

Parameters for remaking home interiors in forced migration: An example of Syrians living in Sultanbeyli

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Abstract

Since March 2011, Turkey has hosted millions of Syrians, who have been subjected to forced migration due to the civil war and conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic. Most Syrians living in Turkey have settled in disadvantaged areas of big cities, such as shantytowns or slums. This study focuses on displaced Syrians living in the district of Sultanbeyli, which is an old slum area that hosts the highest number of Syrians on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, and discusses Syrians' homemaking process for home interiors. The aim of this study is to reveal the parameters for Syrian's remaking home interiors. The case study was conducted in the home environments of 18 Syrian families belonging to middle- or low-income groups who voluntarily participated. Data were collected using visual and ethnographic methods. Photographs, drawings, mapping, and annotated diagrams were used in the analysis of visual data, and content analysis was used for interview questions. Thus, the data were obtained regarding family structure, lifestyle, activities, spatial organization, furniture layout, needs, preferences, choices, and desires for home interiors. The results revealed that cultural, social, behavioral, psychological, spatial, aesthetic, symbolic, and economic parameters play an important role in the process of remaking home interiors for displaced Syrians. The study will expand the sharing of knowledge and experience for future studies in terms of rethinking the design, meaning, and use of home in forced migration. It will also contribute to the literature with a case study from Turkey.

Keywords

Forced migration, Homemaking, Interiors, Parameter, Syrians.

1. Introduction

Due to the civil war and conflict that started in the Syrian Arab Republic in March 2011, millions of Syrians were exposed to forced migration and took refuge mostly in neighboring countries, such as Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan (Cordan & Özcan Aktan 2021; Benz & Hasenclever, 2011). This migration wave is considered the largest mass migration since World War II (Yenilmez, 2017). Turkey, which has the longest border, with 911 km among the neighboring countries to Syria, hosts more than 3.2 million Syrians [1], according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR, 2024).

Instead of accommodating in refugee centers or camps, approximately 98.5% of Syrians who took refuge in Turkey live in urban and rural areas (Directorate General of Migration Management [DGMM], 2024). Therefore, one of the main problems for Syrians on a macro and micro scale is housing (Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2022). Most Syrians living in Turkey, depending on their income level, live in settlements that have been transformed from suburban areas in big cities, such as Istanbul, or in areas that have the characteristics of slums (Kılıçaslan, 2016). Immigrants/refugees try to maintain social, cultural, emotional, and spatial practices related to their previous lives in relocation (Kaya Altay, 2021). The place where these practices are easily observed is the home environment, specifically home interiors.

Due to the lack of studies regarding displaced Syrians' homemaking process in relocation, we focus on the remaking home interiors on a micro-scale and aim to search for the parameters in the process of remaking home for displaced Syrians who belong to the lower- and middle-income groups living in Turkey. The study seeks answers to these questions: How is remaking home in the case of forced migration? What are the parameters in Syrian's process of remaking home interiors? Sultanbeyli, the district on the Anatolian side of Istanbul, was determined as the field study area. According to information provided by the

Syrian Coordination Center (SUKOM) Database in 2017, the number of Syrians living in Sultanbeyli was 22.083 (SUKOM, 2024). The participants consisted of 45 adults from 18 volunteer Syrian families. Data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted using visual and ethnographic methods in the living environments of Syrian families.

To this end, the study begins with a literature review of the research subject. The methodology details the case study setting, study participants and procedures, and materials and methods; the results are based on the outcomes of the obtained visual and ethnographic data analyses; the discussion interprets the results for determining parameters for remaking the home interiors of Syrian families; and the conclusion includes the main conclusions and findings of the study and states the limitations, implications, and future remarks. In this sense, this study fills the gap in the literature for displaced Syrians' remaking home interiors and contributes to the body of knowledge for interior architecture and design.

2. Literature review

While house describes a physical space, a home is a multidimensional structure, a tangible and intangible phenomenon, and a set of relationships with many meanings. In this respect, the home is a place that meet the changing needs of inhabitants in time. In other words, home, in a constant making process (Dayanatre & Kellett, 2008), "needs renewals, alterations, and (re)creations" (Bilecen, 2017, 79). Beyond being a place where daily life activities are carried out, the home is a meaningful place related to culture, identities, and traditions (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002). While Boccagni and Brighenti (2017) and Zalloom (2019) stated the symbolic meaning of home, Saegert (1985) pointed out the psychological and social aspects of home. Bora (2009) defined home as an "inner" that can be traced throughout the culture and that defines the person against the "outside" and shapes him/her. Home also defines the boundaries/territories of living space for providing privacy, which is crucial for religious,

cultural, and personal domestic practices (Willems et al., 2020). Thus, the home provides a protected zone to meet the various individual and collective needs of people (Tüzün, 2002). In other words, the home is a safe place that protects people from the outside world and enables social protection (Bilecen, 2017).

