to from ancient times to the present day and which has been interpreted differently in terms of different societies and different periods, is an indispensable field of study for sociology. Especially modern "formation" of the societies, the place of the state and relevant public authorities, democratization and the idea of human rights have made civil society and civil society organizations crucial. When viewed from the perspective of disasters, which is the main agenda of the study, civil society thought and NGOs

undertake an important function in reducing the effects of disasters that cause great harm to societies and in making human communities more prepared for disasters. Before and after disasters, besides measures taken by public authorities and human communities without any organization in combating calamities, it is known that civil platforms and civil society organizations play important roles.

In the four main phases of disaster management (preparedness, response, recovery and risk reduction), civil society organizations play a complementary and sometimes leading role alongside official institutions. As stated in the comprehensive study of Rodriguez et al. (2006), civil society organizations have a proactive position and potential in increasing community resilience, especially in pre-disaster preparation and risk reduction activities. Situations such as raising community awareness about disasters and determining survival strategies in the event of a possible disaster can come to light with the initiative taken by civil society organizations.

The experience and expertise of NGOs are of critical importance, especially in developing the disaster preparedness capacity of disadvantaged groups, which is the core point of this article. Wisner's (2004) study on disaster vulnerability reveals the role of NGOs in increasing social resilience with empirical data.

On the other hand, as the other side of the coin in disaster management process of the societies, during and after the disaster, civil society organizations stand out with their rapid organizational capabilities and flexible structures. In emergency response, NGOs undertake critical tasks such as search and rescue operations, first aid services, temporary shelter solutions and distribution of basic needs. Quarantelli's (2000) research emphasizes the effectiveness of civil society organizations in disaster response and the importance of their cooperation with official institutions.

As the third phase of integrated disaster management, civil society may play an important role in recovery period after disasters. NGOs play an important role in overcoming social trauma and accelerating the process of returning to normal life. Psycho-social support programs, re-establishment of livelihoods and social adaptation activities constitute the main areas of activity of NGOs at this stage. Dynes' (2002) work reveals in detail the contributions of NGOs to the social recovery process after disasters. Lastly (and as the next step after recovery period, which mainly focuses on the risk management), civil society organizations play an important role by developing and implementing community-based disaster risk management programs. These programs aim to increase the capacity of local communities to understand and prepare for disaster risks. Tierney's (2019) research highlights the role of NGOs in risk reduction efforts in increasing community resilience.

To conclude, as a result of the adoption of integrated disaster management today, the issue of disaster and civil society has gained a more systematic and functional role. Accreditation of NGOs struggling against disasters, the efforts of the representatives and volunteers of NGOs in disaster areas, their activities to raise awareness among local people or the entire country about various types of disasters and the risks they create directly or indirectly refer to sociological aspects that emerge in the face of disasters.

2. Disasters and Disadvantaged Groups: A Multi-Layered Theoretical Output in Sociology

2.1. Integrated Disaster Management: Risk and Opportunity for Disadvantaged Groups.

There are many reasons why the subject of disasters and disadvantaged groups has a multi-layered theoretical background. The first of these is related to the integrated disaster management perspective. As mentioned, today's modern disaster sociology examines human communities in terms of pre-disaster, disaster and post-disaster processes. In other words, the preparedness of individuals and communities against disaster risks, the possibilities and strategies for this preparation, their access to education and

information processes on this subject and the financial means required for preparedness represent the first side of the coin (Cooper and Briggs, 2014, p. 40; Başaran, 2025, p. 584). On the other hand, whether people and communities have sufficient information, opportunities and education to escape from this disaster in the event of a disaster occurring gradually or suddenly is another fundamental point. Finally, the strategies and possibilities of social groups to hold on to life in the post-disaster response and recovery stages, their access to aid after the disaster and their adaptation to temporary shelters, and their re-adaptation to social life in the medium and long term are also among the subjects of disaster sociology (Maskrey, 1989, p. 55-56). At this point, disadvantaged groups (elderly, disabled, children, women, immigrants, poor, etc.), who are fragile even during normal periods of society, have much more difficulty in terms of disaster preparedness, disaster escape and post-disaster recovery processes than other members and groups of society. Now, we can start our analysis by examining the specific stages in the integrated disaster management cycle (Bosher, Chmutina and van Niekerk, 2021, p. 526) with respect to disadvantaged groups.

