

THE REGENERATION OF POVERTY AND EXCLUSION
AFTER THE VAN EARTHQUAKE

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THE REGENERATION OF POVERTY AND EXCLUSION
AFTER THE VAN EARTHQUAKE

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Seza Eraydın, certify that

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Date July, 2016

ABSTRACT

Regeneration of Poverty and Exclusion After the Van Earthquake

This thesis examines the failure of disaster management after the earthquake in Van, one of the poorest cities in the Kurdish region in Turkey. It evaluates the underlying reasons of failure and how such failure affected people's lives. Respectively, the thesis investigates how disaster management process is politicized. The study also analyzes the outcomes of the disaster by looking at social, political and economic aspects.

Based on the analysis of field study, various reports and documents, the thesis demonstrates the management process was double-headed since the government favored their supporters as well as blocked the activities of the municipality which is controlled by the opposed party. Civil society was in an ambiguous position since it could not develop coordination with the government because of the political contestation, yet their actions were politicized by the opposing political party. As a result, the disaster management process is systematically politicized.

Correspondingly, the pre-existing inequalities, poverty and exclusion of the disaster victims were reproduced. The mobilization of victims demonstrated the failure of the disaster management dramatically which might have produced a critical juncture.

The results of the 2014 local elections indicated that the government could not consolidate its local power in Van.

ÖZET

Van Depremi Sonrası Yoksulluk ve Dışlayıcılığının Yeniden Üretimi

Bu tez Türkiye'nin en yoksul şehirlerinden biri olan Van'da yaşanan deprem sonrası afet yönetiminin başarısızlığını inceliyor. Yönetimin başarısızlığının temelindeki nedenleri irdelemeyi amaçlarken, bu başarısızlığın oradaki insanları hayatını nasıl etkilediğini de anlamayı hedefliyor. Bu sebepten, bu araştırma afet yönetimi sürecinin nasıl politize olduğunu ve kayırmacılık ilişkilerinin ve patronajın bu süreci nasıl etkilendiği irdeliyor. Ayrıca bu tez sosyal, siyasi ve ekonomik faktörlere bakarak depremin sonuçlarını analiz ediyor.

Saha araştırmasında yapılan röportajlar ve çeşitli rapor ve belgelerin analizinden yola çıkarak, bu tez, afet yönetimi sürecinin hükümetin kendi destekçilerine iltimas edip karşıt partinin elindeki belediyenin aktiviteleri engellemesi sebebiyle iki başlı olduğunu gösteriyor. Sivil toplum ise hükümetle olan siyasi çekişmeden ötürü onlarla koordinasyon kuramazken, karşıt siyasi partinin de eylemlerini politize etme isteği yüzünden muğlak bir durumda kalıyor. Bunun sonucunda, afet yönetimi süreci sistematik bir biçimde politize olurken hükümetin rant arayışı ve yolsuzluk ekleniyor. Bu süreç afetzedelerin önceden var olan eşitsizlik, yoksulluk ve dışlanmalarının yeniden üretilmesine sebep oluyor. Afetzedelerin açlık grevi bu yönetim sürecinin başarısızlığını gözler önüne sererken, bir kritik dönemeç oluşmasını sağlıyor. 2014 yerel seçimleri sonucu da bu kritik dönemecin sonunda hükümetin Van'da yerel gücünü sağlamlaştıramadığına bir örnek teşkil etmiş oluyor.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AFAD	<i>Afet ve Acil Durumlar Müdürlüğü</i> Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Authority
AKP	<i>Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi</i> Justice and Development Party
BDP	<i>Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi</i> Peace and Democracy Party
EMEP	<i>Emek Partisi</i> Labour Party
GÇD	<i>Gündem Çocuk Derneği</i> Gündem Child Association
GÖÇ-DER	<i>Göç Edenler Sosyal Yardımlaşma ve Kültür Derneği</i> Migrants' Association for Social Cooperation and Culture
HÜNEE	<i>Hacettepe Üniversitesi Nüfus Etüdüleri Enstitüsü</i> Hacettepe University Institute of Population Studies
İHD	<i>İnsan Hakları Derneği</i> Human Rights Association
İHH	<i>İnsanı Yardım Vakfı</i> Humanitarian Relief Foundation
KADAV	<i>Kadınlarla Dayanışma Vakfı</i> Women's Solidarity Association
KCK	<i>Koma Cevakên Kurdistan</i> Union of Communities in Kurdistan
KDRP	<i>Köye Dönüş ve Rehabilitasyon Projesi</i> , Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project
MAZLUM-DER	<i>İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği</i> Association of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed People
TBB	<i>Türk Tabipler Birliği</i> Turkish Medical Association
TESEV	<i>Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı</i> Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation
THİV	<i>Türkiye İnsan Hakları Vakfı</i> Human Rights Foundation of Turkey
TUIK	<i>Türkiye İstatistik Kurumu</i> Turkish Statistical Institute
TMMOB	<i>Türkiye Mühendis ve Mimarlar Odası Birliği</i> Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects
SES	<i>Sağlık ve Sosyal Hizmet Emekçileri Sendikası</i> Health and Social Service Workers' Union

VKK	<i>Van Koordinasyon Kurulu</i> Van Coordination Committee
Van-Der	<i>Van Yoksullukla Mücadele ve Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma Derneği</i> Van Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development Association
VAKAD	<i>Van Kadın Derneği</i> Van Women's Association

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“State policies harmed people more than the earthquake.”¹

On 23 October and 9 November 2011 two major earthquakes have occurred in Van and caused an enormous damage –644 deaths, 1,966 injured, and about 70,000 damaged buildings according to official figures– in the region (GÇD, 2014; AFAD, 2014), and the total cost of disaster management is 5,250,000,000,000 TLs.² Van earthquake is among tenth greatest earthquakes that have occurred in the last one hundred and ten years in Turkey (TBB & SES, 2011). Regarding the deaths that it has caused, it is the fourth earthquake and regarding the population that has been affected by it, it is the third greatest earthquake of the last twenty years in Turkey. In addition to all these, Van is one of the poorest cities in Turkey and it is the third city in terms of unemployment rate in Turkey after Adana and Hakkari (TBB & SES, 2011).

The mainstream media has depicted the disaster management as a success story of the government. Ömer Taşlı, The Chairman of *Kızılay* (The Red Crescent in Turkey) claimed that *Kızılay* organized so successfully right after the earthquake that it could be exemplary for the disaster management in the world.³ Further, it is reported that all state institutions mobilized very quickly, and the Prime Ministry appropriated 3 million TLs fund for Van Governorship at first step just two days

¹ A disaster victim, interview by GÇD, 2013.

² Cafer Giyik, Van AFAD Director, interview by author, Van, Turkey, 24 April, 2014.

³ Retrieved 14 May, 2015, from <http://www.yenisafak.com.tr/gundem/van-depreminde-tarih-yazdik-542428>.

after the disaster.⁴ Three days after the earthquake, Taşlı stated that all of the victims will be in container buildings in a month; therefore no one will be living in tents within a month and a half, at the latest.⁵

However, the management in Van was in crisis from several aspects according to several reports and media coverage. Firstly, the distribution of aid was much disorganized; many victims could not receive tents in harsh winter conditions.⁶ Van MP for BDP tabled a parliamentary question on 30th January, 2012, arguing that three months after disaster there are many earthquake victims who still have to live in tents.⁷

Moreover, the government did not include local NGOs and municipalities to the disaster management coordination.⁸ The report of TMMOB emphasizes the lack of coordination with NGOs, trade associations, universities, and local authorities in the disaster management coordination in Van. The report asserts that the main reason of the organizational failure between central government and local authorities is the law which went in effect in 2009. According to the Law No. 5902 on the Establishment and Duties of the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency,⁹ a new institution called AFAD is established and former institutions which are Ministry of Inferior General Directorate of Civil Defense, Ministry of Public Works and Settlement General Directorate of Natural Disasters and Prime Minister General Directorate of Emergency Management were closed. This new form of emergency

⁴ Retrieved 14 May, 2015, from <http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/van'da-deprem/17702--turkiye-seferber-oldu>.

⁵ Retrieved 15 May, 2015, from <http://www.aa.com.tr/tr/van'da-deprem/17416--1-5-aya-cadir-da-kimse-kalmayacak>.

⁶ Mimarlar Odası Raporu [The Report of Chamber of Architects]. Retrieved 24 February, 2013, from <http://www.mimarist.org/raporlar/2298-mimarlar-odasi-van-deprem-bolge-degerlendirme-raporu.html>.

⁷ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question, 30 January, 2012.

⁸ Retrieved 14 February, 2014, from <http://www.bianet.org/biamag/yasam/143011-depremin-izinde-kameranin-gordukleri>

⁹ 5902 sayılı Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi Başkanlığının Teşkilat ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun

management abrogates the provincial and local organizations. Therefore, the report claims that this legislative regulation was one of the reasons of the failure in Van Earthquake management (TMMOB, 2012).

According to these reports and media coverage, the immediate management process has failed in terms of the issues such as shelter, health, medical aid, rehabilitation and pedagogical support for children. TMMOB report indicates that the tents were set up in muddy areas since the disaster preparedness of the government is not successful to estimate the areas that are set up for tents in winter conditions (TMMOB, 2012). Moreover, the report of KADAV indicates that there were serious problems regarding substructure and transportation issues in *konteynerkents* and *çadırkents*¹⁰ which could not provide water, sewage and a clean area in general (KADAV, 2012).

The reports essentially conclude that the damage of the earthquake has serious impacts to the city. Infrastructure of the city was badly damaged including hospitals, health care units, and schools. Moreover, there should have been several social policies which consider the socio-cultural and economic circumstances of Van and the disaster management process should have been much more organized (GÇD, 2013). The reports draw attention to the fact that the state has failed to organize in the period of initial emergency response but the problems has continued also in the ensuing months.

One year after the disaster, there are still serious problems regarding housing, employment, urban planning, education, health and psychological, and gender related

¹⁰ Çadırkents/Konteynerkents are small districts consist of container buildings/tents that are organized like a city to provide shelter, food, health and other social services such as psychological and pedagogical support.

problems (GÇD, 2013). The buildings which were damaged after the second earthquake were not reported. Tents and container buildings were not distributed to all victims until the end of winter.¹¹ Especially the problems of housing were so severe that the hunger strikes of the people who still had to live in container buildings two years after the disaster provides the explicit example of this problem in the region. Moreover, there are number of disaster victims who have to live in houses that are determined as heavy damaged in the countryside of Van.¹² Additionally, financial difficulties are very significant in Van in the aftermath of the disaster. The head of Craftsman's Association in Van claims that tradesmen in Van face serious financial problems which affect the economy of the city significantly.¹³

All these findings indicate the fact that the disaster management generally failed in the case of Van. This thesis asserts that the main reason of the failure is the clash of interests between the municipality and the government, which ended up lack of cooperation, patronage, and clientelistic relations. A strong central government which balances its power coordinating with local authorities and civil society is very crucial for a successful disaster management. Yet, the central government dominated the process of management by centralizing all the power in AFAD, and excluded the rest in Van. Correspondingly, the government practiced corrupt and rent-seeking activities favoring their own supporters to consolidate their power and caused a double-headed management between the government and the municipality, which hindered the economic development and the recovery of the city.

¹¹ Retrieved 10 May, 2015, from <http://www.bianet.org/biamag/yasam/143011-depremin-izinde-kameranin-gordukleri>.

¹² Retrieved 10 May, 2015, from <http://www.evrensel.net/haber/67305/devlet-dusmanlik-yaratmasin-cozum-uretsin#.UqS0IPTxpxd>.

¹³ Retrieved 24 April, 2014, from <http://www.sondakika.com/haber/haber-van-esnaf-odalari-en-buyuk-sorun-kredi-sorunu-3272952/>.

In addition to this fact, what makes this single case interesting is the political and historical background of Van. The political tension between central and local government combines with the Kurdish issue makes the effects of disaster much more intensive. This thesis emphasizes the fact that the victims of Van were suffered from preexisting inequalities and exclusion that stem from armed conflict and forced migration before the earthquake. And the politicization process became more exclusionary because of the ethnic tension in the region. As a consequence, despite the huge amounts of resources for disaster management, people's condition deteriorated dramatically after the earthquake. I assert that looking at the case of Van Earthquake specifically is significant, since the effects of the Kurdish issue and the tension between the AKP government and BDP municipality make the this single case unique to understand the ways in which poverty and exclusion are regenerated as a result of a disaster management.

I think that it is important to examine this politicization process because of ethical reasons as well. Ideally, disaster management should provide the essential social services, such as housing, food, medical aid, psychological and pedagogical support for people with a pluralist understanding of service provision, and increasing entitlements rather than just capabilities, as Amartya Sen (1983). argues But some disaster managements may end up producing pre-existing inequalities, poverty and marginalization of people through deliberate exclusion in the times of crisis. The positions of these people became worse after these events and the politicization process of disaster management is practiced through the misery of these people. Therefore, it is substantial to analyze the outcomes of the disasters by looking at the disaster management process in detail.

Another significant contribution of this thesis to the subject is that it aims to take a look at post-disaster dynamics by examining politicization processes of disaster management and its outcomes, which has not yet been systematically studied. In the case of Van, the disaster has affected the city dramatically. The politicization which is manifested itself as political and ethnic tension between central and local government, patronage and clientelistic relations, and paternalistic discourse of the state in civil society relations (Kale-Lostuvalı, 2007) was the determinant factor of the failure. Consequently, the disaster marked a critical juncture in the sense that it hinders the ability of government to consolidate its local power in Van. The thesis briefly analyses the political processes and changes that occur during the disaster management in order to establish whether an existing power balance was tipped, and asks which factors can explain a potential politicization of disaster management. By doing so, it will provide new questions that under which conditions disasters lead to the strengthening of pre-disaster trajectories in which the former political balance remains or, on the contrary, exacerbate pre-existing political, cultural and economic tensions and cleavages leading to new dynamics, which will be discussed further in the future.

1.1 Methodology

1.1.1 Research design

The main purpose of this thesis is to explore the reasons of the failure and their impacts on the people who are already excluded in social, economic and political terms. At the outset I first conjecture that the failure might be linked to the capacity problem considering neoliberal state practices such as tax cuts, downsizing, neglect of civil infrastructure, privatization, degrading of public sector, and budgeted

cuts of agency. Moreover, the organizational crisis between the government, local authorities and civil society could be very significant for the failure of the disaster management in Van. In addition to these factors, Van's distinctive characteristics in terms of ethnic tension, political atmosphere and poverty might cause to the discriminatory practices of the state which regenerate poverty and exclusion in the region. The thesis intends to understand the ways in which these factors affect the disaster management in Van which failed in certain aspects. In addition to this, the analysis aims to discover the consequences of the failure for the people's lives in Van.

My preliminary hypothesis asserts that in Van there is a combination of limited state capacity for the disaster management, and the failure of allocation of these limited resources. Respectively, I aim to investigate the process of disaster management by looking at the actions of state, local government and civil society who are involved in. Nevertheless, based on the findings from the field work and data analysis, I deduce that the political process was the dominant factor which caused to discrimination and exclusion in the region. The management process was essentially carried out according to the political motives of the central and local government.

What make the case of the Van Earthquake unique are the impacts of the Kurdish issue on the disaster management process. And examining the Van Earthquake as a single case study, not as a comparative one, emphasizes the uniqueness of the region which is politically, economically and culturally marginalized before the earthquake. The tension between the BDP municipality and the AKP government and the peculiar situation of Van in the Kurdish region exacerbate the effects of the earthquake. Therefore, this thesis aims to conduct an in-

depth analysis of this crucial case to understand how the centralized disaster management of the government which neglects the local authorities ends up with a failure, and what are the impacts of this failure on a region which is already excluded and marginalized because of political dynamics.

