Framing the Values of Vernacular Architecture for a Value-Based Conservation: A Conceptual Framework

Obafemi A. P. Olukoya

1 Department of Environmental Planning, Brandenburg Technical University, 03046 Cottbus, Germany; olukoyaobafemi@yahoo.com or obafemi.olukoya@b-tu.de or oluoka@b-tu.de
2 Department of Research and Development, Olukoya Obafemi & Associates, 900241 Abuja, Nigeria

Abstract: While a growing number of researchers have provided series of tough critiques of the typology-led heritage value assessment over the recent years, the impacts have been constrained by the continued obsession with expanding the list of the predetermined value typologies rather than escaping its limitations. While these sustained debates have provided important insights, this article argues that operationalizing these predetermined ‘one-size-fits-all’ value typologies is symptomatic of a number of shortcomings, especially in the context of capturing the pluralities of values in contextualized heritage such as vernacular architecture. It also often undermines inclusivity and participation in the valuing processes. However, rather than simply rejecting the values-based paradigm, this article proposes a conceptual value assessment framework that is informed by the theorization of vernacular architecture as a contextualized heritage. The proposed Vernacular Value Model (VVM) puts forward the ‘when(s)’ and ‘how(s)’ of amalgamating both technical and normative processes to capture the range of contextual values present in built vernacular heritage. To this end, this article posits that by drawing on such a proposed flexible framework, the conservation strategy for built vernacular heritage can be propagated as an inclusive and participatory process which captures the wide range of values for a more sustainable practices for conservation.

Keywords: vernacular architecture; value typologies; value assessment; vernacular value framework

1. Introduction

Heritage conservation is consistent with the understanding of sustainability as the reduction of environmental impact by preserving nonrenewable heritage resources, encouraging the continued use of old buildings, maintaining social capital and generating economic resources while preserving the human skills and creativity inherent in cultural heritage resources [1]. In this regard, since the last recent decades, values-based approaches to heritage conservation have procured prime significance and dominated professional and academic conservation debates [2], (p. 1), [3]. It has been discussed under different appellations such as “value-based management” [4], (p. 27) “significance-driven approach” [5], “value-based assessment of cultural heritage” [5], (p. 77) or “values-based conservation” [5], (p. 5). To achieving the aim of this article however, ‘value-based conservation’ is adopted and defined as an approach which aims to identify, sustain and enhance the significance of a cultural heritage property. As such, since the value-based approach rose to prominence, protecting values has been central to the idea of conservation activity [2]. Therefore, value assessment has grown to become an imperative activity in determining the significance of heritage objects/places and the attendant conservation decisions [2,5]. By value assessment or evaluation, this article refers to assigning certain names to the perceived values of the material objects from the past. In this vein, the assessment process refers to two important aspects, namely: the object being evaluated and the name of the value assigned to it [6]. Cultural significance here is defined as the importance a heritage property determined by the totality of value attributed to the heritage [7], or in other words, the entirety of
constituents of ‘heritage values’ [3]. Recognizing this importance, values and its perception has inspired a plethora of perspective and provided a locus for growing body research in recent decades [2,8–13]. Informed by a predetermined perception of value, heritage experts and institutions determine the value of heritage based on preconceived criteria called value typologies [5], (p. 5).

However, several years of assessing heritage values through the lens of predetermined criteria have demonstrated a handful of failures and relegated the understanding of heritage value to a partial and standardized one [3,14,15]. Predetermined criteria in this context refers to set of pre-selected value typologies and standards which are used as guidance or principle for evaluating the values of a heritage object or site. Based on these preselected list, judgment or decision as to what qualifies to be heritage or not are made by value assessors. In this regard, the last few decades have witnessed a growing number of academic heritage scholars who have provided staunch criticism of the typology-led value assessment and its consistent failure at capturing the complexity of heritage values for conservation. In spite of the rising awareness (for example, [16–20]), comparatively, not sufficient research advancement has been made in the direction of valuing vernacular architecture specifically as a cultural heritage typology.

As a point of departure, therefore this article advances the existing research awareness by arguing that the established ‘one-size-fits-all’ value typologies are simply incompatible with capturing the holistic dimensions of contextualized cultural heritage such as vernacular architecture. By the term ‘one-size-fits-all’ this article simply refers to the innate assumption that the value of all heritage should operate within the published list of values within the academic sphere as such, they are considered to be suitable for a wide range of contexts and cultural heritage typologies. Values that do not resonate with the published list are therefore not considered or trivialized. As a result, this article argues that there is a need for a different framework for framing the potential ranges of values in vernacular architecture for a sustainable value-based conservation practice. This argument proceeds from the fundamental assumption that vernacular architecture is a contextualized cultural heritage typology which is a product of contextual processes and practices of a people, by a people and for a people acting under a common heritage in a particular space and in a specific time [21–32]. In this regard, its distinctiveness and entanglement with its social, cultural and environmental contexts put it in a position to reject predetermined typologies.

