

VALUING THE MARGINAL: A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW OF UNDEREXPLORED HERITAGE CATEGORIES

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the trend in academic discourse toward proposing new, unofficial heritage categories, broadening the definition of heritage to include other cultural goods. This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) following the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses guidelines (PRISMA). After building a database of 46 sources, the research investigates how the analysed categories are defined and valued in the academic discourse through a content analysis of the collected sources. The analysis revealed that the concerned categories share distinct traits that question some conceptual foundations of official discourses. Building upon the theoretical outcomes of our SLR, we propose “marginal heritage” as a term to represent and legitimise these overlooked heritage categories at an institutional level. Finally, the paper concludes by providing the *Marginal Heritage Model* as a tool to guide the assessment of a diverse range of values associated with marginal heritage across different contexts.

Keywords: marginal heritage, heritage valuation, systematic literature review, cultural management

1. Introduction

When discussing heritage, we acknowledge that selection is based not solely on intrinsic qualities but on our ability to recognize and list them (Konsa, 2013). However, determining significance is inherently complex due to the lack of uniform objective criteria, and the notion of value typologies emerged to address this challenge. While the formalization of value-based approaches in heritage management is commonly linked to the Burra Charter (Australia ICOMOS, 1979), the concept traces back to Riegl's (1903) work, a contribution which laid the groundwork for the notion of *value typologies*, namely pre-conceived criteria to break significance into detectable components (Olukoya, 2021).

Despite the contribution of value typologies, the practice of classifying heritage through official lists and categories, and identifying traditional values, has generated debate. Listing is seen as essential for safeguarding significant cultural properties that are often overlooked by national decision-makers

(Rizzo & Mignosa, 2013). However, static classifications can paradoxically lead to *insignificance* (Cameron, 2020), and traditional value typologies face criticism for being reductive (Avrami et al., 2000). However, instead of abandoning lists and values-based paradigms, their implementation is also considered as a potential solution to the mentioned shortcomings. In this regard, new heritage categories that are less inclined to fit official definitions and valuation criteria are emerging. Moreover, new dynamic models were developed to understand the complexity of a potential range of values that might be present within a landscape (Stephenson, 2008), or a building (Olukoya, 2021).

In summary, these debates address a common concern: defining heritage involves creating a system of meanings tied to specific values, leading to the inclusion of certain meanings within the official system while excluding others (Harrison, 2010; Konsa, 2013). Moreover, they stress how goods that do not easily fall within official systems deserve recognition and protection measures. This paper focuses on developments beyond these official systems, particularly the trend in academic discourse toward new, *unofficial* heritage categories, broadening the definition of heritage to include other cultural goods.

Using a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), we investigate and synthesize existing literature on these emerging categories. This review is guided by two questions: (1) How is each heritage category defined? (2) How do authors attribute values to each heritage category? Included categories are everyday, ordinary, unofficial, informal, neglected, marginalized, mundane, overlooked, and unmanaged heritage. A content analysis of our database reveals that the categories share significant definitional traits. Then, an exploration of emerging values terminology, categorized them into three main value typologies.

Building upon the theoretical outcomes of our analysis, in the last section of our paper we propose “marginal heritage” as a term that can adequately represent these overlooked heritage categories. Moreover, the paper concludes providing a model to guide the assessment of a set of features and values associated with *marginal* heritage across different contexts. This proposed framework does not claim to be final, especially considering that our SLR only included English-language papers. Nonetheless, it has the potential to serve as an initial tool for identifying and assessing marginal heritage among stakeholders, contributing to the preservation of heritage challenging official systems. Finally, we believe that marginal heritage can facilitate a harmonization process within the academic community.

