



Department of Architecture

**Reconstruction of the Built Environment in Post-Conflict Contexts: A Case Study of
Benghazi After the 2014-2017 Conflict**

By

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Abstract

This thesis examines the post-conflict reconstruction of Benghazi, Libya, following the armed conflict of 2014-2017, focusing on the challenges, approaches, and effectiveness of reconstruction efforts from the perspective of householders. Using a mixed-methods approach combining quantitative surveys of 238 householders with qualitative interviews of 10 participants, the study provides a comprehensive analysis of reconstruction processes and their impacts on the urban environment and local communities.

The research findings reveal significant disparities between implemented reconstruction projects and community needs. Survey data indicates widespread dissatisfaction with recovery efforts, with only 1.76 out of 5 mean satisfaction score regarding municipal efforts to restore life and activity in the city. The study found that 31.1% of residents were displaced to other cities during the conflict, while 27.3% reported minor damage to their homes and 8.4% experienced complete destruction. Notably, 88% of respondents received no aid or support during the conflict period.

The research identifies several critical challenges in Benghazi's reconstruction process: fragmented governance structures, unresolved property rights issues stemming from Libya's socialist era, limited community consultation (71% reporting no consultation about projects), and inadequate coordination among reconstruction actors. Unlike the internationally coordinated reconstruction of Mostar or the private sector-driven rebuilding of Beirut, Benghazi's recovery has been characterized by competing priorities and limited stakeholder coordination.

This study contributes to the field in three key ways: first, by providing empirical evidence of reconstruction challenges from a householder perspective; second, by examining the relationship between physical reconstruction and social recovery in the Libyan context; and third, by developing practical recommendations for improving reconstruction processes based on community needs and experiences. The research offers insights into how post-conflict reconstruction can better serve affected populations while promoting sustainable urban development.

The findings suggest that successful post-conflict reconstruction requires not only technical expertise and financial resources but also careful attention to social dynamics, property rights, and community needs. The study recommends an integrated approach to reconstruction that balances immediate recovery needs with long-term development goals while emphasizing the importance of community participation and transparent governance.

Key Words: Benghazi – Heritage - Libya - Post-Conflict - Reconstruction - Urban Development- Old city.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to my late father, whose love, guidance, and influence continue to inspire me every day. His values and strength remain a constant source of motivation in all that I do.

To my mother for her unwavering support and sacrifices, and to my siblings for their love and encouragement throughout this journey.

I also extend my gratitude to my mentors and colleagues for their invaluable guidance.

Finally, to the people of Benghazi, whose resilience motivates my work in post-conflict reconstruction.

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List of Abbreviations

1 st GPP	The 1 st Generation Planning Project
CA	The Comprehensive Approach
CPR	Comprehensive post-conflict reconstruction
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
GIA	General Information Authority
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNA	Government of National Accord
GNS	General National Congress
GNU	The Libyan Government of National Unity
HH	Household
HIB	Housing and Infrastructure Bureau
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LNA	Libyan National Army
LYD	Libyan Dinar
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
ODAC	Organization for Developing Administrative Centres
PCR	Post-conflict Reconstruction
3GPP	The 3rd Generation Planning Project
UN	United Nations
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
UOB	The Urban Observatory of Benghazi
UPA	Urban Planning Agency-Libya
WHO	World Health Organization

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Chapter 1

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

In recent decades, the world has witnessed a significant shift in the nature of armed conflicts, moving from inter-state to intra-state warfare. This transformation is evidenced by the fact that 59 of 64 wars between 1945 and 1988 were civil conflicts, with approximately 80% of casualties inflicted by compatriots (Calame, 2005). These internal conflicts have profound and lasting impacts on social, economic, and institutional frameworks across multiple spatial scales, from national to local levels (Jabareen, 2013).

The repercussions of such conflicts extend far beyond immediate casualties, causing long-term damage to livelihoods, physical infrastructure, governing institutions, and social cohesion. Armed conflicts represent one of the most destructive forms of man-made disaster, fundamentally altering the fabric of affected societies (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga, 2016). The scale of human displacement is particularly striking, with the UNHCR (2014) reporting approximately 51.2 million people forcibly displaced worldwide by the end of 2013, including seven million registered refugees and ten million internally displaced persons.

The Middle East and North Africa region has been particularly affected by these dynamics, experiencing significant security challenges through changing political systems, governmental instability, and local divisions. In oil-producing countries like Libya, these challenges have intersected with rapid urbanization, with urbanization rates surging from 25% to 94.3% (Salhin, 2010). The 2011 Arab Spring catalysed further changes, transforming political regimes and, in many cases, leading to military conflicts between various factions.

Benghazi, Libya's second-largest city and the capital of Cyrenaica, exemplifies these complex dynamics. Following the 2011 revolution, the city experienced extreme events culminating in near-total control by armed groups. The subsequent confrontation with Libyan Arab Army forces in 2014 led to a three-year conflict that resulted in approximately 15,000 casualties and widespread destruction of the city's historical monuments, houses, and facilities. This conflict

forced thousands of residents to relocate to Benghazi's outskirts, spurring rapid but unplanned urban development in these peripheral areas.

Post-conflict reconstruction in such contexts involves more than merely restoring pre-conflict conditions. Contemporary research suggests it must encompass various interrelated activities aimed at rebuilding, development, and conflict prevention (Barakat, 2005a; Woodhouse, Miall, and Ramsbotham, 2005). Rather than simply returning to the status quo ante, reconstruction should comprise deliberate actions that create pathways to an improved future (Kreimer et al., 1998; Barakat, 2005).

The challenge of reconstruction is further complicated by issues of governance and legislation. While local laws and legislation play essential roles in sustainable planning, environmental conservation, and service provision, post-conflict areas often suffer from weak institutions and corruption. This institutional weakness can lead to the exploitation of laws for individual benefit, particularly in land acquisition (Haar and Leeuwen, 2013).

This study examines the challenges of post-conflict urban reconstruction in Benghazi, with particular attention to the complex interplay between physical rebuilding, social recovery, and institutional development. Through analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, it seeks to understand how reconstruction efforts can better serve community needs while promoting sustainable urban development. The research aims to contribute to both theoretical understanding of post-conflict reconstruction and practical knowledge for improving reconstruction outcomes in similar contexts.

1.2 Problem Statement

Benghazi's urban development trajectory has been significantly altered by political upheaval and conflict, transforming from a city of promising development to one facing complex reconstruction challenges. Before 2011, Benghazi was experiencing rapid development, attracting substantial international investment and hosting numerous construction companies engaged in billions of dollars worth of projects (El-Katiri, 2012). The city's development was guided by the Third-Generation Planning 2025, approved in 2009, with many major projects achieving approximately 70% completion (LEEAD Consulting, 2018; Kezeiri, 2020).

However, this development trajectory was dramatically interrupted by the 2011 Arab Spring revolution, leading to the collapse of governmental institutions and the suspension of major construction projects. The situation deteriorated further when, in 2014, the city became engulfed in a major military conflict (World Bank, 2023). This armed conflict had devastating consequences, resulting in widespread destruction of the urban centre and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of residents.

The conclusion of the military conflict in 2017 left Benghazi facing unprecedented challenges in urban reconstruction and development. The post-conflict period has been characterized by significant urban expansion, driven by the need to accommodate displaced populations and establish new government service centres (INDRA, 2017). This situation has been further complicated by the national political fragmentation since 2014, with the emergence of competing governments and parliaments, leading to institutional weakness, increased corruption, and ongoing political instability (World Bank, 2023; Macaraniag, 2019).

The city's post-conflict urban development has occurred in distinct phases. The initial phase (2011-2014) saw rapid urban growth following the revolution. The second phase, during the military conflict, witnessed significant urban expansion beyond the Third Generation Planning boundaries as the city struggled to accommodate forcibly displaced residents (UN-Habitat, 2018). The third phase, from late 2017 to 2020, has been marked by continued urban development driven by the need to house displaced populations and establish new service centres to replace those destroyed in the old city centre (LEEAD Consulting, 2018). Despite the scale of destruction, which necessitates extensive international support, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) remains the sole international organization actively collaborating with the local municipality in reconstruction efforts. Studies estimate that the damage to Benghazi's historic core alone requires billions of dollars in funding and long-term intervention (Atabay et al., 2022; Elfeituri, 2021).

Moreover, in the five years following the ceasefire (2017–2022), little tangible progress was made at the official level in terms of post-conflict reconstruction, leaving displaced families uncertain about the fate of their homes and the implementation of compensation schemes. The delays in city centre reconstruction have been attributed to various bureaucratic and political obstacles, with complex property ownership issues inherited from the socialist era being a major impediment (Valdeolmillos, Boussaa, and Madandola, 2024). The lack of clear ownership records has significantly hindered the identification of legitimate beneficiaries for

compensation, further stalling reconstruction efforts (Fitzgerald and Megerisi, 2017). These challenges highlight the pressing need for a structured and inclusive approach to post-conflict urban reconstruction in Benghazi, ensuring that rebuilding efforts address both physical and socio-political dimensions.

This research aims to address these challenges by providing evidence-based recommendations for effective reconstruction strategies. The study seeks to understand how reconstruction efforts can better serve community needs while promoting sustainable urban development, drawing on both international experience and local perspectives to inform future policy and practice.

1.3 Study Significance

There has been a significant amount of scientific study into the many aspects of urban development, such as its patterns, characteristics, environmental issues, and social, economic, and other effects. A few studies have also addressed the urban situation in post-conflict areas. One branch of urban study has newly begun to explore the relationship between the dynamics of urbanisation and the dynamics of war and violent conflict (Pech, Büscher and Lakes, 2018). There is cooperation between researchers and scientists in urbanisation and conflict, but it has been noted that cooperation does not exist between them in scientific discourse because of the vast differences in study methodologies (Pech and Lakes, 2017). Moreover, a geopolitical study has contributed to the effects of conflict and the transformation of political regimes and impacted the population's lives (Bădescu, 2018). Some social studies have also addressed social situations, such as focusing on displaced and migrant people who lost jobs (Alnafrh and Mouselli, 2020).

While a significant emphasis on rural regions has mostly affected ideas of warfare in Africa, the role of urban areas in the numerous types of conflict remains poorly understood; as a result, conflict studies and urban studies need to engage more closely with one another (Beall and Goodfellow, 2014). There are few trustworthy longitudinal studies of post-conflict healing processes, and many war-torn locations still need rigorous study (Calame, 2005).

This study will seek to address this by investigating the spatial effects of urban redevelopment in post-conflict using Benghazi as a case study. The investigation approach is

a mixed method based on examining the international experience; other cities worldwide have experienced the same conditions since the Second World War. This will enable an understanding of how each town dealt with these crises to make a recovery and reconstruction. This will involve discussing the role of displacement of people and communities in the urban development process during and post-conflict. Results will be in the form of multiple outcomes that include a comparative analysis of post-conflict reconstruction in various cities, a demonstration of the phases of reconstruction and urban development in Benghazi city, and an articulation of the role of local authorities in Benghazi. The outcome will be to recommend effective reconstruction strategies for Benghazi city.

1.4 Study Aims

This study aims to examine the reconstruction process in post-conflict Benghazi, focusing on its challenges, impacts, and key actors to develop effective and sustainable rebuilding strategies. It further contextualizes Benghazi's recovery within global post-conflict experiences to inform both theory and practice in urban reconstruction.

1.5 Study Objectives

- 1- To understand the reconstruction process in post-conflict contexts and the challenges associated with the reconstruction of cities after conflict.
- 2- To examine the armed conflict's impacts on residents in Benghazi city, Libya, including displacement of people and returns. Also, the impact of conflict on the urban environment, such as properties and public and historical buildings during the 2014-2017 conflict.
- 3- To investigate actors' efforts towards the population post-conflict in the phases of recovery and restabilising of Benghazi city.
- 4- To explore the perceptions of Benghazi's residents regarding the reconstruction of urban areas to provide recommendations for effective rebuilding strategies in Benghazi.

1.6 Study Questions

- 1- What does reconstruction in post-conflict contexts involve, and what challenges are associated with rebuilding cities after conflict?
- 2- What are the effects of the conflict in 2014-2017 in Benghazi city, Libya, on residents and the urban environment?
- 3- To what extent had and have been active actors contributing to the recovery and re-stabilization phase in Benghazi post-conflict?
- 4- What are the perceptions of Benghazi's residents regarding the reconstruction of urban areas based on their views and the study of international experiences in the reconstruction of cities after the conflict?

1.7 Study Methodology Overview

This study adopts a comprehensive methodological framework to examine post-conflict urban reconstruction in Benghazi. The research is structured into three interconnected phases, beginning with a systematic literature review that establishes a theoretical foundation for the study. This review explores key themes such as governance structures, community participation, and the relationship between physical rebuilding and social recovery. By critically analysing existing research, the study develops an analytical framework to understand the complexities of urban reconstruction in post-conflict settings.

To provide a comparative perspective, the study examines two international case studies Beirut and Mostar—which offer relevant insights into different reconstruction approaches. Beirut's reconstruction, particularly through the Solidere and Wa'd projects, highlights the role of private sector-led development and non-state actor involvement, demonstrating both the benefits and limitations of privatization in post-conflict urban recovery. In contrast, Mostar's reconstruction showcases the challenges associated with internationally coordinated efforts in a divided city, emphasizing the importance of stakeholder collaboration and social cohesion. These cases help contextualize Benghazi's unique challenges by drawing lessons from other post-conflict cities.

The study employs an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, consisting of quantitative and qualitative phases. The quantitative phase involves the distribution of structured questionnaires to 238 householders in Benghazi, focusing on displacement patterns, property damage, satisfaction with reconstruction efforts, community consultation experiences, and aid received. This phase provides broad statistical insights into the experiences and perspectives of Benghazi residents regarding the reconstruction process. The qualitative phase complements these findings through ten in-depth semi-structured interviews with selected survey respondents. These interviews explore personal experiences of displacement and return, perspectives on reconstruction priorities, governance and community participation, property rights issues, and concerns about cultural heritage preservation. The combination of these methods ensures a comprehensive understanding of both general trends and individual experiences.

Data from both phases are systematically integrated and analysed using a combination of statistical methods, thematic analysis, and cross-referencing with comparative case studies. The statistical analysis of survey responses identifies key patterns and trends, while the thematic analysis of interview transcripts extracts deeper insights into the lived experiences of Benghazi residents. Findings from the international case studies provide additional context, allowing for a comparative assessment of Benghazi's reconstruction challenges. This structured methodological approach ensures a holistic understanding of the reconstruction process, enabling the study to propose practical and sustainable recovery strategies based on empirical evidence and global best practices.

1.8 Thesis Structure

This thesis will be divided into nine chapters to cover all stages of this study as follows:

Chapter One: The introduction chapter included the background of the study, problem statement, aim, objectives of the study, questions, an overview of the study methodology and thesis outlines.

Chapter two: Literature review chapter, a survey of the literature that critically examines the pertinent theories and ideas supporting the idea of reconstruction post-conflict and other

factors. A comprehensive literature review is conducted by re-examining past studies focusing on the strategies of post-conflict reconstruction.

Chapter three: This chapter will explore the urban areas reconstruction in post-conflict cities by reviewing the international examples of the following cities: Beirut and Mostar.

Chapter four: The aim of the "Challenges of Post-Conflict Reconstruction" chapter is to explore and critically analyse the various obstacles and complexities associated with rebuilding cities in post-conflict contexts. This chapter seeks to identify the key challenges that hinder reconstruction efforts, including political instability, economic constraints, social fragmentation, and the destruction of physical infrastructure. Additionally, it examines the interplay between local and international actors, the role of governance, and the difficulties of coordinating large-scale reconstruction initiatives. By addressing these challenges, the chapter provides a framework for understanding the multifaceted nature of post-conflict reconstruction and offers insights into how these challenges can be mitigated to facilitate more effective rebuilding strategies.

Chapter five:

This chapter discusses the methodology employed in the study, the rationale behind method selection, and the approaches taken to meet each study objective. It also includes both qualitative and quantitative methodologies, including questionnaires, interviews, and site visits. The primary and secondary data sources, as well as the design of the quantitative and qualitative study and analysis, are all covered in this chapter.

The most practical study tool, the manner of data collection, whether online or offline and sampling techniques to choose the required sample are all covered in this chapter. The methods of sampling, the sample size, and the justification for using a particular sampling technique are all supported by the type of data collected. Data protection, anonymity, data secrecy, and participant rights protection are all covered in terms of ethical considerations. It explains the study methodology techniques used to accomplish the study's goals and objectives. The rationale behind how the study questions are created for data collecting is also explained. The chapter went on to discuss the chapter's timeline, study methods, kind of sampling, data analysis methods, thesis write-up, validity and reliability, triangulation, ethical considerations in the research, and chapter summary.

Chapter six: In this section, the study will address the Libyan city of Benghazi in several aspects related to urban development and reconstruction in post-conflict contexts.

It will cover the essential previous literature on Benghazi and urban development through a systematic review of the most important published and unpublished secondary literary sources such as reports and documents.

This chapter provides data on the city of Benghazi from the introduction to the necessary information related to planning and statistics. This chapter will explore the different stages of conflict and instability in Benghazi before, during and after the conflicts.

Also included are reports, data, and assessments of building damage, as well as on displaced people and returnees from displacement. In addition to the development position of the city prior to the conflict and the Arab Spring, this report includes statistics on urban projects that have stagnated. Along with the information and budgets of ongoing and abandoned projects, it will also consider the actors in the city of Benghazi after the conflict and during the stabilization phase.

Chapter seven: The findings and data analysis section of this thesis contains the findings of the empirical study that was carried out on the residents of Benghazi households. The findings that were gathered from the survey, which consisted of the collecting of quantitative data, are presented with the use of diagrammatic representations such as tables and graphs. However, this study used sequential explanatory mixed techniques as part of its methodology. The qualitative data collected from the interviews, or outcomes, are presented under themes that support the study problem. The in-depth, comprehensive data gathered from the semi-structured interviews are used to support and validate the survey's findings.

Chapter eight: The "Discussions Chapter" provides a critical analysis of the most important quantitative and qualitative findings that were gathered from the data analysis, as well as how these findings link to the theoretical arguments that were carried out in the literature study.

This chapter discusses the findings that concur with the review of the literature and those that diverge from it. Any new information or findings resulting from the extensive study are acknowledged. The discussions so triangulate with the theoretical presumptions made in the literature study as well as the study problems and questions.

Chapter nine:

The final chapter of this study presents the study's conclusion. Firstly, the chapter provides a concise review of all the preceding chapters, as well as the achievements of the aims and objectives outlined in chapter one. The end of this chapter includes the knowledge contributions to theory and practice. Limitations encountered throughout the study will also be outlined in this chapter. Finally, the directions for future studies.

Chapter 2

2 Literature Review

2.1 Review of Current Literature

This chapter establishes the theoretical foundation for understanding reconstruction in post-conflict cities, directly addressing the first study question: "What does reconstruction in post-conflict contexts involve, and what challenges are associated with rebuilding cities after conflict?" By analysing the literature on global experiences, the chapter provides insights into the critical steps and strategies necessary for effective post-conflict urban development. It also delves into the unique challenges of reconstructing cities post-conflict, using case studies from Beirut and Mostar as examples to illustrate the complexities and approaches involved in such efforts.

2.2 Defining the Scope of Post-conflict Reconstruction

After reviewing the previously published material on the subject of reconstruction, it emerged that spatial and chronological context and scientific specialisation inform the emphasis of previous studies. Therefore, here we discuss the definition offered by international institutions regarding the process of post-conflict reconstruction, including how scholars and researchers view it. After examining the controversies around terminology, this study will adopt the precise definition from which it proceeds and use it.

The origins of current definitions of post-conflict reconstruction are frequently attributed to two significant eras. Following the American Civil War, the term "reconstruction" became widely used to describe the method used to rebuild the structural, legal, and fabric of society in the South, the majority of which was done under the auspices of the victorious Northern government (Kirsch and Flint, 2011). A notable phase of reconstruction occurred in American history between 1863 and 1877, following the outbreak of the Civil War, which saw the extermination of 40 per cent of livestock. The cost of government expenditure on the war reached 3.3 billion US dollars, and most of the population emigrated to cities. Thus, US President Abraham Lincoln embarked on a practical plan to embark upon a reconstruction that would ensure national unity. Subsequently, following his assassination, his successor Johnson

Andrew opposed the planned reconstruction project. Despite this, US Congress formed military zones in the South using the army to administer new policies until a federal government was formed. It abolished slavery and allowed marriage to slaves and extended the right to vote to adult men (Foner, 2020).

The term “reconstruction” was also referenced in the Marshall Plan, which set out a strategy for post-World War II Europe. The Marshall Plan was an economically oriented project for European Reconstruction after the end of World War II. It was developed by General George Marshall, Chief of Staff of the US Army during World War II, and US Secretary of State from January 1947. He announced the plan as an example of the United States financing a war-ravaged continent’s physical and economic reconstruction. Thus, the subsequent policies and restoration represent another noteworthy instance of the methodical and extensive restoration of a conflict-torn area (Barakat 2005).

Numerous studies have dealt with the term while applying differing methodologies. The reconstruction of cities after the conflict has taken on a broad scope in security and development studies (Dawar and Ferreira, 2021; Bdaiwi et al., 2020). The African Union (2006) defines post-conflict reconstruction and development as a comprehensive set of actions seeking to address the needs of external states after conflict, including those of affected populations, the prevention of conflicts from escalating, avoiding a relapse into violence and address root causes to promote sustainable peace. The vision for post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa is one of renewed and sustainable development, with stages that include transformation post-emergency (short-term, medium-term) and approaches to long-term development.

Frequently, war-torn countries experience a severe economic slump combined with structural problems, so the role of foreign aid is critical in the process of recovery and rebuilding. The World Bank is one of the primary organisations that assists “post-conflict” economies. The reconstruction of an affected country’s socio-economic structure is an important aspect of facilitating a peaceful transition from conflict. According to the World Bank, post-conflict reconstruction is the process of assisting a country’s transition from violence to peace by reconstructing its socio-economic structure (Alnafrah and Mouselli, 2020). In contrast, the United Nations emphasises the necessity of political change, as defined by Boutros-Ghali in 1995 (Barakat, 2005). The African Union and the World Bank identify post-conflict reconstruction as a major concern and responsibility. In Africa, several countries suffer from

violence, which leads the African Union's reconstruction efforts to focus on ways to implement and maintain peace. Meanwhile, the World Bank's role is principally to support economic regeneration. Despite the multiple meanings applied to reconstruction in post-conflict situations, there is widespread agreement that reconstruction is a process of resolving the political, institutional, and social circumstances that contributed to conflict (Martín-Díaz, 2014).

According to Samih et al. (2020), the phrase "post-conflict reconstruction" refers to the process of reconstructing a community following the conclusion of a conflict. When physical infrastructure is restored or repaired, the economy is also restarted, governmental institutions are reformed, refugees are repatriated, the psychological traumas of civilians and combatants are treated, reconciliation between warring parties is initiated, and justice is served. Thus, the reconstruction process is a complex and multipart process associated with many study disciplines. Undoubtedly, it is not limited to urban fabric and construction only. Rather, it is an opportunity to rethink planning; as Bădescu (2018; 2015) argues, the reconstruction process is a signal to recover and move forward with reconstruction and consider the urban environment and how societies deal with the past, an extraordinarily complex and inclusive situation.

Jabareen (2013) highlights recent developments in the literature on post-conflict reconstruction, viewing it as an effective strategy limited to humanitarian aid and referencing a global agenda linked to global stability and security. However, Barakat's (2020) approach is based on policy and practice that conceives of post-conflict reconstruction as a concept. He argues that post-conflict reconstruction involves a set of holistic actions carried out as part of an integrated process to revive economic and social growth while also establishing a calm atmosphere designed to prevent a return to violence. In this approach, post-conflict reconstruction is viewed as a multi-dimensional process, including interconnected social, cultural, political, and economic components on the level of the municipality, the province, the nation, and the world. This idea is predicated on the premise that post-conflict reconstruction necessitates the utilisation of cross-disciplinary approaches to problem-solving to successfully navigate the obstacles associated with the recovery process.

Coyne (2005) and Martín-Díaz (2014) share Barakat's comprehensive view of reconstruction, which includes constructing and restoring physical infrastructure and utilities, social services, reform, and structural transformation in the political, economic, social and security spheres. Samih et al., 2020; Toshikj and Zsemary, 2019) also argued that the reconstruction process

should go beyond physical reconstruction to address social issues and revitalise communities as part key components of the comprehensive strategy of reconstruction. This involves contributing to a return to stability to achieve the chief goal, which is peace throughout society.

It is vital to revisit pre-conflict conditions to understand the causes of unrest and address them within a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach. This is especially important because it determines the country's future shape, which is primarily informed by the dedication and abilities of local populations, particularly civil society organisations, to keep the renewal process moving (Habib, 2020).

2.3 Conflict Effects

Conflicts may occur due to several factors or just one, such as devastating economic conditions, ethnic diversity, violations of human rights, and political instability. Every conflict is distinctive in its duration and severity, leading to social, economic, and human devastation. Conflicts lead to the breakdown of institutions and force a large number of people to flee their homes as refugees or become internally displaced. The greatest desperation would result from the loss of the built environment and the city's cultural heritage, which are occasionally the focus of enemy attacks.

Armed conflict, civil war, ethnic conflict, and violent conflict all refer to situations that destabilise civil society, including social, economic, environmental, technical, and physical ones. A civil war is one of the most devastating types of warfare a country can experience since it impacts all economic and social operations. It typically lasts for a long time (for example, Angola 27 years, Liberia 23 years, South Africa 20 years, Lebanon 15 years, and Sierra Leone 11 years) (Alnafrh and Mouselli, 2020). The duration of such a conflict result in the near-total destruction of infrastructure and public utilities, the deterioration of the functional capacity of state institutions, negative impacts on social capital (breakdown of citizen trust), and human capital (brain drain and disruption of rehabilitation, training, and educational activities). The worst consequence of such a conflict is the disintegration of national identity, the primary pillar of society and state unity (ibid).

Since the end of the Cold War, there has been a global rebirth of civil strife characterised by small-scale, non-conventional warfare involving groups most easily defined by language, religion, or location rather than nationality. Typically, these conflicts lack uniforms, commanders, regulations, treaties, conventions, exemptions, beginnings, and endings; their seeds are planted in the dirty ground of cultural identity and irredentism. Long masked by macro-political disputes, inter-ethnic violence is now pervasive. After World War II, the nature of conflicts changed significantly, with a noticeable shift from international to domestic disputes. According to Calame (2005), out of the 64 wars that took place between 1945 and 1988, 59 were civil wars, and 80% of the casualties were inflicted by fellow citizens.

The effects of the conflict have often been detrimental to urban communities in the Middle East. Decades of instability have transformed several local communities into sites for resolving political conflicts. The region's naturally conflict-prone nature was made worse by a notable increase in urban violence in 2010. Nevertheless, many war-torn cities are currently making headway toward rebuilding, which necessitates a review of earlier cases in the area to recognise the essential elements for making development.

Post-conflict zones are marked by a lack of cohesiveness and high levels of inequality among inhabitants, leading to environmental and social instability. Government and financial efforts to rebuild focus on areas where conflict has occurred. Diverse parties, including the United Nations and its agencies, donor nations, international and national NGOs, national governments, and global financial institutions, have devoted greater attention and resources to managing post-conflict rebuilding during the past decade. Rebuilding war-torn countries necessitate addressing three key aspects: institutional weaknesses, economic and social challenges, and security situation (ibid).

Conflict is a destructive state characterised by violence and social inequality rather than a single catastrophic event (Rylko-Bauer and Farmer, 2016). It covers the typical economic issues of expansion, inclusion, stability, and sustainability and the political uncertainty of mending bonds between individuals, communities, and local and national institutions. Warfare includes social, political, and economic components that are not present in the consequences of earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, or tsunamis, despite the possibility that they will cause similar sorts and quantities of physical damage. In war-torn regions, radical shifts in political systems, forms of administration, and ethnic tensions are frequent, as are conflicting sources of authority from governmental, non-governmental, international, corporate, and military players. Given

the extreme fragmentation of such environments, it stands to reason that, despite the socioeconomic and political dimensions of vulnerability, the types of social unity rooted in a collective and impersonal "natural" disaster would be significantly less applicable in the aftermath of conflict (Barakat, 2005a).

2.4 Environmental Impact

Conflicts are a severe type of catastrophe not just because of the massive loss of life but also because of the long-term effects on livelihoods, physical infrastructures, governmental institutions, social stability, and trust. Conflicts impact people's lives because of the widespread death count and the harm to livelihoods and infrastructure that results. Conflicts, therefore, have a lasting effect on social, economic, and political institutions, making it challenging for nations to recover and return to normal on their own. Following a conflict, communities and governments may struggle to rebuild their social and economic institutions while preserving order and establishing lasting peace. Interventions in post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) are necessary for the recovery process from both internal and foreign players. The primary forms of these efforts are soft and complex infrastructures.

Armed conflict significantly damages metropolitan areas and alters cultures and communities by incurring severe losses to people, the environment, and resources. The built environment and the lifestyle of locals are affected in the long run, if not permanently (Steinø, Dabaieh, and Ben Bih, 2020).

Armed conflicts can have immediate or long-term adverse effects on human health and the environment by causing general or localised environmental damage. Environmental and vital infrastructure damage can directly affect the human condition while reducing chances for economic recovery during the post-conflict rebuilding period. Due to the expansion of quarries and riverbed excavations used for cement, the reconstruction of built-up regions also negatively impacted available water resources, impacting groundwater table and local streamflow, as observed in Lebanon in 2006 and Iraq in 2016 (Zwijnenburg et al., 2020).

Diverse sides have attacked environmental facilities throughout the MENA conflict zones to terrorise and evict civilian populations, gain more territory, and alter demographic balances for

their benefit. Recent conflicts in the MENA region illustrate challenges in accurately counting civilian casualties and separating civilian populations from personal bodyguards, state security personnel, and local armed organisations.

Reconstruction can have various undesirable environmental effects, so it is crucial to consider them and, where necessary, reduce them. Since conflict is incredibly harmful to the environment, it is crucial to consider these potential adverse effects and reduce them when feasible throughout reconstruction. As a result of the environmental damage caused by the infrastructure restoration in Iraq, which included oil spills, contaminated water, and marshland destruction, many people were forced to leave their homes and still face significant problems with a shortage of drinking water (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga, 2018).

2.5 Internal Displacement

By June 2019, conflicts had displaced more than 70 million people globally, of which around 41 million were internally displaced, and over 26 million were refugees (Samih et al., 2020).

During the 1990s in Bosnia and Croatia, internally displaced people and other vulnerable people most often struggled to find shelter because they were not permitted to occupy local structures preserved in the name of cultural heritage (Barakat, 2020). For many, the items they recover from their previous residence are valuable and culturally significant.

Families of Afghan refugees generally arrive in Peshawar, Pakistan, with very little. They bring cattle for economic survival or carpets as movable wealth if feasible. In addition, many displacements showed the refugees that wooden beams are impossible to repair, requiring their salvage for new dwellings. Since the Nakba in 1948, it has been usual for older women in Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon to preserve the old, oversized keys to their previous homes and care for them (Barakat, 2020). Attacking infrastructure enables militias and state security forces to relocate urban populations, threaten citizens deemed enemy sympathisers, and get access to the facilities that support modern life (Sowers, Weinthal and Zawahri, 2017). For instance, cities in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) area have lately witnessed "extraordinary" damage and "the worst refugee crisis since World War II." (Khalaf, 2020).

2.6 Post-conflict Reconstruction Phases

Post-conflict reconstruction is a complex and multifaceted process that requires a structured approach to effectively address the challenges faced by societies emerging from conflict. Given the scale and diversity of reconstruction efforts, it is essential to adopt a phased framework that ensures a systematic transition from immediate recovery to long-term stability. This framework helps to organize and analyse the key aspects of reconstruction, providing a clear structure for understanding how different elements interact over time.

The reconstruction process can generally be categorized into four main phases: Relief and War Damage Phase, which focuses on immediate humanitarian aid, emergency response, and damage assessment; Recovery and Stability Phase, where efforts shift toward rebuilding essential infrastructure, restoring governance, and ensuring security; Domestic and Foreign Actors, which examines the role of various stakeholders, including governments, international organizations, and private entities, in shaping reconstruction efforts; and Perceptions of Urban Reconstruction, which captures local perspectives on the effectiveness and inclusivity of rebuilding initiatives. These phases collectively provide a comprehensive framework for assessing the progress and challenges of post-conflict reconstruction, ensuring that efforts are both contextually relevant and strategically effective.

The **Relief and War Damage Phase** marks the immediate response following the cessation of hostilities. This phase focuses on addressing urgent humanitarian needs, such as providing food, shelter, and medical care to the affected population. Rapid and efficient relief efforts are critical in stabilizing post-conflict environments and mitigating the risk of further violence. Research by Öberg, Möller and Wallenstein (2009) emphasises that well-coordinated relief efforts can significantly reduce the likelihood of crises reigniting. Additionally, assessing the scale of war damage is a vital component of this phase, as it provides the foundation for future reconstruction activities (Ghandour and Jezzini, 2018). Communal resilience, demonstrated in places like Lebanon during the 2006 conflict, underscores the role of community solidarity in navigating the immediate aftermath of war (Nuwayhid et al., 2011).

Following the initial relief, the **Recovery and Stability Phase** shifts the focus to restoring essential services and rebuilding infrastructure. This includes the reconstruction of homes, schools, hospitals, and other critical facilities necessary for the long-term recovery of affected communities. The active involvement of local communities in this process is paramount, as it

fosters ownership and accountability, which are crucial for sustainable recovery (Nuwayhid et al., 2011). Additionally, reestablishing security and the rule of law during this phase is critical to preventing future conflict and ensuring stability (Beiki et al., 2020). Social policies that address inequalities and promote inclusivity are also key components, as they help prevent grievances that could lead to renewed tensions (Cocozzelli, 2006).

The role of **Domestic and Foreign Actors** throughout the reconstruction process cannot be overstated. Local governments, international organizations, and NGOs all contribute to the recovery, bringing a range of resources and expertise. However, the collaboration between these actors, while beneficial, can also introduce complications. Power dynamics, competition for resources, and differing priorities often challenge the effectiveness of reconstruction efforts (Boroumand et al., 2023). The involvement of foreign actors, while crucial for providing additional resources, can lead to unintended dependencies that undermine the development of local capacity if not managed properly (Rondinelli and Montgomery, 2005).

Finally, the Perceptions of Urban Reconstruction play a critical role in determining the long-term success of post-conflict efforts. Public attitudes toward reconstruction can either support or hinder recovery efforts. When the reconstruction process is perceived as inclusive and equitable, it can strengthen social cohesion and foster trust in local governance (Lubin and Saleem, 2019). Conversely, perceived inequalities or exclusions in the distribution of benefits may generate resentment and fuel social unrest (Zhang et al., 2023). Therefore, understanding local perceptions and addressing the concerns of affected populations are essential to ensuring that reconstruction efforts are sustainable and socially just.

In conclusion, post-conflict reconstruction requires a holistic and phased approach, with each phase building on the previous one. The active participation of diverse actors, combined with a keen understanding of local perceptions, is crucial for achieving not only physical recovery but also long-term peace and development. Effective post-conflict reconstruction is, therefore, as much about rebuilding trust and communities as it is about rebuilding physical infrastructure.

2.7 Built Environments Post-conflict

Conflicts that effect cities leave clear devastation in the form of shattered buildings, destroyed roads, scattered cultural heritage, and economic collapse. Immediately after the conflict ends, there is a period of peace talks, requiring the legitimising of new authorities, which often results in ongoing instability, adding to the distress to residents caused by loss of life and permanent disabilities. Destroyed cities need direct intervention after the cessation of hostilities or the victory of one party over another, often leading to decades-long developmental endeavours (Barakat, 2020).

Restoration of 'normal' life in the city usually takes place after a transitional phase, during which the essential machinery to get the economy up and running must be attended to, as well as the essential structural components of the government and judicial processes. Resources also need to be dedicated to restoring physical structures, rebuilding the economy, and locating functioning structures to use for the purposes of governance and adjudication (Özerdem, 2015). In the transitional phase that follows the cessation of conflict in a city, during the transition to stability, temporary or transitional authorities and actors seek to try to rebuild the city and the urban environment with the assistance of other parties. After conflicts conclude, cities can struggle to implement recovery strategies (Samih et al., 2020).

When it comes to assessing the space and city during the rebuilding phase, perceptions are frequently constrained and do not always encompass the full spectrum of spatial diversity present in urban environments (Steinø, Dabaieh and Ben Bih, 2020). Between popular nostalgia and professional ambition, the process of post-conflict reconstruction is typically laden with conflict. Each faction feels its assumptions best reflect pre- conflict urban growth. Meanwhile, such strategies must be acknowledged as belonging to overall rehabilitation efforts (Calame, 2005).

An examination of the various literature and case studies relating to post-conflict cities revealed that no common method could guarantee effective conflict-free reconstruction of post-conflict towns (Malas, 2013). In 2014, Kassouha proposed three options for urban recovery:

- 1) Maintaining the city's image by rebuilding it as it was before the conflict (Repetition); this strategy necessitates significant investment for post-conflict countries owing to the

conflict's economic consequences. As a result, the global community may be able to assist in the funding of reconstruction initiatives.

- 2) They were renovating the city's existing structure based on what was left behind after the battle. This strategy may be feasible for the state with the cooperation of the local active actors.
- 3) Building new structures to give the city a fresh look (Kassouha, 2014). The city might be viewed as a private investment zone (Serag, 2017).

Kassouha (2014) states that the criteria for selecting one of these techniques are determined by the social and economic relationships, financial capabilities, historical significance, and the severity of the damage. It is also essential to consider the context while developing post-conflict reconstruction methods.

Once it has begun, successful rebuilding is often defined by a gradual reduction in foreign aid in labour and finance. While a high level of assistance may be more beneficial in the short-term, long-term aid can complicate autonomous regeneration due to reliance on foreign donations or expertise rather than local resources. However, outside assistance can have both positive and negative long-term repercussions, even where it presents an opportunity to reconsider architecture and urban practises and escape from erroneous judgments made in the past (Steinø, Dabaieh and Ben Bih, 2020).

Barakat (2005) argued that post-conflict city reconstructions are always problematic, whether the decision is to seize the possibility to free the area for development or to restore features of the pre-conflict built environment. In their work, Steinø, Dabaieh and Ben Bih (2020) are chiefly concerned with the region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), opining that new forms of urban settlement are beneficial in terms of the quality and design of urban space, the building processes used, and escaping the restriction to re-establish pre-conflict conditions.

2.7.1 Urban Renewal

Broadly, the literature review conducted for this study found that most of the literature views post-conflict reconstruction as an opportunity to rebuild cities, so they are better than pre-conflict. It encourages architects, planners, and agencies to view rebuilding cities as an opportunity to advance; it also recognises that extraordinary, ephemeral conditions create opportunities in post-crisis cities. Generally, researchers urge those engaged in reconstruction

to take advantage of any opportunities to integrate improvements that arise (Moreton, 2015; Amartunga and Haigh, 2011; Charlesworth, 2006).

In the period following World War II, the movement for urban renewal gained momentum across Europe. The relationship between urban form and social welfare was studied with unparalleled enthusiasm and optimism. Many post-conflict rebuilding projects aim to correct pre-conflict problems or reconfigure sites to provide contemporary conveniences, health, amenity, and zoning (Calame, 2005).

When the city of Warsaw was destroyed in World War II, thousands of citizens who had previously lived in the countryside returned to a post-apocalyptic environment, almost entirely demolished. The Warsaw ‘soldier-architects’ were tasked with protecting historical documents and designing plans to rebuild under the German occupation. Their joint efforts, which began with nothing, finally restored inner Warsaw to its previous appearance through a laborious study and rebuilding programme (ibid).

The tragedy of Dresden serves as a significant case study, showing how a suffering governmental entity and affected local community can come to terms with the loss of a beloved ancient city. Prior to the Second World War, the town had been a major cultural centre, but in 1945, allied bombardment devastated nearly 85 per cent of the built environment. The German authorities sought to restore traditional facades and structures in historical areas where possible. Still, the outcome was an imperfect copy of former streetscapes, whose representational pretensions counterattacked the GDR’s social and economic reality. It is reasonable to suppose that the work and money associated with the outdated rebuilding programme were weighed against intangible public advantages and perceived sentimental attachments to destroyed monuments (Calame, 2005).

2.8 Tensions Around Approaches to Reconstruction

In some post-conflict nations, infrastructure development can lead to exploitation and hence promote violence. Due to the rising construction cost following rebuilding, the dominant groups in society may take regenerated territories and exploit their resources. According to Unruh and Shalaby (2012), increased tension and instability are exacerbated by the engagement of politically and militarily influential people in infrastructure investments. Local elites’ ability to control infrastructure resources stymies conflict-affected societies’ growth. At the same

time, corruption is common in post-conflict countries in all government areas. Corruption is a PCR activity that promotes the authority of elites while also increasing people's susceptibility (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga, 2016).

Housing reconstruction after conflict and other crises is also frequently referenced in the literature as having significant effects beyond providing permanent residences, including physical and mental health and well-being (Barakat and Zyck, 2011). Some researchers have claimed that rebuilding housing is a complicated process that, if not handled properly, may weaken governmental institutions, and perpetuate various forms of economic and social discrimination. While societal demand for housing is enormous, market supply is always constrained by economic uncertainty. As a result, in many instances, self-construction has become more popular as a tactic for individuals fleeing damaged areas and those seeking to build self-sufficient families during times of crisis.

Frequently, development projects in post-conflict reconstruction programs could be better designed and of better construction quality. This might be due to the inability of policymakers to consider local circumstances, requirements, and capacities. According to Lefebvre (2014), top-down actors are generally linked to and determine 'political strategy', possessing 'an ideologically justified political notion of space' through representation. Post-conflict, political authorities or actors can shape the space according to the identity they want the city to have in the context of national and international politics (Forde, 2016).

Therefore, it is evident from the literature that civic engagement is ideally sought throughout a project's earliest design and planning stages to ensure that reconstruction efforts are applicable and address the needs of all community segments (Earnest, 2015). Research indicates that post-conflict rebuilding should strive to be "open and inclusive," although practical challenges often arise. For instance, Harrowell (2016) notes that local authorities, who are responsible for both constructing and deconstructing structures, may not fully capture all viewpoints, even when residents are involved. This highlights the complexity of achieving truly inclusive civic engagement in post-conflict environments. The discussion around reorienting spatial politics and addressing residents' needs will be explored further in later sections, where it can be supported by the findings of this study.

Informal reactions to housing shortages are as much a component of the post-conflict political economy of dwelling and welfare as an official planning strategy. We contend that formal

methods are only possible because of the rise of informal housing practices. Allowing informal buildings, for example, meets immediate housing requirements and subdues calls for further government action but does not provide people with legal ownership rights, leaving future redevelopment and rent gaps open (Samih et al., 2020). For example, internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Mostar returned to their houses or purchased new ones in the area to which they belonged, although the government had mostly disregarded them for years. It became the responsibility of residents to rebuild their properties. However, not all the people of Beirut could return to their homes in the town centre since they could not pay their living expenses, and the city centre became abandoned (ibid).

Changes in urban design and architectural production can also be directly connected to the shock of the devastation when implementing any post-conflict reconstruction strategy and to the many stresses experienced by the individuals who design the architecture and make space-related decisions during and after a conflict (Benbih, 2016).

Research suggests that successful post-conflict reconstruction often involves coordinating and collaborating with residents and policy officials at all levels, as this approach can help ensure that the changes are more widely observed and accepted (Steinø, Dabaieh, and Ben Bih, 2020). This collaboration can be particularly important when incorporating cutting-edge architectural and urban improvements, as it allows for the integration of diverse perspectives and needs. Additionally, focusing on the architectural rebuilding of specific buildings, rather than only on broad city reconstruction, can provide valuable insights into the geopolitical implications of reconstruction efforts in disputed cities (Boano and Martén, 2014). However, the effectiveness of such approaches depends heavily on the context and the level of community involvement, which existing literature highlights as crucial for the sustainability and acceptance of reconstruction initiatives. In addition to architectural rebuilding, memorials serve as a form of symbolic violence in post-conflict urban area reconfigurations. In the case of memorialisation's symbolic violence, the symbolic landscape is reshaped because of selective rebuilding and the creation of new buildings designed to promote the supremacy of a specific group. Geopolitically, selective rebuilding may be interpreted as a discourse of power when only structures associated with the memories of one group are restored, and those of others are left in ruins (Bădescu, 2018). During post-conflict reconstruction, 'spatial erasure' caused by conflict damage can often be reinforced (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

On the other hand, place-based identities can be positive in urban areas by being established at any size, whether national, regional, or local. Several planning theorists have suggested that place-based initiatives – frequently local – are powerful tools for promoting social cohesion, agreement, and unity (Stephenson, 2010). Such place-based planning efforts have extra relevance in countries where there are highly intense factional rivalries, as they might be strategies to combat entrenched factions. Reflecting upon place-based identities is beneficial, particularly in regions torn by conflict, as the promotion of regional identity to offset the divide can be seen in instances of Northern Ireland or Ulster identity promotion (Nagle and Clancy, 2012).

Mady and Chettiparamb (2017) point out that attention to detail is essential to prevent a space-based identity from being associated with a specific group identity, reinforcing existing divisions. Work to build place-based identities must therefore be mindful of the formation of prevailing factional biases and must take deliberate steps to prevent such developments from occurring.

After the conflict in Beirut, rebuilding the city was characterised by the neutralisation of the space, the privatisation of the infrastructure, and memory erasure, so there would be no reminders of the conflict or the opposition. This is not the same as symbolic reconstruction as violence, in that it is directed at the past rather than towards another community.

2.9 Active Actors Post-conflict

After the Second World War, international players such as the United Nations, the IMF, the World Bank, UNDP, donor countries, and local and international NGOs devoted considerable attention and resources to post-conflict rebuilding. The UNDP recognised the need for a “collective” approach to meet the requirements of post-conflict nations, which includes assisting those who need immediate and efficient assistance to reach long-term peace (Barakat, 2005).

Samih et al. (2020) argue that the divergent goals of those players involved in the rebuilding procedure are considered a significant obstacle to the effectiveness of reconstruction programs. Multiple different organisations can become involved and reconciling their different objectives

might not be easy. Barakat (2003) identifies and highlights the significant stakeholders in reconstruction as follows:

Local Community: All groups in society must share in the responsibilities. To increase the feeling of ownership, all parties within the community should be included in decision-making and the reconstruction progression.

A non-governmental organisation (NGO): A non-governmental organisation (NGO) is an organisation that is active in a country's national affairs but is not associated with any government (Goldstein, 2010; Tag-Eldeen, 2020).

Government and Local Authorities: The government's role is to generate plans and policies for long-term reconstruction planning and achieve its vision for all the parties participating in the process. Local authorities are the local administrations and municipalities responsible for providing information about housing for the socially disadvantaged, public utilities, land ownership, population, and any other documents that may be required during the rebuilding endeavour.

International NGOs: International non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can engage in a wide variety of tasks during the post-conflict reconstruction period. The social and economic reconstruction field after the conflict is frequently worked on by several global NGOs, whether locally, regionally, or globally (Özerdem, 2015).

2.9.1 International Involvement in Reconstruction

In areas where violence continues, local and international players prioritise the administration of humanitarian aid, including basic food, housing, and medical care. The commencement of post-conflict recovery begins with signing a peace accord or any other action that formalises the end of the conflict. Numerous organisations, both bilateral and multinational, are tasked with working with state governments and organising and disbursing the majority of funding for social and financial recovery. When transitioning from conflict to peace, the process is far from simple. When peace accords are maintained, and military violence abates, the emphasis on humanitarian assistance changes from immediate relief toward a period of lengthy socioeconomic development (Özerdem, 2015).

Jabareen (2013) argued that failed nations need to be rebuilt and reconstructed, with the United Nations, international organisations, and other major countries all having a “strategic and moral responsibility” to assist those populations who suffer during regime change. With contributors from across the world, there is broad awareness that post-conflict rebuilding, which is commonly referred to as the period of transition, is a crucial means of keeping conflict from reoccurring, as well as being a critical component of the development cycle (Özerdem, 2015).

Post-conflict urban redevelopment is often challenging because foreign and local agencies vie for space in post-conflict cities to assist conflict-impacted populations (Dabaieh and Alwall, 2018). The overall goal of a PCR intervention is to repair the affected population’s damaged lives and prevent a return to conflict. An intervention’s chief goal should be to convert the failed state into a new entity addressing social, governmental, and financial issues. The reconstruction of post-conflict societies follows a method of reconstructing and resolving concerns, such as economic growth, economics, safety, and equality while remaining mindful of the difficulties that emerge after the conflict. Through PCR action, economic and political concerns might be reduced, attracting new investments, and resulting in more rapid growth in the economy (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga, 2016).

The work of relief agencies is one of the most significant factors affecting the total recovery duration. Agencies can have a direct impact on several factors that assist with recovery, such as clarity of strategy and guidance, effective communication, the collective motivation of participants, sufficient financial flow, the availability of professional support, and the re-use of recycled materials as well as those that impede the process (Calame, 2005). Growing awareness of the necessity to adapt to and address the needs of each country is gaining ground within the international community. However, there is a growing recognition that for foreign assistance to be effective in post-conflict rebuilding, it must be both organized and timely, with a coordinated effort among key stakeholders such as donor nations, the United Nations system, the World Bank, and NGOs. Lessons learned from post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Haiti, Rwanda, East Timor, and Bosnia have shown that a shared understanding of objectives among these actors is crucial for adapting to and meeting the specific needs of each nation (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004). This understanding emphasizes the need for tailored approaches that consider the unique contexts of each country, ensuring that international aid is both relevant and effective. Additionally, it has been highlighted that infusions in the form of foreign aid might result in negative consequences by promoting uneven or negative growth; exacerbating

competitiveness in times of severe shortage; causing rapid changes to local wealth and income; and boosting conflict's resources while also preventing local organisations from assuming fiscal obligations or revealing their full capabilities in anticipation of foreign assistance based on severe need (Calame, 2005).

According to most of the research, international interventions cannot navigate the uncertainties and complexity of conflict-affected communities, as local societies' skills and competencies are crucial (Chandler, 2015; Juncos and Joseph, 2020; Belloni and Ramović, 2020; Lee, 2020). According to O'Driscoll (2018), consultations with stakeholder groups are critical to establishing appropriate solutions for the local context and determining the essential components for achieving good economic and social transformation. The governments of post-conflict nations often require substantial change, with the result that institutions, which may lack the expertise needed to implement a successful recovery, are expected to move abruptly and quickly in response to emerging post-conflict structures (Barakat, 2020). Thus, international players generally acknowledge that a successful post-conflict reconstruction process depends on the involvement and capability of local communities, particularly national governments, and civil society. Moreover, working on a case-by-case basis, increasingly, foreign players choose to collaborate with national groups to address rebuilding needs (Özerdem, 2015).

Foreign interventionist recovery plans, no matter how well-crafted or implemented, will fall short if they neglect to participate in the population they are intended to serve via direct engagement and, eventually, through handing down responsibilities to others. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the most effective post-crisis reconstruction plans prioritize local social needs and are designed to enhance local capacity for sustainable, long-term improvement. For example, in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, reconstruction efforts in Aceh, Indonesia, that focused on empowering local communities and re-establishing local economies were more successful and sustainable than those that relied heavily on foreign intervention without local engagement (Masyrafah and McKeon, 2008). Conversely, foreign rehabilitation efforts in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake, which often failed to increase local self-reliance or re-establish regional revenue-generating activities, have been widely criticized for their limited long-term impact (Schuller, 2012).

2.9.2 Local Involvement in Reconstruction

The participation of the public in decision-making is critical for developing acceptable and effective reconstruction projects. After all, the impacted individuals have the best grasp of what is required in each circumstance. Furthermore, the more people that are involved directly in decision-making, the better the knowledge and comprehension of the many phases of rebuilding. As a result, the people in the devastated area will reap the full advantages of the reconstruction effort. Consciousness could also assist in keeping certain segments of the community who are opposed to the rebuilding from destabilising it.

Civil society organisations typically have a stronger capacity to act in the immediate aftermath of combat than governmental agencies. However, in the years following a conflict, the relationships shift, and both the government and international funders are often challenged. Civil society can be robust in war-torn nations, leading some international funders to focus their attention on enhancing the state's ability to exercise control and sustain power in the aftermath of conflict. Concentrating funding in the government sector may inhibit contributions from civil society to society, potentially completely marginalising members of local society from the political field at a time when their capabilities and skills are most required (ibid).

To achieve post-conflict rebuilding, engineers, economists, architects, and conservators are frequently tasked with uniting the material and moral aspects of the challenges they must resolve. Research has shown that involving local experts in construction and restoration efforts can be highly effective in post-conflict rebuilding due to their deep familiarity with the local environment and continuous on-site presence. For instance, in the reconstruction of Afghanistan after years of conflict, local engineers and architects played a crucial role in restoring infrastructure, as they understood the cultural and environmental context better than foreign experts (Barakat, 2005b). Similarly, in post-war Lebanon, the use of local expertise in the reconstruction of Beirut's historic centre was vital to the success of the project, as local professionals were able to navigate the complex social and political landscape more effectively than outsiders (Khalaf, 2006).

Foreign experts who wish to support local rebuilding teams should consider leveraging academic and employment programs that were established before the conflict. This approach ensures that the rebuilding efforts are rooted in pre-existing local capacities and are more sustainable in the long term. Studies on post-conflict environments, such as in Bosnia and

Herzegovina, indicate that rebuilding programs which incorporate local educational and professional foundations tend to achieve better outcomes, as they are more closely aligned with the region's specific needs and resources (Pugh, 2002). The base of experience and tactical awareness are commonly thinned by the departure of local experts who have left the area to pursue work elsewhere or join the military (Calame, 2005).

Following wartime, for-profit architectural and infrastructure firms often set up offices, hire local personnel, and outsource their smaller tasks to local enterprises. Reconstruction projects are often subcontracted to private firms or contractors, including specialised ones that focus on education or healthcare. In addition, they provide possibilities for employment and partnership with local companies and non-governmental organisations. Many construction projects include a special requirement for hiring women or fostering women-owned small companies and organisations. International organisations frequently feel compelled to remove employees for safety reasons, while continuing to assist local partners financially and via training and collaborative planning in areas where safety cannot be assured, such as Iraq and Afghanistan. Doing so allows international agencies to stay in contact with the situation in the country while also contracting out work to their partners at the international level. In addition, indirect funding opportunities can also be used to foster local competencies and project participation. International players should encourage the development of new approaches and processes through collaboration rather than directly carrying out plans (Özerdem, 2015).

These processes must include methods for local authorities to revise and review planning. The community should also be given the opportunity to vocalise their desires before implementation and where beneficial to make extensive contributions to the project's administration. It is possible to quantify success by examining the amount an agency helps their community. This could include reducing burdens or healing injuries, enhancing coping mechanisms, reducing operational costs between an emergency and a full recovery, fostering feelings of stability, etc. On the other side, national governments and foreign players frequently fail to seek out and build on indigenous initiatives, either from ignorance or due to their incompatibility with the external scheduling process and timings. Reconstruction processes, for example, primarily repeat short-term humanitarian solutions, explained by foreign organisations and funders' aim to accomplish rapid, visible, and quantifiable outputs while excluding local communities, according to her experience in post-conflict Beirut (Sandes, 2013).

2.9.3 Implications of External Funding

Undoubtedly, the policy language of multilateral funders supports the concept that inclusive democratic political systems in conflict-affected states are vital to building long-term peace and security. However, interventions are not always suited to the countries in need because the model of peace used imitates Western democracy, which is not universally applicable (Keels and Nichols, 2018; Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga, 2016). Moreover, far too frequently, foreign rebuilding responses are based on opportunistic self-interest. This is linked to a variety of issues, such as worries over Western security, terrorism, access to natural resources, control of drugs, and so on. Unfortunately, historically the result has been that when forced to admit failure, foreign support and aid are withdrawn from post-conflict countries prematurely (Barakat, 2020).

Furthermore, in the post-conflict period, reconstruction operations typically require countries to accept imported resources. This involves a procurement process in which funders are typically engaged. When donors put pressure on implementing agencies to purchase items from a specific donor nation even when these commodities do not meet local needs or are pricier than products imported from surrounding countries, they are discouraging economic growth in recipient countries (O'Driscoll, 2018).

International players have also demonstrated unwillingness to coordinate or collaborate with national and local interests (Barakat and Zyck, 2009), with the result that the overwhelming evidence from the last decade suggests little meaningful consideration is given to the worth and future significance of cultural assets in the processes of recovery and restoration. The word “aid” denotes an agreement that benefits both parties, but in which one side has the power to insist on certain conditions, such as implicitly or explicitly economic or political demands, or even unconscious prejudice derived from culture. While some beneficiaries naturally seek to follow their own interests, the reality is that donors frequently include conditions on the type of impact the recipient would like to have (Barakat and Chard, 2002). To meet the requirements of the population and achieve success, donors would be well advised to support local-led programs and guarantee that investment is aligned with the people’s needs (Earnest, 2015).

Certainly, the evidence suggests that for success to be achieved in the long run, national governments must fund reconstruction while empowering the populace (O'Driscoll, 2018). PCR may also be used to restore social capital, particularly in community-based reconstruction

efforts. It is a method of resolving development challenges innovatively while decreasing the possibility of conflict (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga, 2016). However, during regeneration, women, and grassroots groups on the front lines of rehabilitation are frequently marginalised and ignored. Many studies still ignore the need to incorporate disadvantaged populations in recovery efforts.

2.10 Built Cultural Heritage in Post-conflict Cities

The destruction of cultural heritage is frequently one of the most evident consequences of conflict. As a result, rebuilding historic places following violence has become an integral element among the numerous political processes that shape post-conflict communities, affirming or establishing new identities (Legnér, 2018). In many instances, mainstream post-conflict rebuilding methods and policies ignore the region's cultural legacy, which is deemed an unnecessary luxury for communities juggling a variety of conflict-related concerns. This is one of the main reasons post-conflict restoration studies have not given adequate attention to tackling the remnants of cultural heritage (Barakat, 2020).

Conflict has long been an engine of cultural heritage destruction, often as a deliberate act. Despite this, there is an almost universal lack of knowledge among academics and policymakers about how to respond to such destruction post-conflict. Studies to date have explored the challenges at the nexus of conflict and post-conflict situations, many of which are becoming increasingly muddled. These studies provide many valuable insights, and it is reasonable that attention be directed towards the era in which the bulk of the devastation happens. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of addressing the devastation and preservation of cultural assets in post-conflict scenarios. While research has extensively examined the impact of conflicts on heritage sites, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding post-conflict rebuilding and the preservation of these cultural assets (Barakat, 2020). Although there has been significant focus on natural hazards and their effects on cultural heritage, the challenges specific to post-conflict scenarios remain underexplored. The destruction caused by conflicts can sometimes elevate previously overlooked locations into monuments with added commemorative value, further complicating the preservation and restoration efforts (Mol and Gómez-Heras, 2018).

Moreover, despite the increasing body of research on the preservation of cultural assets after natural disasters, studies that specifically address the restoration of cultural heritage in the aftermath of prolonged and intense conflicts are limited. For example, in regions like Syria and Iraq, where cultural sites have been systematically targeted during conflicts, the strategies for rebuilding and integrating these sites into the broader post-conflict recovery efforts are not well documented (Stanley-Price, 2007). This gap underscores the need for more focused research on post-conflict cultural heritage restoration, considering both the physical reconstruction and the symbolic importance of these sites in rebuilding community identity and resilience.

Regardless of their immense value to society, cultural legacies can be utilised to propagate violence, in the case of conflicts arising from a long civil war period. When it comes to rebuilding a new society or state, people's varying conceptions of history, memory, legacy, and identity tend to account for a large portion of the violence exhibited (Viejo-Rose, 2013).

The MENA region, which is home to some of the world's most valuable cultural treasures, is witnessing ongoing shifts in power dynamics. Following the start of the 'Arab Spring' in 2011, social and conflict dynamics associated with the movement brought the link between conflict and cultural heritage into focus. For example, Libya and Syria saw uprisings erupt that destroyed regimes. However, it is essential to note that a lack of institutional strength and lack of sensitivity to cultural heritage characterised the challenges to governmental control. For example, in post-uprising eastern Libya, beginning in 2011, the World Heritage Site at Cyrene was subjected to development and land acquisition. Development restrictions set by the previous administration were lifted, allowing local people to develop the land according to their preferences with no regard for the consequences this might have for ancient monuments (Abdulkariem and Bennett, 2014).

Unreconciled dispute risks *de jure* separation, further complicating efforts to conserve and restore cultural treasures. Toshikj and Zsembery (2019) stated that where it could be observed, the enemy's cultural legacy had been targeted deliberately to achieve the goal of eliminating "culture symbols associated with belief, identity, power, and empowerment that are most cherished." In addition, essential sites, such as churches, libraries, museums, and more quotidian structures, such as historical landmarks and meetinghouses, and shelter artworks. In other words, these locations can hold enormous symbolic significance, meaning their loss would bring the greatest sadness. Conflict may affect cultural heritage in various ways, from physical consequences to psychological repercussions. Additionally, conflicts have varying

impacts on cultural heritage, with both direct and indirect effects depending on the context. For instance, the deliberate targeting of cultural sites during conflicts has been documented as a strategic tool in modern warfare. This practice is often intended to demoralize the enemy and disrupt the cultural identity of the affected populations (Bevan, 2006). A notable example is the destruction of the ancient city of Palmyra in Syria, where cultural heritage sites were intentionally targeted to erase historical and cultural identities as part of a broader strategy of psychological warfare (Harmanshah, 2015).

Moreover, non-state actors, as well as state governments, have increasingly engaged in the deliberate destruction of cultural legacies as part of conflict strategies. For example, during the Bosnian War, the destruction of the Stari Most bridge in Mostar by Croatian forces was a calculated move to sever the cultural and historical ties of the Bosniak community (Walasek, *et al.*, 2016). These actions are not just collateral damage but are often part of a broader agenda to achieve specific military or ideological goals.

The deliberate targeting of cultural heritage is recognized as a significant issue in contemporary conflicts, and the international community has responded by condemning such actions and advocating for stronger protection of cultural sites during warfare (UNESCO, 2016). However, despite these efforts, the destruction of cultural assets continues to be a pervasive issue in conflict zones around the world.

Government initiatives are rarely financed according to principles; reconstruction strategies are founded on perceivable political objectives. Theories concerning the restoration of landmarks often emphasize that when sites tied to patriotism and nationalism are threatened or damaged during conflicts, their repair or preservation can symbolize the restoration of national identity and power during times of transition. This idea is supported by several examples, though it is important to recognize the unique context of each case.

For instance, the Old City of Dubrovnik, heavily damaged during the Croatian War of Independence, was meticulously restored as a symbol of national pride and resilience, emphasizing the city's historical and cultural significance (Jokilehto, 2007). Similarly, Warsaw's Old Town, destroyed during World War II, was rebuilt to replicate its pre-war appearance, serving as a powerful symbol of national renewal and resistance against oppression (Czajkowski, 2012). However, this theory does not universally apply. In the case of Coventry, the city was heavily bombed during World War II due to its industrial capacity, and its post-

war reconstruction followed a modernist approach rather than a focus on restoring historical landmarks. The decision to build a new cathedral alongside the ruins of the old one, with the latter left as a reminder of the destruction of war, illustrates a different approach, where the preservation of ruins serves as a warning to future generations rather than a straightforward restoration of national power (Borsay, 2009).

These varied examples demonstrate that while the restoration of landmarks can play a significant role in post-conflict national identity, the approach taken depends on the specific historical, cultural, and political context of each site.

One way to further illustrate this point can be to associate rebuilding work with a decisive and robust administrative image. This can make it appear that a structured, productive, and well-off country has arisen from conflict. This is a form of public relations that authorities are generally willing to finance. In Coventry (1995), the city council declared that this campaign was supported by the Coventry City Council, which supports Coventry (1945). This approach also contributed to rebuilding Iraq (1992) (Calame, 2005).

According to Khalaf (2020), reconstruction following conflict or other types of armed conflict is not simply a project or result but a process that assists people in recovering. However, when a new administration takes control, it typically seeks to organise rebuilding in a centralised manner, regardless of whether the organs of government are operating in a specific geographic region. Reconstruction in this case, aims to return order and legitimacy to a country by developing regulations designed to integrate or eliminate cultural places (Viejo-Rose, 2013). Moreover, as Kalman (2017) argues, reconstruction is an intellectual effort that can eradicate memories of violence and physically erase evidence of it.

Research on the recovery of cultural heritage in war-torn nations indicates that there is no single, universally applicable approach to restoration. Instead, restoration is just one component of a broader strategy for development and preservation that needs to be initiated well before conflicts end and must continue long after ceasefires are established (Stengård and Legnér, 2019). For example, in the case of the Old City of Mostar in Bosnia-Herzegovina, efforts to restore cultural heritage began during the conflict, with an understanding that these efforts were essential for both physical reconstruction and the symbolic rebuilding of the community's identity (Forde, 2016).

Moreover, the recovery process often involves multiple dimensions, including functional, social, and symbolic aspects of rebuilding. The process of reconstruction is intrinsically linked to the community's ability to recover and move forward, making it a crucial element in shaping the future for the inhabitants (Bădescu, 2015). In Lebanon, for instance, the reconstruction of Beirut's downtown area was not only about restoring buildings but also about healing the social fabric of the city and providing a vision for its future (Bădescu, 2018). These examples illustrate that while there is no one-size-fits-all solution, the integration of cultural heritage restoration into broader recovery strategies is essential for the long-term resilience and identity of post-conflict communities.

2.10.1 Cultural Heritage Recovery and Conservation Approaches

Cultural heritage recovery is far more complex than many people realise. Above all, it is essential to understand there are no easy answers. Recovery after World War II was long and complicated since the countries involved were engaged in rebuilding their cultural legacy. The challenges faced by the planners of reconstruction efforts are compounded by the fact that there are no post-conflict rehabilitation blueprints available, and every problem demands a unique approach. Reconstruction requires a sound theoretical basis, a rigorous analytical approach, effective participatory policy-making methods, and substantial resources. Moreover, where necessary, rebuilding should utilise specific conservation methods, especially as routine cultural heritage protection stops or reverses during wartime.

Maintaining a lasting peace in formerly “post-conflict” nations is frequently difficult because of the lack of permanent peace in such regions. Restoration of cultural heritage can be regarded as a long-term developmental effort prioritised only after the post-conflict transition occurs (Barakat, 2020). Where a conflict transformation perspective does not lead to post-conflict cultural heritage recovery with the triple objective of giving hope, healing, and reconciliation, it is likely to prove unsustainable long term. Recovering from painful memories and re-establishing trust is a delicate and highly complicated process that cannot be hastened and may take time to accomplish.

2.10.2 Choices About How to Restore Cultural Heritage

When armed conflicts damage historic sites and alter the appearance of urban environments, the affected governments are left with a variety of choices for action. Final decisions need to be made about whether to memorialise certain ruins (memorialisation), discard others (abandonment), start over from scratch (modernisation), or reconstruct, which is defined as rebuilding as nearly as possible to an earlier recorded form using new materials (Khalaf, 2020).

In his research, Viejo-Rose (2013) defined reconstruction as the rebuilding of existing buildings and the creation of new ones. This incorporated the concept of reconstructing a country's past, codifying its value system, and creating narratives around that information. Kalman (2017) highlights the multiple criteria associated with heritage status that demand that a site maintain its "authenticity" in its "originally shape and content" as well as "any later changes and additions."

While conservation can be a means of managing change, it can also serve to manage continuity instead. Conservation should strive to maintain culture via a continuity of values, functions, uses, practises and craft skills, and tight linkages when cultural heritage becomes a cornerstone of sustainable development (Khalaf, 2020). At one extreme of the spectrum, preservationists wish to restore what existed before the conflict, constructing an environment to restore identity and heal conflict-damaged communities. This calls for an understanding of which structures have significance to the culture and can be restored to their former glory, as well as making the difficult decision about whether to reconstruct a demolished, especially significant structure or accept its destruction and irreplaceability.

According to Barakat (2020), another strategy is to meticulously restore damaged structures of exceptional value or leave them as ruins inside new townscapes. These alternatives are expensive, but they are frequently justified in ancient locations with high potential for tourism revenue, such as Dubrovnik. These techniques can include precise replications of demolished structures based on archival evidence or exterior townscapes with façades combined with contemporary interiors that eliminate traditional property divides, as seen in Warsaw and Gdansk. Some people wish to preserve ruins hoping that doing so will preserve memories. An example is the structures in Khoramshahr in South-West Iran, which served as memorials after the Iran-Iraq conflict, or the buildings in southern Lebanon, which Hezbollah destroyed with bombs during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict (ibid).

The methods chosen to preserve the pre-conflict city inform what to save, what to rebuild, and even how to remember the battle in space. US architect Lebbeus Woods developed a radical rebuilding strategy that takes advantage of the negative space created by construction projects. This would involve affording structures just a portion of their previous function, while the rest would be reserved as “scabs” on the buildings or “free spaces” that people might appropriate and make use of for new types of habitation (Bădescu, 2015).

Numerous examples can be cited to illustrate the balance between modernisation and preservation. This is the case with most of Germany’s post-1945 urban rebuilding. This method relies more on function and perceived relevance in various urban contexts (ibid). At the opposite end of the spectrum are individuals who view destruction as a means to a goal. Cultural heritage may be considered by some as a stumbling block to attaining their development goals as they rush to stabilise and reconstruct post-conflict nations (Barakat, 2005). In cases like Coventry, the planners favoured the complete erasure of all but a few historically significant sites to create an entirely new urban landscape. A similar strategy was used in Hanoi, which worked successfully in a completely different cultural environment. Once again, this alternative is frequently advocated when the urban environment is seen to have no cultural value, is unlawfully inhabited, or is too expensive to rehabilitate. This view often emerges after long-term neglect, in which the elites depart historic communities and the impoverished take up various jobs (Barakat, 2020).

2.10.3 Steps in Restoring Cultural Heritage

When restoring the post-conflict cultural property, there is always the dual risk of losing quality and authenticity to consider. Additionally, if there is a climate of instability, decision-making can be slow, ownership issues arise, and architectural materials and expertise can be scarce. The restoration of cultural heritage post-conflict can be a pragmatic first step. Still, it should not be misinterpreted as a sign that the warring parties have forgotten or erased deep-seated animosities (ibid), especially where civil war has occurred.

To fully understand the cultural history of the built environment, it is essential to first comprehend the society that created it, the reasons behind its destruction, and the societal impacts of the conflict. A slow and unprepared response can lead to individuals taking matters into their own hands, often resulting in unsupervised and uncontrolled reconstruction efforts. A phased approach to restoration may be necessary, particularly due to technical constraints

such as the need to reopen local quarries or kilns for restoration analysis and sourcing appropriate building materials, as demonstrated in Počitelj, Bosnia (Barakat, 2005). This requires careful planning and adequate funding. Therefore, the initial phase should focus on consolidating and safeguarding monuments, and fostering local skills and materials, rather than rushing into restoration with external resources that may be unsuitable and do little to support local livelihoods (Barakat, 2020).

Heritage conservation and rebuilding include more than simply preserving or reconstructing buildings. It is also a broader process of cultural identification that requires evaluation. Thus, a body capable of articulating the public's needs, setting priorities, and initiating planning, regardless of the likelihood of rapid execution, can help to strengthen local involvement. Considerable damage can occur during recovery, as witnessed in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia. Indeed, reduced governmental capacity to preserve or prioritise cultural heritage preservation can result in a rise in black-market theft, which poses the greatest threat to cultural heritage assets (ibid).

The professional preservation aspect is also highly significant as the “second side” of the rebuilding process, especially when new building fabric is required. Undoubtedly, professional interventions are viewed as more significant today than in the past (Toshikj and Zsebery, 2019).

The restoration of cultural assets should be a vital component of the town's overall city revitalisation, growth, and planning framework (Khalaf, 2020). After a conflict, rebuilding a city involves the management of a complex, interconnected network of social, cultural, economic, and political processes situated at many levels, including national, provincial, and worldwide. War-torn nations' recovery of their cultural heritage should be underpinned by a knowledge of the latest developments in development best practices. Re-purposing physical structures, infrastructure, and vital government operations and services, as well as institution-building, is a crucial component of a comprehensive recovery strategy. It is critical to build customised models because of the wide variation in scope, kind, and level of integration (Barakat, 2020).

2.10.4 Active Actors and Local Participation

As violence is intense in wartime, people's ability to rebuild their social bonds and reconcile divided communities after the conflict concludes is essential. Therefore, the reconstruction of cultural heritage is an essential recovery strategy to help achieve general stability and protection, overcome poverty, and bring about national, economic, and psychological security (Bajčinovci and Thaci, 2016).

Historically, heritage conservation professionals have been resistant to proposals for reconstruction. The fear is that this approach may invalidate history and introduce fictional locations that did not exist previously. This informed some of the reconstruction theories referred to in the previous section (Toshikj and Zsebery, 2019).

According to Samih et al. (2020), "urban planners and designers should ensure that new master plans for post-conflict cities preserve the traditional image of the city, rather than altering it. Maintaining the built environment helps restore a sense of identity and belonging, aiding the healing of war-torn communities." Emphasizing this importance, Barakat (2020) argued that externally imposed models often overlook the two most essential elements of recovery: affirming one's sense of identity and regaining control over one's life.

The international community comprises international governmental organisations (IGOs), such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), diplomatic and cultural cooperation organisations and development agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and a web of bilateral cooperation initiatives (Viejo-Rose, 2013). This community adopts reconstruction as its default strategy for post-conflict mitigation, which includes both social and material rehabilitation and is often the most expensive item on the budgets of NGOs (Kalman, 2017). Due to the worldwide priority to maintain multiculturalism and neutrality, humanitarian organisations are hesitant to acknowledge religion's significance during reconstruction. For example, organisations frequently propose building community centres instead of the religious centres (mosques, churches, or temples) formerly at the heart of the community. A contemporary example is the reconstruction of war-torn Sumatra after the tsunami. The mosque that survived in Teunom became a symbol of safety and a haven, with many people seeking temporary refuge in and around it. People's desire to repair the mosque, however, was neglected by aid organisations

(Barakat, 2020). Although, some donor countries supported the reconstruction of temples due to their different ideological stance.

As stated previously in this chapter, implementing solutions, and responding locally offers tremendous advantages in terms of utilising local resources, talents, and know-how and increasing self-worth, confidence, and faith in one's abilities among locals. There are several primary reasons why this is far more effective as an approach long-term and less expensive than using outside sources. These so-called owner-driven models encourage local stakeholders to enhance their technical capabilities and get involved in an authentic and valuable endeavour following a disaster (Barakat, 2003). Also, they help those recovering from the traumas of war rebuild their homes, while also providing them with a means to re-establish the cultural identity that was endangered during the conflict. In the reconstruction of Built Cultural Heritage, including local communities, rights-holders, and stakeholders from the outset is essential for achieving sustainable development. Research indicates that early engagement promotes a sense of ownership, accountability, and cultural relevance, which are crucial for long-term success (Gallou and Fouseki, 2019). Inclusion in decision-making, policy formulation, and planning allows stakeholders to shape reconstruction efforts based on their unique needs and values, ensuring that outcomes are both practical and culturally sensitive (Dolan et al., 2022). This involvement enhances the likelihood of continued maintenance and support, contributing to the sustainability of the development. Furthermore, alternative engagement platforms such as the Internet, social media, and seminars provide opportunities to widen participation and incorporate diverse perspectives, which further strengthens the resilience and adaptability of reconstruction projects (Evans et al., 2012). This inclusive process ensures that development is deeply rooted in the community, creating a solid foundation for sustainable growth.

According to Viejo-Rose (2013), by implementing community-based rehabilitation initiatives, aid and development workers can alleviate tensions while fostering teamwork indirectly. This technique may be implemented in initiatives where cultural heritage is involved and involves disassembling the image of the "enemy other" that was formed during the conflict. Focusing on the many interpretations of legacy from an inclusive perspective provides an opportunity for conversation and collaborative decision-making that can simultaneously rebuild social relationships, unity among citizens, and culture. Meanwhile, the most critical factor in representing a wide range of perspectives is also a challenge when reaching a consensus about what should be reconstructed and how.

One aspect that may also be impacted is national interests and priorities, which affect how governments give primacy to one facet of sustainable development, such as the economic benefits of tourism. Using cultural heritage restoration as a tool to pursue various goals, especially political ones, is quite common. In the future, then, policy makers will have to encourage discussion, competition, negotiation, and agreement-building, as these will be vital for dealing with the many ethnic groups in the cities where various external agencies and donors (such as UNESCO and the World Bank) are involved. While guidelines do not guarantee effective solutions, they can facilitate project design and implementation and benefit people's lives.

2.10.5 Collective Memory in Post-conflict Cities

To lend credibility to the post-conflict government, a modified narrative of history and memory is produced. Due to its numerous manifestations, this history can be found in pop culture, textbooks, and school curricula. It also helps to determine which of our heritage places should be preserved. The past's created narrative is continually perpetuated via performance and commemoration. To understand the process of constructing a carefully chosen history, one must analyse how choices are made. In selecting what to remember and celebrate and what to purposefully obscure and forget, the project's creators expose their motives and intentions. A government-focused inward initiative may choose historical tales that stress courage and sacrifice over those less focused on the past.

Alterations in views and values brought about by conflict are apparent in decisions about whether historical sites, historical events, or historical figures should be publicly recognised and commemorated. The destruction of heritage and the development of new heritage sites go hand in hand. Memorials are probably the most widely distributed, tactile, and visceral forms of commemoration. Such memorials are unique in their approach to what and how to commemorate the past. Typically, monuments glorify a particular version of events or a specific group at the expense of others (Viejo-Rose, 2013).

Memorial rules provide messages about who, in the end, has the right to grieve and be lamented and who should or should not be remembered. Furthermore, the 'conflict' of obituaries or

monuments, in which each side portrays itself as the bigger sufferer can lead to rivalry for victimisation and the moral victory that accompanies it.

Reconstruction invariably happens along the fault lines established by conflict, because the politics of space, as well as the borders of inclusion and exclusion, have moved or been highlighted. Conflict, in particular, is an uncivil destroyer of cultural legacy that brings to the surface undercurrents of censure, anger, and distrust, and has a long-term influence on the societies that suffer from it. During the rebuilding process, new regimes may strive to stake their claim to symbolic territory, imbuing locations with new significance, establishing a narrative of the past and the conflict, and determining guilt and responsibility for the damage caused by the conflict. This process extends into the past, but its ramifications are felt in the present and the future, directing policy decisions, attitudes and forming the shape of state institutions.

