

## Urban Reconstruction in Post-War Cities by the Approach of Collective Memories

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### ABSTRACT

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This paper aims to identify the role of collective memories in post-war urban reconstruction in Mogadishu, which lost its architectural fabric, and its cultural and historical landmarks during the civil war. Preserving collective memories and integrating them into urban recovery and reconstruction processes strengthens cultural identity, community resilience, and social cohesion. Grounded Theory has been utilized to identify core categories and key concepts on a local level, in order to evaluate the social resilience components and CM. The results indicated that incorporating collective memories into post-war urban reconstruction endeavors is of paramount importance in revitalizing urban areas and a new approach to adopting a comprehensive methodology that gives priority to integrating the historical context, collective memory, and contemporary elements into the process of reconstructing urban areas in Mogadishu, with the aim of transforming it into a developed and sustainable city that connects the past and present and was able to recover at record speed post-war.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The aftermath of wars often leaves cities destroyed and communities amnesiac [1]. In seeking urban reconstruction in post-war, there is a need to harness the power of collective memories as a guiding approach to sustainable urban reconstruction [2]. The importance of preserving and integrating collective memories into the reconstruction process is to strengthen cultural identity, community resilience, and social cohesion. Urban reconstruction is a complex process, and it is the biggest challenge facing post-war nations and the most difficult of those collective memories that those nations live with post-war, which leads to feelings of alienation and non-belonging [3].

Nguyen [4] says in his book “Nothing Ever Dies: Vietnam and the Memory of War” “All wars are fought twice, the first time on the battlefield, the second time in memory”. He explores the relationship between urban reconstruction and contested collective memories post-war in Vietnam. The author analyzes the traces of war in both the material and social fabric of Vietnam and examines architects and city-makers as mediators of multiplicity and complexity between people's collective memories and the official narratives and state strategies.

Bădescu [5, 6] discusses how the process of urban reconstruction in Sarajevo post-war was closely linked to the post-war reconfiguration of CM and identities. The Bosnian War (1992-1995) had a drastic effect on Sarajevo, which left the city in ruins, its infrastructure collapsing, and its architectural texture lost [6, 7]. Efforts to reconstruct the city and how people choose to live and interact through collective

memories played a crucial role in defining new post-war identities [8].

The process of urban regeneration in Sarajevo was not just the physical reconstruction of buildings, streets, and places, but rather a process with a significant role in the symbolism and resilience of the city and its determination to restore its identity after the trauma of war [9]. The reconstruction process in Sarajevo was taking place in debates about the preservation, prioritization, and growth of historical and cultural monuments, rooted in the redefinition of the city's identity and its collective memories in a rapidly changing world [3].

Post-war, CM can support post-war reconstruction awareness by enabling the implementation of effective measures to preserve and share experiences and lessons across generations and social groups in a way that supports increased disaster risk awareness, by recognizing that memory itself is not static and gradually evolves to follow specific needs and social pressures, this can reframe how risk and disaster are understood and implement disaster risk reduction measures more effectively [10]. An urban reconstruction recovery process that ignores the background and collective memory of that community can lead to the reopening of disputes over ownership of land and property [1]. Postwar urban reconstruction should take a radical account of postwar memory and identities. It is necessary to focus on the priorities and how the city is rebuilt, how people choose to live there, and how they interact and accept each other [11]. All of that contributes to the formation of a new post-war identity that accelerates the process of recovery. Reconstructions can not only be about physical structures, but also about rebuilding the social, cultural, and emotional fabric of the city [12].

Mogadishu, the case study, is an ancient city in the Horn of Africa, it is characterized by a long history and embodies different cultures and civilizations. The historical monuments scattered in Mogadishu have an Islamic, Persian, or Arab architectural character. Mogadishu lost its architectural texture and historical identity after the civil war that lasted for nearly two decades [13, 14]. Most of the city was destroyed which made the civilians and returnees feel not belong to the city.

## **2. THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE MEMORIES IN SOCIAL IDENTITY**

Memory makes us, and we make a memory [12, 15]. It is the closely related social identity and CM that make them play an important role in shaping individuals' sense of self and group belonging. Social identity is part of an individual's self-concept and is derived from membership in multi-ethnic social groups and ideologies. Social groups are based on various factors such as nationality, race, religion, or any other common characteristic [16]. Social identity helps individuals feel a sense of belonging and understand their place in society [6, 17].

Orianne and Eustache [18] and Wagoner [19] define CM as shared memories from narratives and historical events of a community or group, and these memories are shaped by shared experiences, traditions, and events that are of particular importance to the group. CM are transmitted by storytelling and cultural practices, through which the group's identity, perception, and outward view are shaped. The relationship between collective memories and social identity is symbiotic [18]. CM plays a major role in the formation and strengthening of social identity by providing a common history and cultural heritage, or what is called a shared memory for society. These shared memories act as a common thread, reinforcing the sense of symbiosis and solidarity among all components of society and enhancing their social identity [17].

Our memories are not just a simple record of facts because we first organize the information [18, 19], we receive back in a way that fits our cognitive perceptions and expectations. Social identity influences the formation and interpretation of collective memories [5]. Group members may selectively remember and interpret historical events in a way that strengthens their own group while demeaning and attempting to erase other groups' narratives [14, 20]. It can lead to the creation of CM that may not entirely correspond to objective historical facts but are essential to maintaining group cohesion and a positive self-image [21]. It is for this reason that decision-makers, architects, and city planners face the challenge of post-war urban reconstruction if they do not focus on the role of CM in the formation of the identity of the post-war society, and this is the reason for our deepening our study in the nature of the concept of CM, and in order to form and develop an environment that residents feel a sense of belonging and a common memory to accelerate the post-war recovery process [10].

## **3. THE ROLE OF COLLECTIVE MEMORIES IN URBAN RECONSTRUCTION IN POST-WAR RECOVERY**

CM and its role in the cities post-war explore how memory and physical urban reconstruction are related [17]. CM refers to the shared memories, feelings, and historical narratives of a

society that has experienced war, and whose identity is shaped by those experiences [5]. It encompasses all the memories of human suffering, experiences, and trauma that people have gone through. The CM impacts the nature of the physical environment, such as landmarks, historical sites, and places where war-events occurred [22]. CM plays an essential role in guiding recovery, urban development, and post-war reconstruction [17]. CM serves as the basis for reconstructing a city with a sensitivity and inclusiveness that allows an understanding of the shared history and cultural heritage of a community between the present and the past [23]. It gives an essential understanding to architects and city planners. By taking CM into account, can design urban development strategies that address the psychological and emotional needs of affected populations and promote healing and reconciliation [2, 17].

