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# A Comparative Study on the "Social Disadvantaged Group" and "Social Vulnerable Group"

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**Abstract.** "Social disadvantaged group" and "social vulnerable group" are intrinsically linked, but the connotations are not exactly the same two concepts. "Social disadvantaged group" refer to the overall weakness of social survivability, including those that are at a disadvantage in economy, power, culture, status and health. "Social vulnerable group" are groups that are fragile, vulnerable and resistant to risk or poorly tolerated. The biggest difference between the two is that the emphasis is different. The "Disadvantaged group" emphasizes social survivability, while the "Vulnerable group" emphasizes anti-risk ability.

#### 1. Introduction

"Social disadvantaged group" and "social vulnerable group" are a core concept in the fields of sociology, social work, social policy and political science. "Social disadvantaged group" and "social vulnerable group "are also two common words in our daily social life. People often use "social disadvantaged group" as "social vulnerable group" and few people distinguish them. However, in fact, "social disadvantaged group" and "social vulnerable group" are two groups that are intrinsically linked but whose connotations and focuses are not exactly the same. The biggest difference between the two is that the emphasis is different. The "social disadvantaged group" emphasizes the social survivability of the group, and the "social vulnerable group" emphasizes the group's ability to resist risks. This paper analyzes the differences between "social disadvantaged group" and "social vulnerable group "and focuses on more detailed explanations of "social vulnerable group".

# 2. The Chinese and English Interpretations are Different

The Chinese interpretation of weak is: weak power. Using disadvantaged in English translation is more appropriate. The social disadvantaged group is translated as a social disadvantaged group. The Chinese interpretation of fragile is: the first meaning is fragile and easy to fold. The second one is cannot afford setbacks, sensitive to things, swaying by considerations of gain and loss and not strong. It is more appropriate to use vulnerable in English translation. The vulnerable group is translated into a social vulnerable group.

There are differences between the Chinese text and the English translation from the two terms of weak and fragile. Therefore, "social disadvantaged group "and "social vulnerable group" are not the same.

#### 2.1. Social Disadvantaged Group

The term "social disadvantaged group" was coined by Liang Yanjun, a non-unknown folk political economist. In March 2002, Premier Zhu Rongji's "Government Work Report" at the 5th National People's Congress 5th Conference used the term "Disadvantaged groups", which made the disadvantaged group a very popular concept and attracted widespread attention at home and abroad. "Vulnerable groups" are right against "strong groups". The international community broadly defines social disadvantaged groups as: "The collection of social members who are socially disadvantaged



due to certain obstacles and lack of economic, political and social opportunities refers to special social groups with economic interests in the allocation of social resources, low levels of quality of life and vulnerability to stress" [1].

# 2.2. Social Vulnerable Group

Social vulnerable groups refer to social members who are vulnerable to setbacks or vulnerabilities because of their low risk resistance or poor tolerance when confronted with challenges from various problems. These social members have caused their own crises or difficulties for objective reasons or social reasons, thus making these social members in a dilemma.

It can be seen that whether it is English translation or Chinese interpretation, "social disadvantaged group "and "social vulnerable group" are naturally very different. Therefore, the author believes that" social disadvantaged group" and "social vulnerable group" are two concepts that are not identical, and the connotations they express also have differences.

#### 3. The Angle of Emphasis is Different

# 3.1. Social Disadvantaged Group

# 3.1.1. Characteristics of Social Disadvantaged Group

A social disadvantaged group refers to a social group that is less difficult to distribute and obtain social wealth due to its relatively weak authority and power in social production and life. Therefore, they are in a poorer situation. The weakness is relative to the "strong". The "weakness" among the disadvantaged groups refers to the low status of social members in the entire social structure and the weakness of their social viability. This weakness is a comprehensive weakness, including many aspects: economy, power, status, culture, health, spirit and so on. Disadvantaged groups generally exhibit the characteristics of impoverishment, marginalization, low-level or no-employment, long-term accumulation and continuity.

