

REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: JNHST- 091

Title: Welfare vs. Memory: Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Cultural Heritage Loss in Urban Recovery,

Recommendation:

Accept after minor revision

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		✓		
Techn. Quality			✓	
Clarity			✓	
Significance	✓			

Reviewer's ID: JPR-Abdul Haseeb Mir

Detailed Reviewer's Report

The manuscript addresses a compelling and highly relevant topic in urban post-conflict recovery, interrogating the socio-political tensions between immediate human welfare imperatives and long-term cultural heritage preservation. The authors utilize a qualitative multi-case study design examining six geographically diverse cities—Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus, Berlin, Beirut, and Baghdad—to demonstrate how distinct drivers such as territorial occupation, neoliberal privatization, institutional fragility, and grassroots participation shape heritage outcomes. The reframing of cultural heritage as a psychosocial asset integral to post-conflict societal resilience provides a promising theoretical entry point.

Despite the broad empirical scope and clear conceptual foundation, the manuscript currently exhibits significant theoretical gaps, methodological inconsistencies, and critical structural formatting issues that must be addressed prior to publication. Most noticeably, the analysis lacks a synthesized comparative matrix across all six cases, relies on superficial theoretical engagement in the comparative discussions, and suffers from draft layout artifacts, including intrusive line numbers, raw running headers, and unresolved text redundancies.

DETAILED RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

1. Methodological and Analytical Rigor

- While the methodology outlines a three-stage coding process based on Bazeley (2013) and lists primary and secondary data sources, the qualitative triangulation across six distinct cities feels unevenly distributed. The paper would benefit significantly from a structured Comparative Case

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Analysis Table in the methodology or results section. This table should systematically map all six cities against key variables: Geopolitical Context, Primary Driver of Loss, Key Stakeholders, Community Impact, and Preservation Outcome.

- The paper notes that remote semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 professionals across Palestine and Lebanon. However, the qualitative insights from these interviews are rarely quoted or explicitly cited in the narrative case studies. To ground the empirical claims, the authors must weave illustrative primary interview extracts into the text, particularly within the Nablus and Beirut sections.

2. Theoretical Deepening and Literature Integration

- The theoretical framing relies on Laurajane Smith's "heritage-as-process," Sharon Zukin's "neoliberal urbanism," and Martin Coward's "urbicide". While these concepts are introduced in the abstract and introduction, their application in the individual case studies remains somewhat superficial. For instance, the discussion on Beirut's Solidere projects should more rigorously dissect the mechanism of financialized gentrification, while the Baghdad analysis should explicitly evaluate how state absence and unregulated laissez-faire construction differ functionally from state-sponsored urbicide.
- The critical engagement with international bodies like UNESCO and UN-Habitat is strong in the discussion section. However, the authors should offer more actionable detail on how "Heritage Impact Assessments" can be realistically operationalized or legally enforced in active occupation zones or politically unstable environments where state sovereignty is contested.

3. Structural Layout, Formatting, and Text Cleanup

- The manuscript requires a thorough copy-editing pass to eliminate layout artifacts. Continuous line numbering (lines 1–757), raw editorial watermarks ("UNDER PEER REVIEW IN JNHST"), and running header fragments ("Welfare vs. Memory") interrupt the flow of the text and must be purged.
- The manuscript contains redundant structural headings. For example, the section titled "Policy Implications" appears twice—once under Section 4 (lines 547–566 and lines 570–630) and again as a subsection within the Conclusion (lines 658–665). The authors must consolidate all policy frameworks, recommendations, and global scaling lessons into a single, cohesive Discussion and Policy Recommendations section before moving into the final Conclusion.
- Ensure all figure captions and high-resolution images are consistently formatted, centered, and fully cited within the main text narrative.

CONCLUSION AND FINAL RECOMMENDATION

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This manuscript brings necessary critical attention to the destruction and commodification of urban memory in post-conflict environments. The cross-regional perspective offers substantial value to urban planners, heritage scholars, and international policy analysts. However, to reach the standard required for final publication, the authors must streamline the document layout, consolidate repetitive policy sections, introduce a unified comparative analytical table, and integrate direct empirical qualitative evidence into the narrative.

Decision: Minor Revisions Required