Despite addressing many pressing fundamental human needs, such as security, housing, and work, interventions addressing cultural and cultural heritage concerns do not appear to be costly indulgences. The ideals that guide the reconstruction of cultural buildings also guide the development of infrastructure, governmental institutions, a court and police force, and other aspects of civic life. Understanding the influence of these characteristics on others may involve seeing how they manifest in decisions made together with one of these dimensions. Emotions about the past, as well as decisions about which events of the past to love and celebrate, may be revealing. Understanding the mechanisms that drive the rebuilding of cultural heritage may prove to be a helpful indicator of the potential for the dysfunction and failure of new governments.

Chapter 3

3 International Post-Conflict Reconstruction

Examples and Lessons Learned

3.1 Beirut Post-conflict Reconstruction Projects

3.1.1 Background

Beirut, Lebanon's capital and most populous city, has long been characterised by its religious diversity, comprising 18 recognised faiths, including various Christian and Muslim sects as well as Judaism (Maroun, 2008). Prior to the Lebanese Civil War, this diversity contributed to a sense of coexistence among its inhabitants, despite spatial divisions based on religious affiliation, with Sunni Muslims predominantly residing in the west of the city and Christians in the east. This diversity, however, also positioned Beirut as a site of tension during periods of conflict, including the Israeli invasions. As a result, Beirut has undergone numerous reconstruction efforts, each shaped by the socio-political conditions of the time and the actors involved in the processes. This chapter examines key stages and models of reconstruction in Beirut, focusing particularly on the post-civil war reconstruction of the downtown area under the Solidere project.

3.1.2 Beirut's Downtown Reconstruction

Lebanon occupies a strategic geopolitical location between the East and the West, and this has contributed to its involvement in various regional conflicts (Milton-Edwards, 2000). Following the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, Lebanon entered a period of modernisation under French mandate (ElKhazen, 2000). After gaining independence in 1943, Lebanon emerged as a republic with a nominally secular government, although its socio-political structure remained deeply influenced by sectarian divisions (Bollens, 2012). In its early post-independence years, Lebanon was known for its free-market economy, earning the moniker "the Switzerland of the East" due to its vibrant financial sector and modern outlook (Moubayed, 2007, cited in Mady and Chettiparamb, 2017, p. 298).

However, these socio-political divisions ultimately culminated in the outbreak of civil war in 1975, which lasted until the signing of the Taif Agreement in 1989. The war left deep scars on Beirut's urban fabric, particularly in the downtown area, which was heavily damaged by years of fighting between various factions. The post-war period saw new challenges for Lebanon, including the assassination of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in 2005, the 2006 war with Israel, and the ongoing impact of the Syrian conflict (Mady and Chettiparamb, 2017).

Despite its political instability, Lebanon is ranked relatively high on the Human Development Index (HDI), placing 72nd out of 187 nations in 2013 (UNDP, 2013). However, the country is marked by sharp economic disparities, with a small elite class, a shrinking middle class, and a growing population of less affluent diaspora and refugees (Mady and Chettiparamb, 2017). The reconstruction of Beirut's downtown area, particularly under the aegis of Solidere, reflected the broader neoliberal economic policies pursued by the state, which encouraged private investment in real estate as a means of driving economic growth (Roy, 2009).

3.1.3 Effects of Conflict in Urban Areas

Beirut, as the epicentre of the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), experienced widespread urban destruction, exacerbated by Zionist aerial strikes in 2006. For over fifteen years, Beirut was the scene of intense conflict, involving various factions, including Muslim and Christian paramilitaries, Palestinian organisations, and foreign forces such as Zionist and Syrian troops (Samih et al., 2020). The war left significant portions of the city in ruins, particularly in areas where sectarian violence was concentrated, making Beirut a symbol of the devastating impact of prolonged urban conflict.



Figure 3-1: Beirut 1991 (Basilico, 2016).

Research on the civil war's effects has provided estimates of the heavy toll the conflict took on Lebanese society. Approximately 150,000 people are believed to have died during the 16-year conflict, with a population of just four million before the war. Civilian casualties, which outnumbered militia casualties, highlight the destructive nature of the conflict on the general population (Calame, 2005). In addition to fatalities, up to 700,000 people were displaced as they fled violence and property loss, and many more were injured. The demographic changes and population losses persisted long after the conflict ended, with Lebanon's population in 1993 estimated to be only about three-quarters of its pre-war size (Calame, 2005).

The war also led to severe damage to the built environment. The conflict between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Christian militias in 1975 marked the beginning of a process that resulted in substantial destruction of infrastructure across Beirut (Samih et al.,

2020). The most prominent symbol of this division was the "Green Line," which ran through the city's centre, separating Muslim-majority West Beirut from Christian-majority East Beirut (see Figure 3.4). This imaginary line served as both a physical and symbolic divider of Beirut's communities, contributing to deep-rooted societal divisions that persisted long after the conflict.

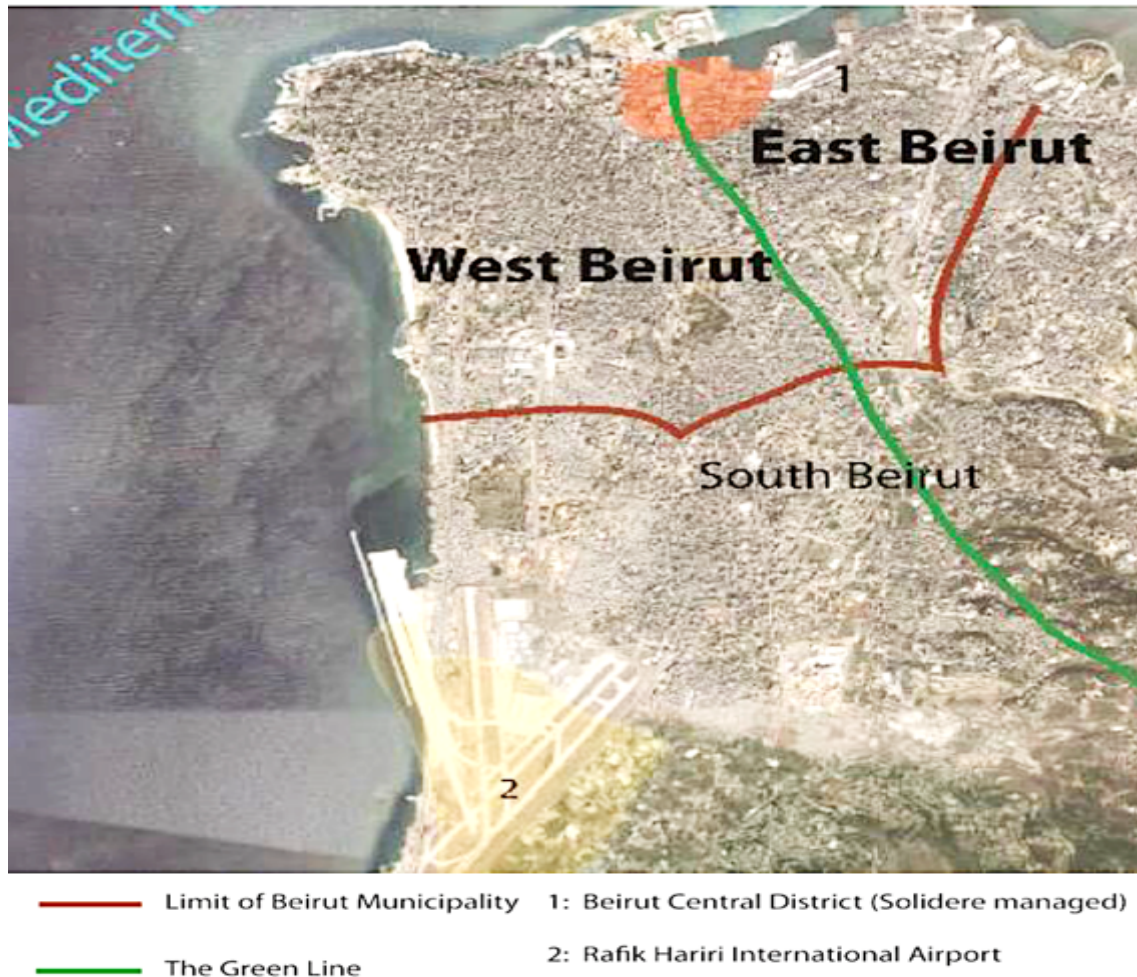


Figure 3-2: The green line in Beirut (Bădescu, 2018).

The Green Line, a no-man's land of destroyed buildings, stood as an emblem of the civil war's destructive impact on Beirut's urban fabric. The violence and sectarian tensions it represented continued to shape the city's development. As the war progressed, Beirut's population experienced significant dislocation. For instance, following the assassination of Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt, Christian populations fled areas such as the Shuf district in East Beirut, while Muslims migrated from East Beirut to the west. By the end of the conflict, the Muslim

population in East Beirut had plummeted from 40% to just 5%, and similar demographic shifts occurred across the country, fundamentally altering Lebanon's social fabric (Nasr, 1993).

The degradation of the city's infrastructure and services further isolated Beirut's communities. As the Lebanese state collapsed, many citizens were left to fend for themselves, leading to the creation of decentralised, self-sufficient communities that provided their own electricity, housing, and security. These communities, while a testament to Beirut's resilience, also highlighted the deep mistrust and fragmentation within the city. This fragmentation reflected the broader societal divisions that the conflict exacerbated (Nagel, 2002).

The political response to these challenges came with the 1989 Taif Agreement, which aimed to address Lebanon's political, religious, and social issues. The agreement laid the groundwork for post-conflict reconstruction, and in the years that followed, figures like Prime Minister Rafik Hariri played pivotal roles in the rebuilding of Beirut's city centre. Hariri's leadership translated into a strategic reconstruction effort aimed at restoring Beirut's status as a leading economic and cultural hub in the Middle East, positioning 'old' Beirut to compete against modern developments such as Dubai (Bădescu, 2018). The reconstruction symbolised a resurgent Lebanon, capable of reclaiming its cultural and economic significance.

In summary, the conflict had long-lasting effects on Beirut's urban structure and societal cohesion. The city's physical destruction, coupled with the demographic and political shifts, presented formidable challenges for post-war reconstruction efforts. The war not only damaged buildings and infrastructure but also deepened sectarian divisions that would continue to shape the city's development in the years to come.

3.1.4 Solidere and Beirut's Post-Conflict Reconstruction

In 1994, Solidere, the Lebanese Company for the Development and Reconstruction of Beirut Central District, was established under National Law 117 of 1991. The law granted Solidere broad powers to plan, develop, and manage the reconstruction of Beirut's city centre, which had been heavily damaged during the Lebanese Civil War. Solidere emerged as a key player in Beirut's post-conflict reconstruction, reflecting both an urban and political project. The initiative was closely tied to the late Prime Minister Rafic Hariri, whose decade-long governance was marked by the rise of neoliberalism in Lebanon (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

Solidere's authority to expropriate land in the city centre, compensating pre-conflict property owners with shares in the company, enabled it to reshape the urban landscape. Its approach emphasised creating an integrated urban environment that balanced new public spaces with high-end developments, often invoking French mandate architecture to align Beirut's image with a cosmopolitan identity (Humphreys, 2015; Ragab, 2011). While Solidere's efforts were framed around rebuilding Beirut as a competitive global capital, especially within the Arab region, the project was not without controversy.

The Solidere-led reconstruction effort covered 191 hectares of Beirut's historical core, beginning in 1994 with the explicit goal of enhancing the city's physical attractiveness. This included constructing a new waterfront, renovating historical sites, and establishing a high-end commercial centre (Alkazei and Matsubara, 2020). According to Solidere's annual report (2006), the overarching objectives included the establishment of comprehensive infrastructure, restoration of historically significant sites, creation of dynamic public spaces, and the development of a multi-use urban fabric. The project's emphasis on aesthetics and urban functionality underscored its goal to position Beirut as a regional hub for investment and tourism.

3.1.5 Neoliberalism and Urban Reconstruction

Solidere's role in Beirut's reconstruction is often analysed within the broader context of neoliberal urban planning. Neoliberalism, in this context, refers to a shift from state-led planning to market-driven approaches, where private investment and competitive market forces are seen as solutions to social and economic challenges (Harvey, 2007). This framework emphasises reducing governmental intervention in favour of private sector involvement, as evidenced by Solidere's leading role in Beirut's rebuilding efforts.

Studies have highlighted that profit-driven motives played a significant role in shaping Solidere's strategy (Alkazei and Matsubara, 2020). The company's focus on attracting Arab and Gulf investment aligns with the neoliberal principle of leveraging global capital flows for national economic development (Krijnen and Fawaz, 2010; Makarem, 2014). However, this approach also raised concerns about its impact on Beirut's historical centre. Critics argue that the transformation of Beirut's downtown into an exclusive commercial district prioritised economic growth at the expense of preserving the city's cultural heritage and addressing the needs of its local population (Verdeil, 2015).

While neoliberal urban planning theoretically encourages economic regeneration, it often sidelines other essential aspects of urban life, such as social equity and historical preservation. In Beirut, Solidere's emphasis on commercial redevelopment led to the displacement of refugees and lower-income residents who had taken up residence in the city centre during the conflict. These individuals were quickly relocated to make way for higher-value developments targeted at expatriates and affluent investors. As a result, the project contributed to the marginalisation of former residents, while Beirut's central district became increasingly exclusive (Verdeil, 2015).

3.1.6 Private Sector Dominance and the Role of Municipal Institutions

Solidere's leadership in post-conflict reconstruction marked a shift away from public-sector governance towards private-sector dominance in urban planning. This trend reflects a broader neoliberal approach, where the market is seen as an efficient mechanism for driving development, often without direct governmental oversight. Solidere's role as planner, developer, and manager of the city centre effectively diminished the role of municipal institutions, which had been weakened during the war. The company's autonomy in decision-making exemplified how private investment can serve as a substitute for state power in post-conflict contexts (Brenner, Peck, and Theodore, 2010).

By outsourcing the city's reconstruction to a private entity, Lebanon's government positioned Solidere as the central force behind Beirut's urban transformation. The assumption was that private capital, driven by market forces, could achieve reconstruction more effectively and efficiently than state institutions, which had struggled with governance and resource constraints (Verdeil, 2015). However, this reliance on private investment raises critical questions about the balance between economic objectives and public interests. The case of Beirut illustrates the complexities of allowing the "invisible hand" of the market to guide reconstruction, particularly in a city recovering from deep social divisions and political instability.

In cases where municipal administrations could be more efficient or more efficient, engaged professionals must rely on other institutional mechanisms. In this way, private investment is an intriguing substitute for municipal power. Relying on the invisible hand of economics, rather than clearly defined political goals, allows professionals to view their role as impartial and non-partisan.

A near-perfect illustration of this strategy may be seen in Beirut, where the establishment of Solidere as a driving force for post-conflict urban rebuilding represented a symbolic departure from government institutions in favour of private industry.

3.1.7 Challenges and Controversies in the Solidere Model

Although Solidere has been lauded for its ability to attract international investment and rapidly transform Beirut's physical landscape, the project has also faced significant criticism. Some argue that the company's aggressive redevelopment strategy prioritised economic returns over social justice and historical preservation. For example, Solidere was granted the authority to demolish many surviving structures, sometimes beyond those directly damaged by the war, to meet its density and income targets. This approach led to accusations that the project eroded the historical identity of Beirut's downtown, replacing it with a homogenised, commercially oriented urban core (Calame, 2005).

Moreover, Solidere's approach to property expropriation, which compensated former owners with shares in the company, may have excluded those without significant financial resources, thus consolidating ownership among wealthier investors. This shift in ownership structure potentially transformed the social fabric of the area, as many local residents were unable to return to the city centre due to rising property values and rents (Humphreys, 2015). Additionally, Solidere's rebuilding of the downtown area reflected a larger trend of privatised urban planning, where the needs of local communities and historical considerations are often subordinated to the pursuit of economic growth.



Figure 3-3: Beirut city post Solidere reconstruction (Solidere, 2006).

3.1.8 The Successes Achieved in the Project

The Solidere project played a central role in the post-conflict reconstruction of Beirut, particularly in reconnecting urban territories that were divided by the Green Line during the Lebanese Civil War. A notable feature of the redevelopment was the creation of the "Garden of Reconciliation," which symbolically addressed the city's divided past. This space, surrounded by various religious institutions, was meant to serve as a place for reflection on Beirut's shared historical and cultural heritage, fostering a pluralistic vision of the city (Bădescu, 2018).

The project attracted billions of dollars in investment from international organisations such as the World Bank, the European Union, and private investors, which contributed to the rehabilitation of Beirut's 180-hectare central business district (Nagel, 2002). Unlike the pre-war laissez-faire development, the downtown reconstruction was meticulously planned and

closely managed. This meticulous planning helped present a unified image of Beirut, both politically and economically, as a stable city with strong civic governance.

Solidere's achievements in rebuilding Beirut's central business district are evident in the rapid completion of new structures adhering to high architectural and infrastructural standards. The technical components of the reconstruction, including design and coordination, were executed to a high degree of precision, contributing to the construction of high-quality buildings and public spaces (Calame, 2005).

The project was framed as a model of financial viability, aimed at directing the broader economic recovery of Beirut and shaping Lebanon's economic future. Solidere claimed that its efforts re-established the downtown area as a multi-ethnic social space, integrating previously divided sections of the city (Calame, 2005). Additionally, the continuity of expertise, as seen through the involvement of established urban planners like Henri Edde and the Dar al Handasah group, ensured a smooth transition from earlier stages of Beirut's urban development (Verdeil, 2015).

However, assessing the success of Solidere's reconstruction purely from a technical and economic perspective can be limiting. While the downtown area has been transformed into a polished urban environment, free from visible remnants of war, the focus on creating a high-end commercial and financial hub raises questions about the broader social inclusivity of the project. Some critics argue that the project's emphasis on aesthetics and economic recovery may have overshadowed important considerations, such as addressing the socio-economic needs of Beirut's displaced and disadvantaged populations (Calame, 2005).

3.1.9 Criticisms of the Project

Despite its achievements, the Solidere project has faced significant criticism, particularly with respect to its impact on Beirut's historical and social fabric. Critics argue that the project's focus on profit and real estate development led to the destruction of many structures that survived the civil war. In some instances, more buildings were demolished during reconstruction than had been damaged during the conflict itself (Calame, 2005). The block-wide master design, while aesthetically impressive, was seen as lacking in sensitivity to the identity and purpose of the site. It required alterations to the urban core's fabric that some argued undermined the city's historical character.

A major point of contention was the perceived contradiction in Solidere's dual objectives: the preservation of historic sites and the pursuit of open-market real estate development. Critics pointed out that the more the company demolished, the more profit it stood to make through redevelopment. Additionally, the displacement of residents and the expropriation of property for the sake of development were seen as exacerbating social inequalities (Calame, 2005).

Further criticisms arose from Solidere's handling of rubble from demolished buildings, much of which was disposed of along the seashore, even as the company sought to create a conservation area that included structures designated for preservation (Ibrahim, Yammine, and Zreika, 2017). This raised concerns about the environmental and heritage implications of the project.

Another area of criticism focused on Solidere's treatment of Beirut's public spaces. While the company successfully enhanced certain squares, transforming them into commercial centres, museums, and music venues, the destruction of other heritage buildings and the lack of transparent government oversight have been contentious issues. Many local stakeholders and civil society groups condemned the project's opacity, particularly in how property owners were treated during the expropriation process (Ragab, 2011).

Moreover, while the city centre attracted significant professional and financial investment, much of the rest of Beirut remained stagnant. Reconstruction outside the central district was piecemeal, disorganised, and underfunded, highlighting the unequal distribution of resources and attention (Calame, 2005). This disparity raised concerns that the project primarily served the economic interests of a select few, while neglecting the broader needs of Beirut's residents.

Critics have also argued that Solidere's reconstruction efforts contributed to widening class and regional divides. The project's neoliberal approach to urban development was seen as prioritising the interests of wealthy elites, transforming the city centre into a "sanitised" zone designed for the affluent, while leaving the rest of the country grappling with persistent social and economic inequalities (Kubursi, 1999; Nagel, 2002).

3.1.10 The Perceived Stability of Beirut

The Solidere project sought not only to rebuild Beirut's physical infrastructure but also to establish a new collective identity for the city, reflecting its aspirations to be a stable and unified metropolis after decades of conflict. However, despite the reconstruction efforts, significant challenges remain regarding how Beirut defines its identity and nationhood. The city's urban landscape has been transformed by new skyscrapers and modern developments, which conceal much of the physical damage inflicted by the civil war. Yet, the underlying political and social tensions that shaped Beirut's past continue to influence its present (Nagel, 2002).

While Solidere's proponents emphasised the economic benefits of the reconstruction, arguing that private investment would allow the city to recover more rapidly than if it had relied on Lebanon's weakened state institutions, opponents of the project raised concerns about the social consequences of the development. The Green Line, which had once divided the city along sectarian lines, was replaced by what some refer to as a "Red Line" – a divide based on economic class, with Solidere's development catering to affluent residents and foreign investors while marginalising Beirut's lower-income populations (Calame, 2005).

This new socio-economic division reflects broader debates about Lebanese nationalism and identity. While the built environment can serve as a powerful tool for shaping collective memory and promoting national unity, the Solidere project has been criticised for creating an urban space that is disconnected from the realities of much of the city's population. Critics argue that the project prioritised the creation of a commercial and financial centre over addressing the social and political legacies of the civil war (Nagel, 2002).

Although the downtown area has been transformed into a vibrant, cosmopolitan space, questions remain about who truly benefits from this redevelopment. Many former residents of the city centre were displaced during the reconstruction process, and the high cost of living in the redeveloped area has made it inaccessible to much of Beirut's population. As a result, the city centre has become an enclave for the wealthy, while the rest of the city remains mired in economic and social challenges.

3.1.11 Enduring Division Within the City

The Solidere project not only transformed the physical landscape of Beirut but also reinforced existing socio-economic divisions within the city. While the reconstruction of the city centre sought to create a high-end commercial and financial hub, this transformation also maintained the barriers established during the civil war, albeit in a different form. The downtown area, once a battleground, has become a space dominated by capital flows, largely inaccessible to the city's poorer residents (Bădescu, 2018).

The new socio-economic divisions in Beirut are marked by the contrast between the affluent city centre and the marginalised peripheries. Access to the redeveloped downtown area is tightly controlled by private security forces, and its high-end real estate is marketed primarily to wealthy foreign investors, particularly from the Gulf. This has effectively turned the city centre into an enclave for the affluent, leaving many Beirutis excluded from the benefits of the reconstruction (Bădescu, 2018).

The project's emphasis on exclusivity is reflected in the high cost of residential property in the city centre, which is beyond the reach of most local residents. As a result, the downtown area has lost its pre-conflict role as a bustling, inclusive hub, and many Beirutis now view it as a space that is alien to their daily lives. The isolation of the city centre from the rest of Beirut has deepened socio-economic inequalities, further marginalising the city's poorer residents (Bădescu, 2018).

While the reconstruction of the city centre met its technical and financial objectives, it failed to address the broader social needs of Beirut's population. The high cost of housing, the lack of affordable employment opportunities, and the absence of adequate public transportation have made it difficult for local residents to benefit from the redevelopment. Additionally, the failure to engage local communities in the planning and decision-making processes further alienated the population from the project, resulting in a reconstruction effort that prioritised economic growth over social inclusivity (Imam, 2014).

3.1.12 Conclusion of the Solidere Reconstruction

The Solidere project serves as a multifaceted case study of post-conflict reconstruction within a neoliberal framework. It successfully achieved many of its stated goals, particularly in terms

of economic revitalisation and infrastructural development. By transforming Beirut's downtown area into a modern financial and commercial hub, the project attracted substantial foreign investment and positioned Beirut as a regional economic centre. However, this market-driven approach to urban planning also exposed significant limitations. The emphasis on economic returns and foreign capital, while effective in rebuilding the city's physical infrastructure, often came at the expense of social inclusion and historical preservation.

The project's prioritisation of high-end real estate development and the exclusion of many local residents from the city centre perpetuated existing social and economic inequalities. By focusing primarily on commercial objectives, Solidere's reconstruction neglected broader social goals, such as maintaining Beirut's cultural identity and ensuring equitable access to the benefits of redevelopment. The resulting socio-economic divide between the affluent city centre and the marginalised peripheries has raised concerns about the long-term sustainability of such a model.

The Solidere experience underscores the need for future post-conflict reconstruction efforts to balance private sector involvement with a commitment to inclusive and socially sustainable urban development. While economic growth is essential for recovery, it should not come at the expense of addressing the needs of all citizens, particularly those who have been displaced or marginalised by conflict. The enduring divisions within Beirut's urban fabric illustrate the challenges of applying neoliberal principles to post-conflict reconstruction in contexts marked by deep-seated social inequalities. Future initiatives must therefore adopt a more integrated approach that fosters social cohesion alongside economic recovery.

3.1.13 Lessons Learned from the Solidere Reconstruction

The Solidere project, aimed at rebuilding Beirut's downtown post-civil war, offers a range of lessons that can inform future post-conflict urban reconstruction efforts, particularly in contexts marked by deep socio-economic and political divisions.

1. **Balancing Economic Growth with Social Equity:** Solidere's reconstruction was heavily driven by neoliberal principles that prioritised private investment and economic growth. While this approach successfully attracted billions of dollars in foreign investment and revitalised the city's physical infrastructure, it largely excluded lower-income residents from the benefits of reconstruction. The project highlighted the need to balance economic

development with social equity. Future reconstruction efforts should strive to include vulnerable populations in the planning and implementation processes to ensure that the benefits of rebuilding are distributed more evenly.

2. **The Risks of Market-Driven Urban Planning:** The emphasis on market-oriented solutions in the Solidere project demonstrated the limitations of relying solely on private sector-led reconstruction. Although Solidere succeeded in creating a modern, aesthetically pleasing downtown, its focus on commercial development and real estate value led to the displacement of long-standing residents and the creation of an urban enclave for the wealthy. This approach underscored the risks of prioritising market-driven urban planning at the expense of social inclusivity and historical preservation. A more balanced approach, integrating public sector involvement and community engagement, would likely produce more sustainable and inclusive outcomes.
3. **Addressing Historical and Cultural Heritage:** The Solidere project was criticised for erasing parts of Beirut's historical and cultural heritage in favour of modern developments. While some historical buildings were restored, many others were demolished to make way for commercial spaces, leading to accusations that the project prioritised economic gain over the preservation of the city's identity. This demonstrates the importance of integrating heritage preservation into urban planning. Future reconstruction efforts should ensure that historical and cultural sites are preserved, as they play a vital role in fostering a sense of identity and continuity, particularly in post-conflict societies.
4. **The Importance of Participatory Planning:** One of the most significant shortcomings of the Solidere project was the lack of meaningful participation by local communities in the planning process. Decisions were largely made by a small group of political elites and private investors, leading to a disconnect between the project's goals and the needs of the broader population. This top-down approach resulted in the exclusion of many former residents from returning to their homes and left large parts of the city outside the scope of redevelopment. Future reconstruction projects must incorporate participatory planning mechanisms, ensuring that local communities are actively involved in the decision-making process to foster a sense of ownership and address the needs of all stakeholders.
5. **The Dangers of Gentrification and Urban Exclusion:** The redevelopment of Beirut's downtown through Solidere created a space that became increasingly inaccessible to the city's middle and lower-income residents. Gentrification, driven by high-end real estate development, resulted in the exclusion of many Beirutis from the reconstructed city centre. This serves as a lesson for future reconstruction efforts to be cautious of gentrification,

which can exacerbate existing socio-economic divides. Policies should be implemented to ensure affordable housing and access to public services for all residents, not just the wealthy.

6. **Institutional Transparency and Accountability:** The Solidere project faced significant criticism for its opacity, particularly in terms of how properties were expropriated and how decisions were made regarding the redevelopment. This lack of transparency and accountability eroded trust between the project leaders and the local population. Future reconstruction efforts must prioritise institutional transparency, ensuring that all stakeholders are kept informed and that there are clear mechanisms for accountability and dispute resolution.

The Solidere reconstruction of Beirut's downtown provides a complex case study that highlights both the successes and challenges of post-conflict urban rebuilding. While the project successfully revitalised the city's core and attracted significant investment, it failed to address critical issues of social equity, inclusivity, and historical preservation. These lessons underscore the need for a more balanced, participatory approach to urban reconstruction that prioritises long-term social cohesion alongside economic growth.

3.2 Haret Hreik Area of Southern Beirut

3.2.1 Introduction

The conflict between Hezbollah and Israel in July 2006, often referred to as the July War, led to a 34-day military confrontation that severely impacted Lebanon's infrastructure and economy. More than 1,200 Lebanese lost their lives, and the damage to public infrastructure amounted to an estimated \$3 billion (Tag-Eldeen, 2020). The consequences of this conflict, although substantial, were not unique in Lebanon's long history of armed struggles. The July War can be seen as part of a broader pattern of conflict that has shaped the country, particularly its southern regions.

Lebanon's complex history of conflict began long before the July War. Tensions escalated in 1941 when the country gained independence from French control amidst internal divisions between religious and ethnic groups, including Shi'as, Sunnis, Druzes, and Maronite Christians. The arrival of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and the establishment of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) in Lebanon in 1970 further intensified these tensions, leading to periodic military confrontations with Israel, such as in 1973, 1978, and 1982 (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

The involvement of external actors, such as Israel, has been a recurring theme in Lebanon's modern history. The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) has been stationed in southern Lebanon since 1978, reflecting the region's volatility. Following the 1982 Israeli invasion and the occupation that lasted nearly two decades, Hezbollah emerged as a significant force opposing Israeli presence. Despite the end of the Lebanese Civil War in 1991, which claimed over 100,000 lives and displaced nearly a million people (O'Ballance, 1998), the south of Lebanon remained contested, with ongoing skirmishes between Hezbollah and Israeli forces.

The Taif Agreement of 1989 brought formal peace to Lebanon, but tensions in the south persisted as Israeli occupation continued. Hezbollah intensified its military resistance against Israeli forces during the 1990s, leading to further escalations, including the 1996 Israeli operation, known as 'Operation Grapes of Wrath.' The July War of 2006 was the culmination of these tensions when Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers, triggering Israel's aerial bombardments and ground incursions (Norton, 2018).

In the wake of the 2006 war, non-governmental actors, particularly Hezbollah, played a leading role in the reconstruction of Beirut's southern suburbs, especially in areas heavily targeted by Israeli airstrikes (Fawaz, 2014; Saliba, 2013). Among these efforts was the reconstruction of Haret Hreik, a neighbourhood that had become synonymous with Hezbollah's stronghold. Jihad al-Bina', an NGO closely linked to Hezbollah and specializing in development and post-conflict reconstruction, spearheaded the restoration of the area. This initiative, referred to as "Project W'ad," aimed to re-house 20,000 displaced residents within the neighbourhood, rebuilding over 200 apartment structures across 40 hectares (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

The reconstruction effort in Haret Hreik illustrates the broader political dynamics of post-conflict rebuilding in Lebanon, where spatial planning often reflects the power dynamics of the actors involved. Hezbollah's leadership in rebuilding the area demonstrates how non-state actors can influence reconstruction processes, asserting control over land and development in ways that extend their political and social influence (Hamieh and Mac Ginty, 2010).

In the case of Haret Hreik, the reconstruction was not only a response to the immediate destruction caused by the 2006 war but also a political strategy to maintain Hezbollah's presence and authority in the area. The establishment of the W'ad agency by Jihad al-Bina' underscores the organized and structured approach Hezbollah took in the post-conflict period, aiming to restore both residential and commercial infrastructure and to re-establish the social and economic fabric of the neighbourhood (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

The reconstruction of Haret Hreik exemplifies how post-conflict reconstruction can serve as a continuation of conflict through other means, with spatial planning being a critical tool for asserting control and influence over contested urban spaces.



Figure 3-4: Haret Hreik, the southern suburbs of Beirut (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

3.2.2 Effects of the War in the Urban Area

The July 2006 war between Hezbollah and Israel had a profound impact on Lebanon's urban landscape, particularly in the southern regions and Beirut's southern suburbs. According to official government estimates, the conflict resulted in the deaths of over 1,183 civilians and

injuries to more than 4,000 people, with approximately 1.2 million individuals displaced, either temporarily or permanently (Fattouh and Kolb, 2006). The destruction extended to the built environment, with over 125,000 residential dwellings and 850 business establishments either partially or fully destroyed, forcing 100,000 people to leave the country in the aftermath (Al-Harithy, 2010).

From an economic perspective, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) estimated that the direct damage to civilian enterprises and national infrastructure amounted to 3.6 billion USD (Dibeh, 2008). However, these figures do not capture the broader indirect economic costs associated with the naval and air blockades imposed during the war, which had significant impacts on tourism revenues, trade balances, government revenue, foreign direct investment (FDI), and currency stability (Fattouh and Kolb, 2006).

The physical devastation was most pronounced in southern Lebanon, particularly in areas with a significant Shia population. It is reported that nearly one-third of the 12,000 airstrikes conducted by Israel during the conflict were concentrated in these regions. The southern suburbs of Beirut, where Hezbollah maintained a strong presence, also faced extensive damage, with levels of destruction surpassing those in other parts of the city, particularly in northern Beirut, which saw less direct impact (Al-Harithy, 2010). The overall cost of reconstruction in Lebanon was projected to be around 2.8 billion USD, further underscoring the magnitude of the destruction (Al-Harithy, 2010).

The damage extended to critical public infrastructure, with 612 schools and 97 bridges destroyed, creating widespread disruption to education and transportation. Additionally, economic activity was further hampered by the destruction of 850 medium- to large-sized businesses, as well as a decrease in agricultural productivity due to unexploded ordnance, including cluster bombs, which made it unsafe for farmers to return to their fields (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

Lebanon, already one of the most indebted nations globally, experienced a severe economic downturn as a result of the conflict. Despite receiving donations from international organizations and other countries, these funds were insufficient to address the broader developmental and socio-economic challenges the country faced in the war's aftermath (Mercy Corps International, 2006; Gütersloh, 2007). Economic growth slowed considerably in the year following the war, and the unemployment rate, which had been around 10% prior to the

conflict, surged to over 20%. The blockades imposed by Israel exacerbated the economic collapse by cutting off vital income streams from taxes, customs, and commerce. Approximately 120,000 people lost their jobs or were at risk of falling into poverty as a direct result of these economic disruptions (Al-Harithy, 2010).

The disbursement of housing compensation was marred by significant delays, prolonging the displacement of thousands of people and, in some cases, forcing families to return to substandard housing conditions. For many displaced individuals, especially those working in agriculture, this displacement resulted in the loss of at least one year's worth of income, as they could not return to their farms. Furthermore, the costs of rental housing, compounded by delayed compensation, placed additional financial burdens on affected households, many of whom faced long commutes to continue work or provide education for their children (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

Efforts were made to mitigate the impacts of the war, including attempts to resettle approximately 20,000 displaced residents in their original neighbourhoods through various reconstruction projects. Compensation was legally delegated to more than 90% of the affected homeowners, who were granted notarised authorisation to rebuild their homes (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010). However, the rebuilding process was not without challenges. The housing compensation and reconstruction procedures had notable gender-specific implications, affecting female-headed households (FHHs) in both positive and negative ways. Women in such households faced distinct challenges in accessing compensation and rebuilding their homes, highlighting the importance of considering gender dynamics in post-conflict recovery efforts (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

In sum, the effects of the 2006 war on Lebanon's urban areas were far-reaching, impacting not only the built environment but also the socio-economic and demographic fabric of the country. The destruction of critical infrastructure and the challenges associated with compensation and reconstruction further complicated the country's post-conflict recovery. Understanding these impacts is essential for developing more effective reconstruction strategies that address the needs of all affected communities.



Figure 3-5: The results of Israeli aggression on civilian neighbourhoods south of Beirut, 2006 (Di Lauro, 2016).

3.2.3 Hezbollah and Project W'ad

The southern part of Lebanon, including the southern suburbs of Beirut, suffered extensive damage during the July War of 2006 due to its strong connections to Hezbollah. The area was heavily targeted during the conflict, resulting in significant civilian casualties and widespread destruction of infrastructure. These spatial-political factors contributed to the divergent patterns of destruction across Lebanon, shaping the post-conflict reconstruction efforts that followed. Hezbollah, as the dominant actor in the region, played a central role in leading reconstruction initiatives, particularly in areas considered its strongholds (Tag-Eldeen, 2020). One of the most notable projects was the restoration of Haret Hreik, a neighbourhood in southern Beirut, through “Project Wa’d,” managed by Hezbollah’s construction wing, Jihad al-Bina’.

Project Wa'd, which began shortly after the end of the conflict in 2006 and was completed in 2012, was remarkable in terms of its scope and the speed at which the reconstruction was carried out. However, the nature of the project and its underlying motivations have been the subject of ongoing debate, particularly regarding the extent to which it involved genuine community participation, as advocated by Hezbollah.

Prominent figures associated with the project assured the public that Haret Hreik, which had historically been a hub for several Hezbollah offices, would be rebuilt to a higher standard and made more attractive than before (Saliba, 2015). Despite these assurances and the significant financial investment in the project from Hezbollah and its backers, the rebuilt area largely replicated its pre-war conditions, with minimal changes to its layout or infrastructure. Notably, issues such as the lack of public space and the precarious legal status of many residences remained unaddressed after the reconstruction.

While Hezbollah officials framed the reconstruction process as a direct response to the needs and demands of the local community (Fawaz, 2009), some scholars have argued that the project was primarily driven by political motives. These critiques suggest that Hezbollah's aim was not only to restore the physical infrastructure but also to solidify its political control over the area. By meticulously reconstructing the buildings destroyed by Israeli attacks, Hezbollah sought to demonstrate its resilience and to symbolically triumph over the destruction caused by the conflict. Moreover, the party's involvement in the reconstruction allowed it to exert greater influence over the local population and consolidate its authority in the region.

Furthermore, Hezbollah's reconstruction efforts were partly seen as a challenge to the Lebanese national government, which had been slow to pass the necessary laws and allocate compensation for rebuilding efforts. In this context, Hezbollah's role in Project Wa'd can be understood as an assertion of its capacity to act independently of the state and to provide for the needs of its supporters, thereby reinforcing its position as a major political and social actor in Lebanon (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

In sum, while Project Wa'd succeeded in rapidly rebuilding Haret Hreik and resettling displaced residents, the motivations behind the reconstruction were complex. The project not only addressed the immediate needs of the war-torn community but also served broader political objectives for Hezbollah, enabling the party to demonstrate its leadership and further entrench its influence in the post-conflict environment.

3.2.4 Hezbollah's Background

Hezbollah, or “The Party of God,” is a prominent Shia political, social, and military organization that has established itself as a powerful actor in Lebanon since its formation in the late twentieth century. Its rise to influence has been partly due to significant financial support from Iran, which has enabled Hezbollah to engage in a range of activities beyond its military and political operations. The group is widely recognized as Lebanon's largest Shia political entity and plays a central role in providing services traditionally associated with state welfare functions. This includes investments in education, healthcare, veteran services, and post-conflict rebuilding projects. For instance, Hezbollah operates 19 schools, two training institutes (al-Imdad and al-Mahdi), 15 medical centres, and four health clinics, alongside offering various professional services at no cost to recipients (Tag-Eldeen, 2020).

The breadth of Hezbollah's social welfare activities has garnered substantial support from within Lebanon's Shia community, contributing to its image as a *de facto* welfare provider, particularly in areas where the Lebanese state has been unable to effectively deliver services. This dynamic has reinforced Hezbollah's role not only as a political party but as a community-based organization that addresses the needs of the Shia population, which comprises up to 40% of Lebanon's total population, or approximately 1.5 million people. However, it is important to note that despite Hezbollah's extensive welfare programs, only a fraction of the Shia population directly benefits from the organization's financial and social investments (Daher, 2019).

Hezbollah's ability to sustain its popularity and political strength is closely tied to its capacity to support a wide array of sectors, including religious education, military resistance, social services, and political advocacy. This multi-faceted role has positioned Hezbollah as a key player in Lebanese society, particularly for the Shia community, which has historically been politically marginalized and underrepresented in Lebanon's sectarian political system (Azani, 2013). The group's efforts to fill the void left by the state in providing basic services have contributed to a significant level of community gratitude and support. Hezbollah's influence was further solidified during the 2018 legislative elections when the group and its political allies won a majority of parliamentary seats, underscoring its political dominance within Lebanon (Perry, 2018).

However, Hezbollah's role as both a militia and a welfare organization poses complex challenges for Lebanon's political landscape. While the group's provision of essential services has filled gaps left by the Lebanese government, it has also raised concerns about the legitimacy and authority of the state. Hezbollah's extensive social service network can be seen as both a response to and a result of the Lebanese state's failure to adequately meet the needs of its citizens, particularly the Shia community. This dynamic strengthens Hezbollah's position as a credible actor capable of taking decisive action, whether through its military operations or its welfare programs.

Understanding Hezbollah requires acknowledging its dual identity as both a religious militia and a welfare provider. The group's social programs are central to its mission, particularly as a faith-based organization, and are a key factor in how it is perceived within the Shia community. This social service provision is crucial for Hezbollah to counterbalance its often-controversial military activities and its portrayal in international discourse as a violent organization. By positioning itself as a welfare state within a state, Hezbollah continues to expand its influence and maintain its stronghold over key sectors in Lebanon, all while reinforcing its socio-political legitimacy (Saad-Ghorayeb, 2006).

In sum, Hezbollah's role in Lebanon goes far beyond its military activities. Its social and political influence is deeply embedded in its ability to provide services in areas where the Lebanese state has been absent. While this strengthens Hezbollah's credibility as a major player, it also complicates Lebanon's governance structure and challenges the state's ability to reassert its legitimacy over social welfare and public services.

3.2.5 Project Wa'd and the Reconstruction of Haret Hreik

The Wa'd Project, launched by Hezbollah's construction wing, Jihad al-Bina', aimed to reconstruct Beirut's southern suburb of Haret Hreik following the devastation caused by the 2006 war. This area, historically marked by insufficient public spaces, poor infrastructure, and high population density, played a significant role in Hezbollah's operations (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010). As a residential hub for Hezbollah, Haret Hreik became a focal point for post-war reconstruction, with Jihad al-Bina' taking the lead in planning and executing the redevelopment (Saliba, 2015).

The main goal of the Wa'd Project was to rehouse approximately 20,000 displaced residents by rebuilding 230 structures and 3,100 apartments across 40 hectares of land (Fawaz, 2009). The project was supported by Hezbollah leadership, including Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, who publicly stated that the neighbourhood would be rebuilt to a higher standard than before the conflict (Saliba, 2015). Hezbollah committed over USD 100 million to the project, while the Lebanese government agreed to provide USD 250 million in compensation to affected residents (Tag-Eldeen, 2020).

Jihad al-Bina' initiated the reconstruction process with a three-step strategy, beginning in August 2006. This strategy included: (i) providing temporary housing for displaced families by relocating them from public shelters and granting them USD 12,000 for one year's rent and furnishings, (ii) conducting non-structural repairs on partially damaged buildings, and (iii) developing a plan to address the complexities of reconstructing the southern portion of Beirut (Jeshi 2008, quoted in Tag-Eldeen, 2020).

To manage the project effectively, Jihad al-Bina' set up two key components: an administrative and technical team to oversee the reconstruction's technical aspects and a liaison office to engage with various stakeholders (Tag-Eldeen, 2020). In November 2006, architect Hassan Jeshi was appointed to lead the project, alongside eight other members of an Advisory Board. This board was selected based on professional expertise and their commitment to the project, representing a diverse range of academic, professional, and personal backgrounds (Al-Harithy, 2010).

The Advisory Board included prominent figures such as the president of the Association of Architects at the Lebanese Order of Engineers and an urban development consultant, as well as academics from various Lebanese universities. The board's primary objective was to facilitate the return of displaced residents while ensuring that Hezbollah's vision for the area's development was fulfilled, without compromising the rights of property owners (Al-Harithy, 2010).

From November 2006 to March 2007, Hezbollah's selected architects worked to develop a reconstruction plan, operating within the party's specific guidelines. These architects were chosen based on two main criteria: their professional qualifications and willingness to work according to Hezbollah's standards (Fawaz and Ghandour, 2007). In August 2006, a Hezbollah

representative joined the National Commission to assist the Lebanese Prime Minister, offering recommendations on best practices for reconstruction in Beirut's southern suburbs.

Hezbollah's approach to the reconstruction of Haret Hreik involved strategically limiting the role of the Lebanese government in the process. By obstructing governmental participation, Hezbollah ensured that it maintained control over the reconstruction, with the state's role limited to providing monetary compensation to property owners. Although the reconstruction efforts were carried out in violation of building regulations, a legal proposal was later passed in parliament, allowing property owners to rebuild their homes as they were before the war (Fawaz and Ghandour, 2007).

In a community meeting held on November 14th, 2006, attended by approximately 5,000 people, homeowners were presented with two options: they could either accept government compensation to rebuild their homes, with Hezbollah covering any additional costs, or delegate the reconstruction to Jihad al-Bina' (Tag-Eldeen, 2020). Surveys conducted during the meeting indicated that 70% of residents preferred to delegate the reconstruction to Jihad al-Bina' (Tag-Eldeen, 2020). This number grew even further, likely influenced by Nasrallah's role as a charismatic and trusted figure within the Shia community (Fawaz, 2009).

Despite the controversies surrounding Project Wa'd, the reconstruction initiative succeeded in its primary objective of relocating displaced residents. By 2012, Jihad al-Bina' had fulfilled its promise by completing the restoration of 270 buildings in the area (Fawaz, 2009). This project not only highlights Hezbollah's capacity for large-scale urban reconstruction but also raises important questions about the political and social implications of such efforts in Lebanon's post-conflict context.

3.2.6 Active Actors in the Wa'd Reconstruction

The reconstruction efforts following the July 2006 war in Lebanon were marked by the involvement of a diverse range of international, national, and local actors. These actors operated within a deeply divided political context, which influenced both the distribution of aid and the execution of reconstruction projects. In particular, international donations for rebuilding efforts were shaped by Lebanon's complex political landscape. Aid from the United States and Saudi Arabia largely supported anti-Syrian and anti-Iranian groups, while Qatar and

Iran provided significant support to Hezbollah-affiliated entities, reflecting the geopolitical alignments of the time (Al-Harithy, 2010).

At the local level, the involvement of both national and municipal authorities in the reconstruction was relatively limited. Despite their official roles, local officials, such as the municipal engineers and elected authorities of the Haret Hreik area, had minimal influence on the actual development of the reconstruction project. Interviews with members of the municipal council revealed that their responsibilities were largely confined to monitoring the on-site construction process to ensure that buildings did not encroach on public land. The government's broader strategy for reconstruction remained largely a proposal, hinging on legal exemptions that would allow the neighbourhood to be rebuilt at its pre-war density, as well as the provision of lump-sum compensation payments to homeowners to facilitate the reconstruction of their homes (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

The reconstruction of Haret Hreik was spearheaded by Hezbollah through its construction arm, Jihad al-Bina'. Hezbollah's Wa'd project adopted a highly centralised approach, leaving little room for external actors to influence the planning or execution of the rebuild. The project was designed to restore the area according to the original dimensions of the destroyed buildings, which allowed Hezbollah to implement a unique model of spatial production. This model centralised communication between property owners and developers within the agency, which was also responsible for making decisions regarding shared building amenities (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

In addition to residential buildings, Jihad al-Bina' set design standards for the restoration of public infrastructure, including roads, sidewalks, and other communal spaces. As a result, the reconstruction of Haret Hreik was tightly controlled by Hezbollah, and the organisation's role in the rebuilding process reinforced the spatial and political boundaries that had been established during the conflict (ibid).

International funding played a crucial role in Lebanon's post-conflict recovery, with approximately USD 2 billion being funnelled into reconstruction efforts by August 2006. Key contributors included regional players such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia, alongside international entities such as the United Nations (Tag-Eldeen, 2020). The United Nations, through its Guidance Note on Early Recovery and other related initiatives, also played an active role in coordinating recovery efforts. Nationally, Lebanon's Reconstruction and Recovery Unit, the

Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR), and the Ministry of Finance were among the main governmental bodies involved (ibid).

Hezbollah and Jihad al-Bina' were the dominant local actors, with the Lebanese government's role being mostly limited to providing financial compensation rather than direct involvement in reconstruction projects. For instance, Qatar and Jihad al-Bina' employed a method known as "direct execution," in which funds were given directly to affected residents in the form of grants (Barakat and Zyck, 2011). The Lebanese government, though aware of this assistance, did not participate in distributing compensation or overseeing the reconstruction process in areas where Qatar had implemented its own policies (High Relief Commission). While approximately USD 750 million was funnelled through these direct grants, most other donors provided sector-specific financial support to the Lebanese state.

The role of the Lebanese Council for the South, which was established in the early 1990s to coordinate development efforts in southern Lebanon, was significant. This body received financial aid, primarily from international donors, which was then transferred to the Lebanese High Relief Commission (HRC) for distribution to individual beneficiaries (High Relief Commission). While this arrangement helped ensure that aid reached affected individuals, it also raised concerns about transparency and accountability in the compensation and rebuilding process.

Kuwait's approach to reconstruction funding was distinct from other Gulf donors. Rather than relying on direct execution or sector-specific support, Kuwait distributed compensation directly to beneficiaries in each community through the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development. Cheques were issued to designated individuals, and the process was managed by the Council of the South without direct fiduciary oversight from the Lebanese government. This approach facilitated efficient distribution while allowing the state to play a nominal role in the process (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

Alternative financial mechanisms, such as multi-donor trust funds (MDTFs), played a limited role in housing reconstruction. For example, the Lebanon Recovery Fund (LRF), which was intended to pool donations from multiple countries, did not fund housing-related programmes. This was partly due to the perception among some Western donors that Lebanon had received substantial financial assistance from Gulf states, rendering additional contributions unnecessary (UNDP, 2008).

In summary, the reconstruction of Haret Hreik was characterised by a complex interplay between local, national, and international actors, with Hezbollah playing a dominant role through its Wa'd project. The limited involvement of governmental bodies and the fragmented nature of international aid distribution highlighted the challenges of coordinating post-conflict reconstruction in a politically divided and resource-constrained environment. Despite these challenges, Hezbollah's centralised approach to reconstruction allowed it to exercise significant control over the rebuilding process, reinforcing its influence in the affected areas. However, the broader implications of this centralised control, particularly in terms of transparency, accountability, and the long-term sustainability of the reconstruction efforts, remain subjects of debate and warrant further examination.

3.2.7 Amounts of Housing Compensation

The process of housing compensation in post-war Lebanon, particularly in the aftermath of the 2006 conflict, was marked by significant challenges related to the uneven distribution of aid and the fragmented nature of financial assistance. One of the primary issues stemmed from the practice of donors "adopting" specific regions, which led to substantial disparities in the levels of aid distributed across different communities. For instance, despite suffering similar levels of damage, individuals residing in areas supported by donors such as Qatar received significantly higher compensation than those in neighbouring jurisdictions not receiving comparable support. In some cases, residents in Qatar-sponsored areas received up to four times as much financial aid as their counterparts (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

The participation of different actors in the housing compensation process varied in significance. Saudi Arabia was the largest single contributor to housing reconstruction, providing \$315 million, followed by Qatar with \$150 million and Kuwait with \$115 million. Additionally, seven other Islamic nations contributed a combined total of \$42 million to support housing recovery efforts. However, the Lebanese government's role was also notable, as it claimed to have contributed \$293 million toward home repairs. These funds were reportedly sourced from Western bilateral and multilateral donors during the Stockholm and Paris III conferences held in late 2006 and early 2007, which collectively generated \$8.5 billion in commitments, including \$900 million for the initial recovery stages (Barakat and Zyck, 2011). However, the Lebanese government's contributions remain difficult to verify due to issues with data transparency and accessibility.

The practice of donor countries and agencies “adopting” specific regions for focused aid distribution was a major factor in the uneven nature of assistance. Aid was allocated based on the severity of destruction and the sectarian or political affiliations of the residents, rather than a geographical or needs-based approach. As a result, the distribution of resources was highly fragmented, with some areas receiving disproportionate attention and financial support, while others were relatively neglected (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

Barakat and Zyck (2011) conducted a study to assess the extent of housing-related donations by comparing the amounts reported by recipients with those identified by donors and the government. Their findings highlight significant discrepancies between official reports and what beneficiaries claimed to have received. For instance, individuals supported by Qatar reported an average of \$32,389 per family, which aligns with statements made by Qatari officials. However, figures reported by the Lebanese government often conflicted with beneficiaries’ accounts. The Lebanese High Relief Commission (HRC) reported that it provided an average of \$8,227.79 in housing compensation per family, but surveys indicated that beneficiaries had only received an average of \$2,757.69 (ibid).

Jihad al-Bina’, a Hezbollah-affiliated NGO involved in humanitarian and development services, played a significant role in the housing compensation process. It is estimated that Jihad al-Bina’ contributed as much, if not more, than all other donors combined. Although the organization did not participate in formal external accountability measures, it relied on Islamic principles, such as zakat (charitable giving), and religious ethics to prevent the misuse of funds (Gebauer, 2006). According to studies, Jihad al-Bina’ provided up to \$6,221.53 per housing unit to approximately 100,000 families, amounting to \$600 million in total (Barakat and Zyck, 2011). While the exact source of these funds remains unclear, many experts believe that Iran was the primary financier, similar to its support for Hezbollah’s other operations, including military resistance against Israeli forces (Logan, 2007).

Jihad al-Bina’ operated independently of other organizations and did not coordinate its efforts with external agencies. Its compensation and support were based on needs assessments conducted by more than 3,000 participants from Lebanon and the wider Arab world. The primary aim of this financial support was to enable displaced individuals to return to their neighbourhoods. Beneficiaries were given the option of either renting temporary housing while their homes were being rebuilt or making alterations to their homes to make them temporarily habitable during the reconstruction process (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

In conclusion, the housing compensation process in post-war Lebanon was marked by significant challenges, including disparities in aid distribution, lack of coordination among key actors, and transparency issues. The involvement of various international and domestic actors, including non-governmental organizations such as Jihad al-Bina', further highlights the complexity of post-conflict reconstruction in Lebanon. Addressing these issues in future reconstruction efforts will require a more coordinated and transparent approach to ensure that aid is distributed equitably and based on actual needs.

3.2.8 Cultural Heritage Protection

The protection of Lebanon's cultural heritage during the reconstruction of post-war Beirut, particularly in the southern suburb of Haret Hreik, presents a complex challenge. While some claims suggest that culturally significant sites were intentionally targeted during the conflict, the lack of official oversight in the reconstruction process further complicated the preservation of these sites. The aftermath of the July War exposed the weakness in Lebanon's cultural heritage management, particularly in areas devastated by the conflict. The Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, tasked with enforcing preservation laws, was largely ineffective in safeguarding historically and aesthetically significant structures (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

In some cases, property owners demolished historically valuable buildings to capitalize on compensation schemes, replacing damaged structures with new developments. This trend, driven by financial incentives, undermined efforts to preserve Lebanon's architectural heritage, especially in neighbourhoods like Haret Hreik, where traditional forms of urban fabric were lost in favor of modern constructions (Barakat and Zyck, 2011). This dynamic was particularly disruptive in cases where owners rented properties to tenants before the conflict, further complicating the relationship between cultural preservation and economic recovery.

The loss of historical structures during the reconstruction process has broader implications for Lebanon's collective memory and identity. The destruction of culturally significant buildings erodes the socio-cultural traits that foster a sense of shared history, which is essential in post-conflict recovery. As noted by Tiesdell, Oc, and Heath (1996), the preservation of cultural heritage is critical for promoting social cohesion in complex post-conflict environments,

including those in Lebanon. Without effective preservation efforts, the city's cultural identity is weakened, potentially exacerbating the already fragile political and social fabric of the country.

3.2.9 Conclusion

The comparison between the reconstruction projects of Solidere and Wa'd challenges the commonly held belief that these initiatives represent opposing ends of the political and ideological spectrum in Lebanon. Solidere, typically seen as a neoliberal project backed by the government, contrasts with Wa'd, which is aligned with Hezbollah and is often framed as an anti-imperialist and anti-capitalist effort. However, both projects reveal underlying similarities in their approach to urban reconstruction, particularly in how they reinforced the spatial and social divisions initiated during the war.

Wa'd's reconstruction efforts, while distinct from Solidere in narrative, replicate many of the same urban patterns and processes seen in the government-led projects. This alignment with the broader post-conflict rebuilding policies of the Hariri era (1995–2005) highlights how both initiatives contribute to the shaping of urban space in post-war Beirut, often reinforcing the war's legacy rather than challenging it. Haret Hreik, symbolically excluded from the government's redevelopment projects, underscores the selective nature of reconstruction policies that prioritize certain areas over others based on political and ideological considerations (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

The exclusion of Haret Hreik from national redevelopment plans reflects a broader "relief" policy, whereby compensation was provided to alleviate the immediate financial burdens on residents, but long-term urban planning and infrastructure development were neglected. This exclusion reveals the state's reluctance to engage with a politically sensitive area that aligns with Hezbollah, further entrenching the political divides that define Lebanon's urban landscape. The lack of public spaces, inadequate road infrastructure, and dense population in Haret Hreik are symptoms of this broader neglect (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

A critical examination of the private agencies involved in both Solidere and Wa'd highlights the similarities in their operational modes, despite their divergent political affiliations. Both organizations implemented tightly controlled reconstruction processes, albeit with different visions of the pre-war urban fabric. Wa'd focused on recreating the pre-existing-built

environment, while Solidere sought to modernize and commercialize Beirut's urban core. These differing approaches to the reconstruction of pre-war inhabitants reflect contrasting attitudes toward urban development and the legacy of conflict (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2008).

Wa'd introduced a new form of spatial production in Haret Hreik, characterized by centralized control over the rebuilding process. This involved a party-appointed architectural board that dictated the design and layout of the reconstructed neighbourhood, prioritizing standard quantitative assessments of destroyed units and displaced inhabitants' losses. However, the narrow interpretation of space adopted by the architects, coupled with limited community involvement, raises questions about the long-term sustainability and inclusiveness of the reconstruction process (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2008).

At first glance, Wa'd appears to offer a unique reconstruction model, driven by ideological and political motivations distinct from Solidere. Wa'd's approach allowed displaced residents and business owners to return to their former homes, preserving the memory of the pre-war urban landscape. This focus on re-establishing a "resistance society" reflects Hezbollah's broader geopolitical goals, blending resistance to Israeli occupation with a rejection of neoliberal globalization (Verdeil, 2015).

However, upon closer inspection, Wa'd's efforts align with broader trends in post-conflict urban reconstruction, where political and ideological motives shape the rebuilding of urban space. While Wa'd may differentiate itself from Solidere in its rhetoric and objectives, its approach to spatial planning and reconstruction reveals deeper continuities in Lebanon's post-conflict urban development. Ultimately, both projects demonstrate how urban reconstruction can reinforce the spatial and social divides initiated by war, with long-term implications for the political and social fabric of the city.

3.2.10 Lessons Learned from the Wa'd Project Reconstruction

The Wa'd Project, led by Hezbollah through its construction arm, Jihad al-Bina', offers significant insights into post-conflict reconstruction efforts, particularly in politically sensitive and conflict-ridden environments. The following lessons can be drawn from the Wa'd project, which are relevant for future urban reconstruction initiatives, especially in post-conflict zones.

- 1 **Political Influence on Reconstruction:** The Wa'd project demonstrates how political entities can shape reconstruction efforts to align with their broader ideological and geopolitical goals. Hezbollah's involvement in the reconstruction of Haret Hreik was not just about rebuilding physical structures; it was also about reinforcing the party's socio-political influence within Lebanon. The project highlights how political organizations may prioritize the reconstruction of areas that align with their support base, potentially sidelining other areas that may have equal or greater needs. This lesson underscores the importance of ensuring a balanced and inclusive approach in post-conflict rebuilding efforts, one that addresses the needs of all affected communities.
- 2 **Centralized Control and Community Engagement:** Wa'd's top-down, centralized approach to reconstruction, where decision-making authority rested with a small party-appointed architectural board, reveals both strengths and weaknesses. On the one hand, this allowed for rapid decision-making and streamlined coordination. On the other hand, the lack of broader community engagement led to criticisms of the project for not fully considering the needs and preferences of the local population. Effective post-conflict reconstruction should balance centralized planning with active community participation to ensure that the rebuilding process aligns with the needs and desires of residents.
- 3 **Challenges of Recreating Pre-War Urban Fabric:** Wa'd's focus on recreating the pre-war urban environment, aiming to rebuild Haret Hreik as it was before the conflict, offers insights into the challenges of such an approach. While this strategy may restore a sense of normalcy and continuity for displaced residents, it can also perpetuate pre-existing urban issues such as inadequate infrastructure, poor public spaces, and high population density. The lesson here is that reconstruction efforts should not merely replicate pre-war conditions but instead take the opportunity to improve urban resilience and sustainability. Rebuilding should address not only immediate housing needs but also long-term infrastructure and planning issues that could mitigate future risks.
- 4 **Limited Attention to Cultural Heritage:** The Wa'd project underscores the importance of integrating cultural heritage preservation into post-conflict reconstruction. Despite the destruction of historically significant buildings during the conflict, the reconstruction process focused primarily on rebuilding housing and infrastructure, with limited attention given to preserving cultural landmarks. This has broader implications for the social and cultural fabric of post-conflict cities, where the preservation of historical identity can play a critical role in fostering social cohesion and collective memory. Future reconstruction efforts should integrate cultural heritage preservation as a key component of rebuilding.

- 5 **Role of Non-Governmental Actors in Post-Conflict Reconstruction:** The Wa'd project underscores the significant role that non-governmental actor, such as Hezbollah, can play in post-conflict reconstruction, particularly in contexts where state capacity is limited. Hezbollah's ability to mobilize resources, coordinate reconstruction efforts, and fill the gaps left by the Lebanese government highlights the potential for non-state actors to assume responsibility in rebuilding efforts. However, this also raises questions about accountability, transparency, and the long-term sustainability of such efforts. The lesson here is that while non-governmental actors can be crucial in reconstruction, there should be mechanisms to ensure accountability and coordination with broader national recovery strategies.
- 6 **Funding and Compensation Inequities:** The distribution of housing compensation in the Wa'd project, where financial support varied significantly across different communities, highlights the challenges of managing external funding in post-conflict settings. The reliance on donor countries and private contributions led to disparities in the level of compensation provided, often influenced by political affiliations or donor preferences. This lesson emphasizes the need for equitable, needs-based funding mechanisms that ensure all affected populations receive adequate support, regardless of political or sectarian alignments.
- 7 **Balancing Rapid Reconstruction with Long-Term Development:** Wa'd's emphasis on rapid reconstruction, while effective in returning displaced residents to their homes, also reveals the potential trade-offs between speed and long-term development outcomes. The focus on quickly restoring housing meant that opportunities to upgrade infrastructure and address broader urban planning challenges were missed. Effective post-conflict reconstruction should strike a balance between providing immediate relief and addressing the long-term development needs of the area to enhance resilience and sustainability.

The Wa'd project provides critical insights into the complexities of post-conflict reconstruction in politically charged environments. While successful in restoring housing and addressing the immediate needs of displaced residents, the project also highlights key challenges related to political influence, community engagement, cultural preservation, and long-term development. Future post-conflict reconstruction efforts should aim for more inclusive, needs-based approaches that integrate long-term planning, address social and cultural issues, and ensure accountability across all stakeholders involved in the rebuilding process.

3.3 Mostar

3.3.1 Background

Bosnia and Herzegovina, located in Southeast Europe within the Balkans, occupies the central part of the former Yugoslavia. Its capital is Sarajevo, with Mostar being the second-largest city. Bosnia and Herzegovina is mostly landlocked, except for a narrow 20 km coastline along the Adriatic Sea surrounding the town of Neum, as shown in Figure 3-6. The country is bordered by Serbia to the east, Montenegro to the southeast, and Croatia to the north and southwest. The interior geography is diverse, characterized by mountainous terrain in the central and eastern regions, hilly areas in the northwest, and flat landscapes in the northeast. The climate ranges from a temperate continental climate with hot summers and cold winters in the interior, to a Mediterranean climate in the southernmost areas, where the terrain becomes predominantly mountainous (Google Maps, 2021b).

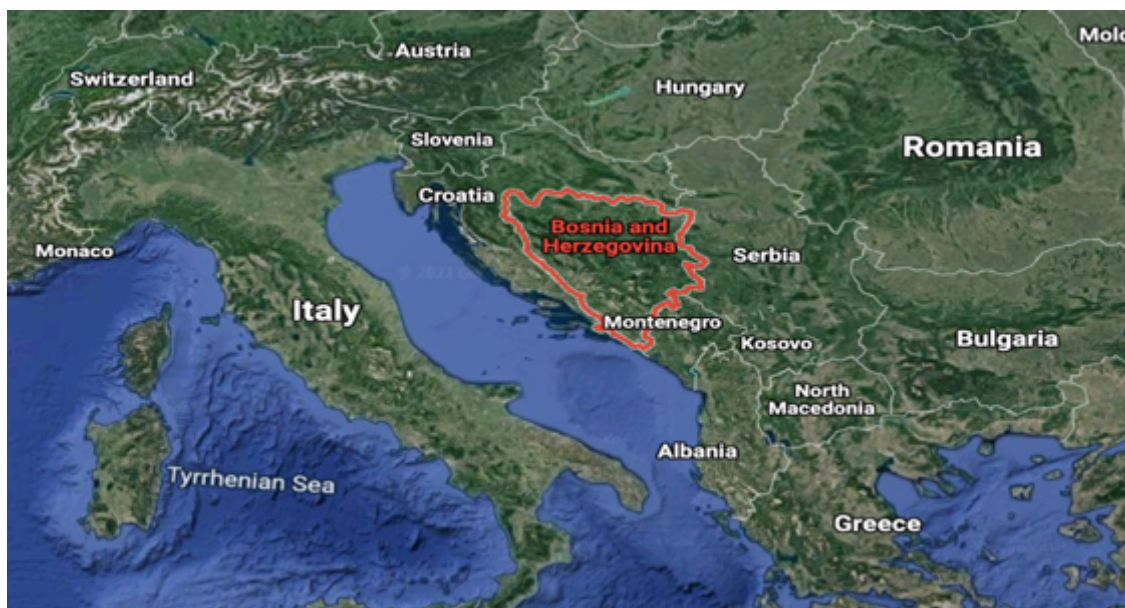


Figure 3-6: Bosnia and Herzegovina (Google Maps, 2021a).

Mostar, the administrative centre of Herzegovina, is situated in the southern part of Bosnia and Herzegovina along the Neretva River (Figure 3-7 shows the location of Mostar). The city's urban design reflects the Ottoman Empire's influence, with one of its most significant landmarks being the Stari Most, or Ottoman Bridge, completed in 1566 (Samih et al., 2020).

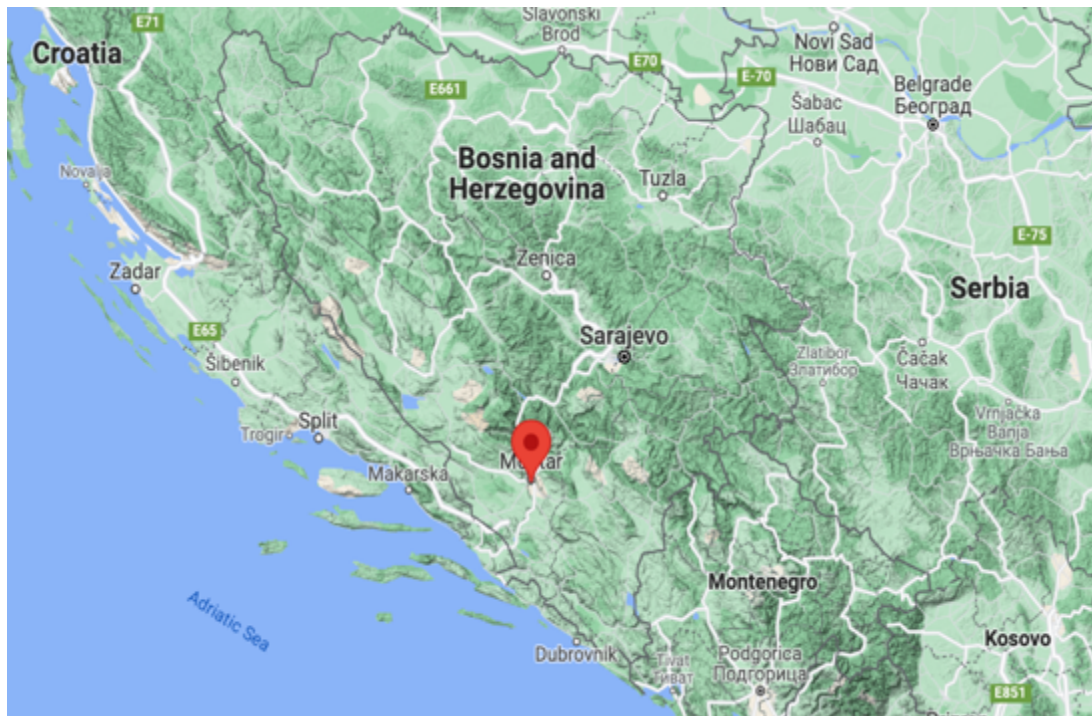


Figure 3-7: The city of Mostar (Google Maps, 2021b).

The city remains divided both ethnically and geographically. Eastern Mostar is predominantly populated by Bosnian Muslims (Bosniaks), while Croats primarily inhabit Western Mostar. The division of Mostar reflects the broader post-conflict divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina that followed the signing of the Dayton Accords in 1995. These accords ended the Bosnian War and divided Bosnia and Herzegovina into two political entities: the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is home to Bosniaks and Croats, and Republika Srpska, predominantly populated by Serbs (Maglajlic and Selimovic, 2014). The reunification of Mostar was seen as essential due to its ethnic and territorial division during the war (Carabelli, Djurasovic, and Summa, 2019).

This background provides the context for the challenges faced during the post-war reconstruction of Mostar, particularly in addressing both physical destruction and the deep-seated ethnic divisions. The reconstruction of the Ottoman Bridge and the urban fabric surrounding it became symbolic of broader efforts to rebuild not only the city's infrastructure but also its social cohesion. However, the reconstruction process also revealed the complexities and limitations of post-conflict urban planning in a divided city.

3.3.2 The History and Impact of Armed Conflict on Mostar

In 1991, the breakup of the former Yugoslavian Republic triggered a series of conflicts as its constituent republics began to proclaim their independence. Among the most significant of these were the ambitions of Serbia and Croatia to partition Bosnia and Herzegovina, a move that ultimately led to widespread violence in the region (Samih et al., 2020). The city of Mostar, located in Bosnia and Herzegovina, was at the heart of these conflicts. Mostar was devastated by two distinct periods of armed conflict: the first between April and July 1992, during which Bosniaks and Croats fought against Serb forces to defend the city, and the second, more intense phase between May 1993 and February 1994, when Bosniaks and Croats turned against each other (Yarwood et al., 1999).

The conclusion of hostilities was marked by the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement on 21 November 1995 in Dayton, Ohio, which was later formalized in Paris, France, on 14 December 1995 (Djurasovic and Knieling, 2015). This agreement was intended to serve as a framework for peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the impact of the war on Mostar was profound and long-lasting.

The conflict in Mostar had devastating consequences for the city's physical and social fabric. Approximately 75% of the city's housing stock was destroyed, as depicted in Figure 3-8, and the violence resulted in 3,000 deaths, as well as the displacement of 40,000 refugees (Djurasovic and Knieling, 2015). The city's economy also suffered severely, with 75% of economic activity halted and GDP plummeting from \$13.1 billion in 1990 to \$6.2 billion by 1993. The loss of property was exacerbated by looting, forced deportations, and widespread bombings. Many Bosniak households in western Mostar were forced to flee, leaving behind their possessions, which were often looted or sold on the black market (Calame, 2005). Over 30,000 people who remained in the city were displaced from their homes, and 10,000 men were forcibly imprisoned in nearby camps (ibid).



Figure 3-8. Destruction of Mostar (Arna, 2014).

The conflict not only caused significant physical destruction but also left lasting divisions within the city's population. Croatian forces established a boundary that both physically and symbolically divided the city into Bosnian Croat and Bosniak sectors. This division persists to this day, with Mostar remaining a city characterized by stark ethnic and spatial segregation. The city's six administrative districts reflect this divide: three districts for Bosniaks are located on the east side, while three districts for Croats are situated to the west (Forde, 2018).

The physical and urban infrastructures of contemporary Mostar are thus the result of two closely related ideologies that have shaped the city in the aftermath of the 1992–1995 conflict. These ideologies have influenced both the built environment and the social fabric of the city, contributing to its continuing fragmentation (Laketa, 2019). The divided urban landscape of Mostar serves as a reminder of the enduring impact of conflict and the complexities involved in post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation.

3.3.3 Development in Mostar After the Cessation of Conflict

3.3.3.1 Influences and Challenges

The post-conflict urban development of Mostar was shaped by a complex interplay of factors, including the outcomes of the war and subsequent international interventions. Following the end of hostilities, Mostar was selected as a pilot project by the European Union (EU) for its post-war reconstruction efforts, marking a significant milestone as the EU's first major intervention in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bose, 2002). Initially, the urban development process was predominantly driven by international actors, with the European Union Administration Mostar (EUAM) overseeing the city's administration between 1995 and 1997 before the Office of the High Representative (OHR) assumed control (Yarwood, 2010; Bieber, 2005).

Despite the EUAM's efforts to unify the city and establish a stable governance structure, the prolonged administrative division and the political complexities on the ground hindered the realization of the international community's objectives. Although the physical reconstruction progressed as planned, the socio-political dynamics of reunification created significant barriers to the city's long-term economic and social recovery. This period left Mostar without substantial industrial capacity and with only a superficial economic revival, making it challenging for the city to achieve sustainable development (Bose, 2002).

The Interim Statute established by the EUAM in 1996 divided Mostar into six districts, each governed by separate administrative entities with their own budgets and authority to issue building permits and make local decisions (Mitrovic, 2008; Bieber, 2005). This division was intended to be temporary, lasting for six years. However, it effectively institutionalized the city's ethnic and political divisions. In 2004, a new Statute for the City of Mostar was introduced, dissolving the district system and consolidating governance under a single administration. This reform aimed to streamline decision-making and enhance administrative efficiency, but it also left behind six electoral divisions and 31 borough councils, which continued to reflect the city's fragmented political landscape (Djurasovic and Knieling, 2015).

3.3.4 The Process of Rebuilding Mostar

The post-conflict rebuilding of Mostar was a complex process that extended beyond physical reconstruction to include the restoration of urban management and planning systems. The European Union Administration of Mostar (EUAM) appointed architect and urban planner John Yarwood to lead this initiative (Bollens, 2007). His role encompassed not only the rehabilitation of the city's infrastructure but also the establishment of frameworks for sustainable urban governance and planning (Ibid). Despite these efforts, some scholars argue that the rebuilding process in Mostar was hampered by a focus on symbolic restoration rather than addressing the underlying socio-political and economic challenges faced by the city (Calame and Pasic, 2009).

During the conflict, Mostar's historical landmarks, including the iconic Old Bridge, suffered significant damage. The reconstruction strategy aimed to symbolically reconcile the divided communities of Bosniaks and Bosnian Croats by restoring these shared cultural assets (Popovac, 2006). The decision to use the historic city as a model for reconstruction was intended to promote a sense of shared identity and unity among the city's residents. This approach included revitalizing neighbourhoods and improving infrastructure, such as pedestrian networks and road systems, to enhance connectivity within the city's historic core (Samih et al., 2020).

The initial phase of Mostar's reconstruction involved comprehensive data collection to assess the extent of damage, demographic changes, and the state of infrastructure. This assessment helped prioritize expenditures and guide the planning process (Yarwood et al., 1999). In 1998, two major projects were launched: the restoration of the historic district and the reconstruction of the Old Bridge and its surrounding complex. The debris from destroyed structures was preserved for use in rebuilding efforts, demonstrating a commitment to both historical preservation and sustainable construction practices (Samih et al., 2020).

The master plan developed for Mostar sought to harmonize the rebuilt historic centre with the natural and cultural landscapes of the city. The goal was to create a cohesive urban environment that respected the city's historical identity while promoting its future development. This plan was supported and funded by various international organizations, including UNESCO, the European Union, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture, and the World Bank (Armaly, Blasi, and Hannah, 2018a).

One of the most notable successes of the reconstruction efforts was the restoration of the Old Bridge, a symbol of Mostar's cultural heritage and resilience. The bridge's reconstruction was completed in 2004, and the historic city centre was subsequently designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2005 (Makaš, 2012). Despite these achievements, the broader impact of the reconstruction on the city's overall recovery has been mixed. While the restored historic centre has become a popular tourist destination, much of the city remains underdeveloped, with visible signs of neglect such as abandoned buildings, uncollected waste, and deteriorating infrastructure (Makaš, 2011).

The political context in Mostar has also complicated the reconstruction process. For over a decade, the city was the only municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina without local elections, reflecting the deep-seated political divisions that persist in the post-war period. The lack of effective governance has resulted in limited public investment and development, further hindering the city's recovery (Makaš, 2011). The divisions between Bosniaks and Croats remain pronounced, particularly in educational institutions, where segregated schooling systems perpetuate ethnic divides. Many young people from both communities have little or no interaction with the other side of the city, underscoring the challenges of achieving genuine social and political integration (Ibid).

In summary, the reconstruction of Mostar illustrates both the potential and the limitations of post-conflict rebuilding efforts. While the restoration of symbolic landmarks like the Old Bridge has contributed to the city's cultural and tourist appeal, the deeper issues of political fragmentation and socio-economic disparity remain unresolved. The experience of Mostar underscores the need for an integrated approach to post-conflict reconstruction that addresses not only physical rebuilding but also the underlying social and political dynamics that shape a city's recovery.

3.3.5 Mostar Bridge: the *Stari Most*

The Stari Most (Old Bridge), a 427-year-old architectural landmark, was destroyed on November 9, 1993, during the Bosnian war, when over sixty mortars were fired at it by the Croatian Defence Council. This act was not merely a military manoeuvre but carried deep symbolic meaning, as the bridge represented the multi-ethnic nature of Mostar, which included Bosnian Muslims, Croats, and other ethnic groups. The targeting of the bridge has been

interpreted as an effort to erase the city's multi-ethnic character and enforce ethnic homogeneity (Coward, 2008).