1.1.2 Data collection

This thesis is built upon literature review and interviews conducted in Van with eleven people. A literature review was carried out on vulnerability approach in disasters, and politics of disaster. In this stage, national reports on disaster management in Van conducted by GÇD, TBB and SES, VKK, AFAD and the reports of TUIK are reviewed in addition to the books, articles and reports of the research done on disasters. Following the literature review, the field research was designed and it was carried out in Van, Turkey.

Ten elite interviews which were conducted in Van in April, 2014 became the most significant part of the method. The interviewees were a number of NGO members, political party representatives, municipal officials and AFAD officials. The interview questions were semi-structured, meaning that the interview plan was designed and used during the interviews. Thus, I could ask for more elaboration on certain issues from different interviewees. The interviews lasted minimum thirty minutes and maximum one hour on average. All the interviews were recorded on a tape-recorder and were transcribed following the interviews as soon as possible. The analysis was based on these transcriptions.

The interview questions mainly consisted of the actions of different actors in the disaster management process. I asked questions about the period right after the disaster in terms of allocation of disaster relief by different institutions, the

construction of *konteynerkents* and *çadırkents*. I provided the information about the mitigation process as well, in terms of establishing the city master plan, projects regarding housing and economic development in the city.

At the early phases of the research, I contacted with the NGOs which involved actively in the disaster management process to choose the interviewees. Nevertheless, thanks to the gate-opener, who is a local tradesman and also was a disaster victim in Van, I could reach AKP and BDP members, the officials of AFAD and Van Municipality, Van MP for BDP, the presidents of various NGOs and a container building resident who was very active during the protests and hunger strike. I could not reach to the governor or deputy governors who were in charge at the time of the earthquake, since they were assigned to other provinces in August 2013.

I conducted an interview with the head of BDP in Van who was one of the politicians that were arrested in June, 2012 in Van ‘KCK operations’,¹⁴ an investigation process for KCK members in which 4,912 people were convicted between April 2009 and July 2014.¹⁵ He provided the information about the tension between the government and the municipality and its impacts. Moreover, I carried out an interview with the deputy mayor of Van who was also arrested in the same investigation in November 2012.¹⁶ The deputy mayor points out the political factors that impact the process of disaster management in the aftermath of Van Earthquake. Additionally, he explained the actions of the municipality in the double-headed process of disaster management in Van. Furthermore, I have spoken with Van MP

¹⁴ Retrieved 10 May, 2015, from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/van-belediye-baskani-tutuklandi/siyaset/siyasetdetay/10.06.2012/1551817/default.htm>.

¹⁵ Retrieved 10 May, 2015, from <http://www.dha.com.tr/cezaevlerinde-kac-pkkli-var-719034.html>.

¹⁶ Retrieved 10 May, 2015, from <http://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/142458-kck-den-10-kisi-tutuklandi>.

for BDP who provided with detailed data of several parliamentary questions regarding the disaster declaration decision, the budget of government's disaster management in Van, the allocation of the disaster relief, the tender process of container buildings, housing projects. In addition to BDP members and the municipality officials, I interviewed with AKP's provincial head in Van and the director of Van AFAD in order to elaborate the actions of the government during the disaster management in Van. Moreover, these two interviews provided the data about the point of view of the government regarding the political tension with the municipality in the region.

In order to understand the role of civil society in Van's disaster management, I conducted four interviews with the members of various NGOs. I interviewed with the president of Van-Der, an association which had strong relations with BDP and the municipality. Van-Der provided information about the disaster management and the projects for poverty reduction which coordinated with the municipality. Moreover, I interviewed with the NGOs which included in VKK a civil organization consisting of several NGOs, chambers, trade unions, and political party representatives which work for people who live in *konteynerkents* and damaged buildings in Van, and aims to raise awareness of housing right in all across Turkey. Accordingly, I conducted an interview with the president of VAKAD as a member of the Committee and provided with further information about the gender-related issues in disaster management process. Moreover, I contacted with the president of MAZLUM-DER who was very active in the Committee and worked intensively for people who still had to live in *konteynerkents*. In addition to the interviews with the members of civil society organizations, I spoke with the provincial head of EMEP in Van, which actively worked with the municipality right after the disaster and

participated to the committee as well. Lastly, I conducted an interview with a local search and rescue team which worked actively right after the disaster.

In addition to these elite interviews, I also conducted an interview with Ali Ahi, is container building resident and very active during the hunger strikes explains that he was working in one of the *konteynerkents* as an employee of İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency). His statements provide very fruitful information about the conditions of disaster victims in container buildings, and their relationship between state officials, local authorities, and civil society organizations.

1.2 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is divided into five parts. The first part reviews the literature on vulnerability approach and the politics of disaster. Among the literature, I will scrutinize the studies which adopt the vulnerability approach claiming that the social, economic and political positions of people before the disaster are as significant as the event itself. Moreover, I review the studies which investigate the ways in which politics is involved in disaster management process. These studies are divided into three categories. First, there are analyses which examine the process of disaster management as a manifestation of calculation, struggle, concentration and contestation of power between different actors who aim to attain and/or consolidate political power after the disasters. Second, the studies about disaster management point out the relationship between state and civil society. And the last dimension is the political outcomes of disasters.

The second part of the thesis focuses on the social, economic and political background of Van to understand the roots of disaster vulnerability and the practices of the state which causes deliberate exclusion after the earthquake. In the third

section, the manifestation of politicization during disaster management process is investigated in terms of patronage and clientelistic relations, and state and civil society relations. In the fourth section, post-disaster political changes in Van are elaborated. The findings of the paper supports that the failure of the disaster management might have produced a critical juncture in Van which causes a contestation of political power of the government. The last chapter provides a brief summary of the arguments made in the thesis and projections on further developments. Reciting the questions and conclusions of this thesis it offers a set of questions and implications for further research.

CHAPTER 2
THEORETICAL CONCERNS:
APPROACHES TO UNDERSTANDING THE POLITICS
OF DISASTER MANAGEMENT

This chapter aims to provide the theoretical framework of the study. What this thesis particularly aims to deal with is that disasters are the outcomes of social structures and those that apply the policy decisions during the politicization of disaster management process and its costs. Accordingly, I will examine two different approaches, which are the vulnerability approach and politicization approach. The vulnerability approach which emphasizes the social, economic and political background of the city before the disaster is crucial for the theoretical framework of the thesis in order to understand that there was a disaster in Van before the earthquake occurred. And the politicization approach focuses on the process in which politics is involved in disaster management, and the outcomes of this process.

The literature on disaster management is notably diverse in the sense that there are quite number of studies which examine disasters as natural and individual events and focus only on policy-making levels (Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 1999). In these studies, positivistic and behavioral social sciences are dominant which give insufficient attention to social sciences and provides only technical solutions for disaster preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation. (Zaman 1999; Pelling & Dill, 2010).

The conventional and technocratic attitude in disaster analysis was criticized by the vulnerability approach in the 1980s in terms of different aspects. This critical approach asserts that disasters and their hazardous effects should not be examined as exceptional cases with no links to the everyday lives of people. This understanding also emphasizes that people are not uninvolved in occurrence of disasters. Not only nature but also socio-cultural, political, economic and historical factors such as use of resources, construction of buildings, and distribution of power and subsistence methods might be reasons for hazards. The unequal positions of people in the world affect their tendency to be exposed to the 'natural' hazards, considering the fact that those regions which are more at risk than others are the places that poor people afford to live (Wisner et al, 2004; Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 1999; Zaman, 1999).

By the politicization of the disaster management, I used the definition of Peters and Pierre (2004) which asserts the substitution of political criteria for need-based criteria in distributing the disaster relief, organizing the recovery and mitigation process, and providing main social services for the disaster victims. This thesis argues that the level of politicization- i.e. to what extent the political criteria is involved in disaster management to control the policy and implementation (Peters and Pierre, 2004, p. 2) has an impact on the outcomes of disasters.

First issue that the literature review aims to investigate is the manifestation of politicization through the calculation, struggle, concentration and contestation of power between different actors who aim to attain and/or consolidate political power, and its outcomes. The second issue that the literature aims to deal with is the relationship between state and civil society in disaster management. Civil society is a significant component of democracies which checks the state power, generates cooperation and trust in disaster relief, and thus it has an efficient role after disasters.

To understand this dynamic, the literature of state and civil society relations after disasters will be examined. The third dimension of the issue is the political outcomes of disasters. Therefore, I elaborate the literature that analyses the post-disaster political change to investigate whether there is a political concentration or contestation of power after the earthquake.

2.1 Vulnerability approach

Vulnerability analysis aims to point out the problems of this behavioral and positivistic approach that are mentioned above. To understand the idea better, the scholars conceptualize the term vulnerability as “the characteristics of a person or group and their situation that influence their capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist and recover from the impact of natural hazard” (Wisner et al., 2004, p. 11). Bolin and Stanford list the factors that affect their capacity and lead to vulnerability of people. These are social class positions, gender, race/ethnicity, age, language and literacy, the issue of migration and political ideologies and state practices (Bolin & Stanford, 1999). Moreover, there are physical, economic, social, educational, informational and environmental vulnerabilities which affect one another (Zaman, 1999, p. 195). The different levels of vulnerabilities lead to systematic processes of marginalization and exclusion which reinforce their existing struggles with the devastating effects of disaster (Bolin & Stanford, 1999).

In their study, Hoffman and Oliver-Smith examine the ways in which researchers consider disasters only as natural events and aim to provide technical solutions in order to return to pre-disaster period as soon as possible in the 1950s and 1970s (Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 1999). Since there are not enough studies that examine political-social and economic dynamics, each disaster were investigated

individually and solutions for disaster management were context specific which leads to a lack of transferable lessons (Davis & Seitz, 1982). Accordingly, Pelling and Dill claims that there was the dominance of geophysical science and of positivistic and behavioral social sciences which leads to a more apolitical analysis which considers disasters exceptional (Pelling & Dill, 2010). Olson mentions this problematic approach in studies of disaster claiming that politics is ignored in analyzing disasters which leads to the similar neglect of leading areas such as sociology and geography and normative statements of political analysis are neglected by researchers who claims politics is not related anyhow in disasters (Pelling & Dill, 2010).

Nevertheless, this conventional and technocratic attitude in disaster analysis that neutralizes disasters was criticized by various scholars. Hoffman and Oliver-Smith emphasize how humans affect environment through technological developments which might cause disasters as well. They state that people are not uninvolved in occurrence of disasters. Not only nature but also socio-cultural factors such as use of resources, construction of buildings, and distribution of power and subsistence methods might be reasons for hazards (Hoffman & Oliver-Smith, 1999). Accordingly, Cohen and Werker claim that the concept 'disaster' is not only the natural event itself that is 'shock', such as earthquake, storm and hurricane etc. but the overall impact of the shock the people (Cohen & Werker, 2008). Moreover, Wisner et al. criticize the 'naturalness' of disasters claiming that unequal positions of people in the world affect their tendency to be exposed to the 'natural' hazards as well, considering the fact that regions which are more at risk of earthquakes, floods etc. than others are the places that poor people afford to live (Wisner et al, 2004). Other than landownership, other patterns of resource control, local stratification, and

inequalities that define people's everyday lives are also the significant factors for disaster impacts (Zaman, 1999).

These arguments indicate the fact when social, political and economic process are not involved in examining disasters, there are only technical solutions for disaster preparedness, management and mitigation which are basically unsustainable (Zaman, 1999). In certain cases, these inappropriate solutions bring about more harm in the region and thus they might prevent people's own capacity to recover. Or even worse, they might end up in a position that they became more vulnerable to future disasters (Dyer, 1999). These studies highlight the relationship between social and economic factors and disasters since they claim the impacts of disasters are basically the outcomes of social and economic dynamics within the society which already exists before the disaster (Zaman, 1999).

It should also be noted that the vulnerability analysis is relevant both wealthy and poor countries. The United States provides a very relevant example the ways in which social inequalities and marginalization caused a failed disaster management, despite the high levels of aggregate wealth compared to any other third world country. The inequalities that stem from political and economic factors, i.e. race, class, gender and ethnicity, marginalize some people and make them more vulnerable to disasters effects and environmental risks in both wealth and poor countries (Bolin & Stanford, 1999). In the case of earthquakes in Piru and Fillmore which are two Southern agricultural communities of the US, disaster relief was racial, ethnic and class based. The Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) programs were not designed to cover all the losses in the region and they do not purpose to enhance the position of people beyond what it was before the disaster (Bolin & Stanford, 1999). Moreover, the accessibility to these relief programs is problematic

considering the situation of the people in the region in terms of their legal status, physical location, cultural and language skills, social class, ethnicity and gender (Bolin and Stanford, 1999).

The case Hurricane Katrina provides another example of segregated nature of disaster management. In the case of Katrina, the richest and most powerful nation of the world has performed the worst emergency management process. There was a lack of organization during recovery process, the government response was slow and racial-based in terms of the rhetoric of government officials, the unequal treatment to the rich and the poor and, to the black and the white people in providing clean-up contamination, health care, housing, transportation loaning, insurance and the like (Bullard and Wright, 2009). People who suffer the most after Katrina were the ones who are living in a vicious circle of poverty; they live in poor neighborhoods, receive poor education, and have poorly paying jobs and the like, basically they are in 'concentrated poverty'. They could not leave the region although the risk of the hurricane was announced, because they do not have enough sources to escape (Zaman, 1999; Dyson, 2007). This failure demonstrates that poverty and race are more significant variables of disaster management process after Katrina.

Bullard and Wright (2009) assert that unequal treatment and unequal protection based on the class, socioeconomic status, race and physical location make some people more vulnerable to the effects of disasters. They claim that Hurricane Katrina made clear links between race, place and vulnerability. The acts of government and business on the excluded and vulnerable people in the society- the poor and black people in New Orleans- bring about social injustice (Bullard & Wright, 2009). Hence, the studies that emphasize vulnerability clearly indicate the

ways in which poverty, race, class and ethnicity could be strong variables that affect the disaster management process in the US.

In addition to the factors of race, poverty and ethnicity that hinder the ability to access to the resources of people and consequently increase their vulnerability, gender-related vulnerabilities are another significant determinant (Hoffman, 1999; Enarson, 1998). Hoffman argues that women suffer more than men after disasters from different aspects, since gender and poverty creates a combination for further vulnerability of women. She states that the effects of Oakland firestorm overlapped with traditional cultural roles which lead to regenerate their vulnerability dramatically. She explains that after the firestorm, the responsibility of women in terms of care giving for suffering children is increased (Hoffman, 1999). Women that are not 'protected' by the institution of marriage suffer more after disasters. Men were dealing with financial issues after the disaster while women excluded from this process. Consequently, men were able to return public world whereas women had to compromise from their jobs and stay in houses and therefore their access to financial means is constraint. These dynamics cause the fact that women are less empowered economically and politically and thus they are more isolated. In order to provide more democratic and participatory disaster management, gendered perspective of preparedness and recovery should be included in the process (Emerson, 1998). Hoffman (1999) states that gender-exclusive disaster management leads to the resistance of women who build formal and informal networks which reinforce community against individualization.

The arguments mentioned above indicate properly that poverty, class, ethnicity, race, gender and geography are significant variables that affect state policies and actions in disaster management process. Tilly (2007) explains the

relationship between poverty, inequality and exclusion that the factors of race, ethnicity and the like lead to inequality, and inequality generates poverty accordingly. Additionally, governments hold power to control and organize the distribution of concentrated means of coercion which could bring about the consolidation of the durable inequalities (Tilly, 1999).