The disaster management phase, conceptualized as "mitigation" and "preparedness", and corresponding to the pre-disaster period, refers to risk management processes. The damage mitigation phase begins after any disaster that societies face and aims to minimize the damage of other possible disasters that may occur in the same society (Tabish and Syed, 2013, p. 237). In this respect, it can also be read as a "risk reduction" effort. The positions of disadvantaged groups in the damage reduction phase are more difficult than other members and groups of society. Because disadvantaged groups have difficulty in managing the strategies, financial processes, the ability to take action, and contact with official and civil institutions needed to overcome the problems they experience even in the normal course of daily life and to manage possible risks (Weichselgartner, 2001, p. 91). Moreover, it is obvious that when faced with a disaster, they will have much more difficulty in reaching the damage reduction steps for the next disaster. For example, it is not easy for an elderly individual who is deprived of the social support of their relatives to build a new place to replace the one they lost after a fire or to move into temporary shelters and access financial support for a certain period of time due to some bureaucratic procedures and challenging stages. The measures they can take to reduce the possible damages of a possible fire in the following periods are limited. To give a different example; it is not easy at all for a visually impaired individual who is not cared for by their relatives to move into a new house after an earthquake disaster and to carry out the damage reduction processes of that house in the next possible earthquake. Therefore, it can be said that disadvantaged groups face relatively many barriers in reducing disaster risks. For this reason, considering that disasters have the potential to cause displacement, economic losses, injuries, loss of life, material damage and similar negative situations, the steps that disadvantaged groups can take to reduce the damages of disasters are very limited (Peek, 2008, p. 2).

Like the mitigation phase, which represents a transition from the post-disaster to the period before the next disaster, the preparedness phase also reveals the negative position of disadvantaged groups in the face of calamities. There are many obstacles to disadvantaged groups keeping up with the steps to be taken by different social units in order to be prepared for the next disaster, to be able to take part in disaster preparedness, which requires ongoing and professional effort, and to share experiences in this regard (Lippman, 2011, p. 71-72). These obstacles include not having the financial power required for disaster preparedness, having difficulty accessing trainings given at certain periods regarding disasters, and, especially for immigrant groups, not being able to participate in the preparation stages against different types of disasters due to the "language barrier" (Uekusa, 2019). Again, if we go through examples, it is not easy for a divorced woman living as a female household to regularly attend the trainings required by the preparedness phase and provided by official institutions, both due to her employment status and the responsibility of caring for her child. Or it may not be possible for a poor individual to live in an earthquake-ready and durable house by participating in the urban transformation

process, which would probably bring extra costs to him.

On the other hand, the disaster management phase, which is conceptualized as response and recovery, and corresponds to the "post-disaster" period, essentially refers to a crisis management process. The situation of "spreading disaster management over time" or "a more flexible disaster management process" that existed in the pre-disaster phases is not really the case for the response and recovery phases that express crisis management. The main reason for this is that, rather than a danger or risk, the disaster has already caused destructiveness and caused loss of lives and properties in human communities. In such a chaotic or deprived environment, time management, the ability to access resources that will keep them alive and in social life, and liaison practices with relevant organizations are much more important for disaster victims (Baker and Cormier, 2015, p. 4-9). For this very reason, the response and recovery phases cause more serious problems for disadvantaged groups than the pre-disaster phases. Again, if we are to give an example, it is expected that a woman with a child may not know where to take shelter in that chaotic and crisis environment after an earthquake occurs in the region where she lives and causes her house to collapse, and will not have an idea of where to take shelter until professional aid teams arrive. It is not easy for a woman, raised with traditional practices, whose spouse has died -or who has divorced her husband- to develop strategies about who and where to get what kind of help during the response and recovery phases. Even if she develops strategies, it will not be easy to put them into practice. Similarly, it will not be easy for a disabled person (and their family) who has difficulty leaving their house after a flood to continue their biological and social lives until the flood has passed. Or, in the damage assessments made after the flood has passed, for an elderly individual whose electricity, water and natural gas infrastructure has been damaged, the processes of contacting the relevant units to compensate for this damage and then following up on the repair work will be quite challenging. In these and similar examples reflected in social or traditional media after almost every disaster, it is not difficult to observe that the disaster response and recovery stages create a natural feeling of exclusion or being left out for disadvantaged groups.

