

Original Research Article

Explaining the Formation of Dwelling Experience in Post-Disaster Prefabricated Housing with Emphasis on Socio-Cultural Components (Case Study: Earthquake-Prone Regions of Turkey)

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Abstract

Problem statement: Recurrent large-scale earthquakes across Turkey have made the temporary resettlement of disaster-affected populations an increasingly urgent challenge. Despite widespread reliance on prefabricated housing in post-disaster contexts, the dwelling experience within these environments extends well beyond physical dimensions. Socio-cultural factors play a considerable role in shaping residents' quality of life and residential satisfaction -dimensions that prior research has largely left underexplored.

Research objective: This study examines the socio-cultural components that shape the dwelling experience in post-disaster prefabricated housing, and clarifies how these components influence residential satisfaction and quality of life among occupants.

Research method: A qualitative approach founded on grounded theory was adopted, given the study's aim to understand and interpret residents' lived experiences and narratives of inhabiting post-disaster prefabricated units, as well as to identify the formative processes underlying the socio-cultural dimensions of dwelling. Data were gathered through documentary review, analytical field notes, and semi-structured online interviews conducted with 30 residents of prefabricated units across Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Adıyaman, and Malatya. Purposive sampling guided participant selection, and data were analyzed through open, axial, and selective coding procedures.

Conclusion: Findings reveal that dwelling experience in post-disaster prefabricated housing is shaped by a constellation of factors -among them neighborly relations, social capital, sense of place attachment, cultural adaptability, and the quality of shared communal spaces. Residents were found to partially offset disaster-induced disruptions through adaptive behaviors and the renegotiation of social ties. Variations in the socio-cultural backgrounds of the studied cities also proved influential in determining both the character of dwelling experience and overall quality of life. Taken together, prefabricated housing functions not merely as a temporary shelter, but as a setting in which place identity and social relations are either reconstructed or eroded. Accordingly, socio-cultural considerations must be central to the design and planning of post-disaster settlement programs.

Keywords: *Socio-cultural components, Dwelling experience, Prefabricated housing, Place identity, Earthquake-prone regions of Turkey.*

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Introduction and Problem Statement

Post-disaster resettlement cannot be reduced to a purely physical or managerial problem. Rather, the process is deeply intertwined with the social and cultural dimensions of human life, as well as with residents' lived experiences, all of which bear directly on how people relate to place. Within the context of prefabricated housing, this relationship is temporarily and precariously redefined. Natural disasters are broadly recognized as sudden, largely unpredictable events that occur within specific temporal windows and cannot be prevented. Beyond the immediate toll of human casualties and widespread destruction of property and environment, such events exert profoundly negative effects on social life and economic systems (Dobrucali & Hakki Demir, 2016, 1).

Among natural hazards, earthquakes represent one of the most significant threats facing Turkey, a country whose tectonic position has rendered it repeatedly vulnerable to seismic events. In February 2023, a devastating sequence of earthquakes struck the country with catastrophic consequences. Official reports indicate that over 3.³ million people were displaced, with nearly two million individuals accommodated in tent camps and container settlements. The destruction or total collapse of residential units, spanning high-rise apartment buildings and rural dwellings alike, across an area of approximately 110,000 square kilometers underscored the unprecedented scale of this disaster (AFAD, 2023, 8). Under such circumstances, the immediate provision of shelter emerged as the foremost priority. Prefabricated housing consequently became a defining feature of post-disaster policy in Turkey. Yet beyond the urgency of physical accommodation, identifying appropriate resettlement locations for disaster victims and establishing temporary settlement areas are equally critical to safeguarding their psychological and physical well-being (Tuzkaya et al., 2025, 256).

From this standpoint, post-disaster housing cannot be analyzed solely through technical and structural responses. It must be understood as a socio-cultural phenomenon -one that directly bears on survivors' quality of life, residential satisfaction, and psychosocial

recovery. Many prefabricated settlements, by overlooking cultural contexts and established patterns of social interaction, fail to address residents' symbolic and relational needs. This shortcoming can erode a sense of place attachment, fragment neighborly relations, and diminish the overall quality of the dwelling experience.

Against this backdrop, the study seeks to explain how dwelling experience is formed in post-disaster prefabricated housing, with particular attention to socio-cultural dimensions in earthquake-prone regions of Turkey. The central research question asks: "How do socio-cultural components shape the dwelling experience, residential satisfaction, and quality of life among residents of post-disaster prefabricated housing?" The study proceeds from the premise that dwelling experience in post-disaster conditions is not solely determined by the physical attributes of housing. Cultural contexts, social relations, family structures, and patterns of social interaction all play a meaningful role in shaping residential satisfaction and quality of life. By offering a human-centered perspective, the research aims to lay the groundwork for designing temporary spaces that respond not only to physical needs but also reflect the cultural, psychological, and social values of local communities.

The study's originality lies in its focus on residents' lived experiences and its explanation of how quality of life is gradually reconstructed through social relations and social capital within temporary settlements—an angle that prior scholarship has largely subordinated to structural and technical analyses.

Literature Review

A considerable body of research has accumulated over recent decades on the subject of post-disaster resettlement, including valuable studies focused specifically on earthquakes in Turkey, most notably the 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquake. Nevertheless, a substantial portion of this scholarship has concentrated on technical performance, structural engineering, and crisis management. Studies engaging with the lived experience of residents during the post-disaster period remain comparatively scarce and narrowly scoped.

The Marmara earthquake of 1999 and the Van earthquake of 2011 rank among the most significant seismic events in Turkey's modern history prior to the 2023 Kahramanmaraş disaster. Ertürk & Topal (2020) argued that in the aftermath of both events, mass housing projects and urban reconstruction initiatives were pursued as broad public responses aimed at compensating for past losses and mitigating future risks. In Turkey, post-disaster resettlement policies have consistently prioritized construction speed and cost-effectiveness; yet the cultural and social dimensions of rehousing have, in many instances, been overlooked.

Beyhan & Taflı (2025) observed that housing needs arising in the wake of a disaster typically prompt the development of response strategies across three phases: emergency relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction. However, the housing solutions produced through these phases frequently fall short of fully meeting users' needs, generating a range of environmental, social, and economic challenges in the process. On a related front, Bostan and Demirtaş (2025) found that quality of life among earthquake survivors residing in prefabricated housing in Adıyaman—those affected by the February 2023 earthquakes in Turkey—had deteriorated markedly relative to general population norms. This decline was particularly pronounced across specific dimensions of quality of life.

Geylani (2025) examined the economic and functional factors influencing post-disaster housing reconstruction in Turkey, underscoring the need to improve cost efficiency throughout the rebuilding process and offering concrete recommendations for policymakers, planners, and project managers. Jennings et al. (2024) demonstrated that modest spatial modifications within neighborhood structures can foster greater social interaction, strengthen community solidarity, and reduce isolation—outcomes that carry heightened psychological and social significance within the context of temporary post-disaster housing. As Turkey continues its recovery from the devastating 2023 southeastern Anatolia earthquakes, the shortcomings of conventional post-disaster housing models and the persistence of housing shortfalls have become increasingly apparent.

Lessons drawn from previous disasters point to the value of alternative approaches, among them participatory housing. Yet despite well-documented benefits, such models remain rarely implemented in practice (Özdoğan et al., 2025).

