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# Disaster Capitalism and Social Policy: Social Work in the Aftermath of Natural Disasters

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**ABSTRACT**

Unpredictable timing, disruption of community and health services, severe economic impacts, and the deterioration of psychosocial well-being necessitate the evaluation of natural disasters from a social work perspective. Social workers play critical roles in these situations, such as connecting disadvantaged groups with necessary resources, protecting individuals' well-being, assessing needs, and providing relief and support. The core roles and functions of the social work profession, which emphasize a people-centered, rights-based approach, become particularly significant after a disaster. Neoliberal policies and disaster capitalism exploit the fear and anxiety generated by natural disasters to gain public consent for practices that may not be in their best interests. In this context, fear appeals can be manipulated as a persuasive tool to make disaster-affected citizens accept policies and practices they would typically reject. This study outlines the issues that social workers should address at micro, meso, and macro levels to counteract the influence of neoliberal policies and disaster capitalism, which leverage the fear and anxiety induced by natural disasters to secure public consent for unfavorable practices.

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**KEYWORDS** Natural disaster; fear attraction; empowerment; education; social work

## Introduction

Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, storms, tsunamis, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, fires, locust infestations, droughts, and desertification, are caused by natural processes and have harmful consequences for humans, animals, and plants (Webb, Tierney, and Dahlhamer 2002). These large-scale adversities occur worldwide and are often associated with death, trauma, and property destruction (Shultz et al. 2013). Natural disasters pose threats of harm or death to large populations, disrupt services and social networks, cause economic losses, create unequal impacts, and result in mental and physical health consequences (Shen and Hwang

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2019). These events can escalate into social disasters with severe repercussions, necessitating immediate response, recovery efforts, and reconstruction processes (Shultz et al. 2013).

The aftermath of these events also paves the way for the development of disaster capitalism, which exacerbates the victimization of disaster survivors. Disaster capitalism refers to the exploitation of natural disasters and other crises as opportunities for neoliberal capitalist reforms and economic restructuring (Bark 2009). This theory posits that crises enable governments and corporations to implement controversial economic reforms with reduced public resistance. Critics argue that disaster capitalism benefits elites at the expense of the most vulnerable populations (Kristanti et al. 2021).

Social workers play a crucial role in the recovery and restructuring of society following a disaster. Their work is essential in understanding the changes post-disaster and in preventing disaster capitalism. Social workers manage the post-disaster process by assessing the needs of individuals, families, and communities, providing psychosocial support, strengthening social solidarity, and distributing resources fairly and effectively. They combat disaster capitalism, which exploits disaster-induced victimization, by developing proposals to improve social work practice based on post-disaster problems and solutions. To achieve this, social workers conduct effective interventions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels to enhance the agency, voice, rights, participation, and solidarity of disaster victims.

## Background of the Study

### *Literature Review and Purpose of the Study*

Social work has traditionally focused on understanding the impact of disasters on individuals, families, organizations, and communities, emphasizing the management of traumatic stress, providing resources for vulnerable populations, and coordinating intervention systems (Pyles 2007). However, there has been a relative lack of involvement in the rebuilding and community development phases of disaster recovery (Bauwens and Naturale 2017). Despite this being a critical aspect of disaster practice, it has been overlooked, even though it aligns fundamentally with the core mission of social work.

The literature suggests that social work interventions have primarily centered on addressing traumatic stress and coordinating relief efforts, with less active involvement in the rebuilding and community development phases (Bauwens and Naturale 2017). This finding highlights the need for a greater emphasis on long-term recovery and development within the field of social work. Additionally, post-disaster local government reconstruction and community self-organization are facilitated through social-acquaintance

networks, indicating the importance of social capital in disaster recovery (Li and Tan 2019). Leveraging social capital can significantly facilitate community recovery and development following disasters.

Furthermore, the impact of disasters on individuals in affected communities is mediated by various circumstances, including the intensity of the disaster, the type and nature of the affected community, and the extent of loss and displacement (Hettige and Haigh 2016). This underscores the complex and multifaceted nature of disaster recovery, emphasizing the need for comprehensive and integrated social responses to address the diverse challenges faced by affected communities.

