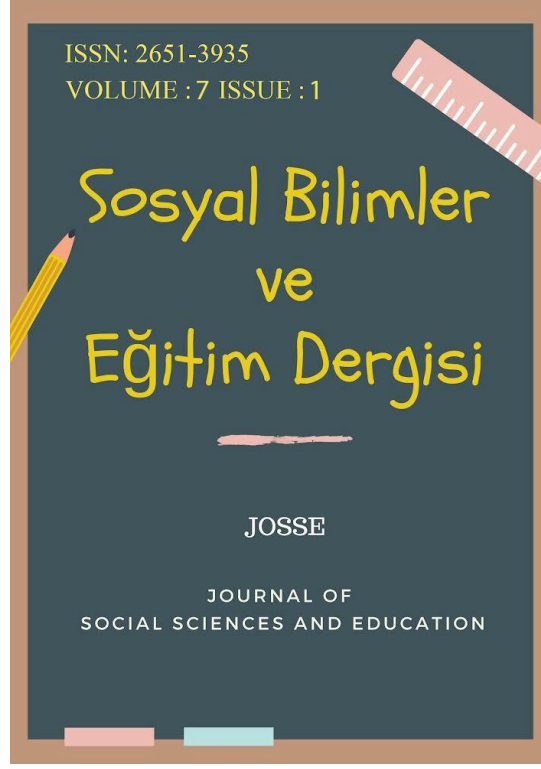


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**Public services provided after Earthquake 2023 in the Context of Central
Government-Local Administration Relations: Mersin Metropolitan
Municipality Case**

Hüseyin METİN¹

Akdeniz University,

Economics and Administrative Sciences, Political Science and Public Administration

Phd Student

husmet@gmail.com

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-7739-6061

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Public services provided after Earthquake 2023 in the Context of Central Government-Local Administration Relations: Mersin Metropolitan Municipality Case*

Hüseyin METİN¹

Akdeniz University, Economics and Administrative Sciences, Political Science and Public Administration

Abstract

Central government-local administration relations are one of the most problematic mechanisms of our administrative history in structural and functional terms. This study will examine the dynamics of central government and local administration relations from a public policy standpoint, emphasizing the importance of collaborative policymaking and cooperation between the two levels of government. AFAD (disaster and emergency management presidency) faced criticism during the February 2023 earthquake in Türkiye sparking a public debate on the relationship between central and local administrations. The study will focus on Mersin, one of the provinces most affected by the recent earthquakes, and the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality. The Metropolitan Municipality's response to the earthquake in Mersin and the public services provided during the aftermath will be analyzed. The role assumed by Mersin Metropolitan Municipality in the context of disaster management is studied to firstly reveal the potential of local administration in terms of disaster management and secondly to show its relations with the central government. In the study, the analysis of the aid provided to earthquake victims will be based on the data of AFAD and Mersin Metropolitan Municipality. The qualitative analysis of the obtained data will reveal the potential of the central government-local administration relationship with structural and functional mechanisms.

Keywords: Earthquake in Turkey, public administration, central- local relations, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, Mersin

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¹ Corresponding author:

Phd Student

husmet@gmail.com

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-7739-6061

Introduction

The subject of this article is to analyze the relations between central government and local administration in Mersin, the closest metropolitan city to the earthquake zone (located outside the earthquake zone), through the services provided by the central government and local administration to the earthquake victims and the earthquake zone during the earthquakes that occurred in February 2023 and affected eleven provinces in Türkiye. This analysis offers an overview of the current dynamics between central and local administration during natural disasters. This perspective seeks an answer to the question of how central government-local administration relations perform structurally and functionally when an extraordinary situation such as disaster management is experienced. This analysis holds significance as it conducts a thorough literature review of central and local administration relations, a longstanding issue in Turkish Public Administration. By presenting new data and analyzing current events, this study provides a fresh perspective on the matter, making a valuable contribution to existing literature.

Central government-local administration relations, as one of the pivotal macro-scale topics in management science, can indeed be assessed alongside nearly every argument within the discipline and analyzed within diverse contexts. When considered in terms of accumulation and tradition, it is necessary to discuss and analyze many discussion topics of management science not only on a universal scale but also on a local scale; this entails considering the political, administrative, geographical, historical, cultural, and economic contexts that shape the landscape of management practices. Central government is a form of administrative organisation that is embodied by the existence of a central structure and organs connected to this structure, where decision-making processes and decision-makers in public administration are dependent on the centre, determined by the centre, financial resources, personnel movements, public policies are directed from a single centre (Çevik, 2012, 31; Görmez & Yaylı, 2018, 21; Özer & Önen, 2019, 278; Özer, Akçakaya, Yaylı & Batmaz, 2019, 292) The aim is to ensure unity and integrity in public services and to carry out services within a hierarchical organisational structure (Eryılmaz 2019, 108).