CM influences the preservation of social, cultural, and historical assets during post-war urban reconstruction [24]. Historic buildings and monuments hold great value to the community, as they are tangible links to their past. Integrating these elements into the reconstructed urban fabric helps maintain a sense of continuity and identity, preventing the loss of cultural heritage that often occurs in a phase of rapid urbanization [10].

## **4. COLLECTIVE MEMORIES AND POST-WAR URBAN RECONSTRUCTION EXAMPLES**

### **4.1 Warsaw City, Poland**

The reconstruction of Warsaw, the capital city of Poland, after World War II, was a significant endeavor that prioritized social factors and aimed to preserve the city's identity and cultural heritage [25-27].

Architects, planners, historians, educators, and other intellectuals played a crucial role in the reconstruction efforts [28]. Valuable artifacts and documents relating to the pre-war fabric and identity of the city were collected, ensuring their preservation before and during the war [29]. The urban reconstruction process began in 1945 and continued until 1966, with approximately 85% of the urban area undergoing restoration [30].

The urban reconstruction efforts in Warsaw aimed to faithfully preserve the historical legacy and previous state of the city. Materials from the original buildings were sought out and restored, including old construction stones extracted from the debris [28]. This preservation of materials and authenticity served as evidence of the historical significance and cultural identity of Warsaw [25]. An identity-preservation-focused social approach was a defining feature of the Warsaw reconstruction strategies [28]. The rebuilding of the historic city symbolized the residents' connection to their land and their refusal to adopt any externally imposed new identity. It also served as a form of silent resistance against the occupying force [31].

The reconstruction efforts in Poland also focused on strengthening societal institutions, with the government operating in exile, the responsibility for managing reconstruction fell upon the population and civil society institutions [29]. Traditional building materials were utilized in the reconstruction process, with an emphasis on incorporating original materials if available [28]. In some cases, historical structures were restored with external facades

matching their original state, while the interior spaces were altered to meet contemporary needs [32]. Eclecticism was observed in the preservation efforts, with certain historical periods being selectively conserved while others were neglected. Efforts were made to restore buildings from the nineteenth century that had been neglected during periods of foreign domination [33].

Witkowski [30] proposed a modification in the urban landscape, suggesting a limit on the high-rise buildings and an increase in the number of floors in low-rise buildings. This was aimed at aligning with the overall visual plan of the city. The reconstruction of Warsaw after World War II was a significant endeavor that prioritized social factors and aimed to preserve the city's identity and cultural heritage [29]. A social strategy that placed a high priority on identity preservation and the accurate restoration of the city's historical legacy was the defining feature of the reconstruction strategies used in Warsaw [34].

The urban reconstruction of Warsaw City is an exemplar of how collective memories can serve as a guiding approach in rebuilding a city ravaged by war, by prioritizing the preservation of identity and collective memory [28]. The urban reconstruction process of Warsaw not only revitalized the urban landscape but also upheld the spirit and pride of its inhabitants in their rich cultural heritage [30]. This approach serves as a valuable reference in urban planning and architectural research, providing insights into the profound impact of collective memories on shaping cities and societies in the face of adversity [32].

#### 4.2 Features of the reconstruction of the city of Berlin

Urban reconstruction post-war in Berlin was a complex process that required a delicate balance between preserving collective memories, historic identity, and culture and embracing modernity and progress. Berlin's urban reconstruction features highlight the significance of incorporating collective memories into the reconstruction process as an exemplar of successful post-war urban reconstruction [35].

The preservation of historic sites and monuments with symbolic value to the city's residents was a crucial aspect of Berlin's reconstruction process [34]. The Berlin Wall and Brandenburg Gate were severely damaged, they were painstakingly restored to preserve their historical significance and serve as physical reminders of the city's turbulent past. Sowińska-Heim [32] emphasized the importance of architectural preservation principles in post-war reconstruction and the safeguarding of cultural heritage. The urban planners of Berlin incorporated the use of public spaces to nurture collective memory and cultural expression [24]. The establishment of memorial gardens and open squares, such as the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and Potsdamer Platz, provided spaces for contemplation, remembrance, and community engagement. This approach is consistent with the concepts of collective memory and urban space discussed by cultural geographers such as Houdek and Phillips [36] and Dellenbaugh-Losse [37] who emphasize the significance of public spaces in influencing the memory and identity of a society.

During the physical reconstruction, Berlin prioritized the incorporation of cultural programs and artistic initiatives to revitalize the city's cultural landscape and reconnect its inhabitants with their heritage [11]. The establishment of

museums, galleries, and cultural institutions, such as the Jewish Museum Berlin and the East Side Gallery, demonstrated the city's dedication to recognizing its varied past. According to scholars such as Hein and Schubert [38], the intertwining of culture and urban reconstruction fosters a deeper sense of place and identity.

Kuroishi and Murayama [39] emphasize the impact of international planning principles on post-war Berlin, which allowed the city to establish a balance between the preservation of historic identity and the incorporation of innovative urban design.

In the Wake of War: The Reconstruction of German Cities after World War II. Diefendorf [35] examines the record pace of urban reconstruction in Berlin and Germany in general. It explains who primarily responsible, what accounts for the speed of this recovery is, and how priorities were set, and decisions were made. He argues that in crucial areas such as architectural style, urban planning, historic preservation, and housing policy, Germans adopted the collective memory of individuals and ideas as well as institutions and practical experiences from the Nazi and pre-Nazi periods [40]. Diefendorf [35] explains that the reconstruction of West German cities after 1945 constituted an essential element of cultural and historical identity and common memory in the process of post-war Germany's reconstruction [41].

The post-war urban reconstruction of Berlin demonstrates how collective memories and historic identity can be thoughtfully incorporated into the process of reconstruction [23]. By preserving and revitalizing historical landmarks, fostering collective memory through public spaces, and fostering cultural expression, Berlin has emerged as a successful modern metropolis that respects the past while embracing the future [42]. This multidimensional approach to reconstruction demonstrates the importance of collective memories and historic identity in the formation of resilient and vibrant cities in the aftermath of catastrophic events [23].

#### 4.3 Kigali city of experience

Rwanda was the site of the greatest genocide of the twentieth century. From April 7 to July 15, 1994, one million Tutsi "ethnic minorities" were murdered, and the country descended into chaos and ethnic cleansing [43]. Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda, is the city with the most genocide [44]. The infrastructure of the city was devastated, causing it to lose its identity and architectural texture [45]. CM is a crucial aspect of the post-genocide reconstruction process in Rwanda. Acknowledging and preserving the memories of the genocide are considered essential for healing and reconciliation [46].