However, the meaning of home is redefined in the case of forced migration and unwilling displacement. The loss of home and homeland, which is a “traumatic experience” (Greene et al., 2011, 403) for forced migrants, is related to the loss of property, goods, income, daily life practices, solidarity networks, and self-identity. Pala (2015) emphasized that the home is a place of existence in forced migration. Liu (2014) defined the home as a place where complex interactions between previous and present living environments and conditions occur in forced migration. As Taylor (2015) stated, remaking home in forced migration is a multi-layered and complex process. In this sense, home turns into a place where one lives both here (new land) and there (homeland) (Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017) and where past experiences and life are effective (Kissoon, 2015). This includes the reproduction of some features of the original home perception (Fadlalla, 2011) and, as Bilecen (2017) emphasized, transcultural homemaking practices. In this sense, the remaking home in relocation refers to the process of reproduction of the previous living space left behind, the memories, imaginations, and meanings it evokes. It also enables reproduction of relations (Bilecen, 2017) according to belief, age, gender, and roles. Home is the concrete indicator of culture. As Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2016) and Rapoport (2005) emphasized that culture gives important clues in terms of spatial use, religious belief, way of life, family structure, etc. Wang (2006) emphasized the psychological aspect of the home and stated that the home is a “*subjective construct*” (28) associated with emotions, attachments, and commitments. Remaking a home is also related to owning a home (Bilecen, 2017). Due to forced migration, people mostly lose their homes

and being tenants in relocation and have less income. This situation also affects the homemaking practices (Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2022). When people do not have their own property and do not create their own environment, the mobile elements can be used to express personality, meaning, ethnic, and other group identity, and status. As Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2016, 24) stated that

“Homemaking involves personalization of space with meaningful objects...”

In this respect, objects (furniture, belongings, and decorative objects and items) help to recall the previous lives and identities of immigrants (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2009) and respond psychological needs (Sweat, 2018). Bilecen (2017) also emphasized that previous life and homeland are recalled through various objects brought from the homeland or acquired in the newly settled place and enabled symbolic construction of them. The furniture, furnishing, and decorative objects also help personalization (Glusac, 2015) and beautification of home to tastes and culture of people (Boccagni, 2022).

In the case of forced migration, the spatial organization of the home also gives important clues about spatial use, culture, furniture, furnishing, family structure, lifestyle, relations, roles, routines, social and behavioral codes, activities, choices and preferences of inhabitants, and determines the dimensions/parameters that are important in remaking the home. Lawrence (1987) defined the dimensions that deal with the use, meaning, and design of home interiors in three main categories: cultural, sociodemographic, and psychologic. While Israel (2003) focused on homemaking dimensions as physical, psychological, social, and aesthetic (beauty, etc.). Turgut (2003), on the other hand, considers sociocultural, behavioral, and spatial factors in homemaking. In this context, when the dimensions/factors that make the homemaking are truly examined, we can conclude that the *cultural, social, behavioral, psychological, spatial, aesthetic, symbolic, and economic* parameters are important in the remaking home and interiors (Figure 1).

3. Methods

We aim to search for the aforementioned parameters in the process of remaking the home interiors of displaced Syrians living in Turkey. The study, which has limitations due to the small geographical area and language barrier, is a qualitative case study conducted in the Sultanbeyli district of Istanbul. The data was acquired through field study through visual and ethnographic methods and techniques [2].

3.1. Setting

The number of Syrians living in Istanbul's disadvantaged districts in terms of quality of life is higher than that living in other districts. The reasons why Sultanbeyli is preferred by Syrians for living are as follows: the activities and services provided by Sultanbeyli Municipality and Sultanbeyli Refugees and Asylum Seekers Assistance and Solidarity Association, such as education, health, and employment; the similarities between Syrians and local people in terms of income level, religious affiliation, culture, and lifestyle; the existence of mutual trade and neighborly relations between both parties; and maintaining a harmonious life between Syrians and local people. The majority of Syrians from lower- and middle-income groups lived in the Fatih neighborhood (Kavas et al., 2019). According to information provided by the Syrian Coordination Center (SUKOM) Database in 2017, Syrians generally settled in the area between Seyhan and Şalgamlı Streets within the borders of Fatih neighborhood, and thus, the scope of the field study was limited to this region (Figure 2). Sultanbeyli has an urban texture consisting of 3–5-story buildings, the study is also limited to apartments where Syrians live dispersedly or collectively.

