

REVIEW / DERLEME

The Evolution of Dwelling: A Systematic Review of Turning Points, Thematic Trends, and Spatial Transformations

Barınmanın Evrimi: Kırılma Noktaları, Tematik Eğilimler ve Mekânsal Dönüşümler Üzerine SistematiK Bir İnceleme

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ABSTRACT

This study holistically examines the historical evolution of dwelling and its significant key turning points in the literature within a rigorous, systematic framework. It reveals periodic and structural dynamics through which dwelling is addressed, and fundamental factors driving these transformations. It also traces the evolution of housing in the historical process using Systematic Literature Review (SLR). Systematic Literature Review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol. A Scopus database search yielded 204 publications for analysis after applying selection criteria. The coding process was structured as data-based and inductive throughout the analysis. Five fundamental turning points were determined in dwelling: (1) transition to sedentarization, (2) industrialization and urban transformations, (3) welfare state interventions, (4) neoliberal reforms and privatization, and (5) the effects of climate, energy, and health crises. Main themes from the SLR are classified under socio-spatial formations, policies, and crises. Housing, a basic human need, continuously transforms over time with environmental conditions, social structures, economic systems, political regimes, and crises. The study intersects with a variety of fields, including architecture, urbanism, urban design, architectural history, social policy, environmental sciences, and housing research. Its contribution is a comprehensive, holistic, and interdisciplinary analysis of dwelling transformations centered on critical turning points and thematic clusters.

Keywords: Dwelling; housing crises; housing policy; PRISMA; spatial transformations; systematic literature review.

ÖZ

Çalışma, barınmanın tarihsel evrimini ve bu süreci biçimlendiren temel kırılma noktalarını bütüncül ve sistematik bir çerçevede irdelemektedir. Çalışmanın temel amacı, barınmanın hangi dönemsel ve yapısal dinamikler üzerinden ele alındığını ve bu dönüşümlerin ardındaki temel etkenleri açığa çıkarmaktır. Ayrıca, sistematik literatür taraması (SLT) yöntemiyle tarihsel süreçte barınmanın evrimini literatüre dayalı olarak ortaya koymak hedeflenmiştir. SLT yöntemi uygulanan çalışmada süreç, PRISMA protokolüne uygun biçimde yürütülmüştür. Tarama, Scopus veri tabanında gerçekleştirilmiş; belirlenen kriterlere göre tespit edilen yayınlar eleme sürecinden geçirildikten sonra toplam 204 yayın analiz edilmiştir. Kodlama süreci veri temelli ve tümevarımsal olarak yapılandırılmıştır. Analiz sonucunda, barınma evriminde beş temel kırılma noktası belirlenmiştir: (1) yerleşikliğe geçiş, (2) sanayileşme ve kentsel dönüşümler, (3) refah devleti müdahaleleri, (4) neoliberal reformlar ve özelleştirme, (5) iklim, enerji ve sağlık krizlerinin etkileri. Ayrıca, tarihsel kırılma noktaları ve SLT'den elde edilen dönemlerle ilgili ana temalar gruplandırılarak sosyo-mekânsal biçimlenmeler, politikalar ve krizler olmak üzere üç başlık altında sınıflandırılmıştır. İnsanın en temel gereksinimlerinden biri olan barınma, çevresel koşullar, toplumsal yapı, ekonomik sistemler, politik rejimler ve krizler doğrultusunda sürekli dönüşüm geçirmiştir. Çalışma, mimarlık, şehircilik, kentsel tasarım, mimarlık tarihi, sosyal politika, çevre bilimleri ve konut araştırmaları gibi çok çeşitli disiplinin kesişiminde yer almaktadır. Çalışmanın özgün katkısı, barınma dönüşümlerini kritik kırılma noktaları ve tematik kümeler ekseninde kapsamlı ve disiplinler arası bir analizle literatüre bütüncül biçimde kazandırmasıdır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Barınma; barınma krizi; barınma politikaları; PRISMA; mekânsal dönüşümler; sistematik literatür taraması.

Received: 17.02.2025 Revised: 29.06.2025

Accepted: 15.07.2025 Available online date: 28.11.2025

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1. Introduction

Throughout recorded history, dwelling has constituted one of the most fundamental necessities for both individuals and communities. This fundamental need has continuously evolved in response to major climatic events, pandemics, wars, socio-economic crises, technological advancements, and, fundamentally, by the evolving needs and resources of societies. Maslow's (1943) hierarchy of needs provides a widely recognized framework for understanding the concept of "basic human needs," with dwelling occupying a critical position among the physiological needs at the base of the pyramid. Fulfilling these foundational needs is essential for survival, while individuals' ability to meet higher-order needs within the hierarchy remains closely linked to their living conditions. Dwelling is not only a physiological necessity but also a reflection of social structures, economic systems, political regimes, and cultural values. The form and function of dwelling are deeply intertwined with individuals' social positions, production relations, normative values, and spatial practices. This multilayered structure is emphasized by approaches that consider dwelling not merely as a physical object but also as a social institution and cultural practice. King (2009) views housing as the intersection of both individual identities and collective frames of meaning and thus argues that theories developed about dwelling should be approached from an interdisciplinary perspective.