Local administrations are administrative structures governed by bodies elected by the local people and function to meet the basic and common needs of the local people (Görmez & Yaylı, 2018, 22). Local administrations aim to fulfill regional or local needs and provide services based on geography or certain services to eliminate the drawbacks related to the functioning of central government (Özer & Önen, 2019, 284). Local administrations are

administrative bodies established to address the needs of people living in provinces, municipalities, and villages using local resources. These decision-making bodies and their establishment principles are regulated by law, and their members are elected by the voters for a certain period (Özer, Akçakaya, Yaylı & Batmaz, 2019, 308). While local administration involve the transfer of powers or some of the power to authorities other than the central government (Eryılmaz, 2019, 116), the fact that their framework is determined by the Constitution and regulated by law emphasizes their legal personality.

The existence of local administrations in the West is based on a struggle with a historical and sociological background. Since the 12th century, regions and cities have gained autonomy from central governments, leading to the emergence of local administrations. The most prominent feature of this process is that they became an authority separate from the center in financial and administrative terms (Özmen, 2012, 171). Furthermore, Çadircı states that the roots of the local government tradition in the Ottoman Empire are much older. In this context, Çadircı refers to the "Muhassılık Assemblies" (Çadircı, 1989). This type of struggle is not seen in the foundations of the modern Turkish administration understanding that started with the Tanzimat reform era. "Today, the relationship between the central government and local administration continues the traditional and historical heritage." The first modern municipal organization was established in the Ottoman Empire at the end of the 19th century. Among the reasons for the need for local administrations in the Ottoman Empire were opening up to the outside world, the growth of cities and their becoming unmanageable, the negativities of excessive centralization, the demands of minorities for political participation, and the pressures exerted by foreigners (Ortaylı, 1978, 6). In practice, during the Ottoman Empire, one of the primary functions of local administration was to contribute to the safeguarding of the empire's integrity (Ortaylı, 1974). The functionalisation of local administrations in the Ottoman Empire did not create a structure that reduced centralisation or strengthened local authority, as it is believed. "To the extent that modern centralisation was strengthened, it is seen that the nucleus of local administration in the modern sense was formed in Ottoman society and local groups participated in the administration" (Ortaylı, 1995, 554). According to Ortaylı, as the central administration became stronger and gained a modern structure in the Ottoman Empire, it included local administrations in its axis as an extension of the center, without a decision-making, financial, and administrative autonomous structure. The main characteristic of the local organization that emerged in this context was that they were an extension of the center rather than a local administrative decision-making

and service authority (Görmez, 2000, 82). This circumstance forms the foundational basis for the emergence of a problematic historical legacy that extends into the present day.

Ortaylı makes the following observations about that period:

"The municipality of the XIXth century develops as an impersonal organisation under the heavy tutelage of the centre due to the services it could not perform with incomplete staff... The Ottoman municipality was born as an integral part of that system in the period when an authoritarian centralism was sprouting... centralist pressure on local administrations in our country has therefore become a tradition" (Ortaylı, 1978, 22).

The observation above highlights a problem that has persisted for approximately a century and a half since the inception of local administrations. Remarkably, local administrations still exhibit a similar outlook today. Ersoy expresses this appearance of local administrations by making a theoretical generalisation as follows: *"the relationship between central government and local administrations can be summarised as "centralist", "authoritarian", "paternalist", albeit in different intensities and forms, in this one and a half century period"* (Ersoy, 1989, 45).

Central government-local administration relations in Türkiye are predominantly influenced by the constraints imposed by administrative historical legacies. However, it is also noteworthy that this relationship is constitutionally guaranteed. Articles 123 and 127 of the 1982 Constitution are related to this issue.

According to Article 123 of the 1982 Constitution;

The administration shall be united with its establishment and duties and shall be regulated by law. The establishment and duties of the administration shall be based on the principles of central administration and decentralisation. Public legal entity shall be established by law or presidential decree. (<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr>, 2023)

According to Article 127 of the 1982 Constitution;

Local administrations are public legal entities whose principles of establishment are laid down by law and whose decision-making bodies are elected by the electorate in order to meet the local common needs of the people of a province, municipality or village. The establishment, duties and powers of local administrations shall be regulated by law in accordance with the principle of decentralisation
... The Law may introduce special forms of administration for large settlement centres. The resolution of the objections of the elected organs of local administrations concerning the acquisition and loss of the title of organ shall be subject to judicial review. However, the Minister of Interior may, as a provisional measure, suspend local administration bodies or their members who are under investigation or prosecution for an offence related to their duties, until final judgement.
The central administration shall have administrative tutelage power over the local administrations in accordance with the principles and procedures set forth in the law in order to carry out local services in

accordance with the principle of unity of administration, to ensure unity in public duties, to protect the public interest and to meet local needs as required. The establishment of unions among local administrations with the permission of the President of the Republic in order to provide certain public services, their duties, powers, financial and law enforcement affairs and their mutual ties and relations with the central administration shall be regulated by law. These administrations shall be provided with sources of revenue commensurate with their duties.
(<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr>, 2023)

As evident, Article 123 of the Constitution initially acknowledges the principles of central administration and decentralization in administrative terms, while simultaneously emphasizing the unity of the administration. The focus on maintaining the integrity of local administration aligns with the fact that these governments are essentially an arm of the central government, as established by constitutional history. This serves as a basis for practical supervision by the central government. Article 127 of the Constitution delineates the legal and administrative status of local administrations while reiterating the imperative that local administrations have to conduct their activities under the principle of the integrity of the administration.