3.2. Study participants and procedures

Although definitions of family differ throughout the literature, home is mainly associated with “family life” (Hayward, 1975, 9). Therefore, the study participants consisted of Syrian families living in a nuclear or extended

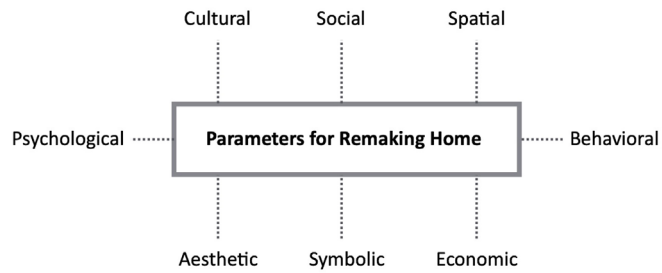


Figure 1. Diagrammatic representation of parameters.

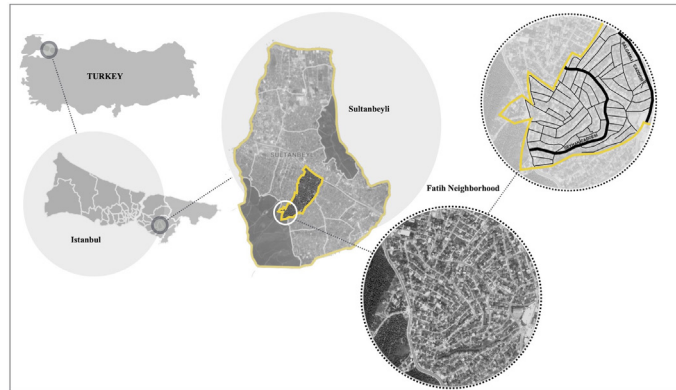


Figure 2. The field study area within the borders of the Fatih neighborhood in Sultanbeyli.

family structure. Syrian families were chosen from the SUKOM database. In the study, national and international research ethics were complied with, and ethics committee and legal permission documents were obtained from the relevant authorities. During this process, all 63 Syrian families living in this neighborhood were contacted by a native translator and informed of the purpose of the study (Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2022). Additionally, 45 adults (i.e., two or three members over 18 years old from each family) from 18 Syrian families who agreed to voluntarily participate in the study and were mostly from rural areas of Aleppo signed a consent form prepared in Arabic and Turkish for the field study. The sample size of the study was ensured research saturation without requiring new/additional data (Guest et al., 2006). The observations and interviews occurred and carried out in the participants' home environments, lasted approximately three hours in two rounds of visits in 2019. A clinical psychologist was included in the research team consisting of 2 or 3 people to find good ways to establish a

Table 1. Methods and techniques for data collection and evaluation.

T1		Techniques	Aim	Mode	Recording Devices
Research Methods	Data Collecting	Visual Methods	Visualization	Showing family composition, drawing schematic house plans, and showing spatial use, activities, and furniture placements on the plans	Observation . Schematic drawings . Field notes
			Physical Traces	Observing and recording physical traces	Observation . Photo shooting . Schematic drawings . Field notes
		Ethnographic Methods	Interviews	Spending time with the participating families, recording personal stories, and getting more detailed and in-depth information	In person . Schematic drawings . Field notes
			Observation	Observing and recording activities, behaviors, relationships, and roles performed in the daily living area	Observation/ Participant observer . Photo shooting . Schematic drawings . Field notes
	Data Analysis	Visualization	Diagram	Analyzing visual data on family composition, plan type, spatial use, and furniture placement	Grouping . Diagram
			Annotated Diagram	Grouping, visualizing, and analyzing physical traces	Grouping . Annotated Diagram
		Coding Categorization	Content Analysis	Coding, categorizing, and interpreting answers to interview questions	Grouping . Excel sheet
		Visualization	Mapping	Visualizing and analyzing activities, behaviors, relationships, and roles performed in the living space	Grouping . Annotated Diagram

dialogue between the researchers and the participants, and the field studies were carried out under the supervision of a clinical psychologist. Furthermore, with the assistance of a female Syrian translator provided by Sultanbeyli Municipality, we conducted the field studies in Arabic with Syrian families in order to resolve language barriers, foster effective communication, and collect adequate data. The interview questions were translated into Arabic. To protect personal privacy, we filtered visual data (photos), and did not take audio and video recordings. We kept the names and full addresses of family members confidential and coded each family using the created coding system.