In conclusion, while social work has played a crucial role in addressing the immediate impacts of disasters, there is a clear need for greater involvement in the rebuilding and community development phases of disaster recovery. Leveraging social capital, understanding the diverse circumstances mediating the impact of disasters, and adopting an integrated approach to social responses are essential for promoting sustainable recovery and development in disaster-affected communities.

However, the scope of social work in post-disaster interventions extends beyond psychological support. The role of social work is crucial and should not be underestimated in addressing injustices arising from fear, ensuring the equal and fair distribution of aid, and combating companies that seek to profit from disaster-affected areas and neoliberal policies that victimize individuals and communities (Saavedra and Alvarado-Cañuta 2023). Bark (2009) argued in "The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism" that social work can be an important tool against disaster capitalism. Bark's work provides a compelling critique of capitalist practices and highlights the role of disaster capitalism in shaping post-disaster responses. Furthermore, Saavedra and Alvarado-Cañuta (2023) discuss the need for a critical debate on how social work has been influenced by neoliberalism, even in ostensibly neutral areas such as post-disaster response. These references collectively support the notion that social work can serve as a vital tool against disaster capitalism by exposing the influence of neoliberalism and capitalist practices in post-disaster scenarios. This study aims to evaluate natural disasters from a social work perspective and to address the issues that social work needs to confront in the face of practices that exacerbate post-disaster conditions.

## *Natural Disasters, Vulnerable Populations, and Integration of Social Work*

The concept of internal and external forces shaping the Earth's surface is a fundamental aspect of geology. Internal forces from within the Earth are driven by mantle convection and are responsible for orogeny, epeirogeny,

earthquakes, and volcanism (Love 1908). These forces are a result of convective currents in the mantle (Love 1908). On the other hand, external forces such as rivers, wind, underground water, glaciers, waves, and currents, are driven by energy from the atmosphere and solar radiation, and play a significant role in shaping the Earth's surface by eroding high areas and depositing sediments in lower areas (Lawrence et al. 1969). The interplay between these internal and external forces is crucial to the continuous shaping of the Earth's surface (Lawrence et al. 1969). However, some natural events can cause great loss of life and property when they intersect with the human population. Such events are called "natural disasters." Natural disasters are natural hazards that negatively affect the socio-economic and cultural activities of society, cause significant loss of life and property, and are mostly caused by natural factors (Şahin and Sipahioğlu 2003).

People's awareness and behavior towards natural disasters play an important role in the emergence of natural disasters. How the natural environment is utilized, the choice of location for settlement, and economic activities are the factors that determine the severity and impact of natural disasters. In other words, activities that ignore the risks of natural disasters further increase the negative impact of natural disasters. In addition, excessive population growth, continuous and unconscious consumption, problematic-wrong policies and irresponsible behavior accelerate the deterioration of the natural environment (Gökçe and Kaya 2009).

The vulnerability of undeveloped or developing countries to natural disasters is well documented (Shah 2023). The impact of natural disasters on such countries is greater and leads to social problems, injustices, inequalities, poverty, migration, displacement, human rights violations and conflicts (Shah 2023).

The widespread floods, hurricanes and droughts in African countries, the massive earthquakes in Chile and the recent earthquake disasters in Türkiye and Syria are poignant examples that illustrate the profound consequences of natural disasters and underline the vital role of social work in such contexts.

For example, one of the most influential natural disasters in shaping Türkiye is the earthquake. The seismic activity in Türkiye is a significant factor in shaping the country's landscape and impacting its population. Türkiye is located in one of the most active seismic regions globally, with a high probability of serious earthquakes (Öcal and Topkaya 2011). The seismic events in Türkiye are caused by the interplay of four tectonic plates, namely the Arabian, Eurasian, and African plates, as well as the smaller tectonic block known as the Anatolian (Fotiou 2023). The country is governed by three major geological structures: the Aegean-Cyprean Arc, the dextral North Anatolian Fault Zone, the sinistral East Anatolian Fault Zone (Yildirim, Yaprak, and Inal 2014). The North Anatolian Fault, East Anatolian Fault, and West Anatolian Fault are the three major fault lines

in Türkiye, contributing to the country's susceptibility to earthquakes (Gastineau et al. 2021). The impact of earthquakes in Türkiye is exemplified by the devastating events of February 6, 2023, which resulted in significant loss of life and infrastructure damage (Fotiou 2023). The earthquakes, with magnitudes of 7.7 and 7.6, caused widespread destruction, leading to a substantial number of casualties and displacements (Fotiou 2023).

