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Post-Disaster Development through the ‘Creative City’ Concept: Case Study of the City of Adiyaman, Turkey

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Abstract

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This study explores the creative city approach as a transformative framework for post-disaster urban development. While traditional strategies prioritize physical reconstruction, this research theoretically argues that cultural heritage and creative potential are critical drivers for sustainable recovery. Utilizing a qualitative methodology that integrates a comprehensive literature review on cultural resilience with spatial observations from the earthquake-stricken city of Adiyaman, the study examines how urban identity serves as leverage in rebuilding processes. The principal result is the conceptualisation of a multilayered creative city model focusing on cultural continuity, adaptive reuse, and community participation. Ultimately, the study contributes to urban planning by proposing a strategic framework to create resilient, inclusive, and innovative urban environments in post-disaster contexts.

Keywords: Creative City; Post-Disaster Recovery; Cultural Heritage; Urban Identity; Adiyaman.

1. Introduction

Cities, as the primary gathering places for human populations, are inherently exposed to natural disasters, necessitating comprehensive crisis management plans to mitigate vulnerabilities and reduce human and financial losses (Wenger, 2008). Earthquakes, particularly in seismically active regions, trigger profound urban crises that disrupt social structures and organizational systems (Wenger, 2009). However, natural disasters can also be approached as an opportunity for cities to rectify pre-existing urban issues and rebuild the environment in a more sustainable and conscious manner (Meilianda et al., 2017). Traditional post-disaster recovery strategies have predominantly focused on physical reconstruction and infrastructural repair, often overlooking the socio-cultural fabric that binds a community together. To achieve a holistic recovery, it is essential to develop comprehensive strategies that facilitate environmental, social, and economic redevelopment simultaneously.

In recent decades, urban and economic development planners have increasingly turned to the creative city paradigm as a catalyst for urban regeneration (Landry, 2005). The creative city framework posits that a city's competitive advantage and resilience no longer rely solely on traditional industrial assets, but rather on its capacity to foster human intellect, imagination, and cultural vitality (Florida, 2017; UNCTAD, 2008). Within this framework, cultural resources encompassing visual and performing arts, historical monuments, local traditions, and shared collective memories are viewed as the fundamental raw materials of urban development, replacing traditional assets like coal or steel (Landry, 2016; Aziz Amen & Nia, 2018; Markusen, 2016). Furthermore, scholars highlight that a successful creative city must cultivate an environment that attracts creative elements and promotes inclusivity, thereby leveraging cultural heritage as a driver for both social cohesion and economic growth (Sasaki, 2018; Aziz Amen & Ahmad NIA, 2021; Smith & Warfield, 2008).

When applied to post-disaster contexts, the creative city model transcends its original economic objectives to become a critical mechanism for holistic urban resilience and psychological healing. The destruction of a city directly threatens the spatial continuity of cultural practices, leading to social dislocation and the erosion of ontological security (Beck, 2016; Pelling, 2011). Consequently, frameworks such as the Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery (CURE) emphasize that physical reconstruction must seamlessly integrate both tangible heritages, such as historic masonry and vernacular architecture, and intangible heritage, including local crafts and rituals (Garcia, 2021). Adaptive reuse of damaged cultural infrastructure serves as a catalyst for social healing, transforming ruined historical sites into active civic spaces rather than isolated monuments (Pereira & Bandarin, 2019).

The province of Adıyaman, located in Turkey, presents a profound case study for this integrated approach. Known as one of the oldest settlements in human history with roots tracing back to 40,000 BC, the region has hosted numerous ancient civilizations and is home to the Mount Nemrut National Park, a site of immense Hellenistic significance. Prior to the catastrophic earthquakes of February 6, 2023, Adıyaman possessed a unique human geography, characterized by an authentic lifestyle and rich cultural symbols that determined the region's social values (Bahar, 2015; Caliskan, 2015). Despite these assets, the city historically operated below the national average in terms of urbanization, gross domestic product, and employment rates, struggling to fully leverage its cultural potential for competitive urban development (TUIK, 2012). The 2023 earthquakes inflicted devastating financial losses and human casualties, while simultaneously shattering the historical and structural identity of the city.