In the view of the outlined assumption, this article is tailored by the following research questions (1) what are the characterizations of tangible and intangible values in vernacular architecture? (2) what type of assessment framework can be used to assess and appropriate the value characterization of vernacular architecture? Guided by the research questions and the identified challenges of conferring predetermined value typologies on vernacular heritage, the main aim of this article is to propose a value assessment framework as guidance for assessing the ranges of values in vernacular architecture for value-based conservation purposes. Value assessment framework in this case is a tool to be employed for amalgamating both the normative participatory process and technical expert analysis procedure for capturing the potential ranges of values in vernacular architecture for a sustainable and participatory value-based conservation. It is considered prudent at this juncture to point out that economic values are not within the scope of this research. Economic values are considered to require different set of processes that have been well documented and well-rehearsed both in recent literature and classic research (for example, [33,34]).

2. Methodology

To achieve the stated aim and structure the argumentations, this research is organized into four main aspects. The first aspect (Section 3) is the literature appraisal which is done to describe the research background, terminologies, definitions and to identify the gap in knowledge as regards value and value assessment within the heritage discourse. This first aspect draws on secondary data collected through desk research and also text-based review [35,36]. The second aspect (Section 5) provides the conceptual framing of vernacular architecture.
architecture and its value characterization. This aspect also draws mainly on text-based content analysis [35,37] of the theories and concepts of vernacular architecture and the characterization of its tangible and intangible values in books by prominent scholars mainly Pierre Bourdieu in: “The Logic of Practices” and Amos Rapoport in: “The Meaning of the Built Environment”, among others. Further elaborations on the choice of theories are provided in Section 5. The third aspect is the development of the proposed Vernacular Value Model (VVM).

The Section 5 is based on the conceptual framing described in aspect 2. The different constituent parts of the framework are highlighted and elaborated upon. The last aspect (Section 6) of this article draws on the discussion of the proposed framework to conclude and suggest recommendations on its empirical applications. The different aspects, the objective, undertakings and methods of the research are explained in Table 1 below.

Table 1. The aim, objectives, undertakings and methods used to structure the article.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Aspects</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Undertakings</th>
<th>Method</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Background and the State-of-the-art</td>
<td>(1). To define value typologies in the context of heritage value assessment.</td>
<td>(1). Examine relevant literature (books, journals, articles, libraries and databases, etc.) to define value, value typology and its limitations in the context of vernacular architecture.</td>
<td>LTR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2). To determine the knowledge gap as regards the challenges associated with value typologies in the value assessment process.</td>
<td>(1). Search for appropriate author and theory for conceptualizing vernacular architecture as contextualized heritage</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1). Examine the conceptualization of vernacular architecture as contextualized heritage which rejects universal value typologies.</td>
<td>(2). Examine relevant theory for theorizing the relationships between cultural practice, traditional process and form creation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2). Develop criteria and categories for the value characterization of vernacular architecture.</td>
<td>(3). Search the literature to develop a set of indicators and different categories of value characterization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3). To describe the criteria and their relations to as to determine the approach to the assessment of each category.</td>
<td>(1). Search for appropriate documents to buttress the assumptions concerning the fragments of the framework.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1). To develop a framework that demonstrates the relationship between cultural practices, traditional processes in the creation of vernacular form are the intangible and tangible values in vernacular architecture.</td>
<td>(2). Search for an appropriate epistemological approach to assessing the assumptions about the value.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Conceptual Framing</td>
<td>(2). To suggest the approach for assessing the valuing the characterization of vernacular values</td>
<td>(3). Search the criteria for selection of participants for each level of value assumptions.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(3). Suggest the participation approach for each level of value characterization.</td>
<td>(4). Draft the vernacular value model which incorporates all the fragment parts.</td>
<td>CA/DA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Development of the VVM</td>
<td>(4). To develop the Vernacular Value Model by integrating all the suggested fragments</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Conclusion</td>
<td>Discuss the implication of results and suggest the recommendations on its empirical application for a participatory conservation approach for vernacular architecture.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3. Value, Value Typology and Value Assessment: A Rapid Literature Review

Mason [5], (p. 7) suggested that “values often evoke dual parallel senses: first, as morals, principles or other ideas that serve as guides to action (individual and collective); and second, in reference to the qualities and characteristics seen in things, in particular the positive characteristics (actual and potential)”. Adopting the second definition, heritage value in a narrow sense can also be understood in accordance with de la Torre and Mason [5], (p. 4) who described it as “a set of positive characteristics or qualities perceived in cultural objects or sites by certain individuals or groups”. In this regard, Avrami et al. [38], (p. 7) suggested that “the ultimate aim of conservation is not to conserve
material for its own sake but rather to maintain (and shape) the values embodied by the heritage—with physical interventions or treatment being one of many means towards that end.” Buttressing this explanation, Munjeri [39] suggested that “I here point [out] that at the heart of it all is the issue of values: our understanding of them; what to make of them; what to ascribe to them; all this determines the policies, strategies and practices’ that either save or condemn our cultural heritage.” (Cited in [15], p. 55). Thus, values and valuing processes play an irreducible role in identifying what constitutes heritage and it is “a very important activity in any conservation effort, since values strongly shape the decisions that are made” [5], (p. 5).