Furthermore, the historical context of seismic events in Türkiye, such as the 1999 Marmara earthquake, underscores the urgency for earthquake preparedness and response measures (Çoban and Göktaş 2023). In conclusion, the seismic activity in Türkiye, driven by its complex tectonic structure and geological features, significantly influences the country's vulnerability to earthquakes. The devastating impact of recent seismic events highlights the imperative for robust seismic risk assessment, disaster management, and preparedness initiatives to mitigate the potential consequences of future earthquakes.

In South Africa, for example, natural disasters such as floods and droughts pose significant challenges, particularly in vulnerable areas such as Limpopo province and Greater Tzaneen Local Municipality. The occurrence of severe flooding and landslides has resulted in the loss of lives, the displacement of individuals, the destruction of homes and critical infrastructure (Mavroulis et al. 2022). In the aftermath of such disasters, urgent responses are required to meet the immediate needs of the affected population, such as access to food, clean water, health services and temporary shelter (Okuyama et al. 2023).

Again, the occurrence of extremely destructive earthquakes in Chile has deeply affected the history and social dynamics of the country. Seismic events not only shaped the culture and life stories of the population, but also marked important moments that disrupted the normal functioning of the country's state institutions (Öcal and Topkaya 2011). The post-disaster phase includes humanitarian relief, material reconstruction and restoration of the pre-existing socio-political order and emphasizes the complex interplay between natural disasters and societal responses (Clague 1997). The potential for exploiting the social mobilization resulting from the post-earthquake coordination crisis for economic gain requires an analysis of this process in the context of the fear-based approach and disaster capitalism (Schwartz 1999).

In this context, social work emerges as an instrumental actor in the phases of preparation, prevention, response, and recovery vis-à-vis natural disasters (Shah 2023). It is discerning in its approach, accounting for the nuanced needs, expectations, resources, and potential of disaster victims, thereby contributing to their empowerment and instigating processes of social transformation (Shah 2023). In summation, the extensively documented vulnerability of developing countries to natural disasters and the ensuing

socio-economic and political challenges necessitate an earnest appraisal. Recent instances of disasters across diverse nations poignantly underscore the imperative for efficacious social work interventions in disaster management and recovery endeavors.

Social workers play a crucial role in the provision of support and interventions to address the psychosocial needs of survivors, including trauma counseling, community mobilization, advocacy for resources and services. It is also stated that social workers should be support providers to advocate for equitable distribution of resources, transparency in reconstruction efforts, and protection of the rights and well-being of affected individuals and communities, especially in the context of potential exploitation and disaster capitalism (Bark 2009).

In short, the impact of natural disasters on vulnerable populations is closely related to various social problems, ranging from poverty to homelessness. Due to extreme poverty and high unemployment rates, individuals living in rural areas are often unable to obtain home insurance, become homeless after natural disasters, and become dependent on state assistance (Iqbal and Sheikh 2023). The socioeconomic challenges posed by natural disasters jeopardize the realization of social justice in society and highlight the need for comprehensive social work interventions and policy advocacy to meet the complex needs of the affected population (Macintyre, Barbera, and Smith 2006).

## Fear Appeal and Disaster Capitalism

Fear is one of the natural and universal emotions that usually arise when faced with any threat, such as happiness, sadness, anger, or excitement. Fear is derived from the Latin word "phobos" (Burkovik and Tan 2006). However, it takes its present meaning from the word "faer," which is used in Old English and describes a disaster or a natural disaster rather than a human-specific emotion. The use of the word "fear" as an emotional counterpart was also determined for the first time in medieval literature (Ghosh 2010). In terms of the meaning of the word, it can be defined as "the sense of restlessness that occurs in the form of a reaction to a threat perceived as real or imaginary" (Doctor, Kahn, and Adamec 2008).

Fear is also used as a force to mobilize individuals. Therefore, it is believed that fear somehow affects persuasion by provoking the person (Brooker 1981). "The combined use of the concepts of fear and persuasion has led to the emergence of a new concept called fear attraction over time" (Çakı 2018). Witte defines the concept of "fear attraction" as persuasive messages designed to scare people by describing the terrible things that will happen to them if they do not do what the message suggests (Witte 1992).

