

Social Media and LGBTQ+ Experiences in the Aftermath of the 2023 Turkey-Syria Earthquake: A Case Study of Kaos GL

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Abstract: There is a growing consensus that natural disasters exacerbate pre-existing social inequalities, disproportionately affecting marginalized communities, including LGBTQ+ individuals and groups. Their vulnerabilities during such disasters are heightened by intersecting factors such as discrimination, limited access to essential services, and social stigma. In this context, the media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of disasters and influencing disaster management policies; however, LGBTQ+ individuals' experiences are often underrepresented or overlooked in mainstream media coverage of these events (McKinnon et al., 2016). Such an omission not only erases the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ communities, including discrimination in shelters, barriers to healthcare access, and an increased risk of violence, but also reinforces the heteronormative frameworks that dominate disaster narratives, further marginalizing these individuals in broader crisis response efforts. In contrast, social media can both mitigate and amplify these disparities. While it provides a platform for advocacy, mutual aid, and solidarity, it also carries risks, such as the spread of misinformation and the potential for cyberbullying, particularly for already marginalized groups. Given these dynamics, it is crucial to explore how social media is used by vulnerable communities, particularly in times of crisis. As both a tool for support and a potential source of harm, social media platforms play a role in shaping how marginalized groups navigate and respond to disasters. Against this background, this study examines how social media platforms were utilized by LGBTQ+ communities in Turkey following the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake, with a particular focus on the Kaos GL Association, Turkey's first officially recognized LGBTQ+ organization. Through thematic analysis of content shared on Kaos GL's social media accounts and interviews with two key contributors, the research explores how LGBTQ+ individuals engaged with social media platforms in the aftermath of the disaster and the role these platforms played in shaping their experiences. Thematic analysis revealed three key findings regarding LGBTQ+ individuals' experiences with social media after the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake: (1) Social media amplified LGBTQ+ voices, fostered solidarity, and created a sense of belonging, especially on platforms like Kaos GL; (2) It served as a crucial tool for highlighting LGBTQ+ needs and mobilizing resources such as shelter and medical aid; (3) Discrimination and social exclusion persisted offline and online, with social media also being used to spread harmful rhetoric, further marginalizing LGBTQ+ communities during the crisis. These findings underscore the complex role social media played in shaping the post-earthquake experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in Turkey, highlighting its potential to foster solidarity while also amplifying vulnerability. While previous research has examined the dual role of social media during crises, this study adds to the existing literature by examining how these roles specifically played out within the socio-cultural and political context of the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake.

Keywords: Gender Minorities, Social Media, Disaster, 2023 Turkey-Syria Earthquake, Case Study

1. Background

1.1 Everyday Resistance of LGBTQ+ Individuals and Groups

The concept of everyday resistance, or *infrapolitics*, introduced by James Scott (1985), refers to routine and normalized acts of resistance against power structures (see Del Valle, 2017, p. 23). Scott (1985) highlights the distinction between organized resistance and more subtle, everyday acts of defiance. However, Johansson and Vinthagen (2013) critique Scott's emphasis on political consciousness, arguing that everyday resistance should be defined not only by its engagement with power structures but also by its potential for liberation, regardless of intent. In this context, LGBTQ+ individuals, who often face discrimination due to their sexual identity and orientation (Sezer and Oktan, 2020, p. 270), engage in everyday resistance through both individual and collective strategies to challenge the pervasive heteronormative pressures in society. LGBTQ+ individuals' resistance practices within society encompass various strategies against the pressures imposed by heteronormative and sexist structures. These practices occur both at the individual and collective levels and aim to protect LGBTQ+ individuals' identities, defend their rights, and increase their visibility.

