



ARAŞTIRMA MAKALESİ | RESEARCH ARTICLE

AFET SONRASI KÜLTÜREL MİRAS YÖNETİMİ: 6 ŞUBAT 2023 HATAY
DEPREMİ ÖRNEĞİNDE TOPLUMSAL BELLEK VE KİMLİĞİN YENİDEN
İNŞASI

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Atıf / Citation: Oflazoğlu Dora, S. & Dora, M. (2025). Cultural heritage management after disasters: Reconstruction of social memory and identity in the case of the february 6, 2023 Hatay earthquake. *İnönü Üniversitesi Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*, (İNİJOSS), 14(1), 222-241.

<https://doi.org/10.54282/inijoss.1642521>

Öz

6 Şubat 2023 tarihinde Hatay'da meydana gelen deprem, bölgenin zengin kültürel mirasını derinden etkilemiştir. Bu çalışma, deprem sonrasında kültürel mirasın, toplumsal belleği canlandırma ve kimliği yeniden inşa etme potansiyelini incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Zengin bir kültürel çeşitliliğe ev sahipliği yapan Hatay'ın deprem öncesi farklı dinsel ve etnik kökenlere ait ritüellerin ve somut kültürel miras öğelerinin bir temsili olması, felaket sonrası yaşanan göç, kurtulanların eski normale olan uzaklıkları, kolektif kimliğin zedelenmesi ve kaybolan bellek-mekan ilişkisi bu çalışmayı gerekli kılmıştır. Çalışmada kültürel miras öğelerinin deprem sonrasında geçmiş ve gelecek arasında bir köprü görevi görerek toplumsal bellek ve kimliğin yeniden inşasındaki rolü ve toplumsal iyileşmedeki katkısına ilişkin değerlendirmeler; saha gözlemleri, katılımcı gözlem, yayınlanmış raporlar ve akademik çalışmalar ile teorik bir tartışma çerçevesinde sunulmuştur. Bu kapsamda somut/soyut kültürel miras değerlerinin deprem sonrası genel durumu değerlendirmiş ve toplumsal iyileşme sürecindeki kritik rolü ortaya koymaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışma sonucunda, somut/soyut kültürel miras değerlerinin toplumsal belleğin korunması ve kimlik inşası sürecinde önemli bir araç olabileceği, ancak bunun için kapsamlı bir koruma ve yönetim stratejisine ihtiyaç duyulduğu ortaya koyulmuştur. Bu kapsamda afet sonrası kültürel miras yönetimi politikalarının geliştirilmesine ve kültürel miras değerlerinin toplumsal iyileşmedeki rolünün afet sonrası toparlanma stratejilerine entegre edilmesi yönünde alternatif önerilerde bulunulmuştur. Bu çalışmanın bulguları, afet sonrası toplumsal iyileşme süreçlerinde kültürel mirasın korunması ve yaşatılmasının, sadece fiziksel yapıların restorasyonu değil, aynı zamanda toplumsal kimliğin ve kolektif belleğin yeniden inşası için de hayati önem taşıdığını ortaya koymaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Somut-soyut kültürel miras, Toplumsal bellek, Kimlik inşası, Afet yönetimi, Toplumsal iyileşme.

CULTURAL HERITAGE MANAGEMENT AFTER DISASTERS: RECONSTRUCTION OF SOCIAL MEMORY AND IDENTITY IN THE CASE OF THE FEBRUARY 6, 2023 HATAY EARTHQUAKE

Abstract

The earthquake of February 6, 2023, in Hatay deeply affected the rich cultural heritage of the region. This study aims to examine the potential of cultural heritage to revitalize social memory and reconstruct identity after the earthquake. The fact that Hatay, which hosted a rich cultural diversity and was a representation of rituals and tangible cultural heritage items belonging to different religious and ethnic origins before the earthquake, experienced migration after the disaster, distanced survivors from their old normal, damaged the collective identity, and lost the memory-space relationship, necessitated this study. In the study, evaluations on the role of cultural heritage items in the reconstruction of social memory and identity by acting as a bridge between the past and the future after the earthquake and their contribution to social recovery are presented within the framework of field observations, participant observation, published reports, academic studies, and a theoretical discussion. In this context, the general situation of tangible/intangible cultural heritage values after the earthquake was evaluated, and its critical role in the social recovery process was revealed. As a result of the study, it is revealed that tangible/intangible cultural heritage values can be an important tool in the process of preserving social memory and identity construction, but a comprehensive protection and management strategy is needed for this. In this context, alternative suggestions have been made for developing post-disaster cultural heritage management policies and integrating the role of cultural heritage values in social recovery into post-disaster recovery strategies. The findings of this study demonstrate that preserving and sustaining cultural heritage in post-disaster social healing processes is vital not only for the restoration of physical structures but also for the reconstruction of social identity and collective memory.

Keywords: Tangible-intangible cultural heritage, Social memory, Identity construction, Disaster management, Social Recovery

INTRODUCTION

Cultural heritage is the totality of tangible and intangible elements that reflect the past, identity, and values of a society (Smith, 2006: 11). This heritage is not limited to historical buildings or archaeological finds but plays a critical role in preserving social memory and identity. However, destructive events such as disasters not only threaten the physical existence of cultural heritage but also profoundly affect social memory and identity. Although Hatay has been home to many civilizations throughout history and has a rich cultural heritage, the earthquake of February 6, 2023, caused serious damage to this heritage.

