



THE SOCIOLOGICAL LAZARUS EFFECT AND THE SUSTAINABILITY DILEMMA: A THEORETICAL ANALYSIS ON MECHANISMS OF STRUCTURAL DESPAIR

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Abstract:

The study uses theoretical and conceptual analysis to turn the medical Lazarus Effect into a sociological metaphor: the Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE). This metaphor helps build a new theoretical framework by integrating social theories such as Durkheim's anomie, Gramsci's hegemony, and Snyder's hope theory. The theory suggests societal despair is a layered structural obstacle, halting collective action. Instead of producing empirical data, the study creates a model to show why a sustained SLE is unfeasible. Three key structural mechanisms—cognitive closure, erosion of social capital, and structural nihilism—undermine collective agency and prolong hopelessness. Findings indicate that while spontaneous SLE is theoretically possible in complex social systems, sustainable transformation through collective reaction is largely impossible due to structural paralysis. Instead of expecting a macro-miracle, attention should turn to building Counter-Hegemonic Hope from the grassroots, aiming to restore collective will and trust.

Keywords: sociological Lazarus effect, counter-hegemonic hope, structural despair, collective agency paralysis, cognitive closure, social capital erosion

1. Introduction

1.1 The Chronicization of Societal Crisis and the Paradox of Revival

1.1.1 Background of the Study and Definition of Societal Crisis

Social life naturally moves within cycles of crisis and recovery. However, the focus of sociological examination centers on situations where the crisis has become chronic and the belief in the future has been depleted at the societal level. Émile Durkheim addressed this dissolution of norms and values with the concept of "anomie"; he observed that in periods when anomie peaked, societal mechanisms dissolved and suicide rates increased (Durkheim, 1893). The structural despair examined in this study refers to the chronic state

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where the anomic environment has turned into a widespread conviction, i.e., a general acceptance that the system will not fundamentally change. Structural despair is the state where individual indifference, lack of interest, and apathy towards politics lead to avoidance of civic participation and the passiveization of collective action, plunging society into a state of "coma" (Parkinson, 1996).

For the past decade, Turkish society has been under immense pressure, grappling with a severe social and psychological strain. This isn't just one big traumatic event, but a chronic, grinding reality shaped by never-ending economic crises, repeated social shocks, and intense political divides.

The core factors—natural disasters, political instability, and acts of violence—have instilled a constant state of hypervigilance rather than acute trauma, leading to a profound loss of control and deep distrust in the future (TİHV, 2015).

Crucially, the economic pain—especially the hyperinflation since 2018—has crushed the real incomes of many and amplified poverty, severely draining societal motivation (Keyder, 2022). Research even suggests a direct link between this economic despair (specifically unemployment) and rising feelings of hopelessness that contribute to suicide (Çelikkaya & Atila, 2020).

Finally, the sharp political polarization has widened the social fault lines, fueling alienation, resentment, and even hatred between groups. This tears at the very fabric of social solidarity and erodes the shared vision of a common future (TİHV, 2015; Taşçı & Öztürk, 2022).

In short: We're looking at a society living under chronic stress, where trust and hope are depleted, and social bonds are weakened.

The central question in this study is: Can a society in this state spontaneously and unplannedly manage to revive itself—what some call the Sociological Lazarus Effect (Rasmussen & Richey, 2012)—and, more importantly, can that revival become a sustainable transformation?

1.2 Sociological Lazarus Effect Metaphor: Definition and Conceptual Boundaries

1.2.1 What is the Sociological Lazarus Effect?

The Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) metaphor was intentionally developed to leverage the power of metaphorical thinking in conceptualizing complex and abstract social phenomena within the social sciences. Metaphors are crucial tools that help scholars overcome theoretical uncertainties and effectively convey the dynamic interactions within a system (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2002).

Originating from a biblical miracle, this metaphor has garnered significant interest because it articulates the unexpected and unsupported return of any system, institution, or individual following an absolute collapse, extinction, or state of "death" (Rasmussen & Richey, 2012).

The Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) specifically draws its name from the Lazarus Effect in medical literature—a rare phenomenon describing the unanticipated return of

vital functions in a patient who had been declared clinically "dead" after resuscitation efforts were terminated.

On the sociological plane, SLE signifies the sudden, radical, and fundamental recovery of collective consciousness or social structures at a point when a society is widely considered to be utterly collapsed—be it politically, economically, or morally.