Asgari et al. (2023, p. 213) identified a range of key drivers influencing the resilience of temporary settlements in the face of seismic crises. These include: the quality of residential units (measured as the ratio of renovated and demolished structures to total built area), distance from fault lines, construction quality and structural execution, building age, building materials (both skeletal and foundation), attention to structural retrofitting and renewal, accessibility to medical centers and hospitals, geological and lithological conditions, appropriate siting of service centers during crisis periods, the availability of diverse and adequately connected access routes throughout the city, and population density. At the international level, comparable studies have been conducted across different disaster contexts. Research targeting residents of prefabricated units in Japan examined dwelling patterns, daily activities, social interactions, and mental health conditions following a natural disaster. Findings indicated that living in post-disaster temporary prefabricated housing did not necessarily exert a negative influence on subsequent psychosocial conditions or social interaction activities (Akaishi et al., 2021). Carrasco & O'Brien (2022), meanwhile, traced the evolutionary trajectory of incremental housing construction in Chile, addressing the multiple complexities arising from the diverse characteristics and needs of households engaged in self-help post-disaster housing processes. Their study documented the capacities and sacrifices of residents as they pursued recovery by retaining control over the incremental building process. On this basis, the authors argued that long-term analysis of post-disaster incremental housing is essential for minimizing the generation of further risk—an endeavor that fundamentally requires community participation in creating safer living environments.

Given that social capital and interpersonal relationships, expressed through neighborly bonds, play a central role

in the social reconstruction of temporary settlements, and that residents' levels of social interaction and their use of communal spaces are profoundly shaped by prevailing values, norms, and ways of life, a thorough understanding of residents' lived experience in post-disaster prefabricated housing necessarily requires examination of culture and spatial behavior. To facilitate a systematic comparison of prior studies and to identify existing gaps in the literature, a summary of the most relevant research is presented in Table 1.

The literature review reveals that the bulk of research conducted in the field of post-disaster resettlement has concentrated on physical, technical, managerial, and economic dimensions, or on resilience indicators. Residents' lived experiences and the formative processes of meaning-making, place identity, and social relations within prefabricated housing have received comparatively little attention. Furthermore, existing studies have predominantly employed quantitative approaches, functional evaluation, or policy analysis; only a limited number have drawn on qualitative methods and grounded theory to develop a deeper understanding of dwelling experience in post-disaster conditions.

Accordingly, this study employs a qualitative approach grounded in grounded theory to explain, from residents' perspectives, how dwelling experience is formed in post-disaster prefabricated housing and to illuminate

the role of socio-cultural components in the gradual reconstruction of everyday life, place identity, and social relations. To this end, the study's theoretical framework is built upon four interrelated concepts: temporary dwelling, place identity, social capital, and spatial culture and behavior.

Methodology

The present study was qualitative in nature and grounded in grounded theory. Accordingly, the research centered on residents' lived experiences, perceptions, emotions, and narratives, with the aim of explaining how dwelling experience is formed in post-disaster prefabricated housing, as understood through the lens of social relations, cultural patterns, and residents' spatial perceptions. Residents were not treated merely as data sources; rather, their everyday experiences and interpretations of post-disaster dwelling constituted the primary basis of the inquiry. The study thus sought to uncover and explain the socio-cultural components that shape residents' acceptance of, and adaptation to, prefabricated housing in post-disaster conditions.

Although certain preliminary concepts were drawn from the theoretical literature and prior studies, these served exclusively as sensitizing concepts -initial orientations to guide the analytical process rather than predetermined categories. The final categories, subcategories, and patterns pertaining to dwelling

Table 1. Summary of prior research and existing gaps. Source: Authors.

Author(s)	Methodology	Research Topic	Limitations and Gaps
Ertürk & Topal (2020)	Policy and documentary analysis	Reconstruction policies and housing following the Marmara and Van earthquakes	Focus on managerial and physical dimensions; absence of inquiry into residents' lived experience
Beyhan & Taflı (2025)	Analytical study	Post-disaster housing challenges	Emphasis on functional and economic issues; neglect of the cultural dimensions of dwelling
Bostan& Demirtaş (2025)	Field study	Quality of life among prefabricated unit residents in Adıyaman	Focus on quality-of-life outcomes; failure to explain the formative process of dwelling experience
Geylani (2025)	Economic analysis	Economic factors influencing housing reconstruction	Dominance of economic and managerial approaches; disregard for social and cultural relations
Jennings et al. (2024)	Spatial analysis	Spatial structure and social interactions	Analysis confined to spatial structure; no examination of lived experience in post-disaster conditions
Asgari et al. (2023)	Resilience indicator analysis	Resilience of temporary settlements against seismic hazards	Focus on physical and functional indicators; lack of a phenomenological and social approach
Akaishi et al. (2021)	Field study	Psychosocial conditions of temporary housing residents in Japan	Differing cultural context; no focus on place identity and social relations
Carrasco & O'Brien (2022)	Case study	Post-disaster incremental housing in Chile	Focus on the construction process and participation; absence of inquiry into dwelling experience in prefabricated units

experience in prefabricated housing were derived from empirical data through open, axial, and selective coding. Given the distinct cultural fabric of Turkey’s earthquake-affected regions and the social variation among local communities, grounded theory proved particularly well-suited to the study, ensuring that findings carried contextual validity and could meaningfully inform post-disaster housing policy and social design. The primary data collection instrument was the semi-structured interview, which afforded researchers the flexibility to explore participants’ meanings, attitudes, and individual perspectives on the cultural, social, and familial dimensions of prefabricated housing¹. Research participants were selected through purposive sampling from among residents of prefabricated units across four earthquake-affected cities in Turkey: Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Adıyaman, and Malatya. Selection criteria included direct experience of living in prefabricated units, willingness to participate in the research, and diversity across age, gender, educational level, and family structure. The sample comprised 30 residents, with interviews distributed as follows: 8 in Kahramanmaraş, 8 in Hatay, 7 in Adıyaman, and 7 in Malatya. Demographic characteristics of the interviewees are presented in Table 2. Interviews were conducted between June and September 2025. Turkish served as the primary language of the interviews, with simultaneous interpretation provided in certain cases. Each interview ranged in duration from 45 to 75 minutes. Simultaneous translation was carried out by researchers proficient in both Turkish and Persian. To ensure conceptual accuracy in translation, audio files and transcribed texts were cross-checked against the translated versions, and in cases of ambiguity, key concepts and culturally specific expressions were reviewed during the analysis process. Data coding was conducted comparatively against both

the original text and its translated version, ensuring preservation of meaning and minimizing interpretive errors. Interview questions were designed around themes such as sense of place attachment, cultural identity, neighborly relations, social adaptability, and residents’ mental conceptualization of home. Alongside the interviews, analytical field notes were employed to develop a deeper understanding of the cultural and social contexts governing temporary settlements. In addition to the online interviews, researchers conducted a limited number of field visits to temporary settlement sites across Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Adıyaman, and Malatya. These visits took place concurrently with the interview period and were aimed at observing the physical and environmental characteristics of the settlements, the spatial arrangement of prefabricated units, semi-public and communal spaces, and residents’ spatial behaviors and patterns of collective space use. Observations gathered during these visits were recorded as field notes and photographic documentation, subsequently serving as supplementary data in the interpretation of interview findings and the broader analytical process. Collected data were analyzed using the three-stage model of Strauss & Corbin (1998/2011) through open, axial, and selective coding, a process that enabled the identification of latent socio-cultural patterns and the explanation of how dwelling experience is formed in post-disaster prefabricated housing from a human-centered perspective. Sampling continued until theoretical saturation was reached; that is, following successive interviews, no new data emerged that gave rise to additional codes or categories. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the data, interviews were reviewed repeatedly, and codes and categories were revisited at multiple stages of analysis. Consistency

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of interviewees. Source: Authors.