In the globalizing world, there are many potential fear factors, such as the existence of a physical environment open to all kinds of dangers, such as natural disasters, nuclear war, international disputes, genetically modified foods, radiation release, economic crises, violent crimes, and terrorism. In an effort to capitalize on these situations, various individuals or institutions may use fear-based messages to persuade individuals and communities. Fear attraction emerges as a persuasion technique that emerges and becomes widespread for this purpose.

In the persuasion process, there are similar definitions in various sources regarding the use of the fear technique. According to these definitions, the usage of persuasive fear is defined as the suggestion of ways to get rid of fear and any stimulated fears by creating a perception of threat and danger with stimuli for different fears owned by the target recipients (Perloff 2003). In parallel, it can also be explained as conveying that those who do not comply with the solution proposals presented against the dangerous situations defined in the message will face negative or painful consequences (Witte 1992). In other words, fear-based persuasion strategies are usually structured as "if you do not comply with these behaviors, you will face serious and negative consequences" in order to entice them to perform certain behaviors. Such messages are widely used for the purpose of creating new markets and expanding existing markets by using the effect of fear. For example, threats such as swine flu, the SARS virus, and coronavirus have increased the market for products such as antibacterial hand sanitizing gels.

In short, emphasizing fears in some political and social messages creates psychological tension in the individual. In order to get rid of this situation, the individual tends to accept the proposed solution with the content of fear much more as compared to other options (Göksel et al. 1997).

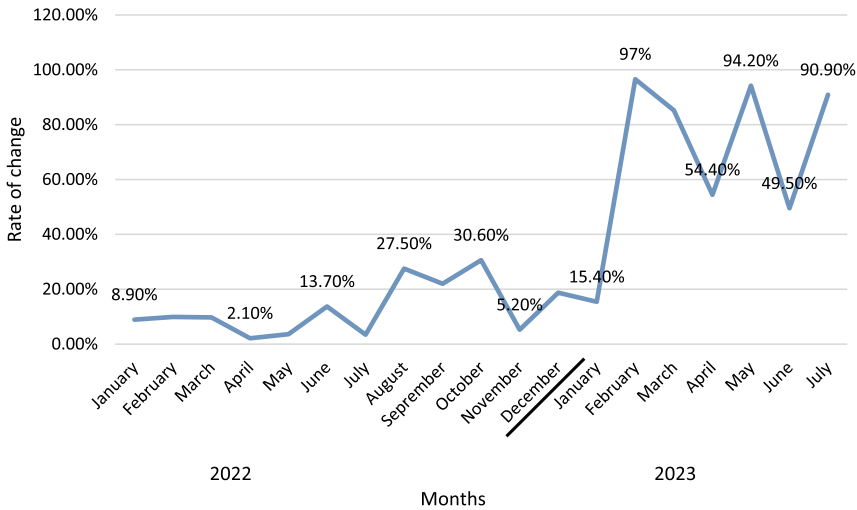
After natural disasters, it is seen that the whole living environment is surrounded by messages created with this fear attraction, which thus affects the decisions taken. Klein's concept of "Disaster Capitalism" also gains meaning at this point. This concept by Naomi Klein is based on the argument that when capitalism encounters catastrophes such as natural disasters, economic crises, and wars, it tends to turn these catastrophes into opportunities, and this situation worsens people's living conditions. According to Klein, disaster capitalism, whose conceptual framework is based on the critique of neoliberalism, is a system in which the private sector acts to increase its profits in extraordinary situations experienced by society, and this system exploits people's fears and concerns, leading to exploitation and injustice (2007).

Klein (2007) criticizes neoliberalism on three main elements: privatization, government liberalization, and significant cuts in social spending, focusing on the pioneers of neoliberalism such as Milton Friedman.