The protection of cultural heritage and its role in post-disaster recovery processes has become a research area of increasing interest in recent years. UNESCO's (2015) 'Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in World Heritage Sites' document emphasizes the importance of cultural heritage protection in the social recovery process after disasters. Harrison (2013: 14) analyzed the role of cultural heritage in sustaining social identity and memory in detail and stated that this role becomes more important, especially in post-disaster periods.

Although the existing literature provides important information on the role of cultural heritage in the protection and post-disaster recovery processes, studies conducted specifically in Turkey are limited. When evaluated through Nora's (1989: 7) concept of 'places of memory' (lieux de mémoire), the importance of the function of cultural heritage in revitalizing and preserving social memory becomes more evident. This study aims to analyze the impact of tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements on the processes of social memory and

identity construction in the aftermath of the Hatay earthquake that occurred on February 6, 2023. Within the framework of Hatay's multicultural structure and historical layers, concepts such as post-disaster collective memory, space-identity relationship, and social resilience have been examined; the contributions of cultural heritage to social recovery beyond physical restoration have been evaluated with theoretical and practical examples. In this context, the study aims to develop recommendations for post-disaster cultural heritage management policies and to fill the gap in the literature through the case of Turkey.

In particular, the study aims to evaluate the impact of the Hatay earthquake on cultural heritage and the traces left by this impact on social memory. In this context, the roles that cultural heritage elements can play in the revitalization of social memory and the reconstruction of identity after the earthquake are examined. The research also aims to identify the strategies to be followed in the post-disaster period for the protection and management of cultural heritage and to reveal the policies and practices necessary to strengthen the role of cultural heritage in the process of social memory and identity construction. This comprehensive assessment aims to provide important contributions to both academic literature and policymakers. The findings of the study provide recommendations for the development of post-disaster cultural heritage management strategies and the planning of social recovery processes. In addition, this study aims to bring a new perspective to post-disaster cultural heritage studies in Turkey and to provide a basis for similar studies to be conducted in the future.

1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. The Relationship Between Cultural Heritage and Social Memory

The concept of cultural heritage refers to the totality of material and immaterial values that societies have inherited from the past. As Smith (2006: 11) states, cultural heritage is not only composed of physical assets but is also the carrier of social memory and identity. Assmann (1995: 125-133) emphasizes the role of cultural memory in sustaining social identity and explains how this memory is kept alive through tangible cultural heritage items.

Nora's (1989: 7-24) concept of 'sites of memory' provides an important theoretical framework for understanding the impact of cultural heritage on social memory. According to this approach, historical buildings, archaeological sites, and cultural landscape elements function as spaces where social memory is embodied and intergenerational transmission takes place. Harrison (2013: 18-22) examined the role of these places in the construction of social identity and emphasized that this role becomes more important, especially in times of crisis. Connerton (1989: 6-40), in his study titled 'How Societies Remember', examined how social memory is formed and maintained, and emphasized the role of tangible cultural heritage items in this process. Similarly, Lowenthal (1985: 185-259), in his work 'The Past is a Foreign Country', elaborated on the central role of cultural heritage in societies' relationship with the past.

The relationship between cultural heritage and social memory becomes more evident, especially after traumatic events. Holtorf (2007: 15) states that while societies go through difficult periods, cultural heritage elements function as a 'handle' that increases social resilience.

Halbwachs' (1992: 37-53) theory of collective memory is particularly important in this context. By emphasizing the relationship between social memory and physical spaces, Halbwachs theorized the role of cultural heritage in the maintenance of social identity. After disasters, not only tangible but also intangible cultural heritage elements play a role in social memory. Commemoration ceremonies and religious/cultural rituals are also effective in mobilizing social memory. While disasters damage memory, cultural heritage elements such as rituals offer a tool to restore social cohesion and preserve memory in the face of loss and trauma. Post-disaster rituals such as commemoration ceremonies and prayer gatherings provide survivors with a space for collective mourning, honoring the dead, and reflecting on shared experiences. For example, in the aftermath of the February 6, 2023 earthquake, ethnic communities in Hatay participated in various local rituals that helped them reconnect with their cultural heritage despite widespread devastation, and even reported returning to the city during ritual times and commemoration days just to attend these events, despite their forced displacement from the city after the earthquake. They stated that this temporary return to the city and participation in events kept their collective memory and identity alive, and that they believed that this common feeling and memory healed them (Oflozoğlu and Dora 2024). In the literature, it is possible to see these examples in different geographical and cultural communities.

The scope of the study focuses on finding answers to research questions such as: How does cultural heritage contribute to social memory and identity construction in the post-disaster process? What strategies can be developed for the protection and reconstruction of cultural heritage? What roles do tangible and intangible cultural heritage play in the social recovery process? In this context, the study evaluated the post-earthquake condition of Hatay's tangible and intangible cultural heritage through field research and expert opinions, conducted participant observation of various religious and cultural rituals to assess local communities' connections with cultural heritage and its contribution to recovery processes, and carried out discussions within the relevant theoretical framework by evaluating published reports from secondary data prepared after the earthquake.