Gender	Number	Age Group		Educational Level		Family Structure	
Male	17	18–30 years	6	Primary school	6	Nuclear family	19
		31–45 years	12	Secondary school	12	Extended family	8
Female	13	46–60 years	9	Bachelor’s degree	9	Single-person household	3
		Over 60 years	3	Postgraduate degree	3		

among extracted codes, participant quotations, and researchers' interpretations was continuously examined and refined. Furthermore, constant comparative analysis throughout the open, axial, and selective coding processes contributed to the consolidation and stabilization of the final categories.

Theoretical Framework

Turkey occupies a unique geographical position as a Eurasian country. The greater part of its territory, Anatolia, or Asia Minor, lies in southwestern Asia and the Middle East, while the smaller European portion, known as Thrace, is situated in the Balkans in southeastern Europe (Soltanzadeh & Hassanpour, 2015, 52). Earthquakes of varying magnitude occur regularly across different parts of the country. On Monday, 6 February 2023, at 4:17 a.m., an earthquake of moment magnitude (Mw) 7.8 struck the Pazarcık district of Kahramanmaraş at a focal depth of 8.6 kilometers, along the East Anatolian Fault. The event lasted 86 seconds and affected eleven Turkish provinces situated along the fault zone. Approximately nine hours later, at 1:24 p.m. on the same day, a second earthquake of Mw 7.6 and focal depth of 7.0 kilometers struck the Elbistan district of Kahramanmaraş, this time along the Sürgü-Çardak segment of the East Anatolian Fault, lasting approximately one minute. The second earthquake inflicted considerably wider damage upon areas already severely affected by the first (AFAD, 2023, 1). In the aftermath of these events, catastrophic losses were recorded across several provinces with a combined population of approximately 15 million, and more than 50,000 lives were lost (Demir et al., 2025, 895). The consequences of this disaster manifested not only at the physical and infrastructural scale but also across the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of affected communities, underscoring, more urgently than ever, the need to reconsider prevailing models of post-disaster resettlement.

Given the nature of the present study's research problem, the theoretical framework rests on four principal conceptual axes, selected to explain the various dimensions of dwelling experience in post-disaster conditions and to forge a connection between

the physical environment, meaning, and residents' lived space. First theoretical axis: concepts related to post-disaster prefabricated housing. Within this axis, prefabricated housing is treated not merely as a technical and temporary solution but as a setting for everyday dwelling and habitation under crisis conditions. Second theoretical axis: concepts related to place identity and sense of attachment. In crisis conditions, individuals lose not only physical space but also the meaning and psychological security bound to it, revealing the profound effects of spatial rupture on identity. This axis examines how forced displacement and temporary resettlement shape, or undermine, residents' place identity and sense of belonging. Third theoretical axis: social capital and neighborly relations. Earthquakes fundamentally disrupt the relational fabric of neighborhoods, bringing into focus the critical importance of neighborly bonds and social activities within post-disaster settlements. Fourth theoretical axis: spatial culture and residents' spatial behavior. Crisis conditions alter family structures, boundaries of privacy, social roles, and cultural relations, raising the question of how cultural identity is reconstructed within temporary dwelling situations. Each of these conceptual axes is elaborated further in the sections that follow.

Notwithstanding the theoretical concepts drawn from the subject literature, the study's approach remains grounded in grounded theory. Concepts such as place identity, social capital, neighborly relations, cultural adaptability, and quality of life were therefore employed exclusively as sensitizing concepts -serving to orient the researcher's initial understanding of the problem and to heighten theoretical sensitivity toward the data. The final categories and conceptual relations were not predetermined; rather, they were derived and articulated through empirical data gathered from interviews, by means of open, axial, and selective coding.

• Post-disaster temporary housing

The passage of time and the escalating frequency of natural disasters have driven a growing global demand for temporary resettlement. Among the challenges this entails, the provision of shelter stands out as one of the most critical components in meeting the basic needs of

affected populations. Post-disaster temporary housing solutions vary considerably depending on the nature of the disaster, the demographic profile of those affected, the specific needs of residents, available resources, and the priorities of decision-makers (Kalkan, 2025, 266). Temporary housing nonetheless remains a vital yet contentious element of the post-disaster recovery process. Families who have lost their homes to disaster require private, safe, and reliable spaces in which to resume daily life as quickly as possible. In practice, however, temporary housing programs have frequently been burdened by high costs, implementation delays, and adverse consequences for the urban environment (Johnson, 2007, 36).

Despite these shortcomings, housing reconstruction programs play a decisive role in post-disaster recovery, and the provision of temporary shelter constitutes a foundational step within such programs. During the period of permanent housing reconstruction, victims are afforded a private and secure space from which to rebuild their normal lives. While this approach has been widely employed following major natural disasters, it has equally drawn considerable criticism on grounds of impermanence and cultural inadequacy (Felix et al., 2013, 136).

From this perspective, temporary housing must not be regarded merely as an emergency shelter. It is necessary that such housing provide residents with a minimum quality of life. Components such as adequate thermal insulation, protection against climatic conditions, and the assurance of privacy and security, particularly in regions subject to extreme weather, are among the fundamental design requirements for these units (Ladiana & Claut, 2024, 518).

From a temporal standpoint, temporary housing is typically required during the rehabilitation phase, a period that emerges several weeks after the disaster and extends until permanent housing construction is completed. In practice, however, building temporary housing within such a compressed timeframe presents considerable difficulties, particularly with regard to logistical and installation challenges. Deployability, the capacity to accelerate the overall process, therefore

becomes a critical characteristic in this context (Süalp & Coşgun, 2023, 510).

From a social standpoint, temporary shelter units can contribute to the strengthening of social cohesion and solidarity by addressing the psychosocial needs of disaster survivors, fostering community formation, ensuring accessibility for vulnerable groups, and preserving local cultural and traditional elements. These factors not only facilitate the recovery of living conditions but also prove effective in mitigating the psychological and social consequences of crisis (Sever et al., 2025, 390). Post-disaster reconstruction must therefore extend beyond a narrow focus on the speed of shelter provision and physical rebuilding. The social and cultural dimensions of recovery, along with residents' lived experiences, warrant equal attention throughout the reconstruction process. Resident participation, the maintenance of social bonds, and sensitivity to the cultural context of each community all play a significant role in post-disaster resettlement and reconstruction (Barakat, 2020, 437–446).

Accordingly, the design of post-earthquake temporary housing must, beyond being rapid and functional, lay the groundwork for permanent post-earthquake housing. Appropriate site selection, attention to the diverse needs of users, and the adoption of a human-centered approach are among the factors that can support residents' gradual return to pre-crisis patterns of life. Failing this, the absence of place attachment in temporary settlements risks giving rise to psychological and sociological difficulties among residents (Aras & Seymen, 2024, 1). Fig. 1 presents examples of prefabricated housing deployed in earthquake conditions in Turkey.

