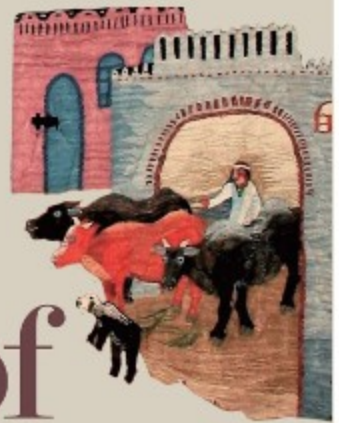


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A Process Model for Architectural Heritage Values Assessment

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Abstract

Cultural values are common factors in almost every decision regarding the appreciation, conservation, and management of architectural heritage. Accordingly, the success of such efforts is accompanied by proper recognition, interpretation, and presentation of cultural values. Further, architectural heritage values are associated with a dynamic phenomenon comprising constant people-place-time interactions. Such complexity requires an assessment process that is adequately complex to consider many factors yet comprehensive, practical, and precise to ensure efficiency. Accordingly, this study develops a process model for architectural heritage values assessment. It applied the model to a case study to examine a tapestry workshop building at Ramses Wisa Wassef Art Center in Egypt. The model establishes a common ground that enhances assessment process management, increases its efficiency, and enables its improvement. Moreover, the model can support values assessment training and capacity building and may be used as an instructional tool for scholars and practitioners. The study verifies the process inputs, steps, and outputs of the model and sets general considerations to guide practitioners. The application revealed the validity of the process model, and its ability to manage a complex process comprehensively.

1. Introduction

The concept of “value” is a social construct.¹⁾ It stems from widely formed sets of assumptions, beliefs, and knowledge that are socially determined cumulatively through the history of a society. Accordingly,

¹⁾ Janet Stephenson, ‘The Cultural Values Model: An Integrated Approach to Values in Landscapes’, *Landscape and Urban Planning* 84, no. 2 (2008): 127–39.

the study of cultural values is imperative in heritage studies. They reveal the core characteristics that give identity and diversity to society²⁾ and, as per Marta De la Torre, are the main reason for heritage conservation. No community will conserve something with no value to them.

The architectural heritage values (AHVs) assessment is a complex process, given its association with the interaction between people, place, and time and the need for considering and judging heritage within the cultural contexts to which they belong.³⁾ Such complexity indicates the need for studying values based on the characteristics and attributes of heritage and context. Considering the lack of similar local studies in Egypt, this study mainly develops a model for the AHV assessment process that integrate the international experience outcomes and represents the local perspective.

2. Literature review

Responding to the absence of literature about AHV assessment in Egypt, relevant literature were reviewed and its potential employment as an intellectual base examined. Many scholars note how values are attributable, multiple, mutable, incommensurable, and sometimes in conflict.⁴⁾ Some discuss value typologies and refer to how they overlap or may fail to reflect the nature and range of all values expressed by people.⁵⁾ Moreover, pre-selected typologies may aggravate reluctance to articulate values not fitting into the scheme.⁶⁾ Such issues yield decisions that are based on assumed rather than explicit values.⁷⁾ Other studies reveal practical aspects, such as the need for multidisciplinary studies and the absence of commonly acknowledged procedures and tools that may be utilized in AHV assessment.⁸⁾ The literature shed light on how the assessment process must provide a comprehensive understanding of attributes and context and provide a clear explanation of typologies if used, considering that some values may not be categorized, try to represent key stakeholder opinions,. Such considerations guided the development of a local methodology regarding Egyptian heritage.

²⁾ Gabriela García, Jorge Amaya, and Alicia Tenze, 'Cultural Significance: Linking Actors and Methods', in *Structural Analysis of Historical Constructions*, ed. Rafael Aguilar et al. (Springer Netherlands, 2019), 2053–61.

³⁾ ICOMOS, 'The Nara Document on Authenticity' (1994).

⁴⁾ De La Torre, Marta, "Values and Heritage Conservation." *Heritage & Society* 6, no. 2 (November 2013): 155–66.

⁵⁾ Stephenson, 'The Cultural Values Model: An Integrated Approach to Values in Landscapes'.

⁶⁾ Britta Rudolff, "'Intangible" and "Tangible" Heritage - A Topology of Culture in Contexts of Faith', *Heritage, Memory & Identity* (Johannes Gutenberg-University of Mainz, 2006)

⁷⁾ L. Harald Fredheim and Manal Khalaf, 'The Significance of Values: Heritage Value Typologies Re-Examined', *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 22, no. 6 (2 July 2016): 466–81.

⁸⁾ Marta De La Torre et al., *Heritage Values in Site Management Four Case Studies*, ed. Marta De La Torre, 2005.

3. A Process Model for Architectural Heritage Values Assessment

Architecture is the sum of tangible and intangible expressions of human culture. Intangible expressions represent the ideas, values, beliefs, habits, and aspirations of their creators and users. Meanwhile, the tangible expression is the built product that combines art, science, technology, and craft. Architectural Heritage changes when understood in a holistic relationship. It is best realized when considering the related social needs, beliefs, and aspirations. Understanding the attributes and context is the key to revealing AHVs. Accordingly, the intellectual base of the AHV assessment process model may be summarized as follows.