Therefore, in this logic, the effectiveness of a value-led conservation activity is to a large extent dependent on the success of a value assessment which addresses what is to be protected, how to protect it and the prioritization of actions. Mason and Avrami ([40], p. 15) also suggested that “clarifying what is meant when we speak of values is a necessary first step in the explanation of values in conservation”. Given that the values represented by the cultural heritage remain complex and diverse, the last few years have witnessed an increasing debate about the values—embodied in and represented by—the cultural heritage and how these can be identified, assessed and evaluated [40]. While the origins of formalized values-based approaches within heritage management practices and policies are considered to be the Burra Charter [41], (p. .51), [14], (p. 60), it has now grown to dominate professional and academic conservation discourses [2], (p. 1).

3.1. The Idea of Value Typologies

To frame the values of heritage for value-led conservation, heritage experts and institutions determine the value of heritage based on limited preconceived criteria [5], (p. 5). These preconceived criteria are called ‘value typologies’ and are an effective guide to value characterization and provides a lingua franca in which values can be expressed and significance can be broken down into constituents [5], (p. 15). Suggesting further, Mason [5] argued that “finally, the typology is both an analytical tool and a way to advance wider participation in the planning process” [5], (p. 10). Walton [42] explained that “value typologies are indeed an interesting phenomenon, as all cultural significance assessment methodologies are aided by specified value categories or criteria” (cited in [12], p. 60). “The use of a well-tried set of criteria is also recommended” because “a typology of heritage values would be an effective guide to characterization [. . . ] in which all parties’ values can be discussed” [4], (p. 9). Worthing and Bond [43] also buttressed these positions by suggesting that in spite of the concerns and difficulties of value assessment, it is important to work with a range of stated values, that is, it is essential to have a more definite reference point for measuring, articulating and justifying the case for suggesting that a particular place is important and should be protected. Roders and van Oers [44], (p. 92) also explained that “[. . . ] this typology of values was proposed to complement the four cultural values—historic, aesthetic/artistic, scientific and social values—recognized in UNESCO’s World Heritage Convention (1972, 2008) [. . . ] as conveyed in cultural heritage assets”.

As such, there have been diverse attempts to categorize these heritage ‘value typologies’ over the years. On the one hand, these typologies, in some cases are enshrined in legislative contexts such the Australia Burra Charter [45], Heritage Collections Council [46] the English Heritage [47] and the ICOMOS New Zealand [48] which have institutionalized value typologies and thus, typologies perform crucial institutional roles in formally designating heritage [3], (p. 469). On the other hand, as early as the onset of the twentieth century, Riegl [9], was the protagonist who attempted to simplify and categorize values in heritage [16]. Subsequently, a growing number of academic writings have posited an immense variety of value categories over the years. Since Riegl [9], an ever-increasing number of scholars have proposed various value typologies [4], [48], (p. 86), [49], (p. 57), [50], (p. 25) [51–53]. The summary of the various typologies of value that has been posited over the years is illustrated in Table 2 below.
Table 2. An overview of published value typologies for cultural heritage (Adapted from [3], (p.9,) and [5], (p. 468))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Year</th>
<th>Proposed Value Typologies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Riegl, 1901</td>
<td>Age; Historical; Commemorative; Use; Newness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lipe, 1984</td>
<td>Economic; Aesthetic; Associative/Symbolic; Informational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carver, 1996</td>
<td>Market Value; Community Value; Human Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frey, 1997</td>
<td>Capital/Estate; Production; Commercial; Residential; Amenity; Political; Minority/Disadvantaged/Descendant; Environmental; Archaeological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashley, 1998</td>
<td>Economic; Informational; Cultural; Emotional; Existence values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throsby, 2001</td>
<td>Aesthetic; Spiritual; Social; Historical; Symbolic; Authenticity values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason, 2002</td>
<td>Economic; Sociocultural; use values, non-use values: existence; option; bequest; historical; cultural/symbolic; social; spiritual/religious; aesthetic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feilden, 2003</td>
<td>Emotional Value; Cultural Value; Use Value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keene, 2005</td>
<td>Social; Aesthetic; Spiritual; Historical; Symbolic and Authenticity values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appelbaum, 2007</td>
<td>Art; Aesthetic; Historical; Use; Research; Age; Educational; Historic; Newness; Sentimental; Monetary; Associative; Commemorative; and Rarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orbaşlı, (2008)</td>
<td>Age and Rarity; Architectural; Artistic; Associative; Cultural; Economic; Educational; Emotional; Historic; Landscape; Local distinctiveness; Political; Public; Religious and Spiritual; Knowledge; Social; Symbolic; Technical; Townscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stubbs, 2009</td>
<td>Universal; Associative; Curiosity; Artistic; Exemplary; Intangible; Use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomez Robies, 2010</td>
<td>Typological; Structural; Constructional; Functional; Aesthetic; Architectural; Historical; Symbolic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lertcharnrit, (2010)</td>
<td>Informational; Educational; Symbolic; Economic; Entertaining/Recreational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yung and Chan, (2012)</td>
<td>Economical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gielen, et al., (2014)</td>
<td>economic</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As demonstrated in the literature review, a plethora of researchers have recommended various lists of value typologies as lingua franca in which heritage values can be assessed.
and significance can be broken down into constituents which form basis for heritage value appropriation. However, years of operationalizing these recommended lists has demonstrated a handful of failures at capturing contextualized values and at the same time, it has heightened the hesitations heritage value assessors at articulating values not fitting into the preconceived scheme. However, the awareness of the challenges of these value typologies is not new in research. Some of the criticisms, research advancements and gaps in the context of rural vernacular heritage which prompted this current research are reviewed and discussed in the next Sections 3.2 and 3.3.