Addressing the unresolved methodological gap in post-disaster urban planning, this study explores the creative city approach as a transformative framework for urban development in the aftermath of natural disasters. While traditional post-disaster strategies often prioritize physical reconstruction, this research theoretically argues that culture, heritage, and creative potential are critical drivers for sustainable social and economic recovery. The primary objective of this study is to propose a multilayered creative city model for post-disaster regions, focusing specifically on cultural continuity, community participation, and the establishment of creative public spaces. By conceptualizing how urban identity and intangible cultural assets can serve as leverage in the rebuilding processes of Adıyaman, this research aims to provide a strategic roadmap for creating resilient, inclusive, and innovative urban environments in crisis-affected regions.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative case study methodology to examine the applicability of the creative city paradigm as a framework for post-disaster urban development in Adıyaman, Turkey. The qualitative orientation is epistemologically justified by the nature of the research problem: post-disaster urban recovery is a context-sensitive, socially embedded phenomenon that resists reduction to quantifiable metrics alone (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Yin, 2018). Rather than seeking statistical generalization, this study pursues analytical generalization, deriving theoretical propositions from a deeply contextualized case that may illuminate broader dynamics in other crisis-affected cities (Flyvbjerg, 2011). Adıyaman was chosen deliberately, not because it stands in for a broader population of cases, but because it represents what Yin (2018) would call a revelatory case. Here, the collision between deep cultural heritage and catastrophic earthquake destruction is so stark that it makes the research questions far easier to investigate clearly.

2.1. Research Design and Epistemological Positioning

The research adopts a pragmatic research design situated at the intersection of urban sociology, disaster management studies, and creative city planning theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Pragmatism as a philosophical paradigm is appropriate here because it prioritizes the utility of knowledge, asking what works, in what context, and toward what ends, rather than adhering strictly to either positivist or interpretivist ontologies (Morgan, 2007). This orientation is particularly salient in applied urban research, where the normative goal of proposing actionable recovery frameworks requires synthesizing empirical observation with theoretical modeling.

The study is organized around a single, embedded case study design (Yin, 2018), in which the city of Adıyaman constitutes the primary unit of analysis and its constituent historical districts, cultural infrastructure, and social communities function as embedded sub-units. This nested structure allows the research to simultaneously address macro-level urban resilience dynamics and micro-level spatial and cultural processes. The decision to pursue a single rather than multiple case study design reflects the exceptional nature of the Adıyaman case: few cities combine a pre-modern archaeological heritage of global significance, including Mount Nemrut, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with the specific socioeconomic marginalization and demographic vulnerabilities that characterized the region prior to the 2023 earthquake sequence (Bahar, 2015; TUIK, 2012). Comparative case analysis, while potentially illuminating, would have risked flattening these contextual particularities into generic typologies.

The theoretical framework structuring the analysis is synthesized from two converging bodies of literature. The first is the creative city literature (Florida, 2017; Landry, 2000; Sasaki, 2018), which provides the conceptual vocabulary for understanding culture, creativity, and talent as drivers of urban competitiveness and social cohesion. The second is the urban resilience and disaster recovery literature (Aldrich, 2019; Pelling, 2011; UN-Habitat, 2018), which contextualizes recovery as a multi-scalar, temporally extended process shaped by social capital, governance structures, and spatial memory. The synthesis of these frameworks is not merely additive but dialectical: the study interrogates the tensions and complementarities between them, particularly the divergence between the creative city's emphasis on economic competitiveness and the disaster recovery literature's focus on equitable, needs-based rebuilding.

Within this synthesized framework, the study develops a specific set of analytical indicators applicable to post-earthquake urban environments. These indicators address four critical dimensions: cultural heritage preservation encompassing both tangible and intangible assets; economic revitalization through creative industries; trauma-informed spatial design; and inclusive community participation in governance and planning processes. These dimensions were derived inductively from the systematic literature review described below and were subsequently applied deductively to the spatial observations conducted in Adıyaman.