The destruction of the Stari Most was seen by many as an attack on the cultural identity of Mostar's Bosnian Muslim community. According to András Riedlmayer of Harvard University, the damage was an attempt to erase collective memory, while Martin Coward, in his book *Urbicide*, argued that such deliberate destruction of the built environment constituted a form of cultural violence, transcending the concept of collateral damage to represent an intentional assault on the city's identity (Kalman, 2017). Coward's analysis underscores the idea that the demolition of Stari Most was emblematic of a broader campaign against the cultural heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina during the war.

From a strategic perspective, the Stari Most held limited military value. By the time of its destruction, the bridge had been closed due to shelling and sniper fire, making it inaccessible to both military and civilian traffic. Its true importance lay in its symbolic and cultural significance, having been constructed in 1557 by orders of the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, as a testament to the city's historical role as a centre of cultural convergence (Kalman, 2017).

In the post-war period, the reconstruction of the Stari Most became a symbol of reconciliation and cultural restoration for Mostar's Bosniak community. Supported by UNESCO and the international community, the restoration of the bridge and Mostar's Old City was undertaken to reclaim the city's shared cultural heritage. The bridge's reconstruction aimed to reaffirm Mostar's historical identity as a city that embraced diversity, with a history of coexistence among Muslims, Christians, and Jews over the centuries.

The restored Stari Most and the surrounding Old City were designated as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, highlighting their "exceptional universal value" and their role in the cultural renaissance of Mostar. This designation served not only to honour the site's historical significance but also to recognize the importance of the reconstruction efforts as a symbol of resilience and reconciliation in the face of conflict (Kalman, 2017). The project aimed to restore not just the physical structure but also the symbolic meaning of the bridge and the city, reinforcing Mostar's place in global cultural heritage and its ongoing relevance in contemporary discussions on post-conflict recovery and identity reconstruction.

3.3.6 The Restoration of the *Stari Most*

The restoration of Stari Most began in 1997, following discussions to secure the necessary funding for the project. This initiative extended to parts of Mostar's Old Town and was overseen by a Pilot Coordination Unit (PCU) under the guidance of the World Bank's Operation Coordination Unit. The project was supported by UNESCO, which provided advisory and consultative roles throughout the documentation and reconstruction process. The international tender for the reconstruction of the Old Bridge was awarded to ER-BU, a construction company based in Ankara, while OMEGA Engineering from Dubrovnik was assigned the supervisory responsibilities (Colak, 2016).

The reconstruction process was initiated by the completion of a detailed project plan by the Florence-based firm General Engineering, which laid the groundwork for rebuilding the historic bridge (Colak, 2016). The physical reconstruction aimed not only to restore the architectural integrity of the Stari Most but also to address the symbolic damage caused by its destruction during the conflict.



Figure 3-9: *Stari Most* rebuilding (Colak, 2016).

The motivations behind the restoration were as much ideological as they were technical, reflecting the significance of the Stari Most as a symbol of cultural identity and heritage. The bridge's destruction during the conflict was emblematic of broader efforts to erase cultural and historical narratives, and its reconstruction represented an effort to counteract these acts of cultural erasure. In this context, the reconstruction of historical sites like the Stari Most is often intertwined with broader social, political, and cultural objectives, particularly in post-conflict settings where such projects can play a crucial role in healing and reconciliation (Kalman, 2017).

Different philosophies exist regarding the restoration of damaged historical sites, with some advocating for conservation approaches that stabilize the site while preserving visible damage as a testament to past events. This method aligns with international heritage doctrines that emphasize the importance of preserving the integrity of historical sites without erasing their scars. Other approaches involve more direct interventions, such as fully restoring a site to its pre-damaged state, which can sometimes be seen as an attempt to symbolically repair the cultural and historical fabric of a community (Kalman, 2017).

In the case of Stari Most, the decision to fully reconstruct the bridge and remove traces of its destruction can be seen as a deliberate choice to move beyond the conflict and reinforce a narrative of resilience and recovery. This restoration effort was not merely a technical exercise but a symbolic act of reclaiming the city's heritage and reinforcing a collective identity. The project also aimed to support Mostar's long-term social and economic revitalization by restoring a key cultural landmark that is central to the city's identity and attractiveness as a tourist destination (Colak, 2016).

The restored Stari Most has become a symbol of reconciliation and resilience, reflecting the community's efforts to rebuild and move forward while acknowledging the complex legacy of the conflict. The project underscores the role that heritage restoration can play in post-conflict recovery, serving as a bridge—both literal and metaphorical—between a divided past and a hopeful future (Kalman, 2017).

3.3.7 The Steps to Rebuild

The reconstruction of the Stari Most, led by project leader Manfredo Romeo, involved several key interventions before construction could commence. These interventions were guided by a comprehensive approach that sought to preserve as much of the original structure and materials as possible, reflecting both the cultural significance of the site and the technical challenges associated with its restoration.

The first step involved the conservation and storage of the recovered bridge stones and arch voussoirs. These materials were preserved in a purpose-built museum, providing an opportunity for extensive research into the historical construction techniques used during the original construction of the bridge (Popovac, 2006). This phase highlighted the importance of maintaining and studying original building materials to inform both the reconstruction process and future conservation efforts.

The second step focused on the cleaning and maintenance of the stones, bridge pillars, abutment walls, and portions of the original pavement. This work aimed to restore these elements to their original condition as much as possible, thus retaining the authenticity of the bridge's structure. The preservation of these materials was crucial in achieving the primary goal of producing a reconstructed bridge that closely resembled the original in both appearance and composition (Popovac, 2006).

The third intervention involved the strategic removal and remounting of certain components. Some weak or damaged masonry elements and sections of the abutment walls were carefully dismantled to create a stable foundation for the new arch. This process, known as anastylosis, involved reassembling the original materials in their historic positions based on detailed technical studies and scientific analyses. This careful method ensured that the structural integrity of the bridge was maintained while using as much of the original material as possible (Toshikj and Zsembery, 2019).

The final step was the rebuilding of what was termed the “new Old Bridge.” This phase involved the reconstitution of the bridge using both the preserved original materials and new stone where necessary, carefully matching the historical appearance and construction methods. This step was not only a physical reconstruction but also an effort to commemorate and

symbolize the resilience of the community and its cultural heritage (Toshikj and Zsembery, 2019).

Each of these steps was informed by rigorous scientific analysis and aimed to balance the need for structural stability with the desire to preserve the historical authenticity of the Stari Most. The project's approach demonstrates the complexities involved in reconstructing heritage sites, particularly those that hold significant symbolic and cultural value.



Figure 3-10: Stari Most (Steves, 2021)

3.3.8 International Intervention and Internal Urban Conflict

The destruction of the Stari Most bridge in 1993 was not merely the loss of a physical structure but also symbolized the breakdown of dialogue and coexistence among Mostar's diverse communities. This act of destruction underscored the deep divisions that had emerged during the conflict, reinforcing lines of ethnic, religious, and cultural separation. The significance of the bridge's fall resonated both locally and globally, capturing the attention of the international

community and becoming emblematic of the broader destruction wrought by the Bosnian war (Viejo-Rose, 2013).

In response, international efforts to rebuild the bridge were driven not only by the desire to restore a historic landmark but also to promote reconciliation and unity in a deeply divided city. The reconstruction of the bridge was intended to serve as a metaphorical bridge between the communities on either side of the Neretva River, reflecting an aspiration to heal the social and cultural fractures left by the war. The project attracted significant international funding and support, underscoring the symbolic importance of the Stari Most as a site of shared heritage and cultural identity (Viejo-Rose, 2013).

However, while the physical reconstruction of the bridge was a visible achievement, it did not automatically lead to the restoration of social cohesion in Mostar. Despite the presence of the rebuilt bridge as a symbol of unity, the city remains one of the most segregated in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The divisions between Bosniaks and Croats persist, particularly in areas such as education and daily social interactions, suggesting that physical reconstruction alone is insufficient to address the deep-seated social and political challenges facing post-conflict communities (Viejo-Rose, 2013).

The case of the Stari Most illustrates the complexities of post-conflict reconstruction, where symbolic restoration projects must be accompanied by broader efforts to rebuild trust and foster dialogue among divided communities. The ongoing segregation in Mostar highlights the limitations of relying solely on architectural and infrastructural interventions to achieve social and political reconciliation.

3.3.8.1 International Efforts at Reconciliation

The process of rebuilding Mostar, particularly its historic sites, was marked by varying perspectives on how reconstruction should proceed, reflecting broader disagreements about the causes and consequences of the conflict that had devastated the city. Different groups, including Bosnian nationalists, Muslims, and international actors, viewed the restoration of the city's landmarks through distinct lenses. For many in Mostar and the international community, restoring the city to its pre-war state as a shared communal space was seen as essential for re-establishing its cohesive identity and fostering a more inclusive Bosnian identity. The reconstruction of the Stari Most (Old Bridge) became emblematic of these efforts, as it

symbolized the aspiration to create communal spaces that transcended ethnic and cultural divides (Makaš, 2012).

The bridge, with its historical significance and symbolic neutrality, attracted considerable international financial and political support, despite other significant landmarks in Bosnia and Herzegovina receiving less attention. The involvement of major international organizations and foreign governments in the reconstruction was prominent, with donors often emphasizing their contributions through visible markers such as signs and plaques around the city. Postcards highlighting the contributions of various nations and organizations were widely distributed, demonstrating the international community's commitment to the project. The World Monuments Fund and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture were instrumental in initiating the reconstruction, while the World Bank provided strategic oversight and financial support (Armaly, Blasi, and Hannah, 2018).

The World Bank's involvement marked a notable shift in its approach to cultural heritage preservation. Historically, the organization had rarely funded such projects, but the potential for tourism-related economic development in post-conflict cities like Mostar led to a reconsideration of its policies. In 1998 and 1999, the World Bank extended a low-interest loan of \$4 million to the City of Mostar, establishing a trust to support the loan with future contributions from international donors. This initiative highlighted the growing recognition of cultural heritage as a driver of economic recovery and development (Makaš, 2012).

The reconstruction effort also featured extensive international collaboration at the technical level. An international Expert Team was established to provide specialized knowledge and support to the local team and donors throughout the reconstruction process. The participation of these organizations, institutions, and foreign governments was often framed as an endorsement of Bosnian multiculturalism and a commitment to the symbolic restoration of the city as a place of shared heritage and identity (Makaš, 2012).

Overall, the international response to the reconstruction of Mostar and its symbolic structures, such as the Stari Most, illustrates the complex interplay between cultural heritage, identity, and post-conflict recovery. While the physical restoration of the bridge was a significant achievement, its symbolic role in promoting reconciliation and fostering a shared sense of community remains a work in progress.

3.3.9 The Reaction of Croats to the Reconstruction of the Bridge

The reconstruction of the Stari Most was undertaken with the intention of symbolizing the reunification of Mostar and representing a shared cultural heritage among the city's diverse communities. To achieve this, the World Bank and UNESCO made considerable efforts to include representatives from all ethnic groups—Muslims, Croats, and Serbs—throughout the restoration process (Makaš, 2012). Despite these efforts, the project did not lead to the hoped-for social cohesion among Mostar's residents. Instead, the reconstruction was met with resistance and scepticism from significant segments of the Croat community.

The destruction of the bridge during the war was seen by many as an attempt to erase the collective memory of peaceful coexistence among different ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Toshikj and Zsebery, 2019). In the post-conflict period, the restoration of the bridge was perceived by some Croats as an effort to impose a narrative that aligned with the experiences and heritage of the Muslim community, while marginalizing Croat identity. This perception was exacerbated by the fact that many Croats felt excluded from the process and saw the bridge as a symbol that primarily represented the Muslim population (Wollentz, 2017).

For example, the bishop of Mostar publicly refused to attend the inauguration ceremony for the reconstructed bridge, citing a lack of inclusivity and expressing concerns that the project was more aligned with a Bosnian national narrative than a shared heritage initiative. This sentiment was compounded by recent conflicts over local projects, such as a restoration initiative funded by the bishop, which had been rejected by the city's Muslim leadership (Makaš, 2012).

The reaction of the Croat community in Mostar reflects broader tensions about the preservation and reinterpretation of shared spaces and cultural heritage in post-conflict settings. While efforts were made to restore sites associated with Bosnia and Herzegovina's multicultural past, some Croats viewed these efforts as attempts to subsume their identity into a predominantly Bosnian-Muslim narrative. This sentiment was reinforced by resistance to Croat cultural expressions and the development of institutions that reflected Croat identity, which they saw as ongoing challenges to their rights and representation within the city (Palmberger, 2012).



Figure 3-11: Franciscan church, bell tower, and monastery complex after reconstruction (Makaš, 2012).

One of the most controversial projects highlighting these tensions is the reconstruction of the Franciscan Church of Saints Peter and Paul and its new bell tower (see Figure 3-11). Originally destroyed during the conflict, the church was rebuilt on a much larger scale, with a towering bell structure that visually dominates the city's skyline. This reconstruction, seen by many as an assertion of Croat identity, has been criticized for its scale and symbolism. The bell tower, more prominent than the Old Bridge, has been interpreted as a statement of Catholic and Croat presence in Mostar, contrasting with the city's predominantly Muslim character and the prominence of minarets in the skyline (Makaš, 2021).

The placement and height of the bell tower, located near the city's dividing boulevard, are seen by critics as reinforcing the lines of separation within Mostar, both physically and symbolically. The tower's visibility from all parts of the city serves as a constant reminder of the Catholic and Croat community's presence and has been perceived as a provocative gesture, particularly by non-Catholics in Mostar (Wollentz, 2017). In contrast, the reconstruction of mosques in the eastern part of the city has been less prominent, though there has been a notable increase in the

number of mosques since the war, reflecting the ongoing process of redefining urban and religious landscapes (Strandenæs, 2003, quoted in Makaš, 2012).

The inauguration ceremony of the new Stari Most in July 2004 was another point of contention. While intended as a celebration of unity, the event highlighted the disconnect between local perceptions and international narratives. Key speakers included high-profile international and national figures such as the High Representative, the Bosnian President, and the Head of the World Bank, but there was limited representation from Mostar itself. The ceremony was perceived by many Croats as an external imposition, with the city's residents largely relegated to the background. This exclusion reinforced the perception that the reconstruction project, and its symbolism, did not resonate with or represent the local Croat community (Makaš, 2012).

Overall, the reaction of the Croat community to the reconstruction of the Stari Most and other cultural projects in Mostar highlights the complexities of post-conflict reconciliation and identity formation. While the international community viewed these projects as steps toward healing and unity, the Croat response suggests that these efforts may have inadvertently deepened divisions by failing to address the diverse and sometimes conflicting narratives of the city's different communities. This underscores the need for a more nuanced and inclusive approach to heritage reconstruction in post-conflict societies.

3.3.10 The Impact of the Dayton Agreement on Urban and Social Divisions in Mostar

The Dayton Agreement, which effectively ended the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has been widely criticized for its shortcomings. While it succeeded in halting hostilities, it also institutionalized ethnic divisions, weakened state sovereignty, and granted excessive authority to the High Representative (Sherman, 2011; Djurasovic and Knieling, 2015). In Mostar, the legacy of these divisions is particularly evident. The city remains administratively divided, with distinct areas allocated to Bosniaks (east) and Croats (west), reflecting the ethnic territorial delineations established by the Dayton framework. This division permeates all aspects of urban life, from education systems to the daily use of public spaces, reinforcing a sense of separation between communities (Carabelli, 2018; Forde, 2018).

The way in which social spaces are utilized within these institutionalized divisions further entrenches the city's ethnic separation. The spatial organization of Mostar, shaped by the wartime ethnic engineering of neighbourhoods, has led to a situation where the boundaries of

these areas are not just physical but are also deeply ingrained in the social fabric of the city (Forde, 2018). The challenges faced by residents in navigating this divided urban landscape illustrate how political and social divides are maintained and, in some cases, challenged. Efforts to establish shared spaces, such as the Core Area intended as a neutral zone for all citizens, have largely failed to bridge these divides. Instead of serving as a community space, the Core Area has become a site of political contestation, with competing projects reflecting differing ethical and moral agendas (Bollens, 2007).

The lack of coordinated planning and cooperation across ethnic lines has also hampered the development of Mostar. For instance, the controversy surrounding the restoration of mosques in the Southwest municipality highlights ongoing tensions. The International Crisis Group (2000) noted that the opposition to mosque reconstruction was seen as part of a broader strategy to reinforce ethnic divisions, demonstrating how urban planning decisions can have profound implications for social cohesion (Forde, 2018).

3.3.11 Conclusion

The case of Mostar provides a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in post-conflict reconstruction, particularly in a city marked by deep ethnic and social divisions. While significant efforts have been made to restore the city's physical infrastructure and historical landmarks, such as the iconic Stari Most, these initiatives have been met with varying degrees of success in fostering long-term reconciliation and social cohesion.

Mostar's reconstruction highlights the challenges of balancing symbolic restoration with practical urban planning and governance. The rebuilding of the Stari Most, supported by international funding and expertise, served as a powerful symbol of the city's cultural heritage and the resilience of its people. However, the broader impact of this project on social integration remains limited. The physical restoration of the bridge did not automatically translate into a reconciliation of the city's divided communities. The persistent administrative, social, and spatial divisions between Bosniaks and Croats underscore the limitations of using architectural reconstruction alone to address the deep-rooted political and ethnic conflicts that continue to shape the city's identity.

The post-conflict development of Mostar was heavily influenced by external actors, such as the European Union and the World Bank, whose interventions aimed to promote a unified

urban vision for the city. Despite these efforts, the city's governance structure, initially divided into separate districts, reflected and reinforced ethnic divisions. Even after the consolidation of administrative control under a single city administration in 2004, political and social fragmentation persisted, inhibiting the city's ability to achieve sustainable development and effective governance.

Moreover, the restoration of historical sites and the promotion of tourism have not been sufficient to revitalize the city's economy or heal its social fabric. While the historic centre has been transformed into a popular tourist destination, much of the city remains underdeveloped, with visible signs of neglect and limited public investment. This disparity between the restored historic core and the neglected peripheries further exacerbates existing inequalities and hinders efforts to create a cohesive urban environment.

The reaction of Mostar's Croat community to the reconstruction of the Stari Most illustrates the complexities of post-conflict identity politics. For many Croats, the bridge's restoration was seen as aligning with a narrative that prioritized the Bosniak experience of the conflict, thereby marginalizing Croat cultural and historical narratives. This perception of exclusion and the symbolic dominance of one group's heritage over another's highlights the need for a more inclusive and participatory approach to heritage reconstruction in post-conflict settings.

The legacy of the Dayton Agreement, which institutionalized ethnic divisions in Bosnia and Herzegovina, is acutely felt in Mostar. The administrative and spatial segregation established by the agreement continues to shape the city's urban landscape and social dynamics, making it challenging to build a shared sense of community. Efforts to create neutral spaces, such as the Core Area, have largely failed to overcome these divisions, instead becoming arenas for political contestation.

In conclusion, the case of Mostar demonstrates that post-conflict reconstruction is not merely about rebuilding physical structures but also about addressing the underlying social and political fractures that the conflict has left behind. Successful reconstruction in such contexts requires an integrated approach that combines physical rebuilding with initiatives aimed at fostering social cohesion, inclusive governance, and economic revitalization. Without addressing these broader challenges, reconstruction efforts risk reinforcing existing divisions rather than paving the way for a more unified and prosperous future for the city and its inhabitants.

3.3.12 Lessons Learned from Mostar Post-Conflict Reconstruction

The post-conflict reconstruction of Mostar offers a complex case study highlighting both the achievements and shortcomings of international and local efforts to rebuild a divided city. Several key lessons can be drawn from the Mostar experience, which are critical for informing future reconstruction projects in post-conflict settings.

1. Importance of Holistic Reconstruction Approaches: While physical reconstruction, such as the rebuilding of the Stari Most, was successful and symbolically significant, it alone was insufficient to foster true social cohesion and reconciliation. Effective post-conflict reconstruction requires a comprehensive approach that integrates physical, social, and economic dimensions. Efforts should extend beyond restoring built heritage to include rebuilding community relations and addressing underlying socio-political issues that contribute to division.

2. Symbolism vs. Social Reality: The focus on symbolic projects, such as the reconstruction of historic landmarks, can help restore cultural identity and attract international support. However, these projects must also resonate with the local population and be inclusive of all community narratives to avoid deepening existing divisions. In Mostar, the symbolic significance of the Stari Most as a symbol of unity was not universally accepted, particularly by the Croat community, highlighting the need for inclusive and participatory processes in heritage reconstruction.

3. The Role of International Actors: International involvement played a crucial role in the physical reconstruction of Mostar, but it often lacked sensitivity to local dynamics and did not fully address the city's socio-political complexities. The imposition of external models of governance and planning without adequate local involvement can undermine the effectiveness of reconstruction efforts. Future projects should prioritize local engagement and capacity-building to ensure that reconstruction initiatives are sustainable and aligned with the needs and aspirations of the affected communities.

4. Challenges of Institutionalized Division: The Dayton Agreement, while successful in ending the conflict, institutionalized ethnic divisions that continue to shape Mostar's urban and social landscape. Efforts to integrate the city, such as the creation of shared spaces, have often been stymied by these entrenched divisions. Reconstruction projects in post-conflict societies should be designed with an awareness of the potential for existing political frameworks to perpetuate division and should include strategies for overcoming these barriers to foster genuine integration and cohesion.

5. Impact of Urban Planning on Social Cohesion: Urban planning decisions in post-conflict settings can have profound implications for social cohesion. In Mostar, the spatial organization of the city and the selective restoration of certain sites contributed to reinforcing rather than overcoming ethnic boundaries. Planners and policymakers must carefully consider the social impact of their decisions and prioritize projects that promote inclusive community development and inter-ethnic cooperation.

6. Inclusivity in Reconstruction Efforts: Reconstruction efforts in Mostar highlight the importance of involving all segments of society in the rebuilding process. The exclusion of certain groups, as seen in the reactions of the Croat community to the restoration of the Stari Most, can exacerbate feelings of marginalization and hinder reconciliation. Future efforts should focus on creating platforms for dialogue and collaboration among diverse community members to ensure that all voices are heard and respected.

7. Heritage Preservation as a Tool for Reconciliation: Heritage preservation can serve as a powerful tool for reconciliation, but it must be approached with care to ensure it does not favor one group's narrative over another. In Mostar, the restoration of the Stari Most was intended to symbolize unity, but the lack of recognition of Croat heritage and identity led to feelings of alienation. A more balanced approach to heritage restoration, acknowledging the diverse histories and contributions of all communities, is essential for fostering mutual respect and understanding.

8. Navigating Political and Administrative Complexities: The reconstruction of Mostar was complicated by its fragmented administrative structure and the influence of various political actors. Effective governance and coordination among different stakeholders are crucial for the successful implementation of reconstruction projects. Clear mechanisms for

decision-making and conflict resolution should be established to manage the complexities of rebuilding in politically sensitive environments

Chapter 4

4 The challenges of post-conflict reconstruction

In some instances, observers have argued that "reconstruction" is often perceived as the process of merely restoring the pre-conflict system, which can sometimes lead to a resurgence of conflict if underlying issues are left unresolved. Post-conflict reconstruction is inherently fraught with difficulties, presenting a complex landscape of challenges, but also opportunities. On one hand, it aims to restore a sense of continuity with the pre-conflict era while simultaneously improving the living conditions of the population. One prominent framework guiding these efforts is the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By aligning reconstruction strategies with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), post-conflict recovery can address deep-seated vulnerabilities, bolster resilience, revive livelihoods, and enhance overall well-being (Khalaf, 2020). The ultimate goal of reconstruction, as noted by Thurairajah (2013), is not simply to rebuild but to improve upon what existed before the conflict.

Much of the academic literature underscores that post-conflict transformation is often crucial due to the severe damage conflicts inflict on urban environments. Numerous studies have associated successful reconstruction outcomes with the capacity of local populations and transitional authorities—whether supported by external organisations or foreign nations—to steer recovery efforts effectively. As highlighted earlier, some scholars argue that post-conflict reconstruction plans should remain flexible while aiming for results that resonate with the conditions prior to the conflict.

However, setting priorities after a conflict can be ambiguous, particularly when immediate challenges such as the provision of humanitarian aid, restoration of essential services, and the implementation of policies to meet these needs take precedence (Chang and Rose, 2012; Alnafrah and Mouselli, 2020). Initially, the reconstruction of urban areas is often framed and financed as an urgent recovery effort, primarily focused on restoring basic functionality. This process typically involves addressing the immediate needs of survivors, such as providing emergency shelters for those displaced by conflict (Barakat, 2020). Nevertheless, there is also

an essential transition towards more long-term objectives, such as fostering peace, political stability, and community development (Langer and Brown, 2016; Tadros, 2017).

It is important to acknowledge that there are exceptions to typical post-conflict reconstruction patterns. For instance, as Barakat (2005) observes in his analysis of Iraq's reconstruction, the process did not conform to established models of conflict and post-conflict recovery. This deviation from the norm can also be seen in regions like Gaza and Afghanistan, where ongoing conflicts continue to disrupt reconstruction efforts. These cases highlight the complexities and unpredictability's inherent in rebuilding societies after conflict.

4.1 Restoring Stability and Peace for Reconstruction in Post-conflict Transformation Phases

The African Union (2006) defined post-conflict reconstruction and development as a comprehensive set of actions seeking to address the needs of external states following the cessation of fighting in order to: firstly, assist affected populations; secondly, prevent conflicts from escalating; thirdly, avoid a relapse into violence; and fourthly, address the root causes of unrest to promote sustainable peace. The vision for post-conflict reconstruction and development in Africa is both renewable and sustainable, with stages that include transformation post-emergency (i.e., short- and medium-term) and approaches to long-term development.

Despite the multiple meanings applied to reconstruction in post-conflict situations, there is widespread agreement that reconstruction is a process of resolving the political, institutional, and social circumstances contributing to conflict (Martín-Díaz, 2014). Bădescu (2018; 2015) argued that the reconstruction process serves as a signal for society to move forward from the past, while also considering the needs of the urban environment and how organizations deal with their history. This issue is highly complex and requires inclusivity.

Barakat's (2020) approach was based on policy and practice conceiving the post-conflict reconstruction as a concept. He argued that post-conflict reconstruction involves a set of holistic actions as part of an integrated process to revive economic and social growth while establishing a calm atmosphere designed to prevent a return to violence. In this approach, post-

conflict reconstruction is viewed as a multi-dimensional process, including interconnected social, cultural, political, and economic components, at the local, provincial, national, and international levels. This concept is based on the notion that to manage the challenges of recovery; post-conflict reconstruction requires multidisciplinary problem-solving techniques.

A few minor and new phrases have also been employed, with post-conflict "stabilisation" being the most prominent. Stabilisation is a term favoured by the military and the British government's interagency organisation for post-conflict and fragile nations, the Stabilisation Unit, due to its modest goals. The term "war on terror" came up during military interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq. This term emphasizes the importance of basic security, with humanitarian activities supporting protection and diplomacy, instead of broader civilian areas like governance and socio-economic development. In comparison, the humanitarian assistance community tends to regard "post-conflict development" as a reflection of the necessity for post-conflict efforts to focus on developmental objectives, as opposed to more politically oriented issues such as democratisation or security sector reform (Barakat and Zyk, 2009).

The Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and the Association of the United States Army (AUSA) (2002) developed a framework for reconstruction that makes the case that security—including all aspects of individual and collective public safety—is an essential requirement for realising the benefits of reconstruction. UN-Habitat (2017) believes that the support of the government and the local populations is necessary for post-conflict reconstruction to succeed (O'Driscoll, 2018).

Achieving peace requires the commitment to remedy injustices and establish good social fairness and accountability. To maintain early restoration efforts, cultural heritage recovery should also have a corrective dimension that encourages socioeconomic change rather than focusing just on restoring the status quo (Barakat, 2020).

Reconstruction decisions must consider the necessity of societal rebuilding in addition to the more conventional definition of the word (emphasising physical rebuilding or the reconstruction of political institutions and public services). Reconstruction also should not recreate the issues that gave rise to the conflict in the first place; instead, it should concentrate on building institutions, places, and other activities that promote inclusiveness and assist in resolving conflict-related problems. Although this process must be context-specific, the

elements that sparked the conflict must be considered when deciding how to proceed with reconstruction (O'Driscoll, 2018).

Development actors have prioritised human development targets such as health and education and inclusive growth, which may help both. However, they must also address the causes of conflict and violence, which impair development potential, more effectively (Ryan, 2012).

Peace in a war-torn nation is not assured by the end of the conflict or the completion of infrastructural projects. Long-term conflict prevention requires the PCR process to integrate peacebuilding techniques. Conflicts may reoccur, damaging long-term effects, if PCR efforts do not help with poverty reduction and sustainable development. On the other hand, successful PCR solutions accompanied by a strong vision for recovery can lead to long-term peace. Therefore, conflict avoidance should be one of the core pillars of PCR strategy, and it should be applied to all initiatives. The economic growth achieved by PCR initiatives can prevent future conflicts and promote peace (Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga, 2016).

Recovery and maintenance follow the same local resilience strategy because they aim to restore social circumstances to their pre-conflict levels. However, recovery reveals distinctive processes that broaden our comprehension of regional resilience. For instance, rebuilding requires far more money and effort from local communities than maintaining current circumstances. This is especially true when the desired social circumstances for rehabilitation have been severely compromised or abandoned, and the recovery process is seriously affected by insecure security and financial challenges. Thus, it only occurred in post-conflict Cambodia with few highly valued social institutions, such as neighbourhood Buddhist temples, organisations for mutual aid, and informal educational systems (Lee, 2020).

Özerdem (2015) argued that the recovery efforts should be maintained during the last stage, also known as the time for encouraging sustainability, to assist in preventing the comeback of conflict. Military actors—particularly international peacekeepers—withdraw, and society starts to “restore” during this phase. Post-conflict reconstruction support is a distinct type of development aid with two main goals:

- taking care of immediate requirements, such as providing relief, humanitarian aid, and other post-emergency support; and

- maintaining (or building) the institutional and physical infrastructure required for long-term economic development.

According to Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga (2016), While the reconstruction of physical infrastructure is an essential first step in post-conflict rebuilding, it is insufficient. To establish stability and lasting peace, it is crucial to integrate each post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) intervention into the overall PCR plan. Post-conflict societies face several primary challenges, including economic recovery, reinstating democracy, and reconstructing the public sector and judicial system. According to Hay (2017), rehabilitation is the reason behind the triumphant post-conflict return to normalcy. The main goals and limitations for effective relief are established by well-planned and prepared rehabilitation, which also restores.

It starts the drawn-out process of reconciliation, recombines all classes of people, and restores sustainable functionality that enables a full recovery.

“Relief” is "help and/or intervention during or after a disaster to satisfy life preservation and basic sustenance needs," according to the UN Department of Human Affairs (now the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) (ReliefWeb, 2008, quoted in Hay, 2017, p.112).

Rehabilitating is "taking steps to return to normal living circumstances through the restoration and re-establishment of key services disrupted or deteriorated by a catastrophe or emergency," according to the Regional Disaster Information Centre (ibid).

In times of crisis, such as those described by Hay (2017), restoring vital functions that maintain life is crucial. This can involve repairing the water and wastewater systems, providing safe drinking water in tankers or browsers, and emptying unclean water from septic tanks. Nevertheless, as time goes on, the external reliance grows more substantial, and the potential for local recovery diminishes. The preparation for rehabilitation activities is planned before the relief phase, informed during the relief phase, and delivered to enable enough stability and normalcy to support a sustainable economy and resumption of development towards full recovery. This is how the incident sequence's response phase is structured. Operation performance objectives may thus be dynamically assigned for each level of the activities in the paradigm. Relief efforts restore the infrastructure system to its bare minimum functional level, rehabilitation to its bare minimum sustainable level, and development to its full potential. With

this concept in mind, predicting whether a given infrastructure system has special relief requirements is possible. The best example is the ICRC-facilitated energy and water/wastewater sector contingency plans for the Gaza Strip.

Infrastructure repair is the key to long-term community recovery following a conflict, enabling economic growth, fighters' reintegration, restoring trust in institutions, and a speedier return to regular life. The socioeconomic shift to normal development and financial security is the fundamental objective. The relief-rehabilitation-development paradigm needs to be based on a systematic understanding of local social capital and abilities and the altered post-conflict infrastructure-to-socioeconomic stability and condition to accept concurrent phases of relief, reconstruction, and development (*vice antebellum*). Any reconstruction work must be perceived as being long-lasting, locally beneficial, and sustainably done (ibid).

The experiences of Beirut and Mostar demonstrate that physical reconstruction alone cannot ensure lasting peace. Beirut's post-civil war reconstruction through Solidere attempted to erase physical traces of conflict without adequately addressing underlying societal divisions, while Mostar's reconstruction under the Dayton Agreement institutionalized ethnic divisions despite physical rebuilding. The Stari Most's reconstruction, while symbolically significant, failed to bridge deeper community divides. These cases show that effective peace restoration requires integrating physical reconstruction with social reconciliation processes and addressing the root causes of conflict.

4.2 Transitional justice

Transitional justice plays a pivotal role in post-conflict reconstruction, serving as a mechanism to address past atrocities while facilitating societal healing and rebuilding. The integration of transitional justice into broader peacebuilding frameworks has evolved significantly, particularly since the late 20th century, as societies grapple with the legacies of violence and conflict.

One of the foundational aspects of transitional justice is its alignment with peacebuilding efforts. Macdonald notes that transitional justice has become a core component of routine peacebuilding initiatives, alongside security sector reform, rule of law strengthening, and

disarmament programs (Macdonald, 2017). This integration underscores the necessity of addressing both immediate security concerns and long-term justice needs to foster sustainable peace. Hoddy and Gready further elaborate on this relationship, indicating that transitional justice and peacebuilding are distinct yet interconnected traditions that address violence and lay the groundwork for future stability (Hoddy and Gready, 2020). The historical context of transitional justice, particularly its emergence during the "third wave" of democratization in Latin America and Eastern Europe, highlights its role in responding to past abuses while promoting democratic governance (Hoddy & Gready, 2020).

The effectiveness of transitional justice mechanisms, such as truth commissions and reparations, in promoting social reconstruction is contingent upon their ability to resonate with local contexts and cultural practices. Eijkman emphasizes the importance of recognizing local perspectives in transitional justice processes, arguing that the legitimacy of these initiatives is often derived from their acceptance by the affected communities (Eijkman, 2010). This sentiment is echoed by Hoondert and Martínez, who discuss the role of memorialization practices in fostering social reconstruction and addressing collective memory in post-conflict societies (Hoondert & Martínez, 2020). The interplay between local customs and externally imposed justice frameworks can significantly influence the success of transitional justice initiatives, as seen in Aceh and East Timor, where traditional justice practices were revitalized in the context of transitional justice (Horne, 2014).

Moreover, the socio-economic dimensions of transitional justice cannot be overlooked. Martínez and Anabitarte highlight the critical need to safeguard the rights of displaced persons regarding land, housing, and property restitution as part of post-conflict reconstruction efforts (Martínez & Anabitarte, 2020). This focus on economic, social, and cultural rights is essential for addressing the root causes of conflict and ensuring that reconstruction efforts are inclusive and equitable. The neglect of these rights can perpetuate grievances and hinder the reconciliation process, as evidenced by the experiences in various post-conflict settings (Mackel, 2023).

Transitional justice also serves as a platform for addressing historical injustices and promoting accountability. Onu and Abayomi argue that the rule of law and transitional justice are integral to post-conflict recovery, particularly in addressing socio-economic and political grievances

stemming from violence (Onu & Abayomi, 2022). The case of Rwanda illustrates the complexities of implementing transitional justice in the aftermath of genocide, where the need for accountability must be balanced with the imperatives of national unity and reconciliation (Mwansa, 2021). This balance is critical, as the choices made in transitional justice processes can have lasting implications for societal cohesion and the prevention of future conflicts (Salehi & Williams, 2016).

Both cities illustrate the challenges of implementing transitional justice through reconstruction. In Beirut, the deliberate absence of war memorials and the erasure of conflict traces through Solidere's reconstruction represented a form of imposed forgetting rather than reconciliation. Mostar's experience shows how the selective reconstruction of cultural and religious sites can reinforce grievances when not accompanied by genuine reconciliation processes. These cases demonstrate that physical reconstruction must be accompanied by mechanisms for addressing historical injustices and promoting genuine societal healing.

In conclusion, transitional justice is a vital component of post-conflict reconstruction, intertwining with peacebuilding, local practices, and socio-economic considerations. Its effectiveness hinges on context-sensitive approaches that prioritize local legitimacy and address the underlying causes of conflict. As societies continue to navigate the challenges of rebuilding after violence, the lessons learned from transitional justice experiences will be crucial in shaping more resilient and just futures.

4.3 Reconstruction Sustainability in Post-conflict Cities

Reconstruction sustainability in post-conflict settings is a multifaceted challenge that necessitates a comprehensive approach integrating social, economic, and institutional dimensions. A critical aspect of post-conflict reconstruction is the establishment of effective governance mechanisms. Iskandarani et al. emphasize the importance of identifying appropriate institutional frameworks to address governance issues that arise in these contexts, highlighting stakeholder management as essential for effective coordination and participation among various actors involved in the reconstruction process (Iskandarani, Proverbs, and Xiao, 2022). This aligns with Seneviratne et al., who note that post-conflict housing reconstruction serves as a visible indicator of economic recovery and is crucial for rebuilding trust among

affected populations (Seneviratne et al., 2015). The need for a strategic approach that incorporates sustainable recovery objectives, such as social equity and risk mitigation, is echoed in their findings (Iskandarani et al., 2022; Seneviratne et al., 2015).

Moreover, the role of social capital in post-conflict reconstruction cannot be overstated. Vervisch et al. argue that rebuilding a nation's social fabric is as crucial as reconstructing physical infrastructure, as conflicts often damage both (Vervisch et al., 2013). Community-driven reconstruction programs, which are advocated by organizations like the World Bank, aim to enhance social cohesion while addressing physical needs (Vervisch et al., 2013). This perspective is supported by Demir, who discusses the importance of security sector reconstruction as a prerequisite for sustainable development, emphasizing the need for a holistic approach that includes both physical and social recovery (Demir, 2020).

In the specific context of Sri Lanka, the post-conflict phase following the civil war has underscored the necessity of addressing housing needs effectively. Seneviratne et al. highlight the gaps in managing these needs and propose recommendations to enhance sustainability in housing development post-conflict (Seneviratne et al., 2017; Seneviratne et al., 2016).

Additionally, the concept of capacity development emerges as a critical element in ensuring sustainable reconstruction. Arthur discusses how building capacity and skills is essential for promoting development goals in post-conflict environments, arguing for a coordinated approach to reconstruction efforts (Arthur, 2011). This is echoed by Alemayehu, who stresses the need for a long-term development planning framework tailored to the specific needs of post-conflict societies in Africa (Alemayehu, 2011).

The sustainability challenges faced in both cities provide valuable insights. Beirut's Solidere project, while financially robust, created sustainability concerns through its exclusion of original residents and focus on luxury development. The Wa'd project demonstrated greater social sustainability through community involvement but faced resource limitations. Mostar's ongoing struggles with maintaining divided municipal services and infrastructure highlight how political divisions can undermine long-term sustainability. These experiences emphasize that sustainable reconstruction requires balancing physical, social, and economic factors.

In conclusion, sustainable reconstruction in post-conflict settings requires a multifaceted approach that integrates effective governance, social capital rebuilding, and capacity

development. By addressing these interconnected dimensions, stakeholders can foster a more resilient and equitable recovery process.

4.4 Security and Development

Post-conflict nations face two unique challenges: economic recovery and minimising the danger of future conflict. Economic recovery has been proven to be facilitated by aid and policy improvements. Microeconomics should also be prioritised to promote the expansion of the private sector and restore the economy. The economic implications of conflict often extend well beyond the loss of human resources and infrastructure, producing patterns that reinforce poverty and restrict economic recovery chances (Gupta et al., 2004). As a sector, post-conflict housing rebuilding is therefore threatened by presumptive understanding, confusion with economic development, and a growing focus on sectors that appear to be more strategically significant (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

According to Collier, Hoeffler, and Söderbom (2008), the economic progress decreases threats significantly, although the process is lengthy. In addition, they uncover evidence that UN peacekeeping efforts greatly minimise the chance of a return to warfare. The effect is significant: doubling the expenditure decreases the risk from 40% to 31%. In contrast to these findings, the authors cannot identify any systematic effect of elections on conflict risk reduction. Reconstruction must be associated with economic growth consistent with local values, able to cope with local culture, and centred on re-establishing livelihoods.

The initial idea of contingency relief and rebuilding efforts can be traced back to the reconstruction of Iraq. For any large-scale reconstruction to be successful, security is essential. A well-executed reconstruction plan should consider security, political, and economic factors. Only when the necessary security measures are in place can significant reconstruction projects commence, ensuring the safety of those involved in the process and those overseeing it (Jabareen, 2013).

In post-conflict nations, improved infrastructure may lead to exploitation and increasing violence. Due to the increasing land value following reconstruction, the influential groups seize land and exploit resources. The participation of politically and militarily strong groups in

infrastructure projects increases tension and instability. The ability of local rulers to exercise control over infrastructural resources restricts the growth of societies influenced by violence. Moreover, post-conflict nations are frequently burdened by corruption at all levels of government. Corruption in PCR activities enhances leaders' authority and the public's vulnerability (Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga, 2016).

Reconstruction, and the economic development and progress it seeks to usher in, is predicated on the premise that it minimises the probability of disunity and future civil war. It is considered that progress, economic success, productivity, and an increase in a country's income and level of living provide the circumstances for peace. The World Bank, one of the prominent supporters of post-conflict reconstruction, sees its role in post-conflict reconstruction as helping " the transition from conflict to peace in an affected country through the rebuilding of the socioeconomic framework of the society " (The World Bank, 1998, quoted in Jabareen, 2013, p.122). Development cannot occur without security, but neither can security remain without development.

Bigombe, Collier and Sambanis (2000) also conclude that development is much more successful at reducing the probability of conflict within the first decade following a conflict than in less targeted conflict prevention circumstances. On the other hand, effective PCR remedies accompanied by a coherent vision for recovery can lead to long-term peace. Therefore, conflict avoidance should be one of the core pillars of PCR strategy, and it should be applied to all initiatives. Economic growth achieved by PCR efforts can avoid future conflicts and promote peace (Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga, 2016).

The case studies of Beirut and Mostar powerfully demonstrate the intricate relationship between security and development in post-conflict reconstruction. In Beirut, the Solidere project could only commence once basic security was established, while the Wa'd project in southern Beirut showed how security concerns fundamentally shape reconstruction approaches. Mostar's experience under the Dayton Agreement reveals how security arrangements, while ending conflict, can inadvertently institutionalize divisions through physical urban planning. The city remains divided along ethnic lines, demonstrating that establishing physical security alone is insufficient for genuine urban recovery without addressing underlying social tensions.

4.5 Funding and Economic Recovery

It is essential that economic development and rebuilding go together for peace to be maintained. Nonetheless, economic progress must be consistent with local understandings and culture. Consequently, development must be sustained beyond the rapid surge of assistance and investment in post-conflict reconstruction. Infrastructure projects can be linked to reducing poverty measures and should, therefore, also focus on re-establishing and restoring livelihoods dependent on the conflict economy (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga, 2018).

The early adoption of programs more frequently linked to post-conflict recovery has led to "humanitarian" aid, including expenditure on relief and rebuilding, becoming a part of the political economy of the conflicts. It would be necessary for the initial post-conflict recovery to take place in an undemocratic but not oppressive environment to give democracy time to develop organically or, at the very least, through the gradual promotion and expansion of relevant social and economic, political, and administrative institutions. Coordination will continue to be chaotic, and the influx of actors with varying and sometimes at odds objectives will significantly limit efficient recovery.

Frequently, international actors prioritise macroeconomic stabilisation programmes. It is maintained, however, that this restricts the state's ability to create local enterprises and industry and that macroeconomic stabilisation programmes cannot foster the organic growth of domestic businesses. Furthermore, they generally support multinational companies rather than the conflict-affected population. A microeconomic strategy would more effectively support expanding the private sector, reviving the economy, reducing reliance on foreign aid, broadening the economic base, and encouraging foreign direct investment in local firms and infrastructure (Bender, 2011).

Economical solutions that are stable can be produced through actions that boost production and are supported by clear policies for development. To sustain prosperity, however, it is vital to decrease economic and political risk with a clear strategy for infrastructure rehabilitation. Economic stability obtained by physical rebuilding is crucial to the formation of a stable state under which the government can fix the fundamental causes of the conflict and give political resolutions (Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga 2016)

Coyne (2005) argued that a liberal political, economic, and social system that is self-reliant and does not require outside assistance is a feature of effective post-conflict rebuilding. It is claimed that the institutional requirements of rebuilt orders limit their scope. These prerequisites—a shared belief in markets and the rule of law, as well as a shared philosophy and ethic of individual and private property rights—are essential. Reconstructed liberal orders will not last over time if they do not have these prerequisites to build on. According to some, the strength of horizontal linkages in the post-conflict nation significantly affects the sustainability of a common ideology and ethic and, consequently, its success. The significant finding is that societies with insufficient horizontal linkages will need much ongoing intervention, and efforts to rebuild them will be less likely to be successful.

Since 1989, Beirut has received several billions of dollars in investment and loans from the World Bank, the European Union, commercial banks, and individual investors. The reconstruction of its 180-hectare centre has also been the focal point of rehabilitation initiatives. In contrast to pre-conflict laissez-faire growth, the new city centre development has been meticulously planned and carefully managed. Lebanon's ruling elite (public and private sectors) have manifested a fresh image of a unified and civic-minded Lebanon in the city centre (Nagel, 2002).

The contrasting approaches to funding in Beirut and Mostar illustrate the complexities of economic recovery. Beirut's Solidere project exemplified a market-driven, private-sector approach, while the Wa'd project demonstrated the potential of combining community resources with external support. In Mostar, heavy reliance on international funding for projects like the Stari Most reconstruction highlighted both the benefits and limitations of foreign aid. These experiences show that successful economic recovery requires diverse funding sources and careful attention to equitable distribution of resources to prevent reconstructions from exacerbating pre-existing economic disparities.

4.6 Strengthening Local Capacity

A significant institutional challenge to conducting rebuilding projects might be a need for a more local capability. Therefore, building up local institutions helps the community while maximising the long-term effects of humanitarian aid. Increasing local institutional capacity through training activities, study abroad trips, etc., provides improved use of the donor resources available and helps to lower risks and expectations (Earnest, 2015).

Through improved services and restoring essential requirements, this strategy must support the impacted communities and help them reclaim control of their lives. As a response to the fundamental demands of the people, it should ensure the presence of a shared vision among the technical and administrative processes, and it must be shared by all parties involved. To identify post-conflict political systems that are viable and conducive to development, there should be a politicised discussion that also considers the demands of the communities, the need to preserve peace, and the need to spur economic progress (Samih et al., 2020).

Collaboration, coherence, and communication among stakeholders are essential to successfully reconstruct post-conflict zones. It is important to note that in post-conflict zones, the absence of fighting does not necessarily mean the presence of peace. The ceasefire presents an opportunity to work towards permanent peace, but this requires establishing institutions capable of ensuring long-term security (Gans and Rutkowski, 2015). Local solutions and responses to rebuilding challenges are often more effective, affordable, and sustainable (Barakat et al., 2002). The local community must be incorporated into the rehabilitation process to be sustainable (Thuraijah, 2013). The community must be able to support ownership of the reconstructed infrastructure; hence, the reconstruction must maximise the use of local materials, trades, and services; what is produced must be domestically sustainable. This is ingrained in the old Roman idea of intelligent resourcing (Hay, 2017). Knowing and integrating local customs into the CPR process is essential for lasting peace (Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga, 2016).

The experiences of both cities underscore the critical importance of building local capacity alongside physical reconstruction. Beirut's Solidere project, which often prioritized international expertise over local knowledge, contrasts with the Wa'd project's more locally driven approach. In Mostar, the challenges in maintaining reconstructed infrastructure and managing divided municipal services demonstrate how sustainability depends on building

robust local institutional capacity. These cases show that without substantial investment in local capabilities, even well-executed reconstruction projects may struggle to achieve long-term sustainability.

4.7 Coordination

Due to limited coordination between the numerous donors and agencies involved in post-conflict reconstruction, projects are frequently reproduced, or similar projects have been developed, resulting in unnecessary waste and a failure to meet society's demands. For this reason, all projects must be coordinated correctly among the many players involved; failure to conform results in the international presence's benefits being nullified (O'Driscoll, 2018). The post-conflict environment differs considerably from the pre-conflict one, and many variables contribute to this difference. Such factors as displacement, vulnerability, the crowding out effect, and the governance conundrum must be considered. Therefore, collaboration among the many stakeholders is essential for developing effective and context-sensitive solutions (Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga 2018).

At the local level, sustainable growth materialises, which is why localisation is necessary. Localisation is a bottom-up approach that begins with the existing physical, social, and economic conditions of cities and people. It then adapts these conditions to meet needs and priorities. Therefore, governments must comprehend local conditions and identify local needs and priorities. Additionally, stakeholders and technical, institutional, financial, and natural resources must be identified. A rebuilding strategy led by stakeholders can promote involvement and inclusion; it is superior to donor-driven and contractor-driven approaches because donors and contractors may need to consider people's needs (Khalaf, 2020). The vision for recovery "must be shared by all stakeholders and rooted locally" so that reconstruction can be sustainable. It is helpful to make a list of names, needs, roles, and responsibilities and to determine the prioritisation and sequencing of needs, including humanitarian and development needs. Men and women who are internally displaced and refugees should be engaged and involved through various communication channels, including open information sessions, seminars, Internet linkages, and social media. People can also be interested in project execution, for instance, by contributing craft skills in exchange for money (cash-for-work), which would speed their rehabilitation and lessen their need for external support.

This may lessen the communication gap between urban professionals and urban residents, governments, constituents, and various groups within a city. In the early stages of post-conflict reconstruction, it may also give a chance to reconsider the reconstruction of cities and lives. Active participation of different stakeholders (residents, builders, planners, etc.) may present an opportunity to reconsider post-conflict reconstruction into an incorporated approach to the design of housing and public places and to participate in peacebuilding processes through the active physical reclaiming of space.

4.8 Corruption and Legitimisation of Local Authorities

It is considered that a secure environment and the support of the local people and government are essential for effective post-conflict rehabilitation. However, corruption is frequently pervasive in post-conflict nations, making post-conflict reconstruction challenging. To maintain openness, governments and aid organisations must develop anticorruption monitoring mechanisms, but it is also essential to develop context-specific accountability measures (Earnest, 2015). Corruption is widespread in post-conflict communities, necessitating the establishment of context-specific accountability mechanisms by governments and humanitarian organisations (O'Driscoll, 2018). As a result, communities remain unstable and find it challenging to return to normal conditions on their own. In addition, these societies are burdened by economic corruption and violence.

The shift of economic activities to developed locations might negatively impact infrastructural enhancement. Due to uneven economic distribution, divisions and tensions might be intensified. The inability to allocate the rebuilding and, by extension, its benefits equitably across the conflict -affected population might increase horizontal disparities. Inequitable allocation of resources is a typical underlying cause of conflict, and its reappearance in the aftermath of a battle can reignite violence. PCR actions that abuse resources and exacerbate inequality make individuals more vulnerable. Infrastructure development often generates environmental impact (Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga 2016).

Donors frequently utilise post-conflict rebuilding to legitimise a state during a building endeavour. However, Brown (2018) argues that enhancing service delivery does not inevitably enhance public opinions of the government's legitimacy. The people are more concerned with

how these services are given and whether they are offered equitably. In addition, residents value a participatory approach to service delivery and the perception of service providers as community members. This indicates a programme of post-conflict reconstruction that is more locally (i.e., municipally) directed (Brown, 2018).

UN-Habitat (2017) claims that the post-conflict reconstruction programme in Sri Lanka's northern and eastern provinces was effective due to three main factors: the involvement of local people from the beginning to the end; the diverse partnerships to implement the projects, which included donors, government, and community organisations; and the use of new and innovative technologies to make the programme cost-effective and sustainable. Notably, UN-Habitat argues that the reconstruction was only feasible with the Sri Lankan government and local populations' assistance since it needed their complete acceptance and involvement. The initiative was sustainable and uplifting since it was built on a participatory method to restore people's homes and infrastructure. The Village Reconstruction Committees played a crucial role in village growth and house building. These committees comprised men and women of all ages, including the elderly and disabled individuals, many impacted by the conflict. In an effort to reduce costs and increase sustainability, the programme utilized new construction technologies. However, as the effectiveness of these technologies varied, the programme needed to be adaptable and flexible.

Rarely is the infrastructure that foreign organisations and contractors have rebuilt without local participation sustainable. Quick Impact Projects in Afghanistan, in which contractors or military engineers construct a well, school, or clinic in a community, can frequently spark a rise in violence in the surrounding villages since they desire the same thing and typically delay the overall development process. The absence of local ownership sometimes entails a lack of following the locally felt need for maintenance or care of usage, a position which may be remedied by intelligent, participatory learning and action (Hay, 2017).

O'Driscoll (2018) argued that several funders and agencies must participate in post-conflict reconstruction coordination to avoid initiatives being conducted in the same or similar ways. The public is more interested in how these services are equitably provided than in whether the state has been legitimated via post-conflict reconstruction.

The case studies demonstrate how reconstruction efforts can either strengthen or undermine local authority legitimacy. In Beirut, Solidere's extensive powers sometimes bypassed

traditional municipal authorities, while Hezbollah's Wa'd project enhanced its local legitimacy through effective service delivery. Mostar's complex administrative structure, established post-conflict, shows how institutional arrangements can either combat or enable corruption. These experiences highlight the need for transparent governance mechanisms and clear accountability structures in reconstruction efforts.

4.9 Priorities and Local Needs Post-conflict

The priorities following any conflict are sometimes only clear unless there are obvious challenges to overcome to achieve these goals associated with humanitarian aid, essential services for citizens, and appropriate policies (Chang and Rose, 2012; Alnafrah and Mouselli, 2020). Dawar and Ferreira (2021) stated that post-conflict programmes must outline, quantify, and prioritise the required needs and actions to recover social and economic conditions and prevent recurring conflict entirely. Furthermore, O'Driscoll (2018) highlighted that reconstruction should address the needs of the local population rather than the elites, which generally tend to be responsible for the conflict in the first place. The focus should therefore be placed on rebuilding the social contract rather than consolidating elite power and wealth.

Priorities should be set, and temporary buildings should be built in war-torn nations to enable a technical-rooted, orderly restoration process as part of the architecture of integrated, guided recovery (Barakat and Zyck, 2009a). Internally displaced people and other vulnerable groups frequently went without shelter in Bosnia and Croatia throughout the 1990s because they were forbidden from using local structures protected under the guise of cultural heritage (Barakat, 2020).

The needs and activities are necessary to ensure the complete recovery of social and economic circumstances. To prevent recurrent conflict, they must be identified, quantified, and prioritised in post-conflict programmes (Dawar and Ferreira, 2021).

The need to adapt and consider each nation's unique needs is becoming increasingly evident. However, at the same time, there is growing awareness that timely coordination and a shared understanding of goals are necessary for foreign help to be practical and to rebuild small communities via social reconstruction or with a focus on meeting essential requirements (Özerdem, 2015).

Instead of focusing on the elites who caused the conflict in the first place, reconstruction should focus on the needs of the locals. Rebuilding the social contract should be prioritised over concentrating elite power and money, as it is crucial to restoring trust, stability, and justice in society. Reconstruction must consider the needs of the community, especially those who have been more directly harmed by the conflict. For instance, according to Sharp (2018), Beirut and urban corporate growth were given much attention during Lebanon's rebuilding as opposed to affordable housing, infrastructure, waste management, urban governance, and open space. Along with significant debt from funding urban business growth, the legacy of not investing in these communities is still very much present today. Construction during reconstruction may be a violent process since it can be used to separate communities rather than bring them together, with some places being built only for some people, with contracts frequently going to the same players involved in violence. During the fight, violence was committed. Furthermore, elites may employ reconstruction to increase their power and riches rather than establish a social contract (O'Driscoll, 2018).

The divergent approaches to community engagement in Beirut and Mostar provide crucial lessons. Solidere's top-down approach in Beirut led to ongoing legitimacy issues, while the Wa'd project achieved greater community buy-in through more inclusive practices. Mostar's experience with the Stari Most reconstruction demonstrates how symbolic projects can either unite or divide communities depending on the level of inclusive engagement. These cases reveal that meaningful community participation, though potentially more time-consuming, is essential for legitimate and sustainable reconstruction outcomes.

4.9.1 Local Needs

As discussed above, reconstruction should address local needs, particularly those population sectors most directly impacted by conflict. In addition, the restoration of cultural assets is vital for a city's overall revitalisation, growth, and planning framework (Khalaf, 2020). After the end of a conflict, rebuilding a city involves the management of a complex, interconnected network of social, cultural, economic, and political processes situated at many levels, including national, provincial, and global.

This indicates that heritage conservation and rebuilding must include more than simply the preservation or reconstruction of buildings, being also a broader process of cultural identification requiring evaluation. Thus, a body capable of articulating the needs of the population, setting priorities, and initiating planning (regardless of the likelihood of rapid execution) can help to strengthen local involvement. On the other hand, it also needs to be considered that, as witnessed in Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, considerable damage can be caused during the recovery process. Thus, reduced governmental capacity to preserve (or prioritise) cultural heritage can increase black-market theft, which poses the greatest threat to cultural heritage assets (ibid). The aspect of professional preservation is also highly significant as the 'second side' of the rebuilding process, mainly when there is a need to employ new building materials, with professional interventions now viewed as more significant than they had done previously (Toshikj and Zsemary, 2019).

Due to the intensity of violence in wartime, it is essential that the population is subsequently helped to rebuild their social bonds and that divided communities are reconciled. Therefore, the reconstruction of cultural heritage forms a vital aspect of a recovery strategy, helping achieve general stability and protection; overcoming poverty; and finally, bringing about national, economic, and psychological security. Historically, heritage conservation professionals have been resistant to proposals for reconstruction, fearing that this approach may invalidate history and introduce fictional locations that did not exist. This view informs the reconstruction theories discussed in the previous section (Toshikj and Zsemary, 2019).

Solidere completely renovated the infrastructure of the city centre in Beirut, and enlarged the roadway network grid to accommodate and ease the dividing up of land for real estate development. This included the installation of water supply networks, public lights, television, telephones, communications networks, walkways, and green public areas (Solidere, 2006).

The contrasting experiences in both cities underscore the importance of addressing genuine local needs rather than imposed solutions. Beirut's city centre reconstruction under Solidere often prioritized international commercial interests over local residential needs, while the Wa'd project demonstrated greater responsiveness to community requirements. Mostar's divided reconstruction efforts reveal how failing to address local needs comprehensively can perpetuate social divisions. These cases emphasize that successful reconstruction must be grounded in thorough understanding and responsive to local priorities and concerns.

4.10 Preserving and Restoring the Built Cultural Heritage

Maintaining lasting peace in formerly ‘post-conflict’ nations is often problematic due to the lack of permanent stability in such regions. The restoration of cultural heritage can be regarded as long-term development, prioritised only after the post-conflict transition (Barakat, 2020). This is likely to prove long-term unsustainable when a conflict transformation perspective does not lead to post-conflict cultural heritage recovery, containing the triple objective of providing hope, healing, and reconciliation. Recovering from painful memories, and re-establishing trust, is a delicate and highly complex process that may take time to accomplish.

Viejo-Rose (2013) defined reconstruction as rebuilding existing buildings and creating new ones. This incorporated reconstructing a country's past, codifying its value system, and creating narratives around that information. Kalman (2017) highlighted the multiple criteria associated with heritage status that demands that a site maintains its ‘authenticity’ in its "original shape and content" as well as "any later changes and additions."

While conservation can be a means of managing change, it can also ensure continuity. According to Khalaf (2020), conservation efforts should preserve culture by maintaining a continuity of values, functional use of practices and craft skills, and a close relationship between cultural heritage and sustainable development.

Solidere was awarded the authority to expropriate property in the city centre of Beirut and compensate pre-conflict owners with shares in the company. It created an integrated urban layout and pulled down many surviving structures to (re)build a high-standard planned city centre that echoed French mandate architecture, with new public spaces and a coherent appearance (Humphreys, 2015; Ragab, 2011).

This reflects the experience of the UK city of Coventry, which was almost completely destroyed by German bombers during the Second World War. Before the bombing, in May 1940, a team of local urban designers and planners had proposed a Coventry-of-Tomorrow redevelopment plan to modernise the city, which, following the attack, was used to rebuild in such a way that the city was barely recognisable to its population. The design was introduced to the city’s citizens in early 1941 under the heading ‘Plan for the New Coventry: Disorder and

Destruction: Order and Design'. This was followed by a brochure showing the plan's details republished based on an Architect and Construction News report. Within days of the rubble being removed, the city architect and the Metropolitan Council were outlining the opportunities created by the bombing, which had rendered Coventry a clean slate to design and develop an entirely new city (Calame, 2005).

The reconstruction of cultural heritage in both cities reveals its profound importance in post-conflict recovery. Beirut's selective preservation under Solidere and the more community-oriented approach of the Wa'd project demonstrate how heritage choices influence collective memory and identity. Mostar's Stari Most reconstruction became a powerful symbol of both unity and division, while the controversial reconstruction of religious buildings highlights how cultural heritage can become politicized. These experiences emphasize that heritage preservation must balance physical restoration with the complex social and political implications of reconstruction choices.

4.10.1 Symbolic Violence

However, in Beirut, Solidere's rescue, and preservation of Lebanon's historic monuments represented a determined effort to submerge and erase the country's more recent past. Even though memories of the civil war still dominate the minds of Beirut's residents, there is no significant public memorial to commemorate the conflict or its victims in the reconstructed city. According to Nagel (2002) and Bădescu (2018), neither the government nor its private-sector partners are willing to acknowledge these memories publicly.

Harvey (2007) highlighted that the rise of neoliberalism had generated interest among academics from various disciplines. While the conventional definition of neoliberalism has focused on reducing governmental intervention in markets and freeing entrepreneurship from restrictions, it has broader implications beyond just economics.

Solidere's rebuilding efforts in Lebanon commenced in the post-conflict period when a holding corporation was formed to restore the city centre. Changing the scope from the reconstruction of a city to the architectural re-imagining of specific buildings can also aid an understanding of reconstruction's (geo)political roots in disputed cities. In addition, rebuilding can also help to improve geopolitical consistency narratives. As well as architectural rebuilding, memorials serve as symbolic violence in post-conflict urban area reconfigurations, with the symbolic

landscape reshaped as a result of selective rebuilding and the creation of new buildings designed to promote the supremacy of a specific group. Thus, geopolitically, selective rebuilding can be interpreted as a discourse of power when only those structures associated with the memories of one group are restored. In contrast, those of others are left in ruins (Bădescu, 2018). Post-conflict reconstruction can therefore lead to the reinforcement of 'spatial erasure' caused by the fighting (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010).

On the other hand, place-based identities can prove positive in urban areas by being established at any size, whether national, regional, or local. Several planning theorists have suggested that place-based initiatives, frequently local, form powerful tools for promoting social cohesion, agreement, and unity (Stephenson, 2010). Place-based planning efforts have added significance in countries with intense factional rivalries, as they can serve as strategies to combat entrenched factions. Therefore, it is beneficial to consider place-based identities, particularly in regions torn by conflict, and promote a regional identity aimed at overcoming previous divisions, as seen in the promotion of a Northern Ireland or Ulster identity (Nagle and Clancy, 2012).

Mady and Chettiparamb (2017) emphasized that attention to detail is crucial in preventing a space-based identity from being associated with a specific group and reinforcing existing divisions. This indicates that creating such identities must consider prevailing factional biases and take deliberate steps to prevent such developments.

The post-conflict reconstruction of Beirut was marked by a deliberate effort to neutralize the space and privatize the infrastructure, while erasing all reminders of the conflict or opposition. This approach could be seen as a form of violence rather than symbolic reconstruction, as it is directed at erasing the past rather than promoting healing and reconciliation among communities. Thus, following the ending of a conflict, a combat zone is no longer a place of violence but becomes one of unrestricted capital flow. However, in Beirut, a new form of the divide has been prompted by an approach to rebuilding that favours group cohesion and promotes a single city and a unified country, confident in its economic prospects. This has led to religious differences giving way to socio-economic barriers, demarcating the city centre for those who are affluent, alongside those from other countries, while its peripheries are inhabited by the poor and members of the indigenous population (Bădescu, 2018).

The case studies powerfully illustrate how reconstruction can perpetuate symbolic violence. In Beirut, Solidere's wholesale transformation of the downtown area effectively erased the

memories and claims of original inhabitants, while in Mostar, the construction of oversized religious buildings and selective reconstruction of cultural heritage sites became tools of ethnic assertion. The experiences of both cities demonstrate how reconstruction choices can reinforce power dynamics and perpetuate cultural dominance, even while appearing to rebuild and restore.

4.11 Community Engagement and Local Ownership

Combined or hybrid perspectives that allow households in post-conflict environments to assign contractor-driven or owner-driven choices, or a combination of the two, may help guarantee that the model of reconstruction practiced is derived from local conditions and the needs of individual households rather than the purported universal benefits of anyone. Owner-driven initiatives are ones in which individuals are permitted to rebuild their homes on their own.

The other types, needing limited professional aid, were first known as "self-help" projects and encompassed not just housing but also numerous aspects of social and economic rehabilitation following the conflict and natural disaster (Barakat, 2005). Since at least 2007, the United Nations (UN) has encouraged owner-driven techniques supplemented by technical advisers and professional labourers as appropriate. Scholars have noted that owner-driven rebuilding and housing rehabilitation are typically more cost-effective and result in more excellent occupancy rates than contractor-driven initiatives (Barakat, 2003).

Reconstruction projects can only be effective if they are built based on local characteristics, which is why public engagement in the planning and design phases is crucial. Prioritising popular participation in government provides a sense of power among the populace and mitigates the feeling of imposition by foreign players. Reconstruction efforts should also handle horizontal inequities, making local engagement crucial. Projects should be people-centred compared to project-centred. The post-conflict reconstruction in Sri Lanka was productive due to the participation of locals from start to finish, diversified partnerships used to accomplish the projects (donors, government, and community organisations), and the utilisation of new and innovative technologies to render it cost-effective and feasible. It is essential that the physical rebuilding be accompanied by aspects that restore the society and the state's legitimacy. Effective post-conflict leadership must be devoted to resolving

disparities and exclusion and promoting social discourse and reconciliation. Incorporating locals in the planning, implementation, and assessment processes is crucial since this provides local ownership and support for the completed programmes. Furthermore, civil society members are rarely involved in decision-making and are only engaged during the implementation phase to ensure sustainable growth and development. Beneficiaries must consistently engage throughout all project phases (Earnest, 2015).

Saul (2014) has emphasised that local ownership should relate to people directly affected by the rebuilding and should not be mistaken for national, regional, or local government ownership. In practice, popular participation in government should be prioritised since it provides a sense of influence among the populace, which develops legitimacy and counteracts the impression of imposition by foreign players. This also helps to foster positive population participation with restoration efforts.

Grassroots and bottom-up approaches to post-conflict rebuilding are essential for addressing the core causes of the conflict, such as poverty and political marginalisation. Therefore, rebuilding should incorporate new bottom-up solutions that address social inequality and marginalisation. However, some obstacles must be addressed to encourage local engagement. Local elites responsible for the conflict might use the reconstruction effort to gather support and take over the process. This shows the local populace that aggression is rewarded. This reinforces the need for a more localised notion of local. However, ignoring elites can generate tensions and lead to their attempts to reclaim their authority (ibid).

4.12 Reconstruction Strategies in Post-conflict Cities

To prevent further conflicts, post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) should adopt a comprehensive strategy that includes reconstructing destroyed livelihoods and re-establishing government and confidence.

Peace in a war-torn nation is not assured by the end of the conflict or the completion of infrastructural projects. Long-term conflict prevention requires the PCR process to incorporate peace-building techniques (Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga, 2016). Conflicts with

detrimental long-term effects may recur if PCR initiatives do not help reduce poverty and promote sustainable development.

Barakat and Zyck's (2011) research highlights the importance of implementing open and consistent planning standards in the context of repatriating refugees or IDPs, promoting racial harmony, fostering local entrepreneurship, and enhancing the environmental and social resilience of local communities. Their findings underscore the need for effective and inclusive planning processes that engage and empower local actors, and that consider the complex social, economic, and environmental dynamics at play in post-conflict settings. This underscores the critical role that planning, and governance frameworks can play in facilitating the sustainable recovery and reconstruction of conflict-affected communities, and in promoting social cohesion, economic growth, and environmental sustainability.

In post-conflict areas, there exists a lack of coherence and significant inequality among citizens, leading to social and environmental instability. The major challenge is the diverse stakeholder groups, each with its own agenda, jurisdiction, and approach, including military, civil society, and organizational perspectives. Bringing these approaches into alignment is a difficult task. The Comprehensive Approach (CA) offers an intriguing solution to this problem. It represents the various governmental stakeholders involved in the decision-making process and is typically implemented in failing or failed states with the aim of post-conflict reconstruction. Within the CA framework, governance is operationalized through collaboration, fostering lasting and well-structured relationships, resource allocation, and other interactions among specific organizations with both common and separate goals (Gans and Rutkowski, 2015).

The Comprehensive Approach is defined by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as "the integration of military security activities with diplomacy and development". The CA aims to increase the coordination and harmony between local and international actors' operations. This encompasses the programme cycle's analysis, planning, execution, management, and assessment (ibid).

These intellectual achievements and lessons from post-disaster operations may be used for post-conflict reconstruction. International organisations, like the World Bank, UN agencies, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), do in fact, closely adapt the disaster recovery paradigm to their work in urban conflict contexts (Steinø, Dabaieh and Ben Bih, 2020). These urban recovery frameworks seek to provide supportive institutional and legislative structures

that mainstream an urban recovery strategy and permit area-based intersectoral collaboration. Additionally, they support a collaborative analysis to comprehend the intricate process of urban recovery and reconstruction, identify gaps, and complete the long-term recovery program—reconstruction of significant cities following an urban recovery results framework (UN-Habitat, 2019).

According to Barakat (2020), in the end, it is a balancing act, and decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis. Capabilities may also be created through the transfer of policies, learning from the experiences of other nations to distinguish between good and bad practices (Barakat, 2005). Despite difficulties, investing in skills and resources before or during conflict is necessary to fill shortages. Post-conflict training and education can help with this.

4.13 Centralised Strategy of Reconstruction

Countries that have undergone conflict often inherit public administrations in need of significant reform. This issue is compounded by the fact that these institutions may lack the necessary experience to facilitate recovery and are expected to respond quickly and effectively to newly emerging post-conflict structures. Furthermore, Their power and authority might conflict with standard neoliberal rebuilding models that minimise the state and consider bureaucracy inefficient and bloated. As a result, the state's essential role in rebuilding processes is diminished, whether for adopting responsibility for security, regulation, and priority-setting or for establishing rebuilding policies that arise through participatory processes. In its stead, non-governmental organisations may continue to dominate the relief phase. Civil society is vital, but so is the state, and bad portrayals should be consistent with its weaknesses. Between the state and civil society, quasi-state entities are increasingly involved in cultural heritage protection in MENA (Barakat, 2020). People's Protection Units (YPG), which governs Kurdish areas in Syria, formed an Antiquities Authority and implemented rules prohibiting the destruction of cultural heritage sites (Danti, 2015). Critics of liberal economic approaches have claimed that humanitarian actors' and governments' subsidisation of housing reconstruction is inappropriate because it impedes broader economic recovery by marginalising the private sector and privileging elites who, unlike the extremely poor, have recorded landholdings and political clout (Freeman, 2004).

In terms of infrastructure, economic sources, social networks, and other options for sustainability, the aftermath of violent conflicts has enormous ramifications for local populations. The effects of intrastate conflicts necessitate the development of new reconstruction strategies and techniques. In most third-world nations, post-conflict reconstruction is frequently led by the central government through "centralised planning" (top-down) without community participation. 'Although, it's easier for the central government to devise quick policies and develop a well-coordinated network with donor organizations, however, the lack of 'truly local ownership' can be a major weakness' (Dawar and Ferreira, 2021, p.3). External players' exclusion of local perspectives is frequently a 'foreign' approach that produces a 'perception gap' and causes additional grievances on top of the initial ones (Richmond, 2010; Khan and Nyborg, 2013). In a state where only central authority "knows" victims' rights and speaks for them instead of the victims themselves, passivity is substituted for empowerment (Madlingozi, 2010).

Westernisation is a result of PCR that has been heavily criticised in the literature. PCR interventions can persuade countries to adopt Western notions of neo-liberal economic development. Peace is frequently confused with market economy and demand-driven growth. Market economy and demand-driven growth have been commonly regarded as a pathway to achieving peace, yet as Sakalasuriya, Haigh, and Amaratunga (2016) suggest, infrastructure development geared towards this approach may worsen pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities in society. In recent decades, the "Western model" has been criticized for creating a market-based capitalist economic system, supported by a political government that prioritizes and defends unrestrained market capitalism, as highlighted by Wind and Ibrahim (2020). Thus, while the market economy may offer potential benefits, there are also potential risks to consider when pursuing this approach to infrastructure development. Urban geographers have noted that several Middle Eastern regimes have lately evolved their brand of neo-liberalism that is authoritarian, oil-funded, and interventionist (ibid).

Both cities reveal the implications of centralized reconstruction approaches. Beirut's Solidere project exemplified a highly centralized, corporate-led strategy that marginalized municipal authorities, while Hezbollah's Wa'd project demonstrated an alternative form of centralized control through non-state actors. Mostar's internationally supervised reconstruction shows how centralized planning can struggle to address local complexities. These experiences highlight both the efficiency benefits and potential pitfalls of centralized reconstruction strategies.

4.14 Reconstruction Models

Power and authority can contend with prevalent neoliberal reconstruction models, which minimise the state and deem bureaucracies to be both bloated and inefficient. Consequently, the state's vital function in rebuilding processes is undermined, whether when it comes to assuming responsibility for security, regulation, and priority-setting or defining rebuilding strategies emergent from a participatory process. It is then replaced by non-governmental organisations, which are permitted to maintain their predominance during the relief phase. Barakat (2020) highlighted that while civil society is essential, the state is no less critical, and its weakness should not be exacerbated by using negative images.

Viejo-Rose (2013) defined reconstruction as the act of restoring existing buildings and creating new ones, including reconstructing a country's past, codifying its value system, and creating narratives around such information. Kalman (2017) highlighted the multiple criteria associated with heritage status, demanding that a site maintains its 'authenticity' in its "original shape and content" as well as "any later changes and additions" (p. 541).

While conservation can be a means of managing change, it can also serve to promote continuity. Thus, conservation should strive to maintain culture through a continuity of values, functions, uses practises and craft skills, and tight linkages when cultural heritage becomes a cornerstone of sustainable development (Khalaf, 2020).

According to Barakat (2020), an additional strategy is to meticulously restore damaged structures of exceptional value or to leave them to remain as ruins inside new townscapes. These alternatives are expensive but are frequently justified in ancient locations with a high potential for tourism revenue, i.e., Dubrovnik. These techniques can, as seen in Warsaw and Gdansk, include precise replicas of demolished structures based on archival evidence or exterior townscapes with traditional façades combined with contemporary interiors that eliminate customary property divides. Some wish to preserve ruins to keep memories alive, as with the structures in Khoramshahr, in South-West Iran, which served as memorials after the Iran-Iraq War, or the buildings in southern Lebanon, bombed by Hezbollah during the 2006 Israel-Lebanon conflict.

The conventional definition of neoliberalism focuses on reducing governmental intervention in the market while simultaneously freeing entrepreneurship from restrictions (Harvey, 2007). At the policy level, this definition implies that a neoliberal agenda is in place, which “implies a shift from government to (partly) private strategies, or a conversion from publicly planned solutions to competitive and market-oriented ones, or at least the serving of business companies and their favoured customer groups” (Sager, 2011, p. 148). Throughout the late 1990s, opponents of such projects became more outspoken and organised, lamenting the replacement of the Green Line in Beirut, dividing ethnic groups, with Solidere's red line dividing economic classes.

Some academics believe separation is currently being perpetuated by the architecture of the huge blocks of high-rise flats that now comprise most of the built environment (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010). These new blocks contrast sharply with the dense morphology of adjacent neighbourhoods, which formed the early expansion of the ancient Beirut's city centre. In addition, the morphology of large blocks also suggests the imposition of a new process of spatial production in the city, with the complex web of social relations, which has sustained the historic core's urban production since the 1800s, now being reduced to property shares owned and managed by a single real estate company.

This development has led to a considerable number of public political protests, reflecting calls for more responsible processes, and emphasising the lack of participation in decision-making. There is also evidence of rebuilding due to top-down decision-making superseding any use of dialogue and involvement, with the local agency neglecting the views of citizens as well as many local urban planners and architects. Thus, despite being overlooked by Beirut's broader social and economic community requirements, its city centre restoration has successfully met all the specified reconstruction objectives. This demonstrates how the brutality of conflict can be continued through the symbolic rebuilding of forms, reflecting Viejo- Rose's (2013) thesis of the reconstruction as cultural violence in relation to Spain after the Civil War. Notably, most of the indigenous population was unable to return to their homes due to the imposition of regulations and requirements for rebuilding, which were costly, while new residential properties were prohibitively expensive. In addition, no appropriate employment was available to offset the high expense of living in the new city centre, which was separated from the other districts and lacked public transport. Thus, the readjustment of the urban fabric failed to

respond to societal changes and needs, largely due to excluding the local population, who were not invited to participate in identifying their needs and changes (Imam, 2014).

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is one of the most notable strategies aligning rebuilding plans with SDGs to assist in developing a recovery strategy addressing underlying vulnerabilities, increasing resilience, regenerating livelihoods, and improving overall well-being (Khalaf, 2020).

The contrasting reconstruction models employed in Beirut and Mostar offer crucial lessons. Beirut's experience with both the market-driven Solidere model and the community-oriented Wa'd project demonstrates how different approaches serve different objectives and constituencies. Mostar's hybrid model, combining international oversight with local implementation, reveals the challenges of balancing external expertise with local agency. These cases show that successful reconstruction models must be adaptable to local contexts while maintaining clear governance frameworks.