3.2. Associative Challenges of Value Typologies

The traditional assessment methods which focus on discipline-specific value typologies may fall short of revealing the stratified complex and intrinsic values held by the community who own the stewardship of particular heritage and according to which it has modified the space and/or settlement [54,55]. It is important that those making decisions are aware of the potential nature and range of values, especially in situations where these values are not revealed by drawing on the standardized assessment techniques [56]. In this regard, the typologies may simply trivialize the pivotal aspect of whom to involve in value assessment, and how to negotiate the decision making that follows. The awareness of this shortcoming is not new in research, it has generated diverse criticism in contemporary research [15,57,58] for example. As a caveat, however, the literature sketch of the studies which have criticized value typologies in this section is not exhaustive as that will require a book-length treatment at the risk of leaving the focus of the article. Such criticisms include but not limited to the following which are demonstrated in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Criticism of Value Typologies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rudolff [15], (p. 60, 149)</td>
<td>“[…] presented typologies might help people articulate some value concepts—those clearly fitting into the respective categories—but at the same time aggravate reluctances to articulate values not fitting into the scheme. This means that heritage professionals, entering a participatory value assessment process with a set of value typologies have already pre-selected the value types they expect to hear”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leif Harald Fredheim &amp; Manal Khalaf, [3], (p. 465)</td>
<td>“Value typologies are often designed and implemented without understanding the implicit consequences of the inclusion and omission of values […] and thus resulting in decisions being based on implicit, rather than explicit, value assessments in practice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avrami et al. [38], (p. 8)</td>
<td>“Though the typologies of different scholars and disciplines vary, they each represent a reductionist approach to examining very complex issues of cultural significance”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason [5], (p. 10)</td>
<td>“Typologies implicitly minimize some kinds of value, elevate others, or foreground conflicts between the cultivation of certain values at the expense of others”. This is in coherence with the observation of Rudolff ([12], p. 60, 147) who argued that […] heritage professionals, entering a participatory value assessment process with a set of value typologies have already pre-selected the value types they expect to hear”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephenson, [56], (p. 128, 137–138)</td>
<td>“It is apparent that the application of assessment typologies may also fail to reflect the nature and range of values expressed by those who feel they ‘belong’ to the landscape […] Traditional landscape assessment methods which focus on discipline-specific value typologies may fail short of revealing the richness and diversity of cultural values in landscapes held by insiders”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nara Document on Authenticity, [59], (p. 9, 11)</td>
<td>“[…] All judgements about values attributed to heritage […] may differ from culture to culture and even within the same culture. It is therefore not possible to base judgements of value […] on fixed criteria.” (Cited in [15], p. 57).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephenson [56], (p. 129) and Emerick [60], (p. 225)</td>
<td>They also suggested that value typology has the tendency to be driven by non-Aboriginal global society and national values in contrast to local and regional Aboriginal values that are not ‘authorized’ may be delegitimized. Thus, the operationalized ‘authorization’ of value operationalizes implicit professional preference and may cause the impoverishing of heritage [60], (p. 225), [61], (p. 36), [62]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Affelt, [6], (p. 10)</td>
<td>“the valuation itself will bear the mark of such expert, depending on the methodology used, personality traits stemming from the expert’s knowledge and experience in evaluation procedures, his aesthetic sensitivity, the ability of lateral thinking and emotional attitude towards the object of research” [6], (p. 10) “rather than integrating the values of people” [6] cited in [63], (p. 756).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As demonstrated above, a growing number of researchers have provided a series of tough critiques of the typology-led heritage value assessment over the recent years. Some of the proposed alternatives to the value typologies are as follows.

3.3. Proposed Alternatives to Value Typologies?

Stephenson [59] proposed the Cultural Values Model (CVM) as a response to the perceived shortcomings of value typologies in the management of heritage landscapes in New Zealand. The model classified landscapes into ‘forms’, ‘relationships’ and ‘practices’ [59], (p. 134). However, study [3], (p. 473) explained that “while the potential for applying the Cultural Values Model to other types of heritage is compelling, it does not identify why features are significant”. Against this identified weakness, study [3], (p. 476) suggested a framework for assessing and communicating the significance of the value of a site. However, while their position remains one of the most significant progressions against value typologies, the proposed framework does not concern itself with how to value a heritage, how to ensure participatory process or how to make decisions which does not favors a particular value in the sight of an expert over that of the community members and stakeholder. The framework only premises three steps to identifying significance.