1.2. Cultural Heritage and Social Identity Construction

Re-engaging with pre-existing social and cultural contexts is crucial to community recovery. While it is valuable to examine the impact of disaster and reconstruction on 'heritage sites' for the benefit of international heritage management practice, it is also crucial to better understand the meaningfully constituted places that make up cultural heritage in the context of post-disaster reconstruction. Local cultural heritage in communities, such as sites and places, are part of the fabric of everyday social life and elements of the landscape that people turn to in times of trauma and disorientation (Daly, Rahmayati 2012). The importance of culture and cultural heritage for dealing with situations such as possible social repair and recovery after a disaster is often underestimated. Post-crisis reconstruction and recovery processes should not aim to return to the pre-crisis situation, but to include improvements to reduce previous vulnerabilities. The role of culture and cultural heritage is not limited to recovery efforts after a crisis, but also helps to strengthen community or societal resilience in order to be better prepared in the event of a new crisis. Both tangible and intangible culture should be integrated as assets and resources to build a better structure (Garcia 2021). In this context, cultural

heritage (intangible and tangible) can be an important resource for local communities to cope with uncertainties and the future. Cultural heritage can be conceptualised as 'embedded local knowledge'. For example, many symbols such as flood warning stones, earthquake monuments, museums, etc. actually provide support to the community in terms of memory, space, and giving meaning to that space. Cultural heritage can help people to understand their past and recent past as a source of income and tourism as well as a source of local identity and belonging for societies experiencing disasters. In this context, cultural heritage has an important role in the formation and maintenance of cultural identities of societies.

The role of cultural heritage in the construction of social identity becomes even more pronounced in the context of the complex relationship between archaeological findings and social memory. Within the framework of this relationship Renfrew and Bahn (2016: 11-28) emphasise that archaeological finds function as material evidence of social memory and constitute a fundamental source in the process of identity construction. In this context, archaeological finds are not only objects of the past but also cultural reference points that shape the identities of contemporary societies. Mesckell (2002: 279-301), while examining the relationship of archaeological heritage with identity politics, draws attention to the potential of this heritage to ensure social integration, especially in times of crisis. Similarly, Hodder (2012: 32-58), in his study 'Entangled: An Archaeology of the Relationships between Humans and Things', discusses the transformative effect of material culture on social identity and memory.

Trigger (2006: 15-42), in his work 'A History of Archaeological Thought', examines the historical development of the role of archaeological finds in the construction of social identity. According to Trigger, archaeological finds are not only relics of the past but also cultural elements that play an active role in shaping contemporary social identities. Jones (2007: 44-67), in his study 'The Archaeology of Ethnicity', analyses in detail the role of archaeological finds in the formation of ethnic and cultural identity. Shanks and Tilley (1987: 83-117), in their study 'Social Theory and Archaeology', emphasise the critical importance of the interpretation of archaeological finds in the processes of social memory and identity construction. Especially in post-disaster periods, they draw attention to the role of archaeological finds in coping with social trauma and in the reconstruction of collective identity. Graves-Brown et al. (2013: 15-38), in 'The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of the Contemporary World', examine the relationship of contemporary societies with archaeological heritage. This study reveals the potential of archaeological heritage to increase social resilience and ensure identity continuity, especially in times of crisis. Furthermore, González-Ruibal (2019: 22-45), in his study 'An Archaeology of the Contemporary Era', emphasises the increasing importance of the role of archaeological finds in the construction of social memory and identity in modern societies.

1.3. Disasters and the Protection of Cultural Heritage

Protection of cultural heritage after disasters is a very important and controversial area. UNESCO (2015) has developed comprehensive strategies to mitigate the impacts of disasters on cultural heritage. These strategies aim not only at physical protection but also at the maintenance of social memory and identity. Jigyasu (2016: 1-15), while emphasising the importance of disaster risk management for cultural heritage, draws attention to the critical role

of risk reduction and preparedness phases. The ICOMOS (2019: 4-28) 'Risk Preparedness Guidelines for Cultural Heritage' report also emphasises the necessity of a holistic approach in the protection of cultural heritage against disasters. This report provides important principles on how traditional risk management approaches should be adapted to cultural heritage in particular. The World Bank's (2017: 15-42) 'Cultural Heritage and Disaster Resilience' report addresses the economic and social dimensions of cultural heritage in post-disaster recovery processes.

Many studies in the related literature also draw attention to this issue. For example, Shaw et al. (2008: 32-45) emphasise that local knowledge systems and cultural practices play an important role in increasing social resilience and the identity construction process after disasters. An important example supporting this view is the cultural heritage studies in the Kathmandu Valley after the 2015 Nepal earthquake. Tiwari (2016: 170-172) analysed the role of cultural heritage restoration in the social recovery process in Nepal after the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake and revealed that restoration works carried out with the participation of local communities were effective in strengthening social ties. In 'Risk Preparedness: A Management Manual for World Cultural Heritage', Stovel (1998: 7-22) developed a systematic approach for cultural heritage sites to be prepared against disasters. Jigyasu et al. (2013: 28-32), while emphasising the importance of implementing disaster risk management strategies in cultural heritage sites, drew attention to the critical role of risk reduction and preparedness phases. Of course, it is possible to increase these examples and studies, but within the scope of the study, the most appropriate ones for the structure of the region will be emphasised. Within this theoretical framework, in the next section, we will examine cultural heritage values in the context of urban memory and identity in the case of Antakya.

2. CULTURAL HERITAGE VALUES OF ANTAKYA IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN MEMORY AND IDENTITY

Antakya is one of the most important settlements of Anatolia in terms of historical continuity. Founded by Seleucus I in 300 BC, the city served as the capital of the Seleucid Kingdom, whose borders extended from Samarkand in the east to Sardis in the west, and during the Roman Empire, it became the administrative centre of the Syrian Province in the east and one of the three major metropolitan cities of the period (Pamir & Nishiyama, 2002: 298).