2.2. Data Sources and Literature Synthesis

The primary analytical data for this study derives from a systematic and critical literature review conducted across three thematic domains: creative city theory, post-disaster urban recovery, and intangible cultural heritage management. The review was conducted using academic databases including Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar, with search terms iteratively refined to capture the most relevant scholarship at the intersection of these domains. Key search strings included combinations such as "creative city AND disaster recovery," "cultural heritage AND post-earthquake urban

planning," "adaptive reuse AND resilience," and "trauma-informed design AND urban environment." Publication dates were not restricted, given the foundational importance of seminal theoretical texts (e.g., Beck, 2016; Florida, 2017; Landry, 2000); however, particular weight was assigned to scholarship published after 2010 to reflect contemporary developments in urban resilience and heritage policy.

The selection of sources followed a criterion-based sampling approach (Patton, 2015): sources were included if they directly addressed the conceptual constructs under investigation, were published in peer-reviewed venues or by authoritative institutional bodies such as UNESCO and UN-Habitat, and contributed original theoretical or empirical insights rather than merely reproducing prior work. Grey literature, including UNESCO policy frameworks (UNESCO, 2011), UN-Habitat reports (UN-Habitat, 2018), and the Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery framework known as CURE (Garcia, 2021), was incorporated where it provided normative guidance directly relevant to the study's applied objectives.

The literature was analyzed using thematic synthesis, a method that moves beyond simple narrative summary to develop higher-order interpretive constructs from across multiple sources (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Thematic codes were assigned to passages addressing mechanisms of heritage-led resilience, spatial adaptation strategies, community empowerment processes, and economic recovery trajectories. These codes were then clustered into the four analytical dimensions identified above, which subsequently structured both the spatial observation framework and the theoretical model presented in the results section.

2.3. Case Selection and Contextual Justification

The city of Adiyaman, located in southeastern Turkey, was selected as the study's focal case on the basis of four interrelated criteria. First, the region's extraordinary archaeological and cultural heritage depth, encompassing Palaeolithic settlements, Commagenean royal monuments, and Ottoman urban fabric, provides a rich substrate for investigating heritage-led recovery strategies (Bahar, 2015; Caliskan, 2015). Second, the catastrophic earthquakes of February 6, 2023, registering magnitudes of 7.8 and 7.7 respectively, created an acute post-disaster condition that brought the tensions between rapid reconstruction imperatives and heritage preservation needs into sharp relief. Third, Adiyaman's pre-disaster socioeconomic profile, characterized by below-average urbanization rates, gross domestic product per capita, and employment figures relative to the national mean (TUIK, 2012), meant that the earthquake did not merely damage an already-prosperous city but further destabilized a structurally vulnerable one, raising urgent questions about the equity and long-term sustainability of recovery pathways. Fourth, the city's existing creative and artisanal economy, anchored by traditional copper craftsmanship and textile weaving, provides concrete industrial anchors around which a creative economy recovery strategy can be operationalized.

The case selection thus reflects both theoretical relevance and practical urgency, fulfilling the dual criteria of purposive sampling in qualitative research: the case must illuminate the research problem with particular clarity, and it must represent a context in which the proposed intervention has genuine applicability (Yin, 2018).

2.4. Contextual Observation and Spatial Analysis

The empirical foundation of this theoretically oriented study is grounded in structured spatial observation and field documentation conducted in the historic city center of Adiyaman. Spatial observation as a qualitative data collection technique entails the systematic recording of the physical, sensory, and socio-behavioral dimensions of urban environments, without the experimental manipulation associated with quantitative research designs (Gehl & Svarre, 2013). In the context of post-disaster fieldwork, this method is particularly appropriate because it allows researchers to document destruction patterns, trace residual spatial memories, and identify existing assets and vulnerabilities that may not be visible in secondary data sources such as administrative damage assessments.

Field observations were structured around a pre-determined observation protocol informed by the study's theoretical framework. The protocol directed attention to the following analytical dimensions. The first concerned the physical condition and structural integrity of heritage buildings, including traditional yellow stone masonry structures and courtyard typologies. The second addressed the spatial distribution of cultural nodes such as historic workshops, souks, communal gathering spaces, and public art installations, and the degree to which these had survived or been disrupted by the earthquakes. The third focused on the current use and activity patterns of post-disaster temporary settlements, including container cities, to assess their potential for creative spatial transformation. The fourth examined the legibility and navigability of the urban fabric in relation to pre-disaster spatial memory, including the presence or absence of landmark structures that anchor collective identity.