3.3. Materials and instruments

We collected the data through multiple data collection methods; thus, the visual and ethnographic methods and techniques were used to ensure the

reliability and validity of the obtained data. Sanoff (2016) was used for recording and analyzing visual data through photographs, schematic drawings, and diagrams. While Zeisel (2006) was used for structuring the interview questions, Creswell (2006) was used for ethnographic field studies to obtain data for a certain culture. The physical traces seen on all surfaces (walls, ceilings, floors) in the house were photographed. The visual methods used in the field study included family composition, housing plans, use of space, activities, furniture placement on the plan, and field notes. The obtained data were analyzed using the annotated diagram.

Within the scope of ethnographic methods, data were collected through interviews and participant observation techniques. The structured and semi-structured interview questions were prepared for the interviews. Thus, the data were collected from Syrian families regarding 'reasons for choosing Sultanbeyli and current residence,' 'meaning of home,' feelings about new home and its environment,' 'needs and deficiencies in the new home,' 'adaptations of new home depending on the living habits and culture,' 'mementos, furniture, equipment, and objects brought from Syria and/or acquired for new home,' and 'mementos, furniture, equipment, and objects longed for in new home.' The answers to interview questions were grouped according to the appropriate coding categories manually and analyzed by content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The observations were made in the daily living rooms of Syrian families. We, as researchers, were "recognized outsider[s]" (Zeisel, 2006, 197) in this observation. To record the behaviors, the living room of Syrian families was drawn on the schematic plans, and the positions of the researchers and family members were determined on the plan. Thus, activities, behaviors, roles, and relationships were grouped and analyzed using the mapping techniques (Table 1).

4. Results

The study results obtained through visual and ethnographic data analysis support each other. Thus, the results revealed indoor use, activities, cultural

habits, behavioral patterns, family structure, roles, relationships, personal or collective taste, pleasure, choices, and needs in the scope of 'spatial use,' 'the surface use,' and 'furnishing' (furniture, objects, kitchen utensils, decorative items), i.e., adaptations and alterations according to the needs.

4.1. Results for visual data

According to the obtained data, 10 of the Syrian families had an extended family, seven had a nuclear family, and one had a several (nuclear) families [3]. Eleven of the visited houses had an entrance hall plan type [4], and seven of them plan type with a corridor. The daily living room was a place where all family members gathered and socialized. This room is used for many activities, such as hosting guests, sitting, studying, playing, eating, resting, and sleeping. Most families used a ground cushion for sitting and a floor mattress for sleeping. The use of a floor mattress in the living room for sitting, working, eating, smoking a hookah and in bedrooms for sleeping was a common cultural influence in use (Figure 3). While floor mattresses were stacked during the day and mostly used in bedrooms at night, floor cushions were not stacked. Meals were eaten at a low table in the daily living room. Although a dining table was found in the kitchen, this table was mostly used for the children's desks and/or for preparing food instead of eating. The kitchen was used for cooking and storage (Figure 4). The use of bedrooms depended on gender, relations, and privacy. While parents mostly have their own bedrooms, the boys and girls in the house sleep in separate bedrooms. If there are elderly people at home, they mostly sleep in the living room (Figure 5). If the bathroom and toilet spaces were located in the same space, they were separated with curtains. It was also common to use curtains to separate the private areas of the residences (bedrooms) from the public spaces (living room, entrance hall, etc.). Another common example of adaptation was painting the glazed surfaces of windows and doors or covering them with a film layer. The use of the balcony, the entrance



Figure 3. The multifunctional and day and night use of the living room for different daily routines and activities.



Figure 4. The use of kitchen for cooking and storage.

Family Code	Family Composition	Plan Type	Daily Living Room	Eating Area	Sleeping Room	Use of Ground Cushion and Floor Mattress in Space
2201MA	Extended family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3101FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3102FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3103FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3104FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3105FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3106FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3107FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3108FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3109FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC
3110FA	Nuclear family	EH	LD	EA	SR	UC

Figure 5. The family composition, plan type, and spatial use of Syrian's families.

hall, and the front of the house on the ground floors was also adapted according to Syrian families' needs (Figure 6). Balconies and suitable areas in the outdoor and indoor spaces of the house were used both for socializing and for storage. Some of the furniture was also used for storage (using the display cabinet or baby



Figure 6. *The use of semi-open spaces.*



Figure 7. *Personalization of space.*

cradle for storage), apart from its main functions. Temporary interventions were made on the wall surfaces. Some Syrian families also used wall surfaces such as exhibiting photographs of Turkish statesmen and politicians, photographs of family members taken with politicians and newspaper clippings, hanging the Turkish flag on windows and doors, etc. Accordingly, various objects and accessories (Arabic manuscripts, verses from the Quran, photos, decorative objects, laces, artificial flowers, etc.) were common for home beautification (Figure 7).