One of the most important features of the city, which constitutes its cultural heritage value, is its 'multi-layered' structure that contains the traces of different civilisations in the historical process. This structure reflects a rich stratification starting from the Hellenistic period to the Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods. Especially the monumental structures of the Roman period, the religious architecture of the Byzantine period, and the elements added to the urban fabric by the Islamic period (Umayyad, Seljuk, and Ottoman) constitute the unique historical layering of Antakya (Downey, 1961: 72-75). This multi-layered structure has left deep traces not only in the physical fabric of the city but also in its social and cultural life.

The Church of St. Pierre, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, stands out as one of the important centres of the early Christian period. In addition, the world-famous mosaic collection of the

Antakya Archaeological Museum contains the most important mosaic artefacts from the Roman period (UNESCO, 2015: 45-52). An important part of the physical heritage values of the city is the traditional urban texture. The city, which was established with regular urban planning on the flood plain between the western ridges of Habib Neccar Mountain and the Asi River, has a characteristic texture with its unique street system and building islands (insula) (Demir, 2004: 221-238). The backbone of Antakya's historically continuous street system is Herod Street, known as Kurtuluş Street today and Herod Street in Roman times.

Houses that have survived from the Ottoman period have an important place in the traditional urban fabric of Antakya. These houses generally exhibit an architectural character unique to Antakya with features such as an inward-oriented courtyard plan scheme, ground floor stone masonry, and upper floor mostly bagdadi wooden frame construction system (Rifaioğlu, 2012: 670-672). The cultural heritage value of Antakya does not only consist of physical structures. The city has a multicultural structure where different beliefs and cultures have lived together for centuries. An examination of 1929 cadastral plans reveals the diversity of foundations in the city: mosque foundations, church foundations, community foundations, family foundations, tekke-zawiye foundations, and foundations related to Alevi visits are important indicators of this diversity (Rifaioğlu & Şahin Güçhan, 2008: 4-5).

This multicultural social structure has also deeply affected the spatial organisation of the city. The centuries-long coexistence culture of different communities has been decisive in shaping the public spaces used in common. Especially the bazaar and trade districts stand out as important spaces where different communities interact, while social relations at the neighbourhood scale have been among the basic elements that form the unique character of the city. Dead-end streets of the city are also an important part of social life. These streets function as spaces that strengthen neighbourhood relations, strengthen social ties within the neighbourhood, and create common areas of use (Rifaioğlu, 2014: 961-962). The urban memory of Antakya exhibits a complex structure in which physical and social layers are intertwined. When evaluated through Nora's (1989: 7-24) concept of 'memory spaces', the city's historical buildings, archaeological sites, and cultural landscape elements function as spaces where social memory is embodied and intergenerational transmission takes place. This spatial continuity, as Assmann (1995: 125-133) states, plays a critical role in the construction and maintenance of social identity. Connerton (1989: 6-40) emphasises that the memory of societies is transmitted not only through written and oral traditions but also through spatial practices and rituals.

Lowenthal (1985: 185-259), while examining how the relationship with the past is established through physical space and the role of this relationship in the formation of urban identity, draws attention to the importance of stratification, especially in historical cities. In Antakya, as Harrison (2013: 14) states, this layering is not only a physical overlapping but also reflects the coexistence of social and cultural practices of different periods. The historical layers of Antakya reflect a rich cultural accumulation dating back to the foundation of the city in 300 BC. During this stratification process, as Kondoleon (2000: 146) states, the city was equipped with monumental structures such as the hippodrome with a capacity of 80 thousand people, the imperial palace, and the large-sized podium temple, especially during the Roman period. Herod

Street, which forms the spine of the urban fabric and is known as Kurtuluş Street today, is known to have been the most important public axis of the city with its colonnaded galleries and porticos dating from the Hellenistic Period to the Justinian Period, as documented by Lassus (1972).

Within the traditional texture of the city, especially the Ottoman period residential architecture exhibits a unique character with its courtyard plan typology and construction techniques. Demir's (2004: 221-238) research reveals that the distribution of these houses within the city and their relationship with the street texture reflect the social structure of the period. As Downey (1961: 78) states, the neighbourhoods formed in different periods in the city formed the spatial projections of the coexistence culture of ethnic and religious groups. As Maas (2000: 13) emphasises, this multi-layered structure enabled different communities to create their own living spaces in the city, while at the same time allowing them to come together in common public spaces. As Todt (2004: 171) points out in his research, the public spaces that developed especially around the bazaar and religious buildings functioned as spaces of interaction and cultural exchange between different communities.

Antakya's multi-layered cultural heritage has left deep traces not only on the physical fabric of the city but also on its social structure. As Harrison (2013: 14-22) points out, this multi-layered character of the city has been one of the main pillars of social resilience and cultural continuity, especially in times of crisis. The relationship between the buildings and spaces of different periods in the city is the result of a continuous process of transformation and adaptation, as Pinon (2004: 191-219) reveals in his research. As Rifaioğlu (2018: 161-175) emphasises in his studies, the traces of stratification in the traditional urban fabric show the changes the buildings have undergone over time and how they have transformed according to social needs. This transformation process gained a new dimension with the interventions made in the urban fabric, especially during the French Mandate Period, but did not completely change the historical character and multicultural structure of the city.

Pamir and Sezgin's (2016: 247-280) archaeological research reveals how the layers formed in different periods of the city were related to each other and how each period developed its own spatial practices. This layering process reflects not only a physical overlapping but also the coexistence of social and cultural practices of different periods. The preservation and sustainability of Antakya's multi-layered cultural heritage are of great importance for the city's future as well as its past. As emphasised in UNESCO's (2015) 'Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction in World Heritage Sites', the protection of cultural heritage should include not only the preservation of physical structures but also social and cultural sustainability. As Jigyasu (2016: 1-15) states, a holistic approach is required for the protection of cultural heritage, especially in historic cities at risk.