A review of the existing literature reveals that a significant body of knowledge has been formed in various disciplines, including spatial design, environmental sciences, social sciences, and engineering. However, these studies are often limited to periodic, regional, or thematic focuses; there appears to be a lack of research addressing the pivotal points guiding the historical evolution of housing within a holistic and systematic framework. Moreover, the literature remains fragmented in terms of integrating spatial, social, and political dimensions of housing transformations across historical periods. This interdisciplinary need stems from the nature of dwelling, which inherently spans across multiple fields—from architecture and urban planning to anthropology, sociology, political science, and environmental studies. This study, prepared with the intention of filling this gap in the literature, aims to examine the historical evolution of dwelling and the key turning points that guide this process through a systematic literature review (SLR) conducted from an integrative and interdisciplinary perspective.

In this context, the main research question of the study is as follows: How has the evolution of dwelling forms been addressed in the literature? Through which critical periods and turning points, and which socio-political, economic, or environmental factors, have these transformations been driven?

This study addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive and periodized synthesis of the evolution of dwelling forms through SLR. It aims to uncover the main historical ruptures, socio-political drivers, and spatial consequences that have shaped housing practices over time. By doing so, it contributes to bridging disciplinary boundaries in housing research and offers a critical perspective on how housing has been conceptualized and institutionalized in different historical and geographical contexts.

The method of the study is based on SLR. This review, conducted following Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) principles, was carried out using the Scopus database. The study aims not only to perform a historical mapping but also to analyze the spatial, social, and cultural dimensions of the dwelling through pivotal points, to consolidate the fragmented knowledge in the literature into a cohesive structure.

2. Methodology

As part of this study, SLR on the evolution of housing was conducted, guided by the PRISMA protocol. The review process followed the principles outlined by Snyder (2019), as PRISMA provides a structured, phased, and transparent approach that is particularly well-suited to synthesizing complex and interdisciplinary bodies of literature such as housing studies. While alternative approaches—such as scoping reviews, narrative syntheses, or meta-analyses—were considered, a PRISMA-guided SLR was ultimately selected for its capacity to organize thematic continuities and disruptions in a systematic, replicable, and critically coherent manner.

The analysis was carried out using the Scopus database, which was chosen for its extensive interdisciplinary coverage in the social sciences, humanities, and environmental studies—domains that are highly relevant to the study of the dwelling. Scopus was also preferred due to its consistency in indexing housing-related publications across diverse regional and disciplinary contexts. The review was limited to Scopus-indexed publications, while grey literature, doctoral theses, and locally disseminated materials were excluded. This decision aims to maintain methodological rigor by ensuring the inclusion of peer-reviewed, high-quality sources that are consistently indexed and broadly accessible through academic citation systems. Additionally, Scopus's extensive disciplinary range and standardized indexing practices made it particularly suitable for a study situated at the intersection of architecture, social sciences, and environmental studies.

An inductive coding strategy was utilized, enabling emerging patterns, historical clusters, and thematic categories to guide the analytical structure. Initial exploration revealed that the literature could be grouped into two broad yet intersecting conceptual orientations:

Table 1. PRISMA flow diagram

| Stage | Records 1 (Historical) (n) | Records 2 (Contemporary) (n) | Total (n) | Description |
|--|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Initial search | 1464 | 2154 | 3618 | Raw records retrieved from Scopus |
| Filtering (document type) | 1196 | 1368 | 2564 | Selection of articles and book chapters |
| Title/abstract screening, duplicate removal, and language filtering (non-English, non- Turkish, non-German records excluded) | 1094 | 1110 | 2204 | Non-relevant content excluded |
| Full-text review | 102 | 258 | 362 | Accessible records reviewed in full text |
| Included | 69 | 135 | 204 | Publications included in coding |
| Excluded | 33 | 123 | 158 | Publications excluded after full-text review |

Search 1 – Contemporary Literature, focusing on modern conceptualizations of housing (e.g., transformation, evolution, turning points):

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("housing" OR "shelter" OR "residential architecture") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("historical" OR "history" OR "evolution" OR "transformation") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY ("turning point" OR "critical juncture" OR "shift" OR "transition"),

Search 2 – Historical literature, dealing with ancient, prehistoric, and early civilizational forms of shelter,

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("housing" OR "shelter" OR "dwelling" OR "residence") AND ("ancient" OR "prehistoric" OR "early civilization" OR "urbanization" OR "industrial revolution" OR "agricultural revolution") AND ("history" OR "historical").

The inclusion criteria were defined to ensure thematic and methodological relevance. Only publications explicitly addressing the evolution of housing and dwelling, particularly those associated with historical transformations or critical turning points, were considered. Eligible documents were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters published by the end of 2024, and written in English, Turkish, or German to ensure linguistic accessibility and cross-regional relevance. Studies were excluded if they focused primarily on technical aspects such as construction materials, restoration techniques, or animal shelters. Additionally, works whose full texts were not accessible, as well as those unrelated to housing—such as research centered on public health, energy systems, or general social policy—were omitted from the review to maintain conceptual coherence.

The screening process advanced as follows: document types (articles and book chapters) were filtered, followed by sub-

ject areas (Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities, Environmental Science). A content evaluation was then conducted at the title and abstract level, excluding over 1,000 records that were not directly relevant to the topic. In this phase, studies were excluded if housing was not one of the central topics of the text—for instance, works primarily addressing architectural design, construction techniques, cost analyses, or material use without engaging with the historical or conceptual evolution of dwelling. Similarly, publications from unrelated fields such as biology, animal shelters, ecosystems, and habitat studies were omitted if they lacked direct reference to housing in a human and historical context. Subsequently, 362 full texts were reviewed, and after applying the inclusion criteria, 204 publications were included for detailed analysis. The screening process is summarized in the PRISMA flow diagram (Table 1).