4.15 The Resilience of Reconstruction Strategies

Mixed or hybrid systems integrating owner-driven and contractor-driven models may assist in maximising the benefits of each, such as local ownership and structural soundness, while providing better flexibility than each model can provide separately.

Mixed or hybrid strategies that allow households in post-conflict environments to identify contractor-driven or owner-driven options, or a combination of the two, may assist in ensuring that the model of reconstruction practised is based on local conditions and the requirements of different households rather than the purported universal benefits of a "one size fits all" approach (Barakat and Zyck, 2011).

Furthermore, international actors should be adaptable to the shifting post-conflict processes and not introduce preconceived notions of the reconstruction process. Donors and implementing organisations must be adaptable in their project design and execution because of post-conflict dynamics on the perception of initiatives (O'Driscoll, 2018).

Lee (2020) investigates the realization of local resilience in post-conflict reconstruction through an analysis of the redevelopment of Buddhist institutions in Cambodia. The author identifies three types of resilience - recovery, maintenance, and transformation - that played a significant role in the practice of local-level peacebuilding in the country. Lee further explores the process by which each form of resilience emerged, as perceived by local communities. Despite the considerable advancement, the discussions surrounding resilient peacebuilding are still in their infancy, and several resilience-related issues still need to be thoroughly investigated. The character of local resilience in civilisations that have experienced conflict is one such area. Comparatively, little attention has been paid to how local resilience is recognised, mobilised, and supported compared to the substantial discussions on how international actors may encourage local resilience (ibid)—and transform within local communities.

The priority of peacebuilding has shifted from extensive institution construction to the capacity development of actors (Bargués-Pedreny and Martin De Almagro 2020), reflected in the resilience language. The need to adapt and consider each nation's unique needs is becoming increasingly evident. Furthermore, at the same time, there is growing awareness that timely coordination and a shared understanding of goals are necessary for foreign help to be practical (Özerdem, 2015).

According to Coyne (2006), foreign interventions in nations with weak or failed domestic institutions often exacerbate problems rather than resolving them. In many cases, foreign government-led rebuilding initiatives have failed to create long-term stability, leading to further conflict or the establishment of autocratic regimes. Historical examples such as Haiti (1915–1934, 1994–1996), Cambodia (1970–2003), and Cuba (1898–1902, 1906–1909, 1917–1922) show that external interventions, despite their intentions, often fail to establish sustainable governance structures. While an effective and accountable government based on democratic principles and the rule of law may be ideal, the complex realities of post-conflict reconstruction make this outcome difficult to achieve in practice.

The resilience of different reconstruction strategies is clearly demonstrated in both cities. Beirut's Wa'd project showed greater resilience through its strong community connections and adaptive approach, while Solidere's rigid master planning proved less adaptable to changing circumstances. Mostar's experience with the Stari Most reconstruction illustrates how resilient strategies must address both physical and social dimensions of rebuilding. These cases

emphasize that resilient reconstruction requires flexibility, community engagement, and the ability to adapt to evolving local needs.

4.16 The Worst-case Scenario

Geipel (2012) describes the worst-case effects of ineffective remedies. It is proposed that the following outcomes can be anticipated when the strategies of intervening agencies for rebuilding are not established, recovery instruments are not rigidly enforced, and incoming money is diverted. Relief supplies are used up by "first aid actions" in the short term (within a year) and disappear along with the initial outpouring of support and public enthusiasm; projects move forward improperly without any master planning or top-down direction; and subsidies that were assured but never quite materialised because they were lost in financial power structures. In the mid-term (2–5 years), donations of relief supplies decline as it becomes more difficult to detect positive resonance among the victims; the central government and international relief organisations leave the disaster area; news of the catastrophe and its effects stops making headlines, and general depression develops as people wait for outside assistance and struggle with a lack of information. In the longer term (5–20 years), impacted residents are left to a free market economy of recovery based on wealth and influence on decision-makers from before the disaster; the local economy suffers; traditional bonds of trust between people and their leadership are deeply upset, and social ties and institutions must be repaired without the advantage of a prior needs assessment or coordinated planning.

Badescu (2018) argues that changing the focus from urban reconstruction to the architectural rebuilding of specific structures might also help in comprehending the (geo)political foundations of reconstruction in disputed cities. Reconstruction can reinforce geopolitical discourses of continuity, indicating that, what he calls, inadvertent monuments - such as houses of worship, fountains, and libraries - become deliberate monuments via their rebuilding.

Consequently, the conflict continues from a military action that destroys buildings and kills people to an urban conflict and violence that destroys the values of belonging, unity, and peaceful coexistence. The reconstruction of the victorious party does not explicitly show a priority for building peace in shared spaces.

Both cities illustrate potential worst-case outcomes in post-conflict reconstruction. In Beirut, Solidere's approach led to the displacement of original residents and the creation of an

exclusive enclave disconnected from the broader city fabric. Mostar's sustained ethnic divisions and parallel institutions represent a worst-case scenario where reconstruction reinforces rather than heals divisions. These experiences demonstrate how reconstruction can exacerbate inequalities and divisions when not properly balanced with social reconciliation and inclusive development strategies.

4.17 Conclusion: The Challenges of Post-conflict Reconstruction

The examination of post-conflict reconstruction challenges reveals a complex web of interconnected issues that must be carefully navigated to achieve successful and sustainable recovery. Through the analysis of Literature review and practical experiences, particularly from cases like Beirut and Mostar, several critical conclusions emerge about the nature and scope of these challenges.

First, the fundamental challenge of balancing immediate reconstruction needs with long-term development goals remains paramount. The experiences examined demonstrate that while physical reconstruction is essential, it must be integrated within a broader framework that addresses social, economic, and political recovery. The cases of both Beirut's Solidere project and Mostar's post-war reconstruction illustrate how focusing solely on physical rebuilding without adequate attention to social fabric can perpetuate or even exacerbate existing divisions.

Second, the challenge of securing and managing reconstruction funding while ensuring equitable distribution emerges as a critical concern. The contrasting approaches in Beirut - from Solidere's market-driven model to Hezbollah's Wa'd project - highlight the complexities of balancing private investment with public good. These experiences demonstrate that while private sector involvement can expedite reconstruction, it must be carefully regulated to prevent the creation of exclusive enclaves that marginalize vulnerable populations.

Third, the challenge of establishing effective governance and coordination mechanisms proves crucial. The cases studied reveal how fragmented authority and competing interests can undermine reconstruction efforts. This is particularly evident in situations where multiple actors - from international organizations to local authorities - must coordinate their efforts. The

experience of Mostar under the Dayton Agreement demonstrates how administrative structures can either facilitate or hinder effective reconstruction.

Fourth, the preservation of cultural heritage while meeting contemporary needs presents a significant challenge. Both Beirut and Mostar's experiences show how decisions about what to preserve, restore, or rebuild carry deep political and social implications. The reconstruction of Mostar's Stari Most and Beirut's downtown area illustrate how heritage reconstruction can either bridge or reinforce communal divisions.

Fifth, ensuring meaningful community engagement and local ownership emerges as perhaps the most critical yet challenging aspect of reconstruction. The contrast between top-down approaches and community-driven initiatives reveals that successful reconstruction requires genuine participation from affected populations. However, this must be balanced with the need for technical expertise and efficient project management.

The research also highlights that these challenges cannot be addressed in isolation. They form part of an interconnected system where decisions in one area inevitably impact others. For instance, funding mechanisms influence governance structures, which in turn affect community participation levels, ultimately impacting the sustainability of reconstruction efforts.

Furthermore, the study reveals that context-specific factors play a crucial role in determining appropriate responses to these challenges. What works in one post-conflict setting may not be directly transferable to another, necessitating flexible and adaptable approaches to reconstruction planning and implementation.

Looking forward, successful post-conflict reconstruction requires:

1. Integration of physical reconstruction with social reconciliation processes
2. Balanced funding mechanisms that promote both efficiency and equity
3. Clear governance frameworks that facilitate coordination while ensuring local ownership
4. Careful consideration of cultural heritage within contemporary development needs

5. Genuine community engagement throughout the reconstruction process
6. Recognition of the interconnected nature of reconstruction challenges
7. Flexibility to adapt approaches based on local contexts and needs

These findings have significant implications for future reconstruction efforts, suggesting the need for comprehensive, integrated approaches that can address multiple challenges simultaneously while remaining responsive to local contexts and needs. The experiences analysed demonstrate that successful post-conflict reconstruction requires not just technical expertise and financial resources, but also careful attention to social dynamics, political relationships, and cultural sensitivities.

Ultimately, the chapter underscores that while post-conflict reconstruction presents formidable challenges, understanding these challenges in their full complexity is the first step toward developing more effective and sustainable approaches to rebuilding war-torn communities. The lessons learned from past experiences provide valuable insights for improving future reconstruction efforts, while acknowledging that each post-conflict situation will require its own carefully calibrated response.

Chapter 5

5 Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methodology and sections of the study, the methods of data collection and analysis, and the criteria of data validity and *reliability*.

Mixed methods can be defined as the research through which the researcher collects and analyses the data, working to reconcile and combine the results, conclusions, and conclusions obtained from quantitative and qualitative tools in the same study or research (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 2010).

Mixed methods are more than a combination of quantitative and qualitative research, as a new strategy that opens the way for the researcher to search for and identify phenomena in a way not provided by the other two methods, as quantitative research speaks only in the language of numbers. The researcher is away from the phenomenon (or claims to be away and total neutrality besides). At the same time, qualitative research takes care of the human and his actions, for example, and sees that the researcher cannot separate himself and get away from the phenomenon at the place of study. The researchers in a mixed-methods approach construct awareness on pragmatic principles (Creswell, 2003), believing that reality is "what works" (Howe, 1988).

The compatibility between quantitative and qualitative approaches is a crucial tenet of pragmatism. As a result, both statistical and textual data gathered sequentially or simultaneously may better understand the research issue. According to Hanson W. *et al.* (2005), three issues must be considered when conducting a mixed-methods study: priority, implementation, and integration. Priority refers to which approach in the analysis is given more weight, qualitative or quantitative. In research methodology, implementation refers to obtaining and evaluating quantitative and qualitative data and determining the order in which these are carried out. This can involve obtaining and evaluating the data sequentially or

concurrently, depending on the research design and objectives. The combining or linking of qualitative and quantitative data occurs during the integration phase of the study process.

This study employed an explanatory sequential design, which involved collecting and analysing quantitative data first, followed by collecting, interpreting, and analysing qualitative data. The explanatory sequential pattern involves collecting and analysing quantitative data first and then collecting and analysing qualitative data based on the results of the quantitative study. Since the researcher collected quantitative data, the focus was on these data and results, followed up and interpreted using qualitative data, such as interviews, to understand the questionnaire results.

This pattern is based on the idea that using qualitative data contributes to the interpretation and clarification of the results of quantitative analysis (Borrego, Douglas and Amelink, 2009; Ivankova, Creswell and Stick, 2006). The quantitative and qualitative data were combined and linked in two analysis stages to interpret and discuss the study results. This approach is useful in explaining and clarifying the relationships and interpretation of the results of the quantitative study, especially if the quantitative results are unexpected. However, this approach requires much time and effort from the researcher, although it includes specific and clear stages that are easy to apply.

Overall, the explanatory sequential design allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem by combining quantitative and qualitative data and combining them rigorously and systematically.

This approach choice aligns with the complexities of the post-conflict urban situation and the continuation of hidden political conflicts after civil wars to ensure the reliability and credibility of the research conducted at this complex stage. Creswell (2014) indicated that the advantages of the integration approach are combining quantitative and qualitative data to avoid deficiencies in both approaches alone as it provides a better understanding of the study problem.

5.1.1 Systematic Search Criteria of Literature Review

A strategy for accessing target resources is an essential precursor to any study. The University of Strathclyde's Suprimo library repository was consulted for this study. Information relating

to the topics under review was identified using *Suprimo*. In addition, *Google Scholar*TM was used to locate several online databases to identify relevant scholarly articles. The online databases consulted included EThOS (the UK's national thesis service), Dissertation and Thesis (ProQuest), Scopus, and Web of Science. Only open-access literature accessible via the UK education management system and written in English was considered.

5.1.1.1 Keyword Search

The researcher's approach to locating credible and relevant sources on post-conflict recovery in reconstruction contexts seems comprehensive and strategic. Using keyword descriptors and the Advanced Scholar Search feature of Google ScholarTM is an effective way to identify relevant literature. Using the Boolean search operator “AND” to narrow down the search results is also a useful technique for increasing the relevance of the search results.

5.1.1.2 Resource Selection and Evaluation

Utilizing Resource Selection and Evaluation is a reliable approach for ensuring the quality and dependability of sources employed in research. Peer-reviewed publications undergo meticulous scrutiny and assessment by domain experts, with acceptance rates reflecting the journal's standing and credibility. In addition, it is crucial to factor in the publication date, as more recent studies could offer up-to-date developments and viewpoints. By implementing this approach, researchers can guarantee that the sources used are relevant, reliable, and current.

The resources were chosen initially by scanning the abstracts of articles to determine if their contents met the search parameters. The assessment of resources was based on the following criteria: the quality of the information, relevance to the subject. The authorship index was used to study the frequency of each source's citation in other publications to evaluate the citation index.

The chief reason for devising the search strategy above was to ensure the reliability of the resulting research. The researcher evaluated the validity and credibility of the data selected for use in this literature review. The rationale for selecting the criteria above to identify target resources is that the thesis focuses on reconstruction in post-conflict cities. The resulting literature review provides a foundation for future research into reconstruction in post-conflict contexts.

The above research criteria have been applied to explore information, theories, and models in general and identify cases for in-depth investigation. The systematic literature review process implemented is outlined in Figure 5-1 below.

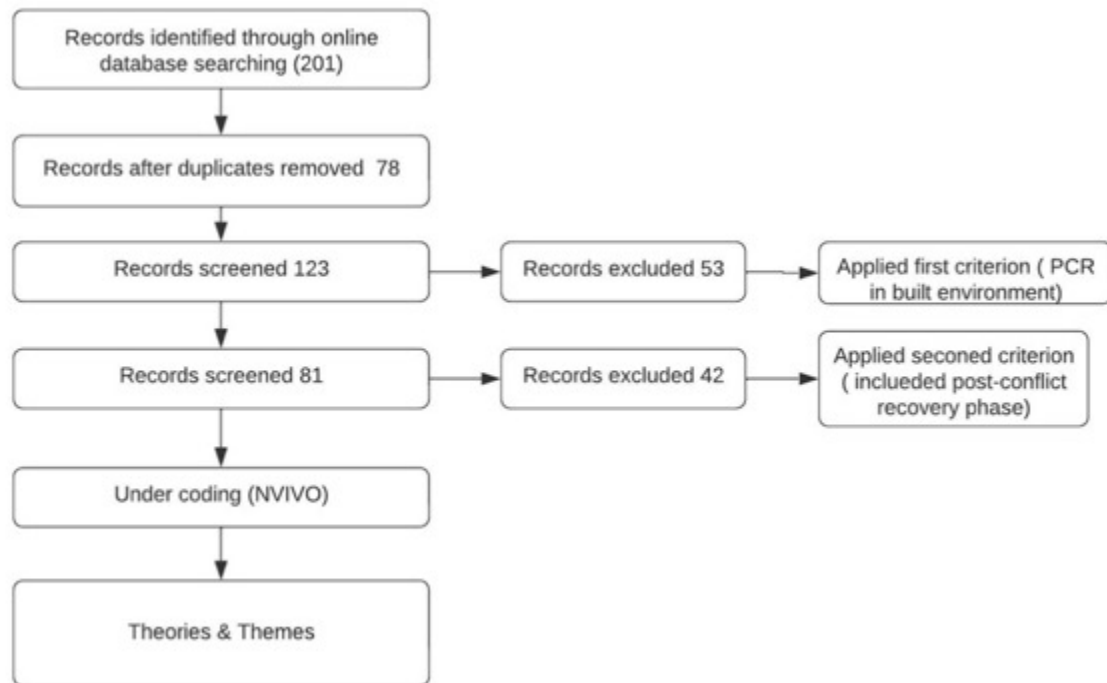


Figure 5-1: Systematic literature review process.

5.1.2 Triangulation in the Study

This study used simultaneous triangulation to develop a comprehensive approach for reconstructing the city of Benghazi following the armed conflict. This strategy entailed acquiring and assessing data from diverse sources to understand the study subject completely. The data sources included surveys of households, analysis of the data and records that were already available, and research on successful post-conflict reconstruction initiatives in various contexts.

The study used the triangulation method, which entailed analysing and cross-referencing data gathered from several sources. This strategy was chosen to guarantee objectivity, reduce bias, and create a thorough grasp of the post-conflict setting. This approach made it possible to spot trends, themes, and discrepancies, which helped create more efficient solutions.

Surveys among the area affected were performed at the beginning to gather their opinions and experiences regarding the armed conflict and the reconstruction activities. In order to guarantee consistency in the replies, the survey was created based on the study questions and delivered in an organised manner. In order to better understand the survey results, primary data was gathered after the surveys through interviews with a sample of the respondents. Based on the findings from the survey and the research questions, the sample was chosen. The semi-structured interviews centred on specific issues that showed up in the survey data. Depending on the participants' choices and availability, the interviews were either performed in person or over the phone. With the participant's permission, the interviews were recorded on audio and then transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were examined using qualitative analysis techniques like content and thematic analysis.

Both qualitative and quantitative techniques, such as content analysis, theme analysis, and statistical analysis, were used to analyse the survey and interview data. The data were triangulated by examining existing information and documents, including assessments of the harm the armed conflict caused and the city of Benghazi's infrastructure and public services. To ensure the validity and effectiveness of the proposed approach, it was reviewed and discussed with experts in post-conflict reconstruction and urban planning. The experts were selected based on their experience and expertise in relevant fields and were asked to provide

feedback and suggestions on the approach. The expert review process involved in-depth discussions on the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed strategies, and recommendations were provided on how to improve the approach further. The feedback from the experts was incorporated into the final plan, resulting in a more comprehensive and effective strategy for the reconstruction of Benghazi city. The information gathered and examined was then used to create a thorough foundation for rebuilding Benghazi city.

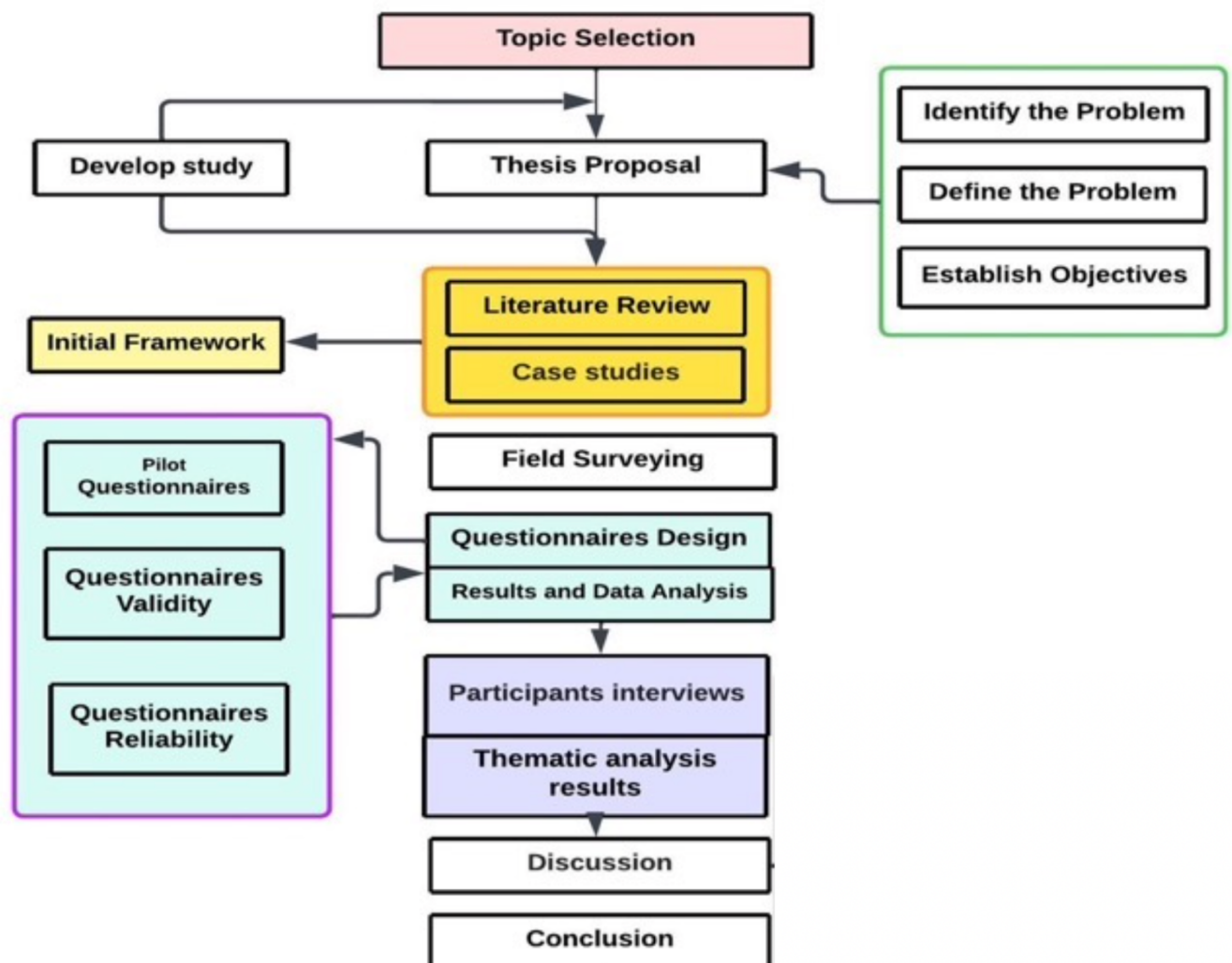


Figure 5-2: Research Structure

5.1.3 Research philosophy adopted and Justification

In my research on post-conflict reconstruction in Benghazi, Libya, I employed a mixed explanatory sequential design, which integrates both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. This methodological choice is grounded in a pragmatic philosophical stance, which seeks to understand complex realities by drawing from both positivist and interpretivist traditions, depending on the specific research questions and the context. Pragmatism, as a research paradigm, emphasises the importance of practical outcomes and the interplay between different forms of knowledge, making it particularly suitable for studies addressing multifaceted social issues such as post-conflict reconstruction (Elgeddawy, 2024; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019; Maarouf, 2019).

The pragmatic stance aligns with the goals of my research for several reasons. First, the subject of post-conflict reconstruction inherently involves both measurable outcomes (e.g., the extent of damage to urban infrastructure and the demographics of displaced populations) and the subjective experiences and perceptions of the local population regarding reconstruction efforts. A purely quantitative or qualitative approach would not fully capture the multifaceted nature of reconstruction, which is both a technical and a deeply social process (Coates, 2020; Morgan, 2014). This duality is recognised in the literature, where pragmatism is often highlighted as a framework that allows for the integration of diverse epistemological perspectives, thereby enriching the understanding of complex phenomena (Kelly and Cordeiro, 2020; Kaushik and Walsh, 2019).

In the explanatory sequential design, I first gathered quantitative data through structured surveys distributed to residents of Benghazi. This phase enabled me to identify broad patterns and trends in issues such as the displacement of populations, the return of residents, and the physical state of the city's infrastructure. The quantitative data served as a foundation for understanding the scale of the problems and provided initial insights into the effectiveness of reconstruction efforts (Morgan, 2016; Denzin, 2012). The use of quantitative methods in mixed research designs has been shown to facilitate a clearer understanding of the context and scope of social issues, thereby enhancing the overall robustness of the findings (Pearce, 2012; Molina-Azorín and Feters, 2017).

Following the quantitative phase, the qualitative component involved semi-structured interviews with participants. This phase allowed me to explore in greater depth the underlying

reasons behind the quantitative patterns identified earlier. The qualitative data helped explain not only the impacts of the conflict and the efforts to rebuild but also how residents perceive these efforts, shedding light on issues of trust, social cohesion, and inclusion (Ellis et al., 2021; Morgan, 2014; Biddle and Schafft, 2014). The integration of qualitative insights is crucial in mixed methods research, as it provides a richer narrative that complements the statistical data, thereby fostering a more comprehensive understanding of the research context (Stampfl, 2023).

By adopting a pragmatic stance, I was able to prioritise practical outcomes and focus on "what works" in the context of post-conflict Benghazi. Pragmatism rejects the notion that there is a single reality to be discovered, instead emphasising the importance of context, action, and the specific needs of the research question at hand (Torres et al., 2015; Powell, 2019). This flexibility was crucial, as it allowed me to address both the objective and subjective dimensions of urban reconstruction, thereby facilitating a more nuanced analysis of the challenges and opportunities present in the post-conflict environment (Handema et al., 2023; Morgan, 2014).

Moreover, pragmatism is particularly suitable for complex, real-world problems like post-conflict reconstruction, where different types of knowledge (both numerical and narrative) are required to inform effective rebuilding strategies. The interaction between quantitative and qualitative findings enables a more comprehensive understanding of Benghazi's post-conflict recovery, bridging the gap between technical aspects of rebuilding and the lived experiences of the city's residents (Badley, 2015; Powell, 2019). This integrative approach aligns with the growing recognition of mixed methods as a valuable strategy for addressing intricate social issues, as it allows researchers to draw on the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies (Kelemen and Rumens, 2012; Morgan, 2016).

In summary, my use of a mixed explanatory sequential design, rooted in pragmatism, allows for a comprehensive exploration of post-conflict reconstruction in Benghazi. This approach enables the integration of both empirical data and human experiences, ensuring that the research findings are robust, actionable, and grounded in the realities of those affected by the conflict (Elgeddawy, 2024; Morgan, 2014; Biddle and Schafft, 2014).

5.2 Quantitative Method Phase I

This section describes the research methodology that was used in this research as explained in Figure 5-2: Research Structure. The adopted methodology to accomplish this study uses the following techniques: the information about the research design, research population, questionnaire design, statistical data analysis, content validity and pilot study.

5.2.1 Online Survey

This approach entails disseminating questionnaires to a sizable cohort of respondents spanning a broad geographic expanse. Survey-based questionnaires are typically administered without prior contact between the researcher and the respondent, resulting in a low response rate, as evidenced by studies (K. Kelley et al., 2003). Therefore, this study targeted a large population of Benghazi residents to compensate for the low response rate. This was done for two primary reasons : (a) to provide the researcher with a sufficiently large dataset for analysis, and (b) to ensure that the demographic profile of the interviewees aligns with that of the survey population.

In recent years, online survey products, commonly known as web or internet surveys, such as Google Form, have become increasingly popular as a convenient research tool (Buchanan & Hvizdak, 2009). The significance of these instruments cannot be overstated, as they empower researchers to construct and distribute surveys to prospective respondents/participants in a convenient and efficient manner. Additionally, they generate results in real-time, allowing respondents and researchers to observe data aggregation occur instantaneously.

The proliferation of online populations has led to a surge in the utilisation of online surveys, which has consequently posed novel challenges for researchers in adapting conventional survey research techniques to investigate phenomena such as online conduct and internet usage. The technology utilised in online surveys has undergone significant advancements over time. Previously, conducting online surveys required considerable time and expertise in web authoring programmes, HTML code, or scripting programmes (Wright, 2005).

Currently, the availability of survey authoring packages and online survey services has facilitated the process, making it efficient and expeditious. The benefits of online research include the ability to reach individuals regardless of their geographic location, the opportunity

to contact participants who may be challenging to access, and the convenience of automated data collection, which can reduce the researcher's time and effort. In contrast, the drawbacks encompass uncertainties about the validity of data and sampling and apprehensions regarding an online survey's design, implementation, and assessment.

Online surveys are a frequently utilised approach for gathering data in online research. According to Fricker and Schonlau (2002), electronic surveys present a cost-effective alternative to postal surveys and yield faster response rates. Consequently, they are progressively emerging as a compelling alternative for scholars across various fields of study. According to scholarly sources, the utilisation of online surveys should be preceded by a thorough assessment of their suitability for the particular research topic at hand (Naus, Phillip and Samsi, 2009). This is due to the possibility of user survey fatigue, which has been attributed to the widespread use of online surveys (Witte, 2009).

Given that many websites store only limited contact information, the internet represents the primary and most feasible means of accessing and enlisting users or participants for a study. The collection of contact information from participants for the purpose of distributing a postal survey may be met with resistance, as previous studies have shown that individuals who engage with online communities place significant value on the anonymity provided by the platform (Tanis, 2008). The request for postal addresses may be perceived as intrusive and could dissuade certain users from participating in the survey. The sampling frame of online communities can potentially encompass a vast number of members dispersed globally. Considering this, utilising an online survey may present a more economical approach to conducting research on this population.

The utilisation of online surveys can foster a perception of anonymity, thereby promoting self-disclosure among respondents. Research has demonstrated that online surveys elicit more truthful responses than postal surveys (Bryman, 2016).

According to Coderre, Mathieu, and St-Laurent's (2004) findings, individuals who respond to email inquiries exhibit a greater tendency to provide comprehensive responses to open-ended questions and offer more perceptive remarks in comparison to those who respond via traditional mail. Notwithstanding, the utilisation of online surveys may present certain limitations, such

as the challenge of detecting deceit, which can prove to be a formidable undertaking (Mendelson, 2007).

5.2.2 Design of Survey Questionnaire

The first step in the field research within this study was to collect data focused on the challenges facing the displaced and residents of Benghazi during the recovery process for reconstruction after the violent conflict. Data collection was conducted through a cross-sectional survey. The questionnaire consisted of several items covering the quantitative aspect of the study's questions to explore the relationships between variables. The formatted questionnaire included multiple-choice questions in addition to a five-point Likert scale. After collecting the quantitative research data through the questionnaire, it was analysed both descriptively and statistically. However, the divergent results led to questions that necessitated the use of qualitative methodology. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were conducted with a sample of the participants to address these questions. To ensure that the questionnaire was appropriate, it was reviewed with the supervisor, two researchers, those interested in post-conflict reconstruction issues, and a statistical analysis specialist's assistance. The questionnaire consists of fifty-two questions in five sections and tables.

The first section of the questionnaire aimed to collect demographic data for respondents such as age, housing location in Benghazi, qualification, and gender. The questions were answered according to two options for sex and four options for age groups, housing, and educational qualification. The second section focused on housing, residential neighbourhood, conflict damage and infrastructure services. The third part of the survey aimed to measure the population satisfaction with the local authorities' recovery plans to restore life in the city and support the displaced and residents for stability through the 5-point Likert scale of the option Strongly agree to Disagree strongly. In the fifth and final part, the survey measured local and international organisations' and actors' roles in involving the community in recovery processes, reconstruction plans, and phase priorities.

As a result of the difficulties of distributing questionnaires personally at the study site and due to the coronavirus pandemic, the survey was launched online via Google Form. The participants' responses are automatically stored in the site's database for questionnaires and

then exported from Excel to the SPSS program. An informed consent form was made available online on the survey's first page. Respondents can agree to participate in the study by clicking the button below and signing the consent form, which says "I agree to complete this questionnaire."

5.2.3 Questionnaire Construction and Justification

The questionnaire used in this study is structured to capture comprehensive data from residents of Benghazi regarding their experiences and perceptions during and after the 2014-2017 conflict. Each section of the questionnaire corresponds to the four primary research questions, ensuring that the data collected is directly linked to the study's objectives. This section outlines the questions in the survey, justifies their inclusion, and explains how they are supported by the existing literature.

Research Questions:

1. What does reconstruction in post-conflict contexts involve, and what challenges are associated with rebuilding cities after conflict?
2. What are the effects of the conflict in 2014-2017 in Benghazi city, Libya, on residents and the urban environment?
3. To what extent had and have been active actors contributing to the recovery and re-stabilization phase in Benghazi post-conflict?
4. What are the perceptions of Benghazi's residents regarding the reconstruction of urban areas based on their views and the study of international experiences in the reconstruction of cities after the conflict?

5.2.3.1 Section 1: General Questions

The explanatory sequential design method used in this study involves analysing the quantitative data collected from the questionnaire, followed by a qualitative investigation of any anomalous results through semi-structured interviews. These interviews provide deeper insights and help to explain unexpected findings, ensuring a more comprehensive understanding of the data.

This section gathers basic demographic data such as education level and area of residence to segment the results and better understand how these factors may influence respondents' experiences of the reconstruction process. While gender and age are also noted, their role is not the primary focus in this context, allowing the study to concentrate on more relevant socio-economic factors like education and residential location.

Example Questions:

- Education Level: Primary school or less / Secondary school / Undergraduate / Postgraduate
- Area of Residence: (Location details)
- Gender: Male / Female
- Age Group: under 20 / 20–40 / 40–65 / 65+

Justification: These demographic questions ensure a broad range of perspectives, particularly by focusing on education level and area of residence, which are critical in shaping how individuals perceive and experience post-conflict reconstruction. Research (e.g., Barakat, 2005; Özerdem, 2015) suggests that socio-economic factors, particularly education and location, play a key role in shaping perceptions of recovery efforts. This approach supports Research Question 4 by providing insights into how different groups experience and view the reconstruction process.

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1. Gender

Justification: This question aligns with literature emphasising the role of gender in post-conflict recovery (UN-Habitat, 2018). Studies show that women's experiences and priorities can differ significantly from men's, especially in reconstruction contexts where their voices are often marginalised.

2. Age Group

Justification: Age affects how individuals experience conflict and recovery. Younger populations may focus on economic opportunities, while older individuals may prioritise healthcare and housing (Bird, Higgins, and McKay, 2010).

3. Educational Qualifications

Justification: Educational background can impact individuals' understanding of and

engagement with recovery efforts. Higher levels of education often correlate with greater access to resources (Bird, Higgins, and McKay, 2010).

4. Residential Neighbourhoods

Justification: Neighbourhoods were affected differently during the conflict. This question helps to assess how geographic location influenced access to services and support during and after the war (Mallett and Pain, 2018).

5.2.3.2 Section 2: Relief and War Damage Phase

This section focuses on the immediate impacts of the war, including displacement, damage to property, and the relief efforts that followed. It is closely aligned with Research Question 2, which seeks to understand the effects of the conflict on Benghazi's residents and urban environment.

- Example Questions:
 - What was the amount of damage that happened to your home due to the war? (No damage, Minor damage, Moderate damage, Massive damage, Completely destroyed)
 - Did you receive any support during the war? (Financial assistance, Food, Mental support, Medical care, In-kind supplies, etc.)
 - What was your displacement status during the war? (Displaced to another neighbourhood, Displaced to another city, Displaced outside Libya, Did not move, etc.)

Justification: These questions assess the direct impacts of the war, which is critical for answering Research Question 2. They were informed by literature on post-conflict damage assessment (Barakat, 2005) and the case studies of cities like Mostar, where the extent of physical damage heavily influenced the focus and pace of reconstruction. This section also addresses the challenges of relief efforts, connecting to Research Question 1 on the broader challenges of reconstruction.

5. Displacement During the War

Justification: Understanding displacement patterns is key to assessing the social and psychological impacts of conflict (Mallett and Pain, 2018).

6. Current Status in Benghazi

Justification: This question was derived from the literature that underscores the importance of understanding displacement and the lived experiences of returning populations (Calame, 2005; UN-Habitat, 2018). It aims to capture the personal stories of displacement and recovery.

7. Damage to Home Due to War

Justification: Assessing property damage offers a clear indicator of the material loss caused by the conflict, a critical factor in understanding the scope of reconstruction needs (Call and Cousens, 2008).

8. Damage to Community Spaces

Justification: Damage to public spaces, such as markets and parks, affects social cohesion and economic recovery. Rebuilding these spaces is often a priority in post-conflict settings (Bwirire et al., 2022).

9. Support Received During the War

Justification: The question builds on the work of Sakalasuriya et al. (2016), who highlights the critical role of external support during the recovery phase. It also reflects findings from the case study of Beirut (Chapter 3), where external aid played a pivotal role in urban recovery. This question explores the extent and types of support received, aiming to analyse how well recovery efforts have addressed basic needs.

10. Source of In-Kind Support (2014-2017)

Justification: Understanding which organizations provided support allows for an assessment of the roles played by domestic and international actors, linking to Research Question 3 (Assem et al., 2019).

11. Permanent Disabilities Due to War

Justification: Conflict-related disabilities have long-term effects on communities, impacting both healthcare needs and employment opportunities (John, 2021).

5.2.3.3 Section 3: Recovery and Stability Phase

This section measures residents' perceptions of the recovery and stabilisation process, including their satisfaction with government efforts to restore the city's infrastructure and public spaces. It addresses Research Questions 1 and 4 by exploring the challenges of reconstruction and the residents' views on the priorities and effectiveness of the recovery phase. Most of these projects during this phase have been implemented by the Benghazi Stabilization Committee, which was investigated in the Benghazi Chapter.

- Example Questions:
- How satisfied are you with the government's efforts to remove destroyed buildings and rubble from the city? (Very satisfied, Satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied)
- How satisfied are you with the maintenance and revival of the vegetable market? (Very satisfied, Satisfied, Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, Dissatisfied, Very dissatisfied)

Justification: These questions are designed to capture residents' satisfaction with ongoing reconstruction efforts, particularly those visible in public spaces. This section was inspired by the literature on post-conflict recovery (Chang and Rose, 2012; Pugh, 2002), which emphasises that perceptions of stability and recovery are key to long-term reconstruction success. Focusing on public projects, such as restoring markets and public spaces, ties into Research Question 4, exploring how residents perceive the rebuilding process.

12. Speed of Government Agencies in Removing Rubble

Justification: Efficient removal of rubble is critical for facilitating reconstruction and restoring normalcy to conflict-affected communities (Mestanza-Ramón and Caballero, 2021).

13. Reconstruction of Omar Al-Mukhtar Shrine

Justification: Cultural heritage restoration contributes to community identity and social cohesion, which are key elements of recovery (Alemayehu, 2011).

14. Maintenance of Sidi Akhrebish Lighthouse

Justification: Preserving historical landmarks can strengthen community pride and identity, aiding psychological recovery (Atabay et al., 2022).

15. Creation of a Fish Sculpture

Justification: Public art can serve as a form of communal healing, reflecting local culture and fostering resilience (Saadé-Sbeih et al., 2016).

16. Cultural Relevance of Whale Sculpture

Justification: Art that resonates with the local community can enhance identity and social cohesion, supporting long-term recovery (Bisset, 2016).

5.2.3.4 Section 4: Domestic and Foreign Actors

The role of international organizations and domestic entities in post-conflict reconstruction is a major theme in the literature (Jabareen, 2013; Barakat, 2005). These questions investigate the contributions of both local and foreign actors, drawing parallels with the experiences of Beirut and Mostar, where foreign involvement significantly influenced the reconstruction process. This section directly supports Research Question 3 by assessing the influence and perceived effectiveness of these actors.

32. Post-War Support Received

Justification: Evaluating the sources and types of support received post-conflict provides insight into the effectiveness of both local and international actors in rebuilding efforts (Mills and Fan, 2006).

33. Support for Maintenance or Rebuilding

Justification: Understanding how communities received support for rebuilding is key to assessing recovery processes and their sustainability (Bozzoli et al., 2012).

34. Financial Support for Rent

Justification: Financial assistance is critical for displaced populations attempting to rebuild their lives and return to normalcy (Barakat & Zyck, 2009).

35. Mental or Moral Support Received

Justification: Psychological support is crucial for individuals and communities coping with the aftermath of conflict (Lyall, 2021).

36. Consultation on Current Projects

Justification: This question was derived from studies such as those by Özerdem (2015) and Barakat (2005), which emphasise community engagement and local ownership in post-conflict reconstruction processes. Given the lack of community participation in

many post-conflict settings, as identified in the international experiences of Sarajevo and Mostar (Chapter 3), this question assesses whether the local population feels included in decision-making processes.

5.2.3.5 Section 5: Perceptions of The Reconstruction of The City

These questions assess whether residents feel that their needs are being met in the reconstruction process, addressing Research Question 4. The literature highlights the importance of public consultation and community participation in successful reconstruction efforts (Özerdem, 2015), and the international case studies of Mostar and Beirut demonstrate the risks of top-down approaches. This questions in this section were informed by the existing gap in literature regarding resident prioritisation in post-conflict recovery. As observed in the literature on Beirut's reconstruction (Barakat, 2005), there is often a disconnect between government-driven reconstruction and the community's actual needs. This question aims to capture residents' preferences and concerns regarding the future of their city. This section allows the study to explore the alignment between government projects and residents' priorities.

37. Removing War Effects from Landmarks

Justification: War remnants in urban spaces can serve as painful reminders of conflict, and their removal is often a key priority for communities seeking to rebuild normalcy. Literature on post-conflict urban recovery emphasises the importance of erasing visible traces of war to promote psychological recovery and community healing (Burgess and Fonseca, 2019). Sarajevo case studies show that removing war-damaged landmarks helps reduce trauma and facilitates economic recovery by encouraging tourism and business investments (Pugh, 2002).

38. Preserving Certain Buildings as Reminders

Justification: Preserving select war-damaged buildings can foster collective memory and contribute to national healing. Studies of post-conflict cities like Berlin and Beirut have shown that if preserved appropriately, symbolic structures can serve as educational tools and reminders of the costs of war (Barakat, 2005). This practice, however, must balance the need for modern development with the cultural significance of such sites (Avraham, 2015).

39. Replanning Devastated Areas

Justification: Effective urban planning post-conflict is essential for sustainable recovery (Meagher et al., 2022).

40. Rebuilding to Pre-War Status

Justification: Rebuilding efforts should aim to restore community identity and functionality (Avraham, 2015).

41. Restoration of Old Damaged Buildings

Justification: Restoring historical buildings can enhance community pride and identity (Steinø et al., 2020).

42. Development of Commercial Areas

Justification: Rebuilding a city's commercial areas to attract foreign investment is a common strategy for stimulating economic recovery post-conflict. Beirut's Solidere project is a notable example, where the reconstruction of its central business district attracted significant foreign investment and helped reestablish Lebanon as a regional financial hub (Barakat, 2005). However, such development must be carefully balanced with the preservation of cultural heritage and the needs of local residents (Jabareen, 2013).

43. Confiscating Damaged Properties for Development

Justification: Property confiscation is a controversial yet sometimes necessary approach to facilitate large-scale redevelopment in post-conflict cities. Compensation schemes can be crucial for ensuring fairness in the process. The experience of post-conflict Beirut, where property laws and compensations were contentious, offers valuable insights into how such measures should be approached equitably to avoid displacing vulnerable populations.

44. Moving Public Service Buildings

Justification: Relocating public service buildings to the outskirts of the city while maintaining the historical integrity of the city centre is a strategy seen in urban development projects worldwide. For example, Sarajevo's efforts to decentralise administrative functions and preserve the historical centre helped balance modern needs with the preservation of cultural identity (Pugh, 2002).

45. Rebuilding and Restoring Old Markets

Justification: Traditional markets and public spaces are central to community life in many cities, and their restoration is vital for social and economic recovery. The rebuilding of the souks in Beirut post-conflict illustrates the role these spaces play in fostering both

economic activity and social cohesion (Barakat, 2005). This question taps into the importance of revitalizing public spaces as part of the broader recovery process.

46. Removing Old Markets for Modern Shopping Centres

Justification: While traditional markets are culturally significant, modern shopping centres can attract new investment and promote economic diversification. Balancing these two approaches is a common challenge in post-conflict reconstruction. This issue was central to Beirut's post-war development, where modern shopping complexes replaced some older markets, sparking debate about the loss of traditional spaces.

47. Avoiding References to Civil Wars in New Structures

Justification: Avoiding the commemoration of civil conflicts in urban spaces can help foster reconciliation and prevent the glorification of violence. The avoidance of conflict-related symbols is seen in several post-conflict cities, where neutral or future-oriented symbols are preferred to promote unity.

48. Building Statues Commemorating Victory

Justification: Commemorating victory through public monuments can play a role in national identity formation, though it must be handled carefully to avoid exacerbating divisions. In Sarajevo, certain memorials have been controversial, reflecting different community perspectives on the war's legacy (Pugh, 2002). This question explores whether public sentiment favours such commemorations or prefers a more neutral approach to memorialisation.

49. Completion of Suspended Projects

Justification: Understanding public sentiment about project completion is crucial for community engagement (Avraham, 2015).

50. Cash Compensation for Rebuilding Properties

Justification: Financial compensation is essential for individuals recovering from loss (Tag-Eldeen, 2020).

51. Supporting Reconciliation in Public Spaces:

- Justification: Public spaces that promote reconciliation can play a significant role in healing post-conflict societies. Projects in Beirut, such as the rebuilding of shared public spaces, have shown that these areas can help foster peace and unity

52. Engagement of Population in Reconstruction Plans:

- Justification: Public engagement in reconstruction planning is crucial for ensuring that rebuilding efforts reflect the needs and desires of the population. The literature on participatory planning emphasizes the importance of involving residents in decision-making processes to enhance the legitimacy and success of reconstruction efforts (Jabareen, 2013). Examples from Mostar and Beirut underscore the need for transparent communication between the government and citizens (Pugh, 2002).

The questionnaire was carefully designed to address the core research questions of the study, ensuring that all aspects of post-conflict reconstruction—damage assessment, recovery, actor contributions, and resident perceptions—are thoroughly explored. Each section aligns with the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and the case studies in Chapter 3, ensuring a comprehensive investigation into the rebuilding process in Benghazi.

The structure of the questionnaire not only facilitates the collection of diverse perspectives but also ensures that the data gathered will directly contribute to answering the study's research questions, providing a well-rounded understanding of the complexities involved in post-conflict reconstruction.

5.2.4 Population and Sampling

The study population comprises all householders in Benghazi city, including both those who experienced displacement and those who remained in their homes during the 2014-2017 conflict. The study employed a stratified random sampling technique to ensure representation across different neighbourhoods and displacement experiences. This sampling approach was chosen because it allows for the examination of both direct and indirect impacts of the conflict on housing units across various city sectors.

Based on recent population estimates from the Urban Observatory of Benghazi of 963,000 residents (UOB, 2023), and considering the average family size of 5.6 in the Benghazi Metropolitan Area (UPA, 2009), the total population of households in Benghazi is approximately 200,000 families. This household-based approach aligns with Libya's standard

practice of conducting damage assessments based on family units rather than individual persons.

The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) statistical formula:

$$n = [X^2NP(1-P)] \div [d^2(N-1) + X^2P(1-P)]$$

Where:

- n = Required sample size
- N = Population size (200,000 households)
- P = Population proportion (assumed to be 0.5 for maximum sample size)
- X^2 = Chi-square value for 1 degree of freedom at 95% confidence level (3.841)
- d = Degree of accuracy (0.06)

This calculation indicated a minimum required sample size of 246 households for statistical significance at a 95% confidence level with a 6% margin of error. The study targeted 250 households to account for potential non-responses, ultimately receiving 238 completed surveys.

The stratified sampling process ensured representation across:

- Different neighbourhoods within the city
- Varying levels of conflict impact (from severely damaged to undamaged areas)
- Different displacement experiences (displaced, returned, and non-displaced households)

The high response rate (238 out of 250 distributed questionnaires) was achieved through strategic partnerships with local civil society organisations. The researcher established communication with the heads of non-governmental organisations who facilitated survey distribution through their networks. These organizations helped reach households across different neighbourhoods and socioeconomic backgrounds, ensuring a more representative sample.

To address potential access limitations of an online survey format, multiple participation methods were implemented:

- Digital access through Google Forms for internet-enabled households
- Assisted completion at NGO offices for those without internet access
- Phone support for participants requiring assistance
- Family member assistance for older householders with limited digital literacy

The survey was conducted from February to May 2022, with regular follow-ups conducted through NGO networks to ensure maximum participation. This comprehensive approach to data collection helped achieve a high response rate while maintaining the integrity of the sampling methodology.

5.2.5 Interview Selection and Data Saturation Process

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with ten participants as part of the qualitative phase of this explanatory sequential mixed methods design. As Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) emphasize, this approach allows researchers to explain and elaborate on quantitative results through detailed qualitative exploration. Following purposeful sampling, all ten participants were selected from the initial pool of 238 survey respondents, ensuring continuity and coherence between the study phases.

The sampling criteria were designed to capture diverse experiences of the 2014-2017 conflict in Benghazi. Six of the ten participants had experienced displacement during the conflict, including both internal and external displacement, while four had remained in their homes throughout the period. This balance provided insights into varying experiences of conflict

impact and recovery. Geographically, participants were selected from both conflict-affected neighbourhoods (including the Old City, Bouatni, Benina, and Al-Laithi) and areas that experienced minimal direct conflict impact. This balanced distribution enabled comparison of experiences across areas with different levels of conflict exposure, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the city-wide impact and residents' perceptions of reconstruction priorities.

The determination of sample size followed the principle of data saturation, as outlined by Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006). Interviews were conducted and analysed sequentially, with each interview fully transcribed and analysed before proceeding to the next. This iterative process allowed for continuous monitoring of emerging themes and assessment of saturation. The primary focus areas for saturation included experiences of displacement and return, accounts of property destruction, perspectives from both affected and unaffected areas, and reconstruction challenges. Particular attention was paid to participants' views on reconstruction priorities, including preferences for rebuilding strategies, preservation of cultural heritage, and the development of public spaces. These perspectives were crucial for understanding how residents envision the future of their city and their preferences for various reconstruction approaches.

Quality assurance measures included regular comparison between interview data and survey results, verification of emerging patterns across different neighbourhoods, and cross-checking of experiences between affected and unaffected areas. Saturation was considered reached when no new significant themes emerged regarding these key areas, and existing patterns were consistently confirmed across different participant categories. This comprehensive approach to data collection and analysis ensured that the qualitative phase effectively complemented and expanded upon the quantitative findings while maintaining methodological rigor.

5.2.6 Survey Study Limitations:

The research acknowledges several potential limitations in the sampling method:

1. Digital Access: Despite providing alternative access methods, households with limited internet access or digital literacy may have faced participation barriers.

2. Geographic Coverage: While the study aimed to cover all neighbourhoods, security conditions and accessibility issues may have affected participation rates in certain areas.
3. Response Verification: The online format required reliance on respondent honesty regarding household representation.

5.2.6.1 Mitigation Strategies:

To address these limitations, the study implemented several verification and validation measures:

1. Regular analysis of demographic data to ensure balanced representation across different areas and socioeconomic groups
2. Targeted qualitative interviews with participants from areas showing lower survey response rates
3. Cross-verification of responses through local community networks
4. Clear acknowledgement of limitations in the presentation of findings

This methodology enabled the collection of statistically significant data while maintaining research rigor and representativeness. The high response rate and comprehensive sampling approach provide a solid foundation for understanding the impact of conflict on Benghazi's households and their perspectives on reconstruction efforts.

5.2.7 Data Analysis

At this stage, the responses of 238 respondents from the population of Benghazi, were analysed. A random sample was the most appropriate and was used in this study because the surveyed population represents local social fabric, language, and religion. All areas and neighbourhoods were generally targeted because the conflict destroyed or affected them. Descriptive data analysis included computational averages, standard deviations, and statistical data. The inference methods in the statistics were used to answer the quantitative study's questions and

clarify the relationships between the variables. The statistical results are displayed in tables and illustrations and their interpretation (See section 7-1).

5.2.8 Reliability and Validity

In quantitative analysis, the instrument's reliability and validity are critical for reducing errors from measurement issues in the sample. The accuracy and precision of a measurement method are referred to as reliability (Thorndike, 1997).

Carmines and Zeller (1979) define reliability on the precision scale as the instrument's ability to give the same results if the same person's measurement is repeated several times in the same conditions. Reliability, in most cases, is a correlation factor, meaning the extent to which the readings of repeated measurement results are related. In many research pieces where a measurement tool is used for the first time, it is tested on specific people, then retried on the same people again, and then a correlation between measurement results the first time and the next is calculated. It is evident that if the tool is highly credible, the subsequent measurements will be similar or applicable to the first measurement results. Besides, reliability depends on internal consistency, which means that the questions are all for a general purpose to be measured. There are several statistical methods for measuring reliability.

The stability or test-retest reliability of the survey instrument is obtained through the instrument's pilot testing. Test-retest reliability will show if the same results are obtained with the repeated administering of the same survey to similar study participants. The survey results will then be compared and correlated with the pilot study's initial results and expressed by the "Pearson r coefficient" (Henson, 2001).

Internal consistency, or what might be called the study's sincerity, is to lead and measure the questionnaire questions that have been designed to measure it. It means the clarity of the questionnaire, its vocabulary and paragraphs of the questionnaire and its concept for the study sample members whom the questionnaire will cover, and the questionnaire paragraphs for statistical analysis (ibid). The results of the questionnaires with Likert-type choices will be used to determine the internal accuracy of the pilot study items' reliability. This will help assess the tool's efficiency in terms of integrating its internal elements to measure the challenges during the recovery period in Benghazi after the conflict.

Many studies that use the questionnaire tool for measurement for the first time should be tested on specific study sample members and then re-experimented on the same study sample again. Then calculate the correlation coefficient between the measurement results from the first time with the measurement results from the second time. If the study tool, such as the questionnaire, is of high reliability, the results of the subsequent measurement will be stable, like the results of the first measurement. Also, consistency depends on internal consistency, meaning that all the survey questions serve a general purpose we want to measure. There are many statistical methods for measuring the reliability of the study tool. One of the most widespread of these methods is the Cronbach's alpha method, which depends on internal consistency and gives an idea of the consistency and stability of the questionnaire questions with each other and all the questionnaire questions in general (Taber, 2018).

There is also a method of splitting the test into two parts, and Cronbach's alpha method is the most used when compared to the method of segmentation of the test because Cronbach's method relies on splitting more than one part repeatedly and measuring the correlation between those parts instead of measuring the correlation between two parts only. Generally, judgments about consistency often depend on the correlation coefficient that exceeds 0.8, ensuring the propensity for the instrument's consistency, such as the questionnaire (Cortina, 1993). Furthermore, if it re-applies the tool like a questionnaire in similar circumstances, it will get the same conclusions or consistent results, which is not intended to be 100% complete. The Cronbach's alpha method is referred to as a measure of internal consistency. Thus, Cronbach's alpha represents the minimum reliability of the questionnaire in the sense that it is a measure of conservative reliability (Taber, 2018).

Validity means the questionnaire should measure what was set to measure it, including that the questionnaire reflects the content to be measured according to its relative weights, and honesty generally means that the question or phrase in the questionnaire measures what the research is supposed to measure (Thorndike, 1997). This study applied three main categories of validity, content, and construct validity with Criterion-Related Validity.

The validity of content relates to the quality of the tool's content in determining the types of things to conclude from, i.e., how much the tool's content relates to measuring the study's dimensions. The authenticity of the content reflects whether the search tool's items adequately cover the entire content that should be covered. Accordingly, the questionnaire will be reviewed by arbitrators represented by the supervisor and researchers in reconstruction studies

in post-conflict cities, which will contribute to assessing the extent to which the questions and items cover the elements to be measured.

5.2.9 Questionnaire Content

The questionnaire was provided with a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, the way of responding, the aim of the study and the security of the information to encourage a high response. The questionnaire included multiple choice questions: which are used widely in the questionnaire. The variety in these questions aims first to meet the study objectives and to collect all the necessary data to support the research's discussion, results, and recommendations.

The sections in the questionnaire will verify the objectives in this study related to the challenges of the reconstruction phases in Benghazi city post-conflict as follows:

Section 1: General Questions

Section 2: Relief and Conflict Damage Phase

Section 3: Recovery and Stability Phase

Section 4: Domestic and Foreign Actors

Section 5: Perceptions of the Reconstruction of the City

The respondents in sections three and five can answer the items with a number from 1 to 5, where (5) represents the highest acceptance degree about an item and (1) represents the lowest acceptance degree, as illustrated in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Respondent scale

Level	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Scale	1	2	3	4	5
Mean Range	1.0-1.8	1.8-2.6	2.6-3.4	3.4-4.2	4.2-5.0

Weight mean	20%-36%	36%- 52%	52%- 68%	68%- 84%	84%-100%
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5.2.10 Pilot Study

A pilot study for the questionnaire was conducted before collecting the sample results. It provides a trial run for the questionnaire, which involves testing the wording of the question, identifying ambiguous questions, and testing the techniques used to collect data.

5.2.11 Validity of the study

We can define the validity of an instrument as a determination of the extent to which the instrument reflects the abstract construct being examined. Validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is supposed to be measuring (Bryman, 2016). High validity is the absence of systematic errors in the measuring instrument. When an instrument is valid, it truly reflects the concept it is supposed to measure. Achieving good validity required care in the study design and sample selection. The amended questionnaire was reviewed by the supervisor and three experts specializing in the field of study to evaluate the procedure of questions and the method of analysing the results. The experts agreed that the questionnaire was valid and suitable enough to measure the purpose that the questionnaire was designed for.

5.2.12 Content Validity of The Questionnaire

The content validity test was conducted by consulting two groups of experts. The first was requested to evaluate and identify whether the questions agreed with the scope of the items and the extent to which these items reflect the concept of the study problem. The other was requested to evaluate that the instrument used is valid statistically and that the questionnaire was designed well enough to provide relations and tests between variables. The two groups of experts did agree that the questionnaire was valid and suitable enough to measure the concept of interest with some amendments.

5.2.13 Statistical Validity of the Questionnaire

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, two statistical tests should be applied (Brain et al., 2011). The first test is the criterion-related validity test (Pearson test), which measures the correlation coefficient between each item in the field and the whole field. The second test is the structure validity test (Pearson test), used to test the validity of the questionnaire structure by testing the validity of each field and the validity of the whole questionnaire. It measures the correlation coefficient between one field and all the fields of the questionnaire that have the same level of similar scale (Kramer, Bernstein and Phares, 2009).

5.2.14 Criterion-Related Validity:

1) Internal Consistency:

Internal consistency of the questionnaire is measured by a scouting sample, which consisted of thirty questionnaires, through measuring the correlation coefficients between each question in one field and the whole field. Table 5.2 below shows the correlation coefficient and p-value for each field item. As shown in the table, the p-values are less than 0.05 or 0.01, so the correlation coefficients of this field are significant at $\alpha = 0.01$ or $\alpha = 0.05$, so it can be said that the paragraphs of this field are consistent and valid to measure what it was set for.

Table 5.2: The correlation coefficient between each item in the field and the whole field, Section 3 Recovery and Stability Phase.

No	Item	Pearson coefficient	p-value
1	The speed of government agencies to remove destroyed buildings and rubble from the city	0.414	0.023
2	Reconstruction of Omar Al-Mukhtar shrine	0.645	0.000
3	Maintenance of the Sidi Akhrebish lighthouse and adding improvements to it	0.785	0.000
4	Create a sculpture of the whale	0.566	0.001

No	Item	Pearson coefficient	p-value
5	The sculpture of the whale is related to the originality and the local cultural heritage	0.630	0.000
6	Adding the ship's figures at the roundabout of Sidi Akhrebish and the El-Gomhouria Hospital on the Sea road	0.667	0.000
7	Maintenance projects for gardens and green spaces in Benghazi	0.600	0.000
8	Temporary paving and road maintenance projects	0.714	0.000
9	Maintenance and revival of the vegetable market	0.719	0.000
10	New commercial urban agglomerations	0.659	0.000
11	Work to complete the Sports City project	0.565	0.001
12	Completely demolishing Al-Gomhoria Hospital	0.745	0.000
13	Keeping banks and service institutions outside of the city centre	0.715	0.000
14	Provide for the requirements of the disabled, the elderly and the sick, the so-called “access for all” in the stabilization phase projects	0.595	0.001
15	The implemented and ongoing projects respond to the needs of the population at this stage and are a priority	0.386	0.035
16	Transparency in stabilization phase projects	0.598	0.000
17	Efforts of the Municipal Council and the Interim Government to restore life and activity in the city:	0.669	0.000
18	Government projects adopt an approach that supports reconciliation and promotes equality	0.717	0.000
19	Efforts by successive central governments to restore life in the city	0.662	0.000
20	Consulting and surveying citizens' opinions on the needs and priorities of the projects to be implemented	0.412	0.024

Table 5.3: The correlation coefficient between each item in the field and the whole field. Section Four: Domestic and Foreign Actors.

No	Item	Pearson coefficient	p-value
1	Provided support such as food, blankets, or medicines after the end of the conflict	0.498	0.005
2	Supported you with a maintenance or rebuilding operation or provided you with materials for construction or maintenance	0.698	0.000
3	Support you financially, such as paying your rent	0.745	0.000
4	Provided you or a family member with mental or moral support after the conflict	0.645	0.000
5	Consult or have your opinion on construction, development, and maintenance projects currently underway	0.543	0.002

Table 5.4: The correlation coefficient between each item in the field and the whole field. Section 5: Perceptions of The Reconstruction of The City.

No.	Item	Pearson coefficient	p-value
1	Remove all kinds, shapes, and effects of conflict from city landmarks	0.614	0.000
2	Removing all types and features of conflict while preserving certain buildings as reminders of the tragedies of civil conflicts	0.597	0.000

No.	Item	Pearson coefficient	p-value
3	Removing streets and devastated areas from the city centre and completely re-planning them in another way	0.524	0.003
4	Rebuilding the destroyed buildings to their pre-conflict status	0.615	0.000
5	Restoration of old damaged buildings in the city centre	0.377	0.040
6	Reconstruction of the city centre with its development into a commercial area attractive to foreign investments	0.583	0.001
7	Confiscating the damaged properties and compensating its owners in order to introduce new development	0.487	0.006
8	Reconstruction of the city centre and moving public service buildings to other areas beyond the city centre, and renovating the old city to preserve its traditional style without building high towers and odd buildings	0.393	0.032
9	Rebuilding and restoring old markets, alleys and spaces	0.483	0.007
10	Removing popular markets such as the Al Jared market and vegetable market and introducing modern shopping centres	0.462	0.010
11	Not to build any shrines or to name streets, statues, or squares with any references to the Libyan civil wars during the country's previous transitional stages	0.460	0.010
12	Build shrines or statues that commemorate victory in the conflict	0.561	0.001

No.	Item	Pearson coefficient	p-value
13	Completion of suspended projects since 2011, followed by reconstruction	0.826	0.000
14	Cash compensation to the affected residents to rebuild their properties	0.842	0.000
15	Supporting manifestations of reconciliation and tolerance in open spaces such as squares and gardens	0.537	0.002
16	For government agencies to engage the population and inform them about the upcoming reconstruction plans	0.408	0.025

5.2.15 Structure Validity of the Questionnaire

Structure validity is the second statistical test used to test the validity of the questionnaire structure by testing the validity of each field and the validity of the whole questionnaire. It measures the correlation coefficient between one field and all the questionnaire fields with the same level of Likert scale.

As shown in Table 6.5, the significance values are less than 0.01, so the correlation coefficients of all the fields are significant at $\alpha = 0.01$. It can be said that the fields are valid to be measured what it was set for to achieve the main aim of the study.

Table 6.5: Structure Validity of the Questionnaire

No	Section	Pearson correlation coefficient	p-value
1	Section 3: Recovery Phase Stability	0.792	0.000
2	Section 4: Domestic and Foreign Actors	0.863	0.000

No	Section	Pearson correlation coefficient	p-value
3	Section 5: Perceptions of the Reconstruction of the City	0.620	0.000

5.2.16 Reliability of the study

The reliability of an instrument is the degree of consistency with which it measures the attribute it is supposed to be measuring. The test is repeated to the same sample of people on two occasions and then compares the scores obtained by computing a reliability coefficient. For most purpose's reliability coefficient above 0.70 is considered satisfactory. A period of two weeks to a month is recommended between two tests. Due to the complicated conditions that the resident was facing at the time, it was too difficult to ask them to respond to our questionnaire twice within a short period. The statistician explained that overcoming the distribution of the questionnaire twice to measure the reliability can be achieved by using the Kronpakh Alpha coefficient and Half Split Method through the SPSS software.

5.2.17 Half Split Method

This method depends on finding the Pearson correlation coefficient between the means of odd rank questions and even rank questions of each questionnaire field. Then, correcting the Pearson correlation coefficients can be done using the Spearman-Brown correlation coefficient of correction. The corrected correlation coefficient (consistency coefficient) is computed according to the following equation (Eisinga, Te Grotenhuis and Pelzer, 2012):

Consistency coefficient = $2r/(r+1)$, where r is the Pearson correlation coefficient. The normal range of the corrected correlation coefficient $2r/(r+1)$ is between 0.0 and + 1.0.

As shown in Table 5.6, the general reliability for all items equals 0.841. It can be said that according to the Half Split method, this reliability is considered high; the result ensures the reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 5.6: Split-Half Coefficient method.

No	Section	person-correlation	Spearman-Brown Coefficient
1	Section 3: Recovery and Stability Phase	0.682	0.811
2	Section 4: Domestic and Foreign Actors	0.743	0.853
3	Section 5: Perceptions of The Reconstruction of The City	0.663	0.797
5	All items	0.726	0.841

5.2.18 Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha

This method is used to measure the reliability of the questionnaire between each field and the mean of the whole fields of the questionnaire. The usual range of Cronbach's coefficient alpha value is between 0.0 and + 1.0, reflecting a higher degree of internal consistency (Ritter, 2010). As shown in Table 5.7, Cronbach's coefficient alpha was calculated. The general reliability for all items equals 0.868. This reliability is considered high; the result ensures the reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 5.7: Cronbach's Alpha for Reliability

No.	Section	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Section 3: Recovery and Stability Phase	0.827
2	Section 4: Domestic and Foreign Actors	0.876
3	Section 5: Perceptions of The Reconstruction of The City	0.821
	All items	0.868

- Statistical Manipulation:

The researcher used the statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) to manipulate and analyse the data to achieve the study goal.

- Statistical methods are as follows:

1- Frequencies and Percentile.

2- Alpha- Cronbach Test for measuring the reliability of the items of the questionnaires

3- Person correlation coefficients for measuring the validity of the items of the questionnaires.

4-Spearman–Brown Coefficient.

5.3 Qualitative Method Phase II

5.3.1 Data Collection

At this qualitative phase, the main qualitative questions highlighted the challenges of the recovery phase to achieve sustainable urban development goals within the reconstruction stages in Benghazi after the armed conflict that lasted for several years. This question will also be related to the interpretation of the results that appeared in the quantitative part of the analysis of the results of the questionnaire (Stake, 1995) As a method of collecting and analysing data according to the qualitative approach.

Miles and Huberman (1994) mentioned four contents that should be clarified in qualitative research:

A: Context - That will be Benghazi city post-conflict.

B: Participants - Ten people from a questionnaire sample.

C: Events - To seek answers to the qualitative question about the procedures followed by the actors during and after the conflict and the effects of the conflict on redevelopment, and an in-depth explanation of the discrepancies in the quantitative results study.

D: Processes - The rotation rate and frequency of events by participants during the study.

The data collection process in the second phase of the qualitative-based study is based on semi-structured telephone interviews and various communication means due to the global situation resulting from the Corona pandemic. The primary technique in the qualitative phase

is semi-structured interviews with a sample of questionnaire participants., interviews were conducted until the point where no new information was obtained, following the principle of saturation (Charmaz, 2006).

The researcher stops collecting data when there is saturation in the classifications (or topics), which happens when the new data does not represent any addition to the search for pre-existing data. The interview protocol will be a pre-prepared question to describe the challenges of recovery processes and actors during the period of re-stability and the questions resulting from the statistical analysis of the quantitative part of this study. The protocol will be tested experimentally on three responders selected from the same target group. The responses of the experimental sample to the questions and the clarity of the questions' formulation will be evaluated. Participants will be contacted in advance to familiarise themselves with the study and provide answers to the main questions prepared for the interview. They will also be notified of the audio chat recording or the interview and provided with a written copy to verify their answers and the information they provided during the interview.

5.3.2 Data Analysis

In the qualitative curriculum, data collection and analysis occurred simultaneously (Merriam, 1998). All notes were taken during the first interview, as well as subsequent interviews, and then all data was collected and analysed. Qualitative data was often saturated with ideas and meanings that could not all be included. Thus, the process of data analysis involved sifting through the data to identify important information and exclude anything that was not related to the study topic (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012). Text data, images and documents were encoded and analysed by the qualitative data analysis program NVIVO. The steps of qualitative analysis, as identified by Creswell (2014), will include the following:

- (1) preliminary data exploration by reading transcripts and making notes.
- (2) coding the data by segmenting and marking the text.
- (3) using codes to create themes by grouping related codes.
- (4) linking and interconnecting themes.
- (5) creating a narrative.

5.3.3 Reliability and Validity

After completing the qualitative data analysis and interpretation, the validity of the results was examined for reliability. To ensure validity, the study applied the following standards of dissonance, which are commonly used as indicated by Creswell (2014):

1. The interpretation of the results from different sources is triangulated to validate the findings.
2. Participants are involved in the findings to ensure that the results are reflective of their experiences and perspectives.
3. The researcher's convictions and experience are employed and explained transparently through explanations to ensure transparency in the research process.
4. Extreme results were examined, even if they contradicted initial expectations, as they can support the honesty and credibility of the qualitative study.
5. To enhance the credibility of the qualitative study, the researcher visited the city of Benghazi during the field research after completing the analysis of quantitative results. However, the researcher followed all the news and developments related to the recovery efforts in the city before and after the visit.
6. The results and their interpretations were reviewed by the researcher's academic advisor.
7. An external arbitrator was engaged to evaluate the qualitative aspect of the study.
8. The raw data was checked to verify its accuracy.
9. Data encoding was reviewed to ensure that there was no mixing in the coding system.

By applying these standards of dissonance, the study ensures the reliability and validity of the qualitative research results.

5.3.4 The Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher in this study varies depending on the research phase and methodology adopted. In the first, quantitative phase, the researcher acted primarily as a data manager, overseeing the collection and ensuring the reliability of the tools used. This included verifying the authenticity and consistency of the data and employing statistical methods for analysis. In this phase, the researcher aimed to maintain objectivity by following standard quantitative research protocols.

However, the second phase of the study employed a qualitative approach, where the researcher's role became more significant and interpretive. As Creswell (2003, p.184) states, in qualitative research, the researcher often becomes a central participant, drawing on their experience and relationship with the study's participants. Given the researcher's background as an engineer in Benghazi's public and private sectors—supervising infrastructure projects and being directly affected by the conflict—the potential for bias is acknowledged. This direct involvement in the city's reconstruction context, combined with personal displacement due to the conflict, adds both depth and complexity to the data interpretation process. However, it also presents a risk of unintentional bias, as the researcher's experiences may influence the way data is interpreted (Locke, Spirduso, and Silverman, 2013).

5.3.4.1 Reflection on Bias and Mitigation Strategies:

To mitigate the risk of bias, the researcher engaged in several reflective practices. First, being aware of the potential for bias allowed for a conscious effort to approach data collection and interpretation objectively. The researcher kept detailed field notes, documenting personal reflections and distinguishing between subjective impressions and the empirical data provided by participants. This reflective journaling helped to separate personal experiences from the participants' accounts.

Additionally, the researcher adhered to ethical guidelines by ensuring transparency throughout the data collection process. For example, respondents were made aware of the researcher's background and position, and efforts were made to create a neutral space for participants to share their views without feeling influenced by the researcher's personal experiences.

Furthermore, verification processes were rigorously followed, including cross-checking data with secondary sources and obtaining approvals from the university's ethics committee.

Finally, while the researcher's connection to Benghazi and its reconstruction efforts offers unique insights, care was taken to avoid over-identification with participants or their experiences. The decision not to "conduct research in one's own backyard" (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992) was adhered to by maintaining a professional distance from the parties involved in the conflict and ensuring neutrality in the interpretation of findings. Despite the potential for bias, these reflective strategies helped ensure that the study's outcomes were both credible and balanced.

5.3.5 Ethical issues for the study

The study received ethical approval from the university's ethics department. To achieve this, an ethics form was downloaded. Several precautions were taken to ensure the privacy and confidentiality of each respondent, as well as to inform them of the research's purpose and their rights as participants. The Ethics form is included in the appendix for reference.

The participants were fully informed of the study's objectives, procedures, and their rights to confidentiality, privacy, and withdrawal from the study. Consent forms and participant information pages were presented as examples. The researcher's contact information was also made available in case anyone had any concerns or questions about the study. Additionally, participants were informed that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could choose to skip any questions they were uncomfortable with.

Second, steps were taken to protect the study participants' confidentiality and privacy. Firstly, no part of the study asked for or provided names or other personally identifying information. The researcher kept access to the raw data behind a password.

Chapter 6

6 Benghazi city

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores Benghazi, an eastern Libyan city with a rich history and culture. The city is situated on the Mediterranean coast with a strategic location that has made it an important commercial and cultural hub for centuries. The chapter covers various aspects of Benghazi, including its background, topography, and history pre-Arab Spring in 2011. The Battle of Benghazi from 2014 to 2017 and its impact on the city are also examined. The history of urban planning in Benghazi and the urban development projects that were underway before the 2011 conflict are also discussed. Furthermore, the chapter evaluates the state of the city's built cultural heritage, and the damage caused by the conflict. Finally, the active actors involved in post-conflict reconstruction and their efforts to rebuild and revive the city are examined.

Benghazi was the first Libyan city to revolt against the previous regime. It became the headquarters of the National Transitional Council (NTC), which disintegrated in July 2012 and was replaced by the National Conference until the July 2014 parliament elections. The signing of the Ceasefire Agreement in October 2020, followed by the Government of National Unity (GNU) founding in March 2021, provided the basis for continued peace in Libya. The general humanitarian situation improved with the termination of large-scale fighting and the gradual relaxation of COVID-19 mobility restrictions on mobility, which was evident in the increase in displaced individuals returning to their homes (OCHA, 2022).

The Benghazi Metropolis region stretches as a semicircle from Sidi Khalifa in the northeast to Ganfouda in the south-west, with a significant expansion in the east, including the areas of Bu Atni along the Banina (Airport) Highway. Benghazi City stretches from a salty land in the heart of coastal areas (*sabkhas*) to the raised plateau of Al Jabal Al Akhdar's flat rocky territory. It is located at latitude 32 degrees north and longitude 20 degrees east. Benghazi is Libya's second-largest city, behind Tripoli, the capital, 1,050 kilometres west of Benghazi. Tripoli is one of the central North African seaports, and within the metropolitan region, the city's coast

stretches about 20 kilometres. Benghazi is the region's most potent metropolis in every economic area. The availability of higher-order administrative, public, and social amenities (e.g., health, education, and culture), as well as the presence of an international airport and seaport, have elevated Benghazi to be the central city of the region, it is the biggest city in the Cyrenaica region and the country's former capital, per the 1951 Constitution of Libyan independence, with a view of the Mediterranean shore. The location of Benghazi in Libya is seen in Figure 6-1 the city's radial form is centred around Lake Benghazi. Under the rule of the Kingdom of Libya, Benghazi was the country's joint capital, along with Tripoli (ibid; UPA, 2009).

Benghazi remained the home of organisations and institutions commonly associated with the national capital, including the parliament, the national oil corporation, the national library and the headquarters of Libyan Airways. Furthermore, it is the location of the first university established in Libya in 1951(UN-Habitat, 2018).



Figure 6-1: The location of Benghazi in Libya (UN Support Mission in Libya, 2021).

6.2 Topography

Due to its location on a coastal strip, Benghazi's topography is mainly consistently flat. The primary topographic characteristic of the terrain in Benghazi City is symmetrical contours with moderate slope to coastline. This aspect of the landscape alters gradually when one approaches Banina, where the elevation rises to 90 - 110 metres above sea level. This formation is visible to the north of the Banina plateau, which gradually rises to the 150-meter contour line at the base of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, as shown in Figure 6-2.

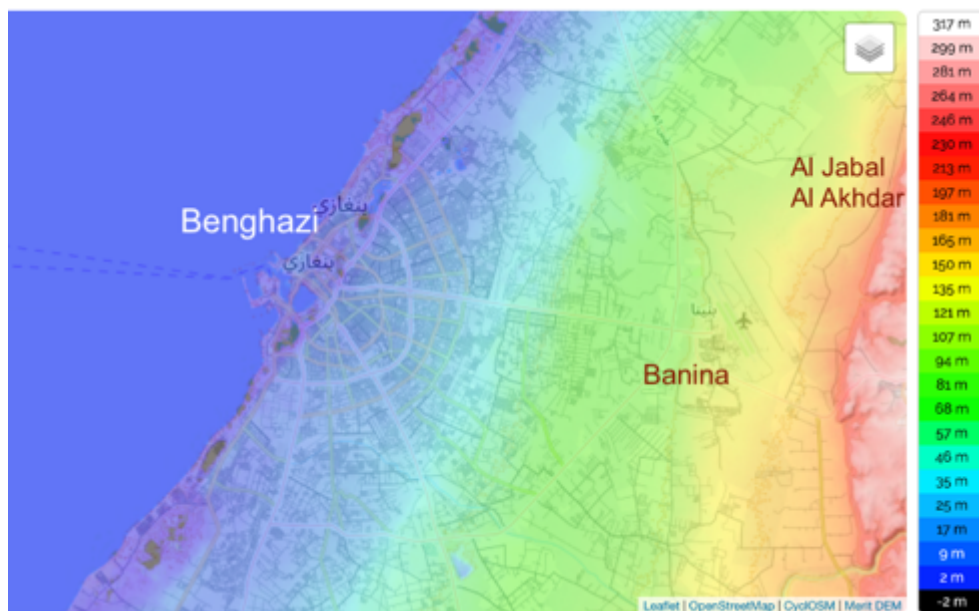


Figure 6-2: Topography and elevation zones in the Benghazi metropolis (Yamazaki et al., 2017).

6.3 Libya Pre-Arab Spring 2011

According to the statistics of the World Bank of Libya, oil accounts for nearly all of Libya's export revenues, eighty per cent of government revenue, and fifty per cent of its gross domestic product. In 2010, the World Bank estimated that the per capita income in Libya was 11,934 dollars, which is higher than the average for the Middle East and North Africa region and

comparable to the highest in Africa. As in other Arab countries, the government sponsored the Arab social contract by providing citizens with free health and education services, public sector jobs, and food and fuel support in exchange for limited freedom of expression and a narrow margin of freedom (Devarajan and Mottaghi, 2017).

Since 2003, when the United Nations lifted sanctions, economic activity has steadily expanded. Between 2004 and 2010, the average yearly real GDP growth rate was roughly 5%. The average inflation rate for consumer prices is less than 4 per cent, and the value of official foreign assets rose from \$20 billion in 2003 to \$170 billion in 2010. Moreover, eighty per cent of the labour force was employed in the public sector (ibid).