While the existence and functions of local administrations are constitutionally guaranteed in the 1982 Constitution, the principle of the integrity of the administration is also emphasized. The laws regulating the activities of local administrations are as follows; Village Law No. 442, Special Provincial Administration Law No. 5302, Municipality Law No. 5393, Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216, and finally Law No. 6360, which partly covers the regulation of metropolises. In addition, Laws No. 5355 and 5445 regulate the relations and services among local administrations. The Law No. 5393 on Municipalities stipulates that "municipal services are provided in the places closest to the citizens and by the most appropriate methods." Although the principle of localization and proximity to citizens is embraced in practice and implementation, it coexists with the constitutional principle of the "integrity of administration."

With the enactment of Law No. 6360, a new structure has been created by increasing the number and authority of local government units within the administrative structure, establishing new metropolitan municipalities, and expanding their service areas. However, this structure does not mean that the central government has transferred its powers to local administrations. Günel makes the following observation on this issue: "the increase in the responsibilities and powers of metropolitan municipalities does not mean that the centre has transferred power and authority to the local, but it may also mean that it has increased and intensified its influence on the local." (Günel, 2013, 129).

There are arguments and discussions in the literature that confirm this argument. According to Belli and Aydın, centralization has been achieved at the local level with Law No. 6360. The evidence supporting this argument is as follows: With Law No. 6360, the authorities belonging to the Special Provincial Administrations, which were abolished, are not given to other local administration units, and these authorities are shared among the units in the provincial organization of the central government (Belli & Aydın, 2017, 409). The powers granted to Special Provincial Administrations are centralized with the abolition of these units. In this respect, Law No. 6360 creates a partial centralization (Güneş, 2013, 63).

Article 3 of the Metropolitan Municipality Law No. 5216 states that "Metropolitan municipality: A public legal entity whose borders are the provincial territorial boundaries and which ensures coordination among the district municipalities within its borders; which has administrative and financial autonomy, fulfills the duties and responsibilities assigned by law, exercises the powers, and whose decision-making body is elected by the electorate." (<https://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/>, 2023). With this amendment, a new form of tutelage was introduced by establishing a hierarchy between metropolitan municipalities and district municipalities responsible for local services, aiming to strengthen local administration vis-à-vis the central government (Belli & Aydın, 2017, 411).

When the constitutional framework and the current form and functioning of the laws on the execution of local services are analyzed, the following conclusion can be drawn: The central government envisages a structure from the perspective of the principle of the integrity of the administration. However, in practice, local services and administrations often function as an extension of the central administration, and they may utilize their resources following the directives of the central government. At the same time, with the new regulations, there is no transfer of authority and resources from the central to the local level, some authorities are centralized by taking away some powers from the local level based on more effective and more efficient performance of services, and new levels of administrative tutelage are established among local administration units in addition to the administrative tutelage of the central administration over local administration. When considered in this context, the statement in the Municipal Law No. 5393 that "*municipal services are provided in the places closest to the citizens and with the most appropriate methods*" loses its reality and the centralisation tendency imposed by our historical administrative heritage still continues to exist, creating the impression that local services are actually provided by local administration units under the supervision and control of the central administration.

Another dimension of central government-local administration relations is the subject of academic and institutional studies. It is possible to analyze this dimension under various headings. The first is the administrative link between the central and local administrations. This issue can be addressed in many ways within administrative tutelage and tutelage monitoring. The second is the financial relationship between the central government and local administration. In this context, issues such as control over the use of resources by local administrations and the adequacy of local administration resources can be addressed and discussed. Finally, the political relationship between the central government and local administrations. In this context, issues such as whether local administrations are from the same party as the central government and whether they act in coordination with the central government's policies can be discussed.

Although central government-local administration relations have different contexts, the critical point to be emphasized is the following: the administrative organization of countries may vary, and these differences may be based on historical, geographical, or cultural reasons. However, the most essential measure of the administrative structure's functional performance is the effectiveness, functionality, productivity, and solution-oriented relationship between the central governments and local administrations. It should prioritize cooperation and developing actors' problem-solving capacity above conflict (Rhodes, 2018, Wilson, 2003; McConnell, 2006).

Güler makes the following observation on this issue: Although there is a legal and administrative dimension to the central government-local administration relations, the primary relationship is a "political" dynamic (Güler, 2007, 267). Öztekin expresses this relationship more clearly and on a more political axis as follows: the success of local administrations, their effectiveness, their need for resources, their capacity to produce and implement projects depend on the harmonious relationship and cooperation they establish with the central government (Öztekin, 1992 cited in Günal, 2013, 129). When considered in this context, it is seen that the central government's transfer of human and financial resources to local governments, the frequency and stringency of legal supervision, and the approval or rejection of locally produced projects by the central government are completely at the discretion of the political power (Çevikbaş, 2008 cited in Günal, 2013, 129). Taking into account the significant dependence of local administrations on the central government, particularly in terms of finances, where they derive most of their revenues from the central budget, it's crucial to acknowledge that this dependency also entails political reliance. As Mahmutoğlu points out, this reliance gives rise to certain expectations within the central administration:

"the central government wants local governments to exist as administrative units but to enter the political sphere" (Mahmutođlu, 2011, 150). Viewed in this context, it becomes apparent that the central government imposes constraints on local administrators regarding the formulation and execution of policies.