During the coding process, each publication was categorized along multiple analytical dimensions to capture thematic and temporal patterns. Emerging themes were identified inductively during the full-text review rather than being predetermined by titles or abstracts. These dimensions included:

- Thematic Tags (e.g., colonialism, industrialization, neoliberalism)
- Historical Period (e.g., prehistoric, postwar, contemporary)
- Turning Point Theme (e.g., climate crisis, state intervention, migration)
- Geographic Scope
- Dwelling Forms (e.g., cave shelters, public housing, informal settlements)
- Key Findings and Quotable Content

Rather than applying a pre-defined framework, these categories were constructed inductively through iterative engage-

Table 2. Main themes identified through the SLR

| Main theme | Number of publications |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Neoliberal reforms and privatization | 53 |
| Welfare state / state intervention | 38 |
| Prehistoric / early settlements | 31 |
| Post-socialist transition | 30 |
| Crisis and displacement | 16 |
| Climate and energy crises | 12 |
| Colonialism and postcolonialism | 11 |
| Industrialization and urbanization | 9 |
| Pandemic and health crises | 3 |
| Cultural housing | 1 |

SLR: Systematic literature review.

ment with the material. This approach enabled us to reflect the structural diversity and conceptual substantiality embedded in different academic traditions and historical contexts.

3. Findings: Evolution of Dwelling via Systematic Literature Review

This section presents a thematic analysis of the publications obtained through the SLR. The reviewed publications reveal not only the forms of housing but also how these forms have been shaped by historical, geographical, and socio-political contexts. The findings are organized around the main turning points that structure the evolution of housing within the literature, with each point examined under a distinct thematic category. Transformations in housing are closely linked to socio-political processes that intensified during specific historical periods. These processes have been driven by large-scale structural factors such as wars, industrialization, the construction of the welfare state, neoliberal transformations, and climate and energy crises. Each subsection provides a detailed analysis of the historical processes associated with a particular theme, the corresponding housing forms, and the conceptual contexts in which they are embedded. Table 2 presents the main themes identified through the analysis and the number of publications associated with each theme.

3.1. Early Forms of Dwelling and the Transition to Sedentism

It has been determined that 31 studies within the SLR address prehistoric periods. Most of these studies focus on the period extending from the Upper Paleolithic to the Neolithic, while some concentrate on the transitions between the Bronze and Iron Ages. The oldest records regarding the historical evolution of dwelling are based on temporary shel-

ters and rock shelters dating to the late Pleistocene and early Holocene periods. These early forms of dwelling serve not only as responses to spatial necessity but also as adaptations to climatic changes, the hunter-gatherer lifestyle, and prevailing forms of social organization (Coutinho et al., 2021; Hamilton et al., 2018; Jensen & Gotfredsen, 2022). One of the most significant transformations in the form and function of dwelling practices in human history occurred during the transition from a hunter-gatherer lifestyle to a settled existence. This transition signifies not only the permanence of structural spaces but also the emergence of new social and symbolic meanings attached to dwelling.

Early forms of dwelling commonly appear as temporary settlements and seasonal cave refuges. At Klithi Cave in the Epirus region, the most suitable location for shelter and warmth was the northwest corner of the refuge (Bailey et al., 1984). In another example, Koç (2022) argues that shelters constructed from mammoth skeletons in Eastern Europe after the Ice Age provided not only an architectural archetype but also a symbolic point of origin. The same study suggests that viewing the mammoth skeleton as a structural support system inspired subsequent architectural innovations, such as columns and roof structures.

Climate change has played a decisive role in shaping settlement patterns and dwelling forms. Research in the Pennala Basin of Finland has shown that during the Neolithic period, settlements shifted from the lakeshore to inland areas as post-glacial lake levels fell, leading to transformations in housing forms. Temporary settlements dating to the Early Mesolithic period have been identified along coastal ridges and near coves, while archaeological evidence of lakeside residences, fireplaces, quartz artifacts, and ceramics been documented from the Neolithic period (Sirviö & Kajander, 2003). Furthermore, long-term climatic changes—such as the end of the Ice Age or periods of drought—have driven both typological and spatial transformations in shelter forms (Karkanas, 2002).

Examples of settlements from the Neolithic period demonstrate that housing functioned not only as a dwelling but also as a nexus of social, economic, and ritual activities. Analyses of houses at Çatalhöyük indicate that each house functioned as a central hub for social life, encompassing industry, religion, and funerary practices (Pilloud & Larsen, 2011). This period also marks the emergence of social differentiation in living spaces. Studies of ritual structures at Keatley Creek reveal that these spaces were used more as venues for feasts and gatherings than as dwellings, highlighting increasing spatial differentiation tied to social roles (Morin, 2010).

Although the transition to sedentary life is often evaluated within the framework of the "Neolithic Revolution," publica-

tions examined within the scope of SLR demonstrate that this process occurred in regionally varied, multifaceted, and temporally layered forms. In particular, Çatalhöyük in South-eastern Anatolia (Pilloud & Larsen, 2011) and late Holocene settlements in Europe (Bailey et al., 1984) show that dwelling was not only a shelter but also intertwined with social hierarchy, ritual practices, and community identity. The residences of this period are generally based on rock-cut spaces, pit houses, platform structures, and central hearth systems. Their spatial organization directly reflects community structures and modes of production at the settlement scale (Lightfoot & Eddy, 1993; Sagona, 1999).

