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### Abstract of thesis

In this thesis, the author describes how the 'Sense of Place' (SoP) plays a significant role in identifying the conservation status of living cultural heritage sites. The content is summarized as follows:

#### (Purpose)

The concept of SoP has existed in human geography since the 1970s and refers to the symbolic meanings or attributes ascribed to a particular place or region. It includes three overlapping sub-components: *place attachment*, *place dependence*, and *place identity*. In the field of cultural heritage conservation, research has fallen short of examining the concept of SoP either theoretically or empirically, especially in North Africa and the Middle East. To fill this gap, “Historic Cairo” in Egypt, a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage Site since 1979, was investigated as a case study. Even though several conservation interventions have been carried out in Cairo by national and international organizations, the historic city has encountered conservational challenges, and its cultural heritage has been deteriorating continuously since the mid-20th century. Moreover, the local people in Cairo's historic quarters exhibit contradicting behaviors toward conserving cultural heritage. The author hypothesize that previous conservation projects at Historic Cairo adopted inappropriate approaches to the living heritage site. The author also hypothesize that the local people's behavioral intentions toward conserving Historic Cairo are influenced by their SoP, which is affected by their demographic and socio-economic characteristics.

In this context, the academic purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth analysis of the controversial case of Historic Cairo and identify the most appropriate approach to conservation. The study examines the role of SoP in shaping the local people's attitude and influencing their behavioral intentions toward the conservation/abuse of historic buildings in Cairo. The study is limited to investigating the cases of the “Al-Khalifa” quarter in the south of Historic Cairo, where local people are giving due attention to conserving specific religious and non-religious buildings, and the “Khan El-Khalili” quarter in the north, where local people abuse historic buildings or are

indifferent to conservation.

### **(Materials and Methods)**

The methodological framework consists of three systematic steps, including both qualitative and quantitative methods: a pilot survey conducted in December 2018 and 2019 based on direct observation, 50 questionnaires with a representative sample of local people at the “Al-Khalifa” quarter, 11 semi-structured interviews with a representative sample of local people at the “Khan El-Khalili” quarter, and semi-structured interviews with five stakeholders in both quarters. Based on this pilot survey, the current conservation status and the local people's behavior toward cultural heritage in both quarters are determined. Second, an intensive literature survey of prime historical resources, conservation reports, and recent studies on Historic Cairo are conducted to understand the historical background and the formal/informal conservation history of historic buildings in both quarters. Finally, a sequential explanatory design, which comprised quantitative (questionnaires) and qualitative methods (semi-structured interviews), is applied to examine the relationship between the local people's SoP levels and their behavioral intentions toward the conservation of the historic buildings in both quarters. The numeric data are coded and statistically analyzed using SPSS for descriptive and correlation analyses and WarpPLS for structural equation modeling (SEM).

### **(Results)**

From the literature review and stakeholder interviews (Chapter 2), the author finds that of the approximately 17 mega-conservation projects implemented in Historic Cairo since the early 1970s, only three have focused on improving the quality of life of local people and involving them in the implementation process, yielding positive outcomes and global recognition. The author also notes that the challenges to the effective preservation of Historic Cairo are directly or indirectly linked to shortcomings in the methodology and structure of the state management system. For example, the participation of the community in conservation projects is neither legally promoted nor appreciated by those involved. This often leads to public disputes between the community and local government during conservation projects and hostility toward cultural heritage.

In a subsequent empirical study, the author finds a significant relationship between the local people's SoP and their positive behaviors toward conserving the religious and non-religious buildings at the “Al-Khalifa” quarter and their negative behavior toward the historic buildings at the “Khan El-Khalili” quarter (Chapters 3 and 4). Thus, “place dependence” has the highest degree of influence on community attitudes toward conserving the religious building. In contrast, “place attachment” has the highest degree of influence on community attitudes toward conserving the non-religious building. Local people depend on the religious building greatly for various daily activities (e.g., praying, supplication, meditation). In comparison, their significant attachment to the non-religious building stems from childhood memories and their direct connection with the building, especially after its adaptation as a community center and dispensary. On the contrary, in the “Khan El-Khalili” quarter, there was no significant relationship between local people's “place attachment” and their attitudes and behavioral intentions toward historic buildings, which could explain their abuse of the buildings and their indifference to their preservation. The author attributes this attitude to touristification and changes in the socio-economic structure within the quarter over the past 30 years, as newcomers have divided rootedness and commodified relationships with the historic buildings. Finally, the author finds that people's residence/workplace location is a significant factor that affects their SoP level regarding different types of buildings in Historic Cairo (e.g., religious, non-religious, residential, commercial).

### **(Discussion)**

This thesis investigates local people's SoP toward cultural heritage based on qualitative and quantitative research in Historic Cairo, Egypt. The results show that the closer the residence or workplace is to a cultural heritage site, the stronger the SoP tends to be toward that site. It also clarifies the characteristics of social groups that have a strong SoP toward historical buildings in each district: in Al-Khalifa, people living within the quarter have a strong SoP regardless of place of birth, ownership, or employment status, while in Khan El-Khalili, those with

social attributes such as being born within the quarters have a strong SoP regardless of gender, age, place of residence, or education level. In addition, this thesis identifies population attributes that should strengthen SoP in the future. The thesis also reveals that SoP does not necessarily correlate with religious importance, tourism weakens SoP, and the strength of SoP does not depend solely on the historical value or religious importance of a building. Therefore, the author concludes that while much attention is paid to the preservation of buildings as “tangible heritage,” it is important to also pay attention to human activities. Thus, a “local people-centered approach” would play an important role in preserving living heritage sites, especially when there are conflicts within the local community.

## **Abstract of assessment result**

### **(General Comments)**

The thesis has sufficient originality as it demonstrates through empirical data that the SoP of local people plays an important role in determining the conservation status of living cultural heritage in the Middle East and North Africa region. The thesis not only offers new academic insights and theoretical contributions to existing literature by examining the SoP of local people from both religious and non-religious perspectives, but also reveals the visible and invisible aspects of living cultural heritage like SoP, which can be useful to stakeholders.

### **(Assessment)**

The final examination committee conducted a meeting as a final examination on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 2021. The applicant provided an overview of dissertation, addressed questions and comments raised during Q&A session. All of the committee members reached a final decision that the applicant has passed the final examination.

### **(Conclusion)**

The final examination committee approved that the applicant is qualified to be awarded Doctor of Philosophy.