# 3.1.2. Classification of Social Disadvantaged Group

The disadvantaged groups are classified from objective and subjective perspectives: First, from an objective point of view, due to social factors, the existence of disadvantaged groups, including economic, power, status, and cultural disadvantaged groups. Such as, farmers, migrant workers, urban laid-off workers, unemployed people, low-income households, special hardship households, wandering and beggars. Second, from a subjective point of view, the weakness caused by its own physiological factors. From a physiological point of view, the division of disadvantaged groups is due to differences in physical strength, intelligence, and age, such as disabled people, mentally retarded people and sick people [2].

#### 3.2. Social Vulnerable Group

# 3.2.1. Characteristics of Social Vulnerable Group

It is extremely appropriate to use "porcelain dolls" to describe the characteristics of vulnerable groups. As we all know, the bones of patients with "porcelain dolls" are so fragile, a slight collision can also cause severe fractures. Vulnerable groups are also fragile and vulnerable. In the face of external resistance or pressure, these people's ability to cope with external resistance or pressure is reduced. As mentioned above, a disadvantaged group is a social group that is less difficult to distribute and obtain social wealth due to its relatively weak authority and power. Vulnerable group refers to a group encountering certain risks or shocks, the ability to resist risks is low or the ability to withstand them is poor. Emphasis is placed on risk resistance to distinguish vulnerable groups from disadvantaged groups.

#### 3.2.2. Classification of Social Vulnerable Groups

Vulnerable groups can be divided into two categories: one is due to the objective factors that cause



the reduction of main body's own ability to resist risks to be divided, including the one-child family, single-parent families, the master of the ship who encounters storms at sea, individual stock investors and farmers. The other category is divided from the perspective of physical, psychological and emotional factors, including those who are mentally or emotionally unbearable and older people who have reduced their ability to resist risks due to physical reasons.

First of all, unscramble from the perspective of the first category of objective factors causing the subject's own ability to resist risks.

# 3.2.2.1. Family Level: One-Child Family, Single-Parent Family

Since the national family planning policy was promulgated in 1980, it is not difficult to see that the one-child family brings some risks. These risks can be summarized as: growth risk, talent risk, family pension risk, social development risk, and national defense risk. For the only-child family itself, the greatest risk is the possibility of becoming a single-child family, which is also brought about by the growth risk of the only-child family. According to Xinhua News Agency, China has added 76,000 "Families bereft of their only child" each year. As of 2012, there were at least 1 million "Families bereft of their only child" across the country. According to a survey released by the Zhi Gong Party, the total number of only children in the country aged 15 to 30 is about 190 million. The annual mortality rate in this age group is four in ten thousandths. In China, 76,000 new "Families bereft of their only child" have been added to our country each year.

Any single-child family has the possibility of losing the only child in the family, which makes each single-child family a potential vulnerable group. Perhaps the child died of a disease, or an accident occurred in a natural or man-made disaster. The one-child family is very vulnerable to resist the ability to lose the only child. Especially for parents who are old and have lost fertility, they are particularly vulnerable.

If we say that the survival risk of parents in the early stage of childbearing can be eliminated by compensatory reproduction, but the survival risk in the late stage of childbearing loses the possibility of compensatory reproduction because the parents are old. Although the accidental casualty of the only child is a low proportion of the one-child family as a whole, the impact of the one-child family in this situation is unpredictable. For the one-child family, the death of the only child in the family has caused the whole family to fall into the abyss of despair and pain. The sickness and casualties of the only child in adulthood are even more devastating for the family. ③

The objective external factors such as natural disasters, man-made disasters and the advent of diseases are inevitable, and people may be taken away at any time. However, if these occur in a single-child family, then the one-child family will become "Families bereft of their only child". This makes the one-child family seem so fragile and vulnerable, when they face such risks, their ability to resist this risk is so insignificant and they also become a typical potential vulnerable group.

Single-parent families are like single-child families, and they are also members of vulnerable groups. Why are single-parent families classified as vulnerable groups? It is because the lack of one parent's parental role leads to the vulnerability of single-parent families. First, the ability of single-parent families to withstand external risks is greatly reduced. For example, in a single mother family with a child, without the umbrella of a man, a mother-child or mother-daughter is extremely vulnerable to external shocks. When there is burglary or conflict with others, the mother with the child's single-parent family, the mother and the daughter or the mother and the son face the bandits, regardless of physical confrontation and psychological tolerance are greatly reduced, if there is a husband or father, this role is accompanied by them, they may not be so fearful, at least psychologically stronger because of dependence. Therefore, the ability of single-parent families to cope with such crises is obviously worse than that of full-fledged families with husbands.