These early formal patterns have evolved over time into permanent housing typologies in specific climatic and cultural geographies; traditional forms of shelter have become structures that are not only functional but also symbolically loaded and identity-building. As noted in Chahbi's (2024) study, the tradition of courtyard houses in Morocco and similar regions exemplifies a cultural housing form where environmental sustainability and social privacy intersect. These formal and symbolic foundations will later lay the groundwork for more complex settlement patterns, property structures, and social divisions.

3.2. Colonial and Postcolonial Transformations in Housing

This section includes studies examined under the themes of Colonialism and Postcolonialism, as well as some examples that, while classified under the theme of Crisis and Displacement, intersect directly with the spatial exclusion of colonial heritage. In total, 15 publications were identified as contributing to the analysis of this period.

Colonial processes began in some regions in the late 15th century (for example, in the context of Iberian expansion in the Americas) with various forms and intensities; from the 17th century onwards, extensive land occupations, colonial administrations, and spatial interventions became systematic, particularly in Asia and Africa, and had a global impact, and influenced earlier settlement forms. The year 1945 is often regarded as the starting point of the postcolonial transition. Despite the long historical trajectory, for analytical purposes, this period has been thematically positioned before the Industrial Revolution within the review.

One of the first examples from the analysis within the SLR framework is the Pucará de Tilcara settlement in northwest Argentina. Greco and Otero's (2016) study examines the layered residential remains of this area from the Pre-Inca and Inca periods, revealing the spatial reorganizations conducted by the Incas during the imperial era. The initial phase of the settlement consisted of a series of terraced houses located on low slopes, which gradually intensified to become a settle-

ment complex covering 17.5 hectares by the 15th century. However, this transformation was not limited to imperial strategies. The conquest process that began with Diego de Almagro's first Spanish expedition to northwestern Argentina in 1536 became an effective colonizing settlement with the arrival of the Jesuits in the Humahuaca Valley in 1595. Similarly, the study by Whitridge (2008) concerning the dwelling forms of the Inuit people in the Labrador region demonstrates that traditional igloo architecture was redefined as "primitive" and "unhealthy" in accordance with colonial reformist discourses from the 18th century onwards. The new housing forms imposed alongside Moravian missionary settlements aimed not only at environmental adaptation but also at transforming indigenous identity and cosmology.

In the African continent, one of the examples illustrating how dwelling served as a means of social control through colonial regulations is Home's (2000) examination of worker housing in Natal and Northern Rhodesia. This study emphasizes that the transition from single-person shacks to garden-based housing models based on the nuclear family addressed dwelling needs and contributed to stabilizing the labor regime. Similar processes occurred in countries like Namibia, a German colony, as well as Kenya and Algeria. The study by Harris and Hay (2007) examining urban transformation policies in Nairobi highlights the shift towards family-type housing as the perceived temporary status of African workers began to change after 1939. However, single-worker accommodations continued to dominate due to persistent resource constraints.

In the postcolonial period, the spatial legacies of colonial heritage have been maintained in various forms. In the example analyzed by Field (1987) regarding Singapore, the high-density public housing developed by the Housing and Development Board (HDB) has served as a central tool in constructing national identity. Similarly, studies by Geyer and Geyer (2014) and Massey and Gunter (2019) in South Africa demonstrate that the formal housing policies in the post-apartheid era, despite their aims for formal equality, have reproduced spatial inequalities and hybridized settlement patterns. Likewise, in Peterek's (1993) study on Algiers, it is noted that the traditional courtyard houses in the Kasbah were replaced by apartment blocks imposed during French colonial rule; subsequently, large-scale prefabricated housing became widespread in alignment with post-independence socialist urban policies. In the transformation of favelas in Brazil, Garmany and Almeida's (2023) research shows how colonial-modern discourses have been reproduced within postcolonial urbanism. Throughout the 20th century, favelas have been redefined regarding various concerns such as hygiene, security, and development, with housing forms being shaped according to the urban power imaginations of elites in each period.

The common point highlighted by these different examples is the understanding that the forms of housing in both colonial and postcolonial periods are seen not only as physical entities but also as material expressions of political, cultural, and ideological transformations. Processes such as the exclusion of indigenous housing types, the imposition of standardized modern forms, and the redefinition of public space did not end with colonialism but have continued through similar spatial strategies in postcolonial nation-building efforts.

3.3. Industrialization and the Emergence of Urban Housing

Approximately 50 studies identified through the SLR as relevant to this chapter detail the effects of industrialization, which gained momentum in the late 18th century, on housing production and the formation of urban space. The prominent themes addressed in this chapter are “Industrialization and Urbanization,” “Crisis and Displacement” (particularly with internal migration and housing shortages associated with industrialization), and, to a limited extent, “Post-Socialist Transition” (based on continuities in early housing structures).

In the transition process to industrial society, dwelling has evolved into a complex social issue intersecting with dynamics such as migration, class differentiation, infrastructure development, and state interventions, not merely a physical necessity. This transformation, especially evident in European and North American cities, is embodied in the construction of housing for the working class, patterns of urban sprawl, and the expansion of rental housing markets (Carmona et al., 2017; Dufaux, 2000; Walker & Lewis, 2001).