The actors of the central government do not want an alternative or a partner in the use of financial resources (Kösecik & Sađbaş, 2005, 120).

In this context, while the central government and local administrations are expected to operate within the scope of the constitutional principle of the integrity of the administration, it is observed that these elements, which are the two main actors of the administrative structure, cannot achieve coordination with each other, coordination cannot be ensured and resources cannot be used effectively.

The main reason for administrative inefficiency is the disruption of the services provided by the central government and the inability to ensure coordination and cooperation with the central government in the services of local administrations (Bilgili, 2020, 221).

Considering these contexts, it is clear that the cooperation and coordination needed in central government-local administration relations have become essential after the large-scale forest fires in our country in the recent past, the coronavirus (COVID-19) epidemic that has affected the whole world, and finally, the earthquake disaster that occurred in our country in February 2023 and affected approximately eleven provinces.

Method

This research compares the public services offered by the Mersin AFAD (disaster and emergency management presidency) Provincial Directorate (a central government entity) and Mersin Metropolitan Municipality (a local administration body) to the earthquake region and victims who arrived in Mersin due to the earthquake. Both institutions were informed about the study through a legal application and asked to provide data. The study used comparative data analysis after receiving data from both institutions.

Model

In this study, the qualitative research methods of document analysis and discourse analysis were used together.

Data Collection Tool

First of all, the analysis of the numerical data received from the citizens who relocated to Mersin following the earthquake and the administrative actors who are obliged to provide services to the earthquake zone within the scope of the Law on Access to Information (AFAD - the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency - affiliated to the Governorship of Mersin and Mersin Metropolitan Municipality) and the discourse analysis of the tweets of Vahap Seer, the Mayor of Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, about the services they provide. The analyses conducted using this methodology were assessed in alignment with the findings derived from the literature review, aiming to capture a unique context.

Qualitative research methods address the object of analysis using qualitative data. The most preferred ones are document analysis, interview techniques, and observation. In qualitative research, facts are examined and analyzed within their natural structure. The findings derived from the analyses are generalized through factual and integrated inferences by going beyond singular observations. In other words, with a perspective aiming to produce theory, events and, facts are generalized and theorized with the help of the findings obtained within their contexts (Yıldırım & Simsek, 2008).

The document review technique is a scientific research method that involves obtaining, organizing, comparing, and analyzing data and documents as primary sources of information. This technique can be used on its own or in conjunction with other research methods. (Sak , Şahin Sak , Öneren Şendil , & Nas , 2021). In the document analysis technique, information is acquired by the classification and examination of records and documents gathered from observation and research. In this method, data are found, read, classified, and evaluated by focusing on a specific target. (Karasar, 2011). The document review technique process can be categorized as creating a data collection protocol, coding, data analysis, and reporting. (Sak , Şahin Sak , Öneren Şendil , & Nas , 2021)

Discourse analysis is the research of the language used in written texts and oral expressions in a wider context. (Sallan Gül & Nizam, 2021). Discourse analysis is a method that focuses on the components that individuals' verbal expressions create in the mind in the process of inter-subjective communication. (Elliott, 1996). Discourse analysis is simply the analysis of language. According to the basic assumption of discourse analysis, individuals actively use language to express themselves and position themselves. Individuals actively constitute themselves through language. The foundations of discourse analysis are the description, definition, and determination of the change of this construction process in the context of discourses. (Elliott, 1996 cited Çelik & Halil, 2008). In other words, it is a method based on the

creation of data consisting of verbal sources and the conclusions drawn as a result of the classification and analysis of that data.

Findings

Analysis of Central Government-Local Administration Relations in the Context of Disaster Management

Examining the actions taken by both the central government and local administrations in the aforementioned situations, which require collaboration between the two levels of government, and comparing the activities of these entities will illuminate the potential and imperative of cooperation between central and local administrations. In this regard, conducting a comparative analysis of the assistance rendered by Mersin Metropolitan Municipality to earthquake victims following the February 2023 earthquake, alongside the public policy measures it implemented, and juxtaposing this with the aid provided to earthquake victims under the coordination of Mersin Governorship, along with the utilization of public resources, will effectively illustrate the potential for cooperation in central government-local administration relations.

Following the earthquake disaster that occurred in February 2023, impacting eleven provinces, a state of emergency was declared in the affected provinces, prioritizing them in terms of disaster management efforts. Mersin was not directly affected by the earthquake disaster, and thus it fell outside the scope of the State of Emergency. However, being one of the metropolitan areas closest to the earthquake zone, it received special attention and scrutiny in the realm of disaster management. Many earthquake victims who had to leave the earthquake zone, especially Hatay, came to Mersin, the nearest metropolitan city (outside the earthquake zone), and benefited directly from disaster management policies in Mersin. Moreover, due to its geographical proximity and logistical advantages, it was easier to provide assistance and intervene in the earthquake zone from Mersin than other provinces.