Furthermore, Rudolff [15] suggested a more theoretical argumentation as to why value should not be universalized by drawing on Thomas [64]. While her argumentation remains compelling, it somewhat circumvents precise focus on non-official heritage sites such as places without statements of Outstanding Universal Value and the approach does not demonstrate the empirical means of overcoming the challenge value typologies. Additionally worth mentioning is Worthing and Bond, [43], (p. 74–76) who suggested that the democratization of value typologies in the decision making of the valuing process is very important. The impacts of the proposed participatory process as a means of overcoming determinism in value typologies are again constrained by the set of value typologies which have already been pre-selected and expect to hear on the field [56], (p. 128), [60,65]. As explained by Stephenson [59], a few sites may have ‘universal’ or ‘outstanding’ values, but other heritage sites will be valued in multiple ways by those people who are closely associated with them. “It is important that those making decisions affecting landscapes are aware of the potential nature and range of cultural values, particularly where these values are not accounted for using standardized landscape assessment techniques” [59], (p. 127).

As demonstrated in the overview, the impact of the awareness has been constrained by several factors. On the one hand, the impact has been limited by a narrow focus on expanding the list of the predetermined value typologies by proposing newer ones [66–73]. On the other hand, the impacts of the awakened awareness have been constrained by the lack of precise focus on the methodological issues of how to abandon preconceived ideas through a participatory framework. In addition, it is important to mention that since the recognition of cultural landscape as a category of heritage property by the World Heritage Committee in 1992 [74,75], vernacular architecture has risen to prominence and a number of research have been done in this direction within the heritage sphere. Nonetheless, as compared with other elitist cultural heritage, not sufficient advancement has been made in the direction of valuing rural vernacular architecture. Therefore, the following section is concerned with making a case for vernacular architecture within the heritage discourse and the need for a contextual framework which can potentially be applied as a basis for valuing vernacular heritage which has been identified to be trivialized and treated with a one-size-fit-all approach.

3.4. The Case for Valuing Vernacular Architecture

This article draws on the definition of vernacular architecture according to a study [76] which defines it as buildings that are regionally representative, regionally distinctive and regionally understood [76]. By extension, this definition includes the architecture of a precinct and/or a people or of an ethnic group, who lives in a particular geographical location [77], (p. 4). The ‘contextualized’ dimension of this typology of cultural heritage is
described by a study [78], (p. 132) which explains that it is a “communal art, not produced by a few intellectuals or specialist but by the spontaneous and continuing activity of a whole people with a common heritage, acting under a community experience.” Against this background, vernacular architecture emerges from the ‘genius loci’ which is the ‘being to the place’ and of the sense of ‘being of the place’ [79].

Having given a background to the simple dimension of vernacular architecture, it is important to reiterate that such everyday heritage has long been trivialized within the whole idea of heritage valuing processes. In line with this argument, for example, the framework laid down in the Venice Charter of 1964 places substantive focus on the courses of action that were acceptable on how to protect ‘monuments’ and works of art rather than the more ‘every day and other’ heritage. Illustrating this point is the article 3 which stated, “intention in conserving and restoring monuments is to safeguard them no less as works of art than as historical evidence” [80], (p. 1). However, in the latter part of the 1960s and through the 1970s there was an increasing awareness for the inclusion and importance of the ‘everyday’ and the ‘other’ cultural heritage which were not considered important under the criteria of art history [43]. Additionally, it is important to mention that since the recognition of cultural landscape as a category of heritage property by the World Heritage Committee in 1992 [74,75], vernacular architecture has risen to prominence and a number of international documents have been published in this direction within the heritage sphere. Example of such international awareness and advancement in the direction of vernacular architecture and diversity of values within the heritage sphere are [81–83]. However, the most significant breakthrough concerning vernacular architecture as a typology of cultural heritage was evidenced by the ICOMOS Charter on the Built Vernacular Heritage [21], (p. 1) which explained that: “The built vernacular heritage [ . . . ] is the fundamental expression of the culture of a community, of its relationship with its territory and, at the same time, the expression of the world’s cultural diversity. Vernacular building is the traditional and natural way by which communities house themselves. It is a continuing process including necessary changes and continuous adaptation as a response to social and environmental constraints” This document remains the most referred international debate which acknowledges the intangible dimensions, rootedness and autochthonous authenticity of vernacular heritage and why its value is context-dependent. In this regard, its distinctiveness and rootedness with its contextual social, cultural and environmental parameters put it in a position to reject predetermined typologies. To assess its values for conservation purposes, this article argues that there is a need for a framework which is premised on this theoretical understanding of vernacular architecture, such that it can be applied as a lingua franca for assessing its values with the community who created and own its stewardship. Therefore, the first fundamental question in this article is: what is the characterization of the values of vernacular architecture?