The first phase of the Industrial Revolution stands out as a period when dwelling became not only a spatial form but also a key element of social organization. During this process, particularly in cities in England and Northern Europe, became increasingly entangled with production activities emerged, directly reflecting an increasingly complex economic system as seen in rent levels and construction quality. An analysis by Clark (2002), based on a data set from the 16th to the 20th century, indicates that housing quality declined even as real wages increased between 1760 and 1860. According to Clark, this situation reveals that housing did not proportionately benefit from economic growth and points to a qualitative crisis in housing during the industrialization period. Additionally, the transformation in the internal spatial organization of housing during this period is notable. Meldrum’s (1999) study on housing in 18th-century London shows that architectural innovations and the relationships between servants and homeowners shaped the privacy phenomenon. Spatial distinctions—especially bell systems, back staircases, and attics—demonstrate how urban housing deepened class separation.

Throughout the 19th century, cities that rapidly grew around industrial facilities prominently featured housing built primarily for the working class, characterized by low cost and high density. The tenement structures studied by Dufaux (2000) in Montreal provided housing units and significant spaces for the spatial interactions of different immigrant communities. Similarly, Walker and Lewis (2001) highlight that the process of urban expansion in North American cities paralleled industrial growth, indicating that housing was produced in large quantities not just in the center but also on the periphery.

Hagopian’s (1999) examination of late Victorian neighborhoods in Ontario, Canada, reveals how spatial organization was intertwined with class hierarchies. In this case, working-class housing was distinguished not only by its physical attributes but also by the arrangement of residences within the neighborhoods, setting it apart from the upper and middle classes. On the other hand, as Carmona et al. (2017) have shown in the example of Spain, the impact of industrialization was felt not only at the production level but also through the increasing financialization of housing and the expansion of the rental market. These developments have deepened the housing crisis, not merely as a deficiency in physical structures but also as an accessibility issue.

The process of industrialization led to profound transformations not only in production and technology but also in population movements and spatial distribution. Especially in the 19th century, intense internal migration towards cities led to sudden population growth in industrial cities and a dramatic rise in housing demand. In this context, the transformation process in rural Estonia, as examined by L’Heureux (2010), demonstrates that modernization is not limited to urban areas, as traditional housing forms in the countryside have dissolved and new settlement norms have emerged. On the other hand, the study conducted by Zakrzewski et al. (2014) on the single-family housing areas built in West Germany after the war sheds light on the temporal effects of migration pressure and housing policies regarding their functional and social aging over time. Similarly, Reick’s (2018) study in Berlin presents historical examples of migration, displacement, and early gentrification processes, revealing how housing forms destabilized in post-industrial periods and how spatial inequalities were reproduced.

The political and economic transformations that emerged in the post-industrial period have also reshaped housing systems. However, in many post-socialist countries, particularly in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the spatial continuity of early collective or planned housing forms is noteworthy. For instance, Zarecor (2012) highlights that large-scale socialist housing areas in the Czech Republic have been carried over to the present day not only through their physical structures but also through their functional

and cultural continuities. Rueschemeyer (1993) addresses how the new urbanization experiences in East Germany maintained the continuity of industry-centric spatial constructs from the socialist period.

The effects of the industrial revolution on housing have not only created a spatial transformation but have also intertwined housing with increasing state intervention, market mechanisms, and social inequalities.

3.4. Welfare State Interventions and Social Housing

Publications considered under the SLR do not limit the welfare state's interventions solely to the production of physical housing; they also examine multi-layered policy areas such as planning ideologies, rent controls, and efforts for socio-spatial integration. This section includes studies gathered under the theme of "Welfare State/State Intervention" and incorporates some publications focusing on the post-socialist transitional period, amounting to approximately 50 publications that inform this period. Following the industrial revolution, housing ceased to be merely an individual or family shelter practice, evolving into a societal issue in which the state directly intervenes. Particularly from the first half of the 20th century onward, the effects of the post-war period have emerged as a defining influence.

Fort's (2015) study on Adelaide demonstrates that the central government directly intervened in housing production during the war, despite opposition from the state government. Initially constructed as temporary wartime housing, these dwellings were not removed after the war due to the continued demand for housing, and they eventually became permanent. Similarly, the analysis by Choko et al. (1986, 1987) of the Montréal case emphasizes that post-war federal housing programs not only transformed urban space physically but also turned housing into an instrument of social planning. Pahl-Weber and Schubert's (1991) study focusing on Nazi Germany highlights the influence of ideological planning and the war economy on housing policy. In Hamburg, large-scale social housing projects concentrated around the armaments industry led to an increased spatial proximity between housing and production sites, creating an urban structure that enabled the localized management of the workforce.

In the context of the United States, Franck and Mostoller (1995) describe the evolution of the spatial organization of public housing across three distinct phases: enclosed courtyards, open green spaces, and row houses facing the street. This evolution reflects not only changes in architectural forms but also shifts in the meanings ascribed to housing by the state. In the same geographical context, Spain (1995) demonstrates how public housing was segregated by gender and race. In Latin America, Valenzuela's (2008) study on Chile reveals that in the post-war period, housing served as a social

tool and an instrument of economic and ideological modernization. The large-scale housing projects implemented between 1930 and 1960 by the *Caja de la Habitación Popular* produced residential units and comprehensive living environments equipped with public spaces, healthcare services, and educational facilities. These examples demonstrate that post-war welfare state interventions extended far beyond the physical production of housing; instead, they involved multi-layered strategies that redefined housing, transformed urban space, and restructured social relations.