Following the genocide, Rwanda's strategy for post-genocide reconstruction is centered on the Rwandan term "Kwibuka," which means "to remember." This approach aims to preserve collective memory. The concept of Kwibuka in Rwanda's post-genocide reconstruction strategy underscores the importance of preserving collective memory as a means to promote social resilience and facilitate [47]. The goal was to maintain the structures and sites of extermination by repurposing them into museums, such as the Kigali Genocide Memorial and Nyamata Church Genocide Memorial. Kigali's post-genocide reconstruction plan focused on reinstating everyday life for the people and preventing them from feeling isolated after everything was [46]. This involved leveraging the city's memories and past experiences to conserve its pre-war identity while removing racist ethnic symbols that fueled

division and led to genocide. The memorials and heritage sites created by the post-genocide play a crucial role in upholding a unified national identity and ensuring that the memory of the genocide is kept alive [48].

Our literary studies can be summarized that collective memory is the only compass that can facilitate architects and urban planners to understand the nature of that community. Post-war urban reconstruction must be a connection to the past through traditional processes of documentation of the physical structure. The collective memory and transmitted and oral cultural heritage must be documented when collecting information. It is important to talk to people and document their ideas and memories about the place and its image in their minds, in addition to the stories that tell the story of the place and its history and strengthens the sense of it as a place that has its own identity, and this is very important when reshaping and the reconstruction of the place in a way that enables people to know it financially and morally and feel their past and enable them to relate to it again as it was in the past. Buildings are the body of the urban environment and people's lives, and the rest of the moral elements are the soul of this body. Which brings this spirit back to life, memory, and collective identity.

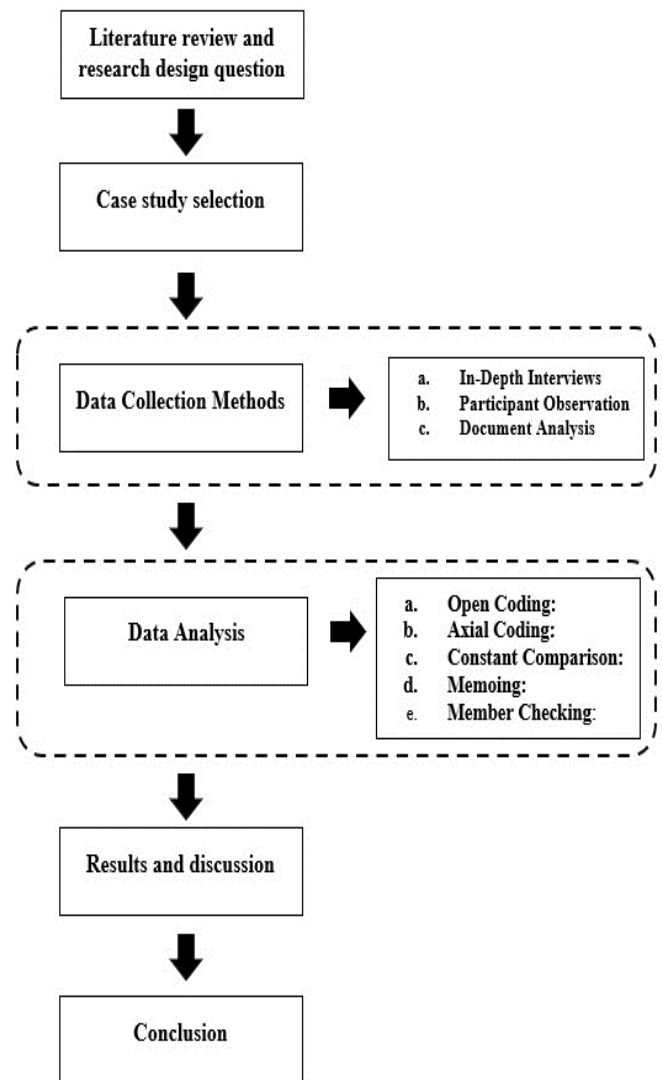
## 5. METHODOLOGY

This research can be considered as a descriptive and analytical approach that uses a grounded theory qualitative approach. This is applied because the study focuses on emotional factors, social and spiritual events, and memories in Mogadishu. Grounded theory can be conducted using different methodologies. Following the transcription of the interviews, the analysis involved identifying and categorizing key concepts from the transcripts. Data collection methods may include interviews, observations, and document analysis. The study is typically chosen based on theoretical sampling, with sample size determined by data saturation. Operational steps include open coding to identify initial themes, axial coding to establish connections, and selective coding to refine the emergent theory, enhancing research rigor and repeatability. One of the main steps in grounded theory is coding. Coding is used to conceptually abstract the data and reintegrate it as a theory [49, 50]. The process of applied research methodology is illustrated in Figure 1. A theoretical foundation and studies on urban reconstruction by the approach of collective memories were used to derive a conceptual framework.

The study includes all different groups of society including residents, war victims, survivors and returnees, urban planners, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, employees of local and international organizations, academics, and political decision-makers, see Table 1. The study focuses on understanding the nature of their ideologies, their perceptions of collective events and memories, and how each participant in the study responded. Observation and interviews took ninety days in Mogadishu and sixty days in Kigali. The questions were formulated for the participants as open-ended questions to delve into as much information as possible about the participants and focus on their collective post-war memories, which have become an essential component of post-war living.

The interviews were in religious centers, popular neighborhoods, and refugee camps scattered throughout Mogadishu. Twenty group discussions were conducted in each discussion that lasted between three and four hours. After the

group discussions, the participants were selected for private individual interviews that lasted between fifteen and forty minutes to ask open-ended questions to obtain more accurate information and provide an opportunity for the participants to obtain deeper answers and not feel embarrassed in front of others. Group discussions and interviews in each group had different sessions to obtain different data and observe the participants thoroughly. For instance, these are examples of questions: What are your mental images of Mogadishu? What are your memories of Mogadishu during and after the war? Are you satisfied with how Mogadishu has become after the war, and do you feel a sense of belonging in post-war Mogadishu? Such questions were formulated and often focused on unforgettable emotions, events, and memories to obtain the most accurate data from the participants. This focuses on participants' reactions and contributions after asking regular, open-ended questions about their shared post-war memory and each participant's perception of those stories and events. The discussions were recorded with the permission of the participants in complete confidentiality due to the nature of the area. Participants contributed by answering direct and open questions from the researcher and presenting their opinions according to their practical experiences in the field and their social worlds according to Burgess [51].