Crucially, this recovery occurs without any external intervention or planned action.

This revival has the potential to manifest as a surprising civil awakening, an unexpected economic breakthrough, or a spontaneous system reform.

The theoretical underpinning of this phenomenon rests on the premise that social systems are characterized by complex and chaotic structures rather than linear ones. According to complex systems theory, minute changes in the initial conditions can lead to vast and unpredictable outcomes (Rosenau, 2004; Lorenz, 1972). Therefore, the emergence of an unexpected and spontaneous moment of revival in sociological systems is theoretically and even mathematically possible, despite significant structural obstacles.

However, the study highlights a fundamental paradox: Can a society that has lost hope and whose collective will is paralyzed genuinely generate the sustained collective reaction required to make such a "miraculous" revival permanent and sustainable?

This study's core objective is to explain why this spontaneous recovery often does not transition into a lasting societal transformation by rigorously examining the structural mechanisms that impede the sustained emergence of the SLE.

1.3 Origin of the Lazarus Phenomenon: Medical and Ethical Limitations

1.3.1 Definition and Mechanism of the Medical Phenomenon

The Lazarus Phenomenon was first named in medical literature by Linko et al. (1982) due to its similarity to the biblical Lazarus story. Its medical definition is the unsupported return of spontaneous circulation in a patient after Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) has been discontinued, without external intervention (Adhiyaman and Sundaram, 2002). Physiologically, the mechanisms behind this condition are not fully understood, but the main hypotheses put forward include decreased venous return and auto-positive end-expiratory pressure (auto-PEEP). The Lazarus Phenomenon essentially describes a situation where vital signs suggest organ function has stopped, but where there is actually only a delay in the return of blood flow. In medical literature, this is not a true death and resurrection, but a physiological delay in the return of blood flow after CPR (Adhiyaman, Adhiyaman, & Sundaram, 2007; Hornby & Shemie, 2010).

1.4 SLE Metaphor at the Micro Level: Identity Crisis and Revival (Micro-SLE)

One of the most common and dramatic applications of the SLE metaphor in sociology is the psychosocial context, referring to the unexpected recovery of individuals from a fatal disease. Although the exact cause of the phenomenon is not fully known, it is attributed to the suppression of venous return and subsequent decrease in cardiac output (the amount of blood pumped by the heart) due to dynamic hyperinflation (over-inflation of

the lungs) and associated increased intrathoracic pressure (pressure inside the chest) during CPR. When CPR is terminated, this pressure is relieved, and venous return and spontaneous circulation may return (Adhiyaman and Sundaram, 2002).

1.4.1 Use of SLE in the Context of HIV/AIDS

With the introduction of Highly Active Antiretroviral Therapy (HAART), a medical treatment method involving a combination of multiple drugs (ART), in 1996, dramatic improvements were observed in HIV/AIDS patients. The dissemination of Antiretroviral Therapy (ART), particularly for HIV/AIDS patients in Africa, radically reversed the course of the disease. Before the widespread adoption of ART (Antiretroviral Therapy), HIV/AIDS was viewed by society as both a moral stigma and a fatal destiny. This perception led to the complete exclusion of patients from social and economic life, causing them to experience a kind of "social death". With the introduction of ART, individuals unexpectedly returned to health and their social roles. This recovery of patients from such great frailty and the brink of death was named the "Lazarus Effect," referencing the biblical resurrection story (Adhiyaman et al. 2007). This social revival was not only an individual success but also a collective transformation that required the reorganization of ethics, politics, and social organization.

1.4.2 Traumatic Return and Identity Reconstruction

The Lazarus Effect not only provides a physical revival but can also create a profound social and psychological crisis. Patients had actively prepared for death (consuming their financial resources, cutting off relationships). Brashers and colleagues (1999) studied this experience in depth and identified the patient's perception: "*In an important way, I did die*". This perception necessitates the forced termination and subsequent traumatic reconstruction of the individual's vocational identity (Gushue & Brazaitis, 2003). The Lazarus Effect, therefore, is not merely a biological return, but a difficult struggle against the impermeability of social categories (Ellemers, 1993).

1.4.3 Stress and Coping Theory Framework

This micro-level revival and uncertainty establish a strong theoretical link with Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman's Stress and Coping Theory (1984) (Lazarus ve Folkman, 1984). The SLE situation requires the continuous renewal of this cognitive appraisal process because threats (the risk of the disease returning) and resources (recovery, new career opportunities) are constantly changing.