As Shaw and Ahmed (2010: 25-42) argue in their research, the preservation of cultural heritage plays a role in increasing social resilience and strengthening identity construction. In the case of Antakya, this conservation approach should take into account all components of the city's multi-layered structure. As stated in ICOMOS' (2019: 4-28) risk preparedness guidelines,

conservation strategies should include a holistic approach that combines traditional knowledge and local practices with modern conservation techniques.

Another important point for the sustainability of cultural heritage is the active participation of local communities in conservation processes, as Meskeel (2002: 279-301) emphasizes. The preservation of the multi-layered cultural heritage in Antakya is critical, especially for different ethnic and religious groups to preserve their own cultural values. In this context, as Holtorf (2007) argues, cultural heritage should not only be considered as relics of the past but as an active part of contemporary social life. At the same time, cultural heritage also ensures the preservation of social capital as an element that forms and sustains the collective identity of society (Assmann, 1995).

In the protection of the physical fabric of the city, the risk preparedness approach proposed by Stovel (1998: 7-22) gains importance. This approach envisages the development of preventive conservation strategies against the risks that may be encountered, especially in historical city centers. The World Bank's (2017: 15-42) studies on cultural heritage and disaster resilience emphasize that the economic and social dimensions of conservation planning should also be taken into consideration. Tiwari's (2016: 172-174) study on post-disaster cultural heritage restoration emphasizes the importance of collaboration between local governments, civil society organizations, and academic institutions. This collaborative approach has been particularly effective in preserving traditional construction techniques and craft knowledge in the post-earthquake restoration experience in Nepal. The research reveals the role of sustaining local knowledge systems and social practices in the conservation of cultural heritage, in order to pass it on to future generations as a living value.

In terms of current conservation approaches, a holistic management model needs to be developed for the preservation of Antakya's multi-layered cultural heritage. As Graves-Brown et al. (2013: 15-38) emphasize in their contemporary archaeology approach, the relationship of contemporary societies with archaeological and historical heritage has the potential to increase social resilience and ensure identity continuity, especially in times of crisis.

As González-Ruibal (2019: 22-45) notes, the role of archaeological finds and historical buildings in social memory and identity construction has become increasingly important in modern societies. In this context, strategies for preserving Antakya's cultural heritage should aim to sustain collective memory, aligning with Assmann's (1995: 125-133) theory of cultural memory. As Renfrew and Bahn (2016: 11-28) argue, it is crucial to preserve not only the physical presence of archaeological finds and historical buildings but also their role in social life. Shanks and Tilley (1987: 83-117) emphasize that the interpretation and presentation of archaeological heritage play a critical role in the processes of social memory and identity construction.

The challenges in preserving Antakya's multilayered cultural heritage and their proposed solutions take on a particularly striking dimension at the urban scale. As Jones (2007: 44-67) points out, preserving cultural and ethnic identity in historic cities is as important as physical

preservation. In this context, Antakya's main challenges arise from the coexistence of buildings from different periods and their adaptation to contemporary needs.

As Trigger (2006: 15-42) emphasizes in his study on the historical development of archaeological thought, preserving and integrating urban archaeological sites into contemporary life is a complex process. In Antakya's case, this complexity is heightened by the need to preserve the city's layers, from the Roman period through the Ottoman period. Harrison (2013: 14-22) notes that conservation work in such historic cities should be conducted in harmony with local communities' daily life practices.

As Hodder (2012: 32-58) emphasizes in "The Archaeology of the Relations between People and Things," one of the most significant practical challenges is maintaining the complex relationship between material culture items and social life. In this context, preserving traditional buildings' original values while adapting them to contemporary needs emerges as a crucial challenge. In light of this information presented about Antakya's multi-layered cultural heritage, we can now proceed to evaluate the damage sustained by this heritage and its current status following the February 6, 2023 earthquake.

2.1. Assessment of Tangible/Intangible Cultural Heritage Status After the Earthquake

The Mw 7.7 and Mw 7.6 earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş on February 6, 2023, followed by the Mw 6.4 and Mw 5.8 earthquakes centered in Hatay on February 20, 2023, caused irreversible damage to Hatay's rich cultural heritage. Among Antakya's 150 archaeological sites, 5 natural sites, and 1 urban site, many buildings comprising the city's historical fabric were either completely destroyed or severely damaged. The retaining wall of St. Pierre Church, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, collapsed, and cracks in its walls threatened the building's stability. The world-renowned mosaic collection and exhibition halls of the Antakya Archaeology Museum were also affected, rendering portions of the museum unusable.

Religious buildings throughout the city suffered significant damage. The dome and walls of the Habib-i Neccar Mosque, one of Anatolia's oldest mosques, collapsed. The historic Sarımiye Mosque lost its minaret, while the nearby Antakya Synagogue and Antakya Turkish Catholic Church were completely destroyed. The Greek Orthodox Church of Saints Peter and Paul in Antakya was largely destroyed, and the Great Mosque on the banks of the Asi River was completely demolished. In Iskenderun, the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas was partially destroyed by the earthquake and subsequent fire, while the Armenian Church of Karasun Mangants sustained significant damage. These losses have jeopardized the sustainability of religious buildings that symbolize the city's multicultural structure.

The city's administrative and public buildings were also severely impacted. The building constructed in 1927, which served as the parliament building of the Hatay State in 1938-1939 and later as a cultural center, collapsed entirely. The February 20 earthquake caused the collapse of the Hatay Governor's Office building, while the Antakya Post Office building, Antakya High School, the old municipality building, and the historic Hatay Handicrafts Exhibition and Sales Center all sustained significant damage.