3.5. Neoliberal Restructuring and Property Regimes

One of the most significant transformations in the housing sector since the last quarter of the 20th century has been the increasing redefinition of housing in terms of market-driven tools and the restructuring of ownership regimes. The neoliberal transformation process has shifted housing from a social right to an object of individual investment; policies such as privatization, the removal of subsidies, a decrease in the supply of rental housing, and the emergence of new ownership relations in urban space have profoundly altered the structural conditions of housing. The 53 publications examined in this chapter address how neoliberal transformation has institutionalized across different geographies, the policy instruments through which it has been implemented, and its layered effects on housing. Additionally, the transformations in ownership regimes occurring in many post-socialist countries are also evaluated in this chapter as examples where neoliberal restructuring intersects with transitional regimes.

Neoliberal policies have led to market-oriented transformations in housing across many countries. Particularly in the United Kingdom, the ideology of promoting homeownership adopted since the 1970s has resulted in the privatization of public housing and increasing inequalities in housing access for low-income groups (Arundel & Ronald, 2021). In countries like the United Kingdom and Germany, the removal of housing from the sphere of public right and its transfer to market mechanisms in line with neoliberal policies has laid the groundwork for the emergence of profound social exclusion in housing (Kennett, 1994). Housing policies in the United Kingdom have, since the 1970s, deviated from the goal of providing a lasting public safety net, evolving into a model based on market-oriented, temporary interventions with the rise of neoliberal ideology (Jacobs & Manzi, 2017).

One consequence of neoliberal policies is the transformation of housing into a financial asset traded in the financial markets. The proliferation of home loans, mortgage-backed property incentives, and expectations of speculative gains from housing have made housing production and accessibility part of the capital cycle. Especially in the United States, the financialization of housing has made the fragility of the

housing market and its social impacts more visible following the 2008 mortgage crisis (Aalbers, 2015; García, 2019). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, the adoption of market-based approaches and the view of housing as an “investment object” has undermined the public aspect of the right to housing. In Germany, meanwhile, privatization processes and large-scale private capital inflows have led to a decline in affordable rental housing and an increase in social exclusion (Deschermeier et al., 2019).

The neoliberal restructuring process in Eastern Europe has developed concurrently and intertwined with post-socialist transitions in many countries. Particularly in former socialist regimes, the transfer of housing from collective or public ownership to individual ownership has occurred quickly and extensively. Following the mass privatization of housing in Poland, serious issues have emerged in the management and physical sustainability of apartment blocks; especially with the withdrawal of public support in poor and shrinking urban areas, both physical and social erosion in the housing stock has been observed (Szafrńska, 2014; Szafrńska et al., 2019). In the case of Berlin, Holm and Kuhn (2011) emphasize that urban renewal and property transformations have affected the housing stock inherited from East Germany, turning into processes that reproduce spatial inequalities.

The neoliberal restructuring process represents a paradigm shift that defines housing solely in terms of ownership and market values. This paradigm is shaped in a context where physical structures and social relations are rebuilt, and urban justice is questioned.

3.6. Climate Crisis, Energy Transitions, and Pandemic Effects

The 28 publications evaluated within the scope of the SLR reveal that forms of housing have been directly affected not only by historical and social crises but also by environmental, technological, and health-related crises. Themes of crisis, climate, and pandemics have influenced housing since prehistoric times; however, today, these multiple threats have become one of the fundamental dynamics that redefine and transform housing. Therefore, these issues form the final phase of the thematic analysis process in this study.

Climate change creates a vulnerability that threatens housing security, particularly in regions inhabited by vulnerable populations. Ajibade and McBean (2014), who examined slum areas in Lagos, demonstrate that flood risk has become a multidimensional problem that exacerbates the housing crisis, not only as a natural disaster but also when combined with unplanned urbanization, inadequate infrastructure, and governance gaps. Energy efficiency and transitions are another areas of transformation closely related to the climate crisis. In an assessment specifically focused on Germany, Ro-

chlitz and Hagist (2024) reveal that individual economic capacity and state incentives are crucial in the energy-sensitive transformation of the old housing stock. In the same context, Hagbert et al. (2024) argue that housing policies in Sweden focused on energy efficiency should be complemented by promoting spatial simplification and collective living forms, going beyond just reducing environmental impact.

Post-disaster housing solutions indicate that the right to housing should be considered a permanent rather than temporary right. While addressing the reconstruction process following the Bam earthquake in Iran, Fallahi (2007) notes that architectural interventions are only successful when integrated with the knowledge and experiences of the local population. In contrast, in the case studies from the U.S., Peacock et al. (2018) show that temporary housing developed after a disaster has transformed into areas of permanent poverty and spatial exclusion, especially for low-income groups. In Türkiye, Güzey (2016) critically discusses how urban transformation policies are often legitimized on the grounds of disaster risk, highlighting that, in this process, profit-driven reconstructions are prioritized over the production of safe housing.

Additionally, pandemics have necessitated a rethinking of housing forms not only in physical terms but also in social and functional dimensions. During COVID-19, residential spaces have transformed from basic living spaces into areas where essential social functions such as work, education, and caregiving are performed (Mendonça et al., 2024). On the other hand, the early phase of the pandemic saw a movement toward second homes in low-density areas, demonstrating that housing also became a “pandemic refuge” and a privileged teleworking space (Zoğal et al., 2022).

Consequently, crises influenced by climate and energy transitions are transforming housing processes, which are now characterized by multi-layered changes in not only spatial but also governance-related, social, and experiential dimensions. Studies within the scope of SLR clearly indicate that this transformation is not merely a final state but a process that continues to evolve in an era marked by increasingly complex and interwoven crises.