4.2. Results for ethnographic data

The data were obtained from the participant observation technique through the first stage of the ethnographic methods. The activities seen in the daily living room of Syrian families were eating, sitting, studying, hosting guests, and spending free time. In the living room, which was completely covered with carpet, the regular behaviors can be concluded as sitting or resting on the floor mattress, and sleeping and eating on the ground. The activities and behaviors in the living room were detailed in the Figure 8.

Observations of relationships were based on relationships between family members and other people such as guests, neighbors, researchers, etc. Relationships changed depending on gender and age, and also determined the boundaries of personal space, privacy, and territoriality. Relationships among family members were determined by roles, which revealed a hierarchical order based on age and gender in the family. While women were responsible for doing household activities, men were mostly responsible for providing for the household according to classical gender categories (Bilecen, 2017, 88). Children were expected to show respect for their elders. In extended and nuclear families, husband-wife, mother-child, father-child, elder-child, and child-child relationships were the most common. Observations about roles and relationships revealed that gender was important when hosting guests and that both gender and family roles were important for household relations (Figure 9).

In the second step of the data obtained by ethnographic methods, the answers given to the interview questions were analyzed by content analysis according to the relevant answer categories. According to the answers received from the participants, half of the Syrians are over the age of 45, while the rest are between the ages of 18 and 45. The participants, most of whom were women, married, and from Aleppo, were predominantly from lower- and middle-income groups. While women do not work anywhere outside the home, men mainly work as workers in












Activities	Behaviors	
Sitting	Sitting on sofa, sofa bed, coach etc.	
	Sitting on the ground cushion	
	Sitting on the ground	
Sleeping	Sleeping on the ground cushion/ floor mattress	
	Sleeping on the sofa, sofa bed, coach etc.	
Eating	Eating on the low table	
	Eating on the dining table	
Leisure time activities	Playing games	
	Watching TV while sitting, laying etc.	
Working on table	Working on table	
Hosting guests	Hosting guests in living room	

Figure 8. The activities and behaviors in the living room.

the textile sector. Both extended and nuclear families have crowded family lives with many children. Polygamy was not common for the participants. Among the reasons for Syrian families to choose Sultanbeyli, living close to relatives, economic situation, and job opportunities (especially in the textile sector) are determinative. Socio-cultural similarity and economic, and religious closeness between the local people and Syrians are also among the important reasons for choosing Sultanbeyli. The reason for choosing the current residence was mostly related to the economic situation, as stated by one participant:

"We have limited resources. This house is the cheapest one in Sultanbeyli" (Male, 55).

For most participants, their current house is the place where their need for shelter is met. In this sense, the longing for the homeland left behind, social networks, living habits, and memories, as well as the status of Syrians as tenants, frequently changing houses for various reasons, negatively affect the sense of belonging to the new place:

"Home is associated with privacy, stability, comfort, and family. My home is in Syria" (Female, 75).

When Syrian families state deficiencies in their current houses, they often make comparisons with their homes in Syria. For example, the toilet and bathroom spaces should be separated ac-

cording to Syrian's cultural habits and religious beliefs. Fitting placements (toilet bowl, squatting toilet, etc.) in toilet and bathroom spaces should not face the Qibla due to religious reasons.

The need for privacy is important for young girls and women. In addition to the need for separate bedrooms for young girls, young boys, and couples, the desire to have spaces for hosting female and male guests separately is also based on privacy and cultural habits:

"We are a large family. Our daughter and son-in-law are using our bedroom. My sons stay in the same room. Unfortunately, there is no separate bedroom for me and my husband. We use the sofa bed in the living room" (Female, 43).

Other needs are related to the physical and comfort conditions of the house, such as inadequate ventilation, humidity issues, dissatisfaction with furniture and belongings, insufficient storage areas [5], and the need for security. In this sense, the importance of needs related to cultural, spatial, furnishing, comfort, property, security, and belonging is revealed.

Whether extended or nuclear, most of the Syrian families interviewed have a crowded and large household. Additionally, lifestyle, cultural habits, family structure, relationships, roles, and beliefs affect the organization and use of space. Therefore, many families have made interventions to adapt their homes appropriate to their needs. When the entrance hall of the house is large enough, most Syrian families use this area as a living room. Most of the participants stated that they needed open spaces depending on their living habits.