LGBTQ+ individuals employ various resistance practices to challenge discrimination and assert their identities, both individually and collectively. **Individual resistance practices** involve self-expression, where individuals increase their visibility and raise social awareness through personal choices such as clothing, hairstyle, and social

media engagement. The act of "coming out" serves as a means of personal liberation and a challenge to societal norms. Additionally, psychological resilience is developed through strategies such as maintaining self-esteem, forming support networks, and seeking psychological assistance to counter prejudice and discrimination (Zottola, 2024, pp. 1-4). **Collective resistance practices** include activism and advocacy, where individuals engage in protests, demonstrations, and legal lobbying to advance LGBTQ+ rights. Community building fosters solidarity through support groups, social events, and educational initiatives. Furthermore, artistic and cultural expression is crucial in increasing visibility and raising awareness by portraying LGBTQ+ experiences in literature, music, cinema, and other artistic domains (ibid).

LGBTQ+ individuals demonstrate resilience against discrimination in their daily lives through community solidarity, activism, and social support. However, during crises, such as natural disasters, their vulnerability increases, and the discrimination they face often becomes more pronounced. Recognizing the diverse experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals during such events, shaped by factors such as cultural context, geographical location, and available resources, is crucial. Addressing these disparities requires sustained efforts, including collaboration between LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, disaster response agencies, and broader communities.

1.2 Experiences of LGBTQ+ Individuals and Groups During Disasters

During disasters, LGBTQ+ individuals face a confluence of challenges arising from pre-existing social vulnerabilities. They often encounter marginalization and discrimination when accessing post-disaster aid, as traditional family structures are typically prioritized, leaving them excluded (Gorman-Murray et al., 2014, pp. 239-243). Temporary shelters can become unsafe spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals, exposing them to harassment and violence, which is further compounded by gender identity challenges within binary-divided spaces. The increased risk of displacement, along with potential food and water insecurity, exacerbates their vulnerability (Yamashita et al., 2017, p. 69). As Gorman-Murray et al. (2017, p. 39) point out, disasters also intensify mental health struggles, triggering past traumas and fostering social isolation. Distrust in official systems, due to past discrimination, can hinder access to essential support. However, despite these adversities, LGBTQ+ communities exhibit remarkable resilience, forming robust support networks and engaging in mutual aid, though these experiences are often further complicated by intersecting identities like race and socioeconomic status (ibid).

Disasters have the potential to cause substantial material, social, and psychological harm (McKinnon et al., 2017, p. 122). They can lead to the destruction of homes and infrastructure, loss of life, or severe injuries, and can induce trauma and disruption at various levels within society (UNISDR, 2009). It is important to note that the repercussions of a disaster are not uniformly distributed. Vulnerable and marginalized communities often face a greater degree of susceptibility to disaster impacts and may have less resilience in their ability to recover (Gorman-Murray et al., 2014, pp. 237-238). For LGBTQ+ individuals, the context of disasters introduces unique challenges and vulnerabilities related to sexual orientation, gender identity, or intersex status. These challenges arise from societal discrimination, a lack of inclusive policies, and an increased risk of marginalization during disaster situations. The experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in disasters can be discussed in detail as follows:

LGBTQ+ individuals experience disproportionate vulnerabilities during disasters due to social stigma, discrimination, and a lack of legal protections, leading to disparities in resource and service access. Safety concerns arise, particularly in gender-segregated shelters that fail to accommodate diverse gender identities. Family and network dynamics are often disrupted, as chosen families may not be legally recognized, leaving individuals without traditional support. Access to critical healthcare, such as hormone therapy, can be interrupted, compounding existing challenges (McKinnon et al., 2017, p. 127). Discrimination and stigma persist in disaster responses, deterring individuals from seeking assistance. Housing and shelter situations present unique difficulties for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, as traditional shelters may be unsafe or unaccommodating. Inclusive disaster planning, involving first responder training, safe shelter creation, and culturally sensitive support, is crucial. The loss of identification documents poses particular problems for LGBTQ+ individuals whose IDs may not reflect their gender presentation or recognized relationships. Advocacy organizations play a vital role in raising awareness and ensuring inclusive disaster response. Those who are not visibly LGBTQ+ may face increased isolation and reluctance to seek help, fearing disclosure in hostile environments, and these factors contribute to heightened stress and mental health challenges (ibid, pp. 127-128). Being an LGBTQ+ individual in disasters means navigating a complex web of challenges that are shaped by societal attitudes, legal frameworks, and the availability of inclusive resources. Efforts to address these challenges are ongoing and require collaboration among various stakeholders, including LGBTQ+ advocacy groups, disaster response agencies, and the broader community.