3.7. Synthesis

This systematic review of the historical evolution of housing reveals the existence of strong continuities and distinct breaks across different periods, geographies, and thematic focuses. According to the classification summarized in Table 3, the structural themes that are decisive in the transformation of housing include, first and foremost, neoliberal reforms and privatization processes (n=53), as well as welfare state interventions (n=38); these two themes represent the commodification of housing as a market object on one hand, and

its institutionalization as a right of citizenship on the other. Furthermore, the theme of “Prehistoric/Early Settlements” ($n = 31$), which dates back historically much further, demonstrates that housing is a practice established not only through formal aspects but also through environmental adaptation and social organization. Other themes, such as post-socialist transitions, crises and displacement processes, colonial influences, and climate-based transformations, show that housing practices develop not along a continuous line over time but in response to various structural fluctuations and contextual interventions.

This classification indicates that the overlaps among themes—such as the way post-socialist transformations relate to both neoliberal privatization processes and welfare interventions—mean that singular orientations cannot explain housing policies; instead, each period is shaped by complex and multilayered structures.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aims to identify the decisive turning points in the historical evolution of dwelling and reveal these transformations' periodic, geographical, and thematic dimensions. As part of a SLR, 204 publications were examined and coded after a selection process; there was no time constraint placed on the examination process, and the oldest publication included for full text review from Scopus dates back to 1979; the period from 1979 to 2024 was evaluated. The most notable concentration emerged in the 2020s; studies from this period alone (5 years) account for approximately 37% of the total publications. According to the SLR, housing has historically been not just a physical structure or form of settlement, but a multidimensional social practice that is continuously redefined in the context of changing production relations, social structures, property regimes, state intervention, and crisis management.

Five fundamental breaks in the evolution of housing have been identified in the SLR: (1) the transition to settled life, where housing evolved from environmental adaptation to social organization (Prehistoric/Early Settlements); (2) the advent of industrial revolution, housing became a means of mass production and class differentiation on an urban scale (Industrialization and Urbanization); (3) in the welfare state era, housing was institutionalized as a social right, with an increase in state-led production (Welfare State/State Intervention); (4) with neoliberal reforms, housing was privatized, commodified, and financialized (Neoliberal Reforms and Privatization); and (5) during ecological and health crises, housing has been re-functionalized in the context of resilience, adaptation, and sustainability (Climate/Energy/Pandemic). The main themes and turning points in historical processes and their effects on housing are expressed in Figure 1. The main themes can be categorized into three main groups: Socio-spatial Formations, Politics, and Crisis (Fig. 1).

The evolution of dwelling was initially driven by the fundamental need for warmth and protection, which has persisted throughout history in various forms and scales. According to SLR, dwelling underwent significant changes during the discovery of America, the early conquests, and the establishment of colonies. From the 19th century onward, industrialization centered in Europe and North America has been associated with the reproduction of dwelling in relation to the labour force. Following this revolution, a process characterized by increasingly accelerating economic and political effects has continued to develop. After the World Wars, welfare state policies emerged in Western Europe during the 20th century, while in regions such as Eastern Europe and China, housing forms based on collective planning developed. Additionally, the fierce competition between capitalism and socialism constituted a different turning point in the evolution of the dwelling. In the post-1980s period, neoliberal policies have become dominant on a global scale; the transformation of housing into an investment vehicle, the privatization of ownership, and the increasing pressures of the rental market have emerged as global trends. On the other hand, themes such as post-socialist transitions, crises, and displacement processes illustrate that the temporal boundaries of these breaks are not always clear. Those hybrid forms have emerged in many contexts. For example, publicly funded housing inherited from the socialist era in Eastern Europe has simultaneously been subjected to both neoliberal privatization processes and collective spatial practices. These interlocking processes reveal non-linear, conflicting, and temporally dispersed transformations in the evolution of housing.

Therefore, the evolution of dwelling should be analyzed not only through periodic and structural breaks but also through their spatial, cultural, and institutional reflections of these breaks. The responses to the same historical process in different geographies can vary; for instance, energy transitions develop with strategies for transforming the aging housing stock in Germany, while in the U.S., they develop alongside the cultural exclusion risks of the green transition. Similarly, responses to the climate crisis may rely on traditional knowledge and forms of local resistance in some areas. At the same time, in other regions, they are restricted to technocratic and market-oriented solutions. This diversity shows that housing policies and spatial practices are context-specific and cannot be reduced to universal categories. Numerous housing articles have developed within the energy and climate crisis framework in recent years.

More broadly, this review contributes to the scholarly literature by offering a historically grounded, geographically diverse, and thematically integrated understanding of how housing has been theorized, politicized, and transformed. It moves away from single-context or single-period analyses by tracing the structural and ideological shifts across epochs—from the premodern to the post-pandemic. In doing so, it bridges con-