2. Methodology

This research adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to map the terms and discourse surrounding heritage categories in a subsidiary position within the official discourse. SLR is considered a valuable method to gain a comprehensive understanding of the scope and depth of the existing body of research (Liberati et al., 2009). This SLR followed the guidelines outlined in the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) to establish the rational foundation for the evaluation and pre-determined methodological and analytical strategy in the initial phases (Liberati et al., 2009). The identification of search terms followed a preliminary literature review. Then, since it became apparent that there exists a broad spectrum of synonyms employed to describe related heritage categories, we incorporated all the identified synonyms of the categories in our preliminary review. In this regard, some terms were excluded to maintain a focused scope, specifically *dissonant*, *difficult*, and *contested* heritage, which relate to a recognized but controversial category of heritage involving collective traumatic past events (Tunbridge & Ashworth, 1996). Additionally, *vernacular* heritage was excluded due to its established definition by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS, 1999). The search string used was (TITLE-ABS-KEY “invisible heritage” OR “unofficial heritage” OR “marginal* heritage” OR “neglected heritage” OR “informal heritage” OR “everyday heritage” OR “ordinary heritage” OR “unbranded heritage” OR “low-brow heritage” OR “unauthorized heritage” OR “unapproved heritage” OR “unvalidated heritage” OR “unacknowledged heritage” OR “unendorsed heritage” OR “unattested heritage” OR “low-end heritage” OR “mundane heritage”). Searches were conducted in the titles, abstracts, and keywords across three extensive academic literature databases: Scopus, ProQuest Central, and ScienceDirect. Then, a protocol was pre-established to systematically document the analysis method and inclusion criteria for the final database. We did not limit the search protocol based on the year of publication or discipline. To ensure high-quality sources, we decided not to limit our search to peer-reviewed articles at a final publication status, while in terms of document type our sources include academic articles, book chapters, features, and short surveys in

English language. This decision was driven by the widespread use of English in academic discourse and the researchers' language proficiency. Nonetheless, future research should consider non-English texts, as discussed in the concluding sections of our paper. In terms of source types, we included scholarly journals and books. The last search was run on the 1st of February 2024. Concerning the paper selection process, it is summarized in Fig. 1.

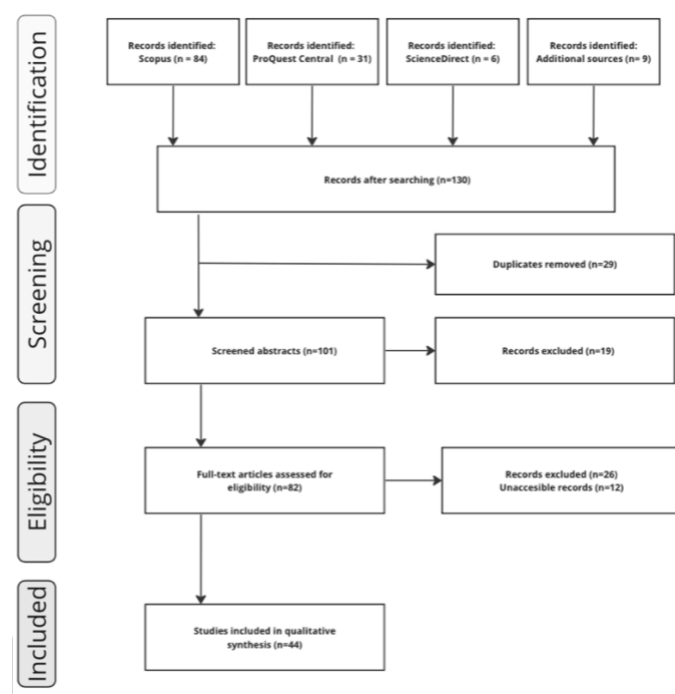


Fig. 1. Flow chart of study selection process.

The first screening phase began with a sequential assessment of the titles and abstracts of our starting database and an Excel table was created to catalogue paper details. Then, we performed an abstract qualitative pertinence check of each paper in the Excel table to exclude all those texts in which the adjectives included among the search terms referred to the term heritage. Following this phase, 82 papers progressed to the second screening phase, involving a full-text review. The criteria for inclusion in this second screening phase encompassed papers providing insights into the meaning of the specific heritage category under consideration and the values attributed to them. After the second screening phase, we found other synonyms relevant to our research. Thus, we decided to incorporate these terms into our analysis with a second search¹ to make it as comprehensive as possible.

In terms of data analysis, it aimed to identify common features of heritage category definitions and typologies of heritage values. Full-text screening was conducted to extract and organize relevant fragments of text into an Excel table, followed by content analysis using ATLAS.ti to identify common features. Then, similar categories were associated based on shared features. To identify typologies of heritage values, the methodology by Sahraiyanjahromi & Türker (2020) was adopted. Texts were screened to identify value terminology associated with each category, recorded in an Excel spreadsheet. Then, the most frequent terminologies were merged manually to create value typologies.

3. Theoretical Framework: the *Vernacular Value Model*

The paper concludes providing a model to guide the assessment of a diverse range of values associated with *marginal* heritage across different contexts. This proposed framework can be interpreted as an

¹ Our second search string was (TITLE-ABS-KEY "unobvious heritage" OR "unmanaged heritage" OR "behind-the-scenes heritage" OR "commonplace heritage" OR "overlooked heritage"). We obtained 4 papers on Scopus, 3 on ProQuest Central and 0 on ScienceDirect. 2 papers were added to the previous database, for a total of 46 papers.

operationalization of the *Vernacular Value Model* proposed by Olukoya (2020) (Fig 2) which aims to understand the complexity of a potential range of values that might be present within vernacular buildings (Olukoya, 2020).