1.3 Social Media and LGBTQ+ Experiences During Disasters

Effective communication plays a pivotal role in not only fostering but also strengthening community resilience in the face of disasters (see Dargin, Fan and Mostafavi, 2021). It could serve as the cornerstone for coordinating emergency responses, disseminating critical information, and fostering a sense of solidarity and preparedness among community members. During and after disasters, the media plays a crucial role in providing essential information, helping individuals and communities strengthen their ability to survive and recover (McKinnon, Gorman-Murray and Dominey-Howes, 2017). Through its selection of coverage angles and emphasis on specific experiences deemed noteworthy, the media shapes public perceptions of a disaster, and the intentional or unintentional omission or suppression of certain narratives may contribute to a broader lack of understanding regarding how disasters uniquely affect marginalized groups (ibid). The coverage of disasters through traditional mass media is often constrained, as it typically relies on messages generated by a single entity and distributed to broad audiences, offering limited opportunities for audience engagement and feedback (Dargin, Fan and Mostafavi, 2021). In contrast, web-based communication technologies, when compared to traditional media, provide increased capacity, reliability, and interactivity, which can enhance communication during disasters (ibid).

Research has shown that digital media plays a crucial role in facilitating connection and support for many individuals within the LGBTQ+ community, particularly those who experience marginalization, isolation, or invisibility (Robards, Byron and D'Souza, 2020). These digital media connections can provide much-needed support that may be lacking in other areas of their lives, allowing LGBTQ+ individuals to observe their own experiences mirrored in the collective lives of others within the community (ibid). However, social media can also serve as a platform where discrimination, hate speech, and harmful rhetoric are disseminated. While it can foster solidarity and empowerment, it can reinforce exclusion and perpetuate stigmatization, highlighting the dual role that social media plays in the lives of marginalized groups. Research on LGBTQ+ experiences in disasters and their representation on social media usually highlights several key points:

One of these is "Social Media as a Tool for Support and Visibility." Social media platforms have become essential for LGBTQ+ individuals during disasters, providing spaces for connection, support, and information-sharing. They help marginalized communities stay informed, organize relief efforts, and share experiences that are often overlooked by mainstream media (Escobar-Viera et al., 2022, p. 2). Another key point highlighted in the representation of LGBTQ+ experiences in disasters is "Digital Activism and Awareness." LGBTQ+ activists use social media to expose discrimination in disaster response efforts, advocate for inclusive policies, and create community-driven relief initiatives. However, misinformation and online harassment can also pose significant issues (Dhiman, 2023, pp. 6-7). "Queer Cosmopolitanism in Disasters" is another important aspect of social media representation of LGBTQ+ experiences during disasters. Research on LGBTQ+ communities in post-disaster settings, such as post-Haiyan Tacloban, found that mobile dating apps (e.g., Grindr) played a key role in facilitating new social networks and building resilience among LGBTQ+ individuals. These platforms provided alternative spaces for identity expression and emotional support (Ong, 2017). Lastly, "Challenges in Social Media Use" is another crucial key point, as social media, while valuable for LGBTQ+ individuals during crises, also presents challenges such as digital surveillance, privacy concerns, and exposure to hate speech, with LGBTQ+ users often employing strategies like private groups and content filtering to create safer online spaces (Saha et al., 2019, pp. 2-3, 5-6). Social media plays a critical role in amplifying LGBTQ+ voices during disasters, offering both community support and advocacy opportunities. However, challenges such as online harassment and misinformation underscore the need for safer, more inclusive digital spaces.