4. Conceptual Framing and Framework Development


Beyond the simplistic characterization of vernacular architecture which suggests that it is responsive to place, people and time, vernacular architecture is also a tangible heritage (form) which is forged in the presence of intangible cultural processes and practices [84], (p. 151), [85], (p. 46). To operationalize this description, three guiding contexts are adopted based on the appraisal of relative literature on vernacular architecture characterization [28,86–96], for example. From the literature review, three guiding contexts namely: ‘practice’, ‘processes and ‘form’ are the three analytic categories that are adopted as a guide to analyze and tailor the relationships of the tangible and intangible values in the built vernacular heritage [86–96]. Furthermore, to tailor the description of the guiding categories, they are divided into two broad dimensions namely: the static and the dynamic dimension. Table 4 demonstrates the three guiding contexts, the brief explanations and the value characterization of each. The static dimension deals with understanding the constituents of tangible material form which is recognized as vernacular architecture. The
dynamic dimension premises the understanding of the evolutionary and generational practice and process and their interrelations in the evolutionary process of creating vernacular architecture (see Table 4).

**Table 4.** The three guiding contexts: practice, process and form for analyzing value relationships in vernacular architecture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Guiding Contexts</th>
<th>Characterization and Indicators</th>
<th>Value Characterization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Static</strong></td>
<td>Form</td>
<td>The tangible, measurable aspect of vernacular architecture otherwise known as a material symbol (cosmological or esoteric anthropomorphic) or objectification of process and practice of a people (Bellushi, 1955; Rapoport, 1969; Rudofsky, 1965; Niels Fock, 1986; Griaule and Dieterlen, 1954; ICOMOS, 1999; Oliver, 1997)</td>
<td>Intangible and intangible value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dynamic</strong></td>
<td>Process</td>
<td>The concept of ‘process’ provides a means by which we can begin to explore a typologically ambiguous and hybrid-built environment. The human-nonhuman relationship, the man-landscape dialogue which informs the creation of the vernacular architecture (Rapoport, 1969; Levi-strauss, 1982; Stender, 2017; ICOMOS, 1999)</td>
<td>Intangible value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dimension</strong></td>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>The person-to-person tradition informed relationship drawing on a common cultural and heritage capital to construct a vernacular building (Durckheim, 1925; Rassers, 1940; Schefold, 1997; Griaule and Dieterlen, 1954; Morgan, 1965; Karakul, 2007)</td>
<td>Intangible value</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concerning how these three aspects interrelate to emerge as tangible and intangible values, this research draws on Karakul [84] who explained explicitly how two main theoretical approaches namely the structuralist approach of Bourdieu [97] and the semiotic approach of Rapoport [98], respectively, are of importance in such case. It is important to mention that this study draws theoretical explanation draws considerably on the extensive theoretical explanation of Karakul [84,85]. As illustrated in Figure 1, the vernacular society draws cultural practices in the presence of environmental constraints and opportunities to engage in the process of building the vernacular form. In this logic, therefore vernacular architecture represents the ‘form’ which is an embodiment expressing the processes and practices (based on Karakul [84]).
4.2. Approach to Assessing Vernacular Value Characterizations

The described value characterization of vernacular architecture has two implications (among others) on assessing its values. First, the values of vernacular architecture are not universal, static, equal, self-evident and absolute, instead, it is a dynamic intrinsic abstraction which varies from context to context. Thus, the approach which is known as ‘situational analysis’ [97], (p. 54), [99,100] would be beneficial in this context. Second, a dialogical framework for integrating both experts and community members in a vernacular setting (stakeholders, associations as well as representatives of the public) to address the localized and nuanced value of vernacular heritage would be beneficial. In this logic, valuing vernacular architecture requires an approach which integrates both normative and technical process. That is, the heritage experts on the one hand, and the community members on the other as illustrated in Figure 2.

![Figure 1. Illustrating the dialogue between the practice, process and the form (Adapted based on Karakul 2007 based on Rapoport 1982 and Bourdieu 1990).](image1)

![Figure 2. A conceptual approach to valuing the vernacular.](image2)

In the view of these implications and assumptions, the distinction between emic and etic is adopted as a mainstay for the argument in this research. These terms designate
two levels of analysis; “An emic model is one which explains the ideology or behavior of members of a culture according to indigenous definitions. An etic model is one which is based on criteria from outside a particular culture” [101] cited in [92], (p. 31). Supporting this emic model and the need for involvement of the community, Heath [76] suggested that with the unconscious cognizance born of familiarity, a local community member is at times not aware of the multiple dynamics at play in the creation of vernacular architecture. On the other hand, the attuned outsider which he describes as the ‘empathetic outsider’ (but in this case, described as the ‘academic heritage expert’), due to the separateness of the experts from the locale, the vernacular setting is likely to describe from a critical point of contradiction. Thus, the viewpoint adopted in this research borrows from both ends of this spectrum, that is, an etic and emic model is adopted for assessing the values. This is a combination of full involvements of both the perception of the local communities (emic and radical empiricism) and interpreting it through a secondhand experiential approach contingent on scientific understanding (etic model).