From this point of view, this thesis intend to study the ways in which the earthquake reproduces durable inequalities and leads to the impoverishment of Van which was already a poor and excluded city in terms of social protection and investments of state. Accordingly the thesis will examine the root causes of disaster vulnerability; and the discriminatory practices and the deliberate exclusion of the state that exacerbate the outcomes of the disaster.

2.2 The manifestation of politicization in disasters

As it is explained above, this thesis aims to investigate the ways in which the politicization of the disaster management is articulated. The main purpose is to understand what kind of relations is established between the actors of disaster management, and how these relations become politicized. Accordingly, this part of the chapter elaborates the literature on politics of disaster management in three categories. First, there are analyses which examine the process of disaster management as a manifestation of calculation, struggle, concentration and contestation of power between different actors who aim to attain and/or consolidate political power after the disasters. These studies provide the framework to understand through which processes the state resources are allocated to the victims of the earthquake. Second, the studies about disaster management point out the relationship between state and civil society. And the last category focuses on the

post-disaster political outcomes to emphasize that disasters open a political space for contestation or concentration of political power and redistribution of rights between state and citizens (Pelling & Dill, 2010).

2.2.1 The politics of disasters, patronage and clientelism

One of the most significant arguments of scholars is that disaster managements are mostly politically motivated in the sense that disasters might be used by governments to consolidate power through the political effect. Rich governments and governments which pay attention to the social welfare of citizens spend more on disaster prevention and mitigation. Moreover, disasters might be used by governments to redistribute power through the political effect, protecting the regions that politically more supportive to the government (Cohen & Werker, 2008, p. 797).

Political institutions have an impact on political unrest and leader survival in disaster management process. Flores and Smith compare the actions of leaders in large coalition of systems like democracies and small coalition of supporters. They essentially claim that the basic aim of political leaders is to their own survival in office. Therefore, leaders in large coalitions implement efficient policies for preparedness to disasters and provide a better recovery program in order to protect the welfare of people and not to lose political support (Flores & Smith, 2010, p. 8, 13, 18). Consequently, less people die from disasters in democracies. Whereas, in small coalition systems leaders provide only efficient means to the essential few in the coalition to consolidate their political support.

Another example of the ways in which politics is involved in disaster management is that the disaster expenditure and the declaration of disaster are not

only related to the size of the disaster and actual need, but political factors have significant impact (Garrett & Sobel, 2003, p. 498). In the analysis of FEMA expenditure after disasters in the US, Garrett and Sobel demonstrate that states which have congressional representation in FEMA receive more recovery aid after disasters. Their analysis indicates that half of the disaster aid is motivated politically rather than need in the US (Garrett & Sobel, 2003). The political motivations play a significant role in the decision making of disaster declaration. As in the example of the US, it might be used as a tool by the President to attain and consolidate political (Garrett & Sobel, 2003, p. 501,505).

Furthermore, patronage and clientelistic relations have a considerable impact in disaster management. The unequal distribution of aid for political gain, providing more efficient management to the supporters of the government, allocation of government budget according to party relations and using declaration of disasters for electoral success, reward or punishment are highly related to patronage and clientelistic relations.

Clientelism and patronage are two concepts which refer to very similar practices. They essentially illustrate the exchange relations of people in power and their supporters in return of particular advantages (Sayarı, 2014, p. 656, 657; Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002, p.2). Clientelism is “the distribution of selective benefits to individuals or clearly defined groups in exchange of political support” and the practices of which “professional politicians and political brokers secure a wide range of public goods for citizens”, according to Hopkin (as cited in Sayarı, 2014, p. 657). Whereas, patronages indicates “the distribution of individual or collective favors and ‘preferential treatment’ by a political party that controls governmental power and uses the resources of the state to gain votes and political support” (Sayarı,

2014, p. 657). In other words, parties use their own resources or the resources of public institutions and provide material rewards or status and title to people who are significant for their party, so that they consolidate political power (Kopecky & Mair, 2006, p. 3).

Political clientelism and patronage are very significant factors that impact the politics in Turkey (Sayarı, 2014), and the disaster management process in the case of Van Earthquake is not exceptional. The government involved in various practices that favor their supporters to consolidate political power in the region after the earthquake. Therefore, the story of clientelism and patronage in Turkey should be examined briefly in order to understand its impact to disaster management in Van.

Clientelistic relations have its roots in the social structure of Ottoman Empire. And starting from 1950s, the traditional clientelistic relationship between notables and the peasant transformed into party-directed patronage. One important development of clientelistic relations in Turkey is related to the decentralization in administrative structures 1980s onwards, since the increase of municipalities' resources causes that the local governments have a more significant role in clientelist and patronage relations (Sayarı, 2014). When the scope of clientelism and patronage is examined today in Turkey, it is observed that the AKP government applies new practices to enlarge clientelistic relations between urban poor for electoral support. Moreover, it generates a new form of clientelism and patronage with several large construction companies to gain large donations for electoral campaigns in favor of providing profitable contracts for major public works projects (Sayarı, 2014).

Nevertheless, the major corruption scandal in Turkey in 2013 illustrates the fact that patronage and clientelistic relations could end with illegitimate acts of

political corruption (Sayarı, 2014), which are essentially rent-seeking activities, public corruption, interrupted and weak implementation, ethnic politics and regeneration of poverty and social exclusion (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002, p. 9, 12). The government might consider political motivations more in the process of making economic decisions through rent-seeking activities. Moreover, it might misuse their power for private gain which causes public corruption or it might fail to implement policies that aim to distribute the resources according to principles of equity, need and entitlement. Furthermore it might distribute favor to certain ethnic groups while excluding the others in the society. And lastly, the clientelistic relations could cause the increase of poverty and social exclusion of the poor who has no capacity to provide political gain for the government (Brinkerhoff & Goldsmith, 2002 p. 13-20).

2.2.2 State and civil society relations

In addition to the patronage and clientelistic relations and political calculation of the party in power, the lack of coordination between state and civil society is another significant factor that leads to the failure of the disaster management in Van. The studies that examine the significance of civil society in disasters essentially highlight the feature of civil society which checks the state power after disasters (Jalali, 2002; Özerdem and Jacoby; 2006). Moreover, scholars emphasize the fact that there are complex interactions between state and civil society, especially in Turkey considering the state characteristics and its relations with civil society (Kale-Lostuvalı, 2007).

There are number of studies emphasize the fact that the process of disaster management is highly affected by the contribution of the civil society which works

as a mechanism that controls the state power (Jalali, 2002). Civil society also generates cooperation and trust in disaster relief, and thus it has an efficient role. In the case of the Marmara Earthquake, the state has failed in rescue relief processes and reconstruction operations and NGOs were working more effective than state institutions (Akşit, Serdar & Tabakoğlu, 2004; Özerdem & Barakat, 2000). The main problem of the disaster management after the Marmara Earthquake is that the policies of the state were top-down without coordinating with people who face the consequences of these policies (Özerdem & Jacoby, 2006). Nevertheless, in the lack of state regulation, civil society associations would not develop. In other words, state and civil society would cooperate so that civil society organizations work efficiently (Jalali, 2002).

The analysis of the state discourse is also very significant to understand state and civil society relations in Turkey. In order to understand the state provision mechanisms, the regular discussions and the culture in a particular society is significant (Kale-Lostuvalı, 2007; Kubicek, 2002; Akşit & Tabakoğlu, 2004). Kale-Lostuvalı examines the paternalistic state discourse arguing that it challenges the concept of modern citizenship. In Turkey, state provisions are not an outcome of a liberal social contract but of a traditional paternalistic state discourse. According to this discourse, state is responsible to its citizens not because of its obligation but because of being the “father” of its “children” (Kale-Lostuvalı, 2007, p. 760). The discourse affects the relationship between state and NGOs in the sense that state is repressive to NGOs because it challenges the paternalistic image of state.

Lastly, Kubicek (2002) summarizes the position of civil society claiming that it plays a ‘Gramscian role’ which represents political contestation within the state or among political parties. State could cooperate with such groups that do not challenge

its power, whereas it could repress the opposing groups. The relationship between state and civil society is complex in the sense that there are personalized, one-to-one relations between state and civil society organizations. State provides benefits to well-connected organizations while excludes the rest (Paker, 2005, p. 277-292).

2.2.3 Political outcomes of disasters

The last dimension of the politics of disaster is the analysis of post-disaster political change. Disasters might lead to revolutionary movements and leaders use policies to survive these threats. In small coalition systems, such as non-democratic regimes, disasters might provide a means for protest to show the discontent, whereas in large coalition systems the relationship is not that strong, since the leaders could not easily exclude people from their coalition and provide necessary means to minimize the impacts of disasters (Flores & Smith, 2010). Similarly, Drury and Olson (1998) examine the relationship between political unrest and disasters arguing that disasters with great losses, economic inequalities and the level of repressiveness cause people to protest.

The article of Pelling and Dill provides a solid empirical analysis on post-disaster political change. Disasters might produce an 'accelerated status-quo', in which pre-disaster course of events continue or accelerate in a path-dependent manner which causes the further control of powerful elites. In the cases of Hurricane Katrina and Indian Ocean tsunami, privatization of disaster recovery leads to increase the shift in resources from local to global actors. However, in some cases, disasters create a 'critical juncture' which leads to change in regimes (Pelling & Dill, 2010). In accordance to these two arguments, they ask whether there is a redistribution of power in governance that could be centralization or decentralization.

They establish a framework to examine the tipping points towards a concentration or a contestation of power which are the processes of political changes after a disaster.

Their analysis demonstrates that disasters open a political space in which the claims of rights and legitimacy of institutions in the social contract which includes state, citizens and non-state actors are tested and renegotiated. After a disaster, unequal distribution of losses between citizens, and citizens and state are started to be questioned. Thereafter, a mobilization process between state and non-state actors occur. They examine the case of Marmara Earthquake, in which several civil society organizations are mobilized after a high level of public attention to the failure of state's management. These developments provide a potential tipping point to create a critical juncture in the social contract. In this phase the critical discourse is directed and contested which might lead to technical, policy or political changes. Lastly, the institutionalization of policy and legislation through a renegotiation of social contract is captured, which eventually leads to contestation or concentration of political power and the distribution of rights between state and citizens (Pelling & Dill, 2010, p. 30-34).

2.3 Conclusion

This thesis aims to emphasize that disasters are the outcomes of social structures, and those that apply the policy decisions during the politicization of disaster management process and its costs. Therefore, it essentially focuses on vulnerability analysis which emphasizes pre-existing socio-economic and political factors, such as class, race/ethnicity, gender, political ideologies, language and literacy and the issue of migration, make people more vulnerable to the effects of disaster. All these factors are quite adequate for examining the case of Van when the

political and social and economic factors including poverty, migration, political and ethnic tensions are considered. Therefore, the vulnerability approach provides a solid theoretical framework for the research.

In order to understand the manifestation of how disaster management is politicized, this thesis elaborates the ways in which political motivations impact the allocation and decision making process of disaster management. Further, it elaborates complex relationship between state and civil society. And lastly it scrutinizes the post-disaster political outcomes to understand whether disasters challenge the political power and lead to a political change, or they produce accelerated status-quo by consolidating political power. These three dynamics provides a theoretical framework to articulate the politicization of disasters.

CHAPTER 3

THE ROOTS OF DISASTER VULNERABILITY IN VAN AND THE DELIBERATE EXCLUSION OF THE STATE

3.1 Introduction

As it is mentioned in the previous chapter which scrutinizes the theoretical concerns regarding disaster management, the economic, social and political background of people has a considerable impact on the devastating effects of the disasters. The vulnerability approach aims to illustrate the relationship between poverty, race, ethnicity, gender and the outcomes of the disaster. Considering the fact that Van is one of the most underdeveloped cities of Turkey in terms of various economic and social indicators (TBB & SES, 2011), the thesis asserts that the disaster victims in Van affected severely from the earthquake, since they were vulnerable before the event itself. Consequently, the earthquake became the second disaster for the people who already live under poverty and exclusion.

This chapter intends to provide the root causes of disaster vulnerability which is the economic and political marginality of much of the population (Wisner, 2001) by looking at social, economic and political factors to grasp the situation in Van before the disaster. I will examine the factors that affect the capacity of people to manage the impacts of the earthquake. These factors are essentially social status, class, ethnicity, language and literacy, gender, the issue of migration, political ideologies and state practices, as Bolin and Stanford clarify (1999). Accordingly, I will discuss economic and social indicators such as gross value added per capita, employment and unemployment rates, labor force participation rate, migration rate,

education, average household size and infant mortality rate from the reports of TUIK. Moreover, the political background of Van will be scrutinized in order to emphasize the fact that Kurdish issue is almost the solely outcome of the current social and economic problems in the region. Thus, I will elaborate the ways in which economic, social and political factors which are interrelated causes for the vulnerability of people in Van.

After discussing the main factors that causes vulnerability, in the next section I will investigate the ways in which these vulnerabilities manifested them in the aftermath of the disaster. I will interpret the data from the interviews and from the GÇD and SES&TBB which analyze the conditions of people before the earthquake and their impacts to the disaster management in the region. Moreover, as Dyson scrutinized the example of Katrina, the discriminatory practices of the state would exacerbate the devastating impacts of people's vulnerabilities. Therefore, I will analyze the practices of the government which could be interpreted as deliberate exclusion and discrimination after the earthquake by looking at the practices and the rhetoric of the state officials using the data from media covers and the interviews.

3.2 The economic, social and political background of Van

Van is one of the least developed cities among Turkey considering various social and economic terms. The number of people who are living in extreme poverty is considerably high in Eastern Anatolia compared to the average of Turkey. According to the TUIK report which analyses the socio-economic dynamics of Van, the gross value added per capita in the region of Van, Muş, Bitlis and Hakkari, which is statistically called "Middle Eastern Anatolia", is 3515 dollars in 2011, which is considerably lower than the average of GVA in Turkey which is 9244 (TUIK, 2013,

p. 7). Moreover, unemployment is a significant issue in the region. The number of employed people in Van, Bitlis, Muş and Hakkari consists 0.83% of Turkey. The unemployment rate in Van is 10.3%, which is the eighteenth highest rate in Turkey. Additionally, the labor force participation rate is 46.2%, and the employment rate is 41.4% in Van, which are significantly lower than the average of Turkey (TUIK, 2013, p. 55). In addition to this, the statistics indicates the fact that industry has the lowest rate in the distribution of workforce across economic sectors, which is 17%, comparing to agriculture and service sector (2013, p. 134).

The statistics of population and demography demonstrates the fact that Van has the lowest rates in various indicators of social well-being. Firstly, the level of education and literacy rate in Van are much lower than average of Turkey. According to Van TUIK report, the literacy rate is 91.8% in Van, which is the tenth lowest literacy rate among Turkey (TUIK, 2013, p. 41). Moreover, the graduation rate of higher education is 0.8% percent among Turkey (TUIK, 2013, p.131). Thirdly, according to the population and housing survey of TUIK in 2011, the average household size is 6.6 in Van, which is the third city of Turkey.¹⁷ Moreover, in 20% of the houses, there is no water pipe system, and in about 25% of the houses the bathroom and toilet are located outside the dwelling (TUIK, 2013, p. 65). In addition to these rates, Van is the 56th city in Turkey in the ranking of hospital beds per hundred thousand people. Moreover, the life tables of TUIK in 2013 indicate that life expectancy in Van is 73.3 years, which is the third lowest number in Turkey.¹⁸ And lastly, infant mortality rate in Van is 17.1 per thousand, which is significantly high compared to the average of Turkey, which is 10.8 per thousand (TUIK, 2013, p. 20).