According to Friedman, the Bush administration used Hurricane Katrina as an opportunity to enact Friedman's neoliberal recommendations. In the wake of the storm, the government proposed expanding the network of contract schools and distributing coupons to homes for food access, with the goal of abolishing the public education system. Klein, who explained a similar situation through the Sri Lankan Tsunami, emphasizes that after the tsunami in Sri Lanka, foreign aid teams coming to the country were marketing their own companies' products, excluding many local entrepreneurs, while at the same time aid to the region was insufficient, and this situation increased poverty. In other words, he states that in such processes, especially media organizations have created a space for the implementation of neoliberal policies by keeping fear alive, and public services have been replaced by the private sector (Klein 2007). As a matter of fact, he states that capitalism is not only satisfied with top-down policies to renew itself but also gains the approval of the public with its fear appeal. He states that this situation creates an opportunity for disaster capitalism, whereby private security companies sign many contracts to ensure security in the region after the disaster and construction companies receive many tenders from the government to rebuild the houses in the region (Klein 2007). Nepalese investigative journalist Rajneesh Bhandari de Klein confirms this claim and points out that there is a lot of neglect and corruption in the post-disaster period, stating that the disaster periods are the periods when millions of dollars of aid and reconstruction grants are realized, while evaluating the process after the earthquake in Nepal in 2015 as a case study (Rowan 2023).

In this context, we can state that there is a close connection between fear attraction and disaster capitalism. This is due to the fact that "disaster capitalism" refers to a system that operates in the face of events that create fear, such as natural disasters, epidemics, terrorist attacks, and other disasters. In this system, the private sector plays an important role in post-disaster restructuring and uses various ways to profit from the fear of society. For instance, private security firms arise to safeguard the populace during times of worry and are capable of handling numerous assignments, which is particularly advantageous to the affluent. Also, in the post-disaster restructuring process, the private sector may look for opportunities to access natural resources and other valuable assets, while the interests of the local people remain secondary. This often results in exploitation and injustice.

The increase in cement companies' stock shares in Türkiye immediately after the earthquake disaster on February 6 is a situation that we can directly associate with disaster capitalism in this direction (Demir 2023). As it is known, construction and infrastructure work accelerate during the reconstruction process after such disasters. The increase in cement shares is also due to the increase in demand for cement used in post-earthquake




**Graph 1.** The monthly variation rates in premium production for the fire and natural disaster branch in Türkiye. Source: TSB (2023). https://www.tsb.org.tr/tr/gorsel-analiz-raporlari.

construction activities. This shows that the commercialization of earthquakes and disasters can be seen as a commercial opportunity.

A similar situation can be seen in the insurance industry. It is seen that insurance companies increase their sales by using fear appeal, especially during disaster periods, by suggesting their customers buy policies and emphasizing that they can compensate for possible losses. Considering the monthly premium production change rates in Türkiye after the February 6 earthquake, it is seen that there were very serious increases in the premium rates in the insurance branches related to fire and natural disasters in February (Graph 1).

Similarly, when we look at the increase rates in February in the policy increases in the sub-branches of DASK insurance in 2023, they have increased quite significantly as compared to the previous period (DASK 2023).

As can be seen, insurance companies also look for ways to increase their profits during disaster periods. One way to do this is by offering additional insurance products to their customers or increasing coverage in their existing policies. In addition, insurance companies operating in regions where disasters are widespread aim to increase their profits by taking advantage of the high demand in these regions (Graph 2).

In short, disaster capitalism is a system in which the private sector acts to increase profits during times of catastrophe. This system exploits people's fears and concerns, leading to exploitation and injustice.

| | January | February | March | April |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2021 | 748.382 | 803.047 | 922.866 | 724.875 |
| 2022 | 769.756 | 801.840 | 944.067 | 773.108 |
| 2023 | 789.407 | 1.236.830 | 1.228.359 | 817.356 |

**Graph 2.** Number of policies by month. Source: https://dask.gov.tr/en/policy-inquiry.

## Social Work Against Disaster Capitalism

Natural disasters are unpredictable events that disrupt public services, have significant economic effects, cause deterioration of psycho-social well-being, and result in loss of life and property (Panwar and Sen 2019). These events can lead to adverse mental health impacts, including emotional distress, helplessness, and depression, particularly among vulnerable populations (Ranse et al. 2014). Furthermore, natural disasters can have diverse economic impacts across sectors, leading to unemployment, poverty, and a decline in economic growth (Ilham 2023; Shah 2023). The psychosocial effects and consequences of natural disasters are evident, affecting individuals, families, and communities (Amiri and Jahanitabesh 2023; Sutini, Suryani, and Trisyani 2021). Moreover, the surge in medical services needed during the aftermath of natural disasters is critical, especially for the elderly population (McQuade et al. 2018).