Based on these discussions, this research delves into the post-2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake experiences of LGBTQ+ communities in Turkey, specifically examining the role of social media platforms as utilized by Kaos GL Association, Turkey's first officially recognized LGBTQ+ organization. This study focuses on how LGBTQ+ individuals' lived experiences with social media influenced their digital engagement following the earthquake. The primary objective is to illuminate the complex role social media played in shaping the post-earthquake realities of LGBTQ+ individuals in Turkey, emphasizing its dual capacity to foster solidarity while also exacerbating vulnerabilities within Turkey's socio-cultural and politically complex landscape for gender minorities.

2. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to explore the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in Turkey in the aftermath of the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake. Through a case study approach, the research focuses on the

Kaos GL Association, examining how LGBTQ+ individuals engaged with social media platforms during the disaster. Specifically, the study investigates both the positive and negative aspects of their interactions with these platforms. The two main research questions guiding this study are:

1. How did LGBTQ+ individuals use social media platforms, particularly Kaos GL, to foster solidarity, mobilize resources, and navigate challenges during the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake?
2. What challenges and opportunities did social media create for LGBTQ+ individuals seeking visibility, assistance, and community support in the aftermath of the earthquake?

The primary data collection method was semi-structured interviews with key contributors to Kaos GL's social media activities during the earthquake crisis. Two in-depth interviews were conducted with members of the organization who played a significant role in managing and creating content for social media platforms. The interviews were held online (via Zoom) on 27 December 2024. The secondary data for this study consisted of Instagram and X (formerly Twitter) content shared by Kaos GL over a one-month period following the 6 February 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake. A total of 73 Instagram posts were collected, of which 38 were directly related to the earthquake. Additionally, 315 posts were retrieved from X, with 258 specifically addressing the earthquake. This content was analyzed to explore how social media was utilized and to gain insights into the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals with social media during the crisis. The collected data, consisting of interviews and social media content, was analyzed using thematic analysis, enabling the identification and interpretation of patterns and themes across both data sources. Through this process, three key themes emerged: 'Building Solidarity,' which focused on how social media facilitated connection and collective action within the LGBTQ+ community; 'Making Needs Visible and Mobilizing Support,' which highlighted how social media was used to raise awareness of the unique needs of LGBTQ+ individuals during the crisis; and 'Discrimination and Social Exclusion,' which examined the challenges of hate speech, marginalization, and exclusion that LGBTQ+ individuals faced in both digital and physical spaces during the aftermath of the earthquake. A comprehensive analysis of these themes follows in the next section, where their implications are examined in depth.

3. Findings

Thematic analysis of the data reveals three main themes regarding LGBTQ+ individuals' experiences with social media in the aftermath of the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake: *Building Solidarity*, *Making Needs Visible and Mobilizing Support*, *Discrimination and Social Exclusion*. These themes provide a nuanced understanding of how LGBTQ+ individuals engaged with social media during the crisis, highlighting both the challenges they faced—such as social exclusion, marginalization, and online harassment—and how social media served as a platform for solidarity, support, and resource mobilization. The analysis underscores how LGBTQ+ individuals navigated the negative aspects of digital spaces, including hate speech and discrimination, while also leveraging the positive potential of social media to foster connections, amplify their voices, and mobilize support during the crisis.