**Figure 1.** The research processes  
(Source: Authors)

**Table 1.** Study framework for data collection, including types of data, and sources

Study Framework	Type of Data	Sources
Establish the pattern of recovery, growth, and development of the city of Mogadishu post-war, used result and discussion page.	Demographics and land ownership. urban structure and morphology statistics on rural-urban migration. Economic, industrial, etc. Old planning documents and maps.	Secondary data from Mogadishu, urbanism, architecture, and social evolution books and journals. Interviews with urbanites; the Institute for Spatial Planning; the Municipality's Urbanism Department. Urban planners, architects.
Reconstruct post-war by approaching the collective memories of war focusing on victims, survivors, and currently resident returnees in Mogadishu. Used in results, discussion, and conclusion.	The role of collective memories in the recovery process of urban reconstruction post-war in Mogadishu. Responds and feelings of Mogadishu residents and returnees.	Interview with Internally displaced persons and interviews Mogadishu residents.
Address the main elements of the urban planning process recovery under the social identity dimension.	Policy and legal documents. Conservation, master, and other planning documents.	Banadir Regional Administration, Mogadishu Municipality, Spatial Planning Institute, Ministry of Public Works, Reconstruction and Housing-Somalia, and Interrogations of planners and other organizations. BRA Archives
Link the current situation of Mogadishu and the past (collective memories) for the urban planning development between 1969 and 1991.	BRA documents, official documents, reports on particular projects, the general reconstruction situation, Plans, and maps that identify potential investment and reconstruction places.	UN-Habitat interviews the Ministry of Public Works
Evaluate the impact of urban reconstruction post-war in Mogadishu.	planners' individual testimonials. representatives of international organizations, the neighborhood, and maps.	Interviews with planners, Banadir Regional Administration, and NGO representatives. Interview community representatives, Interviews with private institutions, BRA, and planners.
Determine how Mogadishu lost architectural texture, identity, and historical monuments post-war. Used in the result and discussion and conclusion.	Banadir Regional Statistics Secondary data from books, papers, and conferences, UN-Habitat documents and maps.	Archives of the Central Government, including UN-Habitat, UNHCR, and other organizations, Regional Administration of Banadir, Interviews with NGOs, city dwellers, and Interviews with other people connected to.

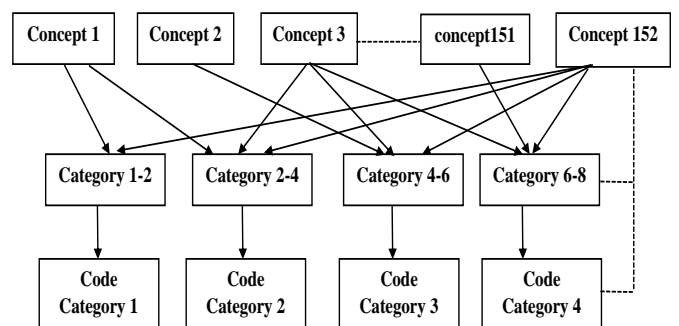
During the questionnaire of this study, due to the difficulty of security and stability in Mogadishu, a group interview was conducted in Kigali by a diplomatic mission consisting of representatives from the Senate of the Somali government. Also, individual interviews were conducted with important and high-ranking persons, which were not easy to meet in Mogadishu.

We visited Kigali, Rwanda, and conducted interviews with residents and returnees in post-genocide Kigali. Rwanda witnessed the largest genocide in the twentieth century, which claimed the lives of more than a million people from the Tutsi ethnic minority. The reason for choosing Kigali was the African historical and cultural similarities between Rwanda and Somalia or East African countries. Asking open discussions and questions and understanding the ideologies, perceptions, and nature of the two communities was not complicated given the cultural affinity and crisis of both countries. The advantage of this study is visiting the two cities and living together the experiences and events that both peoples lived through. Residents, war victims, and returnees were asked unified questions, some of which were different or similar due to the nature of the residents. All study participants' responses were limited to memories, and memories were an essential component of their post-war social identity. Also, visits were made to the Kigali Genocide Memorial Museum and specialized institutions on the history and strategy of the reconstruction of Rwanda.

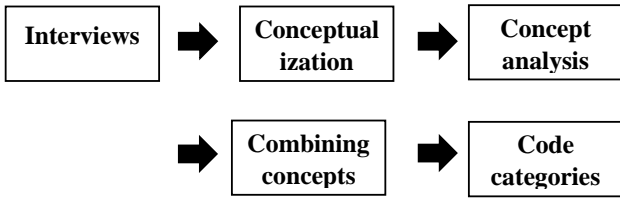
There are common stories and phrases that were echoed and observed during the study, for the respondents answered that they were sharing their collective memories, especially public places, or in which unforgettable events took place. The

studies of Mogadishu and Kigali illustrate how historical events and urban development strategies profoundly influence the identity and resilience of a city. The study focused on addressing how post-war urban reconstruction in Mogadishu can be done with a collective memories approach that meets people's needs, contributes to long-term stability, and preserves the city's identity, culture, and historical fabric. In addition, it sought to identify challenges, lessons learned, and priorities for the city's post-war urban reconstruction.

Following the accomplishment of interviews, a regular set of procedures, including open, axial, and selective coding was applied for data analysis. To assess and interpret data, 152 concepts, 8 categories, and 4 code core categories were derived. The process of deriving and coding the concepts and classes is shown in Figures 2 and 3.



**Figure 2.** Coding process of the study  
(Source: Authors)



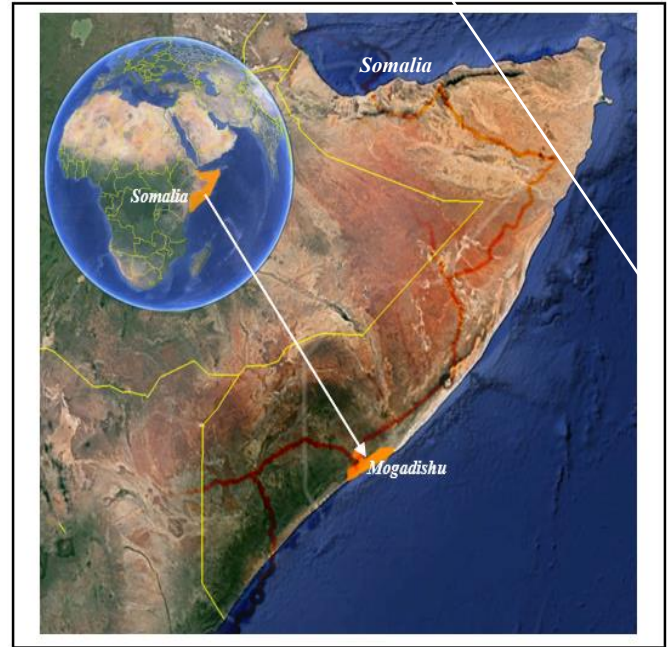
**Figure 3.** The process of the study  
(Source: Authors)