Antakya's characteristic street pattern and its historical buildings suffered extensive destruction. Most of the narrow streets, dead-end alleys, and traditional courtyard houses were either destroyed or damaged beyond repair. The courtyard houses, which symbolized the introverted life culture, were particularly significant as they reflected the city's unique architectural character. Their loss represents not only physical destruction but also the erasure of the spatial framework that supported centuries-old lifestyle patterns and neighborhood relations.

The earthquake also affected the city's archaeological layers, dating from the Hellenistic period to the present day. The damage or destruction of buildings constructed atop ancient ruins caused additional harm to these archaeological layers. This situation poses serious challenges for preserving the city's multi-layered structure, which developed through historical continuity. Assessing these damages reveals the need for a holistic approach to reconstructing and conserving Antakya's cultural heritage. Conservation and renovation strategies must be developed with careful consideration of the interrelationship between the city's tangible and intangible cultural heritage values.

The February 6, 2023 earthquake in Hatay profoundly impacted the region's rich cultural heritage, affecting both tangible and intangible elements. Beyond the physical destruction, intangible cultural heritage values hold critical importance for preserving social memory, identity, and collective memory. Intangible cultural heritage encompasses a society's oral traditions, rituals, music, dance, festivals, and traditional knowledge. These elements help communities maintain their identity and sense of belonging while playing a vital role in post-disaster recovery processes. For Hatay, protecting and revitalizing these intangible heritage elements in the earthquake's aftermath is crucial for enhancing social resilience and rebuilding collective identity. Throughout history, Hatay has hosted various civilizations, developing a multicultural character that has shaped the region's intangible cultural heritage. The coexistence practices of different ethnic and religious groups, shared rituals, religious festivals, traditional music, and dances are integral to Hatay's cultural fabric. However, the earthquake has created a severe rupture threatening the transmission and sustainability of these heritage elements. The trauma, displacement, and weakening of social networks experienced by local communities particularly challenge the transmission of these cultural practices to future generations.

In this context, preserving and revitalizing intangible cultural heritage in post-earthquake Hatay represents a critical step not only for preserving cultural values but also for accelerating social recovery. For instance, the revival of traditional rituals and festivals by local people can strengthen social bonds and support post-traumatic psychological recovery. Additionally, oral traditions and traditional knowledge can enable local communities to develop solutions based on their own resources during post-disaster reconstruction.

However, preserving and sustaining intangible cultural heritage poses significant challenges in post-disaster contexts. The displacement of local communities, fragmentation of social networks, and declining interest among younger generations are primary factors hindering heritage transmission. Therefore, comprehensive strategies for preserving intangible cultural heritage must be developed in the earthquake's aftermath. These strategies should ensure local

communities' active participation and include steps such as documenting traditional knowledge, transferring it to younger generations through educational programs, and revitalizing cultural practices.

In conclusion, preserving and revitalizing intangible cultural heritage values following the Hatay earthquake is crucial for social recovery and identity construction processes. This effort is critical not only for preserving cultural values but also for enhancing local communities' resilience and maintaining collective memory. Therefore, holistic and participatory approaches should be adopted for protecting intangible cultural heritage in the post-disaster period, ensuring these values are transmitted to future generations. Considering the identified damage and losses, examining the role of cultural heritage in the social recovery process becomes increasingly important.

3. THE ROLE OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE SOCIAL RECOVERY PROCESS

When cities become repositories of memories, they facilitate the reproduction of urban memory that is both recalled and imbued with specific meaning. This cycle repeats and transfers through time via the forgetting/remembering dichotomy, enabling the continuous accumulation of urban memory. However, urban destruction can interrupt this process, causing either a discontinuity in urban memory or altering its trajectory to become the source of an entirely different historiography (Boyer, 1994: 186-190). In Hatay's case, this context heightens the significance of cultural heritage in the post-earthquake social recovery process.

Cultural heritage's role in Hatay's post-earthquake social recovery can be evaluated through Harrison's (2013: 14-22) concept of "the anchor function of cultural heritage in times of crisis." Harrison argues that during crises, societies view cultural heritage not merely as physical assets but as guarantors of social continuity and identity. In Hatay, cultural heritage elements such as the Long Bazaar, religious buildings, and traditional housing fabric that constitute the city's historical texture serve as tangible reference points, enabling residents to maintain connections with their past while preserving hope for the future. These structures, which spatially embody centuries of multicomunal coexistence, are essential for reconstructing social memory. As Harrison emphasizes, cultural heritage elements function as "handholds" during crises, allowing societies to redefine and strengthen their identities and values. Thus, Hatay's cultural heritage serves as a crucial fulcrum enabling residents to maintain their connection to a shared past while creating a collective vision for the future during the post-earthquake social recovery process.

Smith's (2006: 11) approach, defining cultural heritage as "the carrier of social values and practices," provides a guiding framework for Hatay's post-earthquake social recovery process. Smith argues that cultural heritage not only embodies and transmits societal identities and values across generations but also serves as a dynamic process through which social practices and relations are reproduced. In this context, revitalizing Hatay's multicultural structure requires both the restoration of physical structures and the reconstruction of social relations and practices sustained through them. This approach gains additional significance when considered alongside Nora's (1989: 7-24) concept of "spaces of memory." According to Nora,

memory sites are places where social memory and identity crystallize and materialize. In Hatay, the historical bazaar and places of worship, shared by diverse ethnic and religious groups for centuries, exemplify these memory spaces. Their restoration and revitalization represent not merely physical improvement but a fundamental aspect of reconstructing social memory and identity, as these spaces embody "living memory" that reflects and sustains different communities' coexistence culture, commercial relations, social interactions, and shared values.