1.5 SLE Metaphor at the Macro Level: Institutional and Systemic Revival (Macro-SLE)

Macro-SLE is used to explain the unexpected, dramatic returns or revivals of large-scale societal, economic, or political structures.

1.5.1 Examples of Institutional Revival

The Revival of Post-Neoliberal State Capitalism: Crises such as the 2008 Global Financial Crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have led to the unexpected return of the state intervention logic that had previously been abandoned. This situation, studied by Musacchio et al. (2015) and Wright et al. (2021), points to the state's proactive intervention in economic production and markets "*re-existing in a Lazarus-like formulation*" (Musacchio et al. 2015; Wright et al. 2021).

1.5.2 Return of Theoretical Paradigms

The unexpected revival of Marxism, which had lost its influence in the 1980s and 1990s in social sciences and popular debates following the 2008 Great Recession, can also be explained by the SLE metaphor. Neil Lazarus (2014) advocated for this ideological revival in the intellectual field (Lazarus, 2014).

1.5.3 SLE as a Mechanism of Endogenous Change

The SLE metaphor offers a powerful mechanism that explains institutional change from within (endogenous). SLE can be seen as an external crisis reactivating "abandoned paths" or "elements of alternative economic orders" that already existed within the system (Schneiberg, 2007). SLE represents the dramatic autoresuscitation (spontaneous self-revival) ability of these internal resources.

1.6 Conceptual Boundaries and Theoretical Comparisons of the SLE Metaphor

1.6.1 SLE and Path Dependence

Path Dependence examines specific historical sequences where past decisions constrain the future (lock-in) through increasing returns (Mahoney, 2000). While path dependence emphasizes the continuity and rigidity of an established path, SLE highlights the revival of a path that was on the verge of extinction, following a crisis or failure. SLE functions as a counter-reaction to the lock-in effect of path dependence.

1.6.2 SLE and Social Emergence

Social Emergence examines the appearance of higher-level system properties that are unpredictable and irreducible, even with full knowledge of the individual components, resulting from lower-level individual interactions (Sawyer, 2005). While Emergence emphasizes the creation of an entirely new social phenomenon or structure, SLE focuses on the return of an old, known, but presumed-dead structure, ideology, or identity. The SLE metaphor captures the non-overly deterministic nature of social processes by emphasizing that collapse or the end is not merely a conclusion, but a transitional state that carries the potential for an unexpected return. The core theoretical contribution of SLE is its potential to include institutional revival mechanisms in institutional analysis. The metaphor provides a rare theoretical bridge that unites the phenomenon of "death and revival" at both micro (individual identity crisis and reintegration) and macro (institutional and ideological return) levels.

1.7 Structural Plan of the Study

The continuation of this analysis will first detail the structural dimension of despair and the loss of collective will, within the framework of Durkheim, Gramsci, and Snyder's theories. Subsequently, three fundamental structural barriers—cognitive, social, and nihilistic—that sabotage the spontaneous momentum of SLE will be examined. Finally, in the context of policy recommendations, the importance of grassroots "Counter-Hegemonic Hope" strategies aimed at structural obstacles will be discussed, instead of awaiting a major Lazarus Effect.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Framework: The Structural Dimension of Despair

2.1 Despair in Classical Sociology: Anomie and Structural Breakdown

In a sociological context, despair is more than just a state belonging to individual psychology; it is a structural barrier that passivizes collective action and hinders social change. *"From a sociological perspective, despair is not merely an individual pathology, but also evidence of society's failures, and is related to the fact that an individual's identity, place, and success are determined by society"* (Pecchenino, 2015). Durkheim associated societal hope with cultural elements and social production; he explained its loss with the anomic state, where societal order and individual expectations become incompatible (Durkheim, 1893).

The existence of severe anomie signals societal dissolution and an increase in deviant behaviors such as suicide. Structural despair, as the chronicized state of this anomie, leads to a widespread and deep conviction that the system will not change. This situation reinforces a state of societal inaction (coma).

