

## **A SOCIOLOGICAL EVALUATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NATURAL DISASTERS AND TRUST IN THE ARMY IN TURKEY**

When natural disasters occur in Turkey, the Turkish Armed Forces deploys humanitarian aid brigades to the disaster area as in other states. The subject of this study is the relationship between natural disasters in Turkey and citizens' trust in military institutions. After natural disasters, due to the occurrence of criminal incidents such as looting, extortion, harassment, theft, intergroup conflicts, etc. new security strategies are needed. In this framework, NATO has assigned new tasks such as humanitarian aid and disaster relief to military institutions within the scope of crisis response operations. Thus, armies assume important roles in crisis prevention, crisis intervention and restoration of order.

The two biggest natural disasters in the history of the Republic of Turkey were the 1999 Marmara and 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes. During these situations, Turkish people demanded that the military institutions prevent individual and intergroup violence, ensure strong coordination, communication and resource management, and provide humanitarian aid to normalize social flow. It can be said that there is a relationship between the realization of these demands and the public's trust in the Turkish Armed Forces. In this context, the Turkish Armed Forces have been trying to maintain public trust through regional coordination in earthquake zones, preventing looting, delivering aid parcels to villages, and providing humanitarian support through disaster relief. In natural disaster areas, people experience existential anxieties, socialization processes are interrupted, mass routines are disrupted, ontological security and social life are damaged. **Abstract systems** and expert knowledge are needed to ensure ontological security and the authority of modern institutions. Thus, the Turkish Armed Forces aimed to be one of the institutions that will take part in emergency management by having a flexible and multifunctional social organization in regions with ontological security problems.

The aim of this study is to examine the relationship between natural disasters and trust in military institutions in Turkey through the 1999 Marmara and 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquakes. An integrated/critical review was determined as the method of the study. In this context, in addition to the studies in the literature, statistical data and documents in the media were analyzed.

As a result of this study, two important findings were obtained. The first of these is that natural disasters shape expectations from military institutions in Turkey and are an important factor for

shaping trust in the military. The second finding is that today's armies have both military and law enforcement qualities in order to be more sensitive to regional and social security, and the Turkish Armed Forces' being in an effort to focus on this transformation in Turkey. For this reason, military institutions should also demonstrate their professionalism in natural disaster situations.