The limited private sector that existed before was immobilised by state dominance and restrictive institutions. As a result, governance indicators remain low, and high reliance impacts job growth in the public sector, resulting in greater reliance on the foreign workforce (ibid).

Libya, like other Arab countries, has made significant development in the areas of education and health. In 2010, life expectancy at birth climbed from 46.9 years in 1970 to 75.1 years in 2010. The adult literacy rate increased to 89.5 per cent, with the percentage of literacy amongst young people aged 15 to 24 increasing to 99.5 per cent. In addition, the under-five mortality rate fell from 139 in 1970 to 28 in 2010.

Decades of investment in elementary schooling improved the literacy rate among the population over 15 from 60% to over 85% in 2010. While the difference has narrowed, literacy rates remained higher among males than females. The male literacy rate in 2010 was 98 per cent, while the female literacy rate was 83 per cent (Devarajan and Mottaghi, 2017).

6.3.1 Battle of Benghazi (2014–2017)

The city faced minor damage during the first civil war in 2011, which happened when the city was attacked from the west side by the western region's army forces and was defeated by international airstrikes. Militias played a significant role in the subsequent years, resulting in violent conflicts between rival factions beginning in 2012 and leading to a second civil war. In July 2014, a coalition of militias supported by the central government announced that they had taken control of the city after conquering army bases, such as the special forces' central compound west of Bu 'Atni. To retrieve the city from the militias, the LNA defended the city's

airbase-initiated operation called "Restore Libya's Dignity." In October 2014, the LNA captured the camp of the "17th February Martyrs" unit in Qwarsha and the University of Benghazi in Qaryounes. As the militia coalition retreated to Benghazi's centre (or old town, the central commercial zone), Sabri and the vicinity of the city's port came under intense fire. In February 2016, following severe combat and bombardment, the LNA restored the city's main military base of Bu 'Atni. The fighting was extreme in the Laythi neighbourhoods of Benghazi Al Jadida. After a lengthy standoff, the LNA acquired the full authority of the Bu 'Atni and Al Laythi districts in February 2016, followed by the cement factory in Huwari, the Al Saiqa camp, and the resort village of Qanfoudha in April. In July 2016, the "Benghazi Defence Brigades," claiming loyalty to the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli, started a second front in the southwest against the Libyan National Army (LNA). The militia coalition was trapped in Qwarsha, Qanfoudha, Sabri, and Souq Al Hout (the fish market) at the beginning of 2017. However, in December 2017, LNA defeated the militias and gained full command of the city (see Figure 6-3). Nowadays, the LNA has complete control of Benghazi and its surroundings. Moreover, by 28 June 2018, the LNA seized complete control of Derna city (UN-Habitat, 2018).



Figure 6-3: The battle of Benghazi (UN-Habitat, 201)

6.3.2 The Impacts of the conflict on the Libyan Economy

Years of civil conflict in Libya have severely harmed progress in health and education. Furthermore, the rising violence has affected economic activities and ripped apart the social fabric apart. Libya produced more than 1.6 million barrels of crude oil per day before the revolution in 2011, but this amount has dropped to around 380,000 barrels per day. Due to supply chain interruptions, instability, and a lack of significant investment, non-hydrocarbon production remained inadequate. Real GDP is thought to have shrunk by 8.9% in 2015 and by another 2.5 per cent in 2016. In 2016, per capita income fell to less than 5,000 dollars, down from almost 13,000 dollars in 2012. Because of the rise in food costs, the inflation rate reached historic levels in 2016, hitting 26 per cent compared to 10 per cent in 2015. A shortage of basic goods and increased black market activities resulted from a lack of financial resources required to fund imports, mainly food. Families attempting to stockpile food worsened the situation.

Outside of the government sector, where only a small minority of Libyans work, the public sector has been unable to offer job opportunities for new participants in the labour market. Over the last two decades, Libya has had significant unemployment rates.

In 2010, the official unemployment rate was 13.5 per cent, with youth unemployment more than double that figure. Oil earnings (the government's primary source) have fallen to a quarter of what they were before the revolution, while spending has remained high. In 2016, the public sector pay bill accounted for 53% of GDP. Investments in health, education, energy, water, and sewage could not provide good public services. Due to their substantial reliance on oil and gas exports and food imports, the balance of payments and fiscal space worsened in 2016. Foreign reserves were the primary source of funding for the budget shortfall (Devarajan and Mottaghi, 2017).

6.4 History of Benghazi's Urban Planning

The origins of urban planning in Libya can be traced back to the Italian era. Before the Italian invasion in 1911, Libyan communities lacked large structural ideas regarding city planning. Tripoli, Benghazi, Darnah, and Misurata had master plans constructed during the Italian time, and layout plans for prominent cities and small towns were also created.

The first plan for Benghazi was made between 1914 and 1922 when Italy oversaw Libya. The city was built in a European style around the old Arabic neighbourhoods and the port, which is now in the branch of Old Benghazi (Mohamed, 2013). In 1966, the Ministry of Planning and Development started a significant urban planning project called the "1st Generation Planning Project" (1st GPP). The main objective was to control cities' growth and ensure that as many people as possible could benefit from the country's new oil wealth. The first GPP focused on making master plans and urban plans. During its first GPP, 29 master plans and 148 layout plans were made that covered the whole country and were in action until 1988.

In 1980, the preparation of the 2nd Generation Planning Project (2nd GPP) launched a comprehensive regional planning process in Libya. Before the 2nd GPP, urban planning was primarily concerned with the first aspect of the process: master and urban design planning. Within the 2nd GPP, complete long-term national, regional, and sub-regional designs were initially developed, along with master and layout plans for the first cities and towns; these were in operation from 1980 to 2000. (Extended to 2006 for finalisation of the National Spatial Policy-NSP).

The second GPP was a comprehensive plan to convert previous macro-plan techniques into local plans. The 2nd GPP stood out from earlier planning experiences in Libya because of its multi-dimensional planning styles for multi-level planning practises that were handled systematically despite the enormous extent and in-depth contents of planning works. By around 2000, Libya had entered a new age marked by governmental changes, new economic advancements, and socio-cultural preferences in lifestyle habits, all of which resulted in changes, especially in the cities. This transition process demanded a new strategy and organisation to direct the country's spatial and economic advancements. In contrast to conventional and traditional planning methods, the emerging trends are signals for transformation and the requirement for dynamic and interactive planning approaches (UPA, 2009).

6.4.1 The Second-Generation Planning Project (1980-2000)

Doxiadis Associates' 2nd Generation Plans for Benghazi City were designed to create arrangements allowing for the seamless operation of all socioeconomic and technological infrastructure aspects and the preservation of land resources.

The two master plans created by Doxiadis in the last half-century have undoubtedly influenced the current circumferential and compact urban macroform. This planning technique was aligned with the widespread notion of modernist-rationalist and comprehensive planning that was widespread at the time. In terms of the Doxiadis Plan's policies, defined as "offering equal chances for all," the compact microform can be claimed to fulfil the convenient urban texture. Furthermore, natural boundaries such as *sabkhas* and lakes in the south and north of the coastal zone rationalised a city macroform for Benghazi (UPA, 2009).

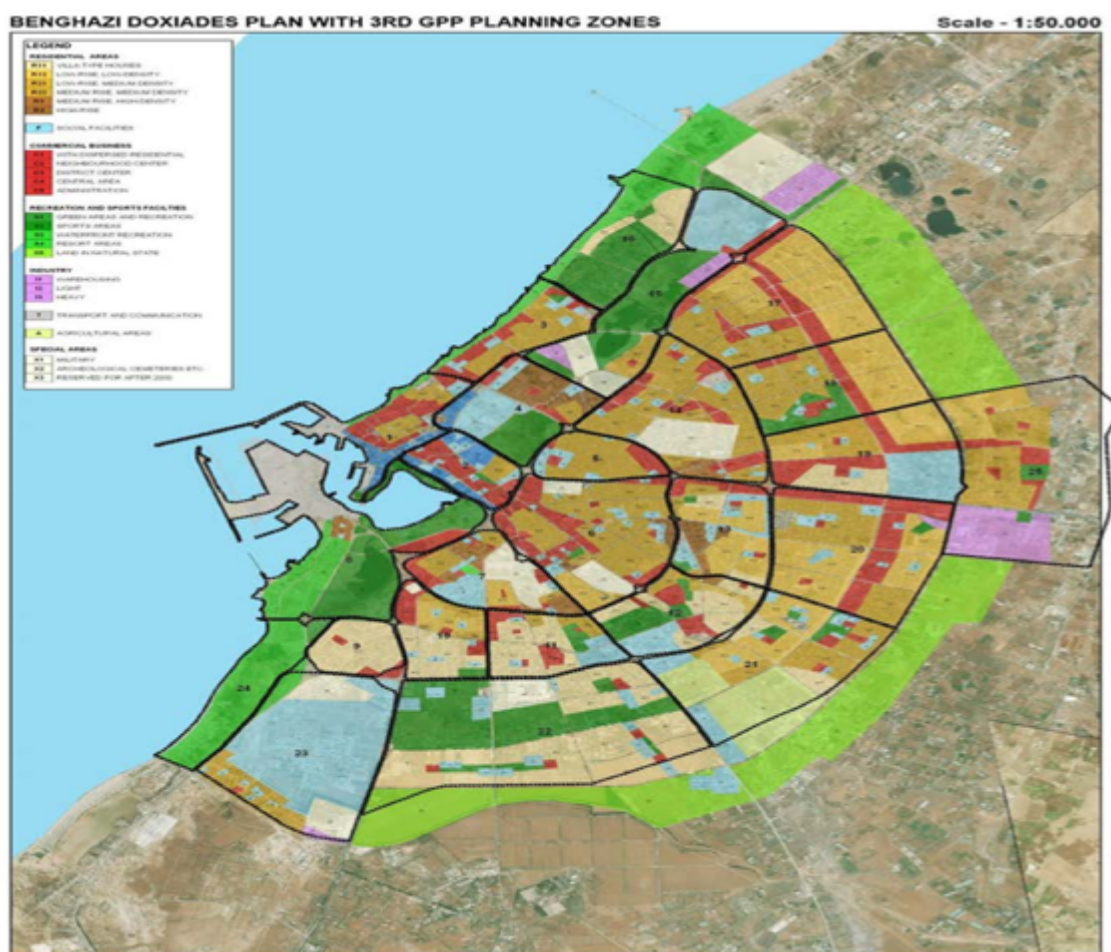


Figure 6-4: The master plans of Benghazi (UPA, 2009).

The city was primarily developed within the 5th Ring Road before 2011. Irregular developments started increasing within the last decade between the 4th and 5th Ring Roads and the outer region of the 5th Ring Road in the north-eastern part of the city (UN-Habitat, 2018), as shown in Figure 6-4.

6.4.2 The 3rd Generation Planning Project (3rd GPP)

The People's General Committee for Planning and the Urban Planning Agency (UPA) identified the necessity for a modern planning programme to replace the 2nd GPP, entitled the 3rd Generation Planning Project (3rd GPP), for the following reasons:

- The ongoing population rise, particularly in large urban centres.
- The introduction of new potentials that will impact spatial development, such as the Great Manmade River Project and high-speed railway projects, as well as the start-up of new businesses and investment firms.
- The potential for expanding the economy's foundation, such as tourism, foreign investors, and public-private partnerships.
- Advances in education, and, most critically, maintaining control over Libya's strategy and creating the groundwork for the country's future growth stage (Kezeiri, 2020).

The Benghazi Metropolitan Plan, which covers 2000 to 2025, was accepted by the General People's Committee at meeting No.22/2009, with Decree No. 433/2009 dated September 28, 2009.

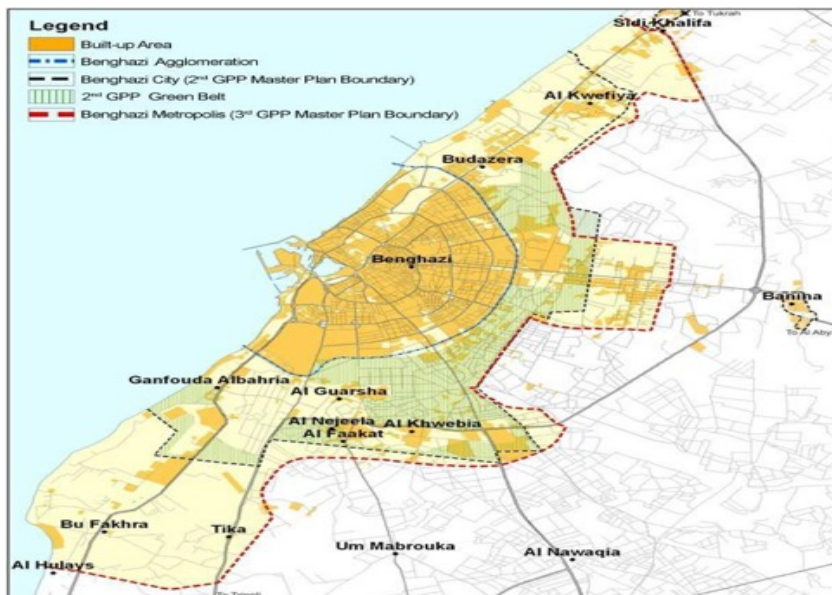


Figure 6-5: 3rd Generation planning project (3rd GPP) (UPA, 2009).

Because the Benghazi Metropolis covers such a vast region, 33 sub-zones have been identified as planning areas to provide an acceptable breakdown approach for analytical studies conducted in the framework of master plan studies (see Figure 6-6). The socio-economic and physical uniqueness concept is extensively considered when demarcating and delineating planning zones. The region within the 5th Ring Road is split into 24 planning zones, while the land on the outside is divided into nine planning zones (UPA, 2009).



Figure 6-6: Planning zones in the Benghazi metropolis (UPA, 2009).

6.5 The Infrastructure of Benghazi: Sewerage System

With considerable subsurface water resources and salt marshes covering portions of the land, the soil of Benghazi and the surrounding area needs a unique sewage system. It is highly dependent on mechanical devices that must be maintained regularly. The sewage system has six significant streams and is separate from the rainwater collecting and drainage system. The network was established in the 1980s and covered only 40% of the municipality's area (constituted of 150 to 2000 mm diameter pipes). Moreover, the sewer system has 25 sewage pumping stations and six rainwater collection units. Twenty-five more stations are also located beyond the municipality's borders (UN-Habitat, 2018).

Two different sewage systems run in Benghazi City. The first is a sanitary sewage system that runs through the Main Commercial Area and certain central areas. The septic tanks are separately attached to the buildings and comprise the second sewage system. The present "sewage treatment facility" in Al Guarsha, spread over 60 hectares, was built to purify sewage water from the city and utilise it to irrigate agricultural fields, plants, and parks. The plant's maximum capacity is 27,000 m³/day; however, it needs to be appropriately used, and it aims to improve capacity to 65,000 m³/day after the repair work is finished. It was also intended to transport the purified sewage water to the Al Khwebia facility and reuse it for agricultural irrigation and other uses (UPA, 2009).

In 2004, the Libyan government agreed to enforce a national General Plan for Water and Wastewater, which included the development of separate collection systems for rainwater and wastewater. The restoration of the sewage infrastructure in Benghazi City has already begun in this framework. When the new sewage network is completed, more water will be ready to be cleaned and utilised in agriculture. In addition, a 40-hectare site near Al Kwefiya has been set aside for the second "sewage treatment facility." When the current treatment plant at Al Guarsha is renovated and the new project at Al Kwefiya is finished, the total capacity of treatment plants in the Benghazi Metropolis is expected to reach 360,000 m³/day. Currently, sewage is temporarily dumped into either standing water in residential neighbourhoods or *sabkhas* and lakes (as in the case of 23 July Lake) see Figure 6-7, creating a threat to human health and polluting the environment. As a result, finishing the integrated sewage system to service the entire city, expanding the capacity of the present treatment plant, and beginning the building of a secondary treatment plant are all critical needs for Benghazi City. To minimise

harmful effects on the environment and urban areas, sewage must be collected and treated appropriately (UPA, 2009).

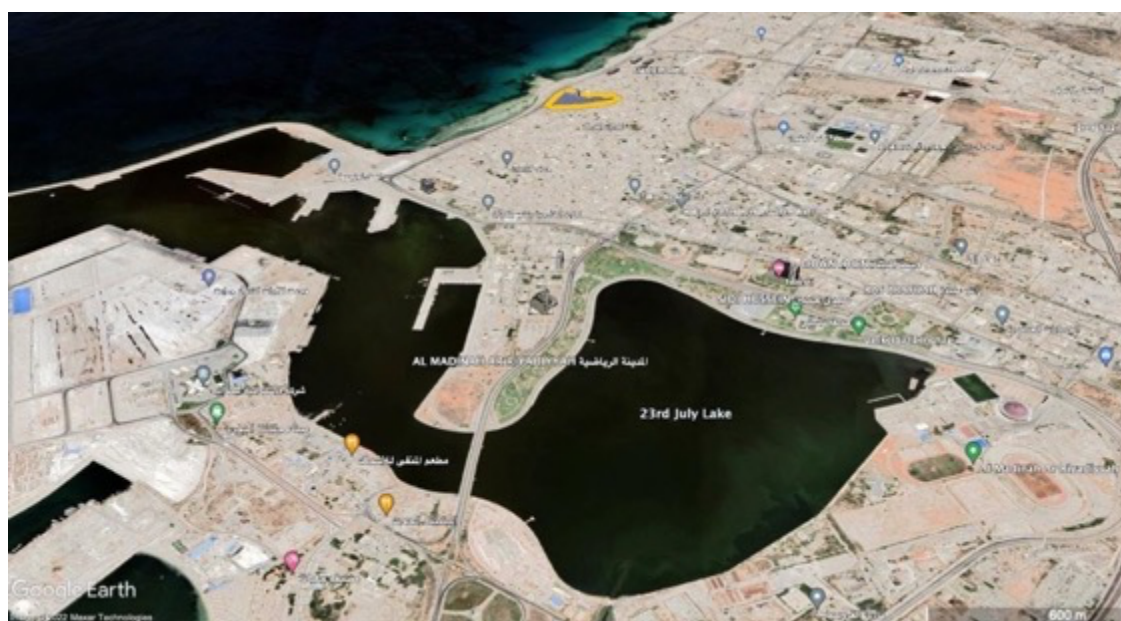


Figure 6-7: Rainwater drainage system on 23 July Lake (Google Maps, 2022).

6.6 Urban Development Projects in the City of Benghazi Before 2011

When the Libyan revolution occurred in 2011, multiple housing projects in Benghazi City were being carried out by active local actors such as the Organization for Development of Administrative Centre (ODAC), Housing and Infrastructure Bureau (HIB), Real Estate Bank, and Urban Preparation Company. New housing projects are extensive except for a few developments around the 5th Ring Road and in Al Nejeela, ranging from 3,000 to 20,000 units. The total area of housing developments is 4,968 hectares, with a housing capacity of 57,000 inhabitants and a population of around 285,000 (UPA, 2009).

They were expected to construct 57,035 housing units, as shown in *Table 6.1*. Only 16,686 were completed when the project was interrupted and put on hold. The average level of completion is roughly 70%, while in Ganfuda, where there are by far the most units, completion is only about 42%. Once finished, these housing units will substantially contribute to meeting the immediate demand for sheltering families displaced from seriously damaged structures,

and they should. As a result, arranging the resumption of the building must take priority (LEEAD Consulting, 2018).

Parts of the land initially set aside for these housing developments have been seized by "illegal" residents in some instances. As a result, in addition to finishing incomplete structures, new land for housing projects must be granted to make up for the "lost" areas because of "illegal" developments. This is one of the significant challenges that must be addressed as part of the 3rd generation master plan's development and upgrade (ibid). In addition to all this, the Municipal Council, through the Stabilization Committee, built 5,000 housing units away from the city centre for families displaced by the conflict.

Table 6.1: Public housing projects suspended since 2011(UPA, 2009).

	Project zone	Area (hectare)	Housing Unit	Population	%
1	Bu Fakhra	576	5,000	25,000	80%
2	Tika	992	12,000	60,000	
3	Ganfouda Albahria	1,600	20,000	100,000	42%
4	Al Guarsha 1	276	5,000	25,000	Cancelled*
5	Al Guarsha 2	32	800	4,000	90%
6	Al Nejeela	105	595	2,975	Cancelled
7	Al Kish District (On 5 th Ring Road)	61 (3 plots)	720	3,600	90%
8	Al Hadayik District (On 3 rd Ring Road)	9	320	1,600	60%

9	Bu Atni	308	3,600	18,000	
10	Al Anhar	386	6,000	30,000	
11	Al Kwefiya	623	3,000	15,000	Cancelled
Total		4,968	57,035	285,175	70%

(*) Because a green belt borders the Al Guarsha 1 housing project and is adjacent to agricultural regions, there is a common understanding that this development had been cancelled.

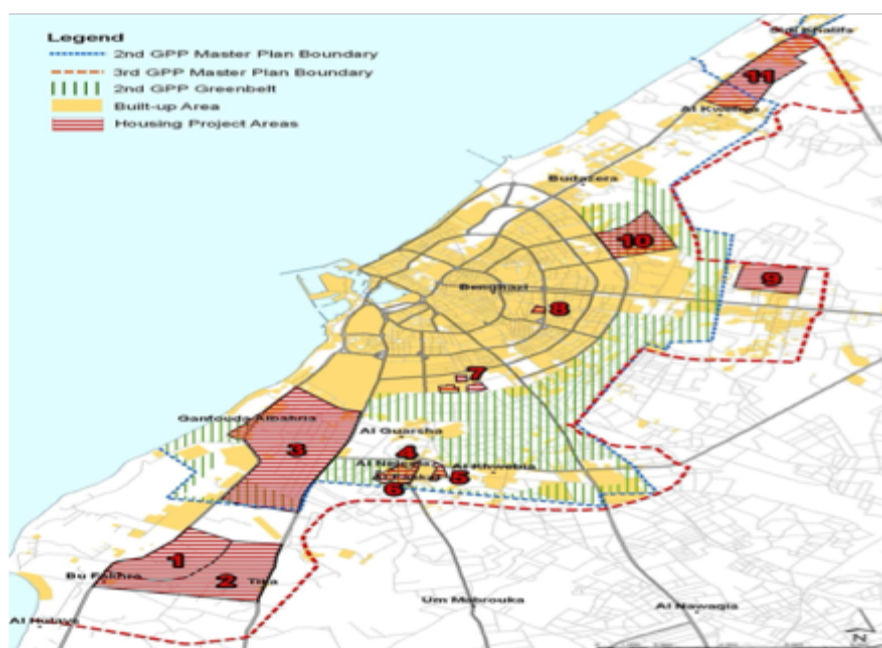


Figure 6-8: Zones of public housing projects suspended since 2011 (UPA, 2009).



Figure 6-9: Samples from some new housing projects (UPA, 2009).

Aside from proposed multi-sector projects, the Ministry of Finance and Planning had several formal projects in the works, including the Development Projects Program, which ran from 2008 to 2012. ODAC (Organization for Developing Administrative Centres) and HIB are the leading players in these programmes (Housing and Infrastructure Bureau). ODAC's housing developments include establishing 1,000 residential units in Benghazi and 2,200, 937, 602 and 262 residential units in Bu Fakhra (see Table 6.2). In Benghazi, there were additional programmes to maintain historical sites and restore ancient structures, as well as a higher education project, including Benghazi University and the reconstruction of the sports city.

The Libyan Aviation Agency in Tripoli claimed in 2008 that the designs and proposals for the new Banina/Benghazi International Airport, which would have a capacity of 1 million passengers per year, are set for construction. The new airport will have 20 terminals that can handle 4,000 passengers per hour. The runways are built to accommodate Airbus 330 jets, with 45 flights taking off every hour, and there will be sufficient parking for ten aircraft. A cargo station is also part of the airport complex, with a capacity of 150,000 tonnes of goods per year (ibid).

In the 2nd GPP Master Plan, it was thought Al Guarsha would be home to 67,000 people. Even though plans were made to build 4,800 homes for 24,000 people in this residential area, the plan still needs to be implemented. In addition, the construction of 800 homes (4,000 people) as part of a housing project established within the industrial zone is completed in this location. To the west of the old project, a parcellation development for another housing project with a capacity of 600 homes (3,000 persons) was under planning before being stopped due to the state of instability present since 2011. In this city region, the population capacity generated by new housing developments, either presently underway or still to be completed, is estimated to be over 48,000 people (UPA, 2009).

Table 6.2: ODAC Projects in Libyan Dinar (UPA, 2009).

ODAC PROJECTS (in LD)			
Housing Projects			
No.	Project	Contract Price	Remaining Price
1	Implementation of (2,200) residential units with external services and utility facilities and infrastructure works in Bu Fakhra	485,240,000	332,455,720
2	Implementation of (1,000) residential units with external services and utility facilities and infrastructure works in Benghazi	213,654,000	177,409,555
3	Implementation of (937) residential units in Bu Fakhra	125,017,985	55,149,034
4	Implementation of constructing infrastructure facilities for (937) residential units in Bu Fakhra	115,745,485	104,419,000
5	Implementation of (602) residential units in Bu Fakhra	80,236,807	46,593,016
6	Implementation of constructing infrastructure facilities for (602) residential units in Bu Fakhra	93,327,929	91,452,037
7	Implementation of (262) residential units in Bu Fakhra	34,920,338	14,422,537
8	Implementation of constructing infrastructure facilities for (262) residential units in Bu Fakhra	58,777,699	39,279,612
9	Total	1,206,920,243	861,180,511
Archaeological and Historic Cities Projects			
1	Project of repair, restoration and rehabilitation works of the former cathedral building of Benghazi	15,120,000	14,816,088
2	Project of repair, restoration and rehabilitation works of the former municipality building in Benghazi	10,846,000	10,618,196
3	Maintenance and upgrading of archaeological sites implementation project surrounding of the light house in Benghazi	8,890,000	6,121,054
	Total	34,846,000	31,555,338
Higher Education Projects			
1	Completion of Garyounis University Complex	176,044,659	172,506,161
2	Project of upgrading of Garyounis University	33,600,000	33,040,416
	Total	209,644,659	205,546,577
Sports and Recreation Projects			
1	Development and rehabilitation of the sports city	298,800,000	247,974,120
	Total	298,800,000	247,974,120
	Grand Total	1,750,210,902	1,346,256,546

HIB projects are primarily technical infrastructure and community service initiatives implemented in varied areas, including Benghazi, Ala Slawi, Al Guarsha, Banina, Garyounis, and Al Hawari-Al Fawayhat, as detailed in Table 6.3.

Table 6.3: HIB Projects in Libyan Dinars (UPA, 2009).

HIB PROJECTS (in LD)			
No.	Project	Contract Price	Remaining Price
1	Project of implementing sewage network at 2008 zone	36,214,906	23,372,570
2	Project of implementing of main pumping and flow lines for the sewage network	62,000,000	18,270,569
3	Project of implementing the northern lakes	81,300,000	65,442,042
4	Implementation of integrated utilities projects at Al Slawi district	400,000,000	274,886,335
5	Implementation of integrated utilities projects at zone number 3	104,237,978	86,319,794
6	Implementation of integrated utilities projects at Al Guarsha	3,850,166	3,272,641
7	Implementation of integrated utilities projects at Banina	34,777,689	34,777,689
8	Implementation of water line 1200	15,364,683	4,959,697
9	Implementation of water network for residential neighborhoods	5,269,320	5,269,320
11	Implementation of wastewater network for Garyounis zone (207A)	33,273,334	13,495,641
12	Implementation of wastewater network Al Hawari-Al Fawayhat zone 210	39,528,033	21,837,117
13	Emergency repair for wastewater network	29,439,987	20,157,946
14	Rehabilitation of second and third phase in Al Guarsha	38,254,190	9,553,957
	Total	883,510,286	581,615,318

6.6.1 Budgets of Suspended Development Projects in Benghazi Since 2011

In contract pricing, ODAC projects total 1,750,210,902 LD, with the remaining share after preliminary expenses totalling 1,346,256,546 LD. This amount equals 76.9% and will be spent in later phases. Likewise, the overall cost of housing projects is 1,206,920,243 LD, with the leftover 861,180,511 LD representing 71.3 per cent of the entire cost to be invested in future phases. Benghazi has been granted 34,846,000 LD from ODAC's pool of archaeological and historic city projects, with 90.5 per cent of it, or 31,555,338 LD, set aside for project costs. In total, 209,644,659 LD will be spent on higher education programs, with 98.0 per cent of that, or 205,546,577 LD, spent in the following stages. ODAC has set up 298,800,000 LD for sports and recreation facilities. The balance of the allocated financial source for this purpose is 247,974,120 LD or 82.9 per cent of the total. ODAC's housing projects comprise 1,000 housing units in Benghazi and 2,200, 937, 602, and 262 dwelling units in Bu Fakhra, all of which come with their infrastructure (UPA, 2009).

Renovation and restoration of the old cathedral, government building, and archaeological sites around the lighthouse are all part of Benghazi's archaeological and historic city projects. Developments at Garyounis University are concerned with higher education, while sports and leisure developments focus on the sports city's growth and rehabilitation. The overall cost of the HIB projects is 883,510,286 LD. The remaining 65.8% of this money, or 581,615,318 LD, will be invested in the subsequent stages of development. The overall cost of road and transportation projects is 736,564,750 LD, of which 639,285,501 LD will be released in the next phases, accounting for 86.7 per cent of the total. The contract price for the infrastructure projects totals 1,261,126,435 LD. The grand amount of 569,173,062 LD is 45.1 per cent of the overall budget for future project costs. HIB's infrastructure projects, which include water supply and wastewater disposal networks, are mostly located in Al Slawi, Al Guarsha, Banina, Garyounis, and Al Hawari-Al Fawayhat. Road maintenance, the Benghazi port, and the Banina airport are among the road and transportation initiatives. Benghazi's technological and physical infrastructure developments include the GMMR system, Al Guarsha water treatment, and dual circulation (ibid).

6.6.2 Other Pending Major New Projects

Before the uprising in 2011, there were many big projects, as in the table below, that had been confirmed, were getting private funding, and were at different stages of development. Some as shown in *Table 6.4* and *Figure 6-10*. Furthermore, some of these projects may start again when the political situation stabilises, and a central government is back in place. Because the total expected investment is so significant, reactivating these projects will surely benefit the local economy. If such is the situation, it is critical that these proposals be re-evaluated considering recent events and within the context of the proposed new Master Plan and Vision concepts. Most of these large projects are listed below, along with their essential qualities (LEEAD Consulting, 2018).

Table 6.4: Other Pending Major New Projects in Benghazi since 2011.

N	Project	Developer	Investment Value	Contract
1	INTERCONTINENTAL BENGHAZI 5-STAR HOTEL	United Libyan Tourist Investment Company / SANDUK EL ELMA	123 million Euro	

2	QASR AL-JAZEERA HOTEL	Libyan Arab Foreign Investment Company (LAFICO)	130 million Euro	
3	SPORT CITY	Libyan Investment and Development Company (LIDCO)	300 million Euro	
4	NORTHERN LAKES PROJECT	Contractor: Monta Montaja (Croatian company)	81,877,388 Libyan Dinars	Contract number: (CJ 5/5/2006) Percentage of technical achievement: (60.1%) Contract term: 36 months
5	COMBINED HOTEL, OFFICES AND RESIDENCES PROJECT	TGG Turkey Client: Tatweer for Touristic and Real Estate Investment Company	300 million \$	
6	TATWEER COMMERCIAL PROJECT	TGG Turkey Client: Tatweer for Touristic and Real Estate Investment Company	250 \$ million	
7	MARTYRS TOWER PROJECT	Shapporji Pallonji (Indian) Client: Libyan Investment and Development Company	180 million \$	This is Shapporji Pallonji's second and largest project in Libya. The building is intended for Commercial use combined with a 5 Star Hotel The G + 34 floors tower would be the tallest building in Benghazi
8	GUILIANA LAKE REDEVELOPMENT	Lavalin Company:	250 million	

		Excavation of the Giuliana Lake and Cleaning of the 23rd of July Lake	Libyan Dinars	
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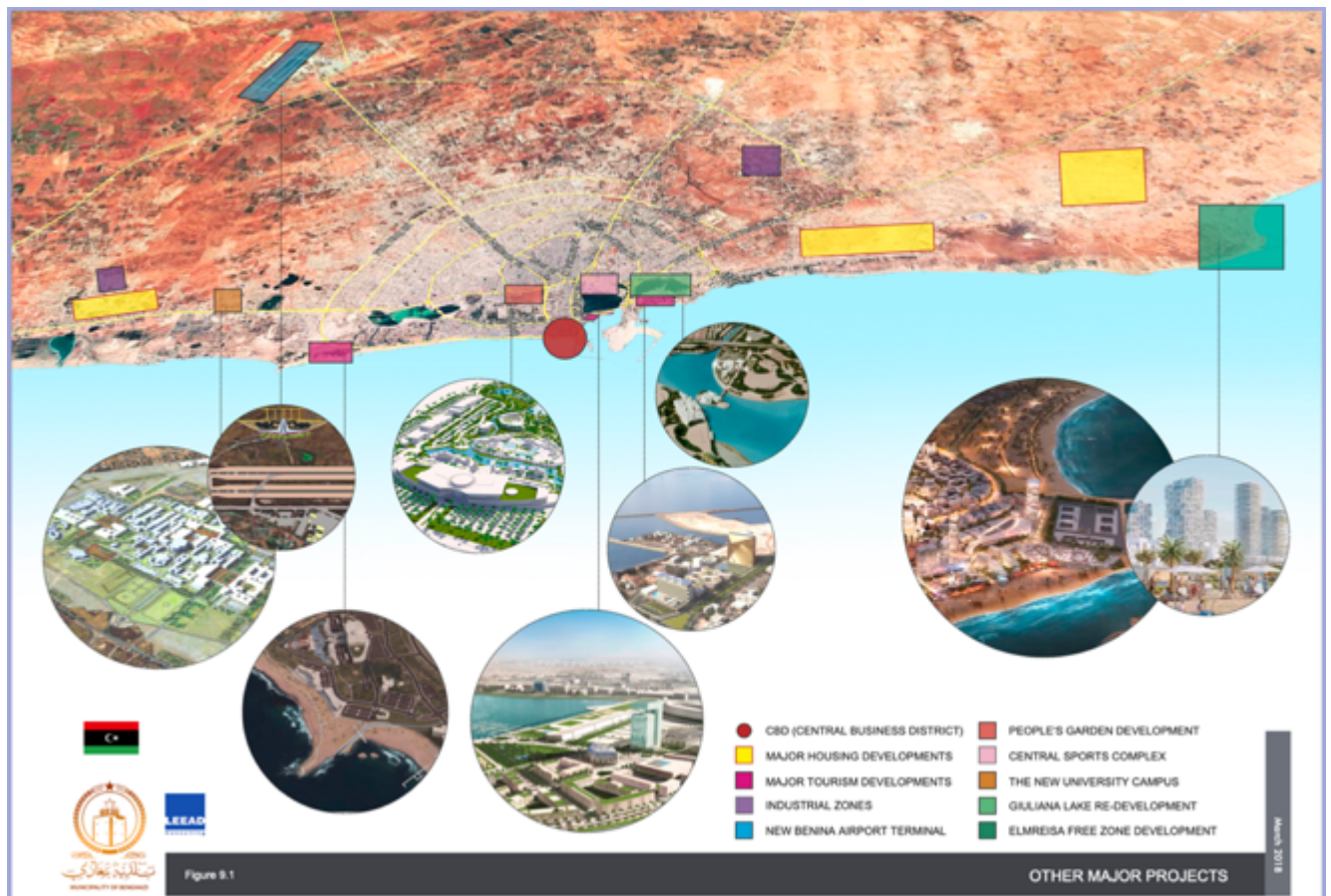


Figure 6-10: Other pending major new projects in Benghazi since 2011(LEEAD Consulting, 2018).

6.7 Cultural Heritage

6.7.1 Archaeological Sites and Historical Buildings

Benghazi has a long history that goes back to the ancient world existing for more than 2,000 years. At the end of the sixth century B.C., Greeks migrated to Cyrenaica and built a city there. Calling it Euesperides. It was intended to be a port for the western parts of Al Jabal Al Akhdar, and a primarily rural area. By the 3rd century B.C., it had already become the centre of a region in the Ptolemaic Kingdom of Egypt, officially named Berenice (UPA, 2009).



Figure 6-11: Archaeological heritage in the Benghazi metropolis (UPA, 2009).

The historical city of Euesperides, the very first Benghazi (see Figure 6-11), was divided into two portions. It was built in the 6th century B.C. and abandoned in the 3rd century B.C. Salmany, on the eastern end of the Sabkha, and Zreriia, on the western end of the Sabkha, are the ancient centres of Euesperides. The city of Sidi Khrebish (Berenice) was extended over recovered *sabkha* to the south and west of the outcrop in the 5th century B.C (ibid).

The region of the old city was created as part of old Benghazi's second phase, the Hellenistic and later Roman city of Berenice. Some old sites were demolished throughout the early Arab

era and more during the Ottoman and Italian regimes. Nevertheless, there is a significant chance that valuable relics are still buried beneath current structures. The main archaeological site is on the side of Sidi Khrebish's ancient cemetery. The discovered site has a mix of lower and middle-class homes and commercial properties that provide excellent insight into Roman and Hellenistic urban life. There are no significant public structures on the bust; it only covers a small part of the old city's entire extent (LEEAD Consulting, 2018).

In the ancient city, there were two graveyards. The ancient graveyard in the north is situated on the Sidi Abeid mound, while the new graveyard in the south is designated "The Martyrs" (Wilson et al., 2003). In many later times, when Benghazi was preferred as an administrative centre in the Ottoman Empire, its stability was ensured. The city became a central military hub during the Italian occupation, making this role even more critical (1922-1942). The city was largely damaged during WWII, as shown in Figure 6-12, and the city's identity altered little throughout the British administration. The city appears to have restored its pre- conflict dimensions (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009). The destruction caused by the Second World War has already caused significant harm to the Euesperides site. Furthermore, technological and public infrastructure improvements and some urban developments throughout time have entirely destroyed the old remains. Looking toward the harbour from above Benghazi. In the foreground are buildings destroyed by Allied bomber planes during air strikes November 28th, 1942.



Figure 6-12: Buildings destroyed in Benghazi by allied bomber planes during air strikes, November 28th, 1942 (The Australian War Memorial, n.d.).

The ancient site of Sidi Khrebish (Berenice), the second Benghazi, dates from the Greek, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. The ancient Lighthouse and several nearby remains have been repaired as part of ongoing efforts.

During the conflict, the historic neighbourhoods of Old Benghazi were devastated. Within the ancient city branch (Old Benghazi), certain areas in Benghazi have sustained significant and severe destruction, necessitating rebuilding and rehabilitation measures.

6.7.2 The Urban Shape of the Historic City of Benghazi

The old city of Benghazi was formed through the coexistence of eight different historical urban patterns, as shown in Figure 6-13: The archaeological area, the typical Arab urban structure in the north-east, the Arab-Ottoman urban structure with the southern urban fabric, the Italian expansion in the south, the Italian urban structure in the north is merging into the Arab-Ottoman fabric, part of the hospital in the north-east, the Italian vegetable market in the west, and School District in the North (ECOU, 2010).

More than 4,200 units use the land of the Old City, all of which are connected in some way. (50%) of these sites are used only for housing, and this number rises to (85%) if we include residential structures with commercial activities. This implies that most of Benghazi's ancient city is dedicated to housing. Only around 5% of buildings are dedicated to shops. However, this ratio rises to 25% in the ancient city of Tripoli, entirely dedicated to shops and workshops. However, a third of the buildings are mixed, compared to only one-sixth in Tripoli's old city. Traditional activities in old Benghazi city disappear if local industry remains important (Buraqiea, Al-Obaidi and Jilani, 2017).

Finally, amenities, religious activities, and services make up nearly 10% of the remaining building units. Many urban industries are no longer suitable for current demands. Even though it is in the area facing the harbour, the ancient city lacks amenities (ECOU, 2010).



Figure 6-13: Compilation of the historical areas in the old city of Benghazi (UN-HABITAT, 2018).

6.8 Damage Assessment

The first assessment of the more significant damage in Benghazi damage completed on August 3, 2016, in cooperation with the Benghazi Municipality, Civil Initiatives Libya, and the European Commission by IMPACT (2016) during fighting between August 2015 and April 2016, the initial damage assessment was done. It affected 13 city districts, significantly impacting the five most devastating sections. Laythi (New Benghazi), Bu' Atni, Huwari, Venicia (Berka branch) and Benina (now out of the limits of the municipality), where the airport is located. Three categories of damage were considered: destroyed (75-100%), severe damage (30-75%) and moderate (5-30%).

The damage grew dramatically between the two assessment dates (the number of damaged structures more than doubled) and was still centred in the same conflict regions, according to satellite imagery analysis and key informant observations (as shown in Figure 6-14): Old Benghazi (385 structures), Sabri (172), Lethama (80), Salmani Charqui (23), Salmani Gharbi (39), Tablinu (10), Bu Hdima (15), Bel'oun (16), Venicia (123), Huwari (860), Laythi (142), Bu' Atni (1398) and Benina (81). In 2016, 3344 buildings were classified as destroyed, severely damaged, or moderately damaged, with another 1152 potentially affected.

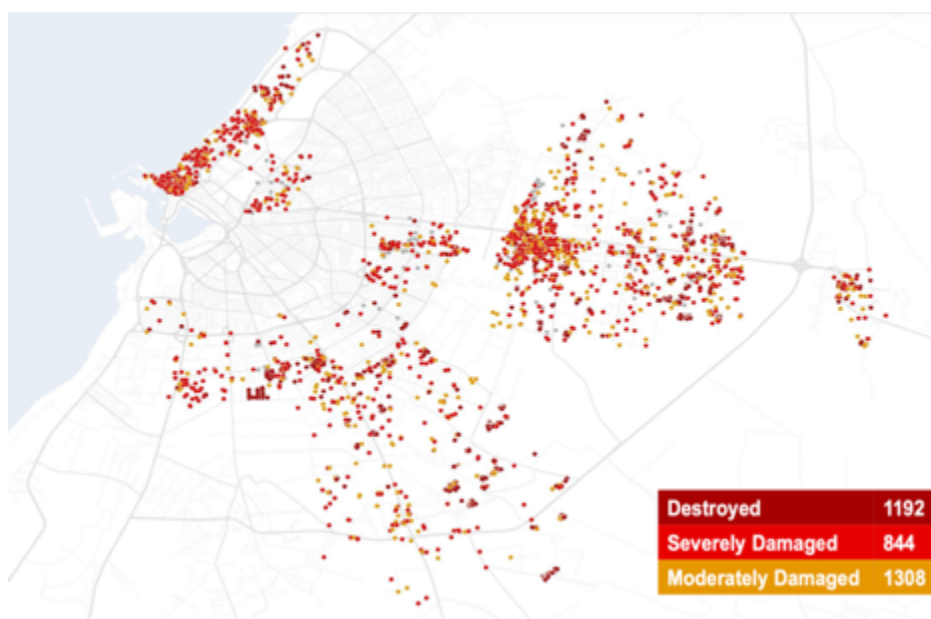


Figure 6-14: Greater Benghazi damage assessment (IMPACT, 2016).

In the old city of Benghazi (as shown in

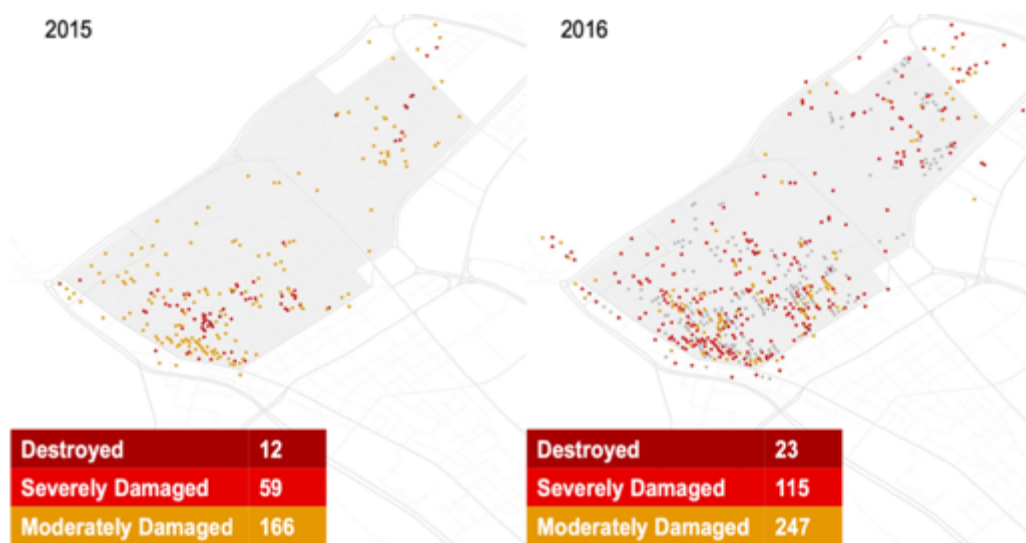


Figure 6-15), 85 buildings have been destroyed, severely damaged, or damaged to a moderate degree. Another 330 buildings may have been damaged (IMPACT, 2016).

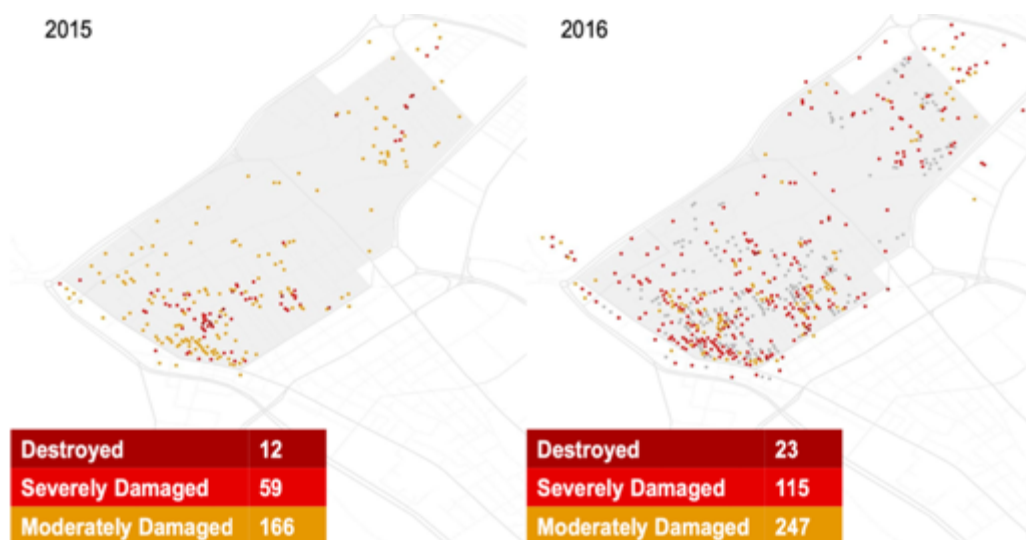


Figure 6-15: The old city of Benghazi damage assessment between 2015 and 2016 (IMPACT, 2016).

In May 2017, a second published damage assessment was carried out by the European Union and appointed a further damage evaluation report, which was completed by the Spanish firm INDRA. The overall number of buildings destroyed, moderately damaged, or severely damaged was 3,426, of which 504 were assessed as destroyed, 1023 as severely damaged, and 1899 as moderately damaged. Also, these 2152 were assessed as possibly damaged. It revealed 700 buildings in Old Benghazi, 423 buildings in Sabri, 315 buildings in Huwari, 323 buildings in Laythi/Benghazi Jadida, and 540 buildings in Benina for the most severely damaged districts and quarters (except the severely damaged Bu 'Atni, which was not addressed) and a similar typology of damage. As a result, the number of damaged structures has increased sharply. Both satellite and key informant evaluations found many other buildings that had been damaged, had missing resources or had been changed because of urban restructuring.

The INDRA (2017) analysis was associated with high-resolution satellite images collected between January and March, as shown in Figure 6-16. Due to the high resolution of the photos, the overall conclusion is close to the truth. It must be emphasised that while determining if a building is destroyed is simple, determining the difference between moderately and seriously damaged structures, especially in a ground survey, is far more complex. It makes more sense to consider these two groups as one until trained experts do in-depth surveys of each structure and compensation efforts.

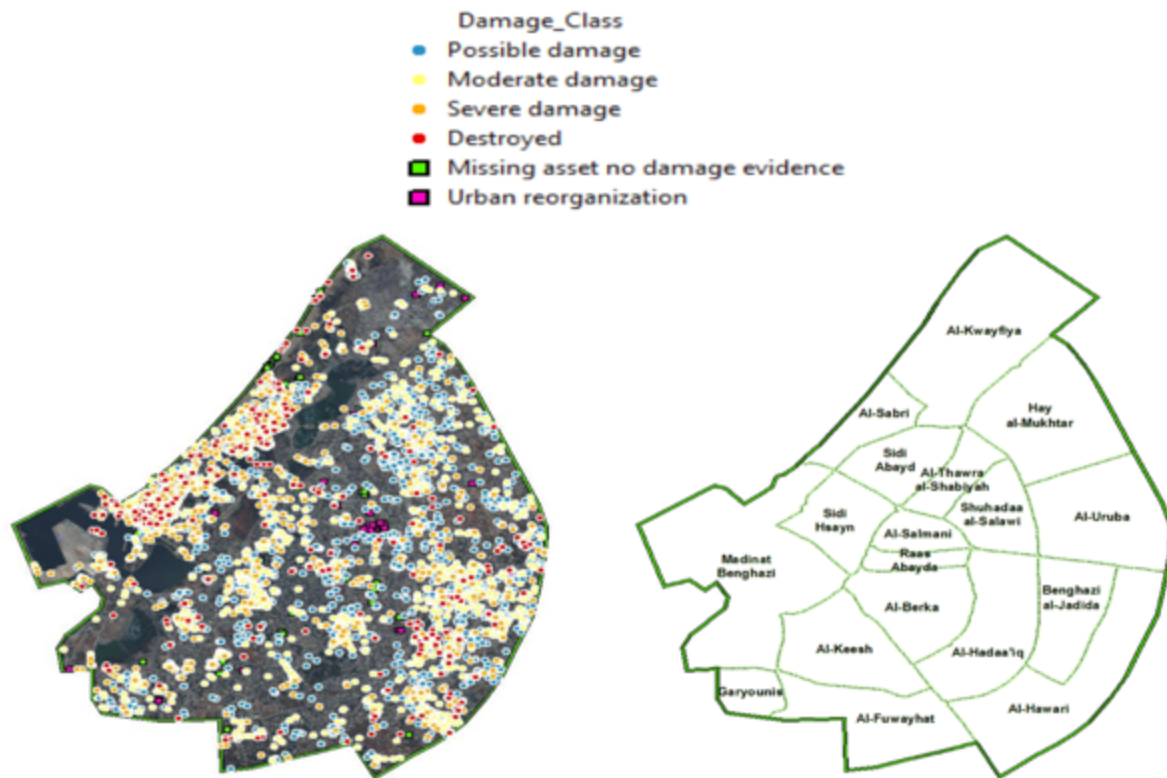


Figure 6-16: Damage assessment in Benghazi (INDRA, 2017).

UN-Habitat has conducted another report of a ground damage assessment for Benghazi with local authorities' cooperation. The satellite maps of damages of April 19, 2018, have been used as a basis. The ground confirmation assessment revealed that severe damage was heavily focused in the municipal branches of Old Benghazi (10 out of 16 districts, particularly those located close to the port and Sabri, Sidi' Obaid, and Thawr Al Sha'biya), Slawi (in 2 out of 10 districts, particularly Salmani and Shuhada), and New Benghazi (in 5 districts out of 8, in particular, The Gardens and Huwari), Bu' Atni (in 3 districts out 4), Benina (in 1 district out of 3, on the road to the airport) and Qwarsha (in 3 districts out of 4, especially Al Fa'akat).

In Old Benghazi (see Figure 6-17), 462 buildings were entirely demolished, primarily in Zrir'iya (130), Sabri (76), Chebbi (77), and Agharbil (77). (64). There were 2,148 seriously damaged buildings, notably in Zrir'ya (634), Sabri (468), Akharbish (385) and Agharbil (381). (276). Sabri was linked to a third of the moderately damaged buildings (UN_Habitat, 2018).

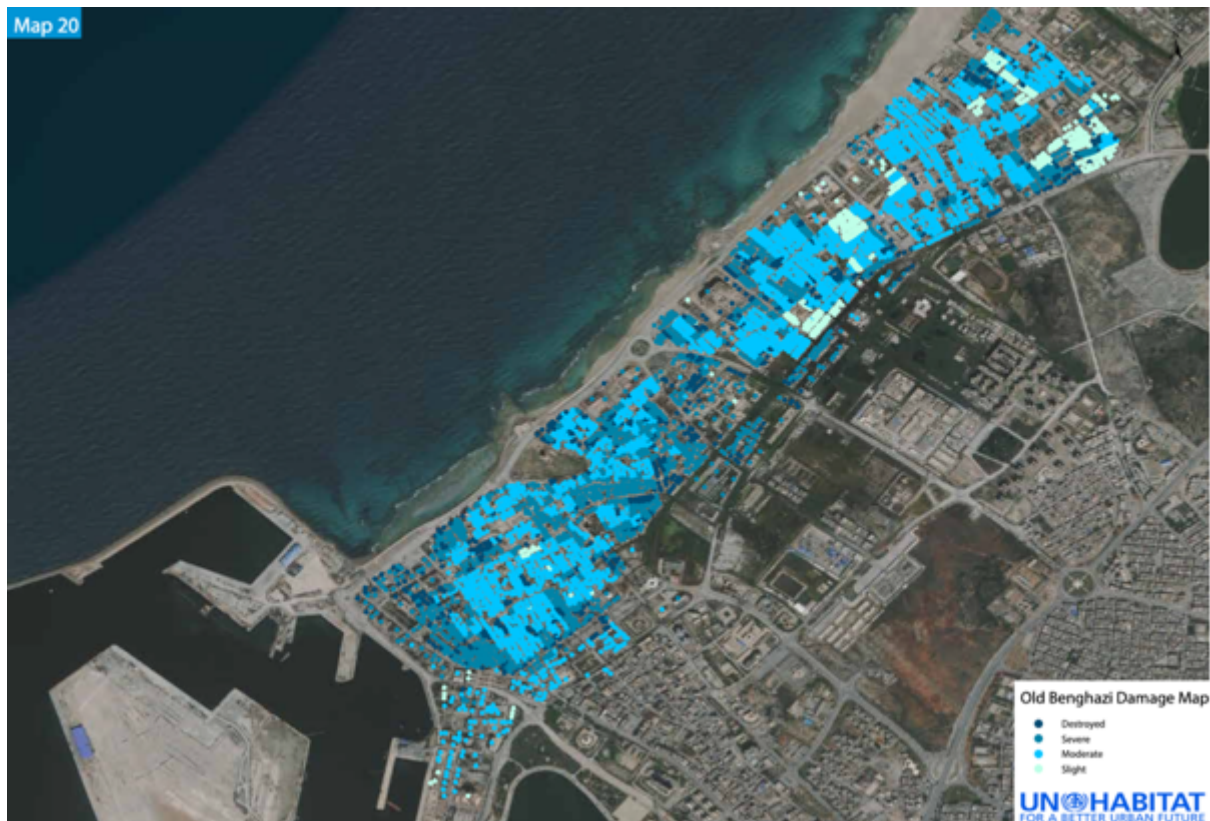


Figure 6-17: The old city of Benghazi damage assessment (UN-HABITAT, 2018).

Damage ground assessment revealed the presence of battle debris in Old Benghazi, Sahel Gharbi, and Bu 'Atni, as well as other areas.

NCR (2018) ground survey was matched with UN-Habitat (2018) expert findings of the United Nations Human Habitat Report of Benghazi by using GIS to investigate the occupancy status of housing in mid-2018. Both studies found that only 9,315 buildings were discovered to be unoccupied, accounting for 9.8% of the total number of buildings in the municipality; 30% of HH live in buildings that have some damage, 9% live in buildings that have considerable damage, and 1% live in buildings that have severe damage. Most people who own a home (either where they currently reside or where they grew up) began some form of maintenance, ranging from very small to significant expenditure. Furthermore, there are significant differences between areas. Around a fourth of the population in Benin and Qnfodah lives in homes that have been severely damaged. The abandoned building structures were mostly primarily based in the areas of Old Benghazi (33 per cent of buildings, primarily due to destruction and severe damage) and Sahel Gharbi (68 per cent, where most of the ground+4”

new housing developments in the districts of Bu Fakhra and Qanfouda Bahriya are undeveloped and damaged, and several of the “ground floor” structures in Tikah are vacant).

According to NCR (2018), except for the Bu’ Atni branch, which has roughly 5% of abandoned structures, most other areas have seen their housing buildings restored and inhabited again. Among Libya’s cities, Benghazi had the highest rate of building damage due to conflict and militia attacks.

Assessments of damage utilizing satellite images are often limited to significant and catastrophic levels of structural destruction and are not intended to track and identify all damage to buildings. Analysis can only evaluate what is observable from above. However, in some specific situations, damage to the outer walls is also visible in the imagery. To enhance the study of distanced satellite data, ground-based investigations can be conducted to detect lateral building damage that is not easily visible from satellite photography. Additionally, other minor types of building damage can also be identified. However, since this method is not exhaustive, it is viewed as a non-representative sample. Data collectors often use convenience sampling to identify sites (IMPACT, 2016).

According to Benghazi’s housing and infrastructure agency, on-the-ground investigations were conducted by their team following the conflict in 2018. About 4,350 buildings of various kinds have been destroyed or severely damaged in the Old City and Sabri. Their estimate shows that about 5,500 homes in the city are likely to be beyond repair, meaning that the people who live there will have to find new places to live. Most residents have returned to some minor areas of Sabri, and only the Old City area remains entirely abandoned. According to the most recent United Nations reports (Libya Inter Sector Coordination Group-September 2017, and “IMPACT” report, August 2017), 5.6 per cent of non-displaced households reported medium-to-heavy damage to their homes, while 41 per cent of returning evacuated households reported the same. There was a substantial amount of “light damage,” although this is less of an issue because it is easier to repair. Based on numerous recent international reports and on-the-ground investigations, the HIA of Benghazi estimated that roughly 4,350 buildings were completely demolished between January and March 2018 (LEEAD Consulting, 2018).

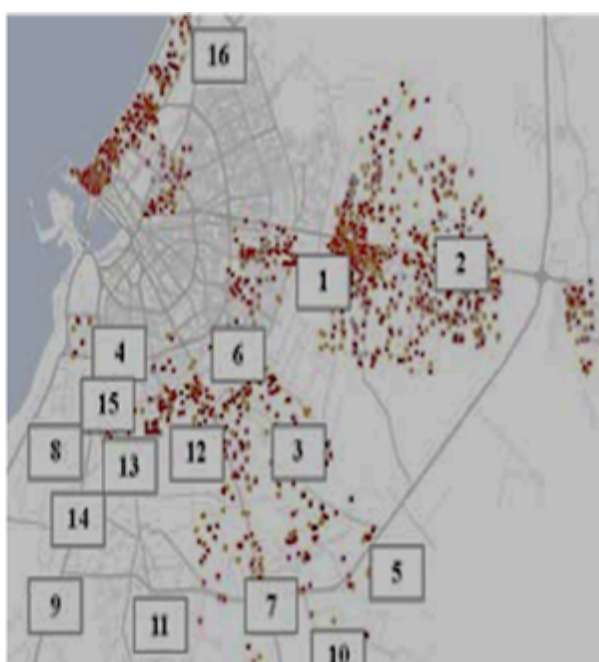
According to experts, the overall number of destroyed buildings is estimated to be about 9,100, including those with minor to severe damage, most of which have already been restored. Their estimations reveal that around 5,500 residential properties were destroyed or damaged beyond repair and must be rebuilt as soon as possible. It is also worth noting that around 10,900 families from the Old City and Sabri remain evacuated (ibid).

The estimation of HIAB in collaboration with the LEEAD Consulting report is considered an updated report that was done in collaboration with local authorities of Benghazi and produced and proposed new urban planning of the city supported by Benghazi municipality (LEEAD Consulting, 2018).

The Benghazi Department of Housing and Utility agency established a “Committee for the Assessment of Damages” in 2016. They accepted and are analysing 5,193 complaints from families around the city, but only a few complaints have been validated thus far. However, there have been no complaints about the Old City and only a minority about Sabri. Compensation will be calculated based on the verified level of damage, with the rate for completely demolished structures being 500 LD per square metre. These numbers include all kinds of damage, and once all complaints have been received and looked at, they will form an essential database for the whole city (ibid).

Table 6.5: Committee for the Assessment of Damage Claims received and processed between 9/3/2016 and 15/2/2018 (LEEAD Consulting, 2018).

NO.	AREA NAME	NO. OF HOUSEHOLD CLAIM FILES RECEIVED	PERCENTAGE OF PROGRESS %
1	AL LIETHI	1,230	95
2	BOU ATNI	1,340	91
3	AL HAWARI	726	89
4	QARUNIS APARTMENTS	221	87
5	SIDI FARAG	151	82
6	VENIZIA	54	76
7	AL FAKAT	75	70
8	AL SHAT	31	65
9	AL TARIA	23	60
10	AUM MABROKA	58	75
11	TIKA	51	67
12	AL QWARSHA	319	71
13	QARUNIS	188	36
14	QANFUDA	525	56
15	BOU SNIB	38	19
16	AL SABRI	163	25
	DWELLING UNITS TOTAL =	5,193	-



At the time of writing, further evidence of the severity of the damage is also being provided. There needs to be more evidence to determine the number of housing units that were significantly damaged or demolished and will need to be rebuilt based on assessments. It is expected to be in the range of 35 per cent, or around 1,800 housing units. When the verified data from the Old City and Sabri (see Table 6.5) are added together, the total number of residential units approaches 5,550.

Table 6.6 below displays the number of claims registered by area and the proportion of these claims that have been reviewed based on information they received after the 2018 conflict.

Table 6.6: 2018 Damage record for residential buildings and corresponding dwelling units (LEEAD Consulting, 2018).

NAME OF NEIGHBORHOOD (AS SHOWN IN THE DAMAGE REPORTS)	TOTAL NUMBER OF BUILDINGS SUBSTANTIALLY DAMAGED OR DESTROYED	TOTAL NUMBER OF BUILDINGS WITH LIGHT TO MODERATE DAMAGE	LESS NUMBER OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS MODERATELY DAMAGED TO DESTROYED	TOTAL NUMBER OF NON-PUBLIC BUILDINGS MODERATELY DAMAGED TO DESTROYED	ESTIMATED AVERAGE NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS PER BUILDING	ESTIMATED NUMBER OF DWELLING UNITS MODERATELY DAMAGED TO DESTROYED
<i>Berka</i>	28	130	3	25	4.6	115
<i>Fuwayhat</i>	20	51	6	14	1.0	14
<i>Hadaa'iq</i>	25	98	2	23	2.0	46
<i>Hawari</i>	91	319	12	79	1.0	79
<i>Keesh</i>	42	126	2	40	2.0	80
<i>Kwayfiya</i>	58	62	1	57	1.0	57
Sabri	1,113	1,670	26	1,087	1.6	1,772
<i>Salmani</i>	14	48	2	12	3.7	44
<i>Thawra al-Shabiyah</i>	12	15	1	11	2.0	22
<i>Uruba</i>	49	138	1	48	2.0	96
<i>Benghazi al-Jadida</i>	106	322	2	104	1.0	104
<i>Garyounis</i>	12	42	1	11	6.0	66
<i>Hay al Mukhtar</i>	37	266	1	36	2.0	72
OLD CITY	1,044	2,329	38	1,006	1.9	1,942
<i>Raas Abayda</i>	16	25	2	14	2.0	28
<i>Shuhadaa al-Salawi</i>	11	45	2	9	2.0	18
<i>Sidi Abayid</i>	59	75	3	56	2.0	112
<i>Sidi Hsayn</i>	62	80	4	58	3.6	209
TOTALS WITHOUT BENINA	2,799	5,841	109			-
<i>Benina Urban</i>	254	140	4	250	2.0	500
<i>Benina Rural</i>	21	35	2	19	1.0	19
TOTALS INCLUDING BENINA	3,074	6,016	224	2,959		5,495
	9,090					

6.9 Demography

6.9.1 The population of the Benghazi Metropolis

The Benghazi Metropolis comprises the towns of Ganfouda Albahria, Bu Fakhra, Tika, Al Guarsha, Al Kwefiya, and Budazera, as well as the city of Benghazi. The population of Benghazi municipality, when last counted in 2006, was 622,148. The non-Libyan population was estimated to be 52,803, accounting for 7.8% of the total population, higher than the national average of 6.4 per cent (UPA, 2009). Determining the population of the municipality of Benghazi post-conflict is more complicated than estimating the population of Libya as a whole. This is due to factors such as population relocation, changes to administrative borders in districts and branches in 2015 and renaming certain districts or unions with other branches. In addition, certain areas have seen major growth in informal settlements, while others have been nearly depopulated—at least temporarily—due to devastation and destruction. This makes estimating a complex operation, with a margin of error that can only be eliminated when a new census is conducted.

According to UN-Habitat (2018), the Municipality of Benghazi analysed satellite pictures and found 152,321 potential housing units in 2006 inside the current municipal limits. They housed 577,939 people. On average, individuals with an HH size of 5.9 climbed to 214,994 potential dwelling units in 2018. By comparing the number of people living in each building in each of the 22 districts in 2006 and 2018, the total population of the municipality of Benghazi is estimated to be 715,498. On average, 5.2 people are living in each household. If the average were 5.9 or 4.4, the estimated number of people would have been 811,816 or 605,422. The population of Old Benghazi branches fell by 36%, as did that of New Benghazi (-17%), Salmani (-7%), and Al Berka (-6 %). The populations of Huwari, Al Kwaifyah, Sahel Gharbi, Qwarsha, Bu 'Atni, and Sidi Khlifa had expanded greatly during this time.

According to UN-Habitat (2018), the population of Benghazi is estimated to be between 715,000 and 812,000 people within its current administrative borders. On the other hand, the Bureau of Statistics and Census-Libya 2020 predicted the population of Benghazi in 2020 to be 807,255. The 2021 census, according to the Urban Observatory of Benghazi, estimated the population at 963,000 (UOB, 2023).

6.9.2 Family and Household Sizes

In Libya, households and families are considered statistical units. A household might be made up of one or more families that share a home. In 1995, more than 88 out of 100 homes were made up of one family, around eight were made up of two families, and four were made up of one person or a group of people who were not related to one another (UPA, 2009).

It was believed that third-generation planning would be implemented. It should be noted that as the time frame of 2006–2025 progresses, family and household sizes are expected to become increasingly similar as 2025 approaches.

Long-term statistics indicate that the country's family and household sizes will inevitably reduce due to economic and social circumstances. In general, growth in the number of educated individuals, particularly more educated women with increased involvement in the labour market in all sectors and income levels, has increased the number of nucleus and independent families, particularly in cities. However, it is expected that household and family sizes will remain relatively high in the next 20 years, regardless of region or in the Benghazi Sub-region (UPA, 2009).

According to official census figures from 2006, the average family size in the Benghazi Metropolitan Area is roughly 5.6, with Benghazi City at 5.62 and the Benghazi Metropolis, which includes towns within its impact area, at 5.59. Al Kwefiya (5.96) and Bu Fakhra (5.75) have larger families than the metropolitan average (ibid).

6.10 Displacement

Beginning in 2011, the fighting caused an initial wave of displacement among the Benghazi population and other cities in Libya. However, it was considered that most IDPs had settled in the Benghazi area. The second wave of IDPs occurred between 2012 and mid-2014 when the security situation in Benghazi city worsened. The third wave of IDPs, including forced displacements, came with increased fighting in Benghazi, which ended in December 2017. In these waves, IDPs from various regions, who had already been displaced, arrived in Benghazi (as for the case of Tawergha IDPs of 2011, displacement occurred again in mid- 2014).

In May 2016, the IOM: Displacement Tracking Matrix Round 3 counted 195,028 people who had left Benghazi. During the period, this was the dominant proportion of IDPs, accounting for 46.8 per cent of the total. These people lived in the Benghazi region (including Slukh and Tucra), Al Bayda, Ajdabiya, and other places (Al Kufrah, Zliten, etc.). They were estimated to number 189,413 in June 2016, with 50,000 returning (19.4 % of all returnees) to the 28 LNA-taken areas of Bu 'Atni, Laythi, and Bel'oun. In September 2016, the number of returnees was 85,500 (IOM-Round 6, 2016), and this trend continued towards the end of the year (IOM, rounds 1-7, 2016 and Rounds 9, 2017), before increasing to 132,050 between January and February 2017. They went back to Al Jadida, Bu'Atni, Benina, Qwarcha, and Al Fa'kat in Benghazi (UN-Habitat, 2018). Returnees to Benghazi reached 174,000 in January 2018, with the end of the conflict (51 % of total returnees in the nation, with returns from the Benghazi region to the Thawra Sha'abiya district being particularly high), while IDPs in the region dropped to 32,250.

Finally, according to the most recent IOM (DTM42-2022), there were 192,185 returns, while 34,066 people from Benghazi remain IDPs in the province (IOM, 2022). According to these figures, around 240,000 people from Benghazi were displaced due to the incidents. This indicates that the conflict displaced around a third of the municipality's population. Notably, the approximately 13,000 Benghazi IDPs in Misrata have yet to return, even though they make up half of those relocated outside the municipality. Furthermore, several IDPs and returnees have stated that they had been evacuated multiple times (Reach, 2017).

6.11 Active Actors in Post-conflict Reconstruction

An active actor in post-conflict reconstruction can be defined as a person, group, or organisation that holds a position or status that allows them to influence or be influenced by the activities, aims, and policies of that person, group, or organisation directly or indirectly. Actors (individuals, groups, or organisations) that have a vested interest in the policy being promoted, the target being achieved, and the action being taken are referred to as stakeholders in a process. International, national, political, public, and social agencies and ministries; labour and commerce-based profit-seeking organisations as well as non-profit oriented and voluntary based non-governmental organisations [NGOs], foundations, and civil societies; users and consumers are examples of stakeholders (De Mascia, 2016).

According to Ketema, Chisholm and Enright (2017), stakeholder analysis is collecting and evaluating qualitative data to identify whose interests should be considered when establishing and/or implementing a policy or programme. Because all stakeholders are not created equal and have varying levels of power and interest, they are subjected to varied considerations. Stakeholders are divided into two categories: primary and secondary stakeholders, sometimes known as internal and external stakeholders, respectively. While primary and critical stakeholders both have a significant effect, secondary stakeholders have an interaction effect (De Mascia, 2016).

6.11.1 Municipality of Benghazi

The administrative divisions in the state have been established in Mouhafazat by Law No. 59 of 2012 as Governorates (sometimes named *Mantiqa* or region), Baladiyat (municipalities or area) and Mahallat (districts). Some municipalities may be subdivided into branches (Furu', or neighbourhoods). Only governorates and municipalities have formal and budgetary standing, and all State executive authorities must follow decentralisation laws, which the Ministry of Local Administration oversees. They will also have a representative Council chosen every four years. The municipality's *Mouhafez* (governor) and dean ('*Amid*) are elected by their local councils (UN-Habitat, 2018).

Since 2012, the governorates' councils had not been constituted, and the municipalities had been the sole local administrations in operation. In 2013, local council elections were held throughout Libya, including in Benghazi. However, following the militia coalition's capture of the city and tensions within the municipal council, the military commander of the east of Libya suspended the council in 2015 and appointed a dean (President of the Municipal Council) and his assistant. The Benghazi City Council was then accountable and responsive to the Interim Government's Ministry of Local Governance (of East Libya). Furthermore, the Libyan parliament has authorised the new government in eastern Libya as a legal administration with no ties to the national unity government in Tripoli (ibid).

Municipalities oversee providing public services within their territory. Furthermore, they grant permits for tourism and investment projects and supervise them: local civil records, local police, local markets and slaughterhouses, local roads and bridges, local business licenses, local control of environment and health, the creation and the management of small enterprises incubators (UN-Habitat, 2018).

However, most of these responsibilities and public services are still controlled by a central government or designated public businesses. No authority has yet been granted to municipalities. Furthermore, systematic procedures for municipal budgeting and accounting have yet to be implemented. Since 2011, the government has disallowed the gathering of municipal fees. Since then, no authorised construction licence has been issued, and all new construction or renovations to damaged structures completed after 2011 are considered informal. During this time, buildings grew quickly, mainly to house IDPs and returnees (ibid).

UN-Habitat (2018) reported that the municipality, civil registration, administrative, and law enforcement facilities are stated to be partially operational in the city, with easy access to public officials, according to the functionality evaluation undertaken by UN-Habitat key informants. However, these facilities were substantially damaged, and various limits on their equipment and supplies were identified. Local access to officers was considered available in all districts, and security was rated adequate.

6.11.2 Benghazi Stabilization Committee

The Committee of Benghazi Stabilization was established by the Speaker of the House of Representatives by Resolution No. 74 of 2017 after the end of the hostilities in the city of Benghazi. Its goal is to return the city's main services to how they were before the conflict, which involves projects for the maintenance and construction of roads, water networks, and public service buildings. The committee has already launched several targeted projects while many are still being implemented. As of November 2021, at least 674 projects have been contracted in Benghazi. A budget of 1,700 million Libyan dinars has been identified for all service sectors, infrastructure, and construction of buildings for the displaced at this date. Four hundred ninety-seven projects had been completed, and 65 projects were in progress. Twenty-four projects had not yet started, 21 were suspended, and 14 were cancelled as reported by Benghazi Municipality (2021). These were divided between sectors in the city in the following way:

- 102 projects for the local government sector: the contract value amounted to 956,642,451,171 Libyan dinars. The largest value amounted to 767,672,067,000 for the construction of 5,000 housing units for the displaced. The remainder of the contracts were spent on general cleaning works, pruning trees, transporting conflict remnants, car bodies, constructing, maintaining, and altering public buildings, planning roads, purchasing cars

for the municipal guard, maintaining the lighthouse, constructing a wall for a cemetery in the outskirts of Benghazi and an earthen dam for the Jardine area.

- 224 for the utility sector: the value of completed contracts is 335,710,236.772 Libyan dinars. This includes temporary paving, maintenance of road landings, extension and widening of roads, and construction of new roads with specifications for temporary works. Installing roadblocks and bumps. Implementation and maintenance of drinking water lines for some neighbourhoods and public parks in some neighbourhoods.
- 65 for the health sector, with a contract value of 104,219,029,067 Libyan dinars. These included maintaining, modifying, and developing hospitals and health centres and importing medical equipment, devices, and vehicles in addition to the demolitions of the Jumhouria Maternity Hospital, which amounted to 3,875,476.250 Libyan dinars in two weeks. Cancellation of a contract for maintenance work for one of the hospital departments began after the conflict's end, with a completion rate of 70%, with a contractual value of 3,628,915,000 Libyan dinars.
- 84 for the electricity sector. The value of these contracts amounts to 69,473,84,168 Libyan dinars. It focuses on supplying equipment, cables, lighting lamps, poles, and towers, implementing road lighting works and supplying electrical power to some facilities.
- 27 projects related to education. The value of the contracts is 56,519,721,289 Libyan dinars and relates to the maintenance and construction of schools and the supply of school supplies.
- 95 for water and sanitation: with a value of 65,270,534.24 Libyan dinars, which included maintenance and completion of sewage and rainwater networks and lines, feeding some neighbourhoods with drinking water, and digging wells for the suburbs.
- 2 projects related to environment and safety, worth 798,892.09 Libyan dinars for the maintenance of the headquarters of the National Safety Authority in Benghazi and the supply of foamy liquid.
- 8 for technical education: the value of contracts is 7,107,347.670 Libyan dinars for the maintenance of 8 technical education institutes in the city of Benghazi.
- 12 projects for the Ministry of Interior: focusing on the maintenance, modification and supply of buildings belonging to the Ministry of Interior in Benghazi. The value of the projects is 15,376,729,203 Libyan dinars.

- 1 project for the Ministry of Labour, with a value of 541,267.800 Libyan dinars. This project is for the maintenance of the Labour Office's headquarters and the rehabilitation of the workforce.
- 1 Ministry of Culture: 985,717,000 Libyan dinars for maintaining and modifying the Libya Sports Channel building.
- 3 consulting services: with a value of 6,104,114,444 Libyan dinars for the engineering supervision of only three projects.
- 2 contracts for The Ministry of Justice worth 24,491,060.50 Libyan dinars. These are for maintaining the South Benghazi Court and 23 million Libyan dinars for establishing the North Court, which was destroyed in the conflict.
- 4 The Ministry of Youth and Sports: Contracts worth 1,296,315.502 Libyan dinars to complete the construction of a volleyball hall at Al-Ahly Club, Benghazi, and maintenance works for facilities affiliated with the Ministry.

A total of 1,644,536,900.48 Libyan dinars for all these projects were implemented by the Committee for Stabilization of the City of Benghazi.

For the city centre and Sabri area, 92,929,972.35 Libyan dinars, 50 projects as follows:

- 10 municipality projects with a value of 16,362,869,012 Libyan dinars for random items that conflict with stabilization projects, some of which are outside the city centre area.
- Utility projects: The value of utility projects in the downtown area amounted to 32,866,761,385 Libyan dinars. The most notable project was to reconstruct the lake bridges destroyed by the conflict and maintenance projects for public parks outside the area.
- 2 health projects: with a value of 3,501,126,902 to build a wall for the Jumhouria Hospital after it was demolished and to maintain the Diabetes Diagnostic Centre.
- 4 electrical projects worth 1,891,126,926 related to electrical works outside the region.
 - Education projects: 8,512,703,435 for constructing one school and maintaining 6 educational facilities.
- 18 projects related to water and sanitation worth 23,408,153.797 Libyan dinars. Maintaining water and sewage networks, some outside the region.
- 1 Consultation contract worth 380,683,200 dinars. Preparation of studies, tests, technical designs, bills of quantities and executive maps necessary for maintaining the 9 bridges damaged by the civil war.

- 3 additional projects: additional projects at the cost of 6,006,547.691 Libyan dinars, maintenance works for 3 facilities, 11 projects that have not started, 12 projects in progress while 2 are suspended, and 25 completed projects.