Single-parent families not only make their children lack a father's or mother's love, but also make their education incomplete. In the process of psychological growth, children first lack an important part in the study of gender roles. A boy without a father or a girl without a mother cannot find the difference in gender roles in family life, and loses the most direct imitation object in the learning of gender roles. In addition, it is precisely because single-parent families cannot give



children comprehensive education, which also brings more challenges and difficulties to single-parent families. However, single-parent families may be negligent in management or give not enough love and attention because only one parent takes care of the children. Children growing up in single-parent families are more likely to become truants, drug addicts, fighters, social idlers and even criminals than full families. There have been surveys that single-parent children have a higher crime rate than children in normal families.

The Dong tai Court conducted a comparative analysis of juvenile crimes since 2005, and found that the total number of crimes committed by children of single-parent families and the proportion of crimes committed by the single-parent families in juvenile delinquency cases is increasing year by year. In the past three years, the court has handled 253 cases of 366 minors, and the crimes committed by children of single-parent families accounted for 44%, 51% and 53% of the juvenile criminal cases respectively. The reason is that single-parent families often lack normal education, lack cohesiveness, and easily lead to psychological imbalances [4]. These conditions are also caused by changes in family structure and lack of family members. However, for these problems, single-parent families cannot avoid and are difficult to resist. Therefore, for children who are misguided due to incomplete family education and lack of love, single-parent families have greatly reduced their ability to resist such risks, its vulnerability has emerged.

#### 3.2.2.2. Strong Groups and Farmer Groups Facing the Impact of Natural Disasters

People seem so small, so insignificant, so helpless in the face of natural disasters. Even any strong groups, those with high economic income, having a certain social status, and dominant position in social life, can hardly resist the strong impact of natural disasters. When facing with this situation, they also become vulnerable groups, it are greatly reduced in their ability to resist risks. Take the shipowner as an example. The shipowner is not lacking money and material. He has a certain position in the society. For his part, he is not a vulnerable group at all, but when he encounters a storm at sea and even has a disaster, his vulnerability to the ability to withstand violence is highlighted. He is powerless to resist and may even die. In this way, it can be analogized to other powerful groups in the event of earthquakes, tsunamis and flash floods. In the face of sudden natural disasters, their ability to resist risks is greatly reduced without any exception, so the impact of external objective factors will not help to improve their ability to fight risks because of their economic, political, and superior rights. On the contrary, they are also frustrated and even lost their lives in this kind of adversity, so it is reasonable to attribute them to vulnerable groups.

The peasants rely on the heavens to eat, and the spring harvest is the natural law. It is also the dependence on nature that makes them vulnerable. For example, in the event of floods and droughts or pests and diseases in the disaster year, such natural disasters make the land grain no harvest, causing huge economic losses to the peasants and a year's hard work has gone to naught. The impact of such natural disasters, they cannot resist, but only bear silently, they appear so vulnerable in the face of natural disasters. In addition, under the conditions of market economy, the price of agricultural products will fluctuate due to the leverage of the market economy, and the relationship between supply and demand has become the killer of vegetable farmers. Compared with vegetables, the price of pigs is the most volatile. When the price of piglets is high, it reaches 10 Yuan per catty, while the price falls; it is only 1 to 2 Yuan per catty. The same is true for adult pigs. Farmers are faced with great risks whether they are growing vegetables or raising livestock. It is difficult to fully understand and predict the market, and it is not easy to preserve leafy vegetables. When the market exceeds demand, it can only be sold at low prices. Therefore, the interests of the peasants will be greatly affected. They accept the cruel reality and cannot resist, and the vulnerabilities are vividly reflected.

#### 3.2.2.3. A Strong Group that Cannot Resist the Objective Human Crisis

If earthquakes, tsunamis, mountain torrents, hurricanes and other natural disasters are caused by human vulnerability, making people unable to withstand natural disasters and become vulnerable groups. However, those former rich and tycoons, who originally belong to the powerful group, cannot escape from the financial crisis created by human factors. Moreover, they are unable to resist



this sudden risk, so they show the vulnerable side of depression, even some people are so vulnerable that they face the crisis by ending their lives, so we classify them as vulnerable groups.