Table 1

Water consumption data of MESKİ (Mersin Water and Sewerage Administration) for 2023

Year	Janua	Februa	March	April	May
2023	ry	ry			

County	Quant ity	M ³	Quanti ty	M ³	Quant ity	M ³	Quant ity	M ³	Quant ity	M ³
The Centre	374.08 9	4.018.8 69	353.90 7	3.503.5 38	376.74 4	3.902.2 68	359.89 5	4.033.1 66	385.07 5	4.336.8 54
High Consumpt ion	2.221	998.35 5	2.194	776.20 0	2.176	878.93 7	2.181	809.39 7	2.195	897.44 6
Anamur	20.894	213.43 2	23.985	248.86 9	24.219	210.87 9	24.602	230.41 8	25.551	237.22 5
Aydıncık	4.500	40.639	4.487	32.425	4.715	39.624	4.828	41.777	4.962	42.850
Bozyazı	7.741	72.719	9.813	86.992	9.919	77.288	10.636	99.604	11.194	100.73 1
Çamlıyay la	1.217	7.735	1.293	12.191	2.284	33.684	2.080	38.267	4.379	83.774
Erdemli	31.714	281.68 5	34.653	442.82 6	38.787	451.44 9	41.561	507.33 7	53.274	864.70 8
Gülнар	3.611	28.313	6.082	136.44 6	7.312	117.57 7	8.340	142.55 6	8.068	95.973
Mut	12.205	133.63 3	12.296	113.04 6	14.934	251.64 6	17.081	424.46 5	14.150	286.25 3
Silifke	33.042	348.38 4	44.417	510.45 5	43.878	605.25 8	43.864	580.00 0	49.534	733.31 3
Tarsus	86.767	888.86 4	93.058	1.076.2 62	95.561	1.268.9 99	95.579	1.269.3 40	104.19 3	1.407.8 66
TOTAL	578.00 1	7.032.6 28	586.18 5	6.939.2 50	620.52 9	7.837.6 09	610.64 7	8.176.3 27	662.57 5	9.086.9 93

Table 2

Water consumption data of MESKİ (Mersin Water and Sewerage Administration) for 2022

Year 2022	Janua ry	Februa ry	March	April	May					
County	Quant ity	M ³	Quanti ty	M ³	Quant ity	M ³	Quant ity	M ³	Quant ity	M ³
The Centre	357.23 6	4.334.7 28	377.85 6	3.738.2 24	357.30 5	3.085.6 39	366.88 9	4.195.4 70	370.01 2	3.965.6 85
High Consumpt ion					1.450	833.20 7	1.543	665.43 0	1.556	674.94 2

Anamur	18.585	188.558	19.506	168.016	18.470	167.299	24.393	474.327	20.030	211.883
Aydıncık Bozyazı	3.774	32.796	3.718	27.533	3.772	29.167	4.727	61.580	3.974	41.044
Çamlıyayla	8.555	75.089	8.365	58.691	8.293	58.406	10.363	120.983	9.487	92.627
Erdemli	1.012	6.916	2.039	7.641	1.275	19.065	3.981	103.994	2.622	26.546
Gülнар	40.526	426.275	43.737	375.777	41.384	347.654	49.303	672.236	49.106	665.534
Mut	4.629	52.958	6.776	73.940	5.248	63.274	9.543	227.527	6.044	81.161
Silifke	12.215	124.333	14.195	113.154	12.191	106.686	21.544	722.472	12.573	172.377
Tarsus	39.486	433.319	38.286	390.393	39.723	420.034	48.897	904.269	45.366	543.820
TOTAL	571.641	6.577.633	599.819	5.746.156	571.233	5.856.417	640.025	9.920.535	605.037	7.481.213

Mersin's water consumption for the February-May 2022 and February-May 2023 periods, as obtained from MESKİ, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, is presented in the table above. The notable increase in water consumption starting from February 2023 is attributed to the substantial influx of citizens affected by the earthquake to Mersin. By comparing these data with the corresponding months of the previous year, it becomes evident how many earthquake victims Mersin accommodated following the earthquake.

Table 3*Amount of Solid Waste Collected in Mersin*

DATE	Waste Amount (Tonnes)
Jan.22	52.960,36
Feb.22	47.309,49
Mar.22	47.215,53
Apr.22	46.273,97
May.22	49.395,56
Jun.22	51.012,34
Jan.23	49.797,06
Feb.23	46.447,54
Mar.23	53.312,74
Apr.23	50.150,83
May.23	54.600,81
Jun.23	60.243,65

The table above illustrates the quantity of solid waste collected by Mersin Metropolitan Municipality from January to June 2022 and 2023. It is evident from this table that the solid waste collected in Mersin has steadily increased since February 2022, coinciding with the occurrence of the earthquake disaster. The Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality

remarks: "Following the earthquake in Mersin, earthquake victims arrived and stayed in significant numbers, with many continuing to reside in Mersin during the post-earthquake period."