The following conclusions were made having conducted field visits between 2021-2022 :

- It was noted that the residents felt dissatisfaction with the quality of the implementation of the road works, which the municipality engineers referred to as temporary paving works. There is no binding and clear timetable for this work.
- Moreover, allocating the city centre area budget to projects outside the target area exacerbated the old city's situation. It disrupted the city centre's revitalization processes for a long time.
- The lack of follow-up and field supervision by the municipality engineers on the projects was noticed due to many projects and the lack of supervisory staff who are not qualified for fieldwork.
- There was a lack of coordination with the intervening parties in the areas of construction and maintenance, and this was not done in a transparent way.
- There were clear and flagrant neglect of safety and protection plans for workers or residents and ambiguity about contracting methods and the value of contracts. There is no sign showing the cost of the project or the implementing agency on the site, as was the case before the 2011 revolution.
- Current projects conflict with previous ones and some projects are concentrated in areas out of legal planning. The municipality is often accused of prioritising projects serving the neighbourhoods of officials before the projects reach most of the city's neighbourhoods. The municipality argues that these are temporary paving works when faced with criticism from residents. Hundreds of kilometres of roads are implemented without infrastructures, such as rainwater or sewage drainage, on the pretext that they are temporary works. This eases bottlenecks but exacerbates illegal urban sprawl and supports private businesses.

6.11.3 Reconstruction Fund of Benghazi and Derna

The Libyan Government of National Unity (GNU) released Resolution No. 45 of 2021, which calls for creating a fund to reconstruct Benghazi and Derna (The Law Society of Libya, 2021). The foundation of a fund with legal personality and independent financial obligation is the choice mentioned in the first article. The fund is situated in Benghazi and is controlled by the Libyan cabinet. According to the second article, the fund will be financed in line with Article 8 with a sum of 1.5 billion dinars (about \$335 million).

The fund's primary objective is to rebuild and fix up areas that were destroyed by the conflict so that development goals can be met, and buildings and infrastructure can be fixed. The fund will do nine specific things. The fund would first make a list of the damage to buildings and public environments in the two cities and figure out how severe it is. It will also cooperate with local authorities, organisations, and government agencies to repair and rebuild areas that have been damaged or destroyed. It will make plans and start implementing them for rebuilding projects throughout the city.

The decision stressed the need for coordinated efforts among all working parties to address the damage. It urges business and civil society groups to contribute to restoration or rehabilitation projects for damaged structures and services. Priorities for reconstruction will be established to clear the way for creating urban and investment zones. For each section of the city, the foundations and controls for calculating compensation and the procedure for its payment must be established and presented to the GNU cabinet for approval. The projected compensation amount and potential alternatives to monetary compensation will be highlighted for cabinet approval.

Local governments and contractual executive organisations will enter contracts to carry out the repair, destruction, disposal, and coordination to develop or finish housing projects and award them as in-kind compensation. To accomplish the objectives of the sustainable development plan, the decision confirmed the re-planning and urban development of devastated regions. In line with the decision of the GNU Prime Minister, the decision suggested selecting a board of trustees for the fund. The fund will be run by an expert general manager and a deputy chosen by the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Abdulhamid Dabaiba of the Government of National Unity has authorised the Benghazi and Derna Reconstruction Fund's plan and directed that it be completed as soon as possible.

6.11.4 The Urban Observatory Benghazi

The Urban Observatory is a "Specialized Centre" in the form of a Specialized Technical Department at the heart of the municipal administration's organisational structure. This Technical Department gathers, analyses, and processes data, statistics, and information in various regions of Urban Development by the requirements of measurement, comparison, publication, retention, and acquisition of city development locations to work on improving the lives of city societies. This Technical Unit converts data into a series of measures that assist decision-makers in the field of urban development in developing policies and plans that accomplish the city's and communities' development objectives, whether they are related to urban, economic, social, or environmental development. These efforts aim to achieve global and sustainable urban development goals. The Urban Observatory is a useful tool for decision-makers, as it can track improvements or degradation in the city's circumstances on a routine basis and compare them with other cities in the same development phase or with the same number of communities. The Urban Observatory achieves this by creating indicators that can be used for comparison purposes. This centre still needs to develop and support, which requires more of a connection with all sectors in the city by law. Also, they must ensure all data is open access for researchers and other local interests. The cooperation with stakeholders and active actors will support the decision-making this centre established for it (UOB, 2023).

6.11.5 Urban Planning Agency (UPA)

The Urban Planning Agency (UPA) plays a key role in Libya's post-conflict reconstruction, particularly in cities like Benghazi. The UPA oversees land use planning, ensuring land availability for housing and regulating density to reduce development costs (UPA, 2009). It also manages building licenses, ensuring construction complies with regulations considering local geographic and climatic conditions, which are crucial for safe, resilient reconstruction.

Despite its mandate, the UPA faces challenges such as rapid urban expansion and illegal settlements. Addressing these issues will require collaboration with local authorities and international organisations to integrate informal settlements into formal urban plans (ibid).

The UPA's broader role includes fostering economic recovery by creating environments that encourage investment and entrepreneurship, vital for long-term urban development (Witter et

al., 2015). Rebuilding critical infrastructure like roads, schools, and healthcare facilities is essential for restoring normalcy and trust in the post-conflict phase (Seneviratne et al., 2015).

The UPA's role is not limited to immediate reconstruction but also includes long-term urban planning that anticipates future growth and development. The agency has been tasked with overseeing the 3rd Generation Planning Project (3rd GPP), which aims to address key challenges such as population growth, new infrastructure developments like the Great Man-made River Project, and the potential expansion of Libya's economic base through tourism, foreign investment, and public-private partnerships. The 3rd GPP replaces the outdated 2nd Generation Planning Project, with the goal of creating a modern urban planning framework that can guide Libya's long-term development (Kezeiri, 2020).

The Benghazi Metropolitan Plan, which covers the period from 2000 to 2025, was adopted by the General People's Committee in 2009. This plan focuses on sustainable urban growth and addresses the needs of a growing population while considering the development of new economic sectors. It provides a framework for future urban development that balances the demands of infrastructure, economic expansion, and environmental sustainability (Decree No. 433/2009).

In conclusion, the UPA is central to Libya's reconstruction, guiding urban recovery through comprehensive planning that integrates physical, economic, and social dimensions to build a stable and prosperous future.

Chapter 6

7 Results

7.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative results section of this research project presents the findings from a survey that was conducted to gather information about the perceptions of residents in Benghazi city regarding the post-conflict reconstruction efforts. The survey questionnaire was divided into five sections: General Questions, Relief and Conflict Damage Phase, Recovery and Stability Phase, Domestic and Foreign Actors, and Perceptions of the Reconstruction of the City.

The General Questions section aimed to collect demographic data from the respondents, such as age, housing location in Benghazi, qualification, and gender. The questions were answered according to two options for sex and four options for age groups, housing, and educational qualification.

The Relief and Conflict Damage Phase section focused on housing, residential neighbourhood, Conflict damage and infrastructure services. It aimed to assess the level of damage to residential areas and infrastructure services during the conflict and the extent to which the local authorities were able to provide relief to affected residents.

The Recovery and Stability Phase section aimed to measure the population satisfaction with the local authorities' recovery plans to restore life in the city and support the displaced and residents for stability through the 5-point Likert scale of the option Strongly agree to Disagree strongly. This section sought to assess the extent to which the recovery and stability phase plans were meeting the needs and expectations of the local population.

In the Domestic and Foreign Actors section, the survey measured local and international organizations' and actors' roles in involving the community in recovery processes, reconstruction plans, and phase priorities. This section aimed to assess the effectiveness of the involvement of local and international actors in the post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

The final section of the survey, Perceptions of the Reconstruction of the City, aimed to gather information on the overall perceptions of the respondents regarding the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Benghazi city.

Overall, the quantitative results section provides a detailed analysis of the data collected through the survey questionnaire, including the responses from the different sections of the questionnaire. The section aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the perceptions of the local population regarding the post-conflict reconstruction efforts and to identify areas where further improvement is needed.

7.1.1 Section 1: General Questions

Q1. Gender: Table 7.1 shows that 81.5% of the sample are male and 18.5% female.

Table 7.1: Questionnaire Q1 Gender.

Gender	Frequency	Per cent
Male	194	81.5
Female	44	18.5
Total	238	100.0

Q2. Age Group: Table 7.2 shows that 53.8% of the sample of ages between “20-40 years “, 42.9% from “40-65 years “, 2.5% from “More than 66 years’’, and 0.8% “under 20 years’”.

Table 7.2: Q2 Age group.

<i>Age Group</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Per cent</i>
20-40 years	128	53.8
40-65 years	102	42.9
More than 66 years	6	2.5
Under r 20 years	2	0.8
Total	238	100.0

Q3. Educational qualifications: Table 7.3 shows the Educational qualification for the sample as follows: 57.1% “Undergraduate “, 30.3% “Postgraduate’’, 10.1% “Secondary school “, and 2.5% “Primary school or less’”.

Table 7.3: Q3 Educational qualifications.

Educational qualifications	Frequency	Per cent
Undergraduate	136	57.1
Postgraduate	72	30.3
Secondary school	24	10.1
Primary school or less	6	2.5
Total	238	100.0

Q4. Residential neighbourhood or area where you live now: Table 7.4 shows that 52.5% of the sample live in A neighbourhoods or residential settlements inside the city's plan, 35.3% lives in A neighbourhoods or residential settlements outside the city's plan, and 12.2% lives in Old city of Benghazi.

Table 7.4: Q4 Residential neighbourhood.

Residential neighbourhood	Frequency	Per cent
Neighbourhoods inside the city plan (Except the old city of Benghazi, Sabri and Akharbish)	125	52.5
A neighbourhood or residential settlement outside the city's plan (e.g., Sayyida Aisha, Boudzira, Al-Sarraj, Qatar, Zamzam, Al-Hawari, Al-Safafa project, Al-Busafeh neighbourhood outside the scheme, the village, Al-Rabsh, Tariq al-Nahr, Boussanib, Bouhadi) and any new neighbourhood.	84	35.3
The old city of Benghazi, Sabri and Akharbish	29	12.2
Total	238	100.0

7.1.2 Section 2: Relief and Conflict Damage Phase

Q5. During the conflict and displacement: Table 7.5 shows that during the conflict and displacement, 40.3% of the sample did not move, 31.1% of the sample displaced to another city, 18.1% displaced to another neighbourhood in Benghazi and its environs, 8.0% displaced to another neighbourhood in Benghazi and its environs and 2.5% sought refuge in shelters such as schools.

Table 7.5: Q5 During the conflict and displacement.

During the conflict and displacement	Frequency	Per cent
I did not move	96	40.3
I displaced to another city	74	31.1
I was displaced to another neighbourhood in Benghazi and its environs	43	18.1
I displaced outside of Libya	19	8.0
I sought refuge in shelters such as schools	6	2.5
Total	238	100.0

Q6. How would you describe your staying in Benghazi after the conflict?

Table 7.6 shows the description of staying in Benghazi after the conflict as follows: 45.0% of the sample are residents and have not moved., 37.4% returned to the city, 11.3% are still displaced, 5.5% are displaced by force and cannot visit the city, and 0.8% displaced from another city to Benghazi.

Table 7.6: Q6 Describe your stay in Benghazi after the conflict.

How would you describe your staying in Benghazi after the conflict	Frequency	Per cent
I am a resident and have not moved	107	45.0
I returned to the city	89	37.4
I am still displaced	27	11.3
I am displaced by force and cannot visit the city	13	5.5
I am displaced from another city to Benghazi	2	.8
Total	238	100.0

Q7. What is the amount of damage that happened to your home due to the conflict:

Table 7.7 shows the amount of damage that happened to survey participants' homes due to the conflict, which indicated that 38.7% says No damage, 27.3% says Minor damage (windows, doors), 14.3% says Moderate damage (one wall, one room), 11.3% says massive damage (half unit destroyed), and 8.4% Completely destroyed (on the ground or falling).

Table 7.7: Q7 The amount of damage that happened to your home due to the conflict.

What is the amount of damage that happened to your home due to the conflict	Frequency	Per cent
No damages	92	38.7
Minor damage (windows, doors)	65	27.3
Moderate damage (one wall, one room)	34	14.3
Massive damage (half unit destroyed)	27	11.3
Completely destroyed (on the ground or falling)	20	8.4
Total	238	100.0

Q8. Damage to a building, park, market, or any specific place that survey participants' used to always visit before the conflict: Table 7.8 indicates the volume of damage to a building, park, market, or any specific place that they used to always visit before the conflict as follows: 38.7% Massive damage, 29.0% Completely destroyed, 15.1% Moderate damage, 8.8% No damages and 8.4% Minor damage.

Table 7.8: Q8 Damage to a building, park, market, or any specific place that you used to always visit before the conflict.

Damage to a building, park, market, or any specific place that you used to always visit before the conflict	Frequency	Per cent
Massive damage	92	38.7
Completely destroyed	69	29.0
Moderate damage	36	15.1
No damages	21	8.8
Minor damage	20	8.4
Total	238	100.0

Q9. Support or assistance survey participants received during the conflict: Table 7.9 shows the support or assistance they received during the conflict as follows: 87.8% Nothing, 4.6% “Food “, 4.6% “In-kind supplies such as blankets “, 1.7% “Financial assistance “, and 1.3% “Mental support or medical care”.

Table 7.9: Q9 Support or assistance you received during the conflict.

Support or assistance you received during the conflict	Frequency	Per cent
Nothing	209	87.8
Food	11	4.6
In-kind supplies such as blankets	11	4.6
Financial assistance	4	1.7
Mental support or medical care	3	1.3
Total	238	100.0

Q10. Receipt of in-kind support such as supplies, blankets, or medicines during the conflict period 2014 to 2017 from Table 7.10 shows the receipt of in-kind support such as supplies, blankets or medicines during the conflict period 2014 to 2017: 4.6% from charities or Libyan NGOs, 3.4% from foreign organizations or agencies, 2.5% from Municipality and government agencies, 0.8% from private sector, and 44.1% did not receive any support.

Table 7.10: Q10 Receipt of in-kind support such as supplies, blankets, or medicines during the conflict period from 2014 to 2017.

Receipt of in-kind support such as supplies, blankets, or medicines during the conflict period from 2014 to 2017 from	Frequency	Per cent
We did not need any support	106	44.5
Not received any support	105	44.1
Charities or Libyan NGOs	11	4.6
Foreign organizations or agencies	8	3.4
Municipality and government agencies	6	2.5
Private sector	2	.8
Total	238	100.0

Q11. Any of those whom the outcome of the conflict has permanently disabled: Table 7.11 shows that 66% no one of the sample has been permanently disabled by the outcome of the conflict, 21.8% one of my co-workers, 9.2% A family member, and 2.5% me.

Table 7.11: Q11 Any of those whom the outcome of the conflict has permanently disabled.

Any of those who have been permanently disabled by the outcome of the conflict	Frequency	Per cent
No one	157	66.0
One of my co-workers	52	21.8
A family member	22	9.2
Me	6	2.5
Total	238	100.0

7.1.3 Section 3: Recovery and Stability Phase

The degree of response for each item will be determined based on the five-point division (Likert scale) as follows:

From 1 to less than 1.79 represent (strongly disagree)

From 1.80 to less than 2.59 represent (disagree).

From 2.60 to less than 3.39 represent (medium)

From 3.40 to less than 4.19 represent (agree).

From 4.20 to 5 represent (strongly agree).

Table 7.12 illustrates the Recovery and Stability Phase as follows: the mean of items ranges from (1.58-3.24), and the average mean for all items = 2.23 from (5) with Wight mean = 44.6%, which is less than 60%, that means Recovery and Stability Phase was slow and most of the projects have been implemented during this phase were not achieved the needs of local people post the conflict. Moreover, we ranked the items from highest to lowest as follows:

- 1- (Maintenance of the Sidi Akhrebish lighthouse and adding improvements to it) with a mean of 3.24 and first rank.
- 2- (Reconstruction of Omar Al-Mukhtar shrine) with a mean of 3.11 and second rank.
- 3- (Work to complete the Sports City project) with a mean of 2.95 and third rank.
- 4- (Keeping banks and service institutions outside of the city centre) with a mean of 2.84 and fourth rank.
- 5- (New commercial urban agglomerations) with a mean of 2.74 and fifth rank.
- 6- (Maintenance projects for gardens and green spaces in Benghazi) with a mean of 2.69 and sixth rank.
- 7- (Maintenance and revival of the vegetable market) with a mean of 2.63 and seventh rank.
- 8- (Adding the ship's figures at the roundabout of Sidi Akhrebish and the El-Gomhouria Hospital on the sea road) with a mean of 2.60 and eighth rank.
- 9- (Temporary paving and road maintenance projects) with a mean of 2.22 and ninth rank.
- 10- (Provide for the requirements of the disabled, the elderly and the sick "the so-called 'access for all' in the stabilization phase projects) with a mean of 2.01 and tenth rank.
- 11- (Consulting and surveying citizens' opinions on the needs and priorities of the projects to be implemented) with a mean of 2.00 and 11th rank.
- 12- (The implemented and ongoing projects respond to the needs of the population at this stage and are a priority) with a mean of 1.99 and 12th rank.
- 13- (Government projects adopt an approach that supports reconciliation and promotes equality) with a mean of 1.84 and 13th rank.
- 14- (Completely demolishing Al-Gomhoria Hospital) with a mean of 1.77 and 14th rank.
- 15- (The speed of government agencies to remove destroyed buildings and rubble from the city) with a mean of 1.76 and 15th rank.

- 16- (Efforts of the Municipal Council and the Interim Government to restore life and activity in the city) with a mean of 1.76 and 15th rank.
- 17- (Transparency in stabilization phase projects) with a mean of 1.68 and 16th rank
- 18- (Create a sculpture of the whale) with a mean of 1.59 and 17th rank.
- 19- (Efforts by successive central governments to restore life in the city) with a mean of 1.59 and 18th rank
- 20- (The sculpture of the whale is related to the originality and the local cultural heritage) with a mean of **1.58** and **18th** rank

Table 7.12: The mean responses of items range of Recovery and Stability Phase.

No	Statement	Statistics	Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Mean	rank	responses
12	The speed of government agencies to remove destroyed buildings and rubble from the city	F	159	31	16	11	21	1.76	15	Very dissatisfied
		%	66.8	13.0	6.7	4.6	8.8			
13	Reconstruction of Omar Al-Mukhtar shrine	F	61	28	41	39	69	3.11	2	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
		%	25.6	11.8	17.2	16.4	29.0			
14	Maintenance of the Sidi Akhrebish lighthouse and adding improvements to it	F	49	29	50	36	74	3.24	1	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
		%	20.6	12.2	21.0	15.1	31.1			

15	Create a sculpture of the whale	F	179	12	26	8	13	1.59	18	Very dissatisfied
		%	75.2	5.0	10.9	3.4	5.5			
16	The sculpture of the whale is related to the originality and the local cultural heritage	F	180	13	24	7	14	1.58	18	Very dissatisfied
		%	75.6	5.5	10.1	2.9	5.9			
17	Adding the ship's figures at the roundabout of Sidi Akhrebish and the El-Gomhouria Hospital on the Sea road	F	90	24	50	39	35	2.60	8	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
		%	37.8	10.1	21.0	16.4	14.7			
18	Maintenance projects for gardens and green spaces in Benghazi	F	72	48	43	32	43	2.69	6	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
		%	30.3	20.2	18.1	13.4	18.1			
19	Temporary paving and road maintenance projects	F	108	44	36	25	25	2.22	9	Dissatisfied
		%	45.4	18.5	15.1	10.5	10.5			
20	Maintenance and revival of the vegetable market	F	76	48	46	24	44	2.63	7	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
		%	31.9	20.2	19.3	10.1	18.5			
21	New commercial urban agglomerations	F	81	37	38	28	54	2.74	5	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
		%	34.0	15.5	16.0	11.8	22.7			

22	Work to complete the Sports City project	F	85	19	32	28	74	2.95	3	Neither satisfied nor
		%	35.7	8.0	13.4	11.8	31.1			
23	Completely demolishing Al-Gomhoria Hospital	F	165	18	22	10	23	1.77	14	Very dissatisfied
		%	69.3	7.6	9.2	4.2	9.7			
24	Keeping banks and service institutions outside of the city centre	F	83	27	35	31	62	2.84	4	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
		%	34.9	11.3	14.7	13.0	26.1			
25	Provide for the requirements of the disabled, the elderly and the sick “the so-called ‘access for all’ in the stabilization phase projects	F	133	41	25	10	29	2.01	10	Dissatisfied
		%	55.9	17.2	10.5	4.2	12.2			
26	The implemented and ongoing projects respond to the needs of the population at this stage and are a priority	F	121	56	26	13	22	1.99	12	Dissatisfied
		%	50.8	23.5	10.9	5.5	9.2			
27	Transparency in stabilization phase projects	F	161	30	25	5	17	1.68	16	Very dissatisfied
		%	67.6	12.6	10.5	2.1	7.1			
28		F	140	45	33	9	11	1.76	15	Very dissati

	Efforts of the Municipal Council and the Interim Government to restore life and activity in the city	%	58.8	18.9	13.9	3.8	4.6			
29	Government projects adopt an approach that supports reconciliation and promotes equality	F	143	34	34	10	17	1.84	13	Dissatisfied
		%	60.1	14.3	14.3	4.2	7.1			
30	Efforts by successive central governments to restore life in the city	F	163	39	19	5	12	1.59	17	Very dissatisfied
		%	68.5	16.4	8.0	2.1	5.0			
31	Consulting and surveying citizens' opinions on the needs and priorities of the projects to be implemented	F	134	34	32	12	26	2.00	11	Dissatisfied
		%	56.3	14.3	13.4	5.0	10.9			
	All statements	F	2383	657	653	382	685	2.23		Dissatisfied
		%	50.1%	13.8%	13.7%	8.0%	14.4%			

7.1.4 Section 4: Domestic and Foreign Actors

Q32. Provided support such as food, blankets, or medicines after the end of the conflict (Table 7.13): that they did not receive any support 44.1%, 46.6% did not need any support, 4.2% Charities or Libyan NGOs, 3.4% Foreign organizations or agencies, 1.3% Municipality and government agencies, and 0.4% Private sector.

Table 7.13: Q32 Provided support such as food, blankets, or medicines after the end of the conflict.

Provided support such as food, blankets, or medicines after the end of the conflict	Frequency	Per cent
We didn't need any support	111	46.6
I did not receive any support	105	44.1
Charities or Libyan NGOs	10	4.2
Foreign organizations or agencies	8	3.4
Municipality and government agencies	3	1.3
Private sector	1	0.4
Total	238	100.0

Q33. Supported you with a maintenance or rebuilding operation or provided you with materials for construction or maintenance (Table 7.14) as follows: 54.6% not receive any support, 42.9% did not need any support, 1.7% Private sector, 0.4% Charities or Libyan NGOs, 0.4% Municipality and government agencies.

Table 7.14: Q33 Supported you with a maintenance or rebuilding operation or provided you with materials for construction or maintenance.

Supported you with a maintenance or rebuilding operation or provided you with materials for construction or maintenance	Frequency	Per cent
I did not receive any support	130	54.6
We didn't need any support	102	42.9
Private sector	4	1.7
Charities or Libyan NGOs	1	0.4
Municipality and government agencies	1	0.4
Foreign organizations or agencies	0	0.0
Total	238	100.0

Q34. Support you financially, such as paying your rent: Table 7.15 shows the financial support such as paying rent as follows: 52.1% did not receive any support, 44.5% did not need any support, 1.3 % Charities or Libyan NGOs, 0.8% Municipality and government agencies, 0.8% Foreign organizations or agencies, 0.4% Private sector.

Table 7.15: Q34 Support you financially, such as paying your rent.

Support you financially, such as paying your rent	Frequency	Per cent
I did not receive any support	124	52.1
We didn't need any support	106	44.5
Charities or Libyan NGOs	3	1.3
Municipality and government agencies	2	0.8
Foreign organizations or agencies	2	0.8
Private sector	1	0.4
Total	238	100.0

Q35. Provided you or a family member with mental or moral support after the conflict (Table 7.16) as follows: 60.1% I did not receive any support, 36.6% did not need any support, 1.7% Foreign organizations or agencies, 0.8% Municipality and government agencies, 0.4% Charities or Libyan NGOs, and 0.4% Private sector.

Table 7.16: Q35 Provided you or a family member with mental or moral support after the conflict.

Provided you or a family member with mental or moral support after the conflict	Frequency	Per cent
I did not receive any support	143	60.1
We did not need any support	87	36.6
Foreign organizations or agencies	4	1.7
Municipality and government agencies	2	0.8
Charities or Libyan NGOs	1	0.4
Private sector	1	0.4

Total	238	100.0
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Q36. Table 7.17 indicates the construction, development and maintenance projects currently underway that consult the opinion of the sample as follows: 71.0% not receive any support, 24.8% did not need any support, 1.7% Private sector, 0.8% Charities or Libyan NGOs, 0.8% Municipality and government agencies, and 0.8% Foreign organizations or agencies.

Table 7.17: Q36 Consult or have your opinion on construction, development and maintenance projects currently underway.

Consult or have your opinion on construction, development and maintenance projects currently underway	Frequency	Per cent
I did not receive any support	169	71.0
Local community	59	24.8
Private sector	4	1.7
Charities or Libyan NGOs	2	0.8
Municipality and government agencies	2	0.8
Foreign organizations or agencies	2	0.8
Total	238	100.0

7.1.5 Section 5: Perceptions of the Reconstruction of the City

Table 7.18 shows the Perceptions of the Reconstruction of the City, and the results illustrated that the items mean range is between (2.10 - 4.55) and the average mean for all items is 3.82 from (5) with a weight mean of 76.4%. That means the Perceptions of the Reconstruction of the City are large. The ranked items from highest to lowest according to the mean of items as follows:

- 1- (Supporting manifestations of reconciliation and tolerance in open spaces such as squares and gardens) with a mean of 4.55 and first rank.
- 2- (Completion of suspended projects since 2011, followed by reconstruction) with a mean of 4.44 and second rank.
- 3- (Cash compensation to the affected residents to rebuild their properties) with a mean of 4.40 and third rank.
- 4- (Reconstruction of the city centre with its development into a commercial area attractive to foreign investments) with a mean of 4.32 and fourth rank.
- 5- (Remove all kinds, shapes and effects of conflict from city landmarks) with a mean of 4.19 and fifth rank.
- 6- (For government agencies to engage the population and inform them about the upcoming reconstruction plans) with a mean of 4.12 and sixth rank.
- 7- (Not to build any shrines or to name streets, statues or squares with any references to the Libyan civil wars during the country's previous transitional stages) with a mean of 4.02 and seventh rank.
- 8- (Reconstruction of the city centre and moving public service buildings to other areas beyond the city centre and renovating the old city, preserving its traditional style without bundling high towers and odd buildings) with mean 4.00 and eighth rank.
- 9- (Removing streets and devastated areas from the city centre and completely re-planning them in another way) with a mean of 3.95 and ninth rank.
- 10- (Restoration of old buildings in the city damaged centre) with a mean of 3.92 and 10th rank.
- 11- (Rebuilding and restoring old markets, alleys and spaces) with a mean of 3.80 and 11th rank.
- 12- (Rebuilding the destroyed buildings to their pre- conflict status) with a mean of 3.67 and 12th rank.
- 13- (Confiscating the damaged properties and compensating its owners to introduce new development) with a mean of 3.56 and 13th rank.
- 14- (Removing all types and features of conflict while preserving certain buildings as reminders of the tragedies of civil wars) with a mean of 3.23 and 14th rank.
- 15- (Removing popular markets such as the Al Jared market and vegetable market and introducing modern shopping centres) with a mean of 2.86 and 15th rank.
- 16- (Build shrines or statues that commemorate victory in the conflict) with a mean of 2.10 and 16th rank.

Table 7.18: The mean responses of items range for Perceptions of The Reconstruction of The City.

No.	Statement		Very dissatisfied	Dissatisfied	Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied	Mean	rank	responses
37	Remove all kinds, shapes, and effects of conflict from city landmarks	F	27	6	21	24	160	4.19	5	satisfied
		%	11.3	2.5	8.8	10.1	67.2			
38	Removing all types and features of conflict while preserving certain buildings as reminders of the tragedies of civil wars	F	73	20	18	33	94	3.23	14	Neither
		%	30.7	8.4	7.6	13.9	39.5			
39	Removing streets and devastated areas from the city centre and completely re-planning them in another way	F	41	10	15	25	147	3.95	9	satisfied
		%	17.2	4.2	6.3	10.5	61.8			
40	Rebuilding the destroyed buildings to their pre- conflict status	F	46	17	26	29	120	3.67	12	satisfied
		%	19.3	7.1	10.9	12.2	50.4			

41	Restoration of old damaged buildings in the city centre	F	35	14	21	33	135	3.92	10	satisfied
		%	14.7	5.9	8.8	13.9	56.7			
42	Reconstruction of the city centre with its development into a commercial area attractive to foreign investments	F	19	6	14	39	160	4.32	4	Very satisfied
		%	8.0	2.5	5.9	16.4	67.2			
43	Confiscating the damaged properties and compensating its owners in order to introduce new development	F	43	20	44	23	108	3.56	13	Neither
		%	18.1	8.4	18.5	9.7	45.4			
44	Reconstruction of the city centre and moving public service buildings to other areas beyond the city centre, and renovating the old city to preserve its traditional style without budling high towers and odd buildings	F	28	16	23	33	138	4.00	8	satisfied
		%	11.8	6.7	9.7	13.9	58.0			
45	Rebuilding and restoring old markets, alleys and spaces	F	37	19	22	36	124	3.80	11	satisfied
		%	15.5	8.0	9.2	15.1	52.1			

46	Removing popular markets such as the Al Jared market and vegetable market and introducing modern shopping centres	F	87	34	21	17	79	2.86	15	Neither
		%	36.6	14.3	8.8	7.1	33.2			
47	Not to build any shrines or to name streets, statues, or squares with any references to the Libyan civil wars during the country's previous transitional stages	F	32	16	16	25	149	4.02	7	satisfied
		%	13.4	6.7	6.7	10.5	62.6			
48	Build shrines or statues that commemorate victory in the conflict	F	140	20	26	18	34	2.10	16	Neither
		%	58.8	8.4	10.9	7.6	14.3			
49	Completion of suspended projects since 2011, followed by reconstruction	F	14	9	13	24	178	4.44	2	Very satisfied
		%	5.9	3.8	5.5	10.1	74.8			
50	Cash compensation to the affected residents to rebuild their properties	F	15	4	17	36	166	4.40	3	Very satisfied
		%	6.3	1.7	7.1	15.1	69.7			
51	Supporting manifestations of	F	8	4	15	34	177	4.55	1	Very satisfied

	reconciliation and tolerance in open spaces such as squares and gardens	%	3.4	1.7	6.3	14.3	74.4			
52	For government agencies to engage the population and inform them about the upcoming reconstruction plans	F	27	9	23	29	150	4.12	6	satisfied
		%	11.3	3.8	9.7	12.2	63.0			
	All statements	F	672	224	335	458	2119	3.82		satisfied
		%	17.6%	5.9%	8.8%	12.0%	55.6%			

7.2 Qualitative Results

In this section, the focus shifts to the qualitative results of the study. The qualitative phase aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced during the recovery phase and achieving sustainable urban development goals in Benghazi after several years of armed conflict. The qualitative questions were designed to complement and interpret the findings from the quantitative data collected in the survey.

To accomplish this, the study employed an explanatory sequential design, which involved collecting and analysing quantitative data first, followed by collecting, interpreting, and analysing qualitative data. The aim was to use qualitative data, such as interviews, to provide a better understanding of the results obtained from the questionnaire.

The qualitative phase aimed to answer the main research questions, which include the effects of the civil war in 2014-2017 on residents and the urban environment in Benghazi, the extent to which actors have contributed to the recovery and re-stabilization phase in Benghazi post-

conflict, and the perceptions of Benghazi's residents regarding the reconstruction of urban areas based on their views and international experiences.

To ensure data saturation, a semi-structured interview approach was adopted to collect data that could answer the research questions. Data coding and analysis were done thematically to identify key themes and sub-themes that emerged from the interviews. The interviews were conducted with a group of participants, and the use of the saturation approach in the interviews ensured that the data collected were sufficient and comprehensive to answer the research questions. The following sections present the key themes and sub-themes that emerged from the qualitative data analysis.

7.2.1 Phase 1: Relief and Conflict Damage Phase

7.2.1.1 Effects of Conflict on the City's Population and Urban Environment

In this chapter section, the qualitative questions focused on the relief phase in Benghazi, alongside the assessment of conflict damage. All the participants referred to the difficulties of the conditions they were experiencing because of the conflict the destruction of most of the historical areas and residential neighbourhoods that had witnessed sieges, clashes or battles. Due to the fighting taking place over a period of three years, several neighbourhoods on the city's outskirts had been subject to an intense siege before the conflict expanded to areas within the city centre. Six participants talked of being displaced from their homes because of the conflict, with one considering himself forcibly displaced due to his political disagreements with the ruling and controlling authorities in the region.

The study demonstrated that the times and directions of displacement tended to differ. Participants 1 and 2 fled to safer neighbourhoods within the city, far from the areas of armed conflict. Participant 1 stated:

“My family was displaced from the Bouatni area due to the severity of the siege conditions, and it is becoming an area of the city where there were clashes. Despite that, we did not escape the fall of indiscriminate shells and bullets flying from several directions.”

This caused many deaths and injuries recorded over a wide area outside the city and its centre.

Some of the families fled to schools and public buildings, which thus became temporary asylum centres, while others preferred to seek refuge in neighbouring cities, which they considered

being safe, or in locations far from any urban centre. The majority of the displaced stayed for a period with family or friends. Participants 3 and 6 stated that they lived with their relatives until, once it became clear the conflict would last for some time, they could complete the construction of simple and cheap housing for their families on the outskirts of Benghazi. These participants also indicated that the creation of this accommodation took up much of their savings, which had already been depleted due to paying rent over a long period, as the uncertainty became apparent. No one could be certain when the conflict would end.

In addition, the participants unanimously agreed on the severity of the damage inflicted on all neighbourhoods within the city because of the intensity of the fighting, which included the shooting down of more than three warplanes. Even after the fighting had ceased, the impact and remnants of conflict still led to death and severe injuries among civilians, particularly children, largely due to the booby traps left in homes, farms, and streets. Half of the participants revealed that they had at least one co-worker who had been permanently disabled because of the conflict, while a quarter of the participants had lost a family member or their home. The results of the interviews also indicated that all the participants had gone through most of their savings, largely due to being forced to rent temporary accommodation, as well as the worsening economic situation.

The participants discussed the high cost of living and the high prices of goods, vegetables and fruits due to the conflict, which had led to the closure of the Western outlets previously operating in the city. This contributed to the disruption of external supplies (due to the length of available routes) and the many food projects and farms that feed the city.

7.2.1.2 Consequences of the Conflict on Government Structures and Public Utilities

Many government structures and utilities were severely damaged in Benghazi during the conflict, while all public services ceased to perform their functions. In addition, two police stations in the city were blown up, the Benghazi Security Directorate and Special Forces camp were destroyed, as well as some bridges across the lakes in Al Lithama area. This was undertaken by the militia coalition, backed by the National Congress and the central government in Tripoli in 2014, aimed at the military forces supported by the elected parliament and the interim government that had moved to Eastern Libya.

Furthermore, the destruction of many hospitals and health facilities within the conflict zone led to paralysis in the health sector, as well as hospitals being prevented from undertaking emergency services and urgent operations for the injured. The participants highlighted the deterioration in the physical and psychological health of the city's residents, as they lived with the constant noise of shelling, as well as their fear for sons involved in the conflict, and daily news containing large numbers of deaths, including of children. This resulted in severe psychological pressure due to grief and continuous pain, and an inability to see an end to the conflict. One of the participants noted the deterioration in the health of his father, who was a diabetic and had suffered from fluctuations in his condition throughout that period.

All the participants referred to the destruction of, or significant damage to, their business premises, forcing many private, public, and service sectors to move outside the focus of the conflict and the siege. They also referred to the disruption of all service centres, which were based in the city centre area, as well as the only port and airport, in both sides' attempts to control this major hub. According to the participants, the conflict disrupted the largest maternity hospital in the city, along with health centres and educational and service institutions, as well as prevented most from visiting popular shopping areas. Participant 4 stated that the conflict had damaged the area's social fabric: "The conflict destroyed our homes and savings and damaged the social fabric of the city." In addition, Participant 2 described the conflict as:

"A regional and political conflict over who should control the city of Benghazi, in which the elected parliament was to settle, and therefore the militias controlling Tripoli and the government, with the support of the armed militia coalition in Benghazi, fought against the remnants of the former Libyan army, to ensure their continued control over the parliament and the new government".

While the remainder of the participants agreed that the conflict constituted a power struggle, made under several different pretexts (including that each party represented countries fighting on its behalf), and they felt regret at what had taken place. The participants from the areas of the old city and the city centre also referred to the damage and demolition of historical buildings, which they described as reflecting the history and past of Benghazi.

7.2.1.3 Return of the Displaced

Some of the participants who had returned from their area of displacement to their former residences indicated that they faced several difficulties, particularly as their return was gradual and to areas in which the fighting had ceased, and so they relied on permission from the military forces. Some participants reported deaths taking place because of the bombing of citizens' homes by the militia alliance. The participants from the areas outside the city, particularly the eastern and north-eastern parts (i.e., the neighbourhoods of Benina and Bouatni and the Al-Laithi neighbourhood), returned after the end of the fighting within their areas, which they stated had lasted for more than two and a half years. They found their homes and properties damaged, ranging from light damage to complete destruction. They also claimed that none had received assistance from local or international bodies for any necessary repair or reconstruction work. Everyone had registered with the records of the displaced with the municipality, and those whose homes were damaged were also registered in the inventory lists for compensation. However, five years after the end of the conflict, none had received any dirhams in compensation.

7.2.1.4 Housing for the Displaced

Those whose homes had been damaged by the conflict held several different views according to several factors, including firstly, the value of the damage; secondly, the location of the house; and thirdly the conditions they had experienced during the conflict.

Most of the displaced expressed resentment at the state's failure to fulfil its duty to end their own suffering, as well as that of their families, due to the destruction of their homes during the conflict. Furthermore, they noted their dissatisfaction with state solutions they viewed as ill-considered and random. One example was Participant 9, who spoke of his desire to obtain material compensation for the destruction of his residence, to enable him to carry out the maintenance himself, due to his lack of confidence in the approach undertaken by the state. In addition, a further participant, whose house had been completely demolished, spoke of the importance of obtaining financial compensation. One of the participants' concerns was that any maintenance work undertaken by the state might be exposed to significant disruption due to the current circumstances or that it would not be carried out in the required manner. On the

other hand, Participant 1 considered that any restoration work was the state's responsibility, which must therefore carry out the reconstruction of his home before he and his family returned.

In response to the question posed regarding the alternative homes the state had built to compensate the displaced, Participant 4 stated that these were located at a considerable distance from the city centre, and the environment differed from the vibrancy to which they were accustomed and where they wished to continue living. The ten participants considered alternative projects to be implemented randomly and deplored the failure to consult with them or offer options. In addition, Participant 4 said he did not wish to replace his old house, which was linked to all his childhood memories and friends. He argued that he was determined that his attachment to the place, its streets and all its details would not be removed.

On the other hand, most of the participants strongly opposed the construction of apartments on the outskirts of Benghazi in one of the residential neighbourhoods. Describing it as lacking in consideration, Participant 8 argued:

“How does this municipality think and move a resident of the old city to live in one of the remote suburbs that is incompatible with the nature of his life?”

Participant 3 added:

“I visited the project targeted for housing the displaced, it is very far from the city and in a semi-desert area, with environmental and social conditions that do not suit us, and the design is hideous and overcrowded.”

However, Participant 5 considered these alternative homes to offer a good solution that would enable him to escape the burden of rental payments and enjoy some stability with his family. On the other hand, he stressed the weaknesses in the designs of the alternative homes, including their insufficient size, despite being in special areas. In addition, he shared with Participant 2 the view that the state could benefit from using existing projects, such as the Ganfouda site, which is closer and more appropriate in terms of location and design, and therefore suitable for their needs, and so more attractive to the displaced.

7.2.1.5 Property Claims

The participants pointed out the problems concerning the ownership of buildings, apartments and land inside the city. Furthermore, many were victims of the socialist regime, which had expropriated their ownership and handed their homes over to others as part of the justice and equality plans advocated during the reign of the late Leader Muammar Gaddafi. While participants 6 and 9 stated that their apartments had been legally allocated to them by the state, including documents of ownership, they felt they were guilty of harming the original owners. In addition, Participant 10 said that he had bought his house from a third party after the original owner was expropriated because of the socialist laws.

Moreover, many of the buildings that had been expropriated were also damaged, but the local authorities were afraid to remove the rubble because the owners of such buildings and apartments opposed their removal, as this could allow the original owner to claim the land on which they were built. Some are considered that they were third or fourth buyers of the property. A further difficulty was posed by some of the ruined apartments belonging to a party to the conflict who was unable to return, and the local authorities had no suggestions as to how to protect or return their property, particularly as some homes owned by the forcibly displaced were occupied by others who belonged to, or supported, the military forces.

While the properties of the victims' families, or the displaced of the defeated coalition of armed militias, remained subject to the occupation of the families or guardians of the victims of the military forces, some were allocated earlier to the displaced. The rest of the participants refrained from answering, as this is one of the sensitive issues arising because of the Libyan civil war in Benghazi.

7.2.1.6 Compensation

The displaced held varying opinions concerning appropriate solutions for compensating and ending the suffering of families, whose homes had been partially or completely destroyed and which had forced them to leave.

Participant 1 demanded that the state provide financial compensation after destroying his house. He said that he could provide a residential plot with a house for his family during the

period of displacement, and he needed financial compensation until he developed his new home, in which he had secured comfort and stability away from the destroyed city centre. Participant 3 also stressed the need for monetary compensation after his house had been partially destroyed, stating that he wished to repair his home in his own way, particularly as, given the country's conditions in the current situation, he did not trust any schedule the municipality might set. He further noted that both his house, and that of his neighbours, had endured only a minor damage of the conflict, and required only partial restoration, and the area could return to the way it had been before, as its streets were still in good condition and open for business.

Participants 7 and 8, by contrast, expressed their dissatisfaction with the state's reluctance to assume responsibility towards the displaced, and considered that maintenance and restoration was the responsibility of the municipality, which should start restoring homes as soon as possible to enable families to return. One participant noted that he had no wish to compromise when it came to being able to live in his home and his street, as they held all his childhood memories and represented part of his pride in his origin.

Nevertheless, some families were in urgent need of housing, due to being unable to continue to afford to pay rent. Participant 2 expressed his dissatisfaction with the houses offered by the municipality as a solution to the crisis, noting that they were unsuitable, and that the municipality should have consulted them, adding that the designs were unfashionable and in remote and non-vital areas, differing in nature from the centre in which they had been raised. Many of the participants expressed their concerns at being unable to adapt to living in these areas, due to their remoteness and lack of facilities. Participant 3 expressed his fear of his damaged house being confiscated if he agreed to receive one of the alternative houses, referring to Law No. 4 (1978), which could return the ownership of the land on which his house was built to the original owners, whose land had been forcibly removed during the country's socialist era.

7.2.2 Phase 2: Recovery and Stability

7.2.2.1 Removing the Effects of Destruction

The post-conflict phase is also known as the recovery phase. However, the participants of this study pointed out the mismanagement of this phase by both governmental and legislative authorities. They said that neither the municipality in Benghazi nor the interim government in Eastern Libya, could deal with the situation, despite promising large amounts of money to resolve the crisis.

Following the ending of the siege (which lasted for three years) had left demolished concrete blocks and destruction in all the historical places of the city, the residents themselves began to deal with the destruction. After the remnants of the militia alliance had fled the city centre, and with the help of some of the militias loyal to the military forces, the residents removed the remains of collapsed buildings, as well as cars and tanks, weapons and projectiles. The participants in this study commented on the weak response of the authorities responsible for the rapid removal of rubble and remnants of conflict. Participants 1, 3, 4 and 5 stated that all traces of the conflict needed to be removed from the city because of the environmental damage, as well as being a danger to health, attracting rodents and other animals.

Participants 5 and 4 said that the ruined buildings continued to remain a source of danger to passers-by, and for those who had returned to their damaged homes, despite the lack of maintenance, due to their inability to afford rental costs elsewhere. Participant 9 referred to the issue related to disputes and ownership claims for damaged and dilapidated buildings, noting:

“Some buildings in the old city and other neighbourhoods have been in dispute since the socialist era of the nineteen seventies, when the authorities’ allocated homes to other citizens under the pretext of social justice.”

7.2.2.2 City Revitalisation Through Collective Memory

The participants also discussed the stabilisation projects implemented by the municipality through its Projects Office. They referred to the construction of the tomb of Omar al-Mukhtar (Fig. 7-1), which the interim government had funded at the cost of one million six hundred thousand Libyan dinars.



Figure 7-1: The tomb of Omar Mukhtar, Benghazi, 2 May 2022.

Participants 1, 3, 4 and 9 agreed that rebuilding the tomb of Omar al-Mukhtar positively impacted the city's revival and the restoration of its historical symbolism. This was due to Mujahid Omar al-Mukhtar representing a symbol for all Libyans, following his resistance to Italian occupiers and his execution by hanging in 1931 when he was seventy years old.

The participants noted that this location symbolises all Libyans and promotes national unity and has been a customary gathering place on national and religious holidays and occasions. Recently, it has been used by political parties seeking to ensure their popularity by pretending to be visiting the site or exploiting spontaneous and religious gatherings. However, the remainder of the participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the reconstruction, including the use of such large sums of money. Behind the shrine stands a 'Halal Building' building, which was damaged in the clashes and housed fifty displaced families. As noted by Participant 8, their condition has not yet been considered:

“Since the outbreak of the conflict, I have been displaced. And my neighbours from the building since the end of 2014 until now, (the beginning of 2022), we have not received any compensation or even maintenance for the building, but the local authorities have spent money on buildings that do not provide any service to the citizen.”

The participants also held similar views concerning the repair of the Benghazi lighthouse (which is seen as a symbol of the city), while those who remain displaced or whose homes have been severely damaged failed to receive any compensation or any sign of interest from the local authorities. They therefore objected to the maintenance of the lighthouse, describing it as a luxury that reflected a lack of consideration of the priorities of reconstruction.



Figure 7-2: Benghazi lighthouse (Sidee Khribish) 26 April 2022.

In addition, Participant 10 described the maintenance as a distortion of the appearance of the lighthouse before the conflict, as the method of restoration and improvements had made it lose its originality, an aspect that should have been preserved. In addition, adding stairs to a historical site attached to the lighthouse was seen as a distortion of the area. They resented the fact that this allowed the lighthouse to become a centre for activities and celebrations, while most of the residents of the Al-Manara area of the old city (known as Khribish) remained displaced due to the severe damage to their homes.

7.2.3 Actors in the Recovery and Stability Phase

All the participants criticised the whale statue (landmark of the fish), created through the United Nations Development Programme in cooperation with the Historic Cities Authority in Benghazi and the Office of Municipal Projects. One said:

“This statue does not reward the city of Benghazi, which offered sacrifices for the sake of all of Libya. It is a terrible artwork.”

Many criticised this work on social media, while the municipality offering those interested in submitting any suggestions said that it had yet to receive any proposal.

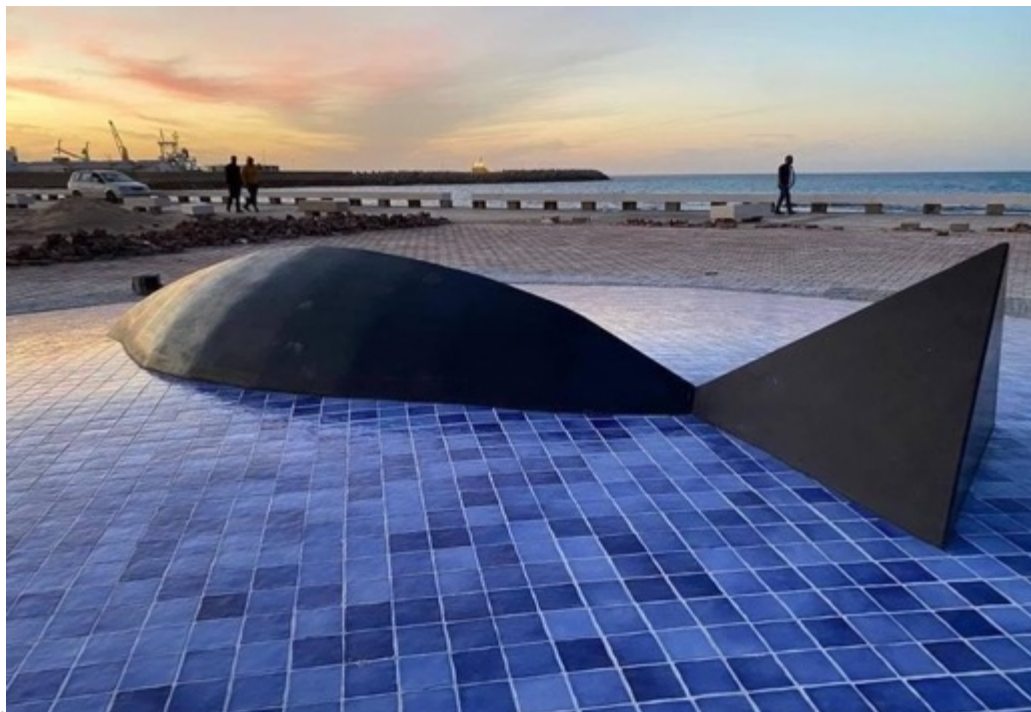


Figure 7-3: The fish landmark, Jan 2021.

Some pointed out that the statue had nothing to do with the city's urban heritage and is not symbolic of the whale market in the old city, which corresponds to its location. When the participants were asked about the landmarks added to Corniche Road, they all expressed that the municipality's choices were insufficient and inconsistent with the urban environment and cultural heritage of the city and its population. At the same time, they all expressed satisfaction with the restoration of the central vegetable market and the municipal hotel. However, they

pointed out the continued presence of rubble and the lack of revival of the old city area in which the vegetable market is located. They also criticised the failure to resume transportation services for passengers from neighbourhoods to the city centre due to the continuation of the deteriorating situation and the failure to commence any reconstruction work to revitalise the area.

The participants emphasised that they were not consulted during any stage. Participant 4 said that foreign organisations made no contribution to the revival of mosques or their maintenance, because they were hostile to Islam and from non-Muslim countries and did not recognise that these formed the backbone of neighbourhoods in Benghazi and so were vital for their revival.

7.2.3.1 Demolition Authority for Reconstruction

The participants were surveyed to establish their views on the demolition of the Al-Jumhuriya Hospital, the prominent and oldest women's and maternity hospital in eastern Libya, which had been undertaken by the authorities, as represented by the interim government and the municipality of Benghazi. To date, no attempt has been made to commence its reconstruction. Participant No 9 stated:

“The hospital was built more than sixty years ago. Most of its buildings are considered irreplaceable. The decision to demolish it was incorrect because the building did not need to be demolished, but it could have been repaired and developed”.

The participants referred to the inappropriate decisions made by the interim government and the authorities in eastern Libya. In addition, Participant 1 considered that the government had benefited from demolition, as this involved fewer costs than construction. This therefore motivated official to hire companies to demolish dilapidated buildings, in particular public infrastructure, without developing solutions for restoration and modernisation.

7.2.3.2 Development Priorities During the Stability Phase

When asked about the projects for maintaining parks and green spaces in the city, Participant 3 said:

“Re-maintenance of public parks is to restore life to green areas within the city, and it has contributed to the visual comfort of the residents and refreshed the air.”

On the other hand, participants 1, 2 and 6 criticised the extravagance of maintaining public parks while hundreds of displaced families had not yet received any compensation, and their homes had not been repaired. Participant 2 said:

“I still suffer with my family the hardship of being displaced in the outskirts of the city. Every time I enter the city to inspect the rubble of my house in the city centre, I feel angry and sad when I see the government's waste of money on green spaces while we remain displaced and impacted by the conflict. This indicates that local officials are working against the residents of the city, or that they are not from Benghazi.”

Participant 9 considered that the municipality should award priority to the restoration of infrastructure. The participants were divided in their views concerning the importance of road projects. Participant 1 pointed out that:

“The maintenance and modernisation of roads contributed to resolving the congestion crisis inside the city”.

By contrast, Participant 8 said:

“The quality of the implementation is very poor, with the municipality skilled in contracts that generate money for itself and its clients, even if these projects are not feasible at this stage.” However, the remainder of the participants believed that, while the roads contributed to easing some congestion, without the creation of infrastructure (i.e., that dealing with sewage and rainwater), they would soon be destroyed, as demonstrated by those that had collapsed during the winter months.

Although some maintenance of the double fourth and fifth ring roads has been implemented to address the current transportation crisis, most road projects tend to aim primarily at benefiting

the city's elite. Participant 10 indicated that most new and repaired roads were outside the city, focused on members of the wealthy elite of the government and the municipality. Consequently, most of the participants agreed that the projects of the Stabilisation Committee for the city of Benghazi have failed to meet citizens' needs and are not considered a priority. The participants were surprised by the lack of architectural designs for public and private sectors, including those addressing the needs of the disabled, especially as the conflict had caused a significant increase in the number of disabled people, i.e., young people. Most government buildings still lack stairs and elevators that help the disabled to move around.

7.2.3.3 Modern Commercial and Residential Development is Growing.

The participants felt the modern commercial buildings and residential neighbourhoods of different classes had been created to compensate for the lack of amenities due to the damage done to the city centre, which had previously contained all the famous markets and large shopping stores. Participant 3 said:

“The new commercial gatherings are a product of money laundering, financial corruption, conflict money, arms and drug trade.”

Moreover, Participant 6 added:

“The municipality contributed quickly to paving roads, delivering services to them, lighting and electricity, while the old city and its destroyed neighbourhoods bear witness to the conflict period.”

In addition, the participants noted the class and demographic shift in the new residential neighbourhoods, as some were built on the displaced and economic roads during the conflict, mainly in the Sidi Khalifa area. Moreover, most of the neighbourhoods in the west of the city were highly expensive and contained a new rich population, as well as the demographic change of the neighbourhoods. Participant 7 said:

“Immigrant families now inhabit some neighbourhoods from Egypt and from immigrant tribes from Egyptian lands who took advantage of the fragile situation during the conflict to settle in Benghazi.”

There are also many neighbourhoods that contained those displaced from cities from the Libyan west, who settled because of the conflict in 2011 and following the second Libyan civil war in 2014. In addition, the participants referred to the change in neighbourhoods, in terms of the rapid spread of crime and drug trafficking, as one of the consequences of failing to ensure former combatants attend development and awareness programmes. In comparison, Participant 9 drew attention to the problems of new construction, in the neighbourhoods both inside and outside the scheme, from the construction of multi-storey buildings in a way that overlooks neighbours, which seriously infringes on freedom, according to the culture in the community.

7.2.3.4 Community Participation in Stabilisation Phase Projects

The participants indicated that they had not been consulted on any project implemented during the stabilisation phase, nor had their opinion been sought when it came to any future reconstruction work. The majority felt that the Municipal Projects Office, and the unelected Municipal Council, failed to respond to any requests from the community. The exceptions were Participant 4, who said:

“I contacted the municipality regarding building a road to the neighbourhood, and it responded quickly”, and Participant 5, who said that the municipality responded if it had an interest in any project.

Participants 1 and 6 considered that the municipality implemented many projects (i.e., roads and public parks), but were unaware of how much the implementation contracts were worth. They pointed out that they had been accustomed to seeing development projects in Benghazi before the revolution in 2011, but now any project aimed at the general population lacked the previous signs showing the name of the project, along with contractor and consultant and the cost and duration. In addition, Participant 2 described the municipal council and its officials as practising tribalism and nepotism. When it came to the work of the central and temporary governments, the participants felt that neither worked to ensure stability but rather to drain public money and that the municipality's projects failed to contribute to reconciliation and national unity but rather responded to current trends, which gives them legitimacy and attracts funding.

7.2.4 Phase 3: Perceptions of the Reconstruction of the City

7.2.4.1 Remove the Effects of Conflicts

All the participants considered it vital that the signs of the conflict were removed from the city. Participant 4 said:

“Life must go on, and we forget all the sad effects of the Libyan civil war in Benghazi, and this can only be the removal of all traces of the conflict.”

The city needed to start reconstruction, but there must also be a disclosure of the environmental effects of the remnants of weapons because of the substantial increase in cancerous tumours in Benghazi compared to the rest of the country. The participants referred to recent a statistic showing the high rate of cancer issued by the Libyan Ministry of Health and noted that reconstruction should be based on a clean environment and that the city's centre should not be polluted and thus a source of disease transmission to future generations.

There was a general concern about the possibility of contamination of the conflict areas with harmful radiation, and an anticipation of a successful reconstruction process based on societal justice. Participant 8 said that all signs of conflict in the city should be removed as soon as possible, while Participant 9 expressed his concerns about the psychological effects of the urban environment, which remains damaged and bears the effects of destruction and conflict, noting:

“The conflict ended in 2017, but the buildings are still destroyed, and the impact of the destruction are in all areas of the old city, with huge piles of rubble, and there are children living there, including a new generation that is now five years old. Since the end of the conflict, they have been growing up amidst these scenes of painful and sad history because of the conflict that lasted three years”.

On the other hand, Participant 1 stated that some traces of damage should be preserved to remind of the tragedies of the civil war between the Libyans and to show that they are the only losers in battles for power. Participant 5 also said that some of the destroyed monuments should be preserved as a reminder of the victory of the military forces over the militia coalition backed by the government in Tripoli.

7.2.4.2 A Reconciliatory Urban Environment

Apart from Participant 5, all the respondents supported the view that the city's urban environment should emphasise reconciliation and national peace. In addition, they disagreed with Participant 5's view that the environment should honour those who liberated the city from the alliance of armed militias, including by naming streets or squares after military leaders and fighters. The remainder of the participants did not support the inclusion of statutes because this is contrary to Islamic law and creates heroes of temporary personalities. Furthermore, there is no tradition of statues in Benghazi. Apart from Participant 5, all participants agreed that the urban environment should include landmarks with non-controversial names for those representing public and military figures. They expressed disapproval of hanging pictures of leaders in squares or public areas because they distorted the visual environment and imposed the views of the victorious party, now controlling the land, particularly as the struggle took place over who should control the city and its residents.

Participants 4, 6, 8 and 9 welcomed the proposal that the urban environments should strongly support unity, including the rejection of differences, as well as the role of public squares, especially in the downtown area, i.e. the major urban centre of Benghazi. They felt that the city requires a reconstruction process to ensure peace and enable citizens to work together to overcome their differences. They also considered that the urban environment can bring together all residents from different neighbourhoods, with a variety of political and intellectual orientations, to create an environment capable of supporting peace for future generations and encouraging them to unite to address the city's challenges.

7.2.4.3 Collective Memory

The participants described the old city and its neighbourhoods as the heart of the city and its history and expressed their grief over the loss of so many buildings and the life experienced since 2014. Participant 2 said that, after his house had been destroyed, he only visited the Old City weekly to meet his neighbours who had returned to their homes. Moreover, he visited the Corniche every weekend and wandered along the seaside to remember the happiness of the past. Participant 1 said:

“The old city and its landmarks are the heart of the city and the centre of gathering for all its visitors. We gather on various feasts and occasions in the old city in Al-Hout Market to shop from street vendors during Ramadan.”

This shows how much these former residents yearn for the time before the conflict and the disruption this imposed on the whole city, forcing many residents to leave. The participants said that they took any opportunity to revive the old city, including, on occasion, gathering at the tomb of Omar Al-Mukhtar and the lighthouse. During the month of Ramadan, they shopped from street vendors, despite the lack of interest from the local authorities in this historical area and the municipality's attention being focused on outside neighbourhoods. Most of the participants rejected the establishment of modern markets and shopping centres outside the old city area, which bore the names of popular centres that had been left in ruins.

The participants' attention also focused on the issues surrounding rebuilding. Most supported restoring the destroyed buildings to the way they had been before the conflict, and to retain their old names, because they represent the authenticity of the urban heritage of Benghazi. None of the participants supported the process of completely removing the city and replacing it with a modern version, insisting on the need to preserve the city's previous demarcations and reconstruct all that had been destroyed. Participant 10 said:

“It may require some modification in the planning of the streets to address previous problems, it is okay, but the aim of the full survey is not to re-plan, but rather to address previous problems”.

In addition, Participant 2 noted that:

“The municipality may plan to remove all destroyed areas and re-plan the streets, which may represent another conflict. Nevertheless, there is an urban struggle to erase the memory of the old city, as the authorities neglect it and focus their attention on the high-end neighbourhoods in the suburbs.”

As discussed above, the participants expressed anger at the demolition of the Jumhuriya Hospital by the interim government, stating that it could have been preserved and they felt that the municipality was destroying the history of Benghazi, pointing out that the unelected mayor of the municipality was not a resident of the city.

7.2.4.4 Historic Buildings

The participants were upset by the demolition of Al-Jumhuriya Hospital due to the maternity hospital being a familiar public building where the majority had been born as well as their children. They therefore viewed it as having a special place in their memories and stated that it should not have been demolished but rather be restored and maintained. Participant 2, who had formerly resided next to the hospital, stated that the damage had not warranted complete demolition and removal. In addition, participants 3 and 6 said that they were still shocked at the demolition of the hospital, as the head of the interim government had attended a celebration for the inauguration of the foundation stone that had aimed to rebuild it within 180 days, but the site had continued to remain empty.

This also made them fearful that a similar fate would befall other damaged buildings, particularly as the demolition was under the control of the authorities rather than citizens. Therefore, the participants felt that corrupt authorities sign demolition contracts because they cost less than construction, including materials conforming to specifications. This led the participants to fear an increase in unwanted demolitions. The participants stressed the need to revive the old city and return to the famous markets, particularly, as highlighted by participants 2, 4 and 7, the middle and poor classes had, prior to the conflict, pioneered the historical markets in the old city, such as Souk al- Jareed.

Participant 4 said:

“We used to go to the Al-Jareed market on all occasions, and its prices were suitable for us as the public servant’s class. Now there are no longer means of transportation for the old area, and high-end private commercial complexes have been established, which are expensive, and their prices are high”

The Participant 9 noted that:

“The urban expansion during the conflict and modern shopping complexes which, in the Western style, have high prices and are not suitable for the capabilities of the simple citizen considering the bad economic conditions after the conflict.”

In comparison, the participants stressed the necessity of reviving the old popular markets in any reconstruction plan because they acted as gathering places for all of the neighbourhood residents and visitors to the city.

7.2.4.5 Community Participation in Reconstruction Perceptions

The participants expressed their desire for a participatory reconstruction model that consulted owners and residents concerning any proposed plans for reconstruction. Participants 3, 4 and 5 said that successful reconstruction must start with the citizens, as they are the target of future reconstruction. They also linked privatisation and shareholding and were not enthusiastic about the expropriation plans in exchange for shares, all considering that, while the country's political situation remains unstable, there is no guarantor of any agreement with capitalist partners.

They all rejected any expropriation of property by force of law or through legislation, especially since the country has yet to have a constitution and remains in political and military conflict. The participants of the old city area preferred that it should be reconstructed as it was before, but without high towers, rather emphasising the preservation of the local style, along with any necessary improvements. However, participants 7, 8 and 10 preferred that a major modernisation of the area be implemented by merging the new and old buildings. On the other hand, they all said that they hoped for everything to soon return to the way it had been, particularly as the conflict had ended in 2017. They highlighted the lack of compensation for those impacted by the fighting, as well as the absence of any reconstruction in the old area of the city. They expressed their disappointment that the unelected local authorities had failed to recognise community participation, and their work was unclear and could be seen as being influenced by corruption. Everyone justified the delay in the period of instability, from the conflicts inside Benghazi to the conflict on Tripoli and then the successive political and peace agreements.

7.2.4.6 Completion of Suspended Projects Since 2011, then the Reconstruction

All the participants unanimously agreed on the need to prioritise the process of completing development projects that had been halted since 2011, i.e., before the onset of the second Libyan civil war in 2014. They hoped foreign companies would return to complete the construction work, which had been progressing well before 2011. Participant 4 said that the

return of foreign companies to complete projects providing residential buildings would solve the housing crisis and the displaced and compensate for the destruction, while Participant 9 noted:

“If the companies return and resume housing projects, we can give up our flat in the old city in exchange for one in the Ganfouda area. I do know that the municipality is building units for us as displaced people in the Jardine area”.

7.2.5 Summary

The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data provided comprehensive insights into the post-conflict reconstruction efforts in Benghazi. The findings are presented based on the three key phases: Relief and Conflict Damage, Recovery and Stability, and Perceptions of Reconstruction, integrating insights from both the survey and interviews.

7.2.5.1 Relief and Conflict Damage Phase

Quantitative data from the survey revealed that a large proportion of residents faced displacement during the conflict, with 31.1% relocating to other cities and 18.1% moving within different neighbourhoods of Benghazi. Meanwhile, 40.3% remained in their homes despite ongoing conflict. The survey data also highlighted the widespread destruction, with 38.7% of respondents indicating no damage to their homes, while 27.3% reported minor damage, 14.3% moderate damage, and 8.4% complete destruction. Additionally, almost 88% of respondents did not receive any aid or support during the conflict, illustrating the lack of organized relief efforts.

These findings were supported by qualitative interviews, where participants detailed the extensive damage to residential areas and public infrastructure, including hospitals, police stations, and government buildings. Interviewees expressed their struggles with displacement, with many families relying on relatives or temporary shelters for accommodation. The economic burden of paying rent during the conflict was particularly emphasized, as families depleted their savings to secure temporary housing. Interviewees also highlighted the lack of immediate aid and support, leading to feelings of neglect and insecurity during and after the conflict.

7.2.5.2 Recovery and Stability Phase

The quantitative results indicated widespread dissatisfaction with the recovery efforts, with an average satisfaction score of 2.23 out of 5. Survey responses showed that certain projects, such as the maintenance of symbolic sites like the Sidi Akhrebish lighthouse (mean score of 3.24), received higher satisfaction ratings, while more critical needs, such as infrastructure for the disabled (2.01) and consulting citizens on project priorities (2.00), were rated poorly. The prioritization of these symbolic projects over essential services indicated a disconnect between government actions and public needs.

Qualitative findings echoed these sentiments, with interview participants expressing their frustration over the government's lack of focus on essential repairs and the slow removal of rubble from key areas. Participants criticized the authorities for investing in symbolic projects like the Omar Al-Mukhtar shrine and the lighthouse, while failing to address more immediate needs such as restoring basic services and repairing damaged homes. The interviews also revealed concerns over the slow pace of the recovery and a lack of transparency in decision-making processes, leading to feelings of exclusion from the rebuilding efforts.

7.2.5.3 Perceptions of Reconstruction Efforts

The survey results on residents' perceptions of reconstruction efforts indicated a strong preference for projects that supported reconciliation and preserved the city's cultural heritage. For example, initiatives promoting reconciliation in public spaces received the highest mean score of 4.55, reflecting the population's desire for unity and healing after the conflict. Respondents also expressed strong support for the completion of suspended projects from 2011, which received a mean score of 4.44.

Interviews provided deeper insights into these sentiments, revealing a clear preference for community involvement in reconstruction planning. Participants expressed dissatisfaction with the government's top-down approach and emphasized the importance of consulting local communities on reconstruction priorities. There was strong support for preserving the historical identity of Benghazi, particularly in the old city, with participants advocating for the restoration of traditional markets and historical sites. Interviewees also voiced concerns over growing social and economic inequalities resulting from new commercial developments that catered to specific segments of the population, rather than addressing the broader needs of the city.

Chapter 8

8 Discussions

8.1 Introduction

This study aimed to critically evaluate the post-conflict reconstruction process in Benghazi (2017-2022) through analysis of reconstruction approaches, stakeholder roles, and community perspectives, to develop evidence-based recommendations for improving urban reconstruction strategies in post-conflict settings. The research was guided by four key questions:

1. What does reconstruction in post-conflict contexts involve, and what challenges are associated with rebuilding cities after conflict?
2. What are the effects of the conflict in 2014-2017 in Benghazi city, Libya, on residents and the urban environment?
3. To what extent had and have been active actors contributing to the recovery and re-stabilization phase in Benghazi post-conflict?
4. What are the perceptions of Benghazi's residents regarding the reconstruction of urban areas based on their views and the study of international experiences in the reconstruction of cities after the conflict?

The research employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data from 238 residents with in-depth qualitative interviews with 10 participants. This comprehensive methodology revealed several key findings that warrant detailed discussion.

The quantitative results highlighted significant disparities between implemented reconstruction projects and community needs. Notable findings include widespread dissatisfaction with the recovery efforts (average satisfaction score of 2.23 out of 5), particularly regarding essential infrastructure repairs and community consultation. The survey revealed that 31.1% of residents were displaced to other cities during the conflict, while 27.3% reported minor damage to their homes and 8.4% experienced complete destruction. Significantly, 88% of respondents received no aid or support during the conflict period.

The qualitative findings provided deeper insights into these patterns, revealing tensions between symbolic reconstruction projects and practical community needs. Participants expressed frustration with the prioritisation of projects like the Omar Al-Mukhtar shrine while basic infrastructure remained unrepaired. The interviews also uncovered complex issues surrounding property rights, compensation, and the preservation of cultural heritage, themes that were less apparent in the quantitative data.

This discussion chapter synthesises these findings within the broader context of post-conflict reconstruction literature and international experience, particularly drawing on the cases of Beirut and Mostar examined in Chapter 3. The chapter is structured to systematically address the research questions while developing a comprehensive understanding of the challenges and opportunities in post-conflict urban reconstruction.

The discussion begins by examining the effects of conflict on Benghazi's urban environment, followed by an analysis of the challenges encountered during the recovery process. It then explores community perspectives on reconstruction, leading to a critical analysis of current reconstruction approaches. The chapter concludes by proposing an improved model for post-conflict urban reconstruction and discussing implications for practice and policy.

Throughout the discussion, findings are interpreted within the literature review established in Chapter 2, while drawing parallels with international experiences to identify patterns and unique aspects of Benghazi's reconstruction process. This analysis aims to contribute to both the theoretical understanding of post-conflict reconstruction and practical knowledge for improving reconstruction outcomes in similar contexts.

8.2 Effects of Conflict on Benghazi's Urban Environment

The 2014-2017 conflict in Benghazi resulted in widespread urban destruction that transformed both the physical and social fabric of the city, reflecting patterns seen in other post-conflict cities but with distinct local characteristics. The damage assessment conducted in 2016 revealed that 3,344 buildings were either destroyed, severely damaged, or moderately damaged, with another 1,152 potentially affected. This level of destruction aligns with what

Steinø, Dabaieh, and Ben Bih (2020) describe as the significant alterations conflicts can impose on urban environments.

8.2.1 Physical Damage to Infrastructure and Buildings

The study's findings revealed extensive damage to Benghazi's built environment, with survey results indicating varying levels of destruction: 27.3% of respondents reported minor damage to their properties, 14.3% experienced moderate damage, 11.3% suffered massive damage, and 8.4% faced complete destruction. This pattern of destruction was not random but concentrated in specific areas, particularly the city centre and historical districts, similar to the targeted destruction observed in both Beirut and Mostar.

Critical infrastructure was severely impacted, with qualitative interviews revealing the destruction of essential facilities including police stations, the Benghazi Security Directorate, Special Forces camp, multiple bridges, and numerous health centres and educational institutions. This systematic damage to public infrastructure mirrors patterns seen in Mostar, where approximately 75% of the city's infrastructure was destroyed during the conflict (Calame, 2005). However, while Mostar's destruction was primarily along ethnic lines, Benghazi's damage patterns followed political and military control zones, more closely resembling Beirut's experience during its civil war.

8.2.2 Impact on Historical and Cultural Heritage

The old city of Benghazi was particularly impacted, with 462 buildings completely demolished and 2,148 seriously damaged structures, primarily concentrated in historic districts like Zrir'ya, Sabri, and Akharbish. This targeted destruction of historic areas echoes findings from Barakat (2020) that highlight how conflicts often result in the deliberate targeting of cultural and historic sites, leading to both physical and psychological impacts on communities.

Unlike Mostar's Stari Most, which was deliberately destroyed as a symbol of ethnic division, Benghazi's heritage destruction was more collateral to military operations. However, similar to Beirut's downtown area, Benghazi's historical centre became a focal point of conflict, resulting

in extensive damage to traditional urban fabric. The qualitative data revealed particular concern about the demolition of Al-Jumhuriya Hospital, which participants viewed as an important historical landmark, highlighting a key difference from both comparison cases: while Beirut and Mostar saw post-conflict efforts to restore historical buildings, Benghazi has experienced continued loss of heritage structures even after the conflict.

8.2.3 Displacement and Demographic Changes

The displacement patterns in Benghazi were significant, with survey results showing that 31.1% of residents were forced to relocate to other cities, while 18.1% moved to different neighbourhoods within Benghazi. The study revealed three distinct waves of displacement, creating new informal settlements and altering the city's demographic composition, particularly in areas like Sidi Khalifa. This differs from Mostar's experience, where displacement followed clear ethnic lines, and more closely resembles Beirut's complex pattern of socio-economic and sectarian displacement.

These population movements align with what Jabareen (2013) identifies as typical post-conflict patterns, where displacement leads to rapid, unplanned urban expansion. However, Benghazi's case is unique in the significant role of regional migration in reshaping the city's demographics, with interview participants noting influxes of Egyptian immigrants and internal migration from western Libya.

8.2.4 Economic and Environmental Impacts

The destruction also had significant economic implications, paralyzing many business sectors and forcing their relocation outside the conflict zones. This economic disruption, combined with the physical destruction of commercial areas, created new patterns of urban development as alternative commercial centres emerged in safer areas, demonstrating how conflict can fundamentally reshape urban economic geography (Alnafra and Mouselli, 2020).

The environmental impact of the conflict extends beyond visible physical damage, with survey participants expressing concerns about potential contamination from weapons residue and environmental hazards posed by rubble and debris. This aligns with research indicating that post-conflict environmental damage can have long-term implications for public health and urban recovery (Sakalasuriya, Haigh and Amaratunga, 2016).

The comparison with Beirut and Mostar reveals that while patterns of physical destruction may be similar across post-conflict cities, the social and demographic impacts are heavily influenced by local political and cultural contexts. This understanding is crucial for developing appropriate reconstruction strategies that address both physical and social dimensions of urban recovery. The patterns of destruction and displacement identified here have significantly influenced both the priorities and obstacles in Benghazi's reconstruction process.

8.3 Challenges in Post-Conflict Recovery

The reconstruction process in Benghazi has revealed multiple layers of challenges that align with theoretical frameworks of post-conflict recovery while also presenting unique contextual difficulties. Building on Barakat's (2020) conceptualisation of post-conflict reconstruction as a multidimensional process, this study's findings illuminate the complex interplay between immediate relief needs, medium-term recovery challenges, and long-term reconstruction requirements.

The relief phase demonstrated significant gaps in emergency response capabilities, with the study revealing that an overwhelming majority (87.8%) of residents received no immediate support during or immediately after the conflict. This striking statistic reflects what Sakalasuriya et al. (2016) describe as the "institutional vacuum" that often characterises immediate post-conflict periods. The limited provision of essential services - with only 4.6% receiving food aid and 1.3% receiving medical care - underscores the severe institutional weaknesses that Chapter 4 identifies as a primary challenge in post-conflict settings. These findings from Benghazi provide empirical evidence of the "governance conundrum" described by Barakat (2005), where weakened institutions must respond to urgent needs despite severely compromised capacity.

The recovery and stabilisation phase has presented even more complex challenges, reflected in the notably low satisfaction rate (2.23 out of 5) with recovery efforts. This dissatisfaction stems from multiple sources, including ineffective rubble removal, poor coordination of utility repairs, and inadequate temporary housing solutions. These issues align with O'Driscoll's (2018) framework of post-conflict challenges, particularly regarding the difficulties of coordinating multiple actors and priorities during the recovery phase. The study reveals a particular tension between symbolic reconstruction projects and essential infrastructure needs, a dynamic that mirrors experiences in both Beirut and Mostar.

The role of different actors in the reconstruction process has emerged as a critical factor in shaping recovery outcomes. Local authorities, particularly the unelected municipal council, have struggled to establish legitimacy and effective governance mechanisms. This governance challenge reflects broader patterns identified in post-conflict literature regarding the difficulties of establishing effective local administration in fragile contexts. The limited involvement of international organisations in Benghazi's reconstruction - with only 3.4% of survey respondents reporting international support - stands in marked contrast to the experiences of both Beirut and Mostar, where international actors played significant roles in shaping reconstruction processes.

Funding and resource allocation have emerged as particularly complex challenges in Benghazi's reconstruction. The study reveals a pattern of inequitable resource distribution and limited transparency in fund management that aligns with what Chapter 4 identifies as the "resource allocation dilemma." The focus on visible projects over essential infrastructure reflects political pressures that often distort reconstruction priorities, a phenomenon well-documented in post-conflict literature but particularly acute in Benghazi's case due to the limited international oversight and weak governance structures.

Implementation barriers have manifested across multiple dimensions, from administrative and technical challenges to social and political obstacles. The complex bureaucratic procedures, unclear property rights, and limited institutional capacity mirror the "implementation gap" discussed in Chapter 2's literature review. However, Benghazi's case presents unique complications, particularly regarding property rights disputes stemming from previous

socialist-era policies - a challenge not typically addressed in post-conflict reconstruction literature.

The social dimensions of reconstruction challenges in Benghazi deserve particular attention. The study reveals deep-seated issues of community trust that complicate reconstruction efforts. The limited community participation in reconstruction planning - with 71% reporting no consultation on projects - reflects a broader pattern of exclusion that threatens the sustainability of reconstruction efforts. This finding supports Earnest's (2015) emphasis on the crucial role of community participation in successful post-conflict reconstruction, while also highlighting the practical difficulties of implementing participatory approaches in fragmented post-conflict contexts.

Political instability continues to pose significant challenges to Benghazi's reconstruction, creating an environment of uncertainty that complicates long-term planning and investment. This ongoing instability, combined with competing power structures and limited governmental legitimacy, creates a particularly challenging context for reconstruction that goes beyond the typical post-conflict scenarios described in the literature. The experience of Benghazi suggests that theoretical frameworks for post-conflict reconstruction may need to be adapted to account for situations where political stability remains elusive even years after the formal end of conflict.