When viewed from an integrated disaster management perspective, it is obvious that disadvantaged groups are much more vulnerable in the face of disasters and much more "in need" of disaster compensation. At this point, the issue of "social inequality", which was also on the agenda in the pre-disaster period for them, becomes much more obvious (Parthasarathy, 2018, p. 426). The fact that the potential for inequality also creates a kinetic discrimination and marginalization process for vulnerable groups after a disaster can also reduce the sense of belonging and trust of these people to the society they live in for the short, medium and long term (Bonanno et al., 2010, p. 6-7). Disadvantaged groups, who expect more sensitive and detailed care and approach, may think that they are marginalized, stigmatized and discriminated against if these expectations are not met in the response and recovery stages after a disaster (Fothergill, 2003, p. 677). In this case, the ideal of organic solidarity may seem suspended in the eyes of individuals who constitute a significant group of society in terms of the pre - and post-disaster periods.

Although it has been almost three years on, Kahramanmaraş Erthquakes in February 6 (2023) and the consequences of this disaster in Turkey have been issued by the social scientists. Altıok and colleagues' (2025) paper puts a comprehensive perspective and study sets on the subject of disadvantaged groups and disasters by especially focusing on women and children survivors of this earthquake. In this article, the issue of gender and vulnerability are discussed within the scopes of "women-friendly zones", "child-friendly zones", "woman support centers", "game-based rehabilitation", etc. On the other hand, Yeşil's (2023) early study titled *Earthquake and Disadvantaged Groups* (*Deprem ve Dezavantajlı Gruplar*) emphasizes each disadvantaged group experiencing social troubles after Februray 6 earthquakes. Even though both papers seem to analyze "post-disaster period" and the implementations after the earthquake, it can be observed that the writers of these academic texts

call for an integrated disaster management practice in order to reduce the risks of such a huge collapse in some cities in Turkey.

As a result, according to the ideal of modern integrated disaster management, disadvantaged people represent a group that needs to be approached with much more sensitivity both in pre-disaster and post-disaster periods. If this sensitivity is not shown, sociological outputs and expectations such as a disaster-prepared society, a disaster-resilient society, a disaster-aware society will always remain incomplete. However, an integrated perspective based on a community-based disaster management has a functional background for disadvantaged groups to become more prepared for disasters.

2.2. The Interaction Between Disadvantaged Groups and Social Institutions During Disasters

One of the most critical factors that can impede the social adaptation of a disadvantaged individual following a disaster is the death or disability of one or more family members. This is particularly significant for disabled or elderly individuals requiring care, as the loss of close relatives results in the severance of their already limited and mediated connections with society (Ngo, 2001, p. 86-87). This scenario represents a dual loss: the psychosocial devastation from losing a first-degree relative and the absence of reliable support for reintegration into social life post-disaster. Consequently, the family, as a social institution, loses its functional role in facilitating disaster victims' adaptation to social life and preparedness. Various examples illustrate this process across different disadvantaged groups:

· An elderly individual unable to care for themselves loses their home in a fire and experiences the death of their children or spouse.
· A primary school child from a nuclear family loses their parents in an earthquake.
· A poor, elderly family suffers home damage due to a flood.

These examples underscore a commonality: these groups possess limited mobility and capacity concerning their social demands and legal rights. They are slower to engage in social compensation processes due to their unique circumstances and are more reliant on the protective role of the family social institution. Consequently, they experience more severe psychosocial impacts following potential harm to family members.

A similar perspective can be applied to the social institution of education. As previously noted, disadvantaged groups face greater challenges in participating in educational processes essential for pre-disaster damage reduction and preparedness. Post-disaster, these groups may struggle to adapt to the restructured educational system, which is often modified to meet new norms during the recovery phase. For disabled and economically disadvantaged children, adolescents, and young adults of formal education age, post-disaster measures such as transportation education and larger class sizes may lead to feelings of alienation and hopelessness regarding the educational system and their future prospects (Mudavanhu, 2014, p. 2). This situation can result in profound deprivation, particularly for students requiring special education. The loss of teachers can exacerbate the situation for these students.