## 6. CASE STUDY OF MOGADISHU

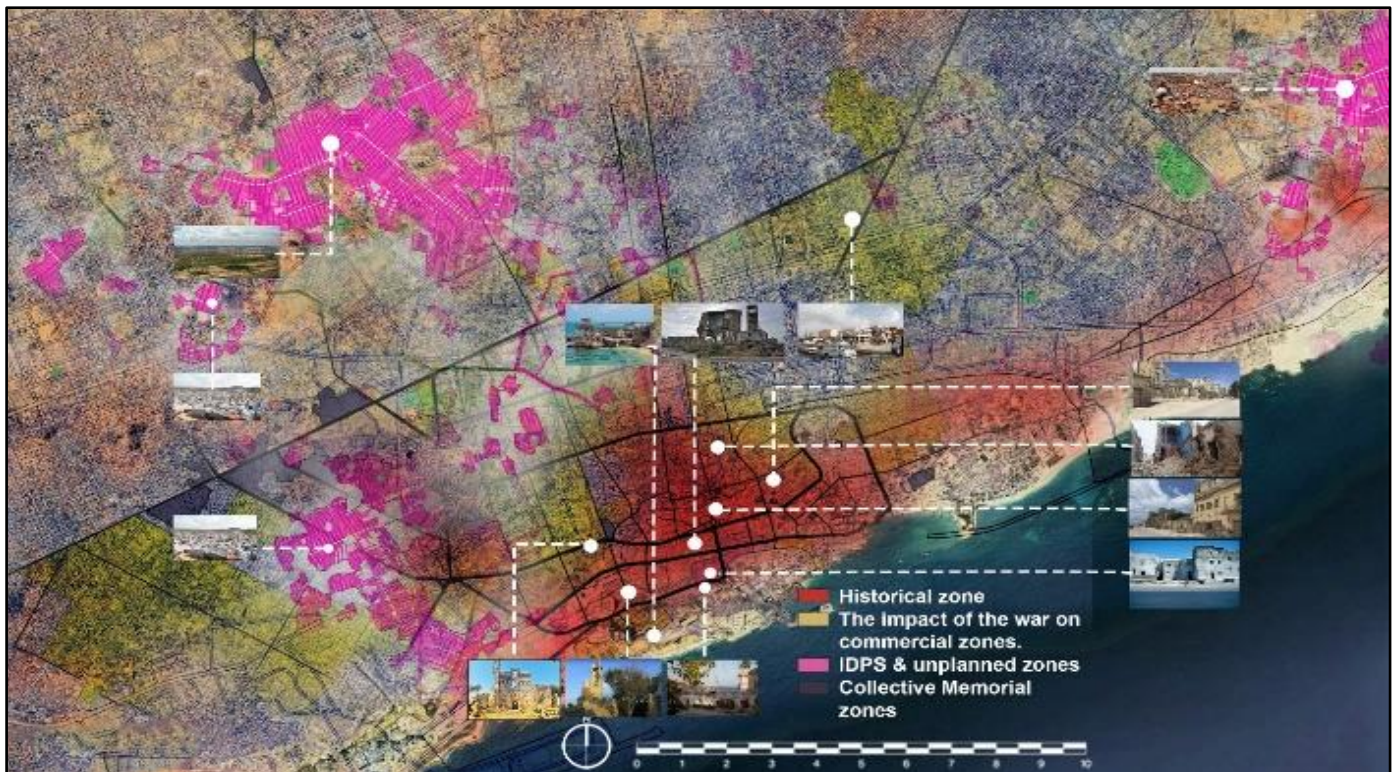
Mogadishu is the site chosen for this study as it is the national capital of the country and the oldest historical city in Somalia and the Horn of Africa (see Figure 4). It is the most historical and ancient city. Founded by Arab and Indian missions and traders [52]. Mogadishu was founded from two regions, Hamarweyne and Shingaani, which were inhabited by minority Banadari tribes. Mogadishu was a strategic location for trade with the rest of the ancient world, which led to the European invasion. Mogadishu became an important element in the process of Italian, Britain, and French colonization in the Horn of Africa [53]. The civil war that began in the early 1990s had a profound impact on the architectural landscape and cultural heritage of Mogadishu, resulting in significant damages and losses (see Figure 5).

Before the outbreak of the civil war, Mogadishu possessed a diverse architectural panorama that has been a testament to its historical connections with Arab culture, Ottoman (Islamic civilization), and Somali cultural influences. The city's urban landscape has shown a cohesive amalgamation of several architectural styles, which is a representation of its rich

cultural legacy. The urban landscape featured impressive mosques featuring elaborate carvings and decorative details, along with traditional Somali dwellings that displayed unique dome-shaped architecture. The use of public spaces and vibrant markets in Mogadishu has been critical to fostering community gatherings, facilitating social ties, maintaining cultural practices, and supporting economic operations, all of which are essential components of the city's identity.



**Figure 4.** The location of Mogadishu  
(Source: Google Earth, 2023)



**Figure 5.** The historical, collective memorial, the impact of the war on commercial zones. And IDPS & unplanned zones  
(Source: Authors)

The occurrence of the civil war resulted in extensive devastation to the architectural fabric and cultural identity of Mogadishu. The utilization of heavy weaponry in armed confrontations among opposing factions led to the indiscriminate destruction of significant cultural landmarks and historical places [5, 54]. The previously lively urban landscape underwent significant deterioration, resulting in the destruction of physical remnants that previously showcased the city's historical magnificence. The absence of architectural icons and social spaces has resulted in a significant gap in the city's CM and identity, thereby disrupting the close bond between the inhabitants of Mogadishu and their cultural history.

In addition, the civil war had a detrimental impact on social cohesion, resulting in the displacement of cultural practices and the fragmentation of communal bonds. The migration of individuals, along with instances of aggression and apprehension, exacerbated the division within the urban community. Consequently, the CM and cultural identity of Mogadishu was adversely affected, leading to the gradual disappearance of traditional gatherings, rites, and customs within the urban setting. The degradation of the urban center's cultural identity and architectural history has engendered a profound struggle among its inhabitants as they endeavor to reconcile their historical legacy with the prevailing conditions of post-war existence [54, 55].