¹⁷ Retrieved 10 April, 2015, from <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=15843>.

¹⁸ Retrieved 10 April, 2015, from <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/PreHaberBultenleri.do?id=18522>.

The statistics highlights that people in Van live under poverty and the rates of accessing education, healthcare, and other social services are significantly lower than the average of Turkey. Therefore, these findings indicate that poverty and social and economic exclusion are two significant issues in the region before the earthquake. In order to understand the fundamental reasons of this poverty and exclusion, it is crucial to refer to the Kurdish issue, one of the most controversial issues in the history of modern Turkey. The root of the problems goes back to the establishment of the Turkish Republic and it has severe consequences for the regions of Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia in which the population is predominantly Kurdish. These are the most vulnerable regions in Turkey in the sense that various political, socio-economic and cultural issues still continue because of the conflict between Turkish state and its Kurdish citizens.

3.2.1 The root causes of vulnerability in Van

The main problem could be defined as the nation-state characteristic of the Turkish Republic which denies different identities other than Turkish in the process of the establishment of the new state in Anatolia after the Ottoman Empire. The citizenship of the republic was standardized as modern, Muslim and secular, Turkish in terms of language and nationality, and obedient to the state (Ergil, 2000). Consequently, the cultural heritage, the history and multicultural and pluralistic standards were reformulated in accordance to these characteristics. Former Ottoman minorities were either deported to outside boundaries as Armenians or exchanged for Muslim population as Greeks. Moreover, the state applied various policies of assimilation and modernization to many the societies that have different identities in the country (Ergil, 2000, p. 124-5).

Parallel to these strategies, the uprising of the Kurdish people was suppressed drastically. The state adopted an authoritarian policy which neglects basic freedoms, social justice, the rule of law and pluralism. Kurdish people were forced to abandon their mother tongue, their culture, history and political identity (Ergil, 2000). After the rebellions of the Kurdish people between 1920 and 1930 and under the Settlement Law which enacted in 1934, great numbers of Kurdish citizens had to relegate from the region. But after the 1980 coup, the repression against Kurdish people accelerated dramatically, which leads to the emergence of PKK (Workers' Party of Kurdistan), an armed Kurdish nationalist and Marxist-Leninist organization (Ergil, 2000). The armed conflict between government security forces and PKK militants starting from the year 1984 has serious outcomes for Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia Regions.

One of the most significant impacts of the armed conflict is forced migration and displacement. Kurdish people were subjected to the forced migration between the years 1990 and 1995 intensively. The oppression of state's security forces, the practices of OHAL (state of emergency), the evacuation or destruction of villages which are suspected of helping PKK, the oppression of village guards, which are the paramilitary forces of the Turkish state, the restrictions such as food embargo and *yayla yasakları*, a practice which forbids people to go up to highlands, preclude any forms of agricultural and husbandry activities in the region. Consequently, people who do not have any economic opportunity and security of life and property had to leave their villages and arable fields and migrate to the cities. (Çağlayan, Özar & Tepe-Doğan, 2011).

According to the reports of the of the project KDRP (Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project), a government project that aims to provide financial and

social support for the people who were evacuated, and the Ministry of Interior, 358.335 people migrated from the 945 villages and 2021 arable fields to the suburbs of the cities, either to large cities in the east, such as Diyarbakır, Van and Batman, or metropolises such as Istanbul, Izmir, Adana and Mersin by the time January 2006(Ünalán, Çelik & Kurban, 2008, TMMOB, 2002/2004). Nevertheless, many local and international NGOs report that the actual numbers are much more than the official figures. The report of HÜNEE indicates that between 953.680 and 1.201.200 people migrated from 14 cities and villages of Eastern Anatolia and Southeastern Anatolia Regions for “security reasons” between 1986 and 2005 and the 80 percent of the migration has occurred from the villages to the cities. (HÜNEE, 2006, p. 106). Moreover, Human Rights Watch and Göç-Der, İHD, and TİHV reports that about 3 and 4 millions of people are affected from the armed conflict and security problems for twenty years in the region (Ünalán, Çelik & Kurban, 2008, p.75).

Forced migration and displacement have very significant consequences that affect the characteristics of these regions today. Forced migration has several impacts for the immigrants, which are landlessness, homelessness, unemployment, marginalization, food precarity, increase in mortality rate and social exclusion (TMMOB, 2002/2004, p. 570). Essentially, there were serious issues regarding education, health, and employment, considering the fact that the majority of the investments of the state were for military and security in the region (Ergil, 2000; Yüksekler, 2008a). Moreover, the process of evacuation of the villages occurred abruptly and in a traumatic manner which was unlawful and violated several of constitutional rights of the people, such as the equal protection of law, the right to life and to protect and to improve his/her corporeal existence, the right to respect for private and family life, the right to property, the protection of fundamental rights and

freedoms and the right of education (Yükseker, 2008a). Additionally, compensation and financial aid for the people who were evacuated has not been discussed by the state until 1999 (2008a). The projects that were carried out by the government for returning back and rehabilitation of these people were not extensive and adequate.

Van is the one of the cities that is affected from the process of forced migration. According to the project KDRP 24,826 people migrated from the 33 villages and 133 arable fields of Van between 1999 and 2010 (Doruk, 2010; p.45). Nevertheless, it is significant to note that actual numbers are much higher according to various national and international reports (Özar, 2010, p. 93). A report of TMMOB indicates that the economy of Van in which husbandry is the predominant industry has severely suffered from the force migration since it eradicated husbandry activities in the region (TMMOB, 2002/2004, p. 567).

Another report of Göç-Der which conducts a field research in the cities of Diyarbakır, Van, Mardin, Batman, Siirt and Hakkari, in which the most of the migration activities occurred (Göç-Der, 2001, p. 190), examines the economic, social and cultural problems that are related to forced migration and claims that this process caused various forms of violation of human rights. In this report, it is indicated that most of the migrants used to live in villages and to be engaged in agriculture before the evacuation process. Moreover, it was mass migration since people migrated with big groups of relatives and villages and preferred to migrate to the cities in which they have kinship relations. Most of them had to migrate to the outskirts of the large cities and lived in shanty houses, because they could not receive any support from the state. Accordingly, they have serious problems regarding health and nutrition, because of the poor infrastructure and the lack of social security for them. Moreover, because of the restrictions of the mother language and financial problems, children

between the ages 6 and 14 could not receive a proper education. Accordingly, unemployment and lack of educational opportunities are the main problems for young population (Göç-Der, 2000, p. 193). Furthermore, adult members of the families could find jobs in unqualified works, such as construction worker, or “bazaaris” for men and domestic workers and babysitters for women, whereas children sell tissues in the streets (Yükseker, 2008b).

In addition to these issues, these people are the subjects of many forms of social exclusion in large cities of the West, because of their Kurdish identity in terms of their language and their culture. Lastly, the report demonstrates that although people are poorly educated, below the poverty line, have unsecure and precarious jobs and experience social and political exclusion in the cities they migrated, they could not come back to their villages because of the lack of economic and social support (Göç-Der, 2001; Yüksek, 2008b).

The above discussed reports, analyses and studies indicate the fact there are serious problems regarding economic, social and political in Van before the earthquake. And the root causes of the vulnerability in Van lie in the long history of Kurdish issue, and the armed conflict and forced migration that have resulted from it. In the next section, I aim to elaborate the ways in which the earthquake became a second disaster for the people in Van by examining the disaster vulnerabilities of the victims and the discriminatory and exclusionary practices of the state.

3.3 Vulnerabilities & deliberate exclusion after the earthquake in Van

Dyson argues that exclusion and poverty are two significant factors that affect the outcomes of the disasters. In the case of Katrina, people who experience social and political exclusion because of their race, ethnicity, gender, and age and live

below the poverty line became the 'victims' of the disasters. And their problems intensified because of the discriminatory practices of the government and their basic citizenship rights violated (Dyson, 2007, p. xxi). Moreover, Bolin and Stanford argue that the disaster management might be racial, ethnic and class based, as in the examples of the US. FEMA's management programs after the earthquakes in Piru and Fillmore (1999) were not inclusionary and they did not aim to ameliorate the social and economic conditions of the victims. Parallel with this argument, this thesis argues that state implemented policies that cause deliberate exclusion in the process of emergency management after the Van Earthquake and the rhetoric of the state and government officials were problematic which strengthens the discriminatory perception in the region.

In accordance to these statements, in this section I investigate the vulnerabilities that stem from economic, political and social factors in Van. I argue that discussing these vulnerabilities of people is highly significant to understand the scope of the failure after the Van Earthquake. I scrutinize the ways in which the pre-existing problems in the region impact the outcomes of the disaster. Moreover, I provide a detailed analysis of the certain groups that are affected mostly from the disaster because of the social, economic and political factors. Furthermore, I examine the practices of state and government officials which cause deliberate exclusion and regenerates poverty and discrimination in the region after the earthquake.

To start with, it is remarkably significant to have a closer look to the roots of the disaster vulnerabilities in Van. The President of Van-Der, an association working on poverty alleviation in the city, explains that the people in Van experiences disasters repeatedly and the earthquake was only the one of them. The urban poor who came to the city because of the forced migration that occurred in the 90s

compose the most of the population in Van. These people were detached from the production process, living in the periphery of the city, in the shanties they built themselves and were working as seasonal workers (GÇD, 2014, p.8). The population of the city almost doubled in these times, since great numbers of people had to evacuate their villages and migrate to the cities with no land, no occupation or no income. According to a narrative that comes to the Van-Der, he was the headman of the village and used to look after fifty people, yet he could not even afford food for his family after they migrated to the city. Therefore, the president of Van-Der argues that the earthquake became the third disaster after the forced migration and the economic and social traumas that forced migration brings about. The earthquake intensified existing poverty and exclusion, as the report of GÇD (2014) emphasizes as well. Therefore, the policies that focus disaster management only would not be sufficient for the city unless the causes of the poverty and exclusion would be examined.

The President of VAKAD provides additional examples that manifest the ways in which vulnerabilities of the people affect the outcomes of the earthquake enormously by referring to the problems that women, children, elderly and disabled people confront. Essentially, she explains that *çadırkents* were not organized according to the special needs of children, elderly and disabled people. It was a serious issue considering the fact most of the disaster victims in *çadırkents* were those who could not leave the city since they have children, old and disabled members in their families. Moreover, she points out that gender related problems increase dramatically after the earthquake. Domestic violence was a very serious issue, as families had to live together with their relatives and in-laws, which eventually expands marital conflicts. Yet, most of the cases of domestic violence

were not evaluated or recorded by officials because of the “state of emergency”. Moreover, single and separated women are subjected to sexual harassment (GÇD, 2013, p. 8).

After the earthquake, the financial problems of women increased seriously as well. The President of VAKAD explains that the women in the villages have no productive activities other than cooking breads in the ovens in their gardens. After the earthquake, they could not even continue this production since these ovens got damaged. Moreover, the issue of right ownership was very problematic that women experience various exclusionary practices. Since the most of the property right was on men, single, divorced, and separated women and married women without civil marriage status were excluded from the process of distribution of TOKİ houses. Therefore, women had to live with their parents in law, or relatives, and this issue increases their problems.

In addition to the problems of women, children were the ones who were affected mostly from the earthquake. According to the hunger strike activist for people in *konteynerkents* and the report of GÇD, education of children affected dramatically after the earthquake (GÇD, 2014). Because of the bad conditions in the container buildings and tents, most of the children got sick. Moreover, there are not sufficient facilities for children to study in *çadırkents* and *konteynerkents*. Because of these reasons most of the children could not attend school. Consequently, the report of TBB and SES indicates that the cases of post-traumatic stress disorder are considerably high in number among children (TBB & SES, 2011, p.39).

3.4 The exclusionary practices of the state

As discussed earlier, the exclusionary practices of the state intensified the vulnerabilities of the disaster victims in Van. First and foremost, the government provided a slow and disorganized management process and adopted a “wait-and-see” policy as refusing the international aid in the first 48-hours, which is a very critical period for search and rescue. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs asserts that the state “politely” refused the foreign offer of aid from Israel, Greece, the USA, Germany, Armenia and Poland right after the earthquake, but decided to accept three days after the disaster.¹⁹ Moreover, according to the parliamentary question of Van MP, the government refused to cooperate with the NGOs from Portugal, Spain, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁰ The President of Van-Der explains that the government wanted to see their potential at first that has serious consequences for the people in Van.

Moreover, the state officials indicates that although there were adequate aid for everyone, the disaster victims in Van tried to “plunder” the aid, therefore the distribution could not be performed properly. The words of the Head of AKP in Van indicate the exclusionary discourse of the state in emergent disaster management accurately:

There were some problems during the distribution [of aid]. [...] We should learn our lessons as a society. When people saw the aid that is came to the city, their perception has changed, despite the fact that they are Kurd and Kurdish nationalists, rampageous BDP partisans.²¹ (See Appendix, 1)

Similar with his arguments, the chairman of Kızılay (Red Crescent) explains that seventeen of their aid trucks and one of the *çadırkents* have been plundered by

¹⁹ Retrieved 15 May, 2015, from <http://bianet.org/bianet/dunya/133643-turkiye-dis-yardimi-kabul-etti>.

²⁰ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question. 8 February, 2012.

²¹ Abdullah Aras, interview by author, tape recording, Van, Turkey, April 20, 2014.

the victims.²² Furthermore, Van AFAD Director explains that the main problem in the distribution process was that the victims demanded more than they needed and they attacked the officers.

Nevertheless, these arguments are problematic from many aspects. The President of Mazlum-Der explains that people who plundered the aid truck were those could not receive tents, blankets and other aid materials for days in harsh winter conditions. He argues that it is reasonable that people with children freezing try to do anything to get those tents. Besides, the earthquake victims were subject to harsh intervention of the police when they tried to get disaster relief. Accordingly, Van MP for BDP tabled a parliamentary question about the verbal and physical abuse that police and military committed to the victims in *çadırkents* and *konteynerkents*.²³ Moreover, police attacked with pepper gas and pressurized water once again to the people who protested the Governorship and the Deputy Prime Minister and demanded the Governor and the Deputy Prime Minister to resign after the second earthquake. The reason of the protest was that the Deputy Prime Minister and the Governor announced that it is safe to go back to the houses after the first earthquake, yet 37 people died in the second earthquake.²⁴

Furthermore, there were exclusionary practices to those who were sent temporarily to different cities by the governorship. These people argue that they were treated as refugees and their children were experience exclusion at the schools. As an example, 54 families were temporarily sent to a disabled camp in Istanbul, yet they have serious problems regarding financial, health, hygiene and psychological. They

²² Retrieved 15 May, 2015, <http://www.ntv.com.tr/arsiv/id/25292271/>.

²³ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question. 24 February, 2012.

²⁴ Retrieved 10 June, 2015, from <http://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/133941-bakanlar-bolgeyi-terketti-polis-gaz-sikti>.

could not find jobs and were subject to discrimination in the city (Vardar, 2011). Moreover, the transfer of the victims was another organizational failure. The President of VAKAD narrates that a family which was taken away to Samsun realized that the Governorship of Samsun was not officially informed by the Governorship of Van. Additionally, Van MP tabled a parliamentary question to the Ministry of Interior about the conditions of the people who were sent to other cities. He claims that these people are subject to discrimination in the places they were sent. Moreover, he indicates in the parliamentary question that two member of a family who was sent to Istanbul is not reachable.²⁵

In addition to these practices which neglect the disaster victims in Van, there were other significant developments that could be linked to the discriminatory practices of the state. One of them was the closure case of VAKAD which was charged of providing assistance to PKK by adducing sanitary towels as evidence. Moreover, the aid came from Istanbul with a truck could not deliver the aid to the association since police warned them as they are terrorists. However, the most significant development was the KCK arrestments in which numbers of BDP members has been arrested in Van, including the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor of Van, the Van head of BDP, and the mayors of the district municipalities.²⁶ The Deputy Mayor explains that they were falsely charged to send the aid that came for the earthquake victims to the storages of PKK. Nevertheless he tells that being taken into custody was not something unfamiliar for him, as he was first put into prison when he was 16 in the operations of the 1980 coup.