"We lived in a village in Aleppo and were used to living outside. For this reason, we use the house front in summer by laying carpets and moving our seats there" (Female, 54).

Since Syrian's current residences are not large enough for extended and crowded families, and depending on privacy, habits, family structure, and relationships, the existing spaces are mostly divided by curtains or separators:

"We divided the entrance hall as it was much bigger than we needed and

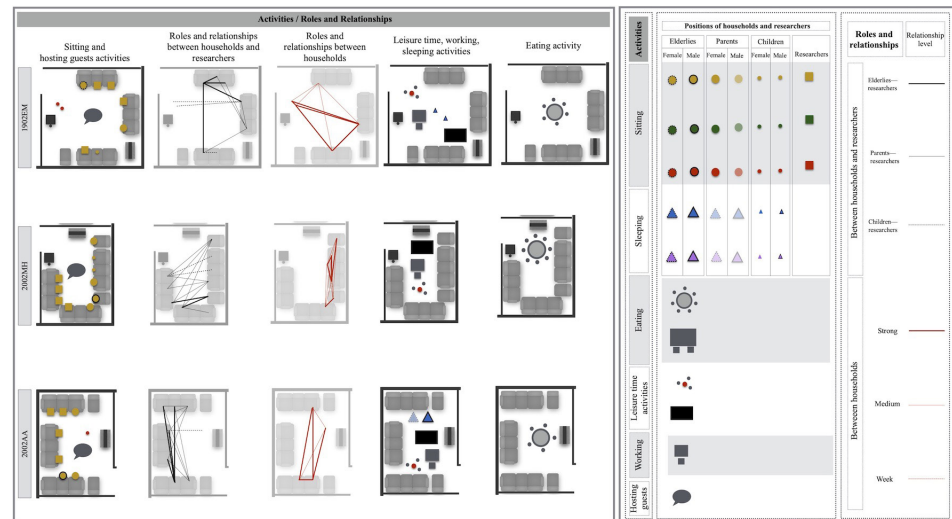


Figure 9. The roles and relations in the living room.

created a room for the children” (Female, 46).

Similarly, the use of suitable areas in the house (under the stairs, niches, balconies, etc.) for storage is an indication of a need. Closing the balconies with curtains and covering the glazed surfaces of doors and windows by paint or hanging cloths are also related to privacy needs.

It is also very common to multi-functional use of space by mobile elements (laying the floor mattresses for sleeping at night and stacking them during the day, using a low table in the living room, etc.) for different activities day and night. In this sense, the interventions were made to both the space and the surfaces to meet the needs for life-style, habits, comfort, and privacy.

Most Syrian families stated that they fled from Syria desperately, their houses were bombed, and therefore they could not bring anything but the Quran, ID cards, and a few pieces of clothing. Many stated that they wanted to bring their photographs, personal belongings, decorative items, and furniture during their migration to Turkey:

“The clothes, the bride’s new kitchen utensils, maybe everything we can take with us, but still, this is not our home” (Female, 62).

Syrian families stated that they obtained most of the furniture and belongings in their current homes from neighbors, landlords, or charities. Most Syrian families use ground cushions

for sitting/lying in their daily living room because the furniture does not reflect their preferences, choices, and needs appropriate to their living habits:

“We’re sitting on the ground cushion even if it’s a sofa” (Female, 60).

The use of a floor mattress and ground cushion is mostly common in Syrian families from Aleppo. Most of the items that were used by Syrian families, such as stoves, carpets, kitchen utensils, and electrical appliances, are objects and goods that they have acquired here. Objects, decorative items, and kitchen utensils are remarkable installations where Syrians reflect their individual or collective tastes, preferences, and choices, as well as show their status and identities.

5. Discussion

Even though the home maintains its existential importance in the case of forced migration (Boccagni, 2022), the home can be a safe haven or a place of alienation in relocation (Taylor, 2015). As Fullilove (2013) points out, forced displacement causes trauma for individuals and communities. Besides traumatic factors caused by forced migration such as loss of homes (bombed or left behind), memories, property, income, social interactions, and bonds, previous homemaking experiences and perceptions are important in the (re)making home (Bilecen, 2017; Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016;

Taylor, 2015; Kissoon, 2015; Liu, 2014; Fadlalla, 2011; Boccagni, 2022). In this sense, factors such as frequent relocation, economic situation, and ownership affect the sense of belonging and the process of remaking home (Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2021; Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2022) and reveal that the *cultural, social, behavioral, psychological, symbolic, spatial, aesthetic, and economic* parameters can be read through home and that these parameters are important in (re) making home.