The causes, effects, and forms of natural disasters differ. Therefore, it is important in such processes to evaluate the degree of influence of people, create appropriate solution scenarios, and determine the measures to be taken. Since a natural disaster cannot be predicted, interrupts public services, has economic effects, causes deterioration of psycho-social well-being, and causes loss of life and property, the active participation of social workers in disaster management processes should be included in the process of bringing disadvantaged groups together with the necessary resources. This is especially so, since the social work profession is a discipline that strives to protect and improve the well-being of people and to provide services to disadvantaged individuals, families, groups, and societies on the basis of human rights (Gleser et al. 1981).

The social work profession, with its focus on protecting and improving the well-being of individuals and communities, is well-positioned to address the complex challenges posed by natural disasters. By integrating social workers into disaster management processes, disadvantaged groups can relate to the necessary resources, ensuring a more inclusive and

comprehensive approach to disaster response and recovery. This aligns with the need for post-disaster counseling and psychosocial training to support the mental health and emotional well-being of affected individuals, including children (Handaka and Septikasari 2019; Ifdil and Ghani 2019).

Natural catastrophes and the detrimental effects they have on society have had a significant impact on the historical development of the social work profession. Natural disasters, such as the disintegration of families, impacts on vulnerable groups, unemployment, hunger, and epidemics, have played a crucial role in the emergence and evolution of the social work profession (Maglajlić 2019). Social transformations such as the industrial revolution, wars, and natural disasters have triggered the emergence and development of the social work profession. The disintegration of families, the direct impact on children, women, and the elderly living on the streets, unemployment, hunger, and epidemics are negative consequences of all these processes. Eliminating these negativities and ensuring the internal harmony of the individual and society has revealed the social work profession. Hence, social work encompasses a broad range of interventions aimed at preserving the equilibrium of individuals, communities, and societies. Its goal is to restore disrupted balances and foster a social environment characterized by peace and prosperity (Tomanbay, Özdenizci Kösemenli, and Özdenizci Kösemenli 1999). In short, while intervening to address social problems and promote positive change, the social work profession is dedicated to maintaining social balance, restoring disrupted balances and creating an environment of peace and prosperity in the social dimension (Mitchuk et al. 2021; Okafor 2021; Soydan 2015).

The impact of natural disasters is often exacerbated by social injustices perpetrated by neoliberal policies. Harvey (2005) emphasizes that neoliberal policies can worsen social injustices, leading to increased poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion (Grady 2013). In response to this situation, social work is called upon to take a critical stance in line with its historical goals and ethical values, advocating for social equality, justice, and human rights. It is encouraged to collaborate with social movements and present an alternative vision. Social work plays a crucial role in mitigating the impact of natural disasters and addressing social injustices exacerbated by neoliberal policies. Social work interventions are essential in reducing the effects of natural disasters and fighting social injustices, particularly in the context of community-driven development and disaster risk reduction (Ali, Hatta, and Azman 2014; Hussain, Ibrar, and Alam 2018; Jackson 2020; Machimbidza, Nyahunda, and Makhubele 2022; Maglajlić 2019).

In this context, the presence of individuals who have lost their assets, who became poor, and who have special needs as a result of disasters, as well as the deterioration of the social balance and the damage to the