These findings demonstrate that while Benghazi's reconstruction challenges reflect many common patterns identified in post-conflict literature, they also present unique characteristics that require context-specific solutions. The comparison with international experiences suggests that while theoretical frameworks provide valuable insights, local conditions must fundamentally shape reconstruction approaches. This understanding is crucial for developing more effective reconstruction strategies that can address both common and context-specific challenges.

8.4 Community Perspectives on Reconstruction

The study's findings reveal a significant disconnect between local priorities and implemented reconstruction projects in post-conflict Benghazi, echoing similar challenges observed in both Beirut and Mostar. Survey results showed widespread dissatisfaction with current reconstruction efforts, with an average satisfaction score of just 2.23 out of 5, highlighting the gap between community needs and actual interventions.

Local residents consistently prioritized basic infrastructure restoration and housing rehabilitation over symbolic projects. However, much like Beirut's Solidere project, which prioritized high-end commercial development over community needs, Benghazi's authorities have focused on projects such as the Omar Al-Mukhtar shrine restoration (satisfaction score 3.11) and lighthouse maintenance (3.24) while neglecting more pressing community needs. Interview participants expressed frustration at this misalignment of priorities, with one resident noting: "The municipality has spent money on buildings that do not provide any service to the citizen while we remain displaced."

The issue of consultation and participation emerges as a critical concern, reflecting patterns identified by Barakat (2020) regarding the importance of community engagement in post-conflict reconstruction. Survey results indicated minimal community consultation, with only 2.00 out of 5 satisfactions regarding citizen involvement in project planning. This mirrors experiences in Beirut, where top-down reconstruction approaches led to community alienation, though contrasting with more recent reconstruction efforts in Mostar that have attempted to incorporate community input, albeit with mixed success.

Cultural heritage and collective memory emerged as crucial factors in community perspectives on reconstruction. Interview participants strongly emphasized the importance of preserving the city's historical fabric, particularly in the old city area. The controversial demolition of Al-Jumhuriya Hospital exemplifies the tension between authorities' modernization agenda and community attachment to historical landmarks. This resonates with what Viejo-Rose (2013) identifies as the critical role of cultural heritage in post-conflict recovery and identity reconstruction. Unlike Mostar's careful restoration of historical buildings or Beirut's selective preservation approach, Benghazi's reconstruction appears to lack a coherent strategy for heritage preservation.

The study reveals strong community support for using urban space to promote social cohesion and reconciliation. Survey responses showed the highest approval (4.55 out of 5) for projects supporting "manifestations of reconciliation and tolerance in open spaces." This aligns with Khalaf's (2020) findings on the importance of shared urban spaces in post-conflict healing. However, interview participants expressed concern that current development patterns, particularly new commercial centres and residential areas, may be reinforcing rather than bridging social divisions.

Comparing Benghazi's experience with international cases reveals both common challenges and unique characteristics. While Mostar's reconstruction largely focused on ethnic reconciliation through symbolic projects like the Stari Most bridge, and Beirut's emphasized economic revival through private sector-led development, Benghazi's community perspectives suggest a desire for a more balanced approach. Residents advocate for reconstruction that preserves historical identity while addressing practical needs and promoting social unity.

The findings also highlight a crucial difference in the role of international actors. While both Beirut and Mostar saw significant international involvement in reconstruction planning and implementation, Benghazi's reconstruction has been predominantly locally managed, though not necessarily locally driven in terms of community input. This has created a situation where, as one interview participant noted, "local officials are working against the residents of the city."

The lack of transparent project implementation and community consultation in Benghazi contrasts with evolving international best practices in post-conflict reconstruction. While recent projects in Mostar have attempted to incorporate community feedback mechanisms, and even Beirut's controversial Solidere project maintained some level of public communication, Benghazi's reconstruction processes appear to lack systematic community engagement channels.

These findings suggest that successful urban reconstruction requires more than physical rebuilding; it demands careful attention to community perspectives, cultural heritage preservation, and the creation of inclusive urban spaces. The experience of Benghazi, compared with international cases, underscores the importance of balancing immediate reconstruction needs with long-term community aspirations for social cohesion and cultural continuity. This understanding should inform future reconstruction policies and practices, particularly in

contexts where local authorities play a dominant role in reconstruction planning and implementation.

8.5 Critical Analysis of Current Reconstruction Approaches

The analysis of Benghazi's current reconstruction approaches reveals significant systemic issues that both parallel and diverge from patterns observed in other post-conflict cities. Through examination of the Benghazi Stabilization Committee's work and comparison with international experiences, particularly those of Beirut and Mostar, several critical issues emerge regarding institutional approaches, project prioritization, and governance.

The Benghazi Stabilization Committee's implementation strategy demonstrates concerning patterns in its effectiveness and alignment with community needs. While the Committee has overseen 674 contracted projects with a substantial budget of 1,700 million Libyan dinars, survey results indicate widespread dissatisfaction with project selection and implementation. The mean satisfaction score of 2.23 out of 5 for recovery phase projects suggests fundamental issues with the Committee's approach, reflecting what Barakat (2020) identifies as common challenges in post-conflict reconstruction when institutional capacity is limited.

The Committee's project prioritization reveals a striking misalignment between implemented projects and community needs. While survey data shows that 52.1% of residents received no housing support and 44.1% received no relief assistance, the Committee has focused resources on projects like the whale sculpture (satisfaction score 1.59) and symbolic monuments. This pattern mirrors experiences in Beirut, where Solidere's focus on high-end development and symbolic projects often came at the expense of addressing immediate community needs (Ghandour and Fawaz, 2010). The distribution of reconstruction resources appears particularly problematic. Interview participants consistently highlighted the contrast between expensive symbolic projects and unaddressed basic needs. As one participant noted, "The municipality has spent money on buildings that do not provide any service to the citizen while we remain displaced." This echoes what Steinø, Dabaieh and Ben Bih (2020) identify as a common issue in post-conflict reconstruction, where visible but non-essential projects often take precedence over fundamental community needs.

The decision-making processes within the Committee demonstrate significant weaknesses, particularly in community consultation and technical assessment. Survey results show extremely low satisfaction (2.00 out of 5) with citizen consultation on project priorities. This lack of community engagement contrasts sharply with evolving international best practices, as seen in Mostar's later reconstruction phases where community input became increasingly central to project planning (UN-Habitat, 2018).

Transparency emerges as a critical concern, with survey results showing the lowest satisfaction scores (1.68 out of 5) for "transparency in stabilization phase projects." Interview participants noted the absence of basic project information that had been standard practice before 2011, such as public displays of project costs and timelines. As one participant observed, "We had been accustomed to seeing development projects in Benghazi before the revolution in 2011, but now any project aimed at the general population lacked the previous signs showing the name of the project, along with contractor and consultant and the cost and duration."

The quality of implementation also raises serious concerns. Interview participants consistently criticized the poor quality of road projects and other infrastructure work, attributing this to inadequate supervision and corrupt practices. As one participant noted, "The quality of the implementation is very poor, with the municipality skilled in contracts that generate money for itself and its clients." This differs markedly from both Beirut and Mostar's experiences, where despite other issues, international oversight helped maintain construction standards (Barakat, 2020).

The comparison with international cases reveals crucial lessons for improving Benghazi's reconstruction approach. While Beirut's Solidere project demonstrated the risks of over-centralized, market-driven reconstruction (Verdeil, 2015), it maintained clear institutional frameworks and reporting structures. Similarly, Mostar's internationally supervised reconstruction, though initially struggling with community engagement, eventually developed more inclusive planning processes (Bădescu, 2018).

The study suggests that Benghazi's reconstruction approach requires significant reform to address these systemic issues. The experience of both comparison cities indicates the importance of balancing institutional capacity with community needs, maintaining transparent processes, and ensuring adequate technical oversight. However, unlike both Beirut and Mostar, Benghazi faces these challenges with limited international support or oversight, making the development of local institutional capacity particularly crucial.

These findings highlight the need for a more structured and accountable approach to reconstruction in Benghazi, one that learns from international experiences while remaining sensitive to local contexts. The current approach's limitations suggest the necessity of developing stronger institutional frameworks, more transparent decision-making processes, and more effective community engagement mechanisms to ensure reconstruction efforts better serve the needs of Benghazi's residents.

8.6 Recommended Reconstruction Strategies

The reconstruction of post-conflict cities represents one of the most complex challenges in urban development, requiring careful balance between immediate recovery needs and long-term development goals. This study's analysis of Benghazi's reconstruction efforts, combined with lessons learned from Beirut and Mostar, reveals the critical importance of developing comprehensive, context-sensitive strategies that address both physical reconstruction and social recovery.

The following strategies emerge from multiple data sources, including:

- Quantitative survey data from 238 Benghazi residents
- Qualitative insights from 10 in-depth interviews
- Analysis of 674 Benghazi Stabilization Committee projects
- Examination of municipal records and damage assessments
- Comparative analysis of Beirut's Solidere and Wa'd projects
- Lessons from Mostar's internationally supervised reconstruction

These strategies are particularly informed by key findings including:

- High levels of displacement (31.1% to other cities)
- Limited support during conflict (88% received no aid)
- Low satisfaction with current efforts (1.76/5 mean satisfaction)
- Minimal community consultation (71% reporting no involvement)
- Complex property rights issues from previous regimes
- Strong desire for cultural heritage preservation
- Need for reconciliation and social cohesion (4.55/5 support)

The strategies presented address these challenges while incorporating successful elements from international experiences and avoiding documented pitfalls in post-conflict reconstruction.

8.6.1 Strategy 1: Establishing Inclusive Governance

The study found that 71% of respondents reported no consultation about reconstruction projects, highlighting a significant gap in community engagement. Additionally, fragmented governance structures were identified as a major challenge, with competing priorities among reconstruction actors leading to inefficiencies and dissatisfaction among residents (mean satisfaction score: 1.76 out of 5).

These findings align with studies on post-conflict reconstruction in other contexts, such as Beirut and Mostar, where top-down approaches and lack of community involvement have been criticized for exacerbating social divisions and hindering recovery (Barakat, 2005; Verdeil, 2015). However, unlike Beirut's private sector-led reconstruction, Benghazi's governance challenges are compounded by unresolved property rights issues and limited international coordination, which require a more inclusive and participatory approach.

Recommended actions:

1. Establish inclusive governance structures that prioritize community participation in decision-making processes. Similar approaches have been successful in Sri Lanka, where

participatory governance frameworks improved social cohesion and project sustainability (O'Driscoll, 2018).

2. Create platforms for residents to voice their needs, such as town hall meetings or online consultation portals. This approach has been effective in Aceh, Indonesia, where community forums facilitated dialogue and trust-building (Masyrafah and McKeon, 2008).
3. Strengthen coordination among local authorities, NGOs, and international actors to ensure alignment of priorities. The success of this approach in Bosnia and Herzegovina highlights the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in post-conflict settings (Barakat, 2020).

8.6.2 Strategy 2: Prioritising Community-Led Planning

The study revealed a disconnect between the priorities of local communities and the focus of reconstruction projects. Many residents reported that commercial redevelopment was prioritized over residential reconstruction, leading to frustration over the lack of attention to housing and essential services. The exclusion of local voices in planning has contributed to inefficiencies and a perception that reconstruction efforts are not addressing urgent needs. Community-led planning has been successfully implemented in other post-conflict contexts, such as Sri Lanka and Aceh, where participatory approaches have improved social cohesion and project sustainability (O'Driscoll, 2018; Masyrafah and McKeon, 2008). However, in Benghazi, the absence of such mechanisms has led to widespread dissatisfaction and mistrust.

Moreover, Venable et al. (2018) reinforce the notion that community participation is essential for the success of post-disaster shelter programs. Their research indicates that the "Building Back Better" approach, which integrates community input into planning and execution, significantly enhances resilience and project outcomes.

Recommended actions:

1. Develop community-led planning frameworks that empower residents to identify and prioritize reconstruction needs. This approach has been effective in post-tsunami Aceh, where community-driven reconstruction improved project outcomes and local ownership (Masyrafah and McKeon, 2008).

2. Provide training and resources to local communities to enhance their capacity to participate in planning processes. Similar capacity-building initiatives in Rwanda have strengthened local governance and project implementation (O'Driscoll, 2018).

3. Enhance transparency to reduce mismanagement and corruption, improve project outcomes, and strengthen community trust and accountability (Mourad, 2022).

8.6.3 Strategy 3: Addressing Property Rights

The study identified unresolved property rights issues stemming from Libya's socialist era as a major barrier to reconstruction. These issues have led to disputes over land ownership and delayed rebuilding efforts. Other post-conflict contexts have encountered similar challenges. In Bosnia, unresolved property disputes hindered reconstruction and prolonged displacement. Research by Martin-Díaz (2014) emphasizes that securing property rights is fundamental to urban recovery, as it enables displaced residents to return and rebuild.

Recommended actions:

1. Blockchain-Based Property Registry: Blockchain technology, characterised by its decentralised and transparent ledger system, can significantly contribute to post-conflict home rebuilding by securely recording property rights, guaranteeing tenure security, and fostering trust among stakeholders (UN-Habitat, 2021).

2. Smart Contract Implementation: Blockchain technology will create transparent housing units and compensation allocation, ensuring fair distribution and reducing corruption risks (Casinoet al., 2019; UN-Habitat, 2021).

3. Establish a legal framework to resolve property rights disputes, including mechanisms for restitution and compensation. This approach has been successfully implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where legal reforms facilitated property restitution and reduced conflicts (Barakat, 2020).

8.6.4 Strategy 4: Preserving Cultural Heritage

Benghazi's historic districts are an integral part of the city's identity, yet they have been largely overlooked in reconstruction plans. The study found strong public support for preserving cultural heritage, but current redevelopment efforts pose risks to historic buildings and archaeological sites. Without a strategic approach to heritage conservation, the city may lose valuable cultural landmarks. The preservation of cultural heritage has been a key focus in post-conflict reconstruction efforts in cities like Mostar, where the restoration of the Stari Most bridge symbolized reconciliation and resilience (Makaš, 2012). However, in Benghazi, the lack of attention to cultural heritage risks eroding the city's identity and collective memory.

Recommended actions:

1. Prioritize the restoration of culturally significant sites as part of the reconstruction process. This approach has been successful in Mostar, where the restoration of the Stari Most bridge became a symbol of unity (Makaš, 2012).
2. Integrate cultural heritage preservation into urban planning frameworks. Similar efforts in Dubrovnik, Croatia, have ensured the preservation of historical sites while promoting sustainable development (Jokilehto, 2007).
3. Engage local communities in heritage conservation efforts to foster a sense of ownership and pride. This has been effective in post-conflict Cambodia, where community involvement in heritage preservation strengthened social cohesion (Dolan et al., 2022).

8.6.5 Strategy 5: Ensuring Sustainable Funding

A significant challenge identified in the study is the lack of consistent funding for reconstruction. Many residents reported receiving no financial aid for rebuilding, and there is widespread uncertainty about how reconstruction projects are funded. The reliance on fragmented municipal and international contributions has created inconsistencies in project implementation. Research by Barakat (2005) suggests that sustainable funding models, including public-private partnerships, are essential for long-term reconstruction success.

However, over-reliance on private investment, as seen in Beirut's Solidere project, can result in exclusionary redevelopment that benefits only certain segments of society. Benghazi requires a well-structured national reconstruction fund with clear allocation criteria to ensure transparency. Coordination among international donors and government agencies should be improved to maximise available resources. Additionally, microfinance initiatives could empower local businesses and homeowners to take an active role in rebuilding their communities.

Recommended actions:

1. Establish a centralized funding mechanism to coordinate and allocate resources effectively. This approach has been successful in Rwanda, where centralised funding improved resource allocation and project outcomes (Bilau, Witt and Lill, 2017).
2. Seek partnerships with international organizations and donors to secure long-term funding. Similar partnerships in Bosnia and Herzegovina have supported large-scale reconstruction projects (Barakat, 2020).
3. Promote public-private partnerships to leverage additional resources for reconstruction. This strategy has been effective in Beirut, where private sector investment played a key role in rebuilding the city centre (Verdeil, 2015).

8.6.6 Strategy 6: Building Local Capacity

The study identified concerns regarding the ability of local institutions to effectively manage reconstruction. Many respondents expressed scepticism about municipal authorities' capacity to oversee rebuilding efforts, citing bureaucratic inefficiencies and a lack of technical expertise. Building local capacity is a crucial component of successful reconstruction. Toshikj and Zsembery (2019) emphasize the importance of investing in local expertise and institutional development to ensure long-term sustainability. Building local capacity has been a key focus in post-conflict reconstruction efforts in countries like Afghanistan, where training programs for local officials have improved governance and project implementation (Barakat, 2005b). However, in Benghazi, the absence of such initiatives has exacerbated governance challenges.

Recommended actions:

1. Provide training programs for local officials to enhance their capacity to manage reconstruction projects. Similar programs in Afghanistan have improved governance and project outcomes (Barakat, 2005b).
2. Develop mentorship programs to support emerging leaders in the reconstruction process. This has been effective in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where mentorship programs strengthened local governance (Barakat, 2020).

8.6.7 Strategy 7: Promoting Social Cohesion

The conflict in Benghazi has left deep social divisions, and rebuilding efforts must actively contribute to social cohesion. The study found that many residents feel disconnected from decision-making processes and lack trust in municipal authorities. If reconstruction efforts fail to address these divisions, they may inadvertently reinforce existing tensions. Studies on post-conflict recovery emphasize the role of inclusive urban planning in fostering social integration. Research by Steinø et al. (2020) highlights how public spaces, mixed-income housing, and community engagement initiatives can contribute to social stability. Promoting social cohesion has been a key focus in post-conflict reconstruction efforts in cities like Mostar, where initiatives to rebuild shared spaces have helped bridge ethnic divides (Makaš, 2012). However, in Benghazi, the lack of such efforts risks deepening social divisions.

Recommended actions:

1. Rebuild shared public spaces, such as parks and community centres, to foster social interaction: In Mostar, the restoration of public spaces like the Stari Most bridge became a symbol of unity and reconciliation (Makaš, 2012). Research by Steinø et al. (2020) emphasizes the importance of public spaces in promoting social stability and community interaction in post-conflict settings.
2. Support initiatives that celebrate the city's diverse cultural heritage to promote unity: In Bosnia and Herzegovina, cultural festivals and heritage preservation projects have strengthened community bonds and promoted a shared sense of identity (Barakat, 2020).

In Cambodia, community involvement in heritage conservation efforts has fostered social cohesion and local pride (Stanley-Price, 2007).

3. Ensure inclusive participation in reconstruction planning to rebuild trust in municipal authorities: In Aceh, Indonesia, community forums and participatory planning processes improved trust and accountability in post-tsunami reconstruction (Masyrafah and McKeon, 2008). Research by Barakat (2005) highlights the importance of inclusive governance in post-conflict settings to ensure that all community voices are heard and addressed.

8.6.8 Strategy 8: Implementing Phased Development

Reconstruction in Benghazi has proceeded unevenly, with some areas receiving extensive redevelopment while others remain in disrepair. A phased approach to reconstruction is needed to ensure balanced and strategic development. Research on post-conflict urban recovery suggests that phased reconstruction allows for gradual rebuilding while ensuring that essential infrastructure is restored first. Barakat (2020) argues that phased approaches prevent resource misallocation and enable better coordination among stakeholders. A phased development strategy for Benghazi should prioritise immediate needs, such as housing and utilities, before expanding into long-term urban planning. A clear timeline for reconstruction milestones would provide greater accountability and transparency in project implementation.

Recommended actions:

1. Prioritizing Essential Infrastructure in Early Phases: Reconstruction should begin with restoring water, electricity, healthcare, and transport before large-scale urban redevelopment. Sarajevo's post-war recovery prioritized critical infrastructure, enabling displaced populations to return and stabilizing urban functions (World Bank, 1998). A similar phased approach in Benghazi will ensure that immediate needs are met before engaging in broader urban planning.
2. Establishing a Clear Reconstruction Timeline with Milestones: A structured timeline with defined short-, medium-, and long-term milestones is essential for progress tracking and accountability. Rwanda's Vision 2020 set phased recovery goals after the 1994 genocide, enabling systematic infrastructure and economic development (Ansoms and Rostagno, 2012).

Lebanon's post-civil war master plan attempted a similar phased approach but suffered from weak coordination (Fawaz, 2009). Benghazi's reconstruction should adopt a phased framework with regular assessments to ensure adaptive planning and efficient resource allocation.

3. Integrating Transitional Solutions and Compensation Before Permanent Development: Temporary housing, financial compensation, and rental assistance should be provided while permanent reconstruction is planned. In Beirut's Wa'd Project, displaced residents received financial compensation or cash rent to secure temporary housing while reconstruction was underway (Fawaz and Harb, 2010), while post-WWII Germany provided prefabricated homes for displaced populations (Diefendorf, 1993). In Benghazi, a compensation scheme or rental assistance program can ensure that affected residents have stable housing while long-term urban redevelopment progresses, preventing prolonged displacement and reducing informal settlements.

Table 8.1: Summary of Reconstruction Strategies and Recommended Actions

<i>Strategy</i>	<i>Key Issues Identified</i>	<i>Recommended Actions</i>	<i>Supporting Case Studies</i>
<i>1. Establishing Inclusive Governance</i>	Lack of community consultation (71%), fragmented governance, competing priorities among reconstruction actors.	1. Establish participatory governance structures. 2. Create platforms for community engagement. 3. Strengthen coordination among local authorities and international actors.	Sri Lanka's participatory governance (O'Driscoll, 2018); Community forums in Aceh (Masyrafah & McKeon, 2008); Multi-stakeholder coordination in Bosnia (Barakat, 2020).
<i>2. Prioritizing Community-Led Planning</i>	Disconnect between community priorities and reconstruction focus, lack of transparency, mistrust in planning processes.	1. Develop community-led planning frameworks. 2. Provide training for local communities. 3. Enhance transparency to reduce	Post-tsunami Aceh (Masyrafah & McKeon, 2008); Community capacity-building in Rwanda (O'Driscoll, 2018); Anti-corruption reforms in Lebanon (Mourad, 2022).

		mismanagement and corruption.	
3. Addressing Property Rights	Unresolved property rights from Libya's socialist era, legal disputes delaying reconstruction.	1. Implement blockchain-based property registries. 2. Use smart contracts for transparent compensation. 3. Establish legal frameworks for dispute resolution.	Blockchain for property rights (UN-Habitat, 2021); Transparent land policies in Bosnia (Barakat, 2020); Housing rights reforms in Kosovo (Casino et al., 2019).
4. Preserving Cultural Heritage	Historic districts at risk, public support for heritage preservation, lack of integration in urban planning.	1. Prioritize restoration of cultural sites. 2. Integrate heritage preservation into urban planning. 3. Engage local communities in conservation efforts.	Stari Most bridge restoration in Mostar (Makaš, 2012); Sustainable heritage preservation in Dubrovnik (Jokilehto, 2007); Community-led conservation in Cambodia (Dolan et al., 2022).
5. Ensuring Sustainable Funding	Lack of financial aid, fragmented funding sources, inconsistent reconstruction implementation.	1. Establish a centralized reconstruction fund. 2. Secure partnerships with international donors. 3. Promote public-private partnerships.	Centralized funding in Rwanda (Bilau et al., 2017); International donor coordination in Bosnia (Barakat, 2020); Private sector investment in Beirut (Verdeil, 2015).
6. Building Local Capacity	Weak municipal institutions, lack of technical expertise, inefficiencies in project management.	1. Provide training programs for local officials. 2. Develop mentorship programs for emerging leaders.	Governance training in Afghanistan (Barakat, 2005b); Mentorship programs in Bosnia (Barakat, 2020).
7. Promoting Social Cohesion	Social divisions post-conflict, mistrust in authorities, lack of inclusive planning.	1. Rebuild shared public spaces. 2. Support cultural heritage initiatives. 3. Ensure inclusive participation in reconstruction planning.	Stari Most bridge as a symbol of unity in Mostar (Makaš, 2012); Cultural integration in Bosnia (Barakat, 2020); Participatory planning in Aceh (Masyrafah & McKeon, 2008).

8. Implementing Phased Development

Uneven reconstruction, lack of prioritization, risk of inefficient resource allocation.

1. Prioritize essential infrastructure first.
2. Establish clear reconstruction milestones.
3. Provide transitional housing and compensation.

Infrastructure-first approach in Sarajevo (World Bank, 1998); Phased planning in Rwanda's Vision 2020 (Ansoms & Rostagno, 2012); Compensation model in Beirut's Wa'd Project (Fawaz & Harb, 2010).

Reconstructing Benghazi requires a phased and strategic approach that aligns with the natural progression of post-conflict recovery. Initially, establishing inclusive governance is crucial to rebuilding trust, ensuring transparent decision-making, and coordinating efforts among stakeholders. Simultaneously, addressing property rights must be prioritized to resolve land ownership disputes, establish legal frameworks, and provide compensation, ensuring displaced residents can reclaim or rebuild their homes. Once governance structures and property rights are in place, prioritizing community-led planning becomes essential to align reconstruction with local needs, enhance public participation, and prevent mismanagement. As planning efforts progress, the focus shifts to implementing phased development, beginning with the restoration of essential infrastructure, followed by clearly defined reconstruction milestones and transitional housing solutions. Alongside this, ensuring sustainable funding through a centralized reconstruction fund, international partnerships, and public-private collaborations guarantees financial stability for long-term recovery. With foundational elements secured, building local capacity through governance training and mentorship programs strengthens institutions to manage reconstruction effectively. In parallel, promoting social cohesion by rebuilding shared public spaces, fostering cultural initiatives, and ensuring inclusive participation helps restore community bonds and prevent further divisions. Finally, preserving cultural heritage by integrating conservation into urban planning and restoring key historical sites ensures that Benghazi retains its identity and collective memory as it moves toward long-term stability and development. This structured progression ensures a comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable post-conflict recovery process for Benghazi.

Chapter 9

9 Conclusion:

This research has examined the complex dynamics of post-conflict urban reconstruction in Benghazi, Libya, through the lens of householder experiences and perspectives. The study's findings reveal both universal patterns in post-conflict reconstruction and unique challenges specific to Benghazi's context, contributing to our understanding of how cities recover from conflict and how this recovery might be improved.

The reconstruction of Benghazi following the 2014-2017 conflict presents a particularly instructive case study. Unlike the internationally coordinated reconstruction of Mostar or the private sector-driven rebuilding of Beirut, Benghazi's recovery has been characterized by fragmented efforts and competing priorities. This fragmentation is reflected in the experiences of householders, who have found themselves navigating a complex landscape of multiple actors, unclear responsibilities, and often conflicting approaches to reconstruction.

A striking finding of this research is the profound disconnect between institutional priorities and community needs. While local authorities focused on symbolic projects and basic infrastructure, householders consistently expressed more immediate concerns about housing rehabilitation and basic services. As one participant poignantly noted, "We remain displaced and impacted by the conflict while they spend money on green spaces." This disconnect represents not merely a failure of implementation but a fundamental misalignment between reconstruction planning and community priorities.

The study's examination of property rights issues reveals how historical grievances can complicate current reconstruction efforts. The legacy of Libya's socialist era property policies continues to cast a long shadow over reconstruction efforts, particularly in Benghazi's old city. As one participant observed, "Some buildings have been in dispute since the nineteen seventies." This finding highlights the critical importance of addressing property rights and transitional justice issues early in the reconstruction process - a lesson that has relevance far beyond Benghazi.

Perhaps most significantly, this research demonstrates how reconstruction efforts that fail to meaningfully engage with community perspectives risk perpetuating rather than healing conflict-related divisions. The finding that 71% of surveyed householders reported no consultation about reconstruction projects reveals a systematic failure to incorporate local knowledge and needs into reconstruction planning. This exclusion not only undermines the effectiveness of reconstruction efforts but also represents a missed opportunity for building social cohesion and community resilience.

Looking forward, this research suggests several promising directions for improving post-conflict urban reconstruction. First, there is a clear need for more integrated approaches that balance immediate recovery needs with long-term development goals. Second, mechanisms for meaningful community participation must be embedded throughout the reconstruction process. Third, property rights and transitional justice issues must be addressed systematically rather than avoided or postponed.

Future research could productively explore several areas that this study has highlighted as particularly significant. The relationship between property rights resolution and reconstruction success warrants deeper investigation, as do mechanisms for effective community participation in reconstruction planning. Additionally, the development of sustainable financing mechanisms and approaches to cultural heritage preservation in post-conflict contexts emerge as important areas for further study.

The contribution of this research lies not only in its empirical findings but also in its demonstration of the value of examining reconstruction through the eyes of those most directly affected - the householders trying to rebuild their lives and communities. Their perspectives reveal both the limitations of current approaches to post-conflict reconstruction and potential pathways to more effective recovery strategies.

In conclusion, while the challenges of post-conflict urban reconstruction are substantial, this research suggests that more effective approaches are possible. These approaches must be grounded in community needs and perspectives, address underlying issues of property rights and transitional justice, and balance immediate recovery needs with long-term development goals. While Benghazi's reconstruction continues to face significant challenges, the insights gained from this study can contribute to improved reconstruction practices both in Libya and in other post-conflict contexts.

The path forward requires not only technical expertise and financial resources but also a fundamental rethinking of how we approach post-conflict reconstruction. By placing community perspectives at the centre of reconstruction planning and implementation, while addressing underlying issues of property rights and social justice, we can work toward reconstruction processes that not only rebuild cities but help heal divided communities. This represents both the challenge and the opportunity that post-conflict reconstruction presents.

9.1 Reflections on the Research Objectives and Aim

9.1.1 Objective 1: Reconstruction Process in Post-Conflict Contexts

Objective 1 was to examine the reconstruction process in post-conflict contexts, using Benghazi as a case study, and identify key findings and challenges. This study addressed Objective 1 by analysing Benghazi's post-2017 reconstruction trajectory in light of broader post-conflict experiences. A comprehensive literature review of post-conflict reconstruction (including cases like Mostar and Beirut) provided a benchmark for common practices and pitfalls, against which Benghazi's process was evaluated. Empirically, the research mapped out Benghazi's reconstruction phases from immediate relief to ongoing recovery, indicating a piecemeal and unstructured process rather than a systematic and strategic approach. Key findings indicate that the reconstruction process in Benghazi has been hampered by fragmented governance, unclear legal frameworks, and minimal community involvement, leading to a mismatch between implemented projects and local needs. Unlike some other post-conflict cities where either strong international coordination (e.g. Mostar) or centralised private-sector initiatives (e.g. Beirut) guided rebuilding, Benghazi's recovery has lacked an overarching authority or plan, resulting in competing priorities and limited coordination among stakeholders. This manifested in projects that often proceeded in isolation – for instance, commercial developments advancing while

residential areas remained in disrepair – illustrating the challenge of aligning efforts across various actors. The study highlighted several critical challenges intrinsic to Benghazi’s reconstruction process, notably: unresolved property ownership disputes dating back to earlier regimes, overlapping institutional responsibilities, and a paucity of consistent funding and expertise.

These challenges meant that even well-intended reconstruction activities frequently stalled or fell short of their goals. By documenting these issues, the research not only met Objective 1 but also underscored that post-conflict reconstruction is not a linear or purely technical process – it is highly contingent on governance structures, legal clarity, and community engagement. In reflecting on this objective, a significant insight is that Benghazi’s case reaffirms lessons from other contexts (the importance of coordination and inclusive planning) while also highlighting unique hurdles (like Libya’s property rights legacy) that can complicate the reconstruction process in a post-conflict city.

Overall, the study successfully examined the reconstruction process by combining global lessons with deep local analysis, thereby illuminating both the key accomplishments (such as initial infrastructure repairs and debris clearance) and the persistent challenges that define Benghazi’s post-conflict rebuilding effort.

9.1.2 Objective 2: Impact of Conflict on Residents and Urban Environment

Objective 2 aimed to assess the impact of the 2014–2017-armed conflict on Benghazi’s residents and urban environment, supported by empirical data. The research addressed this objective through detailed quantitative and qualitative data collection that captured the conflict’s multifaceted toll on the city. Empirical evidence from the household survey and interviews paints a stark picture of widespread disruption and damage. Physically, the city suffered extensive destruction: entire districts were scarred by war, with the historic city centre especially hard-hit – over 460 buildings in the Old City were completely demolished and more than 2,100 seriously damaged during the fighting. Critical infrastructure and public facilities (such as hospitals, schools, and utilities) were heavily affected, contributing to the collapse of basic services in some areas at the peak of the conflict. The human impact was equally significant. Nearly one-third of surveyed residents (31.1%) were displaced to other cities at

some point during the conflict, and an additional share relocated to safer neighbourhoods within Benghazi. This displacement, combined with battle-related devastation, gave rise to new informal settlements on the city's periphery and left formerly populous quarters depopulated or abandoned. Survey data confirm that the majority of households experienced damage to their homes – over one-quarter reported “minor” damage and roughly one in ten (8.4%) lost their homes entirely to destruction. These quantitative findings are corroborated by qualitative accounts of hardship: interview participants described living for years in partially destroyed buildings or overcrowded relatives' homes, underlining the conflict's lasting impact on shelter and living conditions. Moreover, 88% of respondents indicated they received no aid or support during the conflict, highlighting the near-total breakdown of institutional assistance for civilians during the war. This lack of support exacerbated suffering and forced residents to rely on personal networks or meagre resources to survive and repair damages. The conflict's impact on the urban environment extended beyond structures and demographics to include economic and environmental dimensions. Local commerce was disrupted as many businesses in hard-hit zones were forced to close or relocate, reshaping Benghazi's economic geography as new commercial hubs emerged in relatively intact areas. Environmentally, the city faces post-war hazards: rubble and unexploded ordnance scattered in affected districts and potential contamination from munitions have created long-term public health risks. Residents expressed concern about these hidden dangers, noting that rebuilding is hampered not just by physical destruction but also by the need to clear dangerous debris and rehabilitate damaged ecosystems. In sum, through surveys capturing statistics on displacement, damage, and aid, and through interviews giving voice to personal experiences, the study comprehensively documented how the conflict devastated Benghazi's social fabric and urban landscape. Objective 2 has thus been fulfilled by quantifying the conflict's impact – human displacement, housing loss, infrastructure collapse – and by elucidating the lived reality behind those numbers. These findings provide a sobering empirical basis for understanding the scale of recovery required, firmly grounding the reconstruction discourse in the concrete challenges Benghazi's people and environment have endured.

9.1.3 Objective 3: Efforts of Active Actors in Recovery and Stabilization

Objective 3 set out to investigate the efforts of active actors in the recovery and stabilization of Benghazi. The study addressed this by examining the roles and contributions of key

stakeholders – including local government bodies, national authorities, international organizations, and community groups – in the post-conflict reconstruction phase. Data were gathered on both the formal initiatives led by officials and the informal or grassroots efforts that emerged. The findings reveal a complex patchwork of actors working to rebuild Benghazi, with local actors bearing the primary responsibility for recovery. In the absence of a strong unified national reconstruction program or significant international reconstruction mission, the Municipality of Benghazi and the Interim Government (east Libya's authorities) became the main drivers of rebuilding efforts. These entities focused on restoring basic services (such as reopening roads, reconnecting electricity and water lines in war-torn districts) and facilitating debris removal and emergency repairs. However, the effectiveness of their efforts has been limited by several factors uncovered in the research. One major issue has been fragmented governance and poor coordination: with multiple power centres and agencies involved, Benghazi's post-conflict governance was often disjointed, leading to redundant or conflicting recovery projects. For example, respondents noted instances of different government departments or committees working on similar tasks without harmonization, and projects being announced but not followed through due to administrative changes or funding shortfalls. The study also found that international involvement in Benghazi's reconstruction was minimal, especially when compared to other post-conflict contexts. Unlike Mostar, which benefited from intensive oversight and funding by the international community, or Beirut, which saw large-scale private investment, Benghazi received limited external aid or NGO support for reconstruction. Political instability and Libya's international isolation during the study period meant that recovery largely depended on local capacity. A consequence of this was that certain tasks, like clearing unexploded ordnance or rebuilding large public facilities, overwhelmed the resources of local actors and proceeded slowly or not at all. The research documented some community-led and civil society initiatives – for instance, neighbourhood volunteer groups involved in cleaning streets or minor repairs – but these remained small in scale relative to the city's needs.

Overall, active actors made important but uneven contributions to Benghazi's stabilization. Security forces succeeded in securing most areas by 2017, which was a prerequisite for any rebuilding, and the municipal authorities did make progress in reopening the city (e.g., restoring traffic through key roads and reactivating hospitals and schools that could be salvaged). However, the public perception of these efforts was largely negative, as captured by the survey: residents rated the performance of municipal and government reconstruction efforts at only 1.76 out of 5 on average, reflecting dissatisfaction with the pace and scope of recovery. Interviews echoed this sentiment, with many participants criticizing what they saw as a lack of clear vision and competency among the officials in charge. Some stakeholders, such as utility companies or private contractors, were active in specific domains (for example, repairing the electrical grid or roads rebuilding), but there was no central coordination mechanism to unify these contributions. The research thus fulfilled Objective 3 by critically evaluating each major actor's role: what was done, what fell short, and why. It became evident that while the intent and effort from local actors were present, structural challenges – from bureaucratic bottlenecks to legal and political disputes– impeded their effectiveness. In reflecting on this objective, the study highlights that the overall reconstruction effort in Benghazi has been less than the sum of its parts: numerous actors are involved, but their potential impact has been curtailed by fragmentation and lack of collaboration. This finding underscores a key lesson: successful post-conflict recovery requires not just the presence of active actors, but mechanisms to align their objectives, streamline their initiatives, and integrate community input (something largely missing in Benghazi's case). By documenting both the contributions and the shortcomings of Benghazi's active actors, the research provides a nuanced understanding of the city's stabilization process and identifies where coordination and support must improve going forward.

9.1.4 Objective 4: Residents' Perceptions of Reconstruction

Objective 4 sought to explore the perceptions of Benghazi's residents regarding the reconstruction efforts, using insights from both qualitative and quantitative data. The study squarely addressed this objective through the large-scale household survey and in-depth interviews, which together captured how ordinary citizens view the progress and priorities of post-conflict rebuilding. The results reveal a citizenry that is deeply frustrated and disillusioned with the reconstruction to date yet still invested in the future of their city and eager to have their voices heard. Quantitatively, the survey provided clear indicators of public sentiment: as noted, overall satisfaction with current reconstruction efforts was extremely low (averaging 1.76 out of 5), indicating that most residents feel the recovery has been inadequate. Additionally, an overwhelming majority reported feeling excluded from the rebuilding process 71% of respondents said they had no opportunity to participate or be consulted about reconstruction projects in their own neighbourhoods. This lack of community engagement has evidently bred resentment and mistrust. Many residents perceive the reconstruction as something being "done to" the city by authorities or outside contractors, rather than a process working *with* the community. The qualitative data strongly reinforce these findings. Interview participants frequently expressed that the wrong priorities were being pursued in the rebuilding. A common theme was that visible, high-profile projects (such as rehabilitating downtown commercial areas or cosmetic improvements along main boulevards) were taking precedence over the basic needs of citizens – namely, repairing residential areas, restoring essential services in local districts, and rebuilding schools and clinics. *"They are focusing on the city centre and new investments, while our own street still has ruins and no working water,"* one resident complained, summarizing a widespread sentiment. Such perceptions highlight a disconnect between what residents value and what they see happening on the ground. Indeed, the study found that many residents felt that commercial redevelopment was prioritised over housing and essential services, leading to anger that reconstruction efforts were not addressing the most urgent humanitarian needs. The exclusion of local voices from

planning has only amplified this frustration, leaving communities feeling powerless to influence the future of their city. However, alongside criticism, the research also uncovered hopeful and constructive perspectives among Benghazi's residents. People articulated a clear vision of what true recovery means to them. Notably, there is a strong public desire to preserve Benghazi's cultural heritage as part of reconstruction – respondents overwhelmingly supported the restoration of historic mosques and traditional markets, seeing these sites as vital to their community's identity and memory. Likewise, there was near-universal agreement in the survey on the importance of social recovery: for example, support for peacebuilding and community reconciliation initiatives scored 4.55 out of 5, one of the highest consensus ratings in the questionnaire. This indicates that residents view reconstruction in holistic terms – not just the rebuilding of physical structures, but also the healing of social divisions and the return of a sense of normalcy and unity. Interviews echoed this, with participants emphasizing that rebuilding trust and relationships among Benghazi's people is as important as bricks and mortar. Several interviewees, while still upset about the slow pace of rebuilding, noted positive changes like the return of security and the reopening of schools as first steps towards normal life, suggesting a cautious optimism that with the right approach, the city can recover. The qualitative data also added nuance to the understanding of public perceptions. For instance, issues of property rights and compensation emerged in interviews as a significant concern – people are anxious about whether they will be able to return to or rebuild on their properties (some of which are entangled in legal disputes) and feel that clarity on these matters is crucial for them to move forward. Such insights were less apparent in the survey results, demonstrating how the interviews enriched the findings by highlighting personal experiences and concerns (like the fate of specific landmarks or neighbourhoods) that a broad survey could only partially capture. Moreover, the study found that residents' perceptions are deeply

coloured by their emotional and psychological state after the conflict. Many are still coping with trauma and loss, which in some cases tempers their outlook on reconstruction. *“It’s difficult to think objectively about rebuilding when you’re still dealing with the pain of what happened,”* confessed one participant, reflecting the heavy emotional burden that can influence how people judge reconstruction efforts. This suggests that even well-designed reconstruction plans might be met with public scepticism or apathy if the community’s psychosocial needs are not addressed in parallel. In fulfilling Objective 4, the study ensured that Benghazi’s residents are not seen as passive recipients of reconstruction, but as critical observers and stakeholders with their own priorities. Their perceptions, as documented by this research, provide a valuable reality-check for reconstruction authorities: the true measure of post-conflict recovery lies in how it improves daily life for the people. The combined quantitative and qualitative findings give a balanced view – quantitatively, the depth of dissatisfaction and specific areas of concern are laid bare in statistics, and qualitatively, the human stories and suggestions behind those numbers are heard. This objective has been fully addressed, as the study has captured the voice of the community: one that calls for a reconstruction process that is faster, fairer, more inclusive, and attuned to both the material and social restoration of the city.

9.2 Aim: Achieving the Overall Study Aim

The overall aim of the study was to critically evaluate Benghazi’s post-conflict reconstruction process – including its challenges, impacts, stakeholders, and community perspectives – in order to deepen understanding of post-conflict reconstruction and inform better practices. Reflecting on the research as a whole, this aim has been substantially achieved. Each of the research objectives was met (as discussed above), contributing a piece of the larger puzzle and together providing a holistic understanding of Benghazi’s reconstruction in the 2017–2023 period. By examining the process, impacts, actors, and perceptions in tandem,

the study offers a 360-degree evaluation of the city's recovery efforts. Crucially, the research did not stop at describing what happened; it also engaged critically with *why* certain outcomes occurred and *how* reconstruction could be improved, thus translating analysis into meaningful insights. In terms of the aim's substantive focus, the study successfully identified the core challenges in Benghazi's reconstruction – from governance issues and legal obstacles to resource shortfalls and social exclusion – and analysed their implications. It demonstrated how these challenges collectively led to a gap between reconstruction ambitions and on-the-ground realities. The aim also emphasized understanding the *impacts* of conflict and reconstruction, which the study accomplished by documenting the extensive physical destruction and social upheaval wrought by the conflict and then showing how the pace and nature of reconstruction have affected residents (for example, the slow housing recovery prolonging displacement for many families). By involving the community's perspective, the research ensured that the evaluation of reconstruction is grounded in the lived experience of those it is meant to help – a standpoint often missing in high-level assessments. This community-cantered approach has enriched the overall understanding of post-conflict reconstruction, highlighting that technical rebuilding efforts must align with the population's needs and expectations to truly succeed. The study's findings contribute to the broader field of post-conflict reconstruction in several ways, thereby fulfilling the aim of enhancing our understanding of such processes. First, Benghazi's case provides a pertinent example of reconstruction in a context of ongoing political instability (Libya's fragmented governance), which is a scenario less documented in literature that often focuses on post-conflict situations under a stable peace accord or international trusteeship. The research shows how reconstruction unfolds when there isn't a singular national program or strong external oversight – a situation likely to be encountered in other conflict-affected countries as well. This adds to our knowledge by

illustrating the risks of uncoordinated reconstruction and the importance of interim governance arrangements. Second, the study sheds light on the intersection of physical and social reconstruction. It became evident that physical rebuilding (roads, buildings, services) in Benghazi cannot be divorced from social dynamics (community trust, return of displaced populations, reconciliation). The research documented cases were neglecting the social dimension – for instance, not involving residents in decisions or not prioritizing housing for returnees – undermined the success of physical reconstruction projects. In doing so, it reinforces a key principle in post-conflict recovery: sustainable urban reconstruction requires addressing social healing and stakeholder inclusion alongside bricks-and-mortar projects. This insight contributes a nuanced understanding that can inform reconstruction strategies in other contexts: rebuilding a city is not just an engineering challenge, but a socio-political one. Lastly, an integral part of the study's aim was to develop evidence-based recommendations for improving post-conflict reconstruction. By achieving its objectives, the research was able to propose a set of tailored recommendations for Benghazi's context – such as establishing more inclusive planning processes, resolving property rights issues, and enhancing coordination mechanisms – which are grounded in the empirical findings. In reflecting on the aim, we consider whether the study has advanced knowledge and practice in a meaningful way. The answer is affirmative: the study not only met its specific goals in Benghazi but also offers transferable lessons for the wider discourse on rebuilding war-torn cities. It highlights, for example, the profound consequences of excluding local populations from reconstruction planning, echoing lessons from other cases but now backed by data from Libya. It also brings forward less emphasized issues (like the legacy of past regimes' housing policies on current reconstruction) into the conversation, thereby broadening the scope of factors practitioners and scholars must consider. In sum, the overall aim has been achieved in that the research provides a comprehensive,

critical evaluation of post-conflict reconstruction in Benghazi, and through that case, contributes to a deeper understanding of how cities can recover after conflict. The knowledge gained – both the successes and failures observed – serves to guide not only Benghazi’s future efforts but also offers insight for other post-conflict settings. The study concludes that effective post-conflict reconstruction requires a balanced approach: one that marries physical rebuilding with social rehabilitation, immediate recovery actions with long-term planning, and top-down initiatives with bottom-up participation. This overarching conclusion directly stems from the fulfilled aim of examining Benghazi’s reconstruction in depth, and it stands as a key contribution of this research to the field of post-conflict urban development.

9.3 Contribution to Knowledge

This research makes several original contributions to knowledge, spanning empirical insights, theoretical understanding, and methodological approaches in the context of post-conflict reconstruction.

Empirical Contributions: The study provides new, field-based empirical evidence on post-conflict reconstruction from the perspective of an under-researched context (Benghazi, Libya). Prior to this work, very little data existed on how the 2014–2017 conflict had affected Benghazi’s urban fabric and how residents viewed reconstruction efforts. By surveying 238 householders and interviewing 10 participants, the research offers a rich dataset that documents the realities of rebuilding in Benghazi – including the extent of war damage, displacement patterns, levels of satisfaction with reconstruction, and community priorities. These findings fill a gap in the literature by adding a Libyan case study to the canon of post-conflict urban research, which has historically been dominated by cases from the Balkans, the Middle East (Beirut, Baghdad), and Southeast Asia. The householder-centric data is particularly novel: the quantitative measures of community sentiment (e.g., the low 1.76/5 satisfaction score and other statistics) and the qualitative narratives from residents provide empirical grounding for issues that were previously anecdotal or assumed. For example, the study empirically establishes the

disconnect between official reconstruction narratives and on-the-ground outcomes, evidenced by 88% of respondents reporting no aid received and the majority perceiving little to no consultation. Such empirical findings are significant because they offer a reality-check against which policy and scholarly assumptions can be tested. In essence, the research contributes a case-specific evidence base that not only enriches understanding of Benghazi's situation but also serves as a point of comparison for other post-conflict cities.

Furthermore, the study was conducted in 2021, a critical period after the end of the 2014–2017 conflict, allowing for an assessment of the medium-term recovery phase. This timing is significant as it captures post-conflict dynamics after the initial emergency response, offering insights into how reconstruction efforts evolved in the years following the cessation of hostilities. By collecting data through surveys and interviews four years after the conflict ended, the study was able to document long-term challenges, shifting resident priorities, and emerging reconstruction patterns that may not have been evident in the immediate aftermath. The fieldwork timing also ensured that respondents had experienced a prolonged period of post-war urban transformation, making their reflections more comprehensive and informed. This contribution is particularly valuable in understanding how post-conflict recovery unfolds over time, providing a nuanced perspective that complements studies conducted in immediate post-war contexts.

Theoretical Contributions: The findings of this research carry implications for theoretical frameworks of post-conflict reconstruction and urban recovery. One key contribution is the highlighted relationship between physical reconstruction and social recovery. While reconstruction theory acknowledges that rebuilding infrastructure and buildings is intertwined with restoring social cohesion, the Benghazi case provides concrete confirmation and elaboration of this principle. The study shows that neglecting social dynamics (such as community trust, equity, and inclusion) can significantly undermine physical reconstruction efforts – a point that theory often posits but is now backed by evidence from Benghazi. This contributes to theory by underscoring the concept of an integrated reconstruction approach: the research recommends that post-conflict reconstruction models must simultaneously address technical rebuilding and social issues (e.g. property rights, community engagement) to be successful. Additionally, the study expands theoretical discussions on governance in post-conflict settings. It provides insight into how fragmented governance and historical institutional legacies (like Libya's past socialist policies on land and housing) impact

reconstruction. The identification of unresolved property rights from prior regimes as a major impediment is a theoretical contribution, as it draws attention to the temporal dimension of conflict recovery – current reconstruction can be hindered or shaped by pre-conflict and conflict-era decisions and policies.

This finding suggests that theories of post-conflict reconstruction need to integrate an understanding of legal and institutional continuity/discontinuity from pre-conflict periods. Moreover, by comparing Benghazi's reconstruction to other models (internationally driven vs. privately-driven), the research contributes to a theoretical typology of post-conflict reconstruction approaches. It illustrates a case where neither a strong state nor international actors took the lead, resulting in a local-actors-driven model that had its own outcomes and challenges. This can inform theoretical models by adding a variant to the spectrum of reconstruction paradigms (i.e., a *local/self-reliant reconstruction* scenario). In summary, the study's theoretical contribution lies in validating, refining, and extending existing theories with evidence from Benghazi – confirming known concepts like the need for community participation, while also bringing new factors (like legacy property issues and multi-actor fragmentation) into the theoretical conversation about how post-conflict reconstruction unfolds.

Methodological Contributions: Methodologically, this research demonstrates an innovative and rigorous approach to studying a post-conflict urban context. Conducting systematic research in an active post-conflict environment like Benghazi posed considerable challenges, and the strategies developed to overcome these challenges serve as a contribution for future researchers. The study successfully implemented a mixed-methods design – combining a structured quantitative survey with qualitative interviews – in a setting with security constraints and limited institutional data. One methodological insight from this effort is the viability of using online and remote survey tools to reach respondents in a conflict-affected city when face-to-face data collection is difficult. The high response rate achieved (and the volume of data collected) suggests that, with appropriate design and trust-building, conflict-zone populations can be engaged through digital means, which is a valuable lesson for researchers working under similar constraints. The research also placed strong emphasis on instrument validation and reliability in a context where standardized measures were lacking. The questionnaire was carefully developed and pilot-tested to ensure cultural relevance and clarity, and statistical tests (such as content validity checks and Cronbach's alpha for reliability) were employed to verify

that the survey instrument was robust. This thorough approach, often difficult to execute in unstable contexts, is a methodological contribution as it provides a template for maintaining scientific rigor in challenging field conditions. Additionally, the combination of quantitative and qualitative data in analysis demonstrated the value of methodological triangulation. The survey provided breadth – a broad quantification of trends – while interviews added depth and explanation, allowing the research to cross-verify findings and explore nuances (for instance, statistical data showed low satisfaction, and interviews helped explain the reasons behind that discontent. By presenting how these methods can be effectively integrated, the study contributes a case example of mixed-methods research design in post-disaster/post-conflict studies. Another methodological contribution is related to ethical and participatory research practices in a post-conflict setting: the study had to navigate sensitive questions about conflict experiences and government performance, doing so in a way that respected respondents' trauma and security (e.g. anonymizing data, obtaining informed consent under difficult circumstances). Documenting these practices provides guidance on ethical research conduct in similar volatile environments. In essence, the methodological innovations and careful execution of this study offer a model for replicable research in other conflict-affected urban settings, illustrating that even amid instability, one can gather reliable, meaningful data by adapting methods to context.

Overall, the study's contributions to knowledge are multifaceted. Empirically, it adds Benghazi's story – with all its data and insights – to the global understanding of post-conflict reconstruction. Theoretically, it refines and broadens reconstruction paradigms by highlighting the critical importance of aligning physical rebuilding with social context and by introducing considerations of historical legacies and local governance complexities. Methodologically, it provides a tested approach for future scholars to engage with difficult, post-conflict environments in a systematic and sensitive manner. These contributions advance academic knowledge and also have practical relevance, equipping policymakers and practitioners with evidence and strategies drawn from a real-world post-conflict scenario.

9.4 Replicability and Applicability of Findings

While this study is grounded in the specific context of Benghazi, its insights carry relevance for post-conflict reconstruction in other similar settings, though with some caveats. Many of

the challenges and dynamics identified in Benghazi echo patterns observed in other war-affected cities, suggesting a degree of replicability of the findings. For instance, the gap between top-down reconstruction approaches and community needs is not unique to Benghazi – the analysis noted parallels in places like Beirut and Mostar, where reconstruction efforts led by elites or external actors were critiqued for marginalizing local voices.

The dissatisfaction stemming from limited public participation and transparency in Benghazi resonates with these cases, implying that the study's call for inclusive, community-driven reconstruction has broad applicability. Additionally, issues such as coordination failures among stakeholders, the struggle to secure funding, and the slow pace of housing recovery are common in post-conflict scenarios from Bosnia to Afghanistan, which means that the lessons learned in Benghazi (e.g. the need for a centralized reconstruction authority or the benefit of one-stop property claim mechanisms) could inform strategies elsewhere. The importance of addressing social healing alongside physical rebuilding – a key takeaway from this research – is a principle that can improve reconstruction outcomes in any post-conflict city. The finding that residents highly value reconciliation and cultural heritage preservation is likely generalizable to other contexts; in many war-torn communities, people seek acknowledgment of their suffering and restoration of their cultural landmarks as part of recovery, not just new buildings. Thus, one broader implication of this study is reinforcing the idea that post-conflict interventions must be people-centered – a notion that practitioners in different settings can adopt and test. The study's methodology and approach to data collection also have a replicable quality. By demonstrating that meaningful data can be gathered from civilians in a conflict-affected city through careful planning, the research provides a template that could be applied to other contexts (for example, a similar survey could be deployed in cities like Aleppo or Mosul to gauge public perceptions of reconstruction there). Such comparative application would further validate the findings and contribute to a cross-context understanding of post-conflict reconstruction.

However, it is important to note the limitations of generalizing these results beyond Benghazi's unique context. Post-conflict environments differ widely in their political, cultural, and economic conditions, which can influence reconstruction in distinct ways. Benghazi's situation – characterized by Libya's fragmented governance, the absence of a comprehensive peace agreement, and the legacy of specific past policies (like Gaddafi-era property confiscations) – is in many ways singular. For example, the property rights disputes that emerged as a major

hurdle in Benghazi stem from Libya's historical context and years of conflict-induced displacement; other post-conflict cities might not face this exact issue or face it in a different form. Similarly, Benghazi's predominantly local-driven reconstruction (with scant international aid) differs from cases where large UN or donor-led programs are present – hence, some findings (like the consequences of having minimal external oversight) might not apply in a scenario where international agencies are heavily involved. The study's recommendations for Benghazi (such as specific legal reforms or governance structures) are tailored to its context and would need adaptation before applying to another city. In essence, while the thematic findings (e.g. the value of community engagement, or the need to balance immediate and long-term goals) are broadly relevant, the context-specific details (e.g. dealing with socialist-era housing claims) limit one-to-one generalization. Future research should be cautious to account for local conditions when extrapolating from Benghazi's experience. The research acknowledges that factors like cultural norms, the nature of the conflict (ethnic, sectarian, ideological, etc.), and the capacity of institutions can lead to different reconstruction trajectories. For instance, in a post-conflict city with a strong central government, coordination might be less of an issue, whereas in a city emerging from a sectarian war, social cohesion might be an even bigger challenge than in Benghazi. Thus, the applicability of findings is highest for contexts that share key similarities with Benghazi – mid-sized cities that have experienced heavy urban warfare, in countries with governance vacuums or transitions, and where reconstruction is occurring amid ongoing political uncertainty. In those cases, this study's insights on community dissatisfaction, actor fragmentation, and the necessity of addressing legal/institutional voids can be extremely informative. Conversely, in very different contexts, the findings serve more as a comparative reference point, reminding researchers and practitioners of the range of issues that *can* arise, even if not all will manifest similarly. In conclusion, the study contributes to a wider body of knowledge on post-conflict reconstruction that others can draw from, but it does not pretend to be universally generalizable. Instead, it offers evidence and lessons that are indicative rather than definitive. The true test of replicability will be through further studies – by applying similar analyses to other post-conflict cities and seeing which patterns hold and which diverge. By openly discussing Benghazi's contextual particularities, this research invites such comparative work and provides a foundation upon which the broader general understanding of post-conflict reconstruction can be built.

9.5 Limitations of the Study

Despite its comprehensive approach, this study faced several **limitations** that should be acknowledged, as they contextualize the findings and suggest caution in interpretation. These limitations arose from methodological constraints, practical challenges in the field, and the inherent complexity of the post-conflict environment:

Security and Timing Constraints: Conducting research in Benghazi's post-conflict setting imposed strict limitations on fieldwork. Data collection had to be completed in a relatively short window (February to May 2022) during a period of fragile stability. Ongoing security concerns – including intermittent violence, the presence of unexploded ordnance, and military checkpoints – restricted access to certain neighbourhoods and necessitated a cautious, expedited research schedule. The short timeframe, while ensuring researcher safety, meant that the study provides a “snapshot” of the situation. It was not feasible to remain in the field for longitudinal observation or to return multiple times to capture changes. Thus, some longer-term developments in reconstruction may not be reflected in the data, and the conditions described are specific to early 2022.

Pandemic Impact and Data Collection Mode: Compounding the security issues, the COVID-19 pandemic was ongoing during the research period. Public health measures and travellers' restrictions limited face-to-face interactions. To adapt, the study relied heavily on online and remote data collection for the survey. While this approach allowed outreach to a large number of participants without physical meetings, it potentially introduced sampling biases. In a city where internet access is uneven, the digital divide might have meant certain groups (e.g. older residents, those in poorer or more damaged areas with less connectivity) were underrepresented. Moreover, online surveys require literacy and a degree of technical comfort, which could skew the sample toward more educated respondents. The team mitigated this by also distributing some paper questionnaires in accessible areas, but the bias cannot be fully eliminated. Therefore, while the survey sample was sizable, it may not perfectly mirror the entire demographic profile of Benghazi's population.

Dynamic Situation During Research: Post-conflict reconstruction is a moving target – projects commence, policies change, and new actors emerge even as research is underway. The Benghazi context was no exception; conditions were continuously evolving during the study. For instance, some reconstruction projects that were in planning during our interviews might

have started implementation by the time analysis was completed, and leadership positions within local agencies changed over the course of the year. Such dynamics mean that some findings represent a situation that could shift: a snapshot rather than a static truth. While the analysis noted these where known, there is an inherent limitation in that any study of an ongoing process can become partially out-of-date as the process advances. Readers should interpret the findings with the understanding that they describe Benghazi's reconstruction as of early 2023; subsequent progress (or setbacks) may not be captured.

Gender representation: in the study was affected by cultural and social factors. The majority of survey respondents (81.5%) were male, reflecting both cultural norms in accessing household heads and the challenges of reaching female respondents in the post-conflict context. While efforts were made to include female perspectives, their representation in the study remains limited.

Respondent Bias and Emotional Context: Given the traumatic backdrop of war, responses in both survey and interviews may be influenced by emotional factors. Many participants had endured significant losses (family members, homes, livelihoods), which can colour their outlook. The study found evidence that trauma and psychological stress affected how people perceived and reported on reconstruction – for example, some interviewees acknowledged difficulty in separating their personal pain from their assessment of rebuilding efforts. There is a risk of response bias where respondents could paint an overly negative picture due to despair or, conversely, downplay issues as a coping mechanism. Additionally, topics related to political responsibility or sensitive events might have led to cautious or guarded answers, given fear of reprisal or scepticism about speaking openly. The research took steps to create a safe, anonymous environment for participants, but in a post-conflict society mistrust can linger. This context may have limited the Candor of some responses or the willingness of some individuals to participate at all, which is a constraint on the data's completeness.

Scope and Generalizability: By design, this research is a single-case study deeply focused on Benghazi. Contextual factors unique to Benghazi and Libya at large limit the direct generalizability of the results to other conflicts. The aim was depth over breadth, which means the conclusions are tightly linked to the local scenario. While comparative references were made (to draw contrasts or parallels), the study did not include a multi-case analysis that would more rigorously test which findings hold across different settings. Thus, some patterns identified may be idiosyncratic to Benghazi. Readers and practitioners should be careful in

extrapolating these results elsewhere without considering contextual differences. This is less a flaw than a characteristic of the research scope, but it is a limitation in terms of the breadth of applicability (as discussed in the replicability section). Further comparative work is needed to determine how widely the lessons from Benghazi apply.

It is important to stress that none of these limitations invalidate the study's findings, but they provide crucial context for them. By being transparent about constraints – whether due to field conditions, sample composition, or scope – the research allows others to understand the potential influences on the data. In fact, these limitations themselves offer insights into the challenges of doing research in post-conflict environments. The mixed methods design of the study, involving both quantitative and qualitative approaches, helped mitigate some limitations (for example, interviews helped probe issues that the survey's biases might have obscured, and vice versa). Nonetheless, acknowledging these limitations is key for a fair assessment of the study's conclusions. Future research can build on this foundation, addressing these gaps – for instance, by conducting longer-term follow-ups, ensuring more inclusive sampling, or extending the inquiry to additional cases – to further test and refine the knowledge established here.

9.6 Recommendations for Further Research

Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to track Benghazi's reconstruction over time. A long-term assessment of public satisfaction, policy impacts, and housing recovery would provide insights into whether governance, funding, and planning strategies evolve effectively. Such studies would help identify the sustainability of reconstruction efforts and highlight areas requiring further intervention.

A comparative analysis of post-conflict cities would offer valuable lessons by examining similarities and differences between Benghazi and other cities that have undergone reconstruction, such as Mosul, Aleppo, and Sarajevo. This cross-case approach would refine global models for urban recovery, helping to identify best practices and avoid repeating ineffective strategies.

The effectiveness of governance and coordination mechanisms in reconstruction should also be a focus of future research. Examining different governance models, institutional reforms, and coordination between local and national actors would help address inefficiencies in

decision-making and policy implementation. Special attention should be given to property disputes and legal frameworks, which have posed significant challenges to Benghazi's rebuilding process.

Community engagement and public participation in reconstruction planning need further exploration. Research should assess the impact of participatory budgeting, digital platforms for citizen feedback, and public consultation meetings in ensuring more inclusive decision-making. Understanding how to better integrate local voices into urban recovery efforts can help rebuild public trust and create reconstruction projects that align with community needs.

A critical area for further study is the role of gender and social inclusion in post-conflict reconstruction. Research should examine how reconstruction policies affect women's access to housing, employment. Additionally, understanding the specific challenges faced by youth and marginalised communities can help develop more equitable rebuilding strategies that can contribute to more inclusive and representative recovery processes.

Beyond physical reconstruction, research should explore the social and psychological recovery of communities. Investigating the role of cultural heritage restoration, community reconciliation programs, and trauma support initiatives would provide insights into how rebuilding efforts can contribute to long-term stability and healing.

Finally, there is a need for monitoring and evaluation frameworks to assess the impact of reconstruction initiatives. Regular evaluations would improve transparency, highlight successes and shortcomings, and ensure that projects remain aligned with the evolving needs of the population.

In summary, the findings and limitations of this study open up numerous pathways for further inquiry. Addressing these recommendations will not only enhance the academic understanding of post-conflict reconstruction but also directly support practitioners working to rebuild cities like Benghazi. By pursuing longitudinal analyses, comparative studies, focused deep-dives, and inclusive research, the scholarly community can continue to expand upon the foundation laid by this research. Such efforts will help ensure that future post-conflict reconstruction is guided by robust evidence and truly meets the needs of those it aims to serve.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: NVivo



C:\Users\joh18217\OneDrive - University of

- Case Classifications
- Cases
- Codes
- Codes\Beirut
- Codes\Benghazi - Libya
- Codes\Coventry
- Codes\Methodology
- Codes\Mostar
- Codes\SARAJEVO
- Coding Matrices
- Dynamic Sets
- External
- File Classifications
- Files
- Files\I.R.
- Formatted Reports
- Framework Matrices
- Maps
- Memos
- Query Criteria
- Query Results
- Relationship Types
- Sentiment
- Static Sets
- Summaries
- Text Reports

Code	Code	Saleh.Almogte	02/05/2021 04:22	Saleh.Almogte	03/07/2021 02:07
Codes\Strategies	Code	Saleh.Almogte	04/05/2021 04:10	salehalmogte	20/06/2021 20:53

Codes\Beirut					
Codes\Beirut\Beirut	Code	Saleh.Almogte	05/05/2021 04:38	Saleh.Almogte	04/07/2021 23:26
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\Introducing	Code	salehalmogte	10/06/2021 21:18	salehalmogte	22/06/2021 02:11
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\Solidere	Code	Saleh.Almogte	05/05/2021 16:50	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 23:31
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\Solidere\Admari	Code	Saleh.Almogte	06/05/2021 04:31	salehalmogte	16/06/2021 29:49
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\Solidere\Ordn	Code	Saleh.Almogte	05/05/2021 16:53	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 23:31
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\Solidere\Disadv	Code	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 19:31	salehalmogte	27/06/2021 10:59
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\Solidere\Introdu	Code	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 01:56	salehalmogte	24/06/2021 02:02
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\Solidere\Recons	Code	salehalmogte	10/06/2021 21:58	salehalmogte	10/06/2021 21:40
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\Solidere\patial	Code	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 01:57	Saleh.Almogte	02/07/2021 22:10
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\South Lebanon	Code	Saleh.Almogte	02/05/2021 04:36	salehalmogte	07/06/2021 18:24
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\South Lebanon\Active actors	Code	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 16:18	salehalmogte	21/06/2021 01:10
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\South Lebanon\Deconstruction	Code	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 16:24	salehalmogte	21/06/2021 00:45
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\South Lebanon\Introduction	Code	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 13:35	salehalmogte	21/06/2021 00:54
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\South Lebanon\Reconstruction	Code	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 16:15	salehalmogte	22/06/2021 02:14
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\South Lebanon\Results	Code	salehalmogte	07/06/2021 18:24	salehalmogte	22/06/2021 02:27
Codes\Beirut\Beirut\South Lebanon\Spatial Effects	Code	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 01:58	salehalmogte	23/05/2021 23:33
Codes\Beirut\Idea	Code	Saleh.Almogte	29/10/2021 22:25	Saleh.Almogte	29/10/2021 22:25

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Page 3 of 19

30/10/2021 12:01

Hierarchical Name	Item Type	Created By Username	Created On	Modified By Username	Modified On
Codes\Beirut\Idea (2)	Code	Saleh.Almogte	29/10/2021 22:25	Saleh.Almogte	29/10/2021 22:25

Codes\Benghazi - Libya

Codes\Benghazi - Libya\Like Libya	Code	salehalmogte	03/06/2021 11:11	salehalmogte	03/06/2021 11:29
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Codes

Name	Files	Referenc
Reconstruction	13	18
Cultural heritage	1	1
Active actors	2	4
Collective Memory	3	7
Conservation & Mod	4	8
Continuity, Change,	1	2
Destruction impact	2	5
Economic	2	2
Improvement	1	1
Instability	1	2
Integration of activiti	2	4
Introduction	4	4
Knowledge gap	1	3
Libya	1	1
Local responses	1	1
Meticulously restorin	3	4
Participation	3	3
Prioritise	2	3
Protection	1	2
Recovery	7	18
Resilience	1	3
Sustainability	2	3
Integrated management	6	10
Prioritise	7	9
I.R.	5	6

☐ Periods post recovery
 ☐ Introduction
 ☐ Bridge
 ☐ effects
 ☐ Spatial Effects
 ☐ Records

[Files\Barakat, Sultan \(2020\) - \\$ 1 reference coded \[0.16% Coverage\]](#)
 Reference 1 - 0.16% Coverage
 in Bosnia and Croatia during the 1990s, on many occasions internally displaced persons and other vulnerable groups went without shelter since they were not allowed to utilise local buildings protected in the name of cultural heritage.

[Files\Barakat, Sultan; Zyck, Steven A. \(2009\) \(2\) - \\$ 1 reference coded \[0.18% Coverage\]](#)
 Reference 1 - 0.18% Coverage
 should be prioritised, and temporary structures should be established in war-torn countries to ensure an orderly and technically rooted reconstruction process as part of an 'architecture of integrated, directed recovery'.

[Files\Calame, Jon \(2003\) - \\$ 1 reference coded \[0.29% Coverage\]](#)
 Reference 1 - 0.29% Coverage
 The preceding concerns point to an overarching rule for post-disaster interventions: repair local systems first, and allow these to sustain long-term reconstruction. The health of communities, social functions, political mechanisms, and industries should be attended to before individual sites are addressed. A systems approach avoids idiosyncratic and uncoordinated projects which squander resources and undermine public confidence in the recovery process. Davis emphasizes this notion further when he suggests that the planning system should be the first item to be reviewed by recovery officials given "the very much more demanding context of reconstruction planning."41 Other researchers have pointed to the fallacy, implied here, of the uncritical implementation of procedures and policies developed during peacetime in a post-war scenario.

[Files\Danar, Asif Iqbal; Farias Ferreira, Marcos \(2021\) - \\$ 1 reference coded \[0.13% Coverage\]](#)
 Reference 1 - 0.13% Coverage
 The post-conflict programs need to outline, quantify, and prioritize the needs and actions required to achieve full recovery of social and economic conditions to prevent recurring conflict.

[Files\Driscoll, Dylan O \(2018\) - \\$ 2 references coded \[1.66% Coverage\]](#)
 Reference 1 - 0.32% Coverage
 Reconstruction should address the needs of the locals, rather than the elites responsible for the conflict in the first place. The focus should be on rebuilding the social contract and not on consolidating elite power and wealth.

Reference 2 - 1.34% Coverage
 Local needs
 It is important that reconstruction addresses the needs of the locals, particularly those that have been

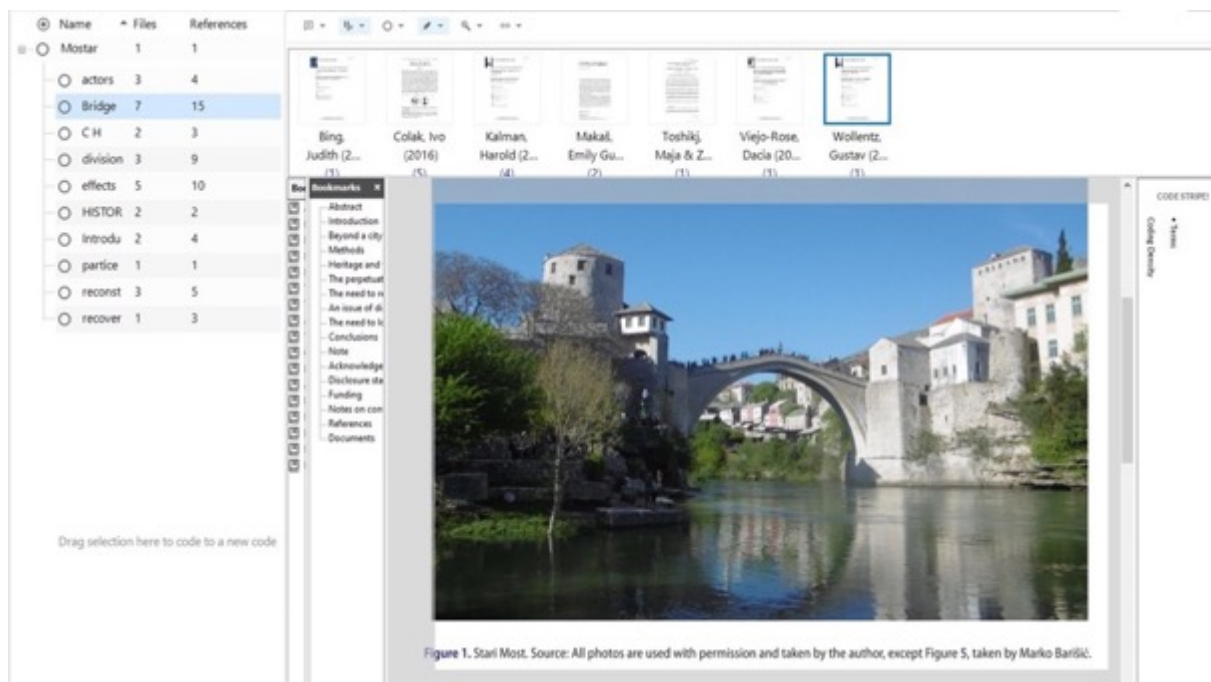
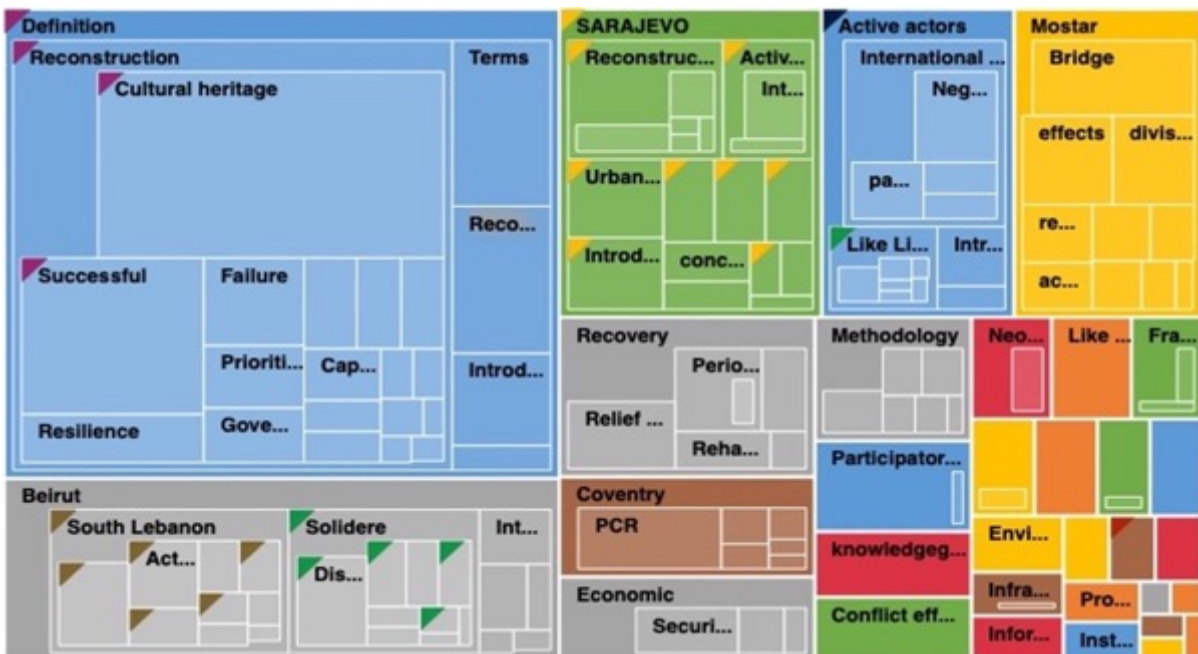
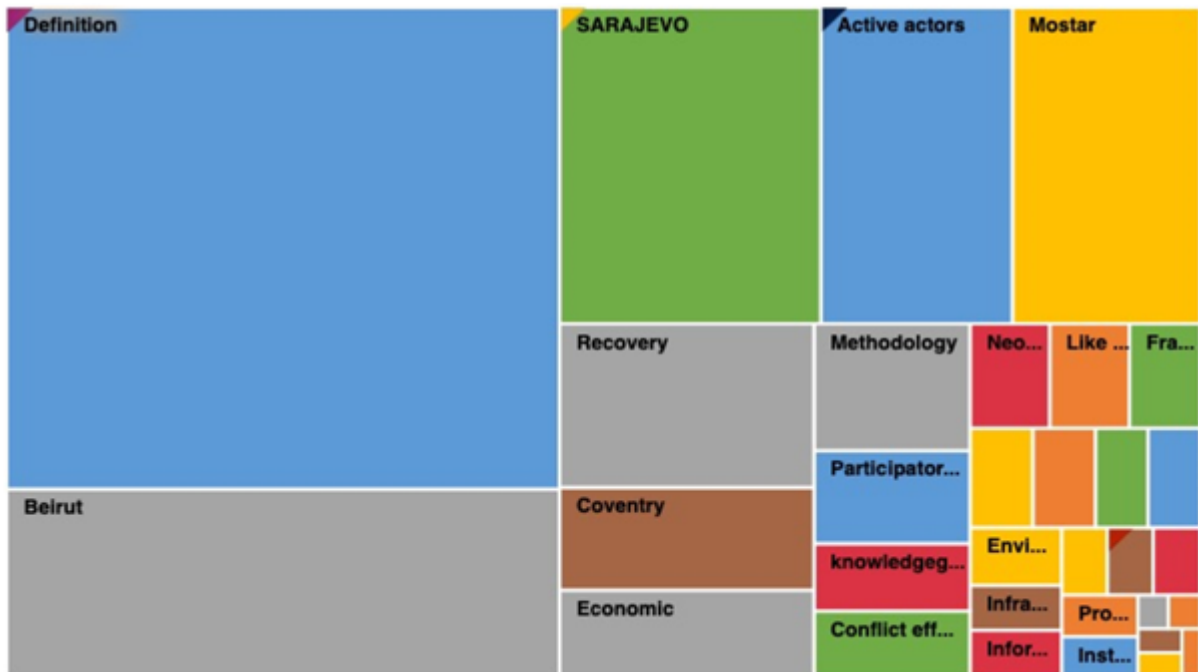


Figure 1. Stari Most. Source: All photos are used with permission and taken by the author, except Figure 5, taken by Marko Barišić.