According to a survey, US millionaires lose a third of their wealth during the financial crisis, and only 36% of millionaires believe their financial advisers performed well during the financial crisis. According to a research report published by the British Medical Journal on September 17, 2013, since the outbreak of the financial crisis in 2008, the male suicide rate has increased in various countries and regions around the world. The report conducted a statistical study of the suicide rate of 54 economies after the financial crisis. After the financial crisis broke out in 2008, the number of suicides increased.

Many of the world's richest people are unable to withstand the financial crisis and choose to commit suicide to end their lives. Such tragedies just show that the groups that are in absolute economic, political and even cultural advantages are facing this sudden crisis, because they cannot adapt and resist this man-made crisis, resulting in their ability to withstand risks greatly reduced, which also makes them change from a strong group to a vulnerable group rather than a disadvantaged group.

#### 3.2.2.4. Small Investors in Individual Stocks in Volatile Stock Markets

There is a saying in the stock market: "One makes money, two holds even, seven ges loss," and others describe it as the law of iron: 7:2:1. It means that 70% of people lose money, 20% don't make money, and only 10% make money. It can be seen that most of the investors are losing money in the market. There are also analysts who say that the manipulation of large funds is profitable in 70% of the cases, and that large capital manipulation is extremely common. In the face of the stock market controlled by the big money owners, then for the small investors of individual stocks, they are like a leafy boat in the stock market wave. The ebb and the flow of the stock market are always at risk of their "safety." It can be said that the small investors in the waves are facing great risks and challenges at any time. The rise and the fall of stocks are affecting their hearts. Anything is so irritating that they don't know where to go because they are vulnerable, they have no right to control, and their ability to avoid risks is low, so when they are hit by such a big shock as the 2008 financial crisis, they will either retreat from the whole body or end in a disastrous defeat. What is more, some people end with ending their life, even those big rich and big consortia will not escape the financial crisis. How to let those small shareholders who are very vulnerable escape the bad luck?

Secondly, expound from the perspective of the second kind of physiological and psychological and emotional factors, the main body's ability to resist risks is reduced.

#### 3.2.2.5. Vulnerability of Mental Emotions

Like the ant, moonlight, and northern drifters, there is now a buzzword about the "strawberry family" on the Internet. Author thinks it is very appropriate to classify the "strawberry family" into the vulnerable groups. "Strawberry family" is often used to describe young people born after 1981. They are like strawberries. Although they look glamorous on the surface, they can't stand the setbacks, it rots at a touch .They are not good at teamwork, initiative and enthusiasm are worse than the previous generation. Therefore, they are highly sensitive in psychology and difficult to bear heavy loads or cope with accidents. In many universities, it is not uncommon to report that college students jump off the building. The reasons are due to learning, economic pressure, some are due to emotional changes, breakdown, and some are because of family changes, no matter what the reasons, they are due to their strong dependence, lack of courage and confidence to face difficulties, poor psychological endurance and the inner fragility, so they caused the tragedy to happen. This kind of inner and mental vulnerability has led to the reduction of the resistance ability of such vulnerable groups in the face of external impact and the occurrence of misfortune cannot be avoided.

In Chinese society, single-parent families, whether due to divorced parents or the death of parents, will have a certain impact on the growth of children. The child has always lived in a sound family, but because of the sudden breakdown of the family, the lack of family roles in life caused them to



lose a love and lead to psychological imbalance. In the face of this sudden family change, children are hard to accept such a reality, and their poor self-adjustment ability will inevitably cast a shadow on their young mind. They will show characteristics of timidity, self-blame, lack of self-confidence, lack of security, and even some children will be paranoid and extreme. Therefore, if they suffer any impact, they will be at a loss and feel overwhelmed. It can be said that compared with the children of a complete family, the children of single-parent families are extremely sensitive to the incompleteness of the family, the lack of parental love or maternal love, and the inner heart is also more vulnerable.