• Place identity and sense of attachment

The earthquake crisis in Turkey brought about widespread destruction of homes, large-scale population displacement, and the subsequent resettlement of affected residents in prefabricated units -a process that, in many respects, severed place identity and sense of attachment. Place identity, in essence, constitutes a dimension of the individual's self-structure: it defines personal identity in relation to place through an

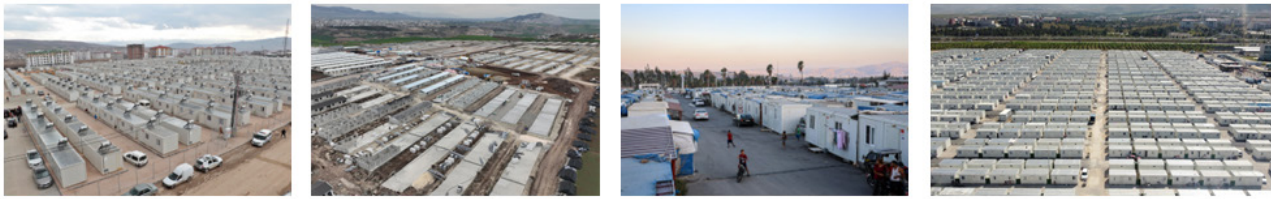


Fig. 1. Examples of prefabricated housing in Adiyaman. Source: www.turkeyrecap.com.

interplay of beliefs, preferences, emotions, values, goals, behavioral tendencies, and skills -both consciously and unconsciously. While place identity is inherently tied to the individual, their particular experiences, and their process of socialization, it simultaneously reflects the characteristics of the people and groups who inhabit a given place (Proshansky, 1983, 155).

This definition, emerging from the field of environmental psychology, emphasizes the individual's socialization with the physical environment through a complex interplay of cognition, perception, and behavior in the formation of identity within one's surroundings. It has given rise to related concepts such as place attachment, place uniqueness, and sense of place (Jang et al., 2024, 2).

According to Peng, "individuals' place identity" and "the place identity of a place" overlap but are not identical. Both constructs encompass the cognitive and affective bonds between people and the physical world. An individual's place identity constitutes that dimension of personality connected to places that hold significance in the formation of one's identity. The place identity of a place, by contrast, refers to the personality of the place itself -a character that is, in most cases, attributed by people to the places in which they live or to which they attach importance. While both concepts involve cognitive and affective ties between humans and the physical environment, they remain distinct (Peng et al., 2020, 14). At this juncture, the role of home and lived space assumes fundamental importance. From a phenomenological perspective, human dwelling is realized not merely at the physical level but at the level of meaning, lived experience, and existential relation to place. Norberg-Schulz regards place as carrying an existential quality that emerges from the perceptual, sensory, and cultural relationship between human beings and their environment -a quality

that enables the very possibility of "being in the world" (Norberg-Schulz, 1980, 5–10).

Relph, by contrast, introduced the concept of "placelessness" to describe a condition in which the individual loses their meaningful and identity-bound connection to the environment. He argued that a place carries meaning only when the individual regards it as their own and is able to experience within it a genuine and meaningful presence (Relph, 1976, 42). Tuan, similarly, understood the formation of place attachment as the product of lived experiences, collective memory, and emotional security. In his view, a home or neighborhood becomes a habitable place only when the individual is able to establish experiential continuity between their past, present, and future within that setting (Tuan, 1977, 136–138). Accordingly, the loss of home through crisis and its replacement with temporary settlements devoid of meaning can disrupt this continuity -ultimately eroding both sense of attachment and place identity.

• Social capital and neighborly relations

The emotional bond individuals form with their place of residence does more than shape their sense of attachment and place identity; it also influences the quality of social relations and the degree to which people participate in collective life. When individuals feel familiarity, affection, or belonging toward a place, they show a greater tendency to interact with others, engage in communal activities, and cultivate neighborly relations. Conversely, the loss of this bond, as Relph articulates through the concept of "placelessness," leads to a rupture in the individual's meaningful relationship with the surrounding environment and can lay the groundwork for social isolation, diminished mutual trust, and the weakening of neighborhood networks (Relph, 1976).

In this context, social capital emerges as one of the key concepts in understanding the social relations of

settlements. Putnam (1993, 73) regarded social capital as the product of social actions, everyday interactions, and collective participation -manifesting as networks of trust, shared norms, and mutual cooperation. In a complementary definition, Coleman (1990, 74) viewed social capital as a resource embedded within social structures that enhances individuals' capacity for collective action and effective communication. From Bourdieu's perspective (1986), social capital is defined in direct relation to power and social structures, referring to the aggregate of actual and potential resources accessible to individuals through durable networks of social relations. On this basis, social capital plays a fundamental role in reconstruction and renewal processes and may be understood as the latent value inherent in relations among residents (Li et al., 2022, 1). Empirical research similarly underscores the decisive role of social capital in residents' well-being. Cramm (2013, 147) demonstrated that individuals' levels of social capital and the quality of services and facilities available in a given place bear a direct relationship to residents' subjective and social well-being, and that at higher levels, social capital leads to more effective social organization and the provision of instrumental and emotional support within the community.

These concepts highlight the significance of neighborhood networks and collective action, particularly under crisis and post-crisis conditions. Within the context of post-disaster temporary resettlement -which is frequently marked by forced displacement, spatial instability, and the disruption of pre-existing social ties- social capital and neighborly relations can function as compensatory mechanisms. Strengthening these components not only helps mitigate the psychological and social consequences of crisis but also lays the groundwork for rebuilding trust, attachment, and solidarity within temporary settlements. The analysis of social capital and neighborly relations, therefore, constitutes an inseparable component of understanding the dwelling experience in post-disaster prefabricated housing.

• Culture and spatial relations

Housing, beyond its physical form, is a profoundly

cultural phenomenon -one that acquires meaning through family life, ways of living, and the behavioral patterns of its inhabitants. In this sense, the purpose of housing is not merely to provide shelter but to constitute a socio-spatial unit that reflects, more than any structure of power, the culture, values, and everyday relations of its residents (Ayazi et al., 2024, 57). Culture plays a foundational role in how residential spaces are perceived, used, and organized, and determines the patterns of spatial behavior in daily life.

Within this framework, Rapoport² -drawing on the intersection of anthropology and the built environment- regards culture as one of the most influential forces shaping the relationship between environment and human behavior. In his view, residential spaces can give rise to meaningful dwelling only when they are consonant with users' cultural patterns, habitual ways of living, and social needs. Residential environments that sustain personal meanings, socio-cultural continuity, and functional alignment with everyday life lay the groundwork for a durable human-place bond (Safarkhani, 2025, 25). Housing must therefore be understood not merely as shelter but as a space for the expression of culture and the enactment of everyday life. In the context of post-disaster resettlement, the significance of culture and spatial behavior becomes considerably more pronounced. Prefabricated units are typically designed according to standardized, uniform templates, with insufficient regard for cultural differences, family structures, and local ways of living. This oversight can lead to reduced residential satisfaction and the emergence of spatial and social incompatibilities. Research indicates that components such as thermal comfort and socio-cultural factors play a decisive role in residents' overall housing satisfaction and bear directly on outcomes such as incomplete occupancy or even the abandonment of residential units following resettlement (Shrestha et al., 2023, 21).

Spatial behavior is therefore always shaped through a reciprocal relationship with spatial structure and cultural context. The ways in which interior and communal spaces are used, the definition of boundaries, and the patterns of family and neighborly interaction all reflect

the cultural and social systems of residents. Overlooking these components in the design and deployment of post-disaster prefabricated housing amounts to disregarding the actual ways of living and lived experiences of those who inhabit them. Taken together, the literature review demonstrates that culture and spatial behavior are key elements in understanding the dwelling experience and play a decisive role in shaping the sense of attachment, the quality of social interactions, and the acceptance of temporary settlements. Embracing a human-centered approach to culture and spatial relations is, therefore, an unavoidable necessity for analyzing and rethinking the patterns of post-disaster prefabricated housing. The components derived from the theoretical framework are presented in Fig. 2.