Since 1991, Mogadishu has faced persistent difficulties in its endeavors to achieve post-war reconstruction. Large parts of the urban landscape continue to show the lasting effects of armed conflict, characterized by significant disruptions to critical infrastructure and notable historic sites. In addition, the extended period of political instability and lack of a reliable central administration impeded the progress of the restoration endeavors. The outbreak of the civil war led to notable cases of population displacement, which in turn led to disruptions in social structures and community ties. As a result, the disruption of citizens' sense of belonging and cultural continuity within the city has given rise to a fractured urban identity [15, 54].

After the war was over, there was widespread recognition among researchers, urban planners, and policymakers of the need to include CM in the process of urban reconstruction. Recognizing the importance of CM enables the protection and revitalization of Mogadishu's cultural heritage and identity, thus promoting a more comprehensive and sustainable strategy for the reconstruction of the city. One potential strategy for harnessing CM is the use of participatory planning and community participation. The active participation of local people in decision-making processes facilitates the incorporation of their stories, lived experiences, and historical expertise into the conceptualization and planning of new urban environments. By incorporating historically significant features into the reconstructed building, a tangible manifestation of the city's history and cultural identity can be achieved, thus developing a sense of pride and ownership among its residents.

Moreover, the reimagining of public spaces and architectural forms can serve as a means of embodying cultural symbols and traditions, thus revitalizing rituals and social gatherings that were of great importance in the urban life of Mogadishu in the past. By integrating historical elements and CM into the current context, the urban environment can initiate a process of healing the collective wounds inflicted by the war, fostering a sense of coherence that connects city

identities before and after the conflict [5].

Mogadishu's urban reconstruction efforts face an enormous undertaking to not only revitalize its physical infrastructure but also bring back its cultural heritage, which has suffered severe consequences as a result of the civil war. Preserving cultural history and restoring a sense of belonging to the urban population are critical goals that can be achieved through participatory planning and community engagement, which facilitate the incubation of collective memories. By incorporating the cumulative experiences of its residents, Mogadishu has the potential to develop into a city that recognizes its historical significance while embracing its current goals. This approach will ultimately facilitate the development of a more sustainable and resilient future for the city. As the urban center turns its attention towards a forthcoming period of restoration and reconstruction, the protection of CM emerges as a potent force in influencing a perceived Mogadishu that embodies the splendor of the past and its cultural richness.

### **6.1 Destruction of cultural heritage and historical monuments in Mogadishu**

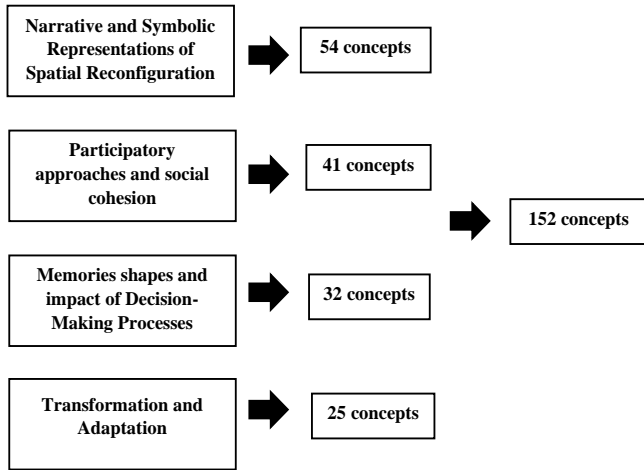
Mogadishu features a plethora of historical landmarks, encompassing notable structures like as Fakhruddin Zangi Mosque, Arbaca-Rukun mosque, Hamarweyne Mosque, Mogadishu Lighthouse, Roman Catholic Cathedral, Mogadishu Former Parliament, Somali National Museum, Somali National Library, Al-Uruba, Hawa Taku, and Hamarweyne historic site (see Figure 5). as well as the palaces that once housed esteemed sultans and monarchs. The monuments in question have been subject to the influence of the Somali civil war, hence facing significant risks of disappearance and extinction. The Arba'rukun Mosque, constructed in the year 1268 AD, played a significant role in the dissemination of Islam across the region. However, its influence was impeded by the adverse effects of civil conflicts. The Hamarweyne Mosque, constructed in the year 149 AH, traces its origins to the period of Mogadishu's governance under the "Shirazis." It holds the distinction of being recognized as the first mosque in the city. The Fakhir al-Din Mosque, constructed in the year 667 AH, stands as a notable testament to the historical heritage of the city.

Mogadishu is renowned for its historical monuments that serve as symbols of the valiant endeavors undertaken by those who resisted occupation and made the ultimate sacrifice in their pursuit of Somalia's liberation. Prominent commemorative structures encompass the Sayyid, the Unknown Soldier, the Dhagaxtuur, and the Hawaa Tako statue. The monuments in Mogadishu have experienced neglect and a subsequent decline in their value following the war, rendering them vulnerable to potential extinction. The absence of a dedicated cultural institution focused on the preservation of archaeological sites and historical monuments exacerbates the ongoing degradation of these significant cultural artifact.

## **7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Data was collected and in-depth interviews were conducted to assess collective memory in Mogadishu. The collected data was analyzed and interpreted using grounded theory which involved open, axial, and selective coding. The first step was

to conduct open coding which involved identifying and labeling concepts from the transcribed interviews. The aim was to identify the main memories of residents and returnees in Mogadishu. Once identified, these concepts were marked and labeled. Figures 6-8 shows an example of how concepts were derived from interviews during the open coding phase. The second step involved code categorizing these concepts based on two types of comparison: Close-in (relative concepts) and Far-out (away concepts).



**Figure 6.** Concepts derived from interviews and the study process (Source: Authors)

*In the Sayidka and Tarbuunka areas, two memories stick out in my mind. The first is from before the war, when I was a child and we used to attend the annual heroic ceremonies with all our families. The second memory is from the war, when these sites were transformed into military bases, and thousands of lives were lost. Even now, when I pass by the area, these memories haunt me like a nightmare. (Mogadishu residents).*

collective memories' places  
Nostalgia  
Creating spaces through collective memories events

**Figure 7.** A sample (1) of deriving concepts in open coding (Source: Authors)

*During my childhood before the war, one of the most cherished memories I have is of the ancient and popular streets and neighbourhoods of Hamarweyne. I remember spending hours playing on the sidewalks of those streets and visiting the areas in Lido. However, after the war, when I revisited these places, I felt strange and like I didn't belong there anymore. It was as if I had lost the fabric of these places and our collective memories (returnees' participant)*

Nostalgia  
collective memories' places  
One-off the collective memories' places  
Lack of feeling of belonging  
Configure the space through memory recall.