5. Results and Discussion: Developing the Vernacular Value Model (VVM)

Against the given overview of vernacular architecture, this section aims to describe the components of the proposed framework which are compatible with the understanding of vernacular architecture according to this study. To achieve the drawn aim therefore, the proposed framework incorporates three conceptual fragments which are informed by a proposed four distinct levels of value categories. It is worth mentioning that most, if not all of the concepts used in this framework have been theorized and documented on their own, in separate disciplines [102] but they have not been brought to bear with the express purpose of heritage value assessment.

Having given the background, therefore, the various fragments of the framework are discussed firstly according to, concepts, epistemologies and operationalization. The term concept in this regard refers to three guiding contexts described in the previous section; epistemology in this context refers to the sets of analytical lenses that are applied for assessing the concepts and lastly, operationalization refers to the mode of participation used to operationalize the analytical models [102]. As summarized in Table 5, the conceptual part of this framework is organized by the form, process and practice. The first aspect hinges on the material dimension of vernacular architecture which is termed the ‘form’. This is the material aspect of vernacular heritage which contains the attributes upon which the values are expressed and as such, drawn.

Table 5. The different fragments of the proposed model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept</th>
<th>Epistemology/Analytical Model</th>
<th>Operationalization</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Form</td>
<td>Etic</td>
<td>Disciplinary experts: Outsider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process</td>
<td>Emic</td>
<td>Community and stakeholder: Insider</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice</td>
<td>Emic + etic</td>
<td>Disciplinary experts, community and stakeholders: Insider and Outsider</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The second aspect is the ‘process’ which is the human—nonhuman dialogue and interaction between nature and culture in the creation of vernacular spaces. The third aspect of the framework is the ‘practice’ encapsulates the person-to-person relationships, customs and traditions, drawing on cultural capital upon which vernacular architecture was created. Concerning the epistemologies, this is guided by the described individual concepts, thus, the analytical model for assessing these concepts is contingent on the two broad categories namely the etic and emic models [92,101]. In this proposed framework, it is argued that the material aspect of vernacular architecture can be interpreted through an ‘outsider’ secondhand experience by drawing on disciplinary expertise. In other words, this aspect draws on the technical/positivist approach to assess it objectively. It is the first level of inquiry in the proposed framework which requires lesser participation and thus, it
is the analytical model proposed to be suitable for the ‘form’ aspect and the identification of material attributes of the vernacular architecture. On the other hand, the emic model is one which explains the ideology or behavior of members of a culture according to indigenous perception. As such, to ‘interpret’ the process and practice aspect of the framework, it requires the abandoning of preconception and necessitates the radical involvement of the community and stakeholders who own the stewardship of the heritage and culture.

Therefore, having given the background to the concepts and analytical models it is important to describe the operationalization which is the participation approach as described in Table 5. In this context, the disciplinary experts who are charged with the value assessment are termed ‘outsiders’ while the owners of the heritage stewardship, otherwise generically called community is termed ‘insiders’. Furthermore, an insider in this context broadly incorporates stakeholder, organized interest. Hall and McArthur, [103] defined the notion of stakeholders “as all individuals, group, organization and association that has a common interest in heritage issue or can affect or be influenced by actions and non-actions taken to resolve the issue” (cited in [104], p. 384). In this regard, Mason [5], (p. 17) suggested that concerning involvement in assessment of values, “the simplest political guideline is trying, as a matter of equity and accuracy, to work toward wide participation and account for the views of all the relevant valuers”.

Having given the background to the determining fragments of the proposed framework, to appropriate the valuing process and the potential challenges, hypothetical categories of value characterizations are developed. These categories are to be synthesized at the end of the assessment procedure to develop a holistic unit of the value in the vernacular architecture. These categories are namely; (1) simple; (2) Complex; (3) Uncertain. It is imperative to mention that this categorization is adapted from Renn [102]. Table 6 demonstrates the different categories and how they relate to the explained concept, epistemology and operationalization.

As shown in Table 6, the simple category is the hypothetical class of values that hardly requires any deviation from traditional scientific inference. It is of paramount importance to mention that the word simple is not used here in the literary dictionary sense to mean trivial,
small or negligible. It only helps determine the first level of involvement and participation. This category is determined by the form aspect of the described concepts and uses the etic analytical model, and it is guided by material evidence based on attributable attributes. In this case, the judgment of the attributable architectural features will thus be based on the best scientific understanding of material attributes and quantitative characterization [102]. Additionally, disciplinary experts can draw on best practices to determine this category with little or no community interference.

