Table taken from:

Mualam, N. and Barak N., "Evaluating Comparative Research: Mapping and Assessing Current Trends in Built Heritage Studies", *Sustainability* 11(3), https://doi.org/10.3390/su11030677

	Benefits	Limitations/ Challenges
The 'N' question		
Small N	Fewer resources needed; comparable elements can be identified more easily; similarities and differences can be highlighted; can help discuss thoroughly specific challenges and issues that relate to built heritage.	Limited contexts; less generalizable; risks being too narrow in its comparative scope. May result in telling endless little tales about heritage while the reader is left with little idea of how individual cases relate to other situations.
Large N	Generalizable; overarching; broad comparisons which can encourage transfer of knowledge between the compared jurisdictions; by encouraging a high degree of abstraction, comparison can highlight select issues that relate to the built heritage.	Time-consuming; needs resources to conduct an overarching comparison; can lead to abstraction and leapfrog over nuances. Many variables influence built heritage- and by increasing the number of compared cases, differences can become overwhelming, and it might be harder to pinpoint similarities.
Scope of comparison		
Cross-national	Provides an overarching framework for understanding the built heritage; focuses on general rules and practices that affect local conditions.	Built heritage is often practiced at the local level; local policies and practices are overlooked while conducting inquiries that focus on the national scale.
Cross-local	Can focus on nuance and conduct a thorough and rich analysis of local conditions.	Harder to generalize from; local and insular analysis which often compares localities in one jurisdiction may not provide a sufficiently broad perspective; might leapfrog over different national-level institutional contexts that affect built heritage
Cross-local/ cross-national	Scaling down the comparison is important when looking at the built heritage which is often defined and protected locally; Cross-local *and* cross-national, enable practitioners to learn from other contexts, while still maintaining a local focus.	Mandates familiarity with both national and local scales which - in turn- may delimit the number of compared cases (i.e. small 'N').
Geographic coverage		
Focused \ limited coverage	Can encourage cross-border transfer of knowledge and experience pertaining to built heritage.	Runs the risk of becoming less relevant to other contexts; isolated comparisons; emphasizing a set of shared heritage values, principles, settings and beliefs. In built heritage studies, limited coverage might also end up as a highly Euro-centric analysis.
Expansive	Goes beyond cross-border analysis; extensive geographical coverage can entice mutual learning in different settings; contribute towards the universalization of knowledge pertaining to built heritage, and to sustainable global heritage practices.	Challenging to conduct; subject to resource limitations; mandates familiarity with different settings.
Type of comparison		
Structured	Generalizable; systematic; findings are organized in an orderly fashion thus more easily transferable to policy; facilitates the compartmentalization of knowledge.	Runs the risk of not paying sufficient attention to small details and nuances; thus, socio-cultural context and meanings of built heritage might be overlooked.
Unstructured	Collecting data about several jurisdictions and themes; their value is in developing, putting forward, and flagging issues and/or challenges associated with built heritage.	Loosely comparative and do not necessarily provide an integrated analysis of policy nor crossing-cutting observations about built heritage.
Semi-structured	Focuses on specific comparable elements, while avoiding a rigorous and comprehensive comparative analysis.	Relatively structured but does not provide a thorough comparison that runs throughout the analysis.