**Figure 8.** A sample (2) of deriving concepts in open coding (Source: Authors)

The comparison helped to identify the fourth category of

concepts (see Table 2). The first: is narrative and Symbolic Representations of Spatial Reconfiguration, this category defines Historical Context and Symbolic Reconstruction and the impact of collective memories on understanding the historical context of the war in Mogadishu, it focuses on the use of symbols, memorials, and public art as expressions of collective memory and identity. The second category is participatory approaches and social cohesion, this category is related to social cohesion and grassroots initiatives and explores the influence of collective memories on fostering community solidarity and inspiring local initiatives for urban reconstruction. It explores how shared memories contribute to a sense of shared identity and belonging among residents and how local communities draw upon memories to initiate and sustain projects that contribute to the rebuilding process. The third category: Memories shapes and Impact of Decision-Making Processes, this category refers to how collective memories inform the formulation of urban policies and planning strategies and involve stakeholders in decision-making for urban reconstruction in Mogadishu. The fourth category: Transformation and Adaptation, this category addresses collective memories' influence on architectural decisions and changes in the built environment and explores how memories shape the transformation and design of public areas.

It seems that CM cannot be neglected in urban reconstruction in Mogadishu, nor should the process of urban reconstruction in Mogadishu depend solely on physical factors. In addition to the historical monuments, social, and cultural components, and the focus of the city's fabric and its components before the war, such as names, symbols, public spaces, and events. The study results that there are several factors that the urban reconstruction process in Mogadishu must focus on with the approach of events and CM: -

*Architectural Design:* influences the design and aesthetics of reconstructed buildings and urban spaces. Architects and urban planners may draw inspiration from historical architectural styles or incorporate elements that evoke specific memories associated with the city's pre-war fabric. Conversely, the denials and deliberate deviations from previous architectural styles that cannot be forgotten may mean a break with the painful memories of the war. Before the war, the central government of Somalia developed the planning and design of the architectural and historical fabric of Mogadishu and thus derived from these urban developmental developments the ancient history of Somalia in all its periods.

*Narrative and Symbolic Representations of Spatial Reconfiguration:* The physical reconstruction of urban spaces with symbolic and narrative elements reflects collective memory. Memory affects the formation of decisions related to urban reconstruction post-war and the spatial configuration of the city. it is necessary to preserve or redevelop areas of historical or emotional significance with a social memory approach for residents of post-war Mogadishu such as using the names of streets that were destroyed and having historical events such as Waddada-Tarbuunka or public art or interpretive performances to tell stories of the past, highlight key events or commemorate specific individuals, all of which enhance collective memory within the urban fabric of Mogadishu. The neighborhood planning and re-creation of community spaces are influenced by memories of post-war social dynamics and community interactions in Mogadishu.



**Table 2.** Derived code categories and concepts

<b>Derived Categories in the Field of Narrative and Symbolic</b>			
<b>Code categories 1</b>	<b>Category 1</b>	<b>Categories 2</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<b>Narrative and symbolic representations of spatial reconfiguration</b>	<p><b>Historical Context:</b> This category encompasses codes related to the impact of collective memories on understanding and interpreting the historical context of conflict in Mogadishu. It includes narratives that shape perceptions of the city's past and influence decision-making in the reconstruction process.</p>	<p><b>Symbolic Reconstruction</b> This category focuses on how historical narratives contribute to symbolic reconstruction efforts in the city. It includes codes related to the use of symbols, memorials, and public art as expressions of collective memory and identity.</p>	<p>Urban reconstruction using symbolic elements influences collective memory, shaping post-war decisions and city configuration. Preserving historical or emotional significance in post-war Mogadishu requires a social memory approach. Utilizing street names, historical events, public art, and interpretive performances enhances collective memory, influencing neighborhood planning and community interactions. Other concepts.</p>
	<b>Derived Categories in the Field of Participatory Approaches and Social Cohesion</b>		
<b>Code categories 2</b>	<b>Categories 3</b>	<b>Categories 4</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<b>Participatory approaches and social cohesion</b>	<p><b>Social Cohesion:</b> Codes in this category relate to the influence of collective memories on fostering social cohesion and community solidarity during the reconstruction. It explores how shared memories contribute to a sense of shared identity and belonging among residents.</p>	<p><b>Grassroots Initiatives:</b> This category encompasses codes related to the role of collective memories in inspiring and shaping grassroots initiatives for urban reconstruction. It explores how local communities draw upon memories to initiate and sustain projects that contribute to the rebuilding process.</p>	<p>Wars and conflicts impact mental health, social bonds, and communities, causing divisions and loss of social cohesion in Mogadishu. Involving local communities in urban reconstruction and recovery is crucial for integrating diverse memories. Rebuilding neighborhoods, creating shared experiences, and enhancing a sense of belonging, ownership, and inclusivity support the resilience of affected residents of Mogadishu. Other concepts.</p>
	<b>Derived Categories in the Field Memories Shapes and Impact of Decision-Making Processes</b>		
<b>Code categories 3</b>	<b>Categories 5</b>	<b>Categories 6</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<b>Memories shapes and impact of decision-making processes</b>	<p><b>Policy Formulation:</b> This category includes codes related to how collective memories inform the formulation of urban policies and planning strategies. It explores the impact of historical narratives on decision-making at the governmental and institutional levels.</p>	<p><b>Stakeholder Involvement:</b> Codes in this category focus on the role of key stakeholders in incorporating collective memories into the decision-making processes for urban reconstruction. It explores how various actors, including government officials, NGOs, and community leaders, engage with collective memories in Mogadishu.</p>	<p>Utilizes master plans, maps, and aerial photographs to facilitate Mogadishu's revitalization strategy, incorporating expertise from the United Nations Human Settlements Program and UN-Habitat. Other concepts.</p>
	<b>Derived Categories in the Field Transformation and Adaptation</b>		
<b>Code categories 4</b>	<b>Categories 7</b>	<b>Categories 8</b>	<b>Concepts</b>
<b>Transformation and adaptation</b>	<p><b>Architectural Changes:</b> This category includes codes related to the influence of collective memories on architectural decisions and changes in the built environment. It explores how historical narratives shape the physical reconstruction of buildings and infrastructure.</p>	<p><b>Public Spaces:</b> Codes in this category focus on how collective memories influence the transformation of public spaces. It explores the role of shared historical experiences in shaping the design and utilization of public areas within the city.</p>	<p>Memory impacts urban transformation and adaptation in Mogadishu, influencing decisions on preservation, transformation, and disposal of past challenges. Mogadishu, a traditional city with tiny lanes, densely woven urban fabric, and wooden dwellings, is impacted by the Mogadishu civil war, causing significant destruction of infrastructure. Other concepts.</p>