Study Area

Following the devastating earthquakes of Monday, 6 February 2023, in southeastern Turkey, a total of eleven cities were directly affected -Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Adıyaman, Gaziantep, Malatya, Kilis, Diyarbakır, Adana, Osmaniye, Şanlıurfa, and Elazığ- sustaining widespread casualties and material losses (AFAD, 2023, 1). The scale and intensity of these earthquakes caused extensive destruction of residential fabric and the displacement of a considerable portion of the population across the affected regions.

The spatial scope of the present study focuses on four cities -Adıyaman, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, and Hatay- which experienced the highest levels of destruction and damage in the earthquake, and where large segments of the population were compelled to abandon their homes and relocate to prefabricated units. The selection

of these cities, given the severity of losses, the extent of temporary resettlement, and their socio-cultural diversity, enables a deeper examination of the dwelling experience in prefabricated housing.

Adıyaman faced severe destruction of residential units and the fragmentation of social networks, to the extent that prefabricated units became the primary and long-term living environment for many households. Malatya, though comparatively less affected than some of the other cities under study, nonetheless confronted residents with considerable social, psychological, and residential challenges. Kahramanmaraş, due to its proximity to the earthquake's epicenter, suffered extensive destruction and large-scale population displacement, rendering the experience of living in prefabricated units something far beyond a temporary arrangement for a significant portion of its residents. Hatay, meanwhile, with its distinctive social and cultural fabric, exhibited notably different patterns of adaptation and dwelling experience in the post-disaster period.

The breadth of prefabricated resettlement and the socio-cultural diversity across these four cities have enabled the identification of both shared patterns and local variations in post-disaster dwelling experience. The selection of this study area thus provides an appropriate basis for a comparative analysis of the social and cultural components shaping the dwelling experience in prefabricated housing. The geographical location of the study area is presented in Fig. 3.

Findings

The study sample comprised 30 residents of prefabricated units across four cities -Hatay, Kahramanmaraş,

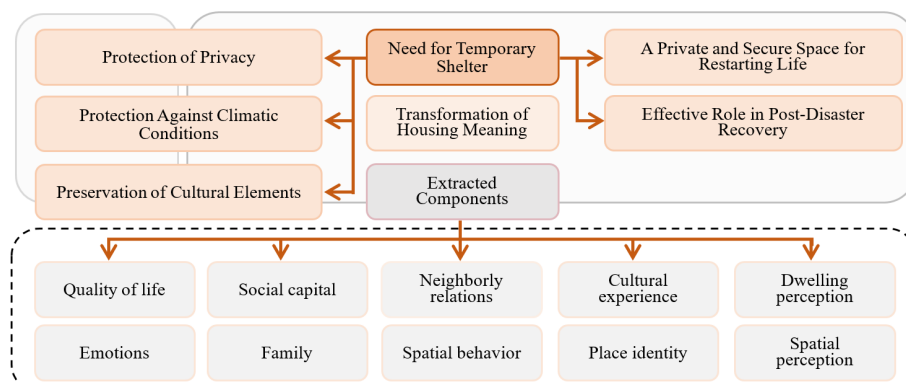


Fig. 2. Components derived from the research theoretical framework. Source: Authors.

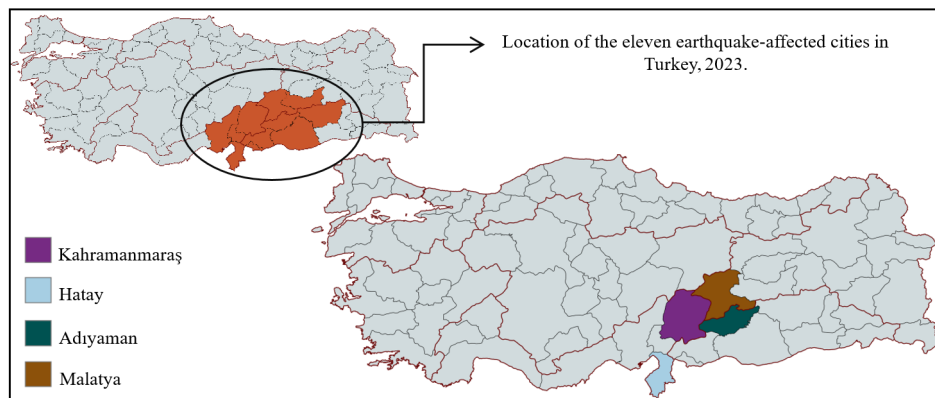


Fig. 3. Geographic location of the study area. Source: Authors.

Adıyaman, and Malatya- all of whom had experienced temporary resettlement following the 2023 earthquake. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, ensuring that all had direct experience of living in post-disaster prefabricated units. Selection criteria included, beyond the dwelling experience itself, willingness to participate in interviews and diversity across age, gender, and family structure. Data were collected through semi-structured online interviews, and sampling continued until theoretical saturation was reached -after 30 interviews, no new data gave rise to additional concepts. In order to extract the study's codes and categories, interview data were analyzed systematically and incrementally in accordance with the grounded theory approach. Interview texts were examined word by word, and core concepts were derived directly from participants' narratives and experiences. During open coding, interviews were read line by line, and initial codes were identified based on the themes arising from responses. These codes reflected everyday dwelling experiences, personal emotions, behavioral patterns, modes of social interaction, and residents' perceptions of life in prefabricated units.

In the axial coding phase, the dispersed codes extracted in the preceding stage were reorganized into more coherent categories on the basis of conceptual similarities and semantic relations among them. Codes sharing common meanings were grouped into unified categories, and the relationships between them were analyzed. Finally, during selective coding, one concept was identified as the central category -one capable of explaining and integrating the remaining categories. This central category provided an analytical framework

for interpreting the dwelling experience in post-disaster prefabricated housing and served as the foundation for presenting the study's final findings. The results of open coding are presented in [Table 3](#).

Following the identification of initial codes, open codes were organized in this phase on the basis of their conceptual connections and causal relationships. Through this process, the links between contextual conditions, residents' actions and strategies, and dwelling outcomes were established. Six axial categories emerged, each explicating a core dimension of the dwelling experience in post-disaster prefabricated housing. These categories provide an analytical framework for understanding how residents' lived experience is formed, and serve as an intermediary between the empirical data and the study's central category. Table 4 introduces the axial categories and their relationships to the open codes.

During the selective coding phase, a single category was identified from among the codes and categories extracted in the preceding stages -one capable of integrating all axial categories and explicating the core process of residents' dwelling experience in post-disaster prefabricated housing. Accordingly, the gradual reconstruction of socio-cultural life within the context of temporary dwelling was identified as the central category of the study. Data analysis revealed that residential satisfaction and quality of life among residents are the product of a dynamic and incremental process. Within spatially and socially constrained conditions, residents endeavor to reconstruct their everyday life in temporary settlements through adaptive actions, the redefinition of neighborly relations, and efforts to preserve cultural rituals and habits. Although this reconstructive

Table 3. Open coding of the research. Source: Authors.