3.1 Building Solidarity

A key finding from this research is the crucial role social media played in amplifying the voices of LGBTQ+ individuals and groups during the crisis. Participants highlighted that LGBTQ+-focused platforms on social media were essential for documenting the challenges their community faced in the aftermath of the disaster. Social media posts further supported this finding, with 112 out of 296 earthquake-related posts focused on **Building Solidarity**. These platforms not only raised awareness of the specific needs of LGBTQ+ individuals but also contributed to creating a sense of belonging within the community. One of the interviewees, Interviewee A, shared an anecdote that illustrates how social media was instrumental in building solidarity among LGBTQ+ individuals during the aftermath of the earthquake:

In dealing with these challenges during the crisis, social media platforms became a bridge of solidarity for us. The regular news reports and social media posts by Kaos GL enabled us to make on-the-ground realities visible. [...] One of the positive aspects of social media was its role in facilitating solidarity. Thanks to social media, individuals were able to quickly raise awareness of their needs, making the organization of aid more efficient. For example, calls made via social media were crucial in establishing safe spaces for trans individuals to find shelter (Interviewee A, 27 December 2024, Mersin, Turkey).

This interviewee also highlighted how social media facilitated connections, stating: "One of the significant contributions of social media platforms was facilitating communication with LGBTQ+ individuals in the region and helping integrate them into solidarity networks" (Interviewee A, 27 December 2024, Mersin, Turkey). Social

media content further supports this analysis. A tweet from Kaos GL (February 28, 2023) announced the formation of *Bursa Lubunya Dayanışması*, a solidarity initiative created to support LGBTQ+ individuals after the earthquake. This tweet exemplifies how social media acted as a tool for mobilizing support, demonstrating that online platforms were crucial in organizing aid and creating safe spaces. By providing an email contact, the post also reflects the importance of digital networks in establishing resources and fostering connections among affected individuals.



Figure 1: A tweet from Kaos GL (February 28, 2023) announced the formation of Bursa Lubunya Dayanışması, a solidarity initiative for LGBTQ+ individuals after the earthquake (Kaos GL, 2023).

Another social media post from Kaos GL (February 22, 2023) highlights *Ankara LGBTI+ Earthquake Solidarity*, an initiative designed to assist LGBTQ+ individuals who relocated to Ankara following the earthquake. Featuring an image of a rainbow flag being held in a public space, the post not only documents the collective response but also visually reinforces resilience and community visibility. This post also provides a curated list of support mechanisms, further emphasizing the role of social media in sharing vital information and facilitating access to aid.



Figure 2: An Instagram post from Kaos GL (February 22, 2023) highlighted the Ankara LGBTI+ earthquake solidarity, compiling support mechanisms for LGBTQ+ individuals coming from the earthquake region to Ankara, emphasizing the importance of support networks and visibility (Kaos GL, 2023).

The analysis demonstrates that social media platforms not only amplified the voices of marginalized communities but also provided an essential space for documenting their challenges and raising awareness about their specific needs. As reflected in Interviewee A's experience, these platforms fostered a sense of belonging and connection, enabling individuals to mobilize resources quickly and organize support. The ability to make urgent needs visible, such as creating safe spaces for trans individuals, highlights the role of social media as a tool for solidarity, advocacy, and collective resilience in times of crisis.

3.2 Making Needs Visible and Mobilizing Support

The theme Making Needs Visible and Mobilizing Support emerged from the interview data as a crucial aspect of participants' experiences. Additionally, the social media posts we analyzed supported this theme, reinforcing the key points discussed. Out of 296 earthquake-related posts, 102 focused on 'Making Needs Visible and Mobilizing Support,' further emphasizing the significance of this theme. This theme highlights how social media platforms were instrumental in raising awareness about the specific needs of LGBTQ+ individuals during the

earthquake, including access to shelter, safety, and other vital resources. It emphasizes the role of these platforms in facilitating calls for help and mobilizing support, both locally and globally.

Both interviewees underscored the pivotal role social media played in bringing attention to the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals following the earthquake. These platforms not only raised visibility for the community's struggles but also became vital tools for organizing resources and building support networks. As Participant A noted, "Kaos GL's visibility on social media allowed us to share the stories of marginalized individuals with a wider audience" (Interviewee A, 27 December 2024, Mersin, Turkey). Participant B echoed this sentiment, stating, "Social media posts helped raise awareness of the needs of LGBTQ+ people in the earthquake zone, mobilizing support and aid" (Interviewee B, 27 December 2024, Mersin, Turkey). Both participants emphasized how essential social media was in driving these efforts.