Cultural parameter is one of the most fundamental factors in homemaking (Rapoport, 2005; Oberg, 2006). The results of the study confirm that culture affects spatial organization (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016) and use of home (Lawrence, 1987), as well as components of culture, such as family structure (extended/nuclear), religious belief (Islam), and lifestyle (crowded and large households). The fact that Syrian families are tenants, which affects the remaking home (Bilecen, 2017), in the current home in Sultanbeyli has caused cultural reflections to be limited by the use of space and the use and placement of furniture. The selection and placement of furniture is important for Syrian's home-remaking. In this sense, the use of floor mattresses, ground cushions, and low tables are the most prominent cultural installations. The Syrians adapted the residential interiors with the use of dividers or curtains due to factors such as privacy, gender, comfort, etc. In this sense, the combined use of indoor and outdoor spaces, the multifunctional use of spaces, and spatial use based on religious belief and gender for Syrian's residences are culture-specific factors and noteworthy in terms of deciphering cultural codes.

Social parameter is related to social life and routines, gender, and the age of family members (Lawrence, 1987). The social parameter is important in the creation of private and public spaces (Omar, 2010) in the home-remaking process of Syrian families. The daily living room, which is the heart of the house and accepted as the public zone for socializing the household, allows family members to interact with each other and with relatives, guests,

neighbors, etc. Age, gender, and family roles affect behaviors and activities in the daily lives of Syrian families. Family elders are the most respected in patriarchal families. Parents, young boys, young girls, and children take their places in this order, respectively. Regardless of religious beliefs (Omar, 2010), women's privacy is a priority for Syrian families. Similarly, the privacy of the spaces for young girls is also evident (Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2022). The bedrooms, specifically the master bedrooms, are also private areas of home use.

Behavioral parameter is related to privacy, personal space, and territoriality (Turgut, 2003) in home use. For Syrians, privacy is more important than the other two dimensions of the behavioral dimension. Privacy thresholds also affect relations (Boccagni, 2022). The need for privacy was met by separating private life from public life in between guests/neighbors and men and women, and family members in Syrian's indoor use. The fact that Syrian's residences are not large enough for economic reasons makes it difficult to provide personal and collective privacy at home. Physical interventions and behavioral and verbal expressions also reveal the importance of privacy for Syrian families at different levels, depending on gender, age, roles, and relationships within the family.

Psychological parameter includes wishes, goals, personal values, preferences, family history, shared values, past and present, and specific life stages (Lawrence, 1987). In addition to these elements, in the case of forced migration, home represents the place where the need for emotions and bonds (Wang, 2006), protection, i.e., being safe (Israel, 2003), familiarity, and control is met (Boccagni, 2022). The results of the study indicate that Syrian's do not consider their current living environment as their home due to factors such as loss of home/homeland and relations, property problems, etc. It also reveals that their most basic needs are a longing for a safe place where frequent displacements are not experienced and the need for privacy and comfort in the current living environment. In this respect, establishing roots in the place

(belonging, security, and stability) and shared values and habits (familiarity) gain importance as psychological dimensions that make the house a home.

Spatial parameter is related to alterations and adaptations in home use (Bilecen, 2017) and accommodates cultural installations (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016). Most Syrian families from rural Aleppo are used to courtyard housing that meet the people's needs regarding social, functional, environmental, economic and architectural aspects (Al-Sabouni, 2017). For this reason, where the entrance hall is large enough, this space is transformed into a living space/living room. Interventions, such as separating the toilet and bathroom spaces, considering the Qibla direction for the placement of fittings, dividing the rooms for privacy, and combining use of interior and exterior spaces, reveal the importance of the flexible use (Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2021; Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2022) and the role of the physical condition of the space (Rapoport, 2005) related to the user and usage.

Aesthetic parameter is based on the aesthetic improvement of the space (Boccagni, 2022) and bringing the home environment closer to the tastes and culture of its inhabitants (Neumark, 2013). In this respect, the aesthetic parameter is related to culture and identity (Aydınlı, 1993) and reveals the importance of personalization/appropriation (Graumann, 2002) in space use. Syrian's home beautification practices, such as displaying and positioning objects and hanging ornaments, photographs, and paintings on the walls, point to the role of pleasure and taste blended with identity and culture in domestic interiors. It also demonstrates the importance of familiarity, feeling at home, and a sense of belonging (Boccagni, 2022).