Open Codes	Related Components	Interviewees' Quotations (Conceptual Categories)
Anticipation of relocation, sense of temporariness, feeling of an incomplete life	Dwelling perception	- The space failed to generate meaning or a sense of belonging. Many participants described the temporary dwelling environment as lacking any sense of home or place attachment. - One resident expressed this as follows: "The space did not feel like home to us. Everything was temporary and unfamiliar -even after several months, we still did not feel that we truly belonged there" (Participant 7, Hatay). - This account reveals that spatial impermanence and the absence of familiar elements played a significant role in weakening residents' place identity and sense of belonging.
Uniformity of units, limited space, and lack of flexibility	Spatial perception	"Despite the temporary nature of the housing, the layout did not have any particular effect on our sense of comfort."
Absence of a sense of home, estrangement from the environment, and lack of familiar landmarks	Place identity	- It did not feel like a real home -it was more like a waiting place. The space felt unfamiliar to us."
Restrictions on rituals, difficulty hosting guests, and changes in daily habits	Cultural experience	- Many of our daily habits and routines can no longer be carried out as before. We faced severe restrictions in performing our customary practices."
Reduced privacy, family tension, forced adaptation	Family	"The space was small, but our family had grown closer to one another." - Several participants identified spatial constraints and reduced privacy as among the most significant challenges of living in prefabricated units: "The walls were very thin and everyone could hear everything. Even for private family conversations, we felt no sense of comfort" (Participant 4, Kahramanmaraş). - This indicates that spatial density and the absence of adequate functional separation had a tangible effect on the quality of the dwelling experience and the psychological well-being of residents.
Rearranging layout, multi-purpose use of space, appropriation of surrounding spaces	Spatial behavior	- Some residents attempted to cultivate a greater sense of belonging through the personalization of space: "Gradually, we tried to change the outdoor space -we put up a shade canopy, brought plants, and made the entrance resemble our previous home" (Participant 18, Malatya). -These actions reflect residents' efforts to redefine the temporary space and transform it into a familiar and habitable environment.
Superficial acquaintance, brief conversations, unstable relations	Neighboring relations	- At the same time, some residents spoke of strengthened social interactions in the aftermath of the disaster: "After the earthquake, people talked to each other more -because everyone was in similar circumstances and tried to help one another" (Participant 15, Malatya). -This account suggests that the shared experience of crisis created the conditions for a form of temporary social solidarity within prefabricated settlements.
Limited trust, intermittent mutual assistance, and solidarity under crisis conditions	Social capital	"Without the neighbors, enduring these conditions would have been far more difficult. Most of the time, the real support we received came from those around us" (Participant 9, Hatay). -These statements indicate that neighboring relations and informal support networks helped alleviate a portion of the pressures arising from post-disaster conditions.
Informal gatherings, the role of semi-public spaces, and everyday interactions	Communal spaces	"Most of our interactions took place in the spaces between the container units. Children played there, and families would sit together in the evenings" (Participant 21, Hatay). -This suggests that semi-public spaces played a key role in fostering social interactions and rebuilding neighboring relations.
Sense of physical security, psychological insecurity, longing	Emotions	"At night, we did not feel safe. The slightest sound made us anxious, and the fear of the earthquake still lingered in our minds. Living in these spaces did not bring complete psychological peace" (Participant 11, Adiyaman). -This account indicates that psychological insecurity and the persistence of post-crisis anxiety were an inseparable part of the dwelling experience in prefabricated units.
Sense of physical security, psychological insecurity, longing	Quality of life	"Life has improved compared to the early days, but we still feel as though we are living in a temporary situation. We have lost many of our former habits and the sense of calm we once had" (Participant 24, Kahramanmaraş). - The data indicate that residents' quality of life, even with the passage of time, continues to be affected by the instability of their dwelling conditions.

process is never fully realized -owing to structural and temporal constraints- it nonetheless plays a significant role in sustaining a degree of relative satisfaction and psychosocial stability.

Given the nature of grounded theory -which rests on

the explication of processes and the in-depth analysis of actions, conditions, and consequences- the findings indicate that residents' responses to prevailing circumstances were not passive, but rather grounded in adaptive strategies and social agency. Within this

Table 4. Axial categories and their relationships to open codes. Source A: authors.

Responses Extracted from Interviews	Related Codes	Axial Category
The space has failed to generate meaning or a sense of belonging.	Absence of a sense of home, estrangement from the environment, and spatial uniformity	Weakened place identity
The space is incompatible with residents' ways of living and cultural patterns	Restrictions on rituals, changes in daily habits	Cultural incompatibility of space
Social relations form but lack continuity.	Superficial interactions, absence of intimacy	Fragile neighborly relations
Social solidarity is short-term and contingent on crisis conditions.	Limited trust, intermittent mutual assistance	Unstable social capital
Residents actively cope with dwelling conditions.	Rearranging layout, appropriation, and redefinition of space	Residents' adaptive action
Certain spaces provide a setting for social interaction	Informal gatherings, everyday conversations	Role of semi-public spaces

framework, contextual conditions encompassed the 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquake, the destruction of prior housing, emergency resettlement, and uncertainty about the future. Actions manifested primarily in the form of adaptive behaviors, the redefinition of space use, and limited social interactions. Consequences were observable as the minimal preservation of social relations, the formation of temporary solidarities, and the continuation of everyday life within the context of temporary dwelling. Table 5 presents photographs from the study area alongside their correspondence to the codes extracted from the research.

Drawing on the theoretical framework, recent research has demonstrated that in post-disaster conditions, residents' quality of life is less dependent on the physical attributes of housing than on the quality of social relations, patterns of collective living, and the capacity for cultural adaptation. Since this study was conducted within a grounded theory framework, its aim extended beyond the mere identification of components to encompass the explication of the process through which dwelling experience is formed in post-disaster conditions. Consequently, the simultaneous examination of conditions, actions, and consequences has enabled an understanding of the causal and consequential relationships among socio-cultural factors, ultimately yielding the study's conceptual model. This model is presented in Fig. 4.

Discussion

Building on the concept of “temporary dwelling” introduced in the theoretical framework, the

dwelling experience in post-disaster prefabricated housing cannot be analyzed as a purely temporary or transient condition. Rather, it must be understood as a dynamic, unstable process deeply contingent on residents' social agency -for the problems and challenges of informal and temporary settlements are inherently multifaceted and multidimensional (Asgari & Arbabi Sabzevari, 2024, 161). The findings of this study indicate that, in the absence of stable place meanings, residents endeavor to gradually reconstruct their quality of life and residential satisfaction through neighborly relations, cultural adaptation, and the redefinition of space use.

Addressing the study's central research question, the most significant socio-cultural components influencing residential satisfaction and quality of life among residents of post-disaster prefabricated units following the 2023 earthquake in Turkey are place identity, the degree of cultural compatibility of space, the quality of neighborly relations, and the level of social capital. These components do not operate in isolation; rather, they function as an interconnected network, shaping the quality of the dwelling experience through residents' everyday actions. The findings indicate that improving quality of life in temporary settlements is not achievable without attention to the cultural and social dimensions of dwelling, for habitation in post-disaster prefabricated units is a multi-layered, dynamic, and context-dependent experience. Results further suggest that while the dwelling experience across the four cities under study -Hatay, Kahramanmaraş, Adıyaman, and Malatya- follows a broadly shared pattern, its

Table 5. Photographs from the study area and their correspondence to the codes extracted from the research. Source: Authors.