2.2 Psychology of Hope and Loss of Collective Agency

In the psychology literature, hope is defined as a coping mechanism against helplessness. C. R. Snyder's Hope Theory formulates hope through three essential components: desired goals, pathways (strategies) to reach these goals, and agency (the ability or will to pursue these pathways) (Snyder, 2002). Structural despair particularly leads to the loss of collective agency. Loss of collective agency is the erosion of individuals' belief in their power to influence their circumstances. Even though SLE, by definition, offers a spontaneous moment of revival, sustainable societal transformation requires an organized collective reaction to make this revival permanent. If a society, regardless of the worsening situation, has lost the belief that it has the power to influence outcomes, it has lost the capacity to convert the momentum provided by SLE into social action. This means that the "agency" and "pathway" components mentioned by Snyder have been structurally passivized.

2.3 Hegemony and Consent: Gramsci's Perspective on the Ideological Construction of Despair

Antonio Gramsci made a significant contribution to modern social theory with his theory of hegemony. According to Gramsci, hegemony is a form of governance achieved by

generating the public's consent through civil society institutions (education, unions, parties), rather than by rulers resorting to force. The main success of the ruling class is not to abandon domination and force, but to produce consent alongside them (Gramsci, 1997). The text also states that the concept of "*structural despair*" plays an important ideological role in maintaining the hegemonic order. This despair convinces individuals that the current system is unchangeable, thereby generating consent for inaction against any action. When people lose their will and their belief in the possibility of political change, they lack the power to resist economic or political pressures. This situation causes powerlessness itself to become a form of hegemony. The inability of a society to collectively react to "*moments of revival*" indicates that the hegemonic system has successfully manipulated individuals' belief in their ability to influence their own future (Gramsci, 1997).

3. Three Fundamental Structural Mechanisms

Impeding the Sociological Lazarus Effect: Structural despair systematically impedes (sabotages) the emergence and continuity of the Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) through three fundamental ways. These mechanisms explain how despair paralyzes and renders collective action and movement ineffective.

3.1 Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC) and Paralysis of Future Vision

3.1.1 The Role of Cognitive Closure in Societal Uncertainty

The Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC) is defined as the motivational tendency of people to possess secure, stable, and permanent (unchangeable) information (Kruglanski, 1996; Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). In periods of deep political and economic uncertainty, the ability to imagine a better future vision and determine the pathways to that goal (Snyder, 2002) becomes mentally very strenuous and costly. Faced with this difficulty, society tends to retreat to a stable and reliable set of information that rationally explains the situation (even if negative).

3.1.2 Rejection of New Information and Interpretation of SLE as a Temporary Deviation

A high Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC) is a motivational tendency that drives individuals to quickly achieve closure and possess secure, stable, and permanent information. After achieving "closure" with a piece of information, individuals tend to "freeze" the current belief set by rejecting new information (Webster and Kruglanski, 1994). In societies dominated by structural despair, this cognitive closure is generally maintained by the belief that "*The System is unchangeable*". The Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE), which is a sudden and deep recovery, is perceived as a threatening, uncertain, and chaotic new source of information for this established, stable belief. Driven by the motivation to avoid cognitive dissonance, a high Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC) prevents society from evaluating this recovery as a potential for lasting change. Instead,

the SLE moment is reinterpreted to fit the existing despair paradigm; it is labeled as a "*temporary deviation*," an "*instant miracle*," or an external manipulation. This cognitive defense mechanism prevents society from developing new goals and action strategies to sustain the revival and ensures a quick return to the status quo.

3.2 Erosion of Social Capital and the Crisis of Trust

3.2.1 The Criticality of Collective Action and Social Capital

Social capital is a network that includes societal trust, cooperation, and reciprocal norms, providing the minimum fuel necessary for collective actions to occur (Putnam, 2000). Collective actions inherently face a difficulty: the cost of an action that will benefit multiple individuals is unreasonably high for any single individual to undertake ("The Taming of the Cat" metaphor) (Olson, 1965; Hardin, 1982). Therefore, the success of a collective action requires the existence of strong reciprocal trust that others will cooperate.

3.2.2 Erosion of Horizontal Trust and Selfish Maximization

Prolonged structural despair gradually erodes horizontal (inter-individual) trust, which is the cornerstone of social capital. With the collapse of societal trust in this way, individuals cease to trust not only the governing system but also one another (Putnam, 2000). Although Brehm and Rahn's research suggests that a short-term threat can trigger civil action (Brehm and Rahn, 1997), the sustainability of this reaction depends on collective trust and responsibility. In a society with diminished social capital, even if the Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) creates a powerful moment of collective solidarity, the minimum collective momentum required to sustain this revival is missing. This energy, instead of directing society toward a collective action, may rapidly turn into an effort by individuals to maximize their short-term personal gains (selfish maximization) (Jevons, 1871). Consequently, the energy brought by SLE quickly dissipates without creating a collective transformation.