The sense of social loss, loneliness and depression in the elderly are their main psychological problems, and the more serious problem is the suicide of the elderly. The problem of suicide among the elderly has now become a serious social problem. At the beginning of 2004, according to the study of the European Comprehensive Research Centre of the World Health Organization, the suicide rate of the elderly over 65 years old is about 29/100,000. In East Asia, the suicide rate for the elderly is 34.5/100,000, which is 2.7 times that of young people. The elderly population is the one with the highest suicide rate. Among them, elderly patients with depression accounted for about 10% of suicides, and those with dementia accounted for 1% [5]. In August 2014, a report by CCTV News "The elderly became the highest suicide rate in China" mentioned that the highest suicide rate in China is the elderly group. Every year at least 100,000 elderly people over the age of 55 commit suicide, of which 95% have different degrees of psychological disorders. Experts pointed out that the inner loneliness that is common among the elderly has become the biggest psychological distress of the elderly. From these figures, it is not difficult to infer that the elderly have low psychological endurance in the face of disease, and the sons and daughters are busy with their work while neglect their care, which will also make the elderly feel lonely and lack of dependence and hopelessness. These inner fragility have led to various mental and psychological problems. The more serious consequence is that the elderly chose suicide.

## 3.2.2.6. Physical Vulnerability

No matter whether it is a strong economic group or a politically prominent strong group, people will grow old one day, especially in the very old age. The old people we define here are old people over 80 years old. Under normal circumstances, the elderly people's human body functions drastically decline, both physical and mental tolerance are not as strong as before, this physical vulnerability is also unavoidable. Diseases are easy to occur in the elderly, and the incidence increases with age. For example, breathing became more difficult and cardiopulmonary function decreased dramatically. In addition, digestive system, urinary system, reproductive system and other functions are rapidly declining, so the ability to resist external risks is greatly reduced, which is the embodiment of vulnerability and the reason we also classify the elderly as vulnerable groups.

Taking the falling down of the elderly as an example, the vulnerability of the elderly bones is very typical. Many elderly people have experienced accidental falls. The incidence of fractures after falling is much higher than that of young people, especially old people of great age.

There are statistics in the literature that 30% of the elderly over the age of 65 each year, 50% of them are elderly people over 80 years old have experienced a fall, the elderly with osteoporosis are more afraid of falling, because it can directly lead to some serious fractures, such as Hip fracture. In addition, according to estimates that 40 million old people fall down in China every year, and falling has become the number one killer of deaths among elderly people over 60 years old. Falling is a serious threat to the health of the elderly. After falling down, the elderly usually need to stay in bed for a long time, and has a series of complications, resulting in a linear decline in body function, and even life-threatening [6]. The reason is that psychological disorders and physical dysfunction are the most direct hazards to the elderly caused by falling. After falling, it further aggravates the fear of the elderly. They have psychological shadow, always worried about the danger of falling again. It can be said that once bitten by a snake for ten years, they are afraid of well rope. This is also the manifestation of the psychological vulnerability of the elderly.

It can be seen that the elderly, especially old people of great age, are physically and



psychologically vulnerable, and their ability to resist external risks is very weak. Of course, they should be classified as vulnerable groups.

# 4. The Contrast Angle is Different

#### 4.1. Social Disadvantaged Group

From a comparative perspective, women are a vulnerable group compared to men. Regardless of social status or family status, the weak position of women is beyond doubt. Taking job hunting as an example, most employers are more willing to recruit male personnel. For men and women of the same age and equal qualifications, men are much more likely to be employed than women. From a political point of view, the proportion of men in government positions is much higher than that of women. Compared with the children of ordinary cities, it is self-evident that the children of migrant workers are vulnerable groups. They are at a disadvantage in the family environment, the degree of education in schools, the degree of attention in society and the space for future development.

# 4.2. Social Vulnerable Group

Old people and children belong to vulnerable groups compared with normal adults. Both physically and psychologically, older people and children are less able to resist risks than adults. For example, in the case of various natural disasters, the ability of the elderly and children to protect themselves and their ability to cope with these dangers is weaker than that of normal adults. Therefore, it is a consistent rule of all countries to give priority to the protection of the elderly and children in distress.

Children in single-parent families are more psychologically vulnerable than children in a healthy family. In addition, as for the children of single-parent families, when they switch from a complete family to a single-parent family, their heart become more vulnerable with this change and the ability to resist external shocks is greatly reduced.