Area	Figure	Description
Semi-public space between units as a setting for social interactions -Hatay		Residents used these spaces for sitting, conversation, children's play, and the conduct of various everyday activities.
An example of entrance space personalization by residents -Malatya		The personalization of entrance spaces through the addition of semi-permanent elements, potted plants, and shade canopies in prefabricated units -a sign of residents' efforts to redefine their sense of belonging and place identity.
General view of prefabricated unit arrangement -Kahramanmaraş		The linear arrangement of units on both sides of a central pathway has given rise to semi-public space and everyday interactions among residents.
Interior view of a prefabricated unit		The limited space of the units has necessitated the simultaneous performance of multiple activities -resting, cooking, dining, and studying- within a single shared environment, which bears directly on residents' privacy and quality of dwelling.
Examples of space personalization, unit entrances, and neighborly interactions.		
An example of informal spatial adaptation and expansion by residents		

intensity, manifestation, and consequences vary meaningfully under the influence of local contexts. Data analysis through open, axial, and selective coding has enabled the explication of causal relationships among the cultural and social dimensions of dwelling. At the level of open coding, the dominant perception among residents of living in prefabricated units was one of temporariness and instability. The sense of losing one's home, the uniformity of spaces, and estrangement from the environment were among the most recurrent themes in participants' narratives. Equally, restrictions on the performance of daily rituals and customs, reduced privacy, and changes in living habits emerged as experiences that reveal the gap between residents' cultural needs and the characteristics of the dwelling environment.

At the level of social relations, neighborly interactions were largely described as superficial, short-term, and contingent on emergency circumstances. Social trust

remained limited, and mutual assistance emerged primarily as a response to crisis conditions. Nevertheless, codes related to spatial rearrangement, multi-purpose use of units, and the appropriation of surrounding spaces indicate that residents were actively engaged in managing and adapting to prevailing conditions.

During axial coding, these dispersed codes were organized into several principal categories. Weakened place identity and cultural incompatibility of space were identified as the contextual conditions of the dwelling experience—conditions that gave rise to fragile neighborly relations and unstable social capital. Social relations within these settlements were formed largely on the basis of a shared fate born of crisis, and rarely led to durable place attachment. By contrast, residents' adaptive actions -including spatial rearrangement, creative use of space, and the formation of informal interactions- played a key role in reducing psychological pressures and sustaining everyday life. Semi-public

spaces, though limited in scope, functioned as the primary setting for social interactions and served as an intermediary between private and collective space. During selective coding, the category of “gradual reconstruction of social and cultural life within the context of temporary dwelling” was identified as the central axis of analysis. This category demonstrates that residential satisfaction and quality of life are not static conditions, but rather the outcome of a gradual, dynamic process contingent on residents’ agency. Confronted with spatial and social constraints, residents endeavor to redefine the meanings, relations, and patterns of their everyday lives. This process is observable across all four cities under study, yet takes on different forms depending on local conditions, the severity of destruction, social structures, and cultural contexts. Taken together, the findings of this study underscore that temporary post-disaster resettlement is not merely a physical or managerial problem, but a socio-cultural process whose quality depends on residents’ capacity

to gradually reconstruct relations, meaning, and lived experience. These results highlight the necessity of rethinking prefabricated housing design and policy frameworks, with emphasis on a human-centered and context-sensitive approach. A comparative analysis of these experiences is presented in Table 6. Based on the comparative analysis of the studied cities presented in Table 6, the observed differences are attributable, more than any other factor, to the level of social capital, the quality of neighborly relations, and the degree of residents’ social participation. These components exert a direct and significant influence on residential satisfaction and quality of life, and play a decisive role in determining how socio-cultural life is gradually reconstructed under conditions of temporary dwelling. The findings indicate that even within similar physical settings, differences in social and cultural contexts can give rise to markedly different dwelling experiences. Finally, attention was directed to the dwelling experience

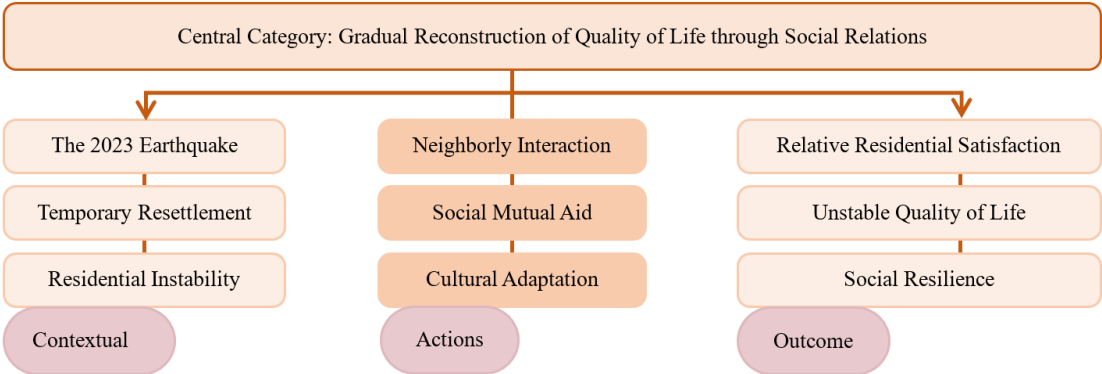


Fig. 4. Conceptual model of the research. Source: Authors.
Table 6. Comparative analysis of dwelling experience across the studied cities. Source: Authors.

City	Residential Satisfaction	Socio-Cultural Components Corresponding to the Research	Type of Dwelling Experience	Analytical Interpretation
Kahramanmaraş	Unstable and fragmented dwelling experience	Weak sense of belonging, limited neighborly relations, moderate social capital	Low	Widespread destruction and severe population displacement have prevented the sustainable reconstruction of social relations.
Hatay	Social solidarity under psychological pressure	High social capital, active neighborly relations, and social support	Moderate	Local social networks have played a protective role, although psychological pressure remains high.
Adıyaman	Active social reconstruction	High social participation, stronger sense of belonging, and local mutual aid	Relatively good	Residents’ active social engagement has contributed to an improved dwelling experience and relative satisfaction
Malatya	Gradual adaptation to new conditions	Strong family relations, emerging sense of belonging, and limited participation	Moderate	A slow and alternative form of adaptation has taken shape, centered on family bonds and limited collective action

and the spatial characteristics of prefabricated units. The dwelling experience in prefabricated units was not confined to the physical quality of shelter; a considerable portion of residents' feelings and perceptions were directly shaped by the spatial and environmental attributes of these units. A large number of participants described the dwelling space as small, cramped, and inflexible. This proved particularly consequential for larger families, where the absence of a clear boundary between individual and collective activities led residents to feel that their personal privacy had diminished.

One participant in Adıyaman stated: "When we had guests or wanted to discuss family matters, we did not feel comfortable. The units were close together and sounds carried easily. At times, we felt that parts of our private life were visible to others." This account illustrates that the physical constraints of prefabricated units and the density of their arrangement can affect residents' perception of privacy and psychological comfort, and bear directly on the quality of the dwelling experience.

One participant in Hatay stated: "Everything happened in a small space -resting, eating, and even family conversations. Sometimes we felt there was no place just for ourselves." Across many interviews, residents drew attention to the uniformity and temporariness of the environment. The repetition of identical forms, the absence of familiar elements, and the lack of identity markers had prevented some residents from establishing a lasting emotional connection with their surroundings. As a result, prefabricated units were perceived more as a temporary place of

accommodation than as a space capable of generating a sense of home and belonging.

One resident of Kahramanmaraş remarked, "When we looked from outside, all the units looked the same. We did not feel that this place was part of our life."

The findings also revealed that the quality of communal space played a significant role in residents' everyday experience. In settlements where small open areas, seating spaces, or semi-public zones were available, social interactions formed more readily, and feelings of isolation diminished. Many residents noted that a considerable portion of their neighborly relations had developed precisely within these informal spaces. One participant in Adıyaman expressed it as follows: "Most of our acquaintance with neighbors formed in front of the units or in the spaces between the containers. That small space was what brought people together."