Table 4

Mersin Metropolitan Municipality's Aid to Earthquake Victims and the Earthquake Region

Department Heads	Staff Assignmen t	Vehicle Allocatio n	Food Assistanc e	Accommodatio n	In-Kind Aid	Health Care and Patient Transport	Cash Provision
Department of Environmental Protection and Control	164	6			4143		
Department of Environmental Protection and Control							6357502,10
Department of Public Works					5991		
Department of Youth and Sports Services	44	2					2494065,50
Fire Department	7742	2952	2443172	8468			
Department of Women and Family Services					8205	1014	
Department of Culture and Social Affairs				8502			201000
Department of Machinery Supply, Maintenance and Repair							4176458,65
Department of Cemeteries					316265		
Department of Mukhtar Affairs	93	25					
Department of Health Affairs	57	17			568	18157	
Department of Social Services	63		492360		18758	293	13406746

TOTAL	8163	3002	2935532	16970	35393	19464	26635772,2
					0		5

Upon analysis of Table 4, it becomes evident that Mersin Metropolitan Municipality has allocated a comprehensive array of facilities and resources to assist earthquake victims in Mersin, as well as conducting various activities within the earthquake zone. Specifically, the municipality deployed a substantial number of personnel (8.163) and allocated a significant fleet of vehicles (3.002). Furthermore, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality provided essential aid such as food, catering, accommodation, education, and in-kind support to the affected individuals.

As a public institution largely reliant on resources from the central government's budget, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality has mobilized nearly all its units to the earthquake zone, aligning their activities with their respective areas of expertise. The municipality has effectively implemented disaster management policies in response to the crisis. Between February and July 2023, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality transferred approximately 26,635,772.25 TL from its budget to support relief efforts. These aid initiatives and resource transfers remain ongoing.

Table 5

Aids Provided to Earthquake Victims and the Earthquake Region by AFAD Mersin Provincial Directorate under the Coordination of Mersin Governorship

Services Provided by AFAD under the Coordination of Mersin Governorship	Data
Staff Assignment	2.431
Meal Allowance (Daily)	2.550
Accommodation	71.090
In-Kind Aid (Parcel)	34.853
Health Care and Patient Transport	23.714
Student Education Service	19.625
Unaccompanied Child Under Protection	629
Cash Aid Provided by SYDV	244.332.07
Identity Renewal	145.640
Psycho-Social Support	137.404

Table 6

Aids Provided to Earthquake Victims and the Earthquake Region by AFAD Mersin Provincial Directorate under the Coordination of Mersin Governorship

Total Expenditures by AFAD	TL
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Food	974.112.7,46
Material	995.071.7,1
Transport - Logistic	693.810.70,65
Fuel	519933,96
Other (Electricity-Water)	675.267.8,97
TOTAL	963.455.28,14

Table 5-6 illustrates the aid provided to earthquake victims and the earthquake zone by the AFAD Mersin Provincial Directorate under the coordination of Mersin Governorship. One notable observation from the table is that both institutions engage in similar activities, albeit through different branches, to deliver public services. The challenges and advantages encountered in obtaining numerical data showcasing the assistance provided by both the central and local administrations to earthquake victims and the affected area offer insights into the respective positions of these government entities within the broader framework of public administration.

In our communication with Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, we found it relatively easy to reach the relevant executive managers. They promptly provided us with the opportunity to meet with them and accommodated our request to access data for academic purposes. This demonstrates the local administration's closeness to the public, their responsiveness to citizen demands, and the transparency of data regarding public services, setting a commendable example.

In the application submitted to the relevant directorates within the provincial organization of the central government, we encountered a traditional bureaucratic process. Numerous interviews were required, and it was not feasible to meet with the executive managers of the institutions. The reluctance to share data was evident, as written and official responses were not provided in response to the official letter. Instead, verbal information was provided. This highlights the bureaucratic obstacles between the central government and citizens, as well as the insensitivity of institutions affiliated with the central government to citizen demands and their reluctance to share data.

The data used in this study is limited to the context of the subject, which doesn't allow for comparison and more detailed analysis. In addition, there is no similar data available to compare the extraordinary conditions created by the earthquake, and the data obtained is specific to the post-earthquake period. To summarize, the data is limited to the fields of activity and budgets of public institutions. In the aftermath of the earthquake, AFAD and Mersin Metropolitan Municipality utilized the funds available to them under legislative provisions to help the affected region. However, the data collected is inadequate for any extensive analysis or

comparison. The only conclusion that can be drawn from the limited data is that despite both organizations utilizing all their financial resources, it was still insufficient to meet the needs of the affected region.

Analyzing Central Government-Local Government Relations Through the Tweets of Mersin Metropolitan Mayor Vahap Seer

This section examines some tweets of Vahap Seer, the Mayor of Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, following the earthquake. In his tweets, Seer implicitly criticizes the central government and holds it accountable for the negative consequences and shortcomings. Therefore, Seer's indirect, if not direct, criticism and blame directed at the central government is a crucial factor in analyzing the relationship between the central government and local administration in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Vahap Seer, Mayor of Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, tweeted on February 11, 2023 *"Hundreds of thousands of our citizens are coming to Mersin from the earthquake zone. We would embrace our people. However, hundreds of thousands of Syrian asylum seekers are also being brought here. I warn those concerned! You have already brought 400 thousand asylum seekers, we cannot carry this one too. We will not allow this harm to be done to Mersin."* (Seer, 2023).