internal and social balance of individuals, have made the social work profession even more important. Therefore, social services can play an important role in solving the problems arising after natural disasters and reducing social inequalities. For example, it can take part in rapid and effective interventions such as the preparation and implementation of emergency plans, as well as in the effective and fair distribution of aid by considering social inequalities. Social services can play a role at certain levels in organizing training programs for people to be prepared for disasters, providing psychosocial support services to cope with psychological problems arising after disasters, and encouraging community participation to increase solidarity in society and ensure social justice. These roles can be listed at different levels, as follows: At the micro level, therapy, group therapy, or counseling services can be provided to help individuals and families directly affected by disasters to cope with post-disaster losses by providing psychosocial support. Social workers can provide emergency assistance services for food, shelter, water, and other basic needs, provide information to disaster victims about the risks related to natural disasters; and offer suggestions to reduce the risks. Mezzo-level studies can also help to organize educational campaigns to raise awareness in society about the effects of natural disasters and to increase the resilience of societies to disasters. Macro-level studies in the field of social work are mostly aimed at solving social problems arising from the effects of natural disasters. In this respect, it plays an important role in the formation of policies and regulations for natural disasters. For example, it can be effective in creating the resources needed to combat disasters, and it can play a role in creating policies to ensure that disadvantaged communities are included in post-natural disaster restructuring studies, that everyone can receive equal help in emergencies, and that disasters do not exacerbate existing inequalities in society. In addition, social work plays a crucial role in protecting the subjectivity of disaster victims against disaster capitalism. By providing support and advocating for the rights and welfare of individuals affected by disasters, social workers help ensure that victims' voices are heard, and their needs are addressed in a holistic and compassionate manner (Adams, Figley, and Boscarino 2008). They do this through various interventions and strategies that aim to empower disaster victims and prevent exploitation in the aftermath of a disaster. Some examples of how social work protects the subjectivity of disaster victims include: conducting needs assessments and ensuring that victims' voices are included in decision-making processes; providing mental health support and counseling to help individuals process their experiences and cope with the emotional trauma of the disaster; advocating for fair and equitable distribution of resources and services to ensure that all individuals affected by the disaster have access to essential services

and support; promoting community resilience and empowerment through capacity-building initiatives, such as community organizing and education; monitoring and addressing any instances of exploitation or abuse of disaster victims by individuals or organizations seeking to profit from their vulnerability. This can be achieved through collaboration with other professionals, organizations, and government agencies to establish and enforce policies and protocols that prioritize the well-being and agency of disaster victims. Social workers also play a crucial role in raising awareness about the potential risks and consequences of disaster capitalism, both within the communities they serve and on a broader scale. Through training, education, and advocacy efforts, social workers can help individuals and communities understand the negative impact of disaster capitalism and take steps to protect themselves against exploitation and ensure their rights are respected. One way that social work protects the subjectivity of disaster victims against disaster capitalism is by conducting needs assessments and ensuring that victims' voices are included in decision-making processes. This helps to ensure that the needs and perspectives of disaster victims are prioritized and considered when determining how resources and assistance will be allocated (Beydili and Yıldırım 2013).

As a result, the concept of "disaster capitalism" has come to the forefront with events such as natural disasters, economic crises, and pandemics that have increased in recent years. In opposing disaster capitalism, Klein emphasizes the importance of social solidarity, participatory democracy, the protection of human rights, and economic justice. In this context, social workers can work to raise the awareness of society against the manipulative news of the media, direct it to accurate and reliable sources of information, offer a realistic and hopeful perspective on the effects of the disasters, and provide psychosocial support to share and reduce people's fears and concerns in the fight against fear attraction after an earthquake disaster (2007). In addition, in the fight against disaster capitalism after the earthquake, social work can work to defend the rights of disadvantaged groups in the earthquake region, to provide emergency aid services to identify and meet their needs, to participate in and supervise the aid activities of the state and civil society, to adopt an understanding based on social equality, justice, and human rights against the social inequalities caused by disasters, to cooperate with social movements, and to offer an alternative vision of what a just society post disaster might look like.

In short, the active participation of social workers in disaster management is essential to addressing the diverse and interconnected impacts of natural disasters. By utilizing the expertise of social workers, disaster management processes can be made more inclusive, sensitive to the needs of

disadvantaged groups, and focused on promoting resilience and well-being in the face of adversity.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

The impact of natural disasters on individuals living in affected areas has been a significant concern, particularly in the post-disaster period. Neoliberal policies exacerbate the social and economic problems of these individuals, increasing their vulnerability and compromising their well-being. This is evident in various disaster events, such as earthquakes in Turkey and Chile, flooding in South Africa, and cyclones in Zimbabwe. The post-disaster restructuring process is further complicated by the concept of disaster capitalism, where private companies exploit the aftermath of disasters for profit, worsening the challenges faced by affected individuals.

In the post-disaster period, individuals often find themselves in a state of helplessness and in need of assistance, which can result in a further decline in their economic status and overall well-being. The fear and anxiety experienced as a result of traumatic experiences caused by natural disasters create an environment where disaster capitalism becomes increasingly effective. Private companies take advantage of the situation for profit, turning the disaster into an opportunity for financial gain. This exploitation of vulnerable populations underscores the need for interventions to prevent disaster capitalism and address the needs of affected individuals in the post-disaster period.