In contrast, in certain settlement sites where communal spaces were limited or lacked social quality, participants spoke of greater isolation and withdrawal. This indicates that the dwelling experience in post-disaster conditions is not solely dependent on the provision of residential units; rather, the manner in which communal spaces are formed and the quality of the living environment play an equally important role in residents' satisfaction and quality of life. Table 7 presents the relationship between the spatial characteristics of prefabricated units and residents' dwelling experience.

As shown in Table 7, the dwelling experience in prefabricated units was not confined to the provision of shelter -its various social and cultural dimensions were closely intertwined with the spatial and environmental

Table 7. Relationship between the spatial characteristics of prefabricated units and residents' dwelling experience. Source: Authors.

Dwelling Experience Component	Related Spatial/Environmental Characteristic	Residents' Experience and Perception	Quotation
Privacy	Spatial density and lack of functional separation	Reduced comfort and increased everyday tension	"We felt we had no personal space."
Sense of home	Uniform form and temporary nature of housing	Weakened place attachment and sense of temporariness	"This place felt more like somewhere to stay than a home."
Social interaction	Presence of semi-open and communal spaces	Strengthening of neighborly relations	"Most interactions took place in front of the units."
Sense of isolation	Shortage of collective spaces	Reduced social interactions	"Some days we barely saw anyone."
Cultural experience	Incompatibility of space with daily ways of living	Changes in certain family habits	"We could no longer maintain the relatively stable family routines we once had."
Spatial perception	Small size and limited spatial flexibility	Sense of pressure and temporary dwelling	"The space was very limited, and everything was merged together."

characteristics of the settlements. Data analysis indicates that factors such as spatial density, physical uniformity, and the quality of communal spaces played a significant role in residents' perception of quality of life and residential satisfaction.

The findings of the present study align with Sultan Barakat's perspectives on post-disaster reconstruction. Barakat argues that successful reconstruction is not limited to physical rebuilding; it must equally attend to the revival of social bonds, collective identity, and cultural structures. The findings of this study similarly demonstrate that even under conditions of temporary dwelling, neighborly relations and social interactions played a meaningful role in reducing psychological pressures and enhancing residents' adaptability. Many participants noted that the presence of neighbors, everyday conversations, and informal social support had partially compensated for the sense of security and calm that had been lost. This suggests that inter-unit and semi-public spaces, far beyond their purely functional role, had become a setting for the reconstruction of social capital.

The findings also accord with Ali Asgari's studies on post-disaster resettlement. Asgari emphasizes that the temporary resettlement process must extend beyond meeting basic needs to address the social and cultural dimensions of survivors' lives. The present study similarly found that the quality of the dwelling experience was not solely dependent on the physical attributes of the units -factors such as the opportunity for social interaction, spatial flexibility, and the capacity to personalize the environment played a decisive role in residential satisfaction. Participants repeatedly referred to actions such as adding potted plants, installing shade canopies, rearranging entrance areas, and making use of outdoor spaces, actions that reflect a sustained effort to redefine the temporary space and transform it into a familiar and habitable environment.

One of the most significant findings of the study concerns the role of place attachment in residents' adaptation to post-disaster conditions. Many participants indicated that prefabricated units, particularly in the initial months, lacked any sense of home or place identity. Physical

uniformity, the resemblance of units to one another, the absence of personal elements, and the temporariness of the space all contributed to a weakening of place attachment. This finding is explicable through the theoretical perspectives of Relph and Norberg-Schulz on the meaning and identity of place. According to these views, place is not merely a physical container; rather, it is constituted through experience, memory, interaction, and meaning. The present study similarly observed that residents, through everyday actions and incremental spatial modifications, endeavored to cultivate a sense of familiarity and belonging. Place identity in temporary settlements was therefore not a static or pre-given condition, but a gradual and social process.

The findings further revealed that privacy constituted one of the most significant challenges of the dwelling experience in prefabricated units. High unit density, thin walls, excessive spatial proximity, and the absence of adequate functional separation contributed to a reduction in psychological comfort and an increase in everyday tensions -a pattern most pronounced among larger families. Nevertheless, the data showed that residents frequently endeavored to manage these constraints through adaptive behaviors. Strategies included the use of curtains, rearranging furniture, creating semi-private boundaries, and making use of outdoor space. This indicates that the dwelling experience is not solely shaped by the initial spatial design, but is rather the product of an ongoing interaction between people and their environment.

Another significant dimension of the findings concerned the role of residents' adaptive actions in redefining the dwelling space. Far from the passive image often attributed to disaster victims, the research data demonstrated that residents play an active role in organizing and modifying their living environment. Space personalization, the creation of seating areas, planting vegetation, and the incorporation of cultural and decorative elements all reflect an endeavor to render the dwelling environment more human. This finding aligns with human-centered perspectives in architecture and environmental behavior studies, demonstrating that users are not merely consumers of space but active participants in the production of meaning and environmental quality.

Taken together, the findings of this study indicate that prefabricated housing cannot be regarded solely as temporary and functional units. These spaces serve as settings in which place identity, social relations, and residents' lived experience are either formed or undermined. Post-disaster resettlement planning and design must therefore extend beyond purely technical approaches to encompass the social, cultural, and behavioral dimensions of dwelling.

Conclusion

Focusing on the socio-cultural dimensions of dwelling in post-earthquake prefabricated housing in Turkey following the 2023 disaster, this study endeavors to offer a deeper understanding of residents' lived experience within these units. The findings demonstrate that the dwelling experience in prefabricated housing is not confined to physical, functional, and structural conditions; rather, it is meaningfully shaped by social relations, social capital, and the cultural contexts of residents. Within this framework, temporary dwelling is best understood not as a static condition, but as a dynamic and social process.

Data coding results revealed that components such as neighborly relations, social support, sense of place attachment, and social capital play a decisive role in shaping residents' residential satisfaction and quality of life. In circumstances where the earthquake has generated spatial instability, forced displacement, and psychological insecurity, these components function as compensatory mechanisms -alleviating a portion of the psychological and social pressures of the post-disaster period. In other words, quality of life in prefabricated units does not emerge rapidly, but rather takes shape through the gradual reconstruction of social relations and residents' everyday actions. The findings further indicate that this process of socio-cultural reconstruction is strongly contingent on the contextual conditions of each city under study, and that differences in levels of social capital, degree of local participation, and the structure of social relations give rise to markedly different dwelling experiences. It may therefore be concluded that uniform and standardized temporary resettlement models,

without regard for social and cultural contexts, are incapable of effectively meeting post-disaster dwelling needs. Accordingly, it is recommended that post-disaster resettlement planning and policy devote greater attention to strengthening social relations, fostering local participation, and creating conditions conducive to social interaction. The provision of semi-public spaces, support for residents' collective actions, and consideration of cultural patterns of everyday life can play a significant role in enhancing residential satisfaction and improving quality of life in temporary settlements.

Finally, to advance theoretical and applied knowledge in this field, it is recommended that future research employ mixed-method approaches -combining quantitative and qualitative perspectives- to examine the various dimensions of post-disaster dwelling. Extending the scope of inquiry to other countries and comparing dwelling experiences across different cultural contexts can further deepen understanding of the socio-cultural processes of post-disaster resettlement and contribute to the improvement of design strategies and policy frameworks in this domain.

Declaration of No Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest in conducting this research.

Endnotes

1. Data collection was carried out in full accordance with the ethical principles governing qualitative research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their involvement, and the confidentiality of participant identities was upheld throughout every stage of the study as an integral component of the research's ethical framework.
2. Rapoport, 1969

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