Observations were recorded through field notes and documented through contextual architectural sketches and analytical diagrams. These qualitative records were subsequently triangulated with secondary documentary sources, including municipal damage assessments, urban master plan revisions, and satellite imagery analyses available in the public domain, to validate observational findings and ensure their representativeness. The triangulation of multiple data sources, which is a fundamental quality assurance mechanism in case study research (Yin, 2018), strengthens the internal validity of the conclusions drawn from what might otherwise appear to be a single observer's field impressions.

It is explicitly acknowledged that this study does not constitute a post-occupancy evaluation or a longitudinal ethnographic study of Adiyaman's recovering communities. The observation phase was deliberately bounded in scope, providing contextual grounding for the theoretical model rather than generating independent empirical findings. This design choice reflects both the early-stage, theoretically generative nature of the research and the ethical constraints of conducting intensive empirical fieldwork in a population still experiencing acute humanitarian distress (Aldrich, 2019).

Prior to the development of the conceptual model, the destruction of key cultural axes and historical landmarks was documented through field notes to understand the extent of physical and spatial disruption. These observations focus on evaluating the feasibility of adaptive reuse strategies for damaged public buildings and assessing the integration of

intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional crafts and local practices, into the new urban plan. The observational data contextualizes the theoretical findings, providing a realistic basis for proposing smart and creative architectural interventions blended with traditional masonry styles (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Conceptual of reuse strategy merging damaged historical masonry with modern resilient architecture.

2.5. Analytical Strategy and Model Development

The analytical strategy integrates deductive and inductive reasoning in an iterative cycle consistent with abductive inference (Timmermans & Tavory, 2012). The deductive phase applied the synthesized theoretical framework, comprising creative city dimensions and resilience indicators, to the observational data from Adıyaman, testing whether the conceptual constructs proved analytically productive in this specific context. The inductive phase allowed context-specific empirical observations to challenge, refine, and extend the theoretical constructs where they proved insufficient. This was particularly evident in revealing the importance of trauma-informed spatial design as a dimension not fully elaborated in the existing creative city literature.

This iterative movement between theory and data culminated in the development of a multilayered creative city model tailored to post-disaster conditions. The model's internal validity is supported by its grounding in multiple converging data sources, namely theoretical literature, institutional frameworks, and field observations, while its transferability is supported by systematic comparison with documented recovery experiences in analogous post-disaster urban contexts. These include the recovery in Christchurch, New Zealand, following the 2011 Canterbury earthquake sequence, and in L'Aquila, Italy, following the 2009 earthquake (Pereira & Bandarin, 2019).

The resulting operational framework, presented in the Results section, takes the form of a matrix and checklist model that translates abstract creative city dimensions into concrete, measurable recovery actions applicable to the Adıyaman context. This operationalization strategy ensures that the study contributes not only to theoretical discourse but also to the practical toolkit of urban planners, heritage managers, and disaster risk governance actors working in post-earthquake environments.

3. Results

3.1. Synthesis of the Resilient-Creative City Framework

The theoretical synthesis of this study indicates that post-disaster recovery in Adıyaman requires a multidimensional framework that shifts the focus from mere physical reconstruction to holistic urban resilience. The findings demonstrate that integrating cultural infrastructure with creative production and civic participation forms the core of a sustainable recovery model. The conceptualization of the creative city in a post-disaster context reveals that cultural assets, rather than traditional industrial resources, act as the primary catalysts for socio-economic revitalization. The proposed model structurally embeds creativity into the city's governance, spatial organization, and economic policy (see Figure.2).