Social services, including social work, can play a crucial role in mitigating the impact of disaster capitalism and addressing the needs of individuals in the aftermath of natural disasters. Social workers, operating within the framework of rights and social justice, can contribute to post-disaster recovery efforts in various ways. They can advocate for the rights of affected individuals, provide psychosocial support to address trauma and anxiety, and work towards preventing the exploitation of vulnerable populations by private entities seeking to profit from disasters. By actively engaging in these roles, social workers can contribute to the prevention of disaster capitalism and the promotion of social justice in post-disaster contexts.

### *Recommended Roles for Social Workers in Disaster Contexts*

(1) *Providing Psychological Support*: Social services can provide psychological support to help disaster victims overcome their traumatic experiences. This support can take various forms, such as individual or group therapy.

(2) *Playing an Active Role in the Reconstruction Process*: Social services can protect the rights of disaster victims by playing an active role in the post-disaster reconstruction process. This involves working to meet the basic needs of disaster victims, such as access to shelter, food, water, and medical assistance.
(3) *Providing Pre- and Post-Disaster Preparedness Training*: In the context of disaster preparedness, social workers can play an important role in providing pre- and post-disaster preparedness training to communities to prevent disasters and reduce their impacts. These trainings are crucial in equipping individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to prepare for and respond effectively to disasters. The content usually includes information on disaster preparedness, possible consequences of disasters, emergency response procedures, and strategies to combat fear and prevent the abuse of disaster capitalism. Moreover, these trainings aim to raise public awareness and promote proactive measures to increase community resilience.
(4) *Increasing Social Solidarity*: Social services can encourage people to support each other by increasing social solidarity after a disaster. This can include studies on the preparedness of society against disasters, the inclusion of society in post-disaster restructuring, and the establishment of a culture of cooperation and solidarity. For example, Solnit (2009) argues that most people in disaster situations show solidarity by sacrificing themselves and their surroundings rather than acting selfishly or panicking. This solidarity can lead to the creation of an alternative "popular social work" that meets the needs of the people when official social work and welfare institutions are inadequate or harmful.
(5) *Advocating for Legal Regulations*: In the aftermath of natural disasters, social workers can advocate for the creation of social justice policies and work towards the introduction of legislation aimed at limiting the for-profit activities of private companies in the post-disaster reconstruction process. These efforts can be specifically planned to protect the rights of disaster victims and reduce negative impacts on already disadvantaged communities. For example, legislation could be sought to prevent exorbitant price increases during the demolition or reconstruction of disaster victims' homes, ensuring fair treatment in the post-disaster recovery process.
(6) *Ensuring Communication and Information Sharing*: In the context of disaster response and recovery, social workers can play a critical role in facilitating communication and information sharing to increase people's knowledge about disasters and their access to resources. Post-disaster communication efforts are crucial to help individuals learn where to find the resources needed to meet the needs of disaster victims, including access to health services, emergency assistance, and

other essential resources. These efforts contribute to building community resilience and promoting effective post-disaster recovery.

(7) *Contributing to the Reconstruction of the Post-Disaster Social Structure*: In the aftermath of a natural disaster, social services play a crucial role in contributing to the reconstruction of the post-disaster social structure. This includes areas such as education, healthcare, job opportunities, and access to other essential resources. By actively engaging in these efforts, social services can help individuals and communities return to normalcy and rebuild their lives following the devastation of a disaster.

(8) *Creating a Governance Model*: Social work after natural disasters can help create an effective governance structure in the fight against fear attraction and disaster capitalism. This may involve conducting disaster preparedness studies, ensuring effective coordination in emergency response, cooperating with local administrators, and adopting a transparent management approach in restructuring efforts. Social services can restore trust in society by providing accurate information and necessary help in a way that reduces people's fears. Therefore, post-disaster studies must be not only short-term but also long-term and sustainable. This approach can become an effective tool for preventing disaster capitalism.

By adopting these roles, social workers can make significant contributions to disaster recovery, emphasizing the importance of social justice and the protection of vulnerable populations in the post-disaster context.

## Disclosure Statement

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