3.3 Nihilism, Apathy, and the Dissolution of the Value System

3.3.1 Societal Nihilism and the Paradigm of Meaninglessness

Societal nihilism refers to a situation resulting from the fragmentation of value and belief systems that form the foundation of historical life. This condition signals the external collapse of social order and the internal decline of the spirit (ter Borg, 1988). In a society that has lost hope, nihilism and the accompanying apathy (emotional unresponsiveness) become prevalent, reinforcing the idea that the consequences and values of actions are baseless. ter Borg (1988) treats nihilism not as a simple disease or symptom, but as a structural problem forming the foundation of modern society, and emphasizes the necessity of a sociological perspective to address this problem (ter Borg, 1988). Nihilism is not merely individual disbelief, but a societal condition arising from the loss of society's ability to offer binding, transcendent meanings and values to the individual. Processes such as modernization and rationalization (secularization, weakening of traditional ties)

have eliminated divine or metaphysical reference points, leaving moral and societal values without a foundation, which has led to a societal crisis.

3.3.2 Devaluation of Action and Passive Acceptance

A nihilistic consciousness leads to the loss of belief that an action will have a consequence. If no action has meaning or consequence, even a spontaneous moment of recovery (SLE) loses its value, pushing society towards passive acceptance. This situation, combined with the Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC), creates a double paralysis: NFCC reinforces the belief that change is impossible, while nihilism establishes the conviction that change is meaningless. This dual barrier causes the SLE moment to be rapidly extinguished by society (ter Borg, 1988). Even the strongest evidence of revival is deemed meaningless by the nihilistic consciousness and fails to turn into collective motivation. A society devoid of hope, even if it experiences the SLE, lacks the collective will and value judgment to react to it.

4. Possibility of Chaos and Emergence in Sociological Systems

4.1 The Nature of Complex Systems and the Theoretical Existence of SLE

In post-modern approaches, the analysis of social systems is influenced by complexity theory, which is alien to propositions of causality and precise probability (Rosenau, 2004). Since social systems are more than the simple sum of their components (Lorenz, 1972), they cannot be explained by the principle of linear causality, and unpredictable behaviors (chaos) emerge within the system. In this context, the Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) is treated as a spontaneous phase transition (sudden and radical change) that emerges as a result of the chaos in complex social systems. Theoretically, given the potential for a small change in initial conditions to lead to large outcomes ("The Butterfly Effect") (Lorenz, 1972), the occurrence of SLE is not impossible.

4.2 Chaotic Recovery and the Problem of Sustainability

An important finding from Complex Systems Theory is that the Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) cannot be deliberately created through a pre-designed policy or initiative. This is because the nature of chaotic systems casts doubt on the capability of prediction (forecasting) (Rosenau, 2004). SLE is an unexpected and spontaneously developing deviation stemming from the system's own internal workings. However, even this irregular release of energy within complex systems (SLE) is rendered ineffective in the face of the system's resistance to change (structural inertia) and the inadequacy of its ability to act collectively (collective muscle). The structural despair mechanisms (e.g., Cognitive Closure, Erosion of Social Capital) previously mentioned in the text rapidly dissipate the irregular energy generated by SLE, making it lose its effect. Consequently, although the emergence of SLE proves that a self-generated change is possible, structural despair has eliminated the collective capacity to turn this kind of revival into a permanent and sustainable societal transformation.

5. Discussion and Policy Recommendations: Counter-Hegemonic Hope Strategy

5.1 Sustainability-Focused Approach

The results of the research clearly indicate that the main problem for a community in despair is not hoping for or trying to trigger a large-scale Lazarus Effect; rather, it is the inability to transform the spontaneous moment of recovery that occurs into a lasting change. Structural despair, a societal structural feature, consumes the willingness to act collectively (collective agency), causing the Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) to rapidly lose its impact. This necessitates shifting the focus of policy recommendations away from large-scale systemic goals towards small-scale actions aimed at overcoming structural barriers.