ADİYAMAN KENTSEL KATMANLAR VE KÜLTÜREL EKOSİSTEM: KAVRAMSAL ŞEMA (ADİYAMAN URBAN LAYERS AND CULTURAL ECOSYSTEM: CONCEPTUAL DIAGRAM)

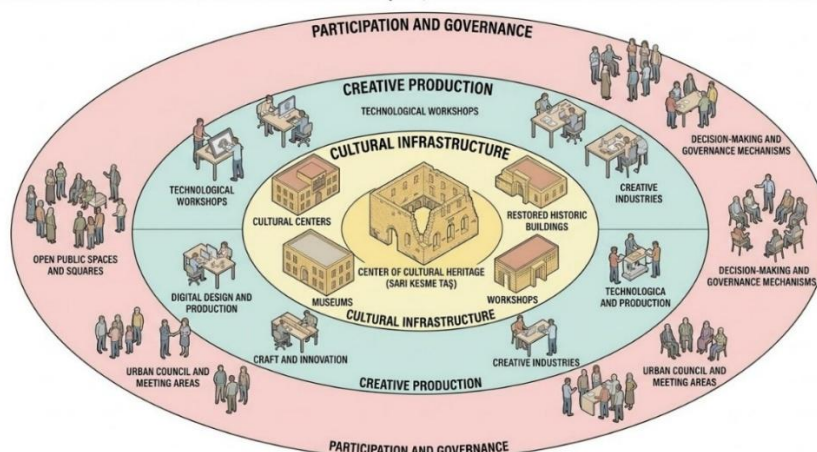


Figure 2. Isometric conceptual diagram illustrating the concentric layers of creative city dimensions.

3.2. Spatial Adaptation and Heritage Integration

A significant finding of the theoretical analysis is the critical role of adaptive reuse in the spatial integration of tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The research shows that preserving structural fragments, such as Adıyaman's traditional yellow stone masonry, and merging them with modern, resilient architectural elements prevents the erasure of urban memory. This approach avoids the creation of isolated, museum-like monuments and instead fosters living, active civic spaces. Furthermore, the spatial translation of these heritage assets directly supports intangible cultural practices; for instance, the restoration of historic workshops and courtyards provides the necessary physical infrastructure for traditional crafts, mentoring, and skill transfer

Table 1: Matrix of Tangible-Intangible Integration in Heritage Preservation.

Tangible Heritage Element	Preservation Strategy (Material Culture)	Intangible Cultural Practice (Non-Material Culture)	Socio-Psychological and Economic Resilience Outcome
Damaged Historical Masonry (Yellow Stone)	Stabilization, cleaning, and structural reinforcement of existing walls (Garcia, 2021).	Storytelling, collective memory sharing, traditional masonry techniques (Jigyasu, 2013).	Enhanced place attachment, ontological security, preservation of architectural identity.
Traditional Courtyard Structures	Adaptive reuse, integrating biophilic elements and flexible furniture (Madanipour, 2017).	Social gatherings, local marketplaces, informal knowledge exchange (Low, 2016).	Strengthened social cohesion, community networking, resilient local economy.
Historic Workshops/Souks	Repurposing with modern tools, acoustic insulation, and smart city infrastructure (Landry, 2005).	Traditional crafts (copper, weaving), mentorship, and skill transfer (Pallasmaa, 2012).	Revitalization of traditional industries, employment generation, sustainable cultural tourism.
Verandahs and Balconies	Restoration and integration within contemporary facades (Oliver, 2006).	Informal surveillance, neighborhood interaction, public-private boundary management (Vellinga, 2013).	Improved urban safety, social cohesion, and vibrant street life.

The findings also highlight the necessity of trauma-informed urban design within the spatial strategy. The proposed integration of biophilic elements, healing gardens, and semi-open art therapy spaces functions to mitigate psychological symptoms such as hyperarousal and avoidance commonly observed in disaster survivors. By embedding psychological support systems into the physical infrastructure, the creative city model facilitates continuous community empowerment through daily spatial interactions (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Architectural visualization of spatial adaptation, the transformation of temporary disaster-relief structures.

3.3. Operationalizing the Creative Economy and Social Resilience

The evaluation framework derived from the literature indicates that economic recovery in post-disaster regions is highly dependent on mobilizing the creative economy. The theoretical SWOT analysis of Adıyaman identifies existing cultural capital and social solidarity as primary strengths, while highlighting the threat of unmanaged urban memory loss and the opportunity presented by digital transformation. To address these factors, the operational model suggests subsidizing cooperative workspaces for local artisans, specifically traditional coppersmiths and rug weavers, and integrating these traditional practices with modern digital fabrication.