²⁵ TBMM Parliamentary Question. 08.02.12

²⁶ Retrieved 16 May, 2015, from <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/van-belediye-baskani-tutuklandi/siyaset/siyasetdetay/10.06.2012/1551817/default.htm>.

These actions of the government provide solid examples of deliberate exclusion in the region. The arrestment of the Van Mayor and of the mayors of the BDP district municipalities hinders the activities of local governments severely, which has significant consequences for the people in Van. The victims of the earthquake struggle against the discriminatory oppressions of the state, in addition to the devastating impacts of the natural disaster. The Head of BDP in Van who was one of the politicians that were arrested explains that they know they will be arrested eventually, since Van was the only city that KCK operations have not occurred yet. Nevertheless, according to him, the timing of the operation was critical, since it is almost impossible to recover a city after two major earthquakes in the lack of local authorities, especially the lack of the mayor. He argues that the ongoing problems in the city are highly related to these operations. In this sense, these arrestments manifest the attitude of the state to the disaster victims in Van.

Eventually, the developments indicate that all these exclusionary practices increased the vulnerabilities of people. The issue of people who live in container buildings and their resistance provides a solid example the ways in which the vulnerabilities that stem from social and economic background exacerbate after the earthquake with the exclusionary practices of the state. In August 2013, the Governor of Van cut the electricity and water supply and sewage system of the containers and removed the facilities that provide social service at four *konteynerkents*.²⁷ However, people could not move from these buildings. Consequently, in October 2013 people started a hunger strike to protest the actions of the government and to claim permanent housing. Thereafter, in December 2013, the Governorship used police

²⁷ Retrieved 12 March, 2015, from http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/vanda_konteynerler_kis_ortasinda_kaldirildi-1165533.

force on these people to move out these container buildings immediately.²⁸

Nevertheless, the hunger strike had widespread media coverage and with the pressure of the Municipality and VKK, the Governor and the Deputy Prime Minister had to get the water service and electricity connected back in *konteynerkents*.

The report of VKK investigates the existing problems that people have in these container buildings. According to this report, there are 111 families in four *konteynerkents* in Van and Erciř in total. Most of these people were tenants before the earthquake and 65 of them earns less than 500TLs. Moreover, there are 232 children, 8 disabled and 60 people with chronic illness living in these container buildings. People in these *konteynerkents* explain that the offer of rent supplement of the government is not reasonable for them, since the duration of this help is unknown, and most of the houses for rent are heavy damaged in the city.²⁹ Moreover, according to the President of Mazlum-Der, there are families who accepted the offer of rent supplement, yet the Governor has cut the help after two months.

According to the president of Van-Der, people are still living in container buildings draw attention to the general issues of housing and poverty in the region. He argues that apart from the families that live in container buildings with devastating conditions, there are families of ten living in heavy damaged buildings after the earthquake. These families are living below the poverty line, do not have any income and completely dependent on social and financial aid or they try to survive with minimum wage. Moreover, even the families who could afford the TOKI houses have serious financial problems after the earthquake and they have

²⁸ Retrieved 12 March, 2015, from <http://t24.com.tr/haber/vanli-depremedeler-konteynerlerini-dekaybetmek-uzere,245149>.

²⁹ Retrieved 10 February, 2015, from <http://van.mazlumder.org/tr/main/faaliyetler/gunluk-ihlal-haberleri/23/van-afetzedede-sosyal-inceleme-ve-degerlendirme/10495>.

difficulties in repayment of mortgages of these houses. Therefore, the campaign for people in container buildings is essential not only for these people, but for many people who experience social and economic marginalization in the city, since it helps to put the issue of housing on agenda.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter aimed to analyze the disaster vulnerabilities of people in Van by examining the social, economic and political background of the region. The roots of the underdevelopment are the poverty and marginalization which is the outcome of Kurdish issue. The victims of Van were suffered from preexisting inequalities and exclusion that stem from armed conflict and forced migration. The thesis asserts that without scrutinizing the political and economic background of Van, the reasons of the failure of the disaster management could not be accurately comprehended. The President of Van-Der sums up the situation of disaster victims well:

Actually, I think that people here got through thousands of earthquakes, who are displaced because of the forced migration. Therefore, they experienced similar processes many times. The earthquake makes visible and exacerbates the pre-existing trauma. [...] The background of our mission is the poverty stems from the forced migration. As an instance, we specify that a poor family in Kırşehir and a poor family in Hakkari are in poverty because of external reasons, of the dominant political system. So there is poverty which is originated by the system. The poverty is [in everywhere], in Kırşehir, in Hakkari. But the second one [Hakkari] was not like this before. Production was there in progress, people were working and happy. But some people removed them from there, forced them to migrate and unleash to cities. To places that they have never seen. Therefore, they suffer in both sense. They are aggravated twice, because of the system and as being forced to migrate. Hence, it is more traumatic.³⁰ (See Appendix, 2)

Furthermore, their vulnerabilities elevated with the exclusionary practices of state in the disaster management process. The arrestment of municipal mayors and

³⁰ Murat Eryılmaz, interview by author, tape recording, Van, Turkey, April 20, 2014.

BDP members blocked the mitigation activities of the local government which deteriorated the earthquake victims in Van dramatically. The exclusionary practices of the state manifest itself when the *konteynerkents* were demolished by using force. People who live in these container buildings were the ones which are the most vulnerable segment of the society in political, economic and social terms. And the practices of the state bring about deliberate exclusion of these people which regenerates poverty and marginalization.

To sum up, the thesis emphasizes the fact that the earthquake might be used as an instrument for reducing the poverty and eliminating inequalities and the conditions of people could be ameliorated. However, the process of disaster management neglects the political, economic and social background of the region and regenerates the preexisting inequalities and exclusion. Consequently, things have gotten even worse in Van after the earthquake.

CHAPTER 4
THE MANIFESTATION OF POLITICIZATION
AFTER THE VAN EARTHQUAKE

As discussed in the hypothesis, political factors are very significant determinant of the failure of disaster management in Van. In this thesis I assert that there is all across politicization among actors that are involved in disaster management of Van Earthquake. The findings are based on the data analysis of various reports, archive research from newspapers and other internet sources, and the fieldwork in which I conducted multiple semi-structured elite interviews with state officials, municipalities, party members, Members of Parliament and Civil Society Organizations. Accordingly, I investigate the issue examining two dimensions, patronage and clientelism during the disaster management and state and civil society relations. I argue that the disaster management was highly affected from the tension between local and central government, the clientelistic relations that government established and their outcomes in practice. Moreover, civil society was in an ambiguous position considering the fact that it could not develop coordination with the government because of the political contestation, yet their actions were politicized by the dissident political party. Consequently, civil society organizations could not work efficiently which has negative impacts on the disaster management as well.

In the first part, the main purpose of this chapter is to illustrate the ways in which the government used the disaster management to consolidate its power by favoring its supporters. The government practiced series of patronage and

clientelistic activities by using state resources extensively. Furthermore, the government applied series of practices which blocked the actions of the municipality considering the crisis in coordination of the allocation of disaster relief after the earthquake and the preparation of city master plan in the mitigation process. More significantly, the government's decisions of declining disaster declaration, and KCK operations in which the mayor, two deputy mayors and BDP's head of provincial assembly in Van were arrested³¹ indicate the fact that the government applied strategies of 'counter-patronage' against the municipality during the disaster management process in Van. In other words, the government aimed to block the party in power working efficiently, so that they would not gain political support in upcoming local elections.

Consequently, these politically motivated decisions of the government caused a 'double-headed' disaster relief coordination of the government and the municipality, which resulted in an organizational crisis of the disaster management. Moreover, the distribution of aid was not according to need but political interests played a significant role. Some people did not receive any forms of aid such as tents, blankets, clothes, food and medicine although they were highly in need.

In addition to the double-headed management process, corrupt and rent-seeking activities of government in the tender of container buildings, city master plan, TOKİ construction and management of the buildings leads to further problems for disaster victims in terms of financial issues and housing after the earthquake. The constructions companies that have close relations with the government won tenders and local companies and workers were excluded, therefore the recovery and mitigation process after the earthquake was not quite successful. Likewise, the

³¹ Retrieved 2 April, 2015, from <http://www.ntv.com.tr/arsiv/id/25400957>.

tension between local and central government causes a bureaucratic crisis of preparing the city master plan after the disaster. This failure affected the economic development of the city intensely and the conditions of people were exacerbated dramatically.

In the second part, I aim to elaborate the complex relationship between state and civil society after Van Earthquake. According to the members of various local NGOs, the government hesitated to cooperate with civil society in the disaster management process. The coordination was top-down and local groups which could express the real needs and priorities more effectively (Jalali, 2002) were excluded from the organization of the government. Moreover, civil society organizations were in an ambiguous position considering the fact that their actions were politicized by the party members that are politically dominant in the region. The activities of NGOs which attempt to be independent from both sides were repressed by the government since they challenge the power of state, whereas their actions were politically manipulated by the opposing party. Hence, I argue that civil society could not work in the region efficiently after the earthquake, which has severe outcomes for disaster victims.

4.1 The politics of Van earthquake, patronage and clientelistic relations in disaster management

The disaster management in Van could be discussed in two periods, the emergent disaster management process right after the earthquake, and the mitigation and recovery process in the aftermath. The main topics that will be discussed regarding the emergent management are the distribution of humanitarian aid, food, clothes,

tents, blankets, medicine etc., the buildings of temporary houses which are called ‘container buildings’, establishing firstly *çadırkents* then *konteynerkents*.

After the emergent disaster management, the main issue is housing in the process of recovery and mitigation. There are several problems related to this issue. One point of discussion is the construction the management of the buildings by TOKİ (Mass Housing Administration) which is the official institution of state’s mass-housing projects. The preparation of the master plan of city after the earthquake was a failure of cooperation between the government and the municipality which affected the recovery process negatively in the region. Furthermore, the damage assessment process and the estimation of right ownership were very problematic which causes several implications.

In addition to the problems that are mentioned above, people in Van are in serious financial difficulties, and the government’s actions regarding the issue are not sufficient in the recovery process. Moreover, one of the most significant issues is that about 50 families who still have to live in container buildings which were supposed to be temporary. The government and the municipality failed to provide a substantial solution and consequently, it causes a political unrest in Van.

4.1.1 Disaster management process right after disaster

Despite Abdullah Aras who is AKP’s provincial head in Van and Cafer Giyik, the director of Van AFAD (Prime Ministry Disaster and Emergency Management Authority), asserted that “the Governorship and AFAD carried out the coordination perfectly”³² (See Appendix, 3), the members of NGOs, the municipality and other political actors argue the opposite. AKP’s head in Van said that state

³² Abdullah Aras, interview by author, tape recording, Van, Turkey, April 20, 2014.

‘declared mobilization’ right after the disaster since the Prime Minister Erdoğan came to the city and organized the coordination in person. In the first 72 hours, the process of search and rescue with 1,000 people from state’s search and rescue team and the distribution of 73,000 tents were very fast and successful. By the end of February 2012, the construction of container buildings was finished and the cost of these buildings was 500 million TLs. There were 36 *konteynerkents*, 5 in Erciş, and 31 in Van. There were 29,486 container buildings in total, and 175,070 people sheltered in these buildings in average (AFAD, 2014, p. 34). Both Van AFAD director and the provincial head of AKP argued in the interviews that life has returned to normal very quickly after the disaster.

These numbers indicate the fact that state resourced sufficient amount of money for the emergent response right after the earthquake. However, according to the assessment report of TBB and SES, the *çadırkents* and other temporary shelter camps in Van had some serious problems in terms of WHO standards. The soil was muddy and not suitable for tents, the facilities for personal hygiene was not sufficient, some tents were inadequate for bad weather conditions, the amount of people for each tent was too many, the facilities for social services for childcare, health, and other social and religious activities. And lastly, the danger of fire and gas poisoning was high in some districts (TBB & SES, 2011, p. 8). According to the report, the lack of social services in terms of rehabilitation and pedagogical projects for children is one of the main problems of disaster victims in the region (TBB & SES, 2011, p. 39).

One of the main reasons of these problems is that, in the allocation process of these resources, political interests were considerably determinant factor. The significant issue is the lack of coordination between the central and the local. All of

my interviewees indicate the fact that there were two main organizations in the disaster management in Van. One was the disaster coordination center of the government which includes AFAD, the governor, and AKP, whereas the other coordination included the municipality, BDP, KESK (Confederation of Public Laborer's Unions) and EMEP (Labour Party) and some NGOs.

Consequently, the disaster management in Van was double-headed and the government held almost all of the resources. Van AFAD director claims that the municipality did not want to communicate with the institutions of central government because of the ideological tension. Nevertheless, according to the president of Van-Der (Van Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development Association), the government was the main actor who carries out the coordination and decision-making process through AFAD, yet it left all the local organizations of Van out. He further explains that the political atmosphere rather than structural procedure were significant in the relationship between the central government and the municipality. Therefore, the provincial coordination committee did not include the municipality which should be a component of this coordination in the decision-making process. Consequently, the municipality established its own coordination center with limited resources compared to the central government. Selim Bozyiğit who is the Deputy Mayor of Van and Özdal Üçer, BDP Member of Parliament, emphasize the double-headed characteristic of the disaster management in Van claiming that the governorship appropriated the monetary and humanitarian aid which came from the NGOs of nearby cities.

The double-headed characteristic of the disaster management process has some significant impacts on the distribution of aid. Van-Der's president argues that government's coordination committee provided more efficient and rapid

management to the regions which are politically more close to AKP, such as Erciř. Nevertheless, in some regions the government did not provide aid at all. According to the TBB and SES report, there some neighborhoods which were in need yet could not receive any forms of aid. Therefore, these victims reacted to the government officials and accused those who favor partisan relations and exclude the rest (TBB & SES, 2011). Furthermore, Van MP tabled a parliamentary question to the Ministry of Interior about the distribution of Kızılay tents. He claims that in certain neighborhoods are imposed embargo by Kızılay so that people could not receive tents and blankets. Consequently a six-year old died because of cold since the family could not receive a tent.³³

Furthermore, the president of VAKAD narrates a story which explains the results of the double-headed organizations dramatically. She explains that:

For example, when you enter to a neighborhood, as we learnt that time very well, there is a hierarchy between the tents. The worst is the plastic bags, then there are Kızılay tents, for those who have better conditions there are tents that are distributed by MSF [Doctors without Borders] and Shelterbox, [an international NGO which worked in Van after the earthquake, and they distributed tents were more qualified than Kızılay's]. There are also tents made in Sweden and in Russia. We learnt all types of tents and the hierarchical order in this manner. For example, the tents made in Russia were distributed by the governorship, whereas the tents from Sweden were distributed by the municipality. When we enter to a neighborhood, the families that have close ties with the municipality could be recognized by their Swedish tents and the families of veteran and martyr soldiers are recognized by their Russian tents. This is an example of disintegration in society. The tents which have same or similar standards should have been distributed to all victims. We can understand who has worked in a neighborhood by looking at their tents.³⁴ (See Appendix, 4)

The process of the distribution of container buildings was similar. The Deputy Mayor claims that people who have references from AKP Member of

³³ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question, November 21, 2011.