When examined through these theoretical approaches, the protection and management of Hatay's cultural heritage assumes multidimensional significance. Particularly in the post-earthquake period, cultural heritage protection should extend beyond physical restoration. This process encompasses revitalizing the urban spirit and collective living practices that have emerged from centuries of interaction among different civilizations, beliefs, and cultures.

The city's multi-layered cultural heritage serves as the foundation for social healing and urban identity reconstruction. Cultural heritage protection and management should therefore be approached as a process that strengthens residents' connections to their shared past, nurtures future aspirations, and enhances social solidarity. The revitalization of historical buildings and areas, which spatially represent different communities' coexistence culture, is particularly crucial for sustaining urban identity.

This perspective demonstrates that cultural heritage protection in the post-earthquake reconstruction process transcends technical considerations to become a fundamental component of social recovery and resilience. Consequently, protecting and managing Hatay's cultural heritage demands a holistic approach that extends beyond the city's physical fabric to encompass the reconstruction of social memory, identity, and coexistence culture.

Cultural heritage functions as a vital catalyst for post-disaster recovery. According to UNESCO's 2008 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, cultural heritage provides a source of resilience and pride that enables communities to unite during difficult times. Following disasters, intangible heritage elements such as oral traditions, traditional knowledge, and rituals play a crucial role in rebuilding social structures and psychological well-being. These practices strengthen social cohesion while creating a sense of continuity that helps disaster survivors cope with trauma and loss. Beyond physical destruction, disasters inflict deep psychological impacts on individuals and communities. By maintaining connections to cultural heritage during crises, communities can mitigate their sense of loss and support psychological recovery (Holtorf, 2007).

The concept of social resilience is crucial for understanding cultural heritage's role in disaster victims' recovery process. Cultural heritage can enhance psychological resilience by providing individuals with a sense of belonging through memory and identity. Following the February 6, 2023 earthquake, Hatay's communities employed centuries-old religious and cultural rituals to maintain continuity and process their losses. These rituals prove essential for addressing collective trauma and strengthening community consciousness.

A comparable example emerged after the 2008 Sichuan earthquake in China, where local communities utilized traditional rituals and cultural practices to contribute to both physical and

emotional rebuilding. Specifically, long-standing rituals such as ancestor worship enabled disaster victims to commemorate lost loved ones and reconnect with their cultural roots. Such practices strengthened communities' ties to the past while helping them develop a new sense of collective resilience. The region's rich cultural diversity, including its distinctive traditions and rituals, served as the foundation for local recovery. Despite significant material losses, Hatay's communities have maintained traditional rituals and practices that help preserve their identity and reaffirm their sense of belonging (Oflozoğlu and Dora, 2024).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this study, firstly, the theoretical relationship between cultural heritage and social memory was examined, and the role of cultural heritage in identity construction was revealed. The effects of disasters on cultural heritage and protection strategies were evaluated. In the specific case of Antakya, the multi-layered structure of the city and the function of its cultural heritage in the formation of urban memory and identity were assessed. The status of tangible and intangible cultural heritage elements after the February 6, 2023 earthquake was examined, and the role of cultural heritage in the social recovery process was demonstrated. The February 6 earthquake profoundly impacted the city's unique cultural heritage, causing significant damage to the multi-layered urban fabric developed over centuries. This study's findings demonstrate that cultural heritage protection and management are critical for post-disaster social recovery. The tangible elements of Antakya's millennia-old historical accumulation constitute the foundational pillars of urban identity and social memory. Historical buildings and spaces that reflect the coexistence of different civilizations, beliefs, and cultures hold particular potential for strengthening social integration and solidarity. Effectively utilizing this potential in the post-earthquake period is crucial for sustaining urban identity and ensuring social recovery.

The protection and management of the city's multilayered cultural heritage should be viewed not merely as physical restoration but as a fundamental component of reconstructing social memory and identity. The restoration and revitalization of cultural heritage sites should ensure local community participation and facilitate the continuation of traditional living practices. Future studies should focus on developing post-disaster cultural heritage management strategies and examining cultural heritage's role in social recovery processes in greater detail. Investigating cultural heritage's function in enhancing social resilience and creating sustainable conservation models is particularly important in multicultural cities.

Global examples offer valuable insights into post-disaster cultural heritage protection and revitalization. The 9.0-magnitude earthquake off Japan's Tohoku region's Pacific coast on March 11, 2011, and the subsequent tsunami provide important lessons for cultural heritage management (Suppasri et al., 2013: 993-1018; Güler et al., 2018: 8605-8630). This disaster claimed approximately 20,000 lives and destroyed or partially damaged 128,530 single or low-rise buildings, 230,332 multi-storey buildings, and 78 bridges (Mori et al., 2012). Japanese society has consciously constructed numerous museums, exhibitions, and monuments in the disaster area, incorporating debris and symbols, and opened these spaces to visitors. For instance, the "Great East Earthquake Memorial" in Sendai depicts the losses through the

metaphor of a seed, while a sprouting flower symbolizes rebirth. This approach could serve as a valuable model for preserving Hatay's cultural heritage and maintaining social memory.

The conservation and management of Hatay's cultural heritage are essential for maintaining urban identity and social memory. Beyond physical restoration, this process's success will depend on social participation and cultural value preservation. The city's future rests on the strength of its connections to its past and the sustainability of its cultural heritage.