3.1 Concepts and Definitions

An architectural heritage site is the spatial space of man and society's cultural interaction and the outcome of communal experiences. It includes values, art, sciences, knowledge, and activities.

Architectural heritage context is the past, present, and future conditions that affect the value of the heritage in which a site was constructed, used, appreciated, discovered, preserved, and presented.⁹⁾

Architectural heritage attributes are the parts, components, qualities, and characteristics that can be categorized into the following:

- The form includes the characteristics of the building and its urban contexts, such as formation, materials, and techniques.
- Associations are features from human connections with the site, such as the ideas of its creators, meanings, and historical and social relationships.
- Practices include customs, traditions, and rituals associated with the site or its function.

3.3 Process steps

The proposed process model assesses values by deconstructing the attributes, conducting interdisciplinary and contextual studies, and constructing significance based on values.

Figure 1. clarifies the process structure.

The steps of the process are as follows:

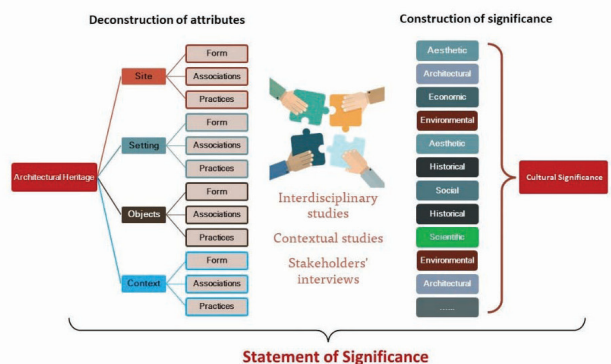


Figure 1. AHV assessment Structure

⁹⁾ Bogusław Szmygin, 'How to Assess Built Heritage? Assumptions, Methodologies, Examples of Heritage Assessment Systems' (Lublin: Lublin University of Technology, 2015).

3.3.1 Inputs and data collection

The process depends on a wide range of information that may be collected through official documents, literature, studies, descriptive materials, photos, drawings, interviews, questionnaires, tests, and personal observations.

3.3.2 Identifying the Architectural heritage's components,

including identifying the scope of assessment regarding the key components:

- The Architectural Heritage Site
- The setting
- The Included objects
- The cultural context

3.3.3 Identifying Architectural Heritage Attributes

For each component, the attribute may be identified. Investigating the links between attributes and the cultural context will contribute to the AHS attribute's structure.

3.3.4 Values assessment (Values - Attributes Matrix)

The assessment of values is the core of the process. A preliminary value list may be established based on Interdisciplinary studies, contextual studies, and stakeholder interviews, setting clear definitions of each used typology to prevent as much overlapping as possible. For each attribute, values should be suggested. This step may indicate further needed expertise and analytical tools for the final assessment. This study proposes a value-attribute matrix (Table 1) to illustrate the value structure.

<Table 1> Value-Attribute Matrix

Architectural Heritage				Values				
Attributes	Site	Form	Description of attribute	Historical	Social	Spiritual		
		Associations						
		Practices						
	Settings	Form						
		Associations						
		Practices						
	Objects	Form						
		Associations						
		Practices						
	Context	Form						
		Associations						
		Practices						

The value-attribute matrix represents the base upon which the site's significance will be determined. The matrix offers results in vertical and horizontal reading. The horizontal reading explains values according to attributes, and the vertical reading can sum up the sources of each value.

3.3.5 Output (Statement of Significance)

The statement of significance is the output and summary of previous studies; It should be a well-structured and clear text that describes values according to attributes. The statement should clarify what each value means and to which attribute it belongs.

Case study of the tapestry workshop building at the Ramses Wassa Wassef art center The study examines the tapestry workshop building at the Ramses Wassa Wassef Arts Center (RWWAC) in Cairo. The late architect established the center between 1952 and 1974¹⁰⁾ to be a model to implement his philosophical vision about the innate creativity of children,¹¹⁾ traditional art,



Figure 2. Historical photo for Ramses Wassa Wassef , His wife and Samiha on of the first generation artists in 1950s (Source : RWWAC Archive)



Figure 3. Interior views of the showrooms (By Author)

¹⁰⁾ Tarek Waly and Shima Shaheen, 'يرام عمل أي جرم أي بعلال قرام عمل' (Traditional Architecture as a Reference)', in *Traditional Crafts First Forum* (Port Said, 2020).

¹¹⁾ Ramses. Wassa Wassef, Werner. Forman, and Denis. Mahaffey, 'Woven by Hand', 1972.