This visualisation shows a Tree-map of the (Coding) Structure of a Project based on authors.



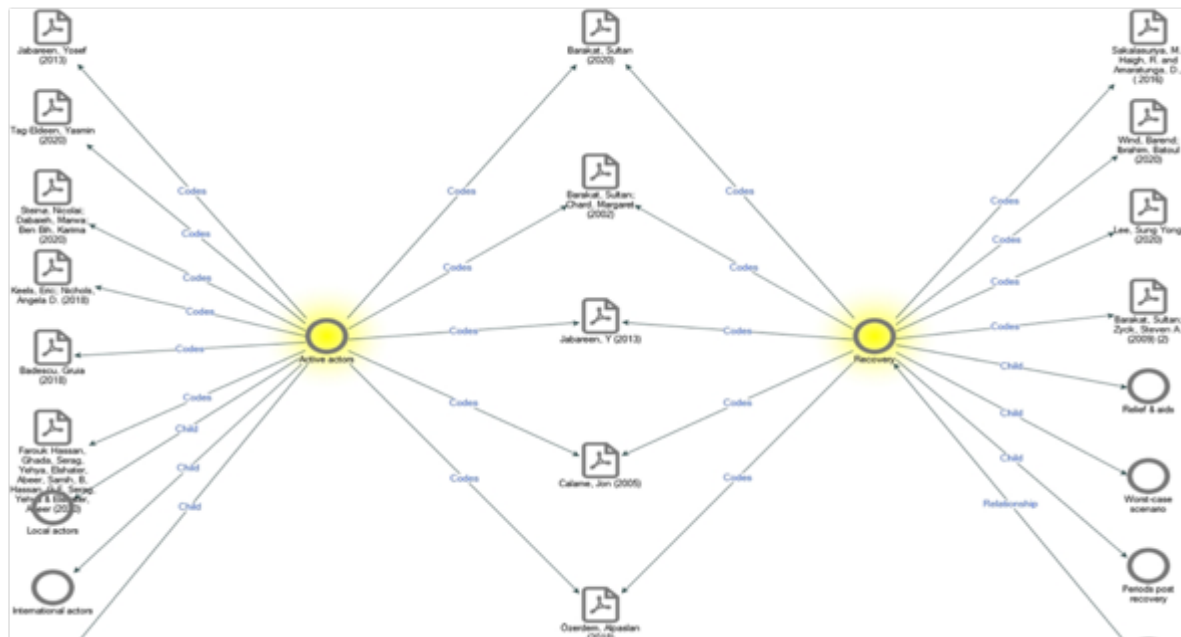
Word Tree



Word Tree

A word tree is created as part of a text search query. This word tree is interactive within NVivo, where a user may click on any branches to the left or the right of the focal word to

see the entire sentence or phrase. This visualisation allows researchers to understand the term used in various forms.



Comparison diagram

2. Review of Current Literature	
2.1 Defining the scope of post-conflict reconstruction	
2.2 The challenges of post-war reconstruction	
3 Built environments post-conflict	
3.1 Urban renewal	
3.2 Tensions around approaches to reconstruction	
4 Active actors' post-conflict	
4.1 International involvement in reconstruction	
4.2 Local involvement in reconstruction	
4.3 Implications of external funding	
5 Cultural heritage in post-conflict cities	
5.1 Cultural heritage in the built environment post-conflict.....	
5.2 Cultural heritage recovery and conservation approaches	
5.2.1 Choices about how to restore cultural heritage.....	
5.2.2 Steps in restoring cultural heritage	
6 Active actors and local participation.....	
6.1 Collective memory in post-conflict cities.....	

Appendix 2: The Approved Ethics Form

OFFICE USE ONLY
UECREP
Date
Paper



Ethics Application Form

Please answer all questions

1. Title of the investigation

Reconstruction challenges in post-conflict cities

Please state the title on the PIS and Consent Form, if different:
N/A

2. Chief investigator (must be at least a Grade 7 member of staff or equivalent)

Name: Ashraf Salama

- ☒ Professor
☐ Reader
☐ Senior Lecturer
☐ Lecturer
☐ Senior Teaching Fellow
☐ Teaching Fellow

Department: Architecture

Telephone: +44 (0)141 548 3995

E-mail: ashraf.salama@strath.ac.uk

3. Other Strathclyde investigator(s)

Name: Saleh Almogrbe

Status (e.g. lecturer, post-/undergraduate): Postgraduate PhD Researcher

Department: Architecture

Telephone: +44 (0) 7848679699

E-mail: saleh.almogrbe@strath.ac.uk

4. Non-Strathclyde collaborating investigator(s) (where applicable)

Name: N/A

Status (e.g. lecturer, post-/undergraduate): N/A

Department/Institution: N/A

If student(s), name of supervisor: N/A

Telephone: N/A

E-mail: N/A

Please provide details for all investigators involved in the study: N/A

The piece of useful learning

The University of Strathclyde is a charitable body, registered in Scotland, number SC015263

5. Overseas Supervisor(s) (where applicable)

Name(s): N/A

Status: N/A

Department/Institution: N/A

Telephone: N/A

Email: N/A

I can confirm that the local supervisor has obtained a copy of the Code of Practice: Yes ☐ No ☐

Please provide details for all supervisors involved in the study: N/A

6. Location of the investigation

At what place(s) will the investigation be conducted

Benghazi - Libya

The fieldwork will take place in several Benghazi neighbourhoods. When online or phone conversations are not feasible, certain governmental and non-profit organisation facilities will be visited to conduct interviews.

If this is not on University of Strathclyde premises, how have you satisfied yourself that adequate Health and Safety arrangements are in place to prevent injury or harm?

Yes, The investigations will take place in various Benghazi neighborhoods or at governmental and non-profit organization facilities, all of which have been visited by the researcher in the past and do not pose any special safety or health risks.

7. Duration of the investigation

Duration(years/months) : 2 months

Start date (expected): 11 / 12 / 2021

Completion date (expected): 09 / 02 / 2022

8. Sponsor

Please note that this is not the funder; refer to Section C and Annexes 1 and 3 of the Code of Practice for a definition and the key responsibilities of the sponsor.

Will the sponsor be the University of Strathclyde: Yes ☐ No ☒

If not, please specify who is the sponsor: Libyan Ministry of Higher Education, Missions Sector represented by the Cultural Bureau of the Libyan Embassy in London.

9. Funding body or proposed funding body (if applicable)

Name of funding body: Libyan Ministry of Higher Education, Missions Sector represented by the Cultural Bureau of the Libyan Embassy in London.

Status of proposal – if seeking funding (please click appropriate box):

☐ In preparation☐ Submitted

☐ Accepted
 Date of submission of proposal: N/A Date of start of funding: N/A

10. Ethical issues
 Describe the main ethical issues and how you propose to address them:
 The investigation is open to participants, but they are not required to supply any personal or sensitive information. The identities of all participants will be kept strictly confidential.

11. Objectives of investigation (including the academic rationale and justification for the investigation) Please use plain English.
 This research studies the challenges of reconstruction in Benghazi city. Information is required about the steps of the local authority post-conflict in Benghazi for recovery and the population's satisfaction with actions taken by local authorities. To begin, an online questionnaire will be administered to gather information regarding the rebuilding activities in Benghazi city, citizens' perspectives on the recovery phase, urban development in Benghazi, and what is needed to improve them. Secondly, interviews are planned with officials working in positions related to reconstruction operations and active actors in Benghazi to understand how they oversee and plan to reconstruct the urban environment.

12. Participants
 Please detail the nature of the participants:
 - Targeting participation of 250 citizens living in Benghazi. - 10 Officials are working in local authorities and active actors in recovery operations of the city.
 Summarise the number and age (range) of each group of participants:
 Number: 250+ Age (range) 18+
 Please detail any inclusion/exclusion criteria and any further screening procedures to be used:
 N/A

13. Nature of the participants
 Please note that investigations governed by the Code of Practice that involve any of the types of participants listed in B1(b) must be submitted to the University Ethics Committee (UEC) rather than DEC/SEC for approval.
 Do any of the participants fall into a category listed in Section B1(b) (participant considerations) applicable in this investigation?: Yes ☐ No ☒
 If yes, please detail which category (and submit this application to the UEC):
 N/A

14. Method of recruitment
 Describe the method of recruitment (see section B4 of the Code of Practice), providing information on any payments, expenses or other incentives.
 Surveys will be placed on social media, and emails will be sent out. Participants in the interviews

will be selected based on their roles as participants in rebuilding operations or as officials working in a function related to such activities.

15. Participant consent

Please state the groups from whom consent/assent will be sought (please refer to the Guidance Document). The PIS and Consent Form(s) to be used should be attached to this application form.

The survey will include a request for consent, and this consent will be collected at the ending of the survey before submitting: "Please know that by pressing the submit button, you confirm that you approve your participation and the use of the answers you provided for research purposes only." Before the interviews with managers and authorities, interviewees will be asked to sign a permission form. Participants will be informed that their anonymised responses will be used exclusively for research purposes on the permission form.

16. Methodology

Investigations governed by the Code of Practice which involve any of the types of projects listed in B1(a) must be submitted to the University Ethics Committee rather than DEC/SEC for approval.

Are any of the categories mentioned in the Code of Practice Section B1(a) (project considerations) applicable in this investigation? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If 'yes' please detail: N/A

Describe the research methodology and procedure, providing a timeline of activities where possible.

Please use plain English.

The researcher will use surveys distributed online to collect data from people living in Benghazi about their satisfaction with Reconstruction efforts and their involvement with local authorities and active actors in these operations and plans. He will also conduct face to face interviews in Benghazi city with officials in positions related to rebuilding and recovery in Benghazi. These will be in the public sector, private sector, and other active actors, needing four weeks to be finished. The researcher will finally do observations in the city and reconstruction projects, which will require another month.

What specific techniques will be employed and what exactly is asked of the participants? Please identify any non-validated scale or measure and include any scale and measures charts as an Appendix to this application. Please include questionnaires, interview schedules or any other non-standardised method of data collection as appendices to this application.

There are questionnaire as well as samples of interviews connected to this application form.

Where an independent reviewer is not used, then the UEC, DEC or SEC reserves the right to scrutinise the methodology. Has this methodology been subject to independent scrutiny? Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, please provide the name and contact details of the independent reviewer:

N/A

17. Previous experience of the investigator(s) with the procedures involved. Experience should demonstrate an ability to carry out the proposed research in accordance with the written methodology.

The researcher conducted surveys before in Benghazi-Libya and Pontypridd-Wales as a part of her master's degree research.

18. Data collection, storage and security

How and where are data handled? Please specify whether it will be fully anonymous (i.e. the identity unknown even to the researchers) or pseudo-anonymised (i.e. the raw data is anonymised and given a code name, with the key for code names being stored in a separate location from the raw data) - if neither please justify.

The information for the surveys will be gathered online and will be completely anonymous. Data collection is carried out using a semi-structured interview technique, which is afterwards digitised and anonymised.

Explain how and where it will be stored, who has access to it, how long it will be stored and whether it will be securely destroyed after use:

The research university's disk will store all the data, while a back-up will be done on the Strathclyde OneDrive account. After use, the data does not include any personal or sensitive information, and so does not need to be deleted.

Will anyone other than the named investigators have access to the data? Yes ☐ No ☒

If 'yes' please explain:

N/A

19. Potential risks or hazards

Briefly describe the potential Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) hazards and risks associated with the investigation:

The fieldwork will take place in Benghazi, where the researcher previously lived and is familiar. There are no anticipated dangers or threats to health and safety related to the investigation.

Please attach a completed OHS Risk Assessment (S20) for the research. Further Guidance on Risk Assessment and Form can be obtained on [Occupational Health, Safety and Wellbeing's webpages](#)

See form: ID: 4561 - Interviews

20. What method will you use to communicate the outcomes and any additional relevant details of the study to the participants?

The data analysis will be a critical component of the doctoral study, and a journal paper including the same analysis is planned for publication.

21. How will the outcomes of the study be disseminated (e.g. will you seek to publish the results and, if relevant, how will you protect the identities of your participants in said dissemination)?

This study and a journal paper are going to showcase the outcomes. Data collection will be utilised with no regard to the source of information.

Checklist	Enclosed	N/A
Participant Information Sheet(s)	☒	☐
Consent Form(s)	☒	☐
Sample questionnaire(s)	☒	☐
Sample interview format(s)	☒	☐
Sample advertisement(s)	☐	☒
OHS Risk Assessment (S20)	☒	
Any other documents (please specify below)	☐	☐
	☐	☐
	☐	☐
	☐	☐
	☐	☐

22. Chief Investigator and Head of Department Declaration

Please note that unsigned applications will not be accepted and both signatures are required

I have read the University's Code of Practice on Investigations involving Human Beings and have completed this application accordingly. By signing below, I acknowledge that I am aware of and accept my responsibilities as Chief Investigator under Clauses 3.11 – 3.13 of the [Research Governance Framework](#) and that this investigation cannot proceed before all approvals required have been obtained.

Signature of Chief Investigator



Please also type name here:

Professor Ashraf M. Salama

I confirm I have read this application, I am happy that the study is consistent with departmental strategy, that the staff and/or students involved have the appropriate expertise to undertake the study and that adequate arrangements are in place to supervise any students that might be acting as investigators, that the study has access to the resources needed to conduct the proposed research successfully, and that there are no other departmental-specific issues relating to the study of which I am aware.

Signature of Head of Department



Please also type name here

Prof. Tim Sharpe

Date:

/ 12 / 21

23. Only for University sponsored projects under the remit of the DEC/SEC, with no external funding and no NHS involvement**Head of Department statement on Sponsorship**

This application requires the University to sponsor the investigation. This is done by the Head of Department for all DEC applications with exception of those that are externally funded and those which are connected to the NHS (those exceptions should be submitted to R&KES). I am aware of the implications of University sponsorship of the investigation and have assessed this investigation with respect to sponsorship and management risk. As this particular investigation is within the remit of the DEC and has no external funding and no NHS involvement, I agree on behalf of the University that the University is the appropriate sponsor of the investigation and there are no management risks posed by the investigation.

If not applicable, tick here ☐

Signature of Head of Department



Please also type name here

Date:

/ /

For applications to the University Ethics Committee, the completed form should be sent to ethics@strath.ac.uk with the relevant electronic signatures.

24. Insurance

The questionnaire below must be completed and included in your submission to the UEC/DEC/SEC:

Is the proposed research an investigation or series of investigations conducted on any person for a Medicinal Purpose? Medicinal Purpose means: • treating or preventing disease or diagnosing disease or • ascertaining the existence degree of or extent of a physiological condition or • assisting with or altering in any way the process of conception or • investigating or participating in methods of contraception or • inducing anaesthesia or • otherwise preventing or interfering with the normal operation of a physiological function or • altering the administration of prescribed medication.	No
---	----

If **"Yes"** please go to **Section A (Clinical Trials)** – all questions must be completed

If **"No"** please go to **Section B (Public Liability)** – all questions must be completed

Section A (Clinical Trials)

Does the proposed research involve subjects who are either: i. under the age of 5 years at the time of the trial; ii. known to be pregnant at the time of the trial	
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If **"Yes"** the UEC should refer to Finance

Is the proposed research limited to: iii. Questionnaires, interviews, psychological activity including CBT; iv. Venepuncture (withdrawal of blood); v. Muscle biopsy; vi. Measurements or monitoring of physiological processes including scanning; vii. Collections of body secretions by non-invasive methods; viii. Intake of foods or nutrients or variation of diet (excluding administration of drugs).	
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If **"No"** the UEC should refer to Finance

Will the proposed research take place within the UK?	
--	--

If **"No"** the UEC should refer to Finance

Title of Research	Challenges of post-conflict recovery cities, case study of Benghazi	
Chief Investigator	Prof. ASHRAF M. SALAMA	
Sponsoring Organisation	University of Strathclyde	
Does the proposed research involve:		
a) investigating or participating in methods of contraception?		No
b) assisting with or altering the process of conception?		No
c) the use of drugs?		No
d) the use of surgery (other than biopsy)?		No
e) genetic engineering?		No
f) participants under 5 years of age (other than activities i-vi above)?		No
g) participants known to be pregnant (other than activities i-vi above)?		No
h) pharmaceutical product/appliance designed or manufactured by the institution?		No
i) work outside the United Kingdom?		Yes

If "YES" to any of the questions a-i please also complete the **Employee Activity Form** (attached).
If "YES" to any of the questions a-i, and this is a follow-on phase, please provide details of SUSARs on a separate sheet.

If "Yes" to any of the questions a-i then the UEC/DEC/SEC should refer to Finance (insurance-services@strath.ac.uk).

Section B (Public Liability)		
Does the proposed research involve :		
a) aircraft or any aerial device		No
b) hovercraft or any water borne craft		No
c) ionising radiation		No
d) asbestos		No
e) participants under 5 years of age		No
f) participants known to be pregnant		No
g) pharmaceutical product/appliance designed or manufactured by the institution?		No
h) work outside the United Kingdom?		Yes

If "YES" to any of the questions the UEC/DEC/SEC should refer to Finance (insurance-services@strath.ac.uk).

For NHS applications only - Employee Activity Form

Has NHS Indemnity been provided?	N/A
Are Medical Practitioners involved in the project?	N/A
If YES, will Medical Practitioners be covered by the MDU or other body?	N/A

This section aims to identify the staff involved, their employment contract and the extent of their involvement in the research (in some cases it may be more appropriate to refer to a group of persons rather than individuals).

Chief Investigator		
Name	Employer	NHS Honorary Contract?
		Yes / No
Others		
Name	Employer	NHS Honorary Contract?
		Yes / No
		Yes / No
		Yes / No
		Yes / No

Please provide any further relevant information here:

Sample questionnaire with Benghazi's Citizens

General information:

1- Age group: 18-25 • 26-45 • 46-65 • over 66 years •

2- Sex: Male • Female •

3- Place of resident:

.....

Conflict effects:

4- Have you been displaced during the conflict?

Yes • No •

5- Are you now:

Displaced from your original home • resident • returned from displacement •

6- Have you been received any support during conflict?

Financial • medical or nutritional • Psychological • Shelter • Nothing •

7- Have you been received any support post conflict?

Financial • medical or nutritional • Psychological • Shelter • Nothing •

8- What is the extent of damage to your properties because of armed clashes?

Destroyed • Partly destroyed • External damages • Nothing •

9- Which of the following entities supported you?

Foreign Organization • Local Organization • Government Agencies • Relatives or neighbors •

No one •

10- Which of the following became disabled because of the war?

Member of household • neighbours • co-worker • Nobody •

Would you please choose the scale to indicate the degree of your agreement/satisfaction with each statement?

(1) Strongly disagree or dissatisfied (2) somehow disagree or dissatisfied (3) neither agree nor disagree (4) agree or satisfied (5) strongly agree or satisfied.

11- To what extent do you agree to remove the destroyed areas of the city centre and completely replan them?

- 12- Restoration of damaged old buildings begins in the city Centre
- 13- Rebuilding destroyed buildings to pre-war
- 14- Reconstruction of the city centre with its development into a private commercial area
- 15- Expropriation of damaged properties as part of area development plans
- 16- Reconstruction of the city Centre with improvements such as the relocation of public facilities outside it
- 17- Rebuilding old markets, alleys, and spaces to what they used to be
- 18- Do you support the idea of completing projects that have been stalled since 2011?
- 19- Reconstruction of affected areas is the first to resume projects that have been stalled since 2011
- 20- Have the projects that been completed and the maintenance included support for access for all people with disabilities and the elderly?
- 21- Local authorities' reconstruction plans are clear and public
- 22- The reconstruction of the tomb of Sheikh Omar al-Mukhtar was an encouraging step for the return of life
- 23- The maintenance of the lighthouse and the addition of the marble staircase were essential to support the manifestations of life
- 24- Maintenance work for the corniche and lighting contributes to the revitalization of the city centre
- 25- The statue of the whale had a good meaning and effect on the souls of the corniche
- 26- Garden maintenance projects and green spaces were a good step in time.
- 27- Road paving projects have been effective in reducing traffic congestion in the city and its surroundings.
- 28- Remove all kinds, forms, and effects of war from the city's landmarks
- 29- Remove all types and features of war while retaining certain buildings for reminders
- 30- Creating shrines or statues that salute the victory in the war
- 31- Supporting manifestations of reconciliation and tolerance in open spaces
- 32- Support labels devoid of political orientations and ideas for regions, streets, and parks
- 33- Are existing and completed projects to meet your needs
- 34- Monetary compensation for the affected population to rebuild their structures
- 35- Foreign organizations play a positive role in population assistance and support
- 36- Foreign organizations are keen to involve the people in their programs
- 37- Foreign organizations understand local needs
- 38- How satisfied are you with the work done by foreign organizations?
- 39- Foreign organizations understand local needs and priorities
- 40- Local organizations have played a positive role in assistance and support
- 41- Local organizations are keen to involve the population in their programs

42- Government agencies interact with the people and strengthen their position in decision-making

43- Please rank your priorities for the following options as the first taken in the urban reconstruction post-war.

The item scale has five possible responses ranging from strongly disagree through undecided to agree strongly. Please read each statement, and from the 5-point scale, clearly check one answer that best represents your agreement with that statement.

item	1	2	3	4	5
Psychological rehabilitation					
Access support for all					
Security					
Spaces and gardens					
health and education					
Projects suspended since 2011					
Supporting new residential neighbourhoods					
Supporting neighbourhoods within the urban plan					
Roads and transportation					
reviving the economy					
political stability					
National Reconciliation					
electricity					
Reconstruction of the city centre					

Sample interviews questions with active actors

1. What is your organisation?
2. How can you describe the situation in Benghazi city now?
3. How long have you been in Benghazi? What is the nature of aids do you provide?
4. What is the effort you make to reconstruct the city? What are the priorities in this period?
5. How do you involve residents in your actions, planning?
6. To what extent do you arrange your activities in the city with other actors?
7. What are the challenges you faced, and what still facing?
8. What is your policy to deal with cultural heritage in the city?
9. Do you consider the development projects that was suspended in Benghazi in 2011?
10. What is your vision to reconstruct the city?

Sample Interview Format

Participant Information Sheet

[FOR USE WITH STANDARD PRIVACY NOTICE FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS]

Name of department: Architecture

Title of the study: Reconstruction challenges in post-conflict cities

Introduction

You are invited to participate in a research study conducted by Saleh Almoghrbe, a PhD student from the University of Strathclyde. You need to understand why the research is being done and what is involved before deciding whether to participate. Please take time to read the following information.

What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to develop and validate a model addressing the challenges of post-conflict Reconstruction in Benghazi city, also a comparative analysis of post-conflict reconstruction in various cities, a demonstration of the phases of reconstruction and urban development in Benghazi city, articulating the role of local authorities of Benghazi.

Do you have to take part?

It is totally optional to take part in this study. You will be given a copy of this information sheet to retain for your records, and you will be able to consult it at any time during the study process.

What will you do in the project?

The interview will be performed, and your responses will give information regarding Benghazi city's reconstruction activities, which will be utilized in the research. The interview will last 30-60 minutes, and with your permission, the contents will be recorded on a digital voice recorder.

Why have you been invited to take part?

As a member of active players in the post-conflict rebuilding of Benghazi city / an official working in a position connected to reconstruction activities in Benghazi city, you have been invited to participate in this research.

What are the potential risks to you in taking part?

Your participation will be kept anonymous, and your identity will not appear on the final study report.

What information is being collected in the project?

The information collected will be regarding post-conflict reconstruction efforts and practices in Benghazi. You will also be asked to express your thoughts on the problems associated with the city's reconstruction and how they might be addressed in the future to avoid them.

Who will have access to the information?

Only the investigators will have access to the information gathered during the research.

Where will the information be stored and how long will it be kept for?

The information will be kept on the University cloud during the research period.

What happens next?

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you want to learn more about the study or have any queries. Please note that before the interview begins, you will be required to sign a consent form.

Please accept my sincere thanks for taking the time to read this information document, regardless of whether or not you are willing to participate.

Please submit your contact information to me throughout the interview process if you like to get updates on the completed study and comments.

Researcher contact details:

Saleh A. Almoghrbe – PhD Student at the Department of Architecture at the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Strathclyde

Telephone: 00447848679699

Email: saleh.almoghrbe@strath.ac.uk

Chief Investigator details:

Professor Ashraf Salama, Professor of Architecture and Director of Research and former Head of the Department of Architecture at the University of Strathclyde (2014-2020).

This research was granted ethical approval by the University of Strathclyde Ethics Committee.

If you have any questions/concerns, during or after the research, or wish to contact an independent person to whom any questions may be directed or further information may be sought from, please contact:

Secretary to the University Ethics Committee
Research & Knowledge Exchange Services
University of Strathclyde
Graham Hills Building
50 George Street
Glasgow
G1 1QE
Telephone: +44 0141 548 3707
Email: ethics@strath.ac.uk

Consent Form

Name of department: Architecture

Title of the study: Reconstruction challenges in post-conflict cities

- I confirm that I have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet for the above project and the researcher has answered any queries to my satisfaction.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice for Participants in Research Projects and understand how my personal information will be used and what will happen to it (i.e. how it will be stored and for how long).
- I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw from the project at any time, up to the point of completion, without having to give a reason and without any consequences.
- I understand that I can request the withdrawal from the study of some personal information and that whenever possible researchers will comply with my request. This includes the following personal data:
 - audio recordings of interviews that identify me;
 - my personal information from transcripts.
- I understand that anonymised data (i.e. data that do not identify me personally) cannot be withdrawn once they have been included in the study.
- I understand that any information recorded in the research will remain confidential and no information that identifies me will be made publicly available.
- I consent to being a participant in the project.
- I consent to being audio recorded as part of the project
- I consent to remain anonymous at the final research papers

(PRINT NAME)

Signature of Participant:

Date:

6. How would you describe your staying in Benghazi after the war
- ☐ I am still displaced.
 - ☐ I returned to the city
 - ☐ I am resident and have not moved
 - ☐ I am displaced from another city to Benghazi
 - ☐ I am displaced by force and cannot visit the city
7. What is the amount of the damage that happened to your home due to the war
- ☐ No damages
 - ☐ Minor damage (windwos, doors)
 - ☐ Moderate damage (one wall, one room)
 - ☐ Massive damage (half unit destroyed)
 - ☐ Completely destroyed (on the ground or falling)
8. Damage to a building, park, market, or any specific place that you used to always visit before the war
- ☐ No damages
 - ☐ Minor damage
 - ☐ Moderate damage
 - ☐ Massive damage
 - ☐ Completely destroyed
9. Support or assistance you received during the war
- ☐ Financial assistance
 - ☐ Food
 - ☐ Mental support or medical care
 - ☐ In-kind supplies such as blankets and blankets
 - ☐ Nothing
10. Receipt of in-kind support such as supplies, blankets or medicines during the war period 2014 to 2017 from:
- ☐ Charities or Libyan NGOs
 - ☐ Municipality and government agencies
 - ☐ Private sector
 - ☐ Foreign organizations or agencies
 - ☐ I did not receive any support

- We didn't need any support

11. Any of those who have been permanently disabled by the outcome of the war

- me
- A family member
- One of my co-workers.
- No one.

Section 3: Recovery and Stability Phase

Please express your satisfaction with the following:

12. The speed of government agencies to remove destroyed buildings and rubble from the city:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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13. Reconstruction of Omar Al-Mukhtar shrine:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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14. Maintenance of the Sidi Akhrebish lighthouse and adding improvements to it:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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15. Create a sculpture of the fish:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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16. The sculpture of whale is related to the originality and the local cultural heritage:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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17. Adding the ships figures at the roundabout of Sidi Akhrebish and the El-Gomhouria Hospital on the sea road:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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18. Maintenance projects for gardens and green spaces in Benghazi:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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19. Temporary paving and road maintenance projects:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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20. Maintenance and revival of the vegetable market:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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21. New commercial urban agglomerations:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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22. Work to complete the Sports City project

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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23. Completely demolishing Al-Gomhoria Hospital:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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24. Keeping banks and service institutions outside of the city center:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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25. Provide for the requirements of the disabled, the elderly and the sick "the so-called 'access for all'" in the stabilization phase projects:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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26. The implemented and ongoing projects respond to the needs of the population at this stage and are a priority:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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27. Transparency in stabilization phase projects:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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28. Efforts of the Municipal Council and the Interim Government to restore life and activity in the city:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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29. Government projects adopt an approach that supports reconciliation and promotes equality:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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30. Efforts by successive central governments to restore life in the city:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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31. Consulting and surveying citizens' opinions on the needs and priorities of the projects to be implemented:

1 Very dissatisfied	2 Dissatisfied	3 Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	4 Satisfied	5 Very satisfied
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Section Four: Domestic and Foreign Actors

32. Provided support such as food, blankets or medicines after the end of the war:

- Charities or Libyan NGOs
- Municipality and government agencies
- Private sector
- Foreign organizations or agencies
- I did not receive any support
- We didn't need any support

33. Supported you with a maintenance or rebuilding operation, or provided you with materials for construction or maintenance:

- Charities or Libyan NGOs
- Municipality and government agencies
- Private sector
- Foreign organizations or agencies
- I did not receive any support
- We didn't need any support

34. Support you financially such as paying your rent

- Charities or Libyan NGOs
- Municipality and government agencies
- Private sector
- Foreign organizations or agencies
- I did not receive any support
- We didn't need any support

35. Provided you or a family member with mental or moral support after the war:

- Charities or Libyan NGOs
- Municipality and government agencies
- Private sector
- Foreign organizations or agencies
- I did not receive any support
- We didn't need any support

36. Consult or have your opinion on construction, development and maintenance projects currently underway:

- Charities or Libyan NGOs
- Municipality and government agencies
- Private sector
- Foreign organizations or agencies
- No one
- Local community

Section 5: Perceptions of The Reconstruction of The City

To what extent do you agree with the following items:

37. Remove all kinds, shapes and effects of war from city landmarks:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
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38. Removing all types and features of war while preserving certain buildings as reminders of the tragedies of civil wars:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

39. Removing streets and devastated areas from the city center and completely re-planning them in another way:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
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40. Rebuilding the destroyed buildings to their pre-war status:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

41. Restoration of old damaged buildings in the city center:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

42. Reconstruction of the city center with its development into a commercial area attractive to foreign investments:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

43. Confiscating the damaged properties and compensating its owners in order to introduce new development:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

44. Reconstruction the city center and moving public service buildings to other areas beyond city center and renovating the old city out preserving its traditional style without budling high towers and odd buildings:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

45. Rebuilding and restoring old markets, alleys and spaces:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

46. Removing old markets such as the Al Jared market and vegetable market, and introducing modern shopping centers:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

47. Not to build any shrines or to name streets, statues or squares with any references to the Libyan civil wars during the country's previous transitional stages:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
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48. Build shrines or statues that commemorate victory in the war:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

49. Completion of suspended projects since 2011, followed by reconstruction:

strongly disagree	1	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
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50. Cash compensation to the affected residents to rebuild their properties:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
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51. Supporting manifestations of reconciliation and tolerance in open spaces such as squares and gardens:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
---------------------	------------	------------------------------	---------	------------------

52. For government agencies to engage the population and inform them about the upcoming reconstruction plans:

1 strongly disagree	2 disagree	3 neither agree nor disagree	4 agree	5 strongly agree
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Appendix 4: Formulated interview transcripts in the Arabic language

اضرار الحرب على السكان والبيئة الحضرية

للمدينة

في هذا القسم من الرسالة تركزت الأسئلة النوعية حول مرحلة الإنعاش وتقييم اضرار الحرب، حيث أشار جميع المشاركين الى ظروف الحرب الصعبة والدمار في أغلب المناطق التاريخية والأحياء السكنية التي شهدت الحصار او الاشتباكات والمعارك. ونظرا لاستمرار الحرب لمدة ثلاث سنوات فقد شهدت عدة أحياء من ضواحي المدينة حصارا مطبقا قبل أن يتوسع الحصار الى مناطق وسط المدينة من قبل القوات العسكرية في مواجهة تحالف الميليشيات. ستة مشاركون تحدثوا عن النزوح من مساكنهم بسبب الحرب ونازح واحد اعتبر نفسه مهجر او نازح قسريا لاختلافه السياسي مع السلطات الحاكمة والمسيطر على المنطقة.

واختلفت أوقات النزوح واتجاهاتها. المشاركون 1 و 2 نزحوا الى أحياء داخل المدينة أكثر امانا بعيد عن مناطق الاشتباكات. يقول المشاركون 1 " نزحت بأسرتي من منطقة بوعطلي لوقوعها تحت حصار خانق ولأنها أصبحت منطقة اشتباكات الى داخل المدينة ورغم ذلك لم ننج من سقوط القذائف العشوائية والرصاص المتطاير من عدة اتجاهات، حيث سجلت الكثير من الوفيات والاصابات خارج مناطق الاشتباكات وفي عمق المدينة نظرا للمدى الذي تصله الاسلحة المستخدمة سواء كانت الخفيفة او المتوسطة. أيضا فرت بعض الاسر الى مجموعة المدارس والمباني العامة التي تحولت كمراكز لجوء مؤقت، بينما فضل آخرون اللجوء الى مدن مجاورة آمنة او أخرى بعيدة عن المدينة. اما غالبية النازحين فقد نزحوا الى أقارب او اصدقاء لفترة من الوقت. بينما المشاركون 3 و 6 قالوا انهم نزحوا مؤقتا للمكان الذي الأقارب الى ان استطاعوا استكمال بناء مساكن اقتصادية بسيطة لأسرهم بضواحي المدينة بعد ان اتضح لهم ان الحرب ستكون طويلة.

أشار المشاركون السابقين الى انهم بنوا منازل بطريقة اقتصادية وفي فترة وجيزة بعد بيع ممتلكاتهم التي كادت تستنزف بسبب دفع الإيجارات لفترة طويلة، حيث أصبح عدم اليقين ظاهرا ولا أحد يعلم متى ستنتهي الحرب. بالإضافة الى ما ذكره المشاركون اجمعوا على شدة الاضرار التي طالت كل الأحياء نتيجة للحرب الشرسية التي اسقطت فيها أكثر من ثلاث طائرات حربية. كل المشاركون لديهم واحد أو أكثر من الأقارب ماتوا بسبب الحرب، اما كمشاركين مع أطراف الصراع أو بسبب الصراع المسلح. وحتى بعد توقف الصراع لازالت اثار ومخلفات الحرب تؤدي الى الوفاة والاصابات الخطيرة بين المدنيين وخصوصا الأطفال بسبب طرق التفخيخ الخطيرة الذي استعملت في بعض المساكن والمزارع والشوارع أثناء الحرب. نصف المشاركون لديهم زميل عمل تعرض لإعاقة مستدامة نتيجة للحرب بينما فقد ربع المشاركون أحد افراد الأسرة أو المنزل الواحد نتيجة للحرب، اشارت نتائج المقابلة ان جميع المشاركين قد فقدوا كثير من ممتلكاتهم بسبب الحرب أو الاضطراب للإيجار مع شح السيولة النقدية وتآزم الوضع الاقتصادي.

تحدث المشاركون عن غلاء المعيشة وارتفاع الاسعار للسلع والخضروات والفواكه نتيجة الحرب التي أدت الى إغلاق المنافذ الغربية للمدينة مما ساهم في تعطل وصول الامدادات من خارج المدينة لطول المسالك المتاحة ، بالإضافة لوقوع الكثير من المشاريع الغذائية والمزارع التي تغذي المدينة في منطقة الحرب مما أدى الى نقص الإمدادات وارتفاع الاسعار.

المرافق العامة والأمنية الحكومية

تعرضت المباني لأضرار كبيرة، وتوقفت كل المباني للخدمات العامة عن أداء ووظائفها. قبل الحرب مباشرة تم تفجير مراكز الشرطة بالمدينة وخلال الحرب تم تفخيخ مديرية الأمن ببناغازي ونسفاها ومعسكر القوات الخاصة وكذلك بعض الجسور العابرة للبحيرات بمنطقة اللثامة من قبل تحالف الميليشيات المدعوم بشرعية المؤتمر الوطني والحكومة المركزية بطرابلس عام 2014 ضد القوات العسكرية المدعومة بشرعية البرلمان المنتخب والحكومة المؤقتة التي انتقلت الى شرق ليبيا.

وقرر الكثير من المستشفيات والمرافق الصحية داخل مناطق الحرب ادي الي شلل بالقطاع الصحي بالإضافة لتفريغ المستشفيات الاخرى لخدمات الطوارئ والعمليات المستعجلة للمصابين بالحرب بشكل يومي ، هذا الوضع ارفع الاطعم الطبية التي كانت تعاني اصلا من نقص وبالتالي تأجلت الكثير من العمليات الجراحية للسكان وكبار السن وأسهم في تدهور صحتهم بشكل كبير. اشار المشاركون الي تدهور الوضع الصحي والنفسي لسكان المدينة حيث كانوا ينامون ويصيحون علي اصوات القذائف ، الخوف علي الابناء المخطوفين في الحرب وتداول اخبار القتل بشكل يومي وبأعداد مفرجة لشباب المدينة تسبب في معاناة الناس من ضغط نفسي شديد بسبب الحزن والام المتواصل وعدم رؤية نهاية لهذه الحرب. أكد احد المشاركين عن تدهور صحة والده والذي كان أحد مصابي مرض سكر الدم حيث عانى من تذبذب حالته طيلة تلك الفترة، كما أعرب آخرون عن خوفهم علي صحة أطفالهم النفسية حيث سقطت بعض القذائف بالقرب من مدرسة داخل المدينة أثناء تواجد الاطفال بالقصور الدراسية وعمليات الاغتيال والتفجيرات التي سبقت بدء الحرب وكان العديد الاطفال ضحاياها.

أشار جميع المشاركون الي التدمير او الاضرار الكبيرة التي لحقت بمقار أعمالهم مما اضطر الكثير من القطاعات الخاصة والعامة والخدمية لنقل مقار أعمالها خارج بؤرة الحرب والحصار. أيضا اشاروا الي تعطل كافة المراكز الخدمية والتي كانت ترتكز بمنطقة وسط المدينة ولتعطل الميناء والمطار الوحيد والذي كان محور رئيسي في الاشتباكات للسيطرة عليه من قبل أطراف الصراع. تسبب ذلك حسب افادة المشاركين في تعطل أكبر مستشفى للولادة بالمدينة والمراكز الصحية والمؤسسات التعليمية والخدمية أيضا توقف مناطق التسوق الشعبية التي يفضلها غالبية المشاركين. الحقت الحرب الضرر بالنسيج الاجتماعي كما قال المشاركون الرابع " الحرب دمرت بيوتنا ومخدراتنا واضرت بالنسيج الاجتماعي في المدينة" بينما قال المشاركون وصف المشاركون الثاني الحرب بانها " حرب

جهوية وحزبية كانت لغرض السيطرة على مدينة بنغازي التي كان من المقرر ان يستقر بها البرلمان المنتخب ولذلك قامت الميليشيات المسيطرة على طرابلس والحكومة بدعم تحالف الميليشيات المسلحة بينغازي ضد بقايا الجيش الليبي السابق لتضمن استمرار سيطرتها على البرلمان والحكومة الجديدة".

بينما اتفق بقية المشاركين على ان الحرب كانت صراع على السلطة تحت ذرائع وحجج مختلفة وان كل طرف يمثل دول يحارب بالوكالة عنها ويشعرون بالأسف والتدمر لما حدث.

أضاف المشاركون من مناطق المدينة القديمة ووسط المدينة الى الاضرار الكبيرة وتهدم مباني تاريخية وصفوها بانها تحمل تاريخ وماضي مدينة بنغازي.

عودة النازحين

أشار بعض المشاركين الذين عادوا من النزوح لمناطق سكنهم الى الصعوبات التي واجهتهم، حيث كانت عودتهم بشكل تدريجي الى بعض المناطق التي انتهت فيها الاشتباكات وسمحت القوات العسكرية للسكان بالعودة اليها حيث افاد بعض المشاركين الى حوادث وفاة نتيجة تفخيخ مساكن المواطنين من قبل تحالف الميليشيات. والمشاركين من المناطق خارج المخطط العمراني للمدينة خاصة في الجزء الشرقي والشمالي الشرقي مثل احياء بلينا وبوعطني، وحي الليبي من داخل المخطط رجعوا لمنازلهم بعد انتهاء القتال بمناطقهم. حيث استمر القتال لأكثر من سنتين ونصف حسب المشاركين. ووجدوا منازلهم وممتلكاتهم متضررة بأضرار تتراوح من خفيفة الى مدمرة تماما. لم يستلم أي منهم أي نوع من المساعدة من الجهات المحلية او الدولية لأعمال الصيانة او إعادة البناء. الجميع سجلوا في سجلات النازحين لدى البلدية ومن تضررت منازلهم سجلوا في قوائم الحصر للتعويض، ولكن الى الآن بعد خمس سنوات من انتهاء الصراع لم يستلم أي منهم أي درهم.

إسكان النازحين

اختلفت آراء الناس المتضررة منازلهم من الحرب ، وذلك حسب عدة عوامل منها قيمة الضرر وموقع المنزل و الظروف التي مر بها النازحون خلال فترة الحرب.

عبر جل النازحين علي امتناعهم من عدم قيام الدولة بواجبها في إنهاء معاناتهم ومعاناة أسرهم جراء ما تعرضت له منازلهم من الدمار أبان الحرب.

وعن استيائهم من الحلول الغير مدروسة والعشوائية حسب وصفهم التي تعرضها الدولة، حيث تحدثت المشارك رقم 9 عن رغبته بالحصول على تعويض مادي عن الدمار الذي تعرض له سكنه حتى يتسنى له اجراء الصيانة بنفسه في إشارة منه الي عدم ثقته في الطرق التي تتبعها الدولة في صيانه المنازل ، بينما تحدثت اخر ممن تهدم منزلها بشكل كامل عن اهمية حصوله على تعويض مادي. وكان من مخاوفهم أن أعمال الصيانة من قبل الدولة قد تتعرض بشكل كبير للتوقيفات والتعطل بسبب الظروف الراهنة أو انها لن تتم بالشكل المطلوب.

في حين اعتبر المشارك رقم 1 أنه أعمال الترميم عمل يقع على عاتق الدولة ويجب عليها تحمل مسؤوليتها والقيام بصيانة منزل له المحطم حتى يعود هو وأسرته .

وفي الرد عن السؤال الموجه بخصوص رأي المتضررين في المنازل البديلة التي قامت بأشائها الدولة كأحد الحلول لتعويضهم ، قال المشارك رقم 4 أن هذه المنازل البديلة بعيدة جدا عن مراكز المدينة الحيوية وتختلف بيئة مناطقها عن الوسط النشط لمركز المدينة الذي نشأوا فيه ولا يحب التحلي عن مكانه القديم .

بينما اعتبر المشارك رقم 10 هذا المشروع البديل أبغض بشكل عشوائي واستهجن عدم استشارتهم أو عرض عدة خيارات أمامهم وقال أنه لا يرغب في الاستئصال حتى لا يتم مصادرة منزله القديم الذي تربطه به كل ذكريات طفولته مع اصداقائه وتعلقه بالمكان وبشوارع وكل تفاصيله .

ومن جهة اخرى عارض غالبية المشاركين بشدة بناء الشقق بصواحي بنغازي بإحدى المجاورات السكنية. واصفين إياه بالغير مدروس وقال المشارك رقم 8 " كيف تفكر هذه البلدية وتنقل مواطن من سكان المدينة القديمة للعيش بإحدى الضواحي البعيدة والغير متمشية مع طبيعة حياته " . وأضاف المشارك رقم 3 " لقد زرت المشروع المستهدف لإسكان النازحين، انه بعيد جدا عن المدينة ومنطقة شبه صحراوية ذات ظروف بيئية واجتماعية لا تتناسب معنا والتصميم قبيح جدا ومكثف"

ولكن هناك المشارك رقم 5 الذي اعتبر أن المنازل البديلة حل جيد له حتى يتخلص من ثقل دفعات التأجير. وينعم ببعض الاستقرار مع عائلته ألا أنه أكد علي ضعف تصاميم المنازل البديلة وقدم طرازا وضيقها رغم وقوعها في مناطق واسعة وتشارك مع المتحدث رقم 2 أنه كان بإمكان الدولة الاستفادة من بعض المشاريع القائمة كموقع قفودة والذي هو أقرب والفضل من ناحية المكان والتصاميم واكثر ملائمة لهم وقد يتحصل علي قبول أكثر من النازحين .

ادعاءات الملكية

أشار المشاركون إلى مشاكل ادعاءات الملكية للمباني والشقق والأراضي بمنطقة وسط المدينة. وأن الكثيرين كانوا ضحايا للنظام الاشتراكي الذي قام بنزع ملكيتهم للمباني والشقق وتمليكها لآخرين ضمن خطط العدالة والمساواة التي نادى بها الاشتراكية في عهد الرئيس الراحل معمر القذافي. بينما قال المشاركون رقم 6 و 9 أن الشقق خصصت لهم من قبل الدولة بشكل قانوني ومنحوا مستندات الملكية و ذنب لهم بتضرر المالك الأصليين. بينما قال المشاركون رقم 10 أنه اشترى منزله الطرف الثالث بعد المالك الأصلي المنزوعة منه بسبب قوانين الاشتراكية. أيضا تضررت الكثير من المباني التي تعود ملكيتها في الأصل لمن نزعت منهم. والان تخشى السلطات المحلية إزالة الركام لأن المالك القديم سوف يحوز الأرض بعد إزالة المباني والشقق المدمرة وهو ما يقابل بمعارضة ممن تضررت شققهم المخصصة لهم وبعض يعتبر مشتري ثالث أو رابع للمقار. من الصعوبات أيضا ركام بعض الشقق تعود لطرف في الصراع لا يستطيع العودة إليه ولا تساهم السلطات المحلية بأي حلول فعلياً لإرجاعهم أو حماية ممتلكاتهم حيث أن بعض منازل المهجرين قسرياً محتلة بواسطة آخرين ممن ينتمون أو يدعمون القوات العسكرية. بينما ظلت ممتلكات ذوي ضحايا أو مهجري تحالف الميليشيات المسلحة المهزوم في الحرب خاضعة لاحتلال ذوي أو أولياء ضحايا القوات العسكرية وبعضها خصص في وقت سابق للنازحين. وتحفظ بقية المشاركون عن الإجابة حيث تعتبر هذه إحدى المشاكل الحساسة نتيجة للحرب الأهلية الليبية بينغاري.

التعويضات

اختلفت آراء النازحين حول الحلول المناسبة لتعويضهم وإنهاء معاناة أسرهم بعد ما تعرضت له بيوتهم من دمار سواء جزئي أو كلي. أبان الحرب التي سبب في تشردهم واجبارهم على ترك منازلهم وشوارعهم. فقد طالب المشاركون رقم 1 عن ضرورة اسراع الدولة في تعويضهم مادياً بعدما تعرض منزله لدمار كامل وقال أنه قد تمكن توفير قطعة أرض سكنية بمنزل لأسرته خلال فترة النزوح ويحتاج التعويض المادي حتى يطور منزله الجديد الذي وجد فيه الراحة والاستقرار بعيداً عن وسط المدينة المدمر حسب قوله . فيما أكد المشاركون الآخر رقم 3 أيضاً عن ضرورة التعويض النقدي بعد تعرض منزله لدمار جزئي وعال ذلك بأنه يريد صيانة منزله بطريقة الخاصة وأنه لا يثق في أي جدول زمني يمكن أن تضعه البلدية للصيانة نظراً لطروف البلاد في الوضع الراهن ، واكمل قائلا أن منزله والمنازل المجاورة له تحملت جزء بسيط من الحرب وشوارعها ما زالت بحالة جيدة ومفتوحة والمنازل تحتاج لترميم جزئي وترجع كما كانت .

بينما كانت وجهة النظر تختلف عند البعض الآخر فقد أعرب المشاركون رقم 7 و 8 عن امتعاضهم من تلك الدولة في تحمل مسؤوليتها تجاه النازحين واعتبروا أن أعمال الصيانة والترميم مسؤولية البلدية وأنه يجب أن تبدأ في صيانة منازلهم في أسرع وقت حتى يتمكن من الرجوع إليه . وقال أنه لا يجب التفریط في منزله وشارعه الذي يجمع كل ذكريات ومفولاته ويمثل جزء من أعزازة بمنشأه .

ولكن كانت بعض الاسر التي تحتاج الى سكن بشكل عاجل لعدم قدرتها تحمل المزيد من اعباء دفع الاجارات ، حيث اعرب المشاركون عن عدم رضاه عن البيوت التي عرضتها البلدية كجزء من حل أزمة النازحين وقال ان البيوت المجهزة تصاميمها غير مناسبة لهم وانه كان من الاجدر ان تقوم البلدية باستشارتهم قبل عرض هذه المساكن ، وأضاف ان تصاميم البيوت المجهزة غير عصري وفي مناطق بعيدة وغير حيوية تختلف عن الوسط الذي نشأ فيه وابتدأ المشاركون تخوفهم من عدم التأقلم في تلك المناطق لبعدها واقتارها للمرافق التي كانت بجانبهم.

فيما تحدث المشاركون 3 عن تخوفه من مصادرة منزله المتضرر أنا وافق علي استلام احدى البيوت البديلة مشيراً الى القانون رقم 4 لسنة 1978.... الذي ربما يعيد ملكية الارض المقام عليها منزله لملأك اصليين ، سلبت ارضهم بسبب القانون خلال العهد الاشتراكي للبلاد.

مشاريع مرحلة التعافي وإعادة الاستقرار

إزالة اثار الدمار

مرحلة ما بعد الحرب وتسمى أيضا بمرحلة التعافي حيث أشار المشاركون الى سوء إدارة هذه المرحلة من السلطات الحكومية والتشريعية بعد الحرب. حيث قالو بان البلدية ببغداد والحكومة المؤقتة بشرق ليبيا لم تكون في مستوى الحدث بالرغم من ملايين من الأموال التي يتحدثون عن صرفها. بعد الحرب قام السكان بمجهوداتهم الذاتية بإزالة المخلفات للمباني المنهارة والسيارات والذبابات وبقايا الأسلحة والمذخرفات بمساعدة بعض من الميليشيات الموالية للقوات العسكرية بعد فرار بقايا تحالف الميليشيات من وسط المدينة، عقب حصار وحرب دامت لثلاث سنوات خلقت كآل خرسانية مهتمة ودمار بكل الأماكن التاريخية للمدينة. فيما يتعلق بإزالة الركام والمباني المهتمة عبر المشاركين عن ضعف استجابة الجهات المختصة بسرعة إزالة الركام وبقايا مخلفات الحرب. قال المشاركون 1 و 3 و 4 و 5 انه يجب إزالة كل اثار الحرب من المدينة لما سببه من اضرار بيئية على الصحة وأصبحت مكانا للقوارض والحيوانات. وقال المشاركون 5 و 4 ان المباني المتضررة والتي لم تزال خلال السنوات الماضية بعد انتهاء الحرب ظلت مصدر تهديد للمارة وللبعض العائدين لمدنهم بالرغم من عدم صيانتها، ولكن لعدم قدرتهم على تحمل تكاليف الاستئجار جعلهم يعودون لمدنهم شبه المهتمة بمنطقة وسط المدينة. بينما أشار المشاركون 9 الى مشكلة تتعلق بالتراموايات وادعاءات الملكية للمباني المتضررة والآلية للسقوط فقال " بعض المباني بالمدينة القديمة واحياء اخرى عليها نزاع منذ العهد الاشتراكي سبعينيات القرن الماضي حينما خصصت السلطات المنازل لمواطنين اخرين تحت ذريعة العدالة الاجتماعية".

تمت مناقشة المشاركين حول مشاريع إعادة الاستقرار التي تنفذها البلدية عبر مكتب مشروعات البلدية. بالإشارة إلى بناء ضريح عمر المختار الذي كان يتمويل من الحكومة المؤقتة بتكلفة بلغت بمبلغ مليون وستمئة ألف دينار ليبي.

2 مايو 2022، ضريح عمر المختار بنغازي

اتفق المشاركون 1 و3 و9 على أن إعادة بناء ضريح عمر المختار له أثر إيجابي في إحياء المدينة وإعادة الرمزية التاريخية لها لما يمثلته المجاهد عمر المختار من رمز لكل الليبيين في مقاومته للمحتل الإيطالي وإعدامه في عام 1931 وهو بعمر 70 سنة. وعبروا على أن المكان يرمز لكل الليبيين ويعزز الوحدة الوطنية. اتخذت الموقع كمكان للتجمع في الأعياد والمناسبات الوطنية والدينية. مؤخراً استغل من قبل الأطراف السياسية الباحثة عن شعبية له من خلال التظاهر بالموقع أو استغلال التجمعات العفوية والدينية. بينما بقية المشاركين عبروا عن امتعاضهم لإعادة البناء وحسب الأموال الكبيرة عليه في الوقت الذي تقف خلف الضريح عمارة تشتهر باسم عمارة الحلال متضررة من جراء الاشتباكات كانت تحوي على 50 أسرة نازحة الآن لم ينظر في حالهم إلى الآن حيث قال المشاركون 8 " منذ اندلاع الحرب نزحت أنا وجبراني من العمارة منذ نهاية عام 2014 وإلى الآن بداية عام 2022 لم نستلم أي تعويض أو حتى صيانة للعمارة بينما تنفق السلطات المحلية الأموال على مباني لا تقدم أي خدمة للمواطن فبناء الإنسان وحاجياته المقترحة أن تكون ذات أولوية أكبر من الرموز التاريخية التي نحترمها ونشرف بها".

كذلك كانت آراء المشاركين متطابقة حول منارة بنغازي وصيانتها فهم يرون أنها رمز للمدينة بينما المشاركون ممن لا زالوا نازحين أو الذين تضررت منازلهم بشدة ولم يستلموا تعويضات أو أي اهتمام من السلطات المحلية شجبوا واعتراضوا على الصيانة واصفين إياها بالكماليات التي تعكس عدم الاهتمام بأولويات إعادة الأعمار.

بينما وصف المشاركون 10 الصيانة بأنها تشويه لما كانت عليه المنارة قبل الحرب حيث إن طريقة الصيانة والتحسينات أفقدتها أصالتها والتي كان ينبغي الحفاظ عليها دون مبالغة وإن إضافة الدرج بموقع تاريخي ملحق بالمنارة كان تشويه كبير للمنطقة التاريخية، أيضاً أصبحت المنارة مركزاً لتجمع بعض الأنشطة والاحتفالات بعد الصيانة. بينما لا يزال أغلب سكان منطقة المنارة المعروفة باسم اخربيش وهي إحدى مناطق المدينة القديمة نازحين حيث تضررت منازلهم بشدة بسبب الحرب.

الأطراف الفاعلة

انتقد جميع المشاركين تمثال الحوت الذي نفذته برنامج الأمم المتحدة الإنمائي بالتعاون مع جهاز المدن التاريخية بينغازي ومكتب مشروعات البلدية، الجميع اجمع على قبح التمثال الذي أشعل موجة من الانتقادات والسخرية عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي.

قال أحد المشاركين " هذا التمثال لا يكافئ مدينة بنغازي التي قدمت وتقدم التضحيات من أجل كل ليبيا، انه عمل فني سيئ جدا" وانتقد الكثيرون هذا العمل عبر وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي بينما عرضت البلدية على المهتمين تقديم أي اقتراحات ليتم دراستها وتنفيذها وقالت انه لم يصلها أي اقتراح.

وأشار البعض الى ان التمثال ليس له أي علاقة بالآرث الحضري للمدينة وان لا يمثل رمزية لسوق الحوت بالمدينة القديمة الذي يقابل موقع هذا التمثال. ويسأل المشاركون عن المعالم المضافة بطريق الكورنيش عبروا جميعهم على ان اختيارات البلدية سيئة وغير منسجمة مع البيئة الحضرية والآرث الثقافي للمدينة والمجتمع، بينما ارتاح الجميع لصيانة سوق الخضروات المركزي او الفندق البلدي، ولكنهم أشاروا الى استمرار وجود الزكام وعدم احياء منطقة المدينة القديمة والتي يقع سوق الخضروات في نطاقها بالإضافة الى عدم استئناف خدمات النقل للركاب من الاحياء لوسط المدينة لاستمرار الوضع المتدهور وعدم البدء بأي اعمال لإعادة الاعمار لتنشيط المنطقة.

أكد المشاركون على انهم لم يستشاروا في أي اعمال في مرحلة الاستقرار حيث قال المشاركون 5 " بنغازي مدينتنا ولكن هناك من يفصلها كما هو يجب وليس كما يجب ويحب أهلها" وقال المشاركون 4 ان المنظمات الأجنبية لم تساهم بإحياء المساجد او صيانتها وهي العمود الفقري لإحياء الاحياء وذلك لأنها ضد الإسلام ومن بلاد غير مسلمة"

ستطة الهدم لإعادة الاعمار

استطلع اراء المشاركين حول هدم السلطات المتمثلة في الحكومة المؤقتة والبلدية بينغازي لأكبر واقدم مستشفى للنساء والولادة بشرق ليبيا مستشفى الجمهورية . كل المشاركين قالو بانهم غير راضيين عن الهدم وقال المشاركون 8 " مستشفى الجمهورية يمثل تاريخ وعراقة للمدينة وكل من هو في جيلنا وحتى الشباب والصغار اطلبهم ولدو بهذا المستشفى وصنعنا بهذمه" بينما قال المشاركون 9 " ان المستشفى بني منذ اكثر من سكين سنة واغلب مبانيه تعتبر تاريخية لا تعوض وقرار هدمه غير صائب لان الاضرار لم تكن بحاجة للهدم بل كان يمكن صيانتة وتطويره" وهدم المستشفى ورفعت لافتة لمشروع انشائه في غضون 180 يوم ولأن لم يتم وضع

أي مطابق بموقعه. أشار المشاركون إلى القرارات الارتجالية للحكومة المؤقتة [1]. **أولويات التنمية** بمرحلة إعادة الاستقرار

والسلطات بشرق ليبيا غير الصانبة بينما قال المشاركون [1] إن الحكومة تستفيد من

عقود الهدم والتي لا تتطلب تكاليف مثل البناء وبالتالي فإن المسؤولين يتدبرون بالمباني الأبله للسقوط وخاصة العامة لتكثيف

شركات بالهدم دون وضع حلول للترميم والتحديث.

بالسؤال حول مشروعات صيانة الحدائق والمساحات الخضراء بالمدينة قال المشاركون 3 " إعادة صيانة الحدائق العامة هي إعادة الحياة

للمناطق الخضراء داخل المدينة وقد ساهمت في الراحة البصرية للسكان وانعشت الهواء" بينما استهجن المشاركون 1 و 2 و 6 البذخ

في صيانة الحدائق العامة في الوقت الذي لا تزال المئات من الأسر نازحة ولم يتم صيانة مساكنهم أو تعويض المتضررين منهم وقال

المشارك 2 "لأزالت اعاني مع اسرتي مشقة الزوج بضواحي المدينة وكلما ادخل المدينة لتتفقد ركام بيتي بوسط المدينة اشعر بالغضب

والحزن لما أشاهده من تأثير الحكومة على المساحات الخضراء ونحن لازلنا نازحين ومتضررين من الحرب ، وهذا يدل على ان

المسؤولين المحليين يعملون ضد سكان المدينة أو انهم ليسوا من بنغازي" ودعى المشاركون 9 البلدية إلى إعطاء الأولويات اسبقية التنفيذ.

بينما اتسم المشاركون حول مشاريع الطرق وصيانتها بالمشارك [1] قال ان صيانة وتحديث الطرق ساهم في حل أزمة الازدحام داخل

المدينة بينما قال المشاركون 8 "ان جودة التنفيذ سيئة جدا وسرقة وان البلدية بارعة في العقود التي تدر عليها وعلى عمالها الأموال

بأيسر المشاريع وان كانت غير مجدية في هذه المرحلة" بينما يرى بقية المشاركون ان الطرق ساهمت بتخفيف بعض الازدحام وحللت

المخففات المرورية ولكنها بدون شبكات للصرف الصحي وتصريف

مياه الأمطار حتما سوف تنهار، وقد انهار بعضها فعلا خلال الشتاء وان كان بعضها مثل تنفيذ ازدواج الطريق الدائري الرابع و

الخامس حل أزمة المواصلات في المدينة لكن تظل اغلب مشاريع صيانة وتنفيذ الطرق لخدمة الطبقة المرموقة . حيث أشار المشاركون

10 ان الطرق اغلبها نفذ خارج مخطط المدينة لإحياء الطبقات الغنية والمسؤولة بالحكومة والبلدية. وبالتالي اتفق أكثر المشاركون على

ان مشروعات لجنة إعادة الاستقرار لمدينة بنغازي لا تلبي احتياجات المواطن في هذه المرحلة وغير ذات أولوية.

استغرب المشاركون من عدم وجود تصميمات معمارية للتطاع العام والخاص يراعي فئة المعاقين خاصة وأن الحرب تسببت في ارتفاع

كبير في عدد المعاقين بين فئة الشباب ولم ترق المنشآت الخاصة والعامة لمستوي يراعي احتياجاتهم. فاعلم المباني الحكومية لاتزال

تتفقد للمرات وسلام ومساعد تساعد المعاقين على التنقل.

انتشار التجمعات التجارية والسكنية الحديثة في مرحلة ما بعد الحرب

نشأت تجمعات تجارية حديثة واحياء سكنية مختلفة الطبقات حيث عبر المشاركون عن ان التجمعات نشأت لتعويض النقص بسبب

افتقاد مركز المدينة الذي كان يحوي كل الأسواق الشعبية ومتاجر التسوق الكبيرة بينما قال المشاركون 3 " ان التجمعات التجارية

الجديدة هي نتاج لغسل الأموال والفساد المالي واموال الحرب وتجارة السلاح والمخدرات المنتعشة مؤخرا وفترة عدم الاستقرار"

والمشارك 6 قال " ان البلدية ساهمت بسرعة في تعبيد الطرق 2. 1. المشاركة المجتمعية في قبائل يعميولوجة بإعادة التفتيش وابطال الخدمات اليها والاثارة والكهرباء بينما لا زالت المدينة

القديمة واحيانها مدمرة شاهدة على فترة الحرب" وعبر المشاركين عن التحول الطيفي والديمقراطي في الاحياء السكنية الجديدة ، حيث ان بعض الاحياء احتوت على التناحيز وبنيت بطرق اقتصادية خلال فترة الحرب ومعظمها بمنطقة سيدي خليفة. اما احياء غرب المدينة اعليها مرتفعة الثمن تحوي حيث تقطنها طبقات غنية جديدة ، أيضا التغير الديمغرافي للأحياء حيث قال المشارك 7 " بعض الاحياء الآن تقطنها عائلات مهاجرة من مصر ومن قبائل مهاجرة ذات من الأراضي المصرية استقلت الوضع الهش خلال الحرب للاستيطان بنغازي" أيضا هناك احياء ضمت اغليبيتها مهجرين من مدن ليبية اخرى من الغرب الليبي استقرت نتيجة للحرب منذ 2011 وبعد الحرب الاهلية الليبية الثانية 2014 . بالإضافة الى إشارة المشاركين الى التغير في الاحياء من حيث انتشار الجريمة وتجارة المخدرات بشكل لافت كإحدى العواقب نتيجة عدم استقطاب المقاتلين في برامج تنمية وتوعية. بينما لفت المشارك 9 الى مشاكل البناء الجديد سواء في الأحياء داخل أو خارج المخطط من بناء العمارات المتعددة الطوابق بشكل يكشف الجيران مما يعد تعدي خطير على حرية الآخرين وفقا للثقافة بالمجتمع.

أشار المشاركون الى عدم استشارتهم في أي مشروع نفذ خلال مرحلة الاستقرار او تم اخذ رأيهم في أي عمل مستقبلي لإعادة الاعمار. وأوضحوا جميعا ان مكتب مشروعات البلدية والمجلس البلدي الغير منتخب لا يستجيب لأي مطالبات مجتمعية ما عدا المشارك 4 قال " قمت بالتواصل مع البلدية بخصوص مد طريق للحي واستجابت لنا بسرعة" بينما قال المشارك 5 ان البلدية تستجيب إذا كان هناك مصلحة لها في أي مشروع. بينما رأي المشارك 1 و 6 ان البلدية تنفذ الكثير من المشروعات كالطرق والحدائق العامة ولكن نعلم كم قيمة عقود التنفيذ وأشاروا الى انهم كانوا يشاهدون في مشروعات التنمية بنغازي قبل الثورة 2011 وجود لاقطة باسم المشروع والمقاول والاستشاري مع تكلفة ومدة المشروع والآن لا تذكر مثل هذه المعلومات المهمة للسكان ولا يؤخذ رأيهم في الحسبان. بينما وصف المشارك 2 المجلس البلدي والمسؤولين بممارسة القبلية والمحسوبية. ولأعمال الحكومات المركزية والموقفة وصف المشاركين بان كل الحكومات لا تعمل على الاستقرار أكثر من انها تعمل على استنزاف المال العام. وروا ان مشروعات البلدية لا تساهم في المصالحة والوحدة الوطنية، بل تعمل على حسب توجهات التيار الذي يمنحها الشرعية والأموال.

إزالة آثار الحروب

يشارك جميع المشاركون وجهة النظر بخصوص ضرورة إزالة معالم الحرب من المدينة. وقال المشارك 4 " الحياة يجب ان تستمر وان ننسى كل الآثار المحزنة للحرب الاهلية الليبية بنغازي وهذا لا يكون الا إزالة كل آثار الحرب" بينما قال المشارك 6 و 7 ان هناك ضرورة لإزالة بقايا الحرب من المدينة للبدء بإعادة الاعمار ولكن يجب ان يكون هناك كشف عن الآثار البيئية لبقايا الأسلحة بسبب تزايد الأورام السرطانية بنغازي بنسبة كبيرة جدا مقارنة ببقية البلاد ، وأشاروا الى

إحصائية حول ارتفاع معدل الإصابة بمرض السرطان صادرة عن وزارة الصحة الليبية مؤخرا. يقول المشاركون إن إعادة الاعمار يجب أن تكون على بيئة نظيفة وإن لا يكون وسط المدينة التي يراد اعمارها ملوثة ومصدر لنقل الامراض لأجيال اخرى. يشارك الجميع القلق حول إمكانية تلوث مناطق الصراع بالإشعاعات المعنوية وأيضاً يتطلعون لعملية إعادة اعمار ناجحة تقوم على أساس العدالة المجتمعية. بينما قال المشاركون 8 انه يجب إزالة كل ما يشير الى الحرب في المدينة بأسرع وقت. عبر المشاركون 9 على قلقه من الآثار النفسية للبيئة الحضرية التي لازالت متضررة وتحمل آثار الدمار والحرب في كل مكان وقال " انتهت الحرب منذ 2017 ولا زالت البنايات مهتمة و آثار الدمار بكل مناطق المدينة القديمة مع اكوام هائلة للركام. وهناك أطفال وجيل جديد يبلغ الآن من العمر خمس سنوات أي منذ انتهاء الحرب والآن ينمون ويكبرون وسط هذه المشاهد من التاريخ المؤلم والحزين بسبب الحرب التي استمرت ثلاث سنوات" من ناحية اخرى يقول المشاركون 1 انه ينبغي الإبقاء على بعض آثار الاضرار للتذكير بمآسي الحرب الأهلية بين الليبيين وانهم هم الوحيدين الخاسرين في معارك صراع الكبار على السلطة. وقال المشاركون 5 ان بعض المعالم المهتمة ينبغي الإبقاء عليها للتذكير بالانتصار القوات العسكرية على تحالف الميليشيات المدعوم من الحكومة بطرابلس.

بيئة حضرية داعمة للمصالحة

ما عدا المشاركون 5 كل المشاركين يدعمون أن تكون البيئة الحضرية للمدينة داعمة للمصالحة والسلام الوطني، اما المشاركون 5 فقال ان البيئة يجب أن تنصف من حرر المدينة من تحالف الميليشيات المسلحة من خلال تسعة الشوارع او الميادين بأسماء بعض القادة العسكريين او المقاتلين، اما بقية المشاركين لم يبيدوا ان تتضمن عمليات إعادة الاعمار أي تماثيل لأنها منافية للشريعة الإسلامية ولأنها تصنع أبطال لشخصيات مرحلية. فلا توجد هناك صناعة للتماثيل او شعبية لها ببغداد. والتفتت إجابات المشاركين عدا 5 على ضرورة أن تكون البيئة الحضرية المعالم ذات أسماء غير جذلية للشخصيات العامة والعسكرية وانهم ينزعجون من تعليق صور لقادة في الميادين او المناطق العامة لأنها تشوه البيئة البصرية وتفرض صناعة البيئة الحضرية للطرف المنتصر لأنها هو المتحكم الآن على الأرض كما كان الصراع في البداية على من يسيطر ويتحكم في المدينة وسكانها. رحب المشاركون 4 و 6 و 8 و 9 بالبنات الحضرية الداعمة بقوة للوحدة ونبذ الخلافات وعلى دور الميادين العامة والمساحات خصوصاً بمنطقة وسط المدينة والتي تعتبر مركز حضري رئيسي لبغداد. وقالو ان المدينة تحتاج لعملية إعادة الاعمار للسلام والعمل معاً لتجاوز الخلافات فالبيئة الحضرية هي التي تجمع كل السكان من مختلف الاحياء والتوجهات السياسية والفكرية ولصناعة بيئة داعمة للسلام للأجيال القادمة وتدعوهم للتلاحم لمواجهة الصعوبات التي تواجه المدينة.

الذاكرة الجماعية

وصف المشاركون المدينة القديمة وأحيائها بأنها قلب المدينة وتاريخها الرابع وعبروا عن مدي حزنهم لفقدان الكثير من المباني وحالة الموت التي تعيشها منذ عام 2014. وقال المشاركون 2 أنه بعد تدمير بيته يقوم فقط أسبوعيا بزيارة وجولة في المدينة القديمة ويلتقي بجيرانه الذي عادوا لملازمتهم. وكل عطلة نهاية أسبوع يزور الكورنيش ويتجول على شاطئ البحر ليتذكر الماضي الجميل. بينما قال المشاركون 1 * المدينة القديمة ومعالمها هي قلب المدينة ومركز التجمع لكل روادها ونحن نتجمع في مختلف الأعياد والمناسبات في المدينة القديمة بسوق الحوت للتسوق من الباعة المتجولين في شهر رمضان " وقال المشاركون 5 و 6 أن معالم المدينة التاريخية وشوارعها تحمل ذكريات الطفولة وتاريخنا ونعتبرها مستقبلنا فهم يحلون الأيام توقف عند أول إطلاقه رصاص في الحرب منذ 2014. وعطلت كل المدينة وأوقفت الحياة فيها. قال المشاركون أنهم يستغلون أي فرصة أو مناسبة لكي يحيدوا المدينة القديمة فهم يتجمعون في المناسبات عند ضريح عمر المختار والمنارة وخلال شهر رمضان يتسوقون من الباعة المتجولين بالرغم من عدم اهتمام السلطات المحلية بهذه المنطقة التاريخية وتركيز اهتمام البلدية على الأحياء الخارج التخطيط. رفض غالبية المشاركين عملية إنشاء أسواق ومراكز تسوق حديثة خارج منطقة المدينة القديمة تحمل أسماء المراكز الشعبية المدمرة والمعتلة

أيضا تركز اهتمام المشاركين حول كيفية إعادة الإعمار فكان غالبيتهم يؤيدون إعادة المباني المدمرة كما كانت عليه قبل الحرب وينفك المسميات لأنها تمثل الإصالة للتراث الحضري لبنغازي. لم يزيد أي من المشاركين عملية مسح كامل للمدينة لإعادة تخطيطها بشكل آخر أو حديث وأصروا على ضرورة المحافظة على تقسيمات المدينة كما كانت دون تغيير واسترجاع ما دمر بالإعمار. بينما قال المشاركون 10 * أنه قد يتطلب بعض التعديل في التخطيط للشوارع لمعالجة مشاكل سابقة فلا بأس، ولكن لا يكون الهدف من المسح الكامل هو إعادة التخطيط، بل إن يكون لمعالجة مشاكل سابقة " بينما قال المشاركون 2 * أن البلدية قد تخطط لإزالة كل المناطق المدمرة وأعاد تخطيط الشوارع وهذا قد يمثل صراع آخر، ولكن صراع حضري لمحو ذاكرة المدينة القديمة حيث تهمل السلطات المدينة القديمة وتركز الاهتمام على الأحياء الراقية بالضواحي " وعبروا المشاركون عن غضبهم من هدم مستشفى الجمهورية من قبل الحكومة المؤقتة وقالوا بأنه كان بالإمكان صيانته وإن البلدية تحارب تاريخ بنغازي وأصفين بأن عميد البلدية الغير منتخب ليس من سكان المدينة.

المباني التاريخية

انزعج المشاركون من هدم مستشفى الجمهورية كونه أحد المعالم الخدمية القديمة المرتبطة بهم كمستشفى للولادة ولد معظم المشاركين فيه وأنجبوا بعض أولادهم فيه فيرون إن له مكانه خاصة في ذاكرتهم القديمة التي كان ينبغي ألا يهدم، بل يعاد ترميمه وصيانتة. راي المشاركون 2 وهو أحد المقيمين سابقا بجانب المستشفى بأن الاضرار لم تستدع الهدم والمسح بالكامل. وقال المشاركون 3 و 6 أنهم صدموا بعد مرور 180 يوم من هدم المستشفى حيث حضر رئيس الحكومة الموقرة احتفالا بفتح حجر الأساس لإعادة بناءه في غضون 180 يوم والآن لليوم لا يوجد شي بموقع المستشفى. وبالتالي فهم يخشون تكرار هذه الاعمال مع مباني أخرى بسوء تقدير، ولكن لأن أوامر الهدم هي بيد السلطات وليست بيد المواطنين وبالتالي يري المشاركون ان السلطات الفاسدة توقع عقود لعمليات الهدم لأنها لا تكلف أي أموال مثل أعمال البناء فالهدم بسيط يتطلب البات للهدم والنقل ويستوجب فتح بلود لتوريد مواد مطابقة للمواصفات. يخشى المشاركون من تزايد أعمال الهدم غير المطلوبة بهذه الترانع. شدد المشاركون على ضرورة ارجاع الأسواق الشعبية بالمدينة القديمة لما كانت عليه واحياء المدينة القديمة، قال المشاركون 2 و 4 و 7 ان الأسواق التاريخية بالمدينة القديمة كسوق الجريد كان رواده من الطبقات المتوسطة والفقيرة قبل الحرب. المشاركون 4 قال " كنا نرئاد السوق الجريد بكل المناسبات وكانت أسعاره مناسبة لنا كطبقة الموظفين العموميين والآن لم تعد هناك وسائل مواصلات للمنطقة القديمة وانشأت التجمعات التجارية الخاصة الراقية وهي مكلفة واسعارها عالية" بينما قال المشاركون 9 " ان التوسع العمراني خلال الحرب ومجمعات التسوق الحديثة والتي على الطراز الغربي ذات أسعار مرتفعة وهي لا تناسب فقرات المواطن البسيط في ظل الأوضاع الاقتصادية السيئة بعد الحرب". بينما شدد المشاركون على ضرورة احياء الأسواق الشعبية القديمة في أي خطة لإعادة الاعمار لأنها هي مكان التجمع والالتقاء لكل سكان الاحياء وزوار المدينة.

المشاركة المجتمعية في تصورات إعادة الاعمار

أعرب المشاركون عن رغبتهم في نموذج إعادة الاعمار التشاركي الذي يحاور المالك ويستشير السكان حول خطط إعادة الاعمار المزعومة، قال المشاركون 3 و 4 و 5 ان إعادة الاعمار الناجحة يجب ان تبدأ من المواطن فهو المستهدف بالاعمار وعبروا عن مخاوفهم من النزاع ملكية منازلهم المدمرة لصالح شركات في المستقبل. كذلك ربطوا بين الخصخصة والمساهمة فلم يكونوا متحمسين لخطط نزاع الملكية مقابل أسهم حيث أعرب جميعهم ان الوضع السياسي للبلاد لازال غير مستقر ولا يوجد ضمان لأي اتفاق مع الشركاء الرأسماليين حسب وصفهم. رفضوا جميعا أي انزاع للملكية بقوة القانون أو أي تشريع يصدر خاصة وان البلاد لازالت بدون دستور وفي صراع سياسي وعسكري. وفضل المشاركون من سكان منطقة

المدينة القديمة إعادة الاعمار لما كان عليه سابقا بدون أبراج عالية، بل الحفاظ على النمط المحلي كما كان مع تحسينات الضرورية. بينما المشاركين 7 و 8 و 10 يفضلون التحديث الكبير في المنطقة بدمج المباني الحديثة الجديدة مع القديمة. ولكن سرعان ما قالو جميعا انهم يأملون في عودة كل شي كما كان خاصة وإن الحرب قد انتهت منذ 2017 ولا يوجد أي تعويض للمتضررين ولا أي اعمار بمنطقة القديمة للمدينة وعبروا عن خيبة أملهم في السلطات المحلية الغير منتخبة والتي لا تعترف بالمشاركة المجتمعية وتعمل في غموض وفساد. علل الجميع التأخير لفترة عدم الاستقرار من الحروب داخل بنغازي الى الحرب على طرابلس ثم الاتفاقات السياسية واتفاقات السلام المتتالية.

أولوية استكمال مشروعات التنمية المتوقفة واسكان النازحين

استكمال المشروعات المتوقفة منذ عام 2011 ثم إعادة الإعمار
اجمع كل المشاركين على ضرورة وضع الأولوية لعملية استكمال مشروعات التنمية التي عطلت وتوقفت منذ العام 2011 أي قبل الحرب الأهلية الليبية الثانية في 2014. ويأملون في عودة الشركات الأجنبية واستكمال الاعمال الانشائية والتي كانت تجري بوتيرة جيدة قبل 2011. قال المشاركون 4 " ان عودة الشركات الأجنبية واستكمال مشاريع الإسكان سيحل أزمات الإسكان والنازحين وسيعوض عن الدمار " بينما قال المشاركون 9 " إذا عادت الشركات واستأنفت مشاريع الإسكان فإننا يمكننا التنازل عن شقتي بالمدينة القديمة مقابل شقة بمنطقة قنفودة " يري بقية المشاركين النازحين ان الوحدات التي كان العمل جاري فيها في منطقة قنفودة أقرب بكثير من تلك التي تقوم البلدية ببناؤها لنا بمنطقة جردينة.