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Cultural heritage represents a crucial element reflecting society's identity, history, and collective memory. Disasters can negatively affect social memory and identity through cultural heritage loss, beyond causing physical destruction. The February 6, 2023 earthquake in Hatay inflicted massive destruction on the region's historical buildings, religious sites, and cultural fabric. In this context, cultural heritage protection and reconstruction play critical roles in the social recovery process. This study examines how cultural heritage can be preserved and social memory rebuilt after a disaster.

The earthquake has not only caused physical damage to the tangible cultural heritage of Hatay but has also disrupted the social fabric and the intangible cultural practices that have been passed down through generations. The loss of historical buildings, traditional neighborhoods, and public spaces has left a profound impact on the collective memory and identity of the local communities. In the face of such devastation, the question of how to protect and revitalize cultural heritage becomes paramount for the social recovery and resilience of the affected population.

Research Question and Objective

This research evaluates cultural heritage's effects on social memory and identity following the Hatay earthquake. The study addresses the following questions:

How does cultural heritage contribute to social memory and identity construction after disaster?

What strategies can be developed for cultural heritage protection and reconstruction?

What roles do tangible and intangible cultural heritage play in social recovery?

How can cultural heritage's impact on post-disaster social resilience be measured?

The study aims to reveal how cultural heritage can serve as a tool in post-disaster processes from theoretical and practical perspectives. Specifically, it examines cultural heritage's role in strengthening social solidarity and preserving collective memory in Hatay's case.

Literature Review

Academic studies on post-disaster cultural heritage protection demonstrate that cultural heritage extends beyond historical buildings to encompass social memory and identity (Smith,

2006). While Assmann (1995) emphasized collective memory's role in social identity construction, Nora (1989) addressed cultural heritage's importance for memory sustainability through the concept of "memory spaces." International organizations such as UNESCO (2015) and ICOMOS (2019) have developed post-disaster cultural heritage protection strategies. Restoration efforts, particularly after the 2015 Nepal earthquake and 2011 Japan tsunami, proved critical for communities rebuilding their identities (Tiwari, 2016). However, studies on post-disaster cultural heritage management in the Turkish context remain limited. This research addresses this gap through Hatay's case study.

The literature review highlights the multifaceted nature of cultural heritage and its significance in post-disaster contexts. It goes beyond the mere protection of physical structures and encompasses the social and psychological dimensions of recovery. The concept of "memory spaces" (Nora, 1989) is particularly relevant in understanding how cultural heritage sites function as anchors for collective memory and identity. The international guidelines and case studies provide valuable insights into the strategies and approaches for safeguarding cultural heritage in the aftermath of disasters.

Methodology

This research employs qualitative research methodology. Data collection involved analyzing field observations, published reports, and academic studies. Additionally, participant observation methods assessed local communities' cultural heritage connections and their contribution to recovery processes.

The research specifically evaluated post-earthquake conditions of Hatay's tangible and intangible cultural heritage through field research and expert opinions. The analysis encompassed tangible heritage (religious buildings, historical buildings, and public spaces) and intangible heritage (rituals, traditions, and practices constituting social memory).

The methodology section outlines the comprehensive approach taken in this study to assess the impact of the earthquake on Hatay's cultural heritage and its role in social recovery. The combination of field observations, participant observation, and expert opinions allows for a nuanced understanding of the complex interplay between tangible and intangible heritage in the post-disaster context. By examining both the physical damage to historical sites and the disruption of cultural practices, the study aims to provide a holistic picture of the challenges and opportunities for cultural heritage protection and revitalization.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Research findings demonstrate that cultural heritage plays a vital role in post-disaster recovery. Cultural heritage extends beyond physical assets to function as an element that facilitates psychological and social recovery processes by preserving communities' collective memory. In Hatay's case, preserving heritage shared across different ethnic and religious groups emerged as a crucial factor supporting community recovery. Post-disaster cultural heritage conservation transcends the mere rebuilding of historical buildings. It demands a holistic approach encompassing the reconstruction of social memory, preservation of identity, and

enhancement of community resilience. As evidenced by the Hatay earthquake, sustainable cultural heritage management should be recognized as a key component of social recovery.

The conclusion and recommendations underscore the central role of cultural heritage in post-disaster recovery processes. The findings suggest that cultural heritage is not merely a passive victim of disasters but an active agent in rebuilding social cohesion and resilience. The case of Hatay highlights the importance of preserving the shared heritage of diverse communities as a unifying force in times of crisis. The recommendations call for a comprehensive approach to cultural heritage conservation that goes beyond physical restoration to include the revitalization of social practices and the strengthening of community bonds. By integrating cultural heritage into post-disaster recovery strategies, policymakers and practitioners can harness its potential for fostering social healing and identity reconstruction.

Çıkar Çatışması Bildirimi/ Conflict of Interest Statement:

Yazar, bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanmasına ilişkin herhangi bir potansiyel çıkar çatışması beyan etmemiştir. / The authors declared no potential conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Destek/Finansman Bilgileri/ Support Financing Information:

Yazar, bu makalenin araştırılması, yazarlığı ve yayımlanması için herhangi bir finansal destek almamıştır. / The authors have received no financial support for the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

Etik Kurul Kararı/ Ethics Committee Decision: Etik kurul gerektiren bir çalışma değildir. / Ethics committee pieces are not a study.

Yazar Katkı Oranı/ Author Contribution Rate: Yazarların katkı oranı eşittir. / The contribution rates of all authors are equal.

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