Numerous instances of conflict between central and local administrations arise regarding public policy, particularly in areas such as foreign migrant and asylum seeker policy. While these policies are typically coordinated by the central government, local administrations and administrators often feel powerless in addressing related issues. Despite citizens' complaints, local administrations may struggle to find solutions due to constraints imposed by the central government. This highlights the challenge of coordinating policies between different levels of government and underscores the need for effective collaboration and communication to address complex societal issues like migration.

In a tweet dated February 16, 2023: *"A 15% increase in water consumption in Mersin between February 9 and February 15 is equivalent to the water consumption of 327,000 people." "The government should immediately prepare and implement an urgent action plan for the migration wave."* (Seer, 2023).

Based on the sudden increase in water consumption, the Metropolitan Mayor estimates that approximately 327,000 earthquake victims are in Mersin. Numerical data and graphs reveal that many of the earthquake victims came to Mersin due to its geographical and cultural proximity to the earthquake zone and the fact that many of them have relatives in Mersin.

Another noteworthy detail is that it was impossible to determine the total number of earthquake victims who came to Mersin, and the central government's administrative units were unable to provide clear answers to our questions.

In a tweet dated February 21, 2023: *The earthquake disaster serves as a significant warning for Mersin, particularly given the high density of old buildings in the area. I started all the work that needed to be done and had not been done so far. As a first step, we decided to establish the "Department of Disaster Management and Urban Transformation". I will personally follow up on these efforts.* (Seçer, 2023).

The Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality has made an effort to raise awareness about the causes of the earthquake disaster and the policies that public institutions should implement in this regard. He also intends to start an initiative within his organization regarding the administrative structuring that should have been implemented by the central government many years ago since we are an earthquake country.

Vahap Seçer, Mayor of Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, tweeted on 24 February 2023: *"A considerable number of individuals who migrated from the earthquake zone will now live in Mersin, increasing the need for housing. Housing sales and rental prices are exorbitant. Both the Housing Development Administration of Turkey (TOKİ) and municipalities must commence the construction of affordable mass housing projects to accommodate low-income citizens facing hardship. We have started our work.* (Seçer, 2023).

The Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality wants to take initiatives regarding the need for housing, an issue that falls within the purview of both central and local administrations. There are clearly serious deficiencies in the central government's policies on mass housing production, which is largely implemented through TOKİ (Housing Development Administration of Turkey) under the central government. While municipalities have the authority to undertake mass housing projects, many lack the capacity to do so effectively. It is evident that municipal resources are insufficient, and the funds allocated by the central government often barely cover mandatory needs. Additionally, the current economic crisis further complicates efforts to realize such initiatives. This highlights the urgent need for collaborative efforts between central and local administrations to overcome these challenges and address the housing needs of citizens effectively.

Around thirty-five years ago, Mersin Municipality successfully developed mass housing. However, it's important to note that during that time, ANAP was in power, Turgut Özal was the Prime Minister, and Okan Merzeci from ANAP was the Mayor of Mersin

Metropolitan Municipality. Major projects such as housing production can only be realized by municipalities when they work in conjunction with the central government.

In a tweet dated March 10, 2023: *"Post-earthquake migration in Mersin led to increases in water consumption (15.4%), housing rents (150%), solid waste (13%), and demand for teksinmersin (200%)."* (Seçer, 2023).

Referring to the increase in water consumption and the increase in the amount of solid waste in Mersin after the earthquake, the Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality states how many earthquake victims Mersin hosted and received migration from the earthquake zone.

At the same time, he points out a recurring issue between the central and local administrations, specifically regarding projects awaiting approval from the central government, which are unnecessarily stalled without clear reasons.

Vahap Seçer, Mayor of Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, tweeted on March 2, 2023 *"We are taking concrete steps in our efforts to make Mersin a disaster-resilient city. First and foremost, we will present our proposal for establishing an earthquake risk management and urban improvement department to the city council during the March meeting."* (Seçer, 2023).

It is seen that the Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality is serious about the impact of the earthquake risk in Mersin and the measures to be taken, which he is trying to implement within his administrative structure. It is seen that the initiative in question was included in the March agenda of the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality Council and the issue was referred to the commission with the decision dated 09/03/2023 and numbered 134. However, the department has not been able to be established or operational yet.

Tweet dated March 10, 2023: *"We met with business NGOs, professional chambers, trade unions and various NGOs. In the meetings with the agenda of the earthquake and intensive migration to Mersin, the opinion that emerged was that Mersin, which is the 12th province affected by the earthquake, should be included in the scope of "disaster zone" or "support with special status"* (Seçer, 2023).

In cooperation with civil society organizations, the Mayor of the Metropolitan Municipality has been expressing the extent to which Mersin is affected by the earthquake zone and how vital it is for the earthquake zone. He has invited the central government to take steps in this regard. This request, which should have been spontaneously considered and implemented by the central government and expected to lead to positive results in terms of disaster/crisis management, has remained unanswered and has not been implemented.

Results and Discussion

Historically, Türkiye has had an intense centralist tendency in its government-local administration relations, which has persisted despite changes in laws, governments, and local administrators.