*Participatory approaches and social cohesion:* Wars affect the mental health of individuals and societies, cause dispersion and break social bonds, displace communities, and sow divisions between ethnic, religious, or cultural groups. Mogadishu suffers the effects and consequences of the civil war, which led to the loss of social cohesion and a sense of patriotism and responsibility. It is necessary to involve local communities in decision-making processes for urban

reconstruction, which is critical to integrating diverse memories. It includes public consultations, workshops, and community engagement initiatives. That the physical reconstruction aligns with the different narratives of memory held by the different groups, reinforcing a sense of ownership and inclusivity. By creating spaces for community interaction, rebuilding neighborhoods, and providing opportunities for shared experiences. It enhances a sense of belonging, restores

community trust, and supports the resilience of affected populations.

*Transformation and Adaptation:* Memory influences processes of urban transformation and adaptation. Mogadishu faces challenges such as urban decline, redevelopment and demographic shifts caused by internal displacement from the countryside and other cities to Mogadishu, and memories of the past can inform decisions about what to preserve, transform or dispose of. It is necessary that memory guides urban planning and design choices that ensure the integration of elements of cultural interest and value into the evolving urban fabric. As well as continuity and change postwar memory provides a sense of continuity amid the changing urban landscape. This links the past, present, and future so that historical events and experiences are not forgotten or erased in the face of urban development. To strike a balance between embracing change and honoring Mogadishu's rich history.

*Role of Technology and Smart City:* Technology plays a vital role in documenting and preserving collective memories. It provides modern methods in keeping up with reality to transform Mogadishu from a destroyed city into a contemporary and smart city, reviving its old texture and rebuilding it post-war according to modern technology. Modern technology facilitates answers about how modern technology can participate in collecting information and a virtual survey about the structure of the city and its historical architectural fabric post-war, and about painful memories that cannot be forgotten during the civil war, as well as facilitating digitally collecting society's fantasies, opinions and perceptions towards the future and then converting them into archives digitized by analyzing the vast amount of data collected from CM and comparing past and present events. This helps share all the data (historical narratives, stories, events, and the fabric of Mogadishu before the war compared to its current situation) with future generations, ensuring that the memory of the past continues to resonate in the post-war urban landscape.

Modern technology helps transform Mogadishu into a smart post-war city, through which Mogadishu can develop and recover at record speed from the scourge of civil war. "The use of geographic information technologies and urban mapping will make it possible to identify historical and archaeological sites and help structure post-war city planning." It is necessary to present all official, geographical, and urban documents on the plan during the virtual survey, whether digital or physical, in order to facilitate the process of urban reconstruction in post-war Mogadishu. More uses of modern technology must be studied in depth to implement the concept of a smart city [56].

*Saving Important Documents and Maps for the Future:* Upon careful examination of numerous maps, images, and records depicting traditional Mogadishu, it becomes evident that the city is characterized by a network of tiny lanes, an organic and densely woven urban fabric, as well as traditional dwellings adorned with wooden windows and constructed using locally sourced building materials. The case study highlights the impact of the Mogadishu civil war on the cultural legacy of the city. It is evident that this conflict has resulted in the significant destruction of crucial components within the conventional urban landscape, with almost 90% of Mogadishu's physical infrastructure being decimated [54]. The implementation of the revitalization strategy for the traditional city in Mogadishu can be facilitated through the utilization of various resources such as master plans, maps, and aerial

photographs that have documented the distinctive heritage attributes of the city. These valuable resources can be effectively incorporated into the revitalization strategy, alongside the expertise and experience of the United Nations Human Settlements Program and UN-Habitat in this particular domain.

It is necessary to unify the individual and institutional efforts and all components of society to draw a new developmental future for Mogadishu for the future so that the data currently available will not be lost to help in the process of advancement and gradual reconstruction in future generations.

## 8. CONCLUSION

Mogadishu stands as an example of the complexities and challenges faced by post-war urban cities. Mogadishu is the national capital of Somalia and the oldest historical city in the Horn of Africa. Mogadishu has a unique cultural and historical significance, founded by Arab, Muslim, and Indian missions and traders, the city's rich heritage reflects the blend of different influences that shaped its architecture, urban fabric, and collective identity. The civil war in Mogadishu destroyed its architectural fabric landscape and cultural heritage, it caused a social exodus. This resulted in the loss of important historical cultural monuments, the erosion of the collective memory of Mogadishu, and the severing of the connection between the past and the present.

The complex challenges facing Mogadishu are not the first of their kind, as other cities have succeeded in fully recovering from the effects of the war, such as Warsaw and Berlin, while other cities in the post-war period are seeking to reconstruct and renew their identities, such as Kigali. Kigali is an example of how proactive urban design, preservation of collective memory, and community engagement can promote healing, resilience, and reconciliation. Through collective memories and prioritizing the revitalization of cultural heritage, architectural authenticity, and community interactions, Kigali has been able to reshape its urban landscape as a symbol of hope and unity through its history and collective memories.

It is essential to engage local communities, integrate their narratives, and harness CM that guide the recovery of cultural monuments, public spaces, and historic sites. Architects and urban planners have a responsibility to integrate historical elements into the urban fabric, creating an environment that acknowledges the past while meeting the needs and aspirations of present and future generations.

Reconstruction and recovery in Mogadishu are not limited to rebuilding the physical structures but rather require restoring a sense of belonging, building a bridge of communication with history, and activating the collective memory that binds the residents of Mogadishu. Through continuous efforts, collaboration, and commitment to integrating the past into the present, Mogadishu can emerge as a city that embodies its rich cultural heritage while blazing a new path toward prosperity, resilience, and sustainable development. By weaving together, the threads of history, memory, and modernity, Mogadishu will be able to rise again, to represent a beacon of hope and a living model for nations.

Existing research on urban reconstruction in post-war cities often neglects the pivotal role of CM in shaping urban reconstruction. Theoretical frameworks often ignore the social and cultural dimensions embedded in these memories, leading

to a limited understanding of their impact on reconstruction efforts, empirical evidence documenting the specific impact of collective memories on urban redevelopment remains scarce. This study aims to address these shortcomings by comprehensively exploring the interplay between collective memories and urban reconstruction processes. It not only advances our theoretical understanding but also provides practical insights for policymakers and urban planners, emphasizing the innovative and necessary nature of this research.

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