Additionally, the development of e-commerce platforms and digital design hubs serves to overcome physical market isolations caused by infrastructural damage. The findings suggest that transforming temporary container settlements into culturally engaging, semi-permanent public gathering spaces significantly enhances social cohesion and participatory governance. The operational checklist below delineates the measurable actions required to implement this theoretical framework effectively.

Table 2: The Operational Checklist Model for Adıyaman's Post-Disaster Recovery.

Creative City Dimension	Post-Disaster Recovery Strategy	Operational Action (Adıyaman Checklist)	Evaluation Metric
Creative Economy	Social Cohesion	Subsidizing cooperative workspaces for local artisans, specifically traditional coppersmiths and rug weavers.	Number of active artisanal cooperatives formed post-disaster.
Cultural Production	Cultural Continuity	Integrating traditional Adıyaman craftsmanship with modern digital fabrication in shared innovation hubs.	Volume of hybrid cultural products created and marketed locally.
Talent and Creative Class	Cultural Resilience	Providing dedicated grants and transitional workspaces for local cultural practitioners to prevent out-migration.	Retention rate of pre-disaster cultural workers and artists.
Innovation	Institutional Fragility	Establishing community-led design councils to guide the architectural rebuilding of historic neighborhoods.	Frequency of community-led design proposals officially implemented.

Creative City Dimension	Post-Disaster Recovery Strategy	Operational Action (Adiyaman Checklist)	Evaluation Metric
Place Branding	Spatial Adaptation	Utilizing salvaged yellow masonry stone in new public squares to visually narrate urban resilience and memory.	Percentage of new public projects incorporating salvaged local materials.
Cultural Infrastructure	Physical Destruction	Executing adaptive reuse of damaged historic ground-floor units into modern co-working spaces and digital libraries.	Number of adaptive reuse projects successfully completed in the city center.
Participation and Governance	Social Dislocation	Transforming temporary container settlements into culturally engaging, semi-permanent public gathering spaces.	Participation rates in cultural events held within transformed container hubs.

4. Discussion

The theoretical findings of this study re-frame traditional post-disaster recovery paradigms by positioning the creative city framework not merely as an economic tool, but as an essential mechanism for socio-psychological healing and urban resilience (Florida, 2017; Landry, 2000). While conventional assessment models often prioritize rapid physical reconstruction and structural repair, this research aligns with the Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery (CURE) framework by emphasizing that culture must be treated as the core foundation of urban resilience (Garcia, 2021). By focusing on Adiyaman, the study demonstrates how integrating tangible heritage preservation with intangible cultural practices addresses the critical gap between material rebuilding and social recovery (Low, 2016). This approach theoretically validates earlier studies suggesting that the adaptive reuse of historical infrastructure acts as a critical catalyst for community reintegration, ontological security, and social stability (Beck, 2016).

Furthermore, the proposed spatial strategies expand upon existing literature regarding trauma-informed urban design in post-crisis environments (Roaf & Baverstock, 2018). The integration of biophilic elements, healing gardens, and semi-open art therapy spaces into the ruined historical fabric offers a novel architectural interpretation of psychological support principles. This conceptual model illustrates that providing defensible and legible spaces significantly reduces post-disaster hyperarousal, intrusive thoughts, and avoidance behaviors among survivors (Houtsma et al., 2022). Consequently, the research advances the understanding of historic urban landscapes, indicating that dynamic preservation, where heritage sites accommodate contemporary urban needs, is far more effective than static conservation in crisis-affected regions (Pereira & Bandarin, 2019; UNESCO, 2011).