³⁴ Zozan Özgökçe, interview by author, tape recording, Van, Turkey, April 21, 2014.

Parliament and Provincial Head have the priority to transfer from the tents to the container buildings. The president of VAKAD supports this argument claiming that *muhtar* (neighborhood headman) played a significant role in distributing the container buildings since s/he prioritize people who have close ties with them. It indicates the fact that the distribution was not according to the need, but according to particularistic relations. The interviewee who is container building resident and very active during the hunger strikes explains that he was working in one of the *konteynerkents* as an employee of İŞKUR (Turkish Employment Agency). He claims that in certain neighborhoods of *konteynerkents* there were only the members of the party elite. These were the “model” *konteynerkents* in which people were grateful for their government, since they mentioned about no problems and they stated they are in a very well condition. He claims that, these *konteynerkents* were appeared on media and were visited by the protocol.

Similarly, the Deputy Mayor mentions that a group of Kurdish businessmen from nearby cities donated 250 prefabricated houses for the disaster victims who are in need, yet he did not mention how these disaster victims were determined. He claims that the municipality provides water, electricity and food aid to these houses. This case illustrates that the municipality and the government carried out their disaster management separately to their supporters in the region.

Furthermore, there were families who could not be transferred to the container buildings. Thus, they continued to live in tents which were set up to places outside the town, and these families could not receive aid from the governorship. Van MP tabled a parliamentary question to the Deputy Prime Minister in January 2012 to highlight the issue claiming that some earthquake victims were not transferred from *çadırkents* to container buildings at it was assured by the officials of

AFAD. He further adds to the parliamentary question that 127 tents were burnt and 11 people died because of the lack of necessary precautions.³⁵

The report of TBB and SES provides another example of the problems of distribution of aid. It asserts that there are serious inequalities between different villages in terms of distributing tents, containers and other forms of aid. They claim that the difference did not base on need, yet clientelistic relations played a significant role. The villages which support the government received sufficient aid whereas in the villages that have politically opponent position the needs were not provided (TBB & SES, 2011, p. 45).

These stories are related to the arguments of Cohen and Werker (2008) who assert that governments might provide more resources to the regions that are politically more supportive in order to redistribute power through political effect. In the case of Van, central government used the resources of the state and aimed to favor the disaster spending in regions that support AKP, whereas the municipality tried to do the same for people who are aligned with BDP by using their limited resources. Therefore, I argue that in the process of emergent management, both parties used patronage relations to consolidate political power in Van. However, the government has considerably more power in terms of using state resources; therefore their actions related to patronage had more serious impacts on the failure of the management.

In addition to problems of allocation of resources, there were rent-seeking activities and corruption regarding the real cost of container buildings. Van Deputy Mayor Bozyiğit claims that the container buildings were tendered to firms which

³⁵ Retrieved from TMBB Parliamentary Question, 3 April, 2012.

increase the cost. Accordingly, Van MP tabled a parliamentary question to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization in April 2012 and stated that Van Governor declares the cost of each container building is 13,000 TLs whereas the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization declared the cost as 7,500TLs for each container building and requests an explanation.³⁶

Another significant problem of the disaster management is regarding the disaster declaration. Van MP explains that in cases of Düzce Earthquake and flood disaster in Rize, the government announced disaster declaration, whereas for Van Earthquake that was not the case, even though the disaster was as destructive as the other two. He tabled a parliamentary question to the Prime Minister about the issue of disaster declaration in November 2011 claimed that the conditions are fulfilled to declare disaster in Van. The answer of this question is that in case of declaration of disaster, the construction and dwelling would be forbidden in the region which would affect the social and economic situation of people in Van.³⁷ Nevertheless, the president of Van-Der emphasizes the main problem of the management was that the government did not decide to declare disaster after the earthquake. He asserts that there was a political motivation behind this decision. In accordance with the Law no. 4123 on Execution of Services Concerning the Damage and Disruption Caused by Natural Disasters, Article 6,³⁸ in case of disaster declaration, the municipalities and local governments that are exposed to disasters may be receive funds from the sources that are collected in special accounts in order to mitigate the disruption caused by natural disasters. Additionally the taxes, levies and charges that could not be collected by the municipalities because of the natural disasters may be funded

³⁶ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question, 3 April, 2012.

³⁷ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question, 21 November, 2011.

³⁸ 4123 sayılı Tabii Afet Nedeniyle Meydana Gelen Hasar ve Tahribata İlişkin Hizmetlerin Yürütülmesine Dair Kanun, Madde 6.

according to the decision of cabinet. The municipality could not receive additional budget after the earthquake, according to the Deputy Mayor.

The decision of AKP government is highly related to the arguments of Garrett and Sobel. They claim that the government makes the decision of disaster declaration considering political interests rather than actual need. In this case, the Prime Minister did not declare disaster in Van and used his decision-making power as a 'punishment' for the people who support BDP in the region (Garrett and Sobel, 2003, p. 501). Moreover, he did not want the BDP municipality would work effectively, so that they would not use it for political support and electoral gain in the next local elections. Therefore, I argue that this decision of the government could be seen a strategy of 'counter-patronage' against the BDP municipality in Van.

4.1.2 Recovery and mitigation process after Van earthquake

In the first anniversary of the earthquake, the government organized an opening ceremony for the completion of the construction 17,489 TOKİ houses. According to the director of Van AFAD, the cost of these houses is 2,300,000,000 TLs which is financed by AFAD and built to TOKİ.

Moreover, Van AFAD director explains the distribution process as follows. In accordance with the Law No. 7269 on the Precaution and Aid against Disasters Effecting Common Life,³⁹ AFAD coordinates a damage assessment team which consists of about 1500 engineers coming from different cities of Turkey. Moreover, AFAD's report of 2011 Van Earthquake indicates that 186,636 houses were evaluated in total and 26.1 percent of the buildings are assessed as heavy-damaged or ruined. 74 percent of these heavy-damaged or ruined buildings are residence (AFAD,

³⁹ 7269 Sayılı Umumi Hayata Müessir Afetler Dolayısıyla Alınacak Tedbirlerle Yapılacak Yardımlara Dair Kanun

2014, p. 41-44). People who legally own and reside these houses were identified as right owners and they could claim to buy these TOKİ houses which have interest-free 20-year term loan.

Nevertheless, there are some serious issues regarding the recognition of the right holders, the damage assessment process, the city master plan, the process of the tender of these houses, the real costs of these building and many like. Van Deputy Mayor claims that the government put in a tender of these projects but most of the winners were from other cities, not from Van. Consequently, he argues that in these projects people in Van were not employed, since the construction workers, the catering service personnel were subcontracted from other cities of Central Anatolia and Black Sea region. He claims that even the construction materials and the food were brought from other cities. They built their own constructions sites for concrete and asphalt production. He concludes that these projects did not have any impact on the unemployment and the economic development of city after the disaster. One BDP member adds the fact that local companies in Van could not take the advantage of these TOKİ constructions so that it could boost the economic growth in the region.

Van MP for BDP emphasizes the same issue regarding the tender of TOKİ houses. He tables several parliamentary questions to the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization regarding the tender of these projects. He claims that the total amount of the tenders is 1,424,000,000 TLs and the procedures during the tenders were not transparent, thus 72 percent of the tenders were won by firms that have close relations with AKP. Moreover, he asserts that the most of the constructor workers were not from Van. Accordingly, he asks why there was negotiated tendering and why only certain firms were invited to the tender. He asks whether there were winner firms are a member of Van Chamber of Commerce and

Industry. He further asks what the amount of each project is and whether there were firms which won more than one tender. Lastly he seeks information about any objection against the tenders.

The Ministry of Environment and Urbanization partially answers these questions. He claims that according to Public Tender Act, Article 21(b), in case of disasters and emergencies, tenders should be bidden urgently. Moreover, there were three firms from Van out of 139 firms that are invited to the tender. There were 57 projects and out of 57 projects, there is only one firm which is a member of Van Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Regarding the employment of local workers, the Ministry claims that the awarded contractor company has all the responsibility and there is no legal regulation about forcing these firms to employ local workers.⁴⁰

Moreover, there are serious questions regarding the trade of TOKİ houses to earthquake victims by AFAD. AKP head of Van claimed that there is an interest-free special payment plan for victims in Van, nevertheless AFAD Director in Van reminded the fact that TOKİ is a business enterprise. Van MP for BDP tabled two parliamentary question to the Prime Minister about the real cost of the TOKİ houses in November 2013. He claims that in other TOKİ projects, each m² costs 560 TL, whereas in Van it is estimated that each m² costs 1,050 TL. Therefore, it was declared that the cost of each house is 105,000 TLs but actual cost was 49,000 TLs. The government claimed that they applied 30 percent discount because of the disaster but actually people are deceived. He asks why the government applied

⁴⁰ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question 15 November, 2013.

higher cost system in Van and did not consider public utility. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister did not reply this parliamentary question.⁴¹

In addition to the corruption of tender in TOKİ projects, there are additional corrupt activities in terms of site management, the subscription fee of the buildings, and the cost of heating. Van MP for BDP tabled parliamentary questions in March 2013 and November 2013 to the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and the Ministry of Interior about the tender of TOKİ management and the amount of fee the dwellers pay to these managements. He claims that the management is on the firms which have close relations with AKP. In the process of tender and purchase of goods and services, rent-seeking and corruption is very high. As an example, these managements charge a fee of heating to the dwellers, but actually the coal is provided by Social Assistance and Solidarity Foundation for free.⁴²

The issue of the city master plan in Van after the earthquake indicates another dimension of the lack of cooperation and bureaucratic failure between central and local government. The report of GÇD explains that in February 2012, Van Municipality and the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning signed a protocol to prepare the city master plan. Accordingly, in March 2013 the Ministry proposed the master plan of 9600-hectare area, yet the Municipality approved 1050-hectare area in the city center and rejected the rest of the plan essentially because of the fact that political factors played a significant role and pro-government families were favored. The master plan of Erciş was modified four times before it went into operation, because of patronage (GÇD, 2013, p. 27).

⁴¹ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question 15 November, 2013.

⁴² Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question 05 March, 2013 and 13 November, 2013.

Both parties, AKP and BDP accused each other by rejecting to cooperate. AKP's Van provincial head claims that BDP municipality could not be integrated about the town planning. He explains that the municipality could not manage the issue of town planning which is the essential work of the municipalities. According to him, the municipality handed the project off to the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning. He says that the Ministry submitted a project considering 'modern' standards but the municipality rejected this project by using a populist approach.

Van MP adds the fact that since the Ministry has more authority and resources than the Municipality, they could provide a more successful project for the city master plan. Nevertheless, he claims that the Ministry applied non-standard rules in preparing the project and exclude the Ministry from the process. One BDP member claims that the awarded party of the city master tender has clientelistic relations with the government, and therefore, the master plan was problematic. Additionally, when we discussed the issue with Van Deputy Mayor, he refused that they rejected to cooperate with the government. He claims that the municipality wanted to cooperate with the Ministry but the Ministry designed the project in Ankara, and the working team of Van Municipality was bypassed by them. He explains that the Municipality rejected the project of the Ministry eventually, since the project involved many rent-seeking activities in ways that will generate favor to themselves. Accordingly, he claims that the municipality accepted only a small part of the project, 4-hectare area of the city center, and they will redesign the project in their municipal council, which would lead to increase the tension between the government and the municipality. Consequently, the crisis leads to a perpetuation of problems regarding housing and economic development. A dweller in Van summarizes the issue perfectly:

The earthquake did not this to us. It was the Municipality and Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning. It was people who paid the price caused from the conflict between BDP and the AKP Government. The city master plan could be accepted just three months ago.⁴³ (See Appendix, 5)

In the process of damage assessment and the determination of right holders, Van Municipality claimed that the damage assessment process was not carried out properly, since there are buildings which are assessed as light damaged by the AFAD's team, yet assessed as heavy damage by different experts. And there are some buildings which are estimated as heavily damaged in AFAD's report, yet have occupancy permit (Van Belediyesi, 2013). Furthermore, it is claimed that the government officials abused their positions for private gain were associated with corruption in the process of damage assessment and the determination of right holders. The President of Mazlum-Der mentions the corruption scandal of AFAD officials in the damage assessment decisions. In July 2012, the legal investigation was opened about the issue. 10 officials of Van AFAD were taken into custody because of changing the reports of damage assessment in exchange for a bribe. Van Governorship states that the reports of 38 buildings in Van were falsified in the electronic system.⁴⁴ Mazlum-Der president explains the issue that there are heavy damaged buildings which were not demolished since the owner did not want to and paid a bribe to AFAD officials and received light damage status for their buildings. The report of AFAD indicates that 12,000 buildings were demolished out of 19,000 heavy damaged building. However, the reports of GÇD claim that the number should be far more than this. Fifty-one thousand, seven hundred and fifty buildings with heavy or moderate damage were not demolished or strengthened, thus people who are living in these building are in a great danger (GÇD, 2013).

⁴³ A disaster victim in Van, interview by GÇD, 2013: 30.

⁴⁴ Retrieved 19 May, 2016, from http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/diger/358874/Van_AFAD_da_rusvet_operasyonu.html.

These actions of the government indicate the ways in which patronage and clientelistic relations could end up to various acts of corruption, as it is examined in the study of Sayarı. These acts are highly related Brinkenhoff and Goldsmith's identification of the costs of clientelistic and patronage actions in practice, especially rent-seeking activities and corruption. The tender process of container buildings, city master plan, TOKİ construction and management of the buildings are series of rent-seeking activities with the companies which have close relations with AKP in Van, after the disaster. Therefore, the disaster management in Van illustrates the new forms of patronage and clientelistic relations of AKP which is the party in power for 13 years.

The findings of the fieldwork and report analysis indicate the fact that the activities of the government affected the economy in Van very negatively after the earthquake. The disaster management could not provide economic development in Van; on the contrary, it could be argued that things got worse. Many shopkeepers in Van have serious financial problems. In September 2013, Van MP for BDP tabled a parliamentary question to the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology about the KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization) loans which were planned as a program of financial and economic support to the earthquake victims. He claimed that these loans were provided to construction companies and contractors who have close relations with AKP. Moreover, he indicates that there are small enterprises which got these loans yet could not receive the money from the banks for 40 days.⁴⁵

Furthermore, the problems regarding housing persist definitely. Many people who live in TOKİ houses live on with minimum wage and they have serious

⁴⁵ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question 27 September, 2013.

difficulties to afford the expenses of the TOKİ houses, which is 800 TLs on average, including subscription fee, heating, utility and water bills. When the payments of the TOKİ houses would start, people probably had to leave these houses, according to the presidents of Mazlum-Der and VAKAD. In addition to these problems, there are more severe issues considering people who were tenants before the disaster or could not be entitled as right holder after their houses are ruined or heavily-damaged. According to Van Governor, there were 255 families who live in container buildings and 14,000 families have problems regarding housing in October 2013.⁴⁶ Three years after disaster, there is one family which still has to take shelter in a tent (GÇD, 2014, p. 2).

In December 2013 Mazlum-Der published a report in behalf of VKK (Van Coordination Committee). The report indicates that there are 111 families still live in container buildings in 5 different *konteynerkents* which were supposed to be temporary. Consequently, the government decides to force people to leave these houses by cutting electricity and water supply in these *konteynerkents*. Harsh weather conditions in winter worsened the situation of people as well. Accordingly, people started to hunger strike because their demands of housing, employment, livelihoods and reduction in social and economic vulnerability especially for children are not recognized by state officials.