Disaster management is one of the current institutional contexts for central government-local administration relations. Yavaş and Yavuz made the following observations regarding the analysis of central government-local administration relations in the context of disaster management: Disaster management tends to localize in the light of current developments, however, this tendency is not at a sufficient level, and especially the centralist identity of the Turkish Public Administration does not allow the localization of disaster management systems (Yavaş & Yavuz, 2015). Özler, who assesses the issue from a comparable standpoint, outlines the drawbacks of centralization and single-actor while advocating for a disaster management model grounded in a multi-actor and governance approach (Özler, 2019). Gerdan conducted a study regarding the relationship between central government units responsible for disaster management and local administration units in the context of inter-actor relations. The study found that while the actors tried to produce projects in cooperation, the implementation and efficiency were not at the desired level (Gerdan, 2019). Korkın and Öztop, examining disaster management through the lens of local administrations, sought to conclude disaster management by analyzing the strategic plans of 30 metropolitan municipalities. Their primary finding indicates that while metropolitan municipalities exhibit a high level of awareness regarding disasters within their strategic planning framework, there are significant factual and practical deficiencies (Korkın & Öztop, 2022). Özler, who evaluated disaster management within the policy-making processes of local actors and municipalities, identified shortcomings related to the inclusion and support of disadvantaged groups, persons with disabilities, and the elderly in disaster management efforts (Özler, 2023). Lastly, Özdemir, taking a broad perspective on disaster management within municipalities, has concluded that municipalities lack the expected level of competence in the realm of disaster management (Özdemir, 2023).

These studies provide valuable perspectives on the relationship between central government and local administration. The focus of this study is the analysis of post-earthquake public services, which has led to the conclusion that there is a need for reform in this area. It has been found that the public administration as a whole has failed, highlighting the importance of improving central government-local administration relations. Academic

studies have also identified the need for reform in this area, discussing the issue from various angles but reaching the same conclusion.

Clearly, disaster management and the dynamics of central government-local administration relations within disaster management are focal points of ongoing discussions. Our analysis of the Mersin Metropolitan Municipality case contributes novel data and provides a fresh perspective to this discourse

The study underscores the necessity for reforming central government-local administration relations, particularly within disaster management. It advocates the establishment of a new, functional, and efficient administrative structure that fosters collaboration between central and local administrations. Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that both the central government and local administrations possess significant resources for disaster management. However, these resources and activities are not effectively, efficiently, or cohesively utilized. When analyzing the tweets of Vahap Seer, Mayor of Mersin Metropolitan Municipality, regarding disaster management, it becomes evident that politicization and polarization come to the forefront rather than cooperation and coordination efforts in central government-local administration relations.

It may be helpful to consider two different perspectives that can provide greater depth and understanding to the discussion of this issue. Firstly, although Türkiye's central government has been controlled by the Justice and Development Party (AKP) since 2002, some municipalities in the region where the earthquake occurred, as well as some metropolitan municipalities that provided aid to the affected area, are under the administration of the Republican People's Party (CHP). This division of power between the central government and local administration creates an administrative crisis. Therefore, the Turkish Public Administration needs to develop solutions and establish the necessary legal framework to address such problems in practice.

Furthermore, the role and impact of civil initiatives during the earthquake have become clear. Voluntary civil initiatives, especially AHBAP, which organized and pioneered aid to the earthquake zone, should be given an active role in this process. This role should be in a way that their legal infrastructure is prepared, they are included in administrative processes, and their role in crises is objectively determined. To sum up, civil society organizations and voluntary organizations should be included in crisis management processes, and their roles should be objectively defined and represented legally and administratively. In this context, it is also useful to add the following: While KIZILAY (Turkish red crescent), which operates with public resources and donations, should have played an active role in the

earthquake together with AFAD, it managed the process extremely unsuccessfully. KIZILAY was very disappointing with its post-earthquake activities and became the subject of controversy.

It is important to note that the Turkish Public Administration, including all its actors, failed to manage the post-earthquake crisis and disaster management. Consequently, it is necessary to thoroughly examine the process, create pre- and post-disaster scenarios, and establish effective, productive, and solution-oriented policy sets based on the cooperation and organization of all actors, including the central government, local administration, and civil initiatives.

Recommendations

The significant fires, epidemics, and earthquake disasters experienced in the past five years underscore the requirement for cooperation between central and local administrations. By observing these events, identifying the involved actors, and analyzing numerical data, it becomes clear that collaboration is essential for effective disaster management. Considering this necessity as an obligation for the reform and functionality of the administrative structure, the necessity of reforming the administrative structure in the context of central government and local administrations should not be ignored by turning the conjuncture into a window of opportunity.

A reform is imperative to restructure the relationship between central and local governments. This reform should aim to enhance the local administration's administrative and financial autonomy while establishing an audit mechanism based on objective criteria independent of political conflicts.

The context of this study, the data obtained and the analysis of this data provide us with a limited perspective. In this context, the inferences made and the recommendations expressed above are abstract, general, and limited. It is necessary to access and analyze more comprehensive data to make more practical and applicable suggestions. It is also important to conduct studies that reveal the experiences of institution managers.

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