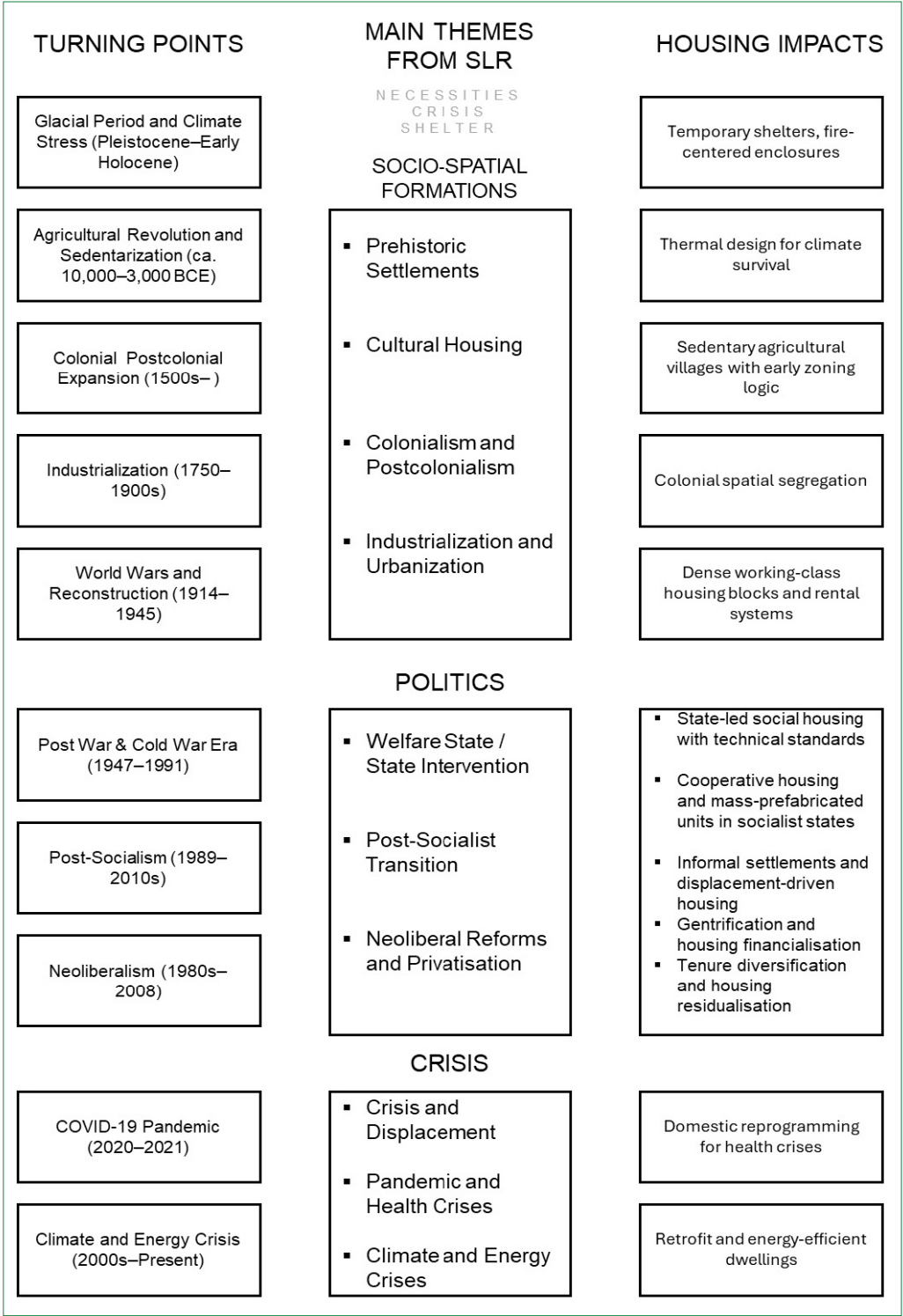


Figure 1. Historical breaks, thematic clusters, and housing impacts in the evolution of dwelling/mapping the evolution of dwelling: historical breaks, themes, and housing outcomes.

ceptual divides between housing as infrastructure, as policy instrument, and as a socio-political construct. This approach helps situate housing not merely within the logic of provision, but within systems of power, belonging, and exclusion.

Moreover, by examining how housing literature evolves in response to shifting crises—colonial, industrial, welfare-based, neoliberal, and ecological—this study reveals how academic narratives on housing are themselves historically

situated and politically charged. Thus, it not only maps housing transformations but also reflects on how the scholarly field has approached these transformations over time. In sum, this study contributes to the interdisciplinary literature on housing, planning, and urban transformation by providing a historically grounded and thematically integrated synthesis of dwelling evolution.

As a result, this study has systematically reviewed the historical evolution of dwelling through interdisciplinary frameworks concerning crises, transformations, and forms of intervention. Dwelling is not just a matter of obtaining a place; it is also a multi-layered arena of struggle extending from environmental sustainability to social justice, from state policies to individual everyday life—a fundamental need and an interdisciplinary field of study. Future studies are recommended to examine topics such as the rising urban inequalities in the global South, climate-induced migrations, and the role of new housing cooperatives in more detail. These lines of inquiry will not only deepen our understanding of housing transformations but also support the pursuit of more just, resilient, and inclusive urban futures.

Conflict of interest: The authors declare that there are no financial or personal conflicts of interest related to this study.

Funding and support: No financial support was received for the conduct or publication of this research.

Use of artificial intelligence (AI): No AI-based writing or editing tools were used at any stage of this study.

Authorship contributions: Research/project coordination – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Conceptualisation – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Research design and structuring – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Methodology – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Data sources and documentation – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Data collection and/or processing – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Data analysis and/or interpretation – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Mapping/visualisation – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Literature review – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Writing – original draft – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.; Writing – review and editing – İ.E., T.D., E.Ö.A.A.

Peer-review: This manuscript was evaluated through a double-blind peer-review process. The manuscript was revised in accordance with the reviewers' comments.

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