4.2 State and civil society relations

As it is illustrated previously, one of the most significant factors of the failure of disaster management was the lack of cooperation between state and NGOs. According to the reports and the interviews with different NGOs members who

⁴⁶ Retrieved 19 May, 2016, from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/van-valisi-soz-verdi-1154506/>.

participated to the disaster management actively, the immediate management process was disappointed. Van AFAD Director claimed that AFAD organized a crisis center in the emergent disaster management phase and they coordinated all local and global NGOs that got accredited. He emphasized that NGOs could not work separately from AFAD's crisis center.

It is plausible to argue that one central coordination team would carry out the disaster management more successful, since it would be more organized. Nevertheless, AFAD's crisis center did not develop an effective cooperation with community-based organizations which understand the cultural dynamics and reflect the real needs and priorities of people (Jalali, 2002). Moreover, because of the double-headed characteristic of the disaster management in Van, many local and global NGOs left out of the government's coordination team. Van AFAD Director claimed that they worked with many NGOs such as *Kimse Yok Mu YardımDerneği*, a non-profit humanitarian aid organization, *İHH* (IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation) and some commercial enterprises. Whereas, several NGOs which have a critical position against the government coordinated with the crisis center of the municipality, according to the president of Van-Der.

According to Paker, state establishes particularistic connections with civil society organization, cooperating with certain groups whereas excluding the rest. She claims that there are personalized one-to-one relations between well-connected groups and state in terms of providing benefits to them (Paker, 2005, p. 277-292). In the case of Van, AFAD Director mentions certain organizations that have close relations with the government and business enterprises in order to demonstrate the cooperation between state and civil society. Nevertheless, local NGOs which have

close relations with BDP were excluded from the government's management process and they form their own particularistic connections with the municipality.

There are some NGOs which tried to be independent from both parties. VAKAD's president explained that they cooperated with local government and unions such as *Eğitim-Sen* (Education and Science Workers' Union), nevertheless they set up an independent network with local and feminist groups, such as *Sosyalist Feminist Kolektif* (The Socialist Feminist Collective) and Global Dialogue. She claimed that they tried to cooperate with the crisis management of AFAD and governorship but their attempts were rejected by them all the time. They prepared a list of the urgent needs of the people, such as shoes, but the crisis management did not supply these needs. They organized an independent feminist tent in three main *konteynerkents* in order to distribute the aid that came from other organizations, yet their activities were blocked by the governorship since they did not get accredited. She said that they kept working because they were from Van and they did not need accreditation in their own town. She added that the attitude of the municipality was similar against their activities in the municipality's organization. VAKAD wanted to organize an activity for women victims and they asked to use the tents of the municipality's crisis center in Altıntepe. However, the municipality replied that they have their own NGOs and asked accreditation from VAKAD.

One point that should be discussed regarding state and civil society relations is that the activities of civil society became politicized by the actors of the party which is powerful in the region, and this has serious implications for the disaster management process. The presidents of Mazlum-Der and VAKAD claimed that the problem of people who still live in container buildings could not be solved because of the clash of political interests of both groups. They think that civil society

organizations could not carry out activities that are not supported by political actors who are dominant in the region.

The case of victims who still have to live in *konteynerkents* illustrates the issue evidently. VAKAD's President argues that the main purpose of the Van Coordination Committee was to solve the ongoing problems of the *konteynerkents*. This committee was very affective in terms of molding political opinion and putting pressure on the government connecting electricity back to *konteynerkents*. Nevertheless, the committee failed to provide a solution to the issue in the next stage. VAKAD's president explained that they started negotiations with the governorship about a public land to build houses for people who could not afford TOKİ houses with collective work. The negotiation process was in a good progress since the governor considered even providing a public land and the municipality promised that they will push the limits to construct a building for these people. Nevertheless, the negotiation with the governorship was ended by some members of the Committee since this task 'exceeds the capacity of NGOs'. The report of GÇD confirms that because of the public pressure, Van Governorship requested a project of 2,500 houses in Van and Erciş from Ministry of Family and Social Policies, yet the project was put aside because Van Coordination Committee stopped working actively (GÇD, 2014, p. 3).

Van MP for BDP, a member of Van Coordination Committee, was one of them who think the negotiation should end. VAKAD's President added that the public statements of Van Coordination Committee about the issue were made by Van MP for BDP after all because he is more 'political'. The other NGOs in the committee could not say a word against it, although it would be more objective when NGOs would make statements, she argues. Eventually, she claims that the real

reason was making coordination with the government would impact the electoral campaigns of BDP for the upcoming local elections. Therefore, she concludes that the project could not be put into practice because of everyday politics.

Moreover, VAKAD's President criticized the 'civil' position of Van Coordination Committee which has to be more objective. She argues that in the meetings, there is a hierarchy between NGOs and political parties in the decision making process. These organizational problems 'melted' the power of the committee and hindered the actions of some NGOs in the group. The President of Mazlum-Der claimed that some people in this group prioritize the political interest than the benefit of the people in Van. He mentions another project of their organization and he hopes that their project would not be hindered by the party which is in power in Van, BDP frankly, since if they do not approve the project, it would not be effective.

Jalali, Özerdem and Jacoby claim that there is a complex relationship between state and civil society. On the one hand, the activities of civil society is crucial for the effectiveness of the disaster management in terms of controlling state power, developing cooperation and trust in disaster relief, and on the other hand civil society works more efficiently when it cooperates with the state institutions (Jalali, 2012, p. 122-123; Özerdem & Jacoby, 2006, p. 70). Furthermore, Kubicek (2007) emphasizes the 'Gramscian role' of civil society in terms of illustrating the political challenge within the state and among political parties. Nevertheless, in the case of Van Earthquake, the role of civil society is much more convoluted because of the significant impacts of political actors. The civil society organizations in Van got stuck in the tension between central government and local government in the region. Their activities were repressed by the government since they were opposing groups, and at the same time were manipulated by political actors who are powerful in the

region. Therefore, the civil characteristic of civil society organization melted away which reduced their effectiveness in disaster management.

4.3 Conclusion

The data consisting of various interviews, reports, parliamentary questions, archive research from newspapers and other internet sources illustrate the fact that the political interests of both parties, the municipality and the government, are the leading factor of the failure of disaster management after Van Earthquake. However, the government took the advantage of holding state resources for favoring their supporters in the city in exchange of political support. Thus, the distribution of aid right after the disaster, the tender and construction process of TOKI houses, damage assessment and city master plan projects, and the recognition of right holders were very problematic. The government favored their supporters as well as blocked the activities of the municipality which is controlled by the opposed party. This complex relationship between central and local government leads to the fact that the disaster management became double-headed. Consequently, various forms of corrupt and rent-seeking activities of the government caused an unequal allocation of resources.

Moreover, state and civil society relations were politically motivated during the disaster management. The coordination of the government was very top-down and ineffective in terms of integrating community-based groups that have local knowledge. Various NGOs were excluded from the crisis center of the government's disaster management, since they challenge the power of the state by raising awareness in public sphere, as in the example of Van Coordination Committee. In addition to this, civil society organization had difficulties with protecting their 'civil' status because of the fact that, actors from the dominant political party in Van, which

is BDP, influenced the activities of NGOs during the disaster management process. Therefore, civil society was in a difficult condition in terms of providing an independent and effective contribution to the disaster management.

All these developments have severe implications on people who were affected by the earthquake in the sense that poverty and exclusion were regenerated. The corrupt activities of the government hindered the ability of people to receive the aid they essentially need. People who were already excluded before the disaster were neglected by the government and their basic rights of protection such as housing were undermined. Moreover, the tension between the municipality and the government caused an organizational crisis which hindered the economic development and the recovery of the city. As a consequence, despite the huge amounts of resources for disaster management, people's condition deteriorated dramatically after the earthquake.

CHAPTER 5

THE OUTCOMES OF THE DISASTER:

THE CONTESTATION OF POWER AFTER THE EARTHQUAKE

In addition to the analysis of the politicization of disaster management process, this thesis aims to examine post-disaster political change after Van Earthquake. The framework of critical juncture to understand post-disaster political change provides a historical institutional analysis to understand the outcomes of disasters. Disasters might produce an 'accelerated status-quo', in which pre-disaster course of events continue or accelerate that causes the further control of powerful elites. However, in some cases, disasters create a 'critical juncture' - a period of significant policy shift and political transformations (Collier & Collier, 1999) during which one can observe political change - revolutionary movements and structural change in regimes, or more moderately, institutional alterations, change in power balance at state and local levels, or changes in the legislative regulations and practice on the crisis management (Pelling & Dill, 2010; Olson & Gawronski, 2003). The approach demonstrates that disasters may open a political space for contestation or concentration of political power and redistribution of rights between state and citizens (Pelling & Dill, 2010, p. 34).

This chapter aims to examine the outcomes of the earthquake whether there is a political change in the city. The findings of the fieldwork and report analysis which have been discussed in the previous chapter indicate that the AKP government used different forms of clientelistic relations and patronage in the process of the allocation of disaster relief and the recovery, which largely ended up with rent-seeking

activities and corruption. In accordance with these developments, this thesis argues that the activities of the government caused a minor contestation of political power of the AKP government in the region.

In order to understand whether there is a political change after the disaster, it is significant to analyze the social and economic outcomes of the earthquake. Thus, this chapter aims to discover the post-disaster trajectories in order to claim that the social and economic problems persist even three years after the earthquake. Furthermore, it will focus the political developments which may be analyzed as an example of a minor political contestation in the sense that the failure of disaster management in Van brings about a social mobilization which tips the local power balance in the region.

5.1 Economic and social outcomes of the earthquake: A failure of disaster management

According to the findings of my field work and of various reports, the economy in Van was affected very negatively after the earthquake. The disaster management of the government could not provide economic development in Van; on the contrary, it could be argued that things got worse. Many shopkeepers in Van have serious financial problems. In September 2013, Van MP for BDP tabled a parliamentary question to the Ministry of Science, Industry and Technology about the KOSGEB (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization) loans which were planned as a program of financial and economic support to the earthquake victims. He claimed that these loans were provided to construction companies and contractors who have close relations with AKP. Moreover, he indicates that there are small enterprises which got these loans yet could not receive

the money from the banks for 40 days.⁴⁷ The Deputy Mayor argues that most of the shopkeepers in Van have serious difficulties of paying the tax debts accrued after the earthquake, since most of them were closed for a long time. Additionally, the project of TOKİ houses did not have a positive impact on the issue of the unemployment and the economic growth of city after the disaster, considering that the projects were carried out by firms that are not from Van and that have close relations with AKP.

The problems regarding housing persist definitely. Many people who live in TOKİ houses live on minimum wage and they have serious difficulties even to afford the expenses of the TOKİ houses. When the mortgage payments of the TOKİ houses would start, people probably had to leave these houses, according to the presidents of Mazlum-Der and VAKAD. In addition to these problems, there are more severe issues considering people who were tenants before the disaster or could not be entitled as right holder after their houses are ruined or heavily-damaged. Van MP explains that it is quite difficult to find houses for rent in Van considering the fact that the city master plan has not been completed and the rent rose dramatically after the earthquake.

The situation of people who still live in *konteynerkents* three years after the earthquake brings out that the post-disaster recovery has failed in Van precisely. According to Van Governor, there were 255 families who live in container buildings and 14,000 families have problems regarding housing in October 2013.⁴⁸ Three years after disaster, there is one family which still has to take shelter in a tent and 43 families live in *konteynerkents* (GÇD, 2014, p.2). In addition to the very urgent needs of the people in terms of shelter, heating, food, clothing, clean water, personal

⁴⁷ Retrieved from TBMM Parliamentary Question, 27 September, 2013.

⁴⁸ Retrieved 19 May, 2016, from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/van-valisi-soz-verdi-1154506/>.

hygiene and medical aid, the psychosocial condition of the disaster victims is worrisome. The disaster victims are expected to continue their daily life without any psychological support (GÇD, 2013, p. 25). The President of MazlumDer states that suicides attempts are very common in konteynerkents that there were 15 serious suicide attempts reported, which demonstrates the psychological conditions of disaster victims.⁴⁹

5.2 The hunger strike and local elections: A minor contestation of power?

In August 27, 2013 the disaster victims in Anadolu Konteynerkent started a hunger strike to raise their demands for housing and better life conditions after the government decided to force people to leave these temporary houses by cutting the electricity and water supply in *konteynerkents*.⁵⁰

The resistance of the victims in *konteynerkents* and their hunger strike make the issue visible nationwide. While the government claims the great success of the disaster management providing TOKİ houses and economic growth, the hunger strike and resistance demonstrate the fact that life has not got back to “normal”. On the contrary, these developments indicate that after almost three years from disaster, nothing has much changed, or it may even have gotten worse in Van. The hunger strike demonstrates the fact that the demands of disaster victims in terms of housing, employment, and better living conditions especially for children are not recognized by state officials.

Consequently, the struggle of the disaster victims in container buildings reveals the discontent of all citizens in Van. The hunger strike lasted more than three

⁴⁹ Yakup Aslan, interview by author, tape recording, 22 April, 2014.

⁵⁰ Retrieved 5 May, 2015, from <https://bianet.org/bianet/insan-haklari/149471-depremedeler-aclik-grevinde>.

months and is reported in the mainstream media. As a response, the government tried to oppress the victims at first by cutting the electricity and water supply of the containers. The President of Mazlum-Der explains the issue as follows:

That place had no electricity for three months. The kids were infested with lice, smelled very badly, in that cold weather. [...] I said that we tried so hard to convince the Governor and TEDAŞ (Turkish Electricity Distribution Corporation). [to the head of AKP in Van] I asked [him] why you prevented it and how would you if one of these people would die. I said I would divulge this. Then they contacted Beşir Atalay, I suppose. He was also involved in this process. He came to Van and said they have to leave this place. Then he called me and said that I criticized him a lot, but he decided to provide the electricity. I said as long as the electricity is provided, it does not matter who provides this. Now they have power supply, but psychological problems and illnesses remains. They cut the aid that came from the Institute of Social Services [...].⁵¹ (See Appendix, 6)

The pressure of the media and civil society increased and the government had to take a step back and provided the electricity and water supply to *konternerkents* and promised some housing benefits such as rent allowance to people in these container buildings.⁵²

The resistance of disaster victims may mark a critical juncture which could lead to a change. The local election results held in March 2014 illustrate the contestation of the local power of AKP, the ruler party to a certain extent. Bekir Kaya, the Mayor of Van who was arrested within the scope of the investigation into the KCK in June 12 and discharged after nine months won 54% of the votes and was re-elected Mayor in 2014 local elections.

Moreover, in district municipalities, BDP had a relative success compared to AKP. In 2009, AKP won the five district municipalities out of eleven, whereas in 2014 it won two district municipalities out of thirteen. On the other hand, DTP (Democratic Society Party, the Kurdish party in Turkey which is succeeded by BDP)

⁵¹ Yakup Aslan, interview by author, tape recording, 22 April, 2014.

⁵² Retrieved 20 April, 2015, from <http://www.radikal.com.tr/turkiye/van-valisi-soz-verdi-1154506/>.

won four district municipalities in Van in 2009 yet it won eleven district municipalities in 2014 (YSK election results). One of the districts that AKP lost is Erciş, a region in which AKP is publicly supported before the earthquake. Considering that Erciş is the epicenter of the first earthquake and thus affected severely, the loss of AKP is significant, according to the head of Labour Party (EMEP).