Figure 4. The surrounding setting RWWAC (By Author)

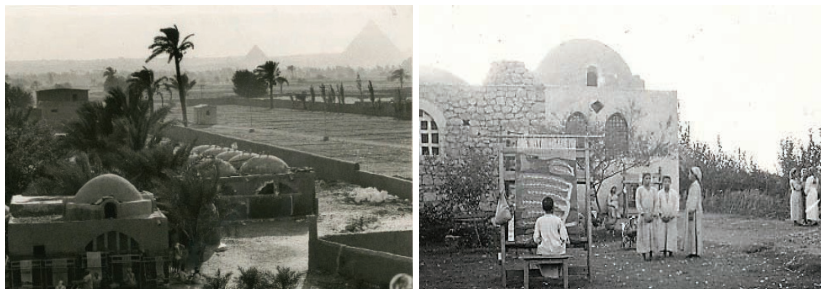


Figure 5. Historical photos shows the early stages of the tapestry workshop in 1950s (source: RWWAC Archive)



Figure 5. Exterior photos showing the architectural character, the use of traditional elements and natural materials (By Author)



Figure 6. Ramses Wissa Wassef 's first tapestry



Figure 7. Weaving looms and traditional tools



Figure 8. Samples of the wool tapestries exhibited in the showroom the one on the right is a about the architecture of the workshop by one of the first generation artists

architecture, and compatibility with nature.¹²⁾

The center succeeded in reviving and developing the traditional weaving craft and transforming it into a unique art and traditional Egyptian mud-brick architecture.¹³⁾

4.1. Values assessment process

The application of the proposed model in the workshop resulted in the construction of a provisional value–attribute matrix. Architectural analysis, literature, and expert interviews revealed many related values. Further studies were needed to reveal the contextual interaction. Moreover, local community interviews clarified the associations and connections between the locals and the site, and studies on a national level revealed the site's connections with Traditional mud architecture, the traditional weaving craft, the architectural influence of the site on other contemporary architects, and the developmental role of the experiment on surrounding villages. *Table 2* presents a limited sample of the value-attribute matrix.

¹²⁾ RWWAC, *Threads of Life: A Journey in Creativity* (Cairo: Ramsess Wissa Wassef Art Center, 1998).

¹³⁾ AKHDN, 'Ramsess Wisa Wassef Art Center Technical Review', 1983.

<Table 2> Tapestry workshop provisional value-attribute matrix

Architectural Heritage			Values							
			Historical values	Social values	Scientific values	Aesthetic values	Architectural values	Functional values	Economic values	Environmental values
Attributes	Site	Form	Use of traditional architectural elements			√		√	√	
			Use of natural materials			√	√	√	√	√
		Associations	Association with the architect	√	√	√				
			Ideas about children's creativity	√		√		√		
			Alignment with the nature			√	√	√	√	√
			Community development through crafts		√	√			√	
		Practices	Building's function as a school		√			√	√	
			Tourism activity					√	√	
			Crafts associated with the architecture			√	√	√	√	
	Setting	Associations	Environmental compatibility				√	√	√	√
	Objects	Form	First tapestry he made himself	√	√	√	√		√	
			Weaving tapestries without prior models	√	√	√	√		√	
		Associations	Tapestries' natural colors and materials		√	√	√		√	
	Context	Associations	Developmental role of experience		√			√	√	
			Identity search	√	√	√	√	√	√	
			Reviving the weaving craft	√		√	√	√	√	
		Practices	Traditional Architecture techniques	√		√	√	√	√	
			Traditional Weaving techniques	√		√	√	√	√	

4.1.1 Process Output

Given the limitation of this study, a sample may illustrate the established value statement.

The site's function holds various social and societal values, instilling a sense of individuality, identity, inventiveness, and pride in artists. Furthermore, it produces a close bond between the architect, his family, and the village residents. Moreover, the impact extended beyond the site's walls to affect the entire village of Haraneya, distinguishing it and creating a long-term effect that is expected to have broader future implications as the experiment grows.

Many technical, aesthetic, social, and economic values are also included in the tapestries, as they are the most attractive element of the place. Further, the site contains a different set of artwork regarding their creators, which embody many of their thoughts, memories, and orientations but, as a whole, express their unique history and evolution of their identity over time.

The site may be described as a unique architectural and cultural representation, bearing the symbols of the historical stage to which it belongs. It presented many ideas and philosophies from reality and the Egyptian environment, which can be described as revolutionary given its actual human, social, and even economic impact on the lives of related people."



Figure 9. A tapestry created in 1984 presenting Wissa Wassef Art School by Mohamed Mousa indicating the local artist's perception of the architecture and its surrounding setting

5. Conclusion

The study and its application revealed the importance and complexity of probing the local context of the architectural heritage, assessing values based on a comprehensive understanding of the cultural context. The study employed local literature and interviews with Egyptian experts to form the intellectual perspective of the assessment process and conducted interdisciplinary contextual studies that clarify the connection between the historical, social, and economic context and the assessed heritage, as per local community opinions that represent the local perspective of the site's significance. However, enlarging the base of participants in the process may yield further results. Accordingly, it is highly recommended for future research to adopt various tools to ensure wider data collection regarding stakeholders opinions. The application of the approach also revealed many vital results. First, the process is not linear; its steps are interrelated and circular. Second, the process's credibility is entirely based on the collected data, its comprehensive preciseness, and, of course, the variety of its sources. Third, careful consideration should be given to the dialectic issues related to the values, such as typology overlapping, which require the clarification of each value in the statement of significance.

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