Symbolic parameter is related to the fact that the house is a symbolic place (Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017; Bilecen, 2017). Therefore, its symbolic meaning is much more important than its physical entity. For Syrian families, the house in relocation is a place where past memories are kept alive, cultural and social habits are maintained, and messages are conveyed. In the case of

forced migration, the role of furniture, objects, and accessories as reminders of previous life and memories (Bilecen, 2017) and identity continuity (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2009) are supported by the results of the study. In this sense, both furniture-based cultural installations, such as ground cushions, floor mattresses, and low tables, as well as objects and decorative items, such as photographs, religious objects, and ornaments, are remarkable for symbolic construction (Bilecen, 2017) and reproduction of previous home in relocation (Fadlalla, 2011).

Economic parameter is associated with factors such as household income, working status, and social class (Lawrence, 1987). The results of the study show that the economic situation of Syrian families who belong to low- and middle-income groups (Kavas et al., 2019) plays an important role in the process of remaking home both for spatial interventions and acquiring furniture and goods. In this sense, little or no income negatively affects the fulfillment of needs and the reflection of pleasure and satisfaction.

Shortly, *cultural, social, behavioral, psychological, symbolic, spatial, aesthetic, and economic* parameters are important for a supportive living environment, i.e., home, which is a physical, emotional and meaningful structure and a multidimensional phenomenon, in the process of remaking in relocation for forcibly displaced people such as Syrians.

6. Conclusions

Supportive environment (Rapoport, 2005), closeness to relatives (Rapoport, 2005), emotions and bonds (Wang, 2006), economic status (Rottmann, 2020), and shared cultural or religious values with local people (Kavas et al., 2019) are important factors for remaking home in relocation. Remaking home is also an act of being of existence (Pala, 2015), rooting, and proving identity (Boccagni, 2022). It can also be an expression of reinforcement (Boccagni, 2020) or rejection (Thorshaug & Brun, 2019) of feeling at home and belonging. In this sense, the results of the study confirm the literature on the multidimensional

and complex phenomenon of remaking home for forcibly displaced people (Taylor, 2015; Kabachnik et al., 2010) among others and reveal that *cultural, social, behavioral, psychological, symbolic, spatial, aesthetic, and economic* parameters are important in the remaking home process and practices.

The results of the study reveal that the tenant status of Syrians, due to their economic income, affects the process of remaking the home and that furniture placement is more effective in the remaking process rather than spatial interventions. Cultural codes are reflected in the use of space with floor mattresses, ground cushions, and a low table, and thus the psychological needs are met, such as familiarity, identity, belonging, etc. The multifunctional, day/night, and indoor/outdoor use of the house reveal the behavioral, social, and cultural parameters that are reflected in spatial use. The separation of toilet and bathroom spaces per religious belief and privacy and determining the direction of Qibla in fitting installations are behavioral, social, and cultural parameters that are also reflected in the use of space. Privacy, which is an important need specifically for women and young girls at home, both as a cultural need and as a requirement of religious belief, is reflected in behavioral, psychological, cultural, social, and spatial parameters. Family structure, family roles, and relationships determine privacy thresholds and behavioral codes. The beautification of the house is notable as a reflection of belonging, familiarity, and identification. In this sense, furniture, belongings, and decorative and religious items convey messages and produce emotional, evocative, and identity-proving symbolic meaning and aesthetic value.

The study has limitations due to the size of the sample, one cultural group, and one small geographical area. Additional limitations include the language barriers between Syrians and researchers. The results of the study contribute to the literature in terms of sharing the field study findings based on on-site observations and interviews regarding the families of Syrians belonging to the low- and middle-income groups liv-

ing in Sultanbeyli in Istanbul, Turkey. Multiple methods and techniques used in the study can be useful for other researchers to conduct similar studies with disadvantaged groups, such as forcibly migrated Syrians.

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Endnotes

¹Although Syrians are considered refugees who were involuntarily displaced from their homelands (Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2022), the legal status of Syrians living in Turkey has been determined as “temporary protection” according to Article 1 of the Temporary Protection Regulation (GKY), which was prepared in 2014.

²The results of this study were obtained from the research project carried out in 2018-2020.

³The term “several (nuclear) families” (Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2016, 28) is used to refer to more than one nuclear family living in and sharing the same house.

⁴For Syrian families, “hall” or “mama” is used to describe the entrance hall of the house (Cordan & Özcan Aktan, 2020), which is a semi-public zone and used as a saloon and dining room (Ismail, 2015), and a middle space or daily living room where the other rooms’ doors are opened and family members socialize (Algül et al., 2022).

⁵During the interviews, most of the participants expressed that they felt the lack of a storage space called “seife” in their residences in Syria, which is mostly located above the kitchen or bathroom spaces and can reach by stairs.

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