To understand the integration or exclusion of disadvantaged groups from these two social institutions (or their problematic situation) after devastating disasters, academic works based on some of the well-known disasters in the past can be exemplified. Katrina Hurricane (2005) that literally destroyed New Orleans has been identified as a crucial point in terms of disasters and disadvantaged groups (Zoraster, 2012). The devastation of New Orleans, where Black people constituted the vast majority of the population, intensified accusations of racism against the American administration due to the inadequacy and late arrival of aid (Lavelle and Feagin, 2006). Black people were thus considered both a disadvantaged and marginalized group. Furthermore, the disadvantage experienced by the majority of the population due to the city's low socioeconomic status became even more complex and

challenging in the aftermath of the disaster (Thedie and Brown, 2013). Fothergil and Peek's (2015) book, *Children of Katrina*, provides sociological analyses and findings regarding the traumatic experiences of primary and secondary school-aged children and adolescents following the disaster, resulting from the loss of family members and their prolonged isolation from educational processes.

2.3. Disasters, Disadvantaged Groups and Civil Society

Another critical aspect of the sociological context of the subject "disasters and disadvantaged groups" is the role of civil society. As extensively discussed, disasters impact all societal segments; however, their effects on disadvantaged groups can be significantly more severe. Sociological research indicates that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play a pivotal role in both pre-disaster preparation (risk management) and post-disaster response and recovery (crisis management) phases. In the pre-disaster period, civil society and voluntary organizations affiliated with civil institutions are essential in preparing disadvantaged populations for potential disasters. Unlike the voluntary public participation in disaster management, the involvement of NGOs from a professional and organized perspective theoretically enriches the discourse on disasters and disadvantaged groups. Sociologists have been examining this area since the 2000s, coinciding with the emergence of the concept of integrated disaster management. This section will explore some academic works that address both community and NGO involvement. Cutter et al. (2003, p. 243) assert that disaster risk is directly linked to "social vulnerability," which is "a function of social inequalities, accessibility of social resources, and characteristics of settlements." Consequently, the efforts of civil society and NGOs are potentially critical in safeguarding the social existence of disadvantaged groups by preparing them for disasters through mitigation and preparedness phases. This approach can enhance disaster awareness and resilience among these groups. Similarly, Hoffman and Oliver-Smith (2002, p. 28) emphasize that risk perception and disaster management cannot be considered independently of the sociocultural context, highlighting the specific needs of disadvantaged groups in disaster preparation.

The concept of social capital offers a valuable perspective for examining disaster management and the challenges faced by disadvantaged groups within a sociological framework. Uekusa et al. (2020, p. 64) emphasize the significance of social capital in disaster preparedness, arguing that robust civil society networks are crucial in enhancing the resilience of disadvantaged communities. This suggests that disadvantaged groups may encounter greater difficulties in accessing and participating in disaster mitigation and preparedness phases due to their limited social capital ties and network channels. Considering the role of civil society as a mechanism for disaster resistance, it becomes evident that even accessing the services of civil society organizations and NGOs may pose challenges for disadvantaged groups during disasters. In their field research on the social impact of the Northridge Earthquake in 1994, Bolin and Stanford (1998, p. 27) found that local NGOs are essential in ensuring that disaster education and preparedness programs are culturally appropriate and accessible. However, disadvantaged groups in the disaster area lacked the necessary information and access to these NGOs' activities. Gender and disability, as elements of the sociology of disadvantaged groups, warrant examination in the context of pre-disaster management processes. The literature on disaster risk management and the requisite steps for these groups reveals a problematic background. In her qualitative study conducted after flood disasters in Scotland in 1993 and 1994, Fordham (1999, p. 20-21) contends that pre-disaster risk reduction efforts often lack a gender perspective, and that women should be considered both as active participants and as vulnerable groups in disaster preparedness. The absence of such consideration likely overlooks specific conditions faced by women in disaster preparation.