In terms of economic revitalization, the operational framework developed for Adiyaman bridges the gap between theoretical creative city dimensions and practical disaster recovery (Pratt, 2018). By transforming traditional spaces into modern creative industry workshops and utilizing digital e-commerce platforms, the model ensures the survival of local artisans and traditional craftsmanship. This strategy directly counters the threat of post-disaster brain drain and economic stagnation, proposing that cultural capital serves as a robust driver for long-term economic dividends and micro-entrepreneurship (Scott, 2014; Throsby, 2017). Such findings offer fresh avenues for urban planners to utilize cultural production as a fundamental component of economic resilience rather than viewing heritage conservation purely as a financial burden (Lazzeretti & Oliva, 2018).

Despite these theoretical advancements, this study acknowledges several methodological and contextual limitations that must be addressed in future applications. The fluid and transient nature of post-disaster populations residing in temporary container cities complicates the long-term projection and stabilization of cultural policies (UN-Habitat, 2018). Additionally, the profound psychological trauma experienced by survivors may initially skew public priorities toward immediate humanitarian and survival needs rather than long-term cultural and creative planning (Aldrich, 2019). Furthermore, the proposed smart city interventions and digital creative hubs are highly contingent upon the successful reconstruction of basic physical and technological infrastructures, which remain fragile in the aftermath of the earthquakes (Sha et al., 2024). Future research must build upon this theoretical foundation by empirically testing the proposed operational framework through longitudinal quantitative surveys and comprehensive stakeholder analyses once the initial recovery phases stabilize in the region.

5. Conclusions

This study set out to examine whether post-disaster urban development can be reconceived as more than physical reconstruction, and to propose a multilayered creative city model capable of harnessing cultural continuity, community participation, and creative public space as drivers of recovery in the earthquake-stricken province of Adiyaman. The findings substantiate the study's central theoretical proposition: that culture, heritage, and creative potential function not as peripheral or decorative considerations in disaster recovery, but as primary structural drivers of sustainable, equitable,

and psychologically restorative rebuilding. Where conventional recovery paradigms treat reconstruction primarily as an engineering and infrastructural problem, the Adiyaman case demonstrates that the spatial, economic, and psychological dimensions of recovery are inseparable from the fate of a city's tangible and intangible cultural assets.

The contribution of this study to the existing literature is twofold. Theoretically, the research extends the creative city paradigm, conventionally framed around urban competitiveness and economic growth (Florida, 2017; Landry, 2000), into the comparatively underexplored domain of post-disaster recovery, and in doing so identifies trauma-informed spatial design as a dimension that existing creative city scholarship has not fully elaborated. By synthesizing this expanded framework with the disaster resilience literature (Aldrich, 2019; Pelling, 2011; UN-Habitat, 2018) and operationalizing the Culture in City Reconstruction and Recovery framework (Garcia, 2021) into an empirically grounded matrix and checklist, the study moves CURE from a normative policy statement toward a more concrete analytical tool. Methodologically and practically, the resulting model offers urban planners, heritage managers, and disaster risk governance actors a transferable strategic roadmap, one whose underlying logic was cross-checked against comparable recovery trajectories in Christchurch and L'Aquila, and which may plausibly inform recovery planning in other heritage-rich, seismically vulnerable cities beyond Adiyaman.

Ultimately, the evidence assembled here supports a clear recommendation for policymakers: that recovery authorities adopt inclusive, multi-stakeholder governance arrangements in which cultural heritage and creative industry strategies are integrated into reconstruction planning from the outset, rather than appended once physical rebuilding is complete. Implementing such a culture-led creative city strategy would allow post-disaster regions to rebuild not only their physical landscapes but also their social cohesion and civic memory, converting what is theorized here as urban trauma into a durable foundation for sustainable, locally rooted innovation. As this remains a theoretically generative rather than empirically tested model, its propositions await verification as Adiyaman's recovery unfolds; the present contribution is to establish the conceptual and operational groundwork on which that future empirical work can build.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author(s) report no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

No new empirical data were created or analyzed in this study. The theoretical framework relies on secondary literature and conceptual architectural visualizations based on existing cultural heritage assets.

Institutional Review Board Statement

Not applicable, as this study is a theoretical conceptualization and did not involve empirical data collection from human or animal subjects.

CRedit Author Statement

Conceptualization; Methodology; Writing – original draft; Writing – review & editing. All authors have read and approved the final manuscript.

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