The complex category refers to values are based on the attempted interpretation of the attributes found in the ‘form’ aspect. That is, while the evidence of what is at stake is clearly given, the judgment needs to be based on a dialectical discourse between the disciplinary expert(s) and the community about values and their implications. It is thus guided by the emic level of the analytical model and it requires a combination of both disciplinary experts and the community members. This can be considered what phenomenologists considered a combination of radical empiricism and secondhand experience [92]. This hypothetical value is contingent on both the form and process aspects of the described concepts. In addition, the term complex should not be interpreted in its literary context and it does not attempt to elevate these values above any other. It is simply used as the next step after the simple category which has been described.

Lastly, the uncertain category is based on ambiguities on both perceived values and the attributable evidence [105]. That is, this case arises on the innate assumption that the values in this category are disputable, temporal, transitional and generation dependent. This category is based on the unknown, the less striking and salient which is informed by the practices of the people. This would imply that assessors should engage in an activity to find some common ground for characterizing and qualifying the evidence and establish a synthesis of both the simple and complex categories. In this case, the combination of both the interpretative and normative implications is useful (Ibid). Thus, it involves a combination of both the emic and the etic analytical model.

Therefore, as the last step on how to unify the various fragments of the framework and operationalize its constituent parts, Figure 3 was developed. The framework illustrates the various hypothetical value categories, the analytical model used to access it and the levels of participation envisaged to be required.

Figure 3. Proposed ‘Vernacular Value Model’ for assessing values of vernacular architecture.
6. Conclusions and Recommendation

The appraisal of the literature in this article demonstrated that discipline-specific value typologies have been symptomatic of a number of shortcomings in the context of capturing the ranges of values present in cultural heritage. The prevailing limitations of value typology are even more aggravated in the context of capturing the ranges of values in contextual heritage such as built vernacular heritage whose rootedness and autochthonous authenticity place it in a position to reject one-size-fits-all typologies. By drawing on literature review, this article demonstrated that built vernacular heritage is a form which is created by the processes of a people in a specific location who drew on a particular cultural practice in the presence of the abundance of their climatic and topographical constraints and opportunities to meet their physical and social needs [21,32,75–96]. Thus, it is a cultural heritage which is firmly rooted in its place and as such, the understanding of its value is firmly enshrined in the people that created it and own its stewardship in time. In this regard, value assessment in a vernacular settlement will, therefore, require the abandonment of preconceived criteria that privilege certain heritage values over the others.

As a point of departure, therefore, this article argued that there is a need for a framework which is in coherence with this rooted characterization of vernacular architecture. Hence, this article proposes an integrative framework for value assessment in the case of vernacular architecture. The proposed Vernacular Value Model (VVM) integrates the following components:

- Presents a robust and coherent characterization for the values of vernacular architecture.
- Abandons determinism and aims at discovering the unknown value rather than inquire for values through the preconceived list of academic value typologies.
- Premises approach to the ‘when’ and ‘how’ of creating synergies between the perceptions of values according to disciplinary experts and community members to address the complexities and nuanced dimensions of value in vernacular architecture.

As such, the proposed conceptual VVM advances the existing valuing approaches by drawing on a theory-based approach on vernacular architecture and its values. The conceptual framework is inclusive of perceptions founded in disciplinary methodologies by adopting two analytical models which are the classical etic and emic anthropological models. In this regard, the framework is integrative for addressing the potential range of values which are plausible in a built vernacular heritage. The proposed VVM also illustrates the range of ways in which disciplinary experts and communities can integrate the perceived values present in the vernacular architecture ensemble in the value assessment process.

It is important to mention that this proposed framework does not entertain the pretension of being a perfect model, however, it has a potential to be applied as a tool for mediating and facilitating discussion in various heritage contexts. It premises how to integrate both experts and community members in a heritage setting (stakeholders, associations as well as representatives of the public) to address the localized and nuanced value of heritage. Such approach is recommended in the UNESCO Recommendation on Historic Urban Landscape (HUL) approach [106], (p. 4) and in this regard, the proposed framework can be applied as a civic engagement tool to involve a diverse cross-section of stakeholders, to facilitate intercultural dialogue by learning from communities about their traditions, histories, values and negotiation of conflicting interests. The proposed framework can also be used “to reach consensus using participatory planning and stakeholder consultations on what values to protect for transmission to future generations and to determine the attributes that carry these values” [107], (p. 13) as recommended in the step 2 of the HUL approach [107]. Thus, the proposed tool has the potential to be applied in a variety of heritage situations, especially cross-cultural applications. Furthermore, it might also be helpful to extend this framework in assessing rural landscapes where the view of tourists could be compared and used in the framework.
Institutional Review Board Statement: This article does not involve human or animal.

Data Availability Statement: This article did not report any data.

Acknowledgments: I would like to acknowledge the unwavering constructive scrutiny of my thesis Supervisor at the Chair of Environmental Planning and the inputs of the UNESCO Chair in Heritage Studies at Brandenburg Technical University, Germany

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References


52. Yung, E.H.; Chan, E.H. Implementation challenges to the adaptive reuse of heritage buildings: Towards the goals of sustainable, low carbon cities. Habitat Int. 2012, 3, 352–361. [CrossRef]