AKP's loss in 2014 local election in Van is relatively high compared to other cities of Kurdish region in Eastern Turkey. According to the local election results of 2009 and 2014, compared to eleven cities in the region, there is a remarkable loss in AKP's local power in Van. AKP lost four district municipalities of Van whereas BDP won seven. In other cities, the number of AKP mayors and BDP mayors of district municipalities has not critically changed compared to Van. Table 1 presents the comparison of 2009 and 2014 Local Elections in ten cities of Eastern Turkey to examine the loss of AKP and the success of BDP in Van.

Table 1: The Comparison of 2009 and 2014 Local Elections in Eleven Cities of Eastern Turkey

	# of AKP's District Municipalities			# of BDP (DTP)'s District Municipalities		
	March 2009	March 2014	Change	March 2009	March 2014	Change
Van	5/11	2/13	-5	4/11	11/13	+7
Ağrı	2/7	4/7	+2	3/7	3/7	0
İğdır	2/3	0/3	-2	0/3	1/3	+1
Hakkari	0/3	0/3	0	3/3	3/3	0
Şırnak	1/6	1/6	0	5/6	5/6	0
Siirt	3/6	4/6	+1	2/6	2/6	0
Batman	3/5	2/5	-1	2/5	2/5	0
Bitlis	2/6	3/6	+1	2/6	3/6	+1
Muş	0/5	2/5	+2	3/5	3/5	0
Diyarbakır	1/17	2/17	+1	14/17	15/17	+1
Bingöl	3/7	5/7	+2	1/7	0/7	-1

Sources:

<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yerel-secim-2014/>, <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/election2009/election.html> and data from The Supreme Electoral Council of Turkey (YSK)

The loss of AKP in Van after the local elections induces a crisis in the government. The event during the annual ceremony of Turkish Council of the State might be an example of this crisis. In May 2014, the President of Turkish Bar Association Feyzioğlu made a speech at the annual ceremony of Turkish Council of

the State. In this speech, he highlights the issue of container buildings and the devastating conditions of victims with these words:

[...] I would like to give disaster victims' kind regards to the President. The regards of the victims who still live in *konteynerkents*. The Republic of Turkey is a welfare state with rule of law. The welfare state has to provide the housing rights of its citizens. The earthquake killed our people and destroyed our buildings with no distinction between tenants and house holders. But social houses provided only to house holder and to a number of tenants who are selected by lots. There is no doubt that the Republic of Turkey is capable to relief the conditions of these people. With a simple change in regulations, this problem could have been solved which I hope it will as soon as possible.⁵³ (See Appendix, 7)

The speech was interrupted by the Prime Minister Erdoğan who left the ceremony. The dramatic overreaction and aggressive attitude of the Prime Minister demonstrates how AKP's loss in Van arise a crisis in the government.

Based on the analyses and the local election results that are investigated above, the thesis argues that the failure of the disaster management marked a critical juncture which tipped the power balance and open a space for political contestation. The politicization process of the disaster management was the determining factor of this outcome. The government's centralized disaster management which refuses to cooperate with the municipality because of clashing political interests, various cases of patronage and rent-seeking activities in disaster management, the unequal disaster management process to AKP supporters in terms of providing disaster relief and social services leads to a discontent of citizens in Van. And this might have an impact on the election results in the sense that it is plausible to argue AKP's political power in Van has been challenged because of the failure of the disaster management.

⁵³ The Speech of Metin Feyzioglu, retrieved 5 April, 2016, from <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/iste-basbakani-sinirlendiren-konusma-26391046>.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

This thesis is my pursuit of understanding the post-disaster dynamics in Van by examining politicization processes of disaster management and its outcomes.

Disasters are rarely just natural events, rather, they are the product of socio-political and economic dynamics. And disaster management became a political process through the power calculation between different actors who aim to attain and/or consolidate political power. Taken into hand within such framework, disaster management is inevitably a political process (Zaman, 1999).

To understand these two facts, the main theoretical concern is to elaborate the ways in which such practices are politicized and what are their political, social and economic impacts. Thus, in the second chapter I focused first on vulnerability analysis which emphasizes pre-existing socio-economic and political factors such as class, race/ethnicity, gender, political ideologies, language and literacy and the issue of migration; and asserts that these factors make people more vulnerable to the effects of disaster, therefore disasters are more devastating for them. All these factors are quite adequate for examining the case of Van when the political and social and economic factors including poverty, migration, political and ethnic tensions are considered. Therefore, the vulnerability approach provides a solid theoretical framework for the research.

In order to understand the manifestation of how disaster management is politicized, I elaborated the ways in which politics is involved in disaster management. I examined the political factors that impact the decision-making

process of the governments in the aftermath of disasters and clientelistic and patronage relations in the distribution of resources. Secondly, I elaborated the ambiguous relationship between state and civil society relations during disaster management process in order to understand in which conditions state cooperates with NGOs or it hinders the actions of NGOs. And lastly I scrutinized the political outcomes of disasters to understand the ways in which disasters challenge the political power and cause a regime change or they produce accelerated status-quo by consolidating political power. These three dynamics provides a theoretical framework to articulate the politicization of disasters.

My thesis asserts that the case of Van Earthquake provides an accurate example to understand these two facts mentioned above. First, in the third chapter I assert that Van's political, economic and social background demonstrates there was a disaster in Van before the earthquake occurred. The roots of the underdevelopment are the poverty and marginalization which is the outcome of Kurdish issue. The victims of Van were suffered from preexisting inequalities and exclusion that stem from armed conflict and forced migration. The thesis asserts that without scrutinizing the political and economic background of Van, the reasons of the failure of the disaster management could not be accurately comprehended.

Nevertheless, their vulnerabilities elevated with the exclusionary practices of state in the disaster management process. The arrestment of municipal mayors and BDP members blocked the mitigation activities of the local government which deteriorated the earthquake victims in Van dramatically. The exclusionary practices of the state manifest itself when the *konteynerkents* were demolished by using force. People who live in these container buildings were the ones which are the most vulnerable segment of the society in political, economic and social terms. And the

practices of the state bring about deliberate exclusion of these people which regenerates poverty and marginalization.

The earthquake became the second disaster for the people who suffer from inequalities, poverty and exclusion. Their vulnerabilities that stem from the Kurdish issue in terms of armed conflict and forced migration exacerbate after the earthquake with the exclusionary practices of the state. This thesis argue that the earthquake might be used as an instrument for reducing the poverty and eliminating inequalities and the conditions of people could be ameliorated. However, the process of disaster management neglects the political, economic and social background of the region and regenerates the preexisting inequalities and exclusion. Consequently, things have gotten even worse in Van after the earthquake.

Second significant point, which is emphasized in the fourth chapter, is that throughout the disaster management process in Van, there is all across politicization among actors of the state, the government, the municipality and the civil society organizations. In my field study, I observe that almost every actor who is involved in disaster management process is highly politicized. My comprehensive analysis illustrates that the political interests of both parties, the municipality and the government, are the leading factor of the failure of disaster management after Van Earthquake. However, the government took the advantage of holding state resources for favoring their supporters in the city in exchange of political support. Thus, during the distribution of aid and recovery process, the government favored their supporters as well as blocked the activities of the municipality which is controlled by the opposed party. This complex relationship between central and local government leads to the fact that the disaster management became double-headed. Consequently,

various forms of corrupt and rent-seeking activities of the government caused an unequal allocation of resources.

Moreover, state and civil society relations were politically motivated during the disaster management. The coordination of the government was very top-down and ineffective in terms of integrating community-based groups that have local knowledge. Various NGOs were excluded from the crisis center of the government's disaster management, because of the political contestation. In addition to this, the actions of civil society organizations became politicized because dominant political actors, both from AKP and BDP, tried to influence the activities of NGOs during the disaster management process. Therefore, civil society was in an ambiguous position in terms of providing an independent and effective contribution to the disaster management.

All these developments have severe implications on people who were affected by the earthquake in the sense that poverty and exclusion were regenerated. The corrupt activities of the government hindered the ability of people to receive the aid they essentially need. People who were already excluded before the disaster were neglected by the government and their basic rights of protection such as housing were undermined. Moreover, the tension between the municipality and the government caused an organizational crisis which hindered the economic development and the recovery of the city. The fifth chapter highlights that as a consequence, despite the huge amounts of resources for disaster management, people's condition deteriorated dramatically after the earthquake.

The resistance of people in container buildings and the hunger strike demonstrates the failure of the disaster management very dramatically. This thesis

argues that this event might have produced a critical juncture in the sense that it hinders the ability of government to consolidate its local power. The results of the local election in 2014 indicate that the political power of AKP has been contested. I assert that these results may be analyzed as an example of a minor political contestation in the sense that the failure of disaster management in Van brings about a social mobilization which tips the local power balance in the region.

After covering the main issues that the thesis emphasizes, it is important to mention the ideas for future work. As mentioned for a couple of times, the main purpose of my study is twofold. Firstly, it aims to examine the disaster management process after disaster in order to make us rethink service provisions, institutions, and infrastructures particularly for those who are more vulnerable to the devastating effects of disasters. Secondly, it purposes to analyze the post-disaster trajectories in Van by looking at the politicization process and its outcomes. Disasters may lead to significant political and policy changes which entail structural transformations in power distributions (Pelling and Dill, 2010, p. 22; Carlin et al, 2013, p.5), or former structures of institutions induce further movement in the same direction in a path dependent manner after disasters (Pierson, 2000). Accordingly, this research raises this fundamental question which may be discussed in the future: Under what conditions do disasters strengthen the pre-disaster inequalities in which the former political balance remains or, on the contrary, exacerbate pre-existing political, cultural and economic tensions and cleavages leading to new dynamics?

To understand the underlying dynamics of the outcomes of disasters, the study addresses three key propositions which could be discussed comparatively in a different research: First, disasters are crisis precipitating events which may cause political and policy change. Second, politicization of crisis management has a

significant impact on the social, economic and political outcomes of crises. And third, the politicization manifests itself in political institutions and policy implementations of state authorities in charge of administering relief services, and in complex relationship between central government, local government and civil society.

The main aim of this thesis is to present a frame of the failure of the disaster management in Van, in which the clash of interests between central and local authorities combines with the political tension that reproduced preexisting inequalities and exclusion. This frame could provide a map for further studies in which the power of the central and local actors is more balanced in the process of disaster management, and the political context is different.

APPENDIX

QUOTES IN THE ORIGINAL TURKISH

1. Interview with Abdullah Aras the Head of AKP in Van

Dağıtımda birazcık problem oldu. Alanlar çarçur ediyordu [...] Toplum olarak ders edinelim. Kürt, Kürtçü olmasına rağmen, azgın BDP'li olmasına rağmen herkesin algısı değişti gelen yardımları görünce.

2. Interview with the President of Van-Der

Aslında benim tespitim buradakilerin binlerce deprem yaşadığıdır, Zorunlu göçten kaynaklı böyle yerinden edilmiş kesimlerdir. Dolayısıyla benzer süreçleri çokça yaşamışlardır. Deprem onu daha bir görünür kılıp derinleştiriyor o travmayı. [...]Bizim çalışmaların arka planında da o var, zorunlu göçle gelen bir yoksulluk. Mesela belirlememiz söyle, Kırşehir'deki bir yoksul aile ile buradaki yoksul aile dışsal nedenlerden egemen, hakim politik sistemden kaynaklı bir yoksulluk. Yani kapitalist sistemden kaynaklı bir yoksulluk var. Kırşehir'de de var, Hakkari'de de var. Ama ikincisi, (Hakkari) bunlar aslında böyle değildi, üretime dahildir, çalışıyorlardı, mutluydular. Zorunlu göç birileri onları oradan söküyor ve şehirlere salıyor hayatlarında görmedikleri gitmedikleri bir yerlere. O anlamda iki defa mağdurdurlar. Bir egemen sistemden bir de yerelde o zorunlu göçün mağdurdurlar. Dolayısıyla daha travmatik.

3. Interview with the Head of AKP in Van

Koordinasyonu Valilik, Afad Başkanlığı harika yürüttüler.

4. Interview with Zozan Özgökçe, the President of VAKAD

Bir de mesela gidiyordun bir mahalleye, biz artık o dönemde şeyi çok iyi öğrenmiştik, şöyle bir hiyerarşi vardı bak, naylon, çadır, çadır da Kızılay çadırı, ondan sonra daha iyi koşullarda yaşayanların çadırı, sınır Tanımayan Doktorlar'ın veya Shelterbox çadırları, Rus çadırları vardı, bir de İsveç çadırları vardı. Biz bütün çadırları öğrenmiştik. Böyle bir ilerleme var. Mesela Rus çadırlarını valilik dağıtıyordu, İsveç çadırlarını da belediye dağıtıyordu. Bir mahalleye gelince, iyi çadırlar belediyenin değerli ailelerinde İsveç çadırları, onlarda görüyordun. Gazi ailelerinde Rus çadırları görüyordun. Mesela bu bile toplumsal yarılmadır ya bırak şeyi, herkese aynı

çadırın, veya benzer standartlarda çadırların dağıtılması gerekiyor. Biz o mahallede kim çalışmış onu görebiliyorduk mesela.

5. Interview with a disaster victim

Deprem bir şey yapmadı. Ne yaptıysa belediye ve Çevre Şehircilik Bakanlığı yaptı. Hükümet ve BDP çekişmesinden olan buradaki insanlara oldu. Şehrin imar planı 3 ay önce kabul edildi.

6. Interview with Yakup Aslan, The President of Van Mazlum-Der

Dedim ki yani o kadar çaba gösterdik neticede vali de kabul etti Tedaş il bölge müdürü de kabul etti, niye engellediniz, yani yazık günah değil mi bu insanlardan biri ölürse bunun hesabını nasıl vereceksiniz? Dedim sizi deşifre edeceğim. Onun üzerine onlar işte valiyle görüştüler herhalde Beşir Atalay'la da görüştüler. Çünkü bu engellemenin içerisinde Beşir Bey de var. Geldi bunlar burayı terk etsinler gitsinler diye. Onun üzerine bana telefon açtı ya işte sen beni çok eleştirdin, ben elektriği bağlatıyorum, dedim bağlat. Yani yeter ki elektrikleri bağlansın, bizim derdimiz kim bağladı değil. Elektrikler bağlandı, ama orada hastalık devam ediyor, orada psikolojik sorunlar devam ediyor, orada valiliğe bağlı sosyal yardımlaşma kurumu müdürlüğü yardımları kesti eskiden mesela ayda bir her aileye bir koli işte makarnadır şekerdir zeytindir veriyordu, şu anda onu kesti. Neden kesti yardımı? Hatta gidip orada göreceksiniz malul maaşı alanların da maaşı kesildi. Siz burada işte devletin imkanlarından istifade ediyorsunuz.

7. The Speech of Metin Feyzioğlu in the 146th Annual Ceremony of Turkish Council of the State

[...]Zat-I Alinize ve buradaki muhterem heyete iletmek üzere, üzerimde bir selam borcu var. Van'da konteynerkentte yaşamaya devam eden kiracıların selamı. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti sosyal bir hukuk devletidir. Sosyal devlet, yurttaşın barınma ihtiyacını gidermek zorundadır. Deprem, kiracı-mal sahibi ayrımı yapmadan binaları yıkıp insanlarımızı öldürmüş, deprem konutları ise öncelikli olarak mal sahiplerine ve yalnızca bir kısım kiracıya ise kurayla tahsis edilmiştir. Türkiye Cumhuriyeti bu insanlarımızın mağduriyetini giderebilecek kudrete kuşkusuz sahiptir. Basit bir yönetmelik değişikliğiyle bile çözüm bulunabileceğini düşündüğümüz bu sorunun kısa sürede giderilmesini dileyerek bu selamı sizlere iletiyorum.

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