The vulnerability of the very old people is more obvious than that of the younger elderly; both physical and mental risk tolerance and resistance to external shocks are significantly reduced. As has been explained before, it will not repeat here. I just want to reflect that the elderly should belong to the vulnerable groups by comparison.

# **5.** The Commonality and Intersection of Social Disadvantaged Groups and Social Vulnerable Groups

Although there are some differences between social disadvantaged groups and social vulnerable groups, there are certain links and internal intersections between the two groups. It is impossible to separate them completely in isolation. The similarity between the two is that they are corresponding to the strong group, and in some aspects there are weaknesses or in a weak position. Some groups can be attributed to both social disadvantaged groups and social vulnerable groups. This mainly depends on which angle to divide. For example, the group of farmers, we can say that they are social disadvantaged groups, or they can be said to be social vulnerable groups. The reason why peasants are social disadvantaged groups is that they maintain their lives in a relatively low economic income. The general level of education is not very high. They don't have discourse power in society. Compared with other groups, they are more passive, so it is difficult to make their own voice, even if they make their own voice; it is very weak or even insignificant. Therefore, when it comes to their immediate interests, they often rely on the government to be the master and rely on the mass media to speak for them. From the economic and political aspects, they are at a disadvantage and there is no doubt that they are social disadvantage groups. At the same time, farmers are also social vulnerable groups. As mentioned above, when farmers face the dilemma of natural disasters, they are unable to resist the price effects brought about by changes in market supply and demand. Their resistance is also low. The vulnerability of risk capabilities is exposed.



#### 6. Summary

We combed and summarized social disadvantage and vulnerable groups in the form of tables.

**Table 1.** A summary of the comparison between Social Disadvantaged Group and Social Vulnerable Group

	Social disadvantage group	Social vulnerable group
Commonality between the two	Both are relative to the strong group, and there are weaknesses and in a weak position in some aspects.	
Cross of the two	Farmer group	
The essential difference between the two	Emphasis is placed on the overall weakness of the group in terms of social survival, including economic, political, cultural, status, and physical disadvantages.	that is, the fragility of the group, the vulnerability, the low risk resistance or
Subjective angle	The weakness caused by its own physiological factors. People are formed by differences in physical strength, intelligence, and age.  For example: disabled people, people with intellectual disabilities, and sick people	own ability to resist risks is reduced. Causes of natural disasters and man-made disasters, the advent of diseases, natural disasters and other objective external factors. Such as: single-child families, single-parent families, ship owners who encounter storms at sea, shareholders of individual stocks, farmers and other vulnerable groups.
Objective angle	Social factors lead to the existence of vulnerable groups. It includes economic, power, status, and cultural disadvantaged groups.  Such as: farmers, migrant workers, urban laid-off workers, unemployed people, low-income households, special hardship households, homeless and beggars, illiterate people, or low-educated people.	Due to subjective factors, the subject's own ability to resist risks is reduced. It may be caused mentally or emotionally, or it may be a physical cause that reduces the ability to resist risks.  Such as: people with low psychological endurance include "Strawberry Family",

All in all, through the comparison and elaboration of this article, we can easily see that the social disadvantage groups and the vulnerable groups are two different concepts. The biggest difference is that the "social disadvantage groups" emphasize the overall weakness of the group in the social survival level, including economy, power, culture, status, and health are at a disadvantage. "Social vulnerable groups" emphasize the vulnerability, that is, the fragility of the group, the vulnerability, the low risk resistance or the poor ability to withstand. Social vulnerable groups may be groups with low economic income and low social status. However, some groups with high economic income and high social status attribute them to vulnerable groups. They are attributed to vulnerable groups because of their weak resistance or poor endurance in the face of various risks, pressures and shocks. Of course, there are also crosses between social disadvantage and social vulnerable groups. Farmers are typical of both social disadvantage and vulnerable groups. In the past, people did not distinguish between social disadvantage groups and social vulnerable groups from the perspective of survival and risk resistance, and the vulnerable groups are not removed from the social disadvantage groups. Therefore, more attention should been paid to the social disadvantage groups with poor viability, while less detailed research and low attention are on the social vulnerable groups. The purpose of this distinction is to divide the social disadvantage groups and the social vulnerable groups more



clearly and more carefully, which can analyze group characteristics better, and can also formulate corresponding policies for different groups to help them solve problems.

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