Here is an anecdote shared by Interviewee A, which further elaborates on their experiences:

LGBTQ+ individuals faced significant barriers in accessing shelter, healthcare, and emergency aid—areas in which they were already marginalized due to social prejudices. During the crisis, these barriers were exacerbated, making it nearly impossible for them to access necessary services. Social media calls proved particularly effective for trans individuals in need of shelter and safety in the earthquake zone. A notable example of this was Kaos GL's social media posts titled "Emergency Needs List for LGBTQ+ People in the Earthquake Zone." These posts provided clear and specific information about both the physical and psychological needs of LGBTQ+ individuals, while also sharing contact details for volunteers in the area. As a result, communication was established with individuals in the region, and aid was successfully directed to those in need (Interviewee A, 27 December 2024, Mersin, Turkey).

Here are some examples of social media posts that, along with the interview data, contributed to the emergence of this theme.



Figure 3: A tweet from Kaos GL (February 20, 2023) highlighted the Colors of Resistance Izmir, current emergency needs list for the earthquake region, emphasizing the urgent needs of LGBTQ+ individuals affected by the earthquake (Kaos GL, 2023).

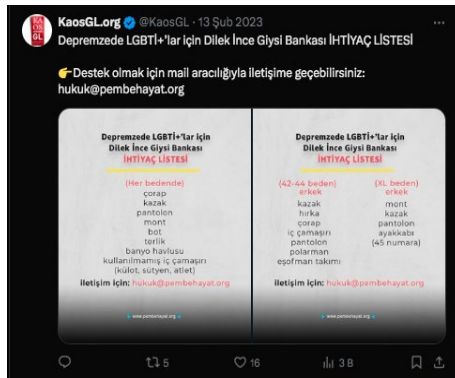


Figure 4: A tweet from Kaos GL (February 13, 2023) highlighted the Clothing Bank Needs List for LGBTQ+ Earthquake Survivors by Dilek İnce, emphasizing the urgent needs of LGBTQ+ individuals affected by the earthquake (Kaos GL, 2023).

The analysis of social media posts further reinforces this theme, demonstrating how digital platforms became lifelines for LGBTQ+ individuals affected by the earthquake. Kaos GL's posts (Images 3 and 4) highlight the urgent needs of those in disaster-stricken areas, including essential supplies such as food, hygiene products, and warm clothing.

3.3. Discrimination and Social Exclusion

This theme explores the multifaceted marginalization and exclusion of LGBTQ+ individuals in both online and offline spaces, particularly in times of crisis. It examines how deeply ingrained social and cultural biases not only hinder their access to vital support but also contribute to their systematic neglect in disaster relief efforts. Furthermore, it delves into the prevalence of harmful rhetoric and online harassment directed at LGBTQ+ individuals during the crisis, while also examining the role of social media platforms in amplifying and normalizing discriminatory discourses. It explores how the earthquake intensified existing prejudices, with some using social media to spread hate speech, incite violence, and further stigmatize the LGBTQ+ community, ultimately shaping public perceptions and exacerbating their vulnerabilities during such critical moments. Social media posts, in conjunction with the interview data, played a key role in the emergence of the theme 'Discrimination and Social Exclusion.' Of the posts analyzed, 82 centered on this theme, often taking the form of anti-LGBTQ+ discourses and hate speech in response to content shared on Kaos GL's accounts. An anecdote provided by Interviewee A highlights the depth of discrimination LGBTQ+ individuals faced in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Yes, unfortunately, discrimination and stigmatization were frequently encountered on social media. Some people attempted to blame LGBTQ+ individuals for major disasters like the earthquake. Hate speech became widespread on social media platforms, especially through cases where trans individuals were removed from shelters or not even recognized as earthquake victims. These discourses were often masked with religious references or societal morality narratives (Interviewee A, 27 December 2024, Mersin, Turkey).