5.2 Reconstruction of Collective Muscle: Grassroots Movements

Since the ability to identify goals and the pathways to those goals, as mentioned in Snyder's Hope Theory, is paralyzed due to the Need for Cognitive Closure (NFCC) (Snyder, 2002), the priority of politics must be to directly re-establish collective will and reciprocal trust. This dictates supporting horizontal, grassroots, and narrow-scoped organizations that emerge from the populace, instead of broad and general political initiatives (Scott, 1992; Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2002). These types of formations (e.g., joint ventures, local aid networks) offer individuals tangible evidence that they can change the outcome of events. Collective Action Literature reveals that the empowerment individuals gain through action can be a stronger incentive for participation in future initiatives than the concept of perceived efficacy (Drury and Reicher, 2000). These small-scale successes trigger the transformation within the individual (Scott, 1992; Bartlett and Ghoshal, 2002), gradually rebuilding societal awareness and trust.

5.3 Counter-Hegemonic Hope Sparks

Within the framework of Antonio Gramsci's theory of civil society and power (hegemony) (Gramsci, 1997), these regional and grassroots organizations assume the role of "Sparks of Counter-Hegemonic Hope". These sparks develop an active practice of resistance against the dominant ideology of despair. This approach aligns perfectly with Michel Foucault's defined critical attitude (the art of not being governed) (Foucault, 2009); as this attitude is characterized as a way of objecting to, distancing oneself from, and escaping the arts of governance. The aim of such actional practices is to re-signify the vacated societal space, not with passive emotions, but with regained collective will and concrete actions.

Table 1 summarizes the structural mechanisms that impede the sustainability of SLE and the strategies aimed at overcoming these barriers.

Table 1: Barriers to Sustainable Transformation and Counter-Strategies

Structural Mechanism (Barrier)	Social Effect	Behavior during SLE Moment	Counter-Hegemonic Strategy
Cognitive Closure (NFCC) (Webster and Kruglanski, 1994)	The paralysis of future vision, political apathy	Interpreting SLE as a 'temporary deviation' and 'freezing' back to the status quo (Kruglanski, 1996)	Setting local, concrete, successful goals (rebuilding Snyder's pathways) (Snyder, 2002)
Erosion of Social Capital (Putnam, 2000)	Collapse of horizontal and vertical trust, paralysis of collective action	SLE energy turning into selfish maximization, lack of coordination	Building small-scale, tightly trust-based solidarity through grassroots organizing
Nihilism and Apathy	Dissolution of value systems, passive acceptance	Extinguishing subsequent action by finding SLE meaningless	Focusing on empowerment gained from collective action (Drury and Reicher, 2000), the art of not being governed (Foucault, 2009)

5.4 Limitations and Future Research Recommendations

This study is inherently limited to being a purely theoretical and conceptual analysis, focusing on the mechanisms through which structural despair paralyzes collective action, with the Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) metaphor at its core.

Future research should focus on three key areas: developing scales to measure the mechanisms of structural despair and nihilism at the societal level; empirically testing the effects of Counter-Hegemonic Hope practices on collective agency and trust through longitudinal field studies; and conducting in-depth qualitative analyses to understand how SLE moments are neutralized by social unresponsiveness.

6. Conclusion

This article has analyzed, using the Sociological Lazarus Effect (SLE) metaphor, why structural despair prevents spontaneous societal revival (SLE) from leading to sustainable transformation. The findings confirm that despair is not merely a mood but a powerful social structure that systematically paralyzes collective agency. Although SLE moments may theoretically emerge due to the complex and chaotic nature of social systems, the society's intrinsic mechanisms of inertia—cognitive closure, social capital erosion, and the dominance of nihilism—guarantee the rapid dissipation of this spontaneous energy. A society immersed in despair lacks the capacity to react to even the strongest evidence of revival in a rational, collective, and sustainable manner.

The fundamental conclusion drawn from this comprehensive theoretical and conceptual analysis is that while it is theoretically possible for a society plunged into deep despair and structural paralysis to experience a spontaneous moment of revival (SLE), it will be unable to convert this into a sustainable societal transformation. Therefore,

instead of awaiting a large-scale, unpredictable macro-miracle, the focus of social change must shift to the Gramscian civil sphere—that is, concentrating on rebuilding collective trust and agency from the grassroots through counter-hegemonic practices. The miracle that "*brings a society back from the dead*" ultimately lies in the continuity of the collective faith and action that sustains and nourishes it.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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Hilmi Atalıç has a PhD degree from Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University. His main interests are total quality management, quality management in healthcare, sustainable healthcare, personal motivation and sociological theories.

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