In addition to the pre-disaster phase, which involves risk management, the post-disaster response and recovery phases are crucial for addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups, thereby signifying the importance of crisis management. It is important to note that, as with other aspects of disaster

sociology, effective risk management strategies can significantly enhance the success of response and recovery efforts, particularly for disadvantaged groups, thereby fostering disaster resilience and preparedness. Disasters inherently bring about crises that demand substantial mental fortitude, physical endurance, and a sense of responsibility to mitigate the effects of unexpected and severe losses. The initial response, maintaining composure in the early days, and mobilizing resources to combat disasters can be challenging even for healthy and "average" individuals within a society. Consequently, it is nearly impossible for disadvantaged groups to independently undertake such efforts. Rather than actively participating in societal crisis response, members of disadvantaged groups often find themselves in a position where society must mobilize on their behalf during post-disaster stages. Therefore, policymakers from both governmental and non-governmental organizations are expected to develop specific plans for vulnerable populations within any community facing a disaster crisis. Sociologists, like other professionals and experts in the academic community, have been examining this issue by focusing on the experiences of disaster victims from vulnerable groups. For instance, Enarson and Morrow's (1998) pioneering work, "The Gendered Terrain of Disaster," highlights that women often assume greater responsibilities following a devastating disaster. Consequently, civil society, particularly non-governmental organizations, should recognize women as both a vulnerable and burdened group. Based on this understanding, NGOs should develop programs that address gender-specific needs in disaster-affected areas. Such civil society efforts will contribute to mitigating the impact of disasters on women and facilitate their reintegration into social life post-disaster.

Individuals with disabilities may offer a comprehensive perspective to elucidate the significance and function of civil society and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the phases of disaster response and recovery. In the routine course of daily life, certain NGOs engage in volunteer activities aimed at facilitating the lives of disabled individuals, integrating them into social life, and fostering social awareness against discrimination. Furthermore, disabled individuals may congregate within associations they have established, which serve as models of social organization. These associations can also be classified as NGOs. However, in the context of major disasters, activities targeting disabled individuals become significantly more complex, necessitate swifter action, and may endanger the lives of these individuals if unsuccessful. For instance, the plight of a diabetic individual whose residence has collapsed in an earthquake may not be prioritized by disaster managers conducting search and rescue operations across numerous buildings. Nevertheless, if this individual is deprived of insulin injections during the initial three critical days of disaster intervention, they may succumb by the end of the third day. In this scenario, local NGO members, who possess a comprehensive understanding of the region, its population, and their needs, have the opportunity and foresight to deliver essential medications to this patient and others with similar conditions. Conversely, during the recovery phase, NGOs can assume a more enduring role in facilitating the participation of disadvantaged groups in social life. Individuals with various special needs may be integrated into employment opportunities through interactions with relevant NGOs, meet their self-care needs through volunteers, or receive educational support from volunteer teachers if they are unable to attend formal education. These examples can be extended to encompass each disadvantaged group. Civil society plays a crucial role for disadvantaged groups through practices that consider the cultural context of society, both prior to and following disasters, particularly in terms of social capital. In situations where public institutions struggle to reach every disaster victim in the initial days of major disasters, NGOs assume numerous roles in disaster response and recovery stages due to their proactive engagement and familiarity with the community. Additionally, NGOs actively contribute to recovery efforts that facilitate the integration of disadvantaged groups into social institutions such as education, family, and the economy in the aftermath of a disaster. NGOs engaged in mutual aid, education, and cultural activities enhance the disaster preparedness and resilience of disadvantaged groups by conducting activities specifically tailored to disasters.

For a better and concrete understanding of disasters, civil society and disadvantaged groups, Turkey's Covid-19 experience and the contribution of NGOs to response and recovery phases can be revisited. A pandemic disaster of unprecedented scale and global scope has brought about NGO-based work targeting disadvantaged groups in Turkey. In addition to NGOs' normal working practices and understanding of civil society, the pandemic has drawn a new roadmap for NGO activities in Turkey, and Turkish literature has documented its steps toward taking a more proactive stance and reaching out to disadvantaged groups in the face of new developments (Akıncı, 2020). In addition to the paradigm shift NGOs have undergone during the pandemic, their activities, particularly those targeting people with disabilities, and the collaboration between the civil society and the public and private sectors, have also produced concrete examples of the NGO-Disaster-Disadvantaged Groups equation for the elderly, immigrants, and people with disabilities (Ünal, Koçtürk and Bayar, 2021; Tarlan, 2020).