This finding highlights how LGBTQ+ individuals were not only marginalized in physical spaces but also targeted through digital narratives that reinforced their exclusion. The portrayal of LGBTQ+ communities as responsible for a natural disaster illustrates how crises become moments where existing societal prejudices are amplified. Social media functioned as a key site where these narratives were both produced and circulated, legitimizing discrimination under moral and religious pretexts. The removal of trans individuals from shelters is particularly significant as it reflects the ways in which social media-fueled biases translated into real-life exclusion. Reflecting on this experience, Interviewee B further noted:

Social media played a dual role in shaping the post-earthquake experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals, both positively and negatively. While it became a space for solidarity and support, it also fueled misinformation and cyberbullying, making these challenges even more severe. Hate speech, targeted posts, and fake news about LGBTQ+ individuals intensified social polarization. One striking example was the way some social media users portrayed LGBTQ+ individuals as people unworthy of receiving aid. This not only harmed individuals' morale but also had tangible consequences on access to relief mechanisms (Interviewee B, 27 December 2024, Mersin, Turkey).

Examples of posts that contributed to the emergence of this theme are discussed below.

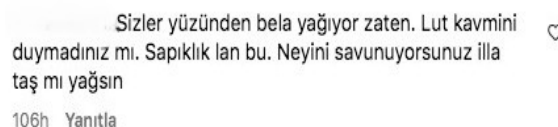


Figure 5: A comment written under the post “Ece, a trans woman earthquake survivor from Maraş on Kaos GL’s Instagram account, expressing discrimination towards LGBTQ+ individuals, Instagram User, February 14, 2023.

This post reflects a prevalent form of hate speech, often amplified during crises, where moral and religious justifications are used to discriminate against LGBTQ+ individuals. The comment draws on religious discourse, specifically referencing the story of Lot’s people, to frame the existence of LGBTQ+ individuals as sinful. This narrative suggests that natural disasters, such as the earthquake, are a form of divine punishment for their perceived immorality. Such rhetoric not only reinforces negative stereotypes but also promotes the dangerous idea that LGBTQ+ communities are deserving of harm, further marginalizing an already vulnerable group. In the

context of a disaster, where marginalized groups are already facing heightened risks, this type of moralistic condemnation deepens their exclusion and amplifies societal biases.

Sayfanın adı kaos, derdi vatan hainliği.
105h 3 beğenme Yanıtla

Figure 6: A comment written under the post “Roman LGBTQ+ individuals have become completely invisible in the earthquake zones” on Kaos GL’s Instagram account, expressing discrimination towards LGBTQ+ individuals, Instagram User, February 23, 2023.

This post undermines Kaos GL and, by extension, LGBTQ+ advocacy, labeling it as treasonous (vatan hainliği). It attempts to delegitimize LGBTQ+ activism by associating it with national betrayal. By framing LGBTQ+ advocacy as a form of treason, the post reinforces harmful stereotypes and seeks to criminalize efforts to advance the rights and visibility of marginalized communities. This kind of rhetoric fosters an atmosphere of hostility and exclusion, making it more difficult for vulnerable groups to seek support or protection during times of crisis. In the context of a natural disaster, such narratives can intensify the marginalization and vulnerability of LGBTQ+ individuals, further isolating them from critical resources and solidarity.

..Depremden önce gördüğünüzde "ALLAH belanı versin" demiyormuyduk?? E verdi işte. Şimdi neden üzülüyorsunuz ki?? Ben üzülmiyorum ona. Hatta yemek vermeyenlerin ellerinden öperim. Sırf o şerefsizler yüzündün dağılmıyormu dünya?? Az kaldı. Taş yağacak gökten taş. Soyu kurusun cinsi belli olmayanların. O şerefsizin yerine bir çocuk kurtulsaydı kaşkı. Geçtm çocuğu. Bir köpeyin bile kurtuluşu ondan kıymetli olurdu benim için. Şükür ALLAHın bildiğine. Yaşattıysa vardır bi bildiği. Daha beter ölüm gönderecektir elbet. Yada imana gelir soysuz..
106h 1 beğenme Yanıtla
— Yanıtları gör (6)

Figure 7: A comment written under the post “Ece, a trans woman earthquake survivor from Maraş” on Kaos GL’s Instagram account, expressing discrimination towards LGBTQ+ individuals, Instagram User, February 14, 2023.

This post is an explicit example of hate speech and dehumanization, celebrating the suffering of LGBTQ+ individuals by framing the earthquake as divine punishment. The post not only justifies violence and neglect but also praises those who refuse aid to LGBTQ+ survivors, reinforcing the idea that they are undeserving of basic humanitarian assistance. This finding underscores how the digital sphere became both a site of resistance and exclusion for LGBTQ+ individuals. While solidarity networks emerged, misinformation and targeted attacks also escalated, revealing the deeply polarized nature of public discourse. The construction of LGBTQ+ individuals as “undeserving” of aid points to a broader pattern of social hierarchies that influence disaster response. The way relief efforts were shaped by these online narratives suggests that discrimination in digital spaces has direct material consequences, affecting who is seen as worthy of help and who is left behind.

4. Conclusion

This research explored the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in Turkey in the aftermath of the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake, focusing on their engagement with social media, particularly through platforms like Kaos GL. The findings emphasize the dual role of social media in fostering solidarity, while also amplifying discrimination and exclusion. The findings indicate that social media played a critical role in fostering solidarity and mobilizing resources, enabling LGBTQ+ individuals to share information, access support, and navigate the challenges of the disaster. However, the research also uncovered how these platforms highlighted the challenges faced by LGBTQ+ individuals, including the amplification of discrimination and exclusion, with hate speech and societal biases exacerbating their vulnerability. The earthquake exacerbated existing societal prejudices, with some individuals using social media to spread harmful rhetoric, stigmatize LGBTQ+ communities, and deny them access to disaster relief. This reinforced societal biases and discrimination, further marginalizing LGBTQ+ individuals both in physical spaces and within digital platforms. Thus, while social media provided significant opportunities for connection and advocacy, it also revealed the persistent marginalization of LGBTQ+ individuals in digital spaces. These findings address the central concerns of the research, showing how social media shaped

LGBTQ+ individuals' experiences during the earthquake—serving both as a tool for support and a site of ongoing discrimination, hostility, and exclusion.

To address these challenges in future crises, it is crucial to improve the inclusivity and visibility of LGBTQ+ support networks on social media platforms, ensuring that marginalized voices are amplified and that access to vital resources is easier for affected individuals. Additionally, fostering collaboration between LGBTQ+ organizations and mainstream disaster response agencies through digital platforms could enhance information sharing and resource mobilization. Furthermore, training social media platforms to better moderate hate speech and address discriminatory narratives could contribute to creating a safer, more supportive online environment for LGBTQ+ individuals during times of crisis.

In the context of the 2023 Turkey-Syria earthquake, this research contributes to the existing body of literature on gender minorities in disaster contexts, with a particular focus on the experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in Turkey—an area that has been under-explored in current studies. Despite growing interest in gender minorities and disasters, the specific experiences of LGBTQ+ individuals in Turkey—particularly their use of social media—remain underexplored. Centered on the case of Kaos GL, this study highlights these experiences but is limited by its small sample size and singular focus. Future research should include a broader range of LGBTQ+ communities and organizations, especially less visible ones, to offer a more comprehensive understanding.

AI Declaration

This research utilized ChatGPT, an AI language model developed by OpenAI, to assist with data analysis and language refinement.

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