CONCLUSION

In this paper, several critical aspects of disaster sociology are examined. The arguments concerning the concept of "fighting against disasters before and after," as envisaged by the integrated disaster management perspective, are analyzed with reference to the relevant literature.

The primary focus of the study, the issue of disadvantaged groups and disasters, is addressed in terms of integrated disaster management, social institutions, and civil society. Consequently, the relationship between the initial section of the study and the main focus, "disadvantaged groups," is elucidated in its natural progression.

This study demonstrates that, in the context of disasters and disadvantaged groups, multi-layered and multi-dimensional sociological outcomes are achieved. The first of these pertains to the "inclusion of individuals/groups from all segments of society," which is prioritized by the sociology of disadvantaged groups. Disadvantaged groups, who become increasingly vulnerable in the face of disasters, encounter significant challenges in overcoming the effects of disasters and readapting to social life if they do not receive adequate support.

Secondly, the study reveals the critical importance of social institutions such as "family" and "education" for fostering disaster awareness and resilience in society during both pre- and post-disaster periods. Subsequent analyses of the connections between disadvantaged groups and these social institutions indicate that sustained engagement with these structures in disaster response efforts provides disadvantaged groups with a more robust protective shield against disasters. In this cumulative study, numerous starting points are identified concerning sociological theory, particularly in the context of the disaster-disadvantaged groups-civil society triad. It is revealed that sociological concepts such as social capital, solidarity, culture, collective consciousness, social structure, and social function serve as fundamental outputs regarding the bond between civil society and disadvantaged groups. It can be asserted that, in the 16 years since Enrico Quarantelli (1999, p. 18), regarded as one of the "architects" of disaster sociology, posited that the success of disaster management is contingent upon a participatory approach involving all societal segments, numerous disasters and disaster response processes have occurred to support this view.

In the light of the conclusive comments and findings above, this study proposes some of the implementations regarding the issue of disasters and disadvantaged groups:

1) Countries should identify which disadvantaged groups are more vulnerable in which disasters, and thus implement measures to reduce risks and minimize crises for these groups both before and after the disaster.

2) Countries should clearly state preventive or compensatory policies and practices for disadvantaged groups in their disaster management plans, and even prioritize disadvantaged groups in

these policies and practices.

3) During the post-disaster response and recovery phases, the challenges faced by disadvantaged groups in social life should be taken into account, and the spaces where these individuals temporarily live should be tailored to their needs.

4) Both public institutions and NGOs should take comprehensive measures and develop practices for the psychosocial well-being and social inclusion of older people, especially those without shelter, in the post-disaster period.

5) To prevent people with disabilities from experiencing multiple disadvantages after a potential disaster, individuals in this group should receive comprehensive training in disaster management.

6) Individuals from disadvantaged groups should be employed in the units responsible for disaster management in countries, thus strengthening the empathetic approach towards disadvantaged groups in pre- and post-disaster risk and crisis management.

7) NGOs should prioritize providing temporary assistance to vulnerable groups after a disaster, and also conduct specific activities (training, seminars, awareness events, use of social and traditional media, etc.) to raise disaster awareness among these groups and foster disaster resilience in the pre-disaster period.

Although the study appears to be grounded in the sociology of disadvantaged groups, it aims to contribute to the literature on disaster sociology and posits that evaluating disadvantaged groups within the scope of disaster sociology will enhance both sociology and the theory of disadvantaged groups (and their applications). Disadvantaged groups, an inevitable reality of the modern world and increasingly prominent on the agendas of nation-states, transnational organizations, and NGOs, require examination from a broader perspective within disaster sociology.

Ethical Statement

This study is an original work.

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Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Sustainable Development Goals: 10 Reduced Inequalities

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