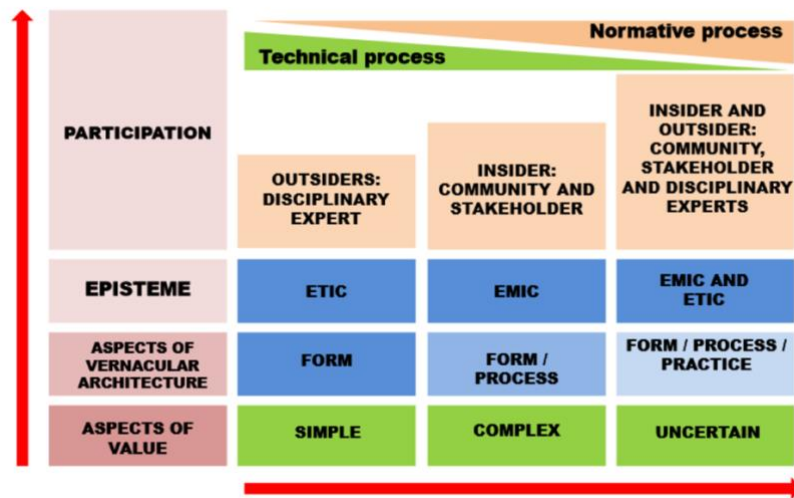


Fig. 2. The Vernacular Value Model (Source: Olukoya, 2021)

Despite tailored on the category of *vernacular* heritage, the model is open and potentially applicable to different cases. Moreover, it considers the mentioned limitations of the values-based paradigm and the necessity to involve “the community and stakeholders who own the stewardship of the heritage and culture” (Olukoya, 2021, p. 12). Finally, since the model is highly conceptual and not applied to specific cases, our research also constitutes a first attempt to operationalize it. Given the focus on the academic discourse and the research approach, using this model as a framework, we locate our research in the first step of the *Vernacular Value Model*, namely the assessment of what are defined as “simple values” by outsiders. By doing so, we emphasise how the model we derived from our SLR, does not claim to be final, but it constitutes the first step to facilitate the identification and assessment of instances of marginal heritage mediating between a variety of stakeholders.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Overview of the selected studies

The 46 studies in our database were published before 2024 and included 14 different disciplines (Figure 3). The dominant fields are Geography, Heritage Studies, Archaeology, Architecture, Urban Design and Anthropology. In cases where the discipline was not specified or the authors came from different fields, the discipline of the first was declared.

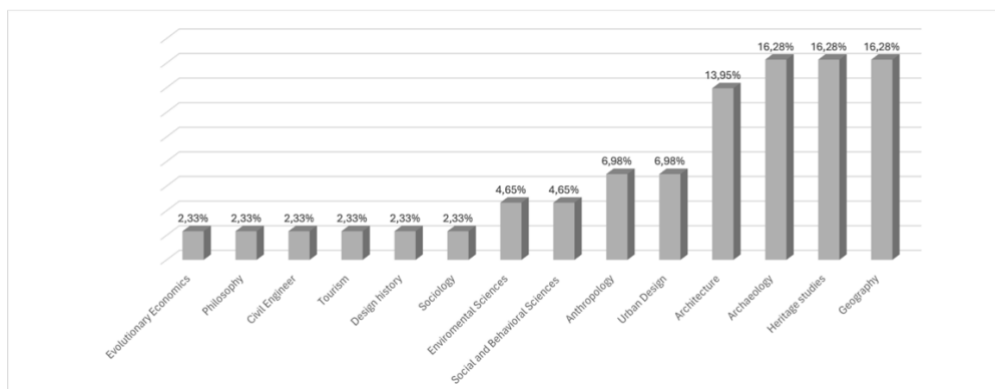


Fig. 3. Discipline distribution in the final database.

In terms of developments over time, the analysis reveals an evolution in the usage of these categories over time (Figure 4). Prior to 2015, there was scant interest in them. However, a relevant shift occurred from 2015 onwards. This increase could be linked to a period of growing interest in an integrated approach that combines sustainable development with active community participation in heritage management, exemplified by the concept of "heritage from below" (Robertson, 2012) and centralised by reports such as the *Policy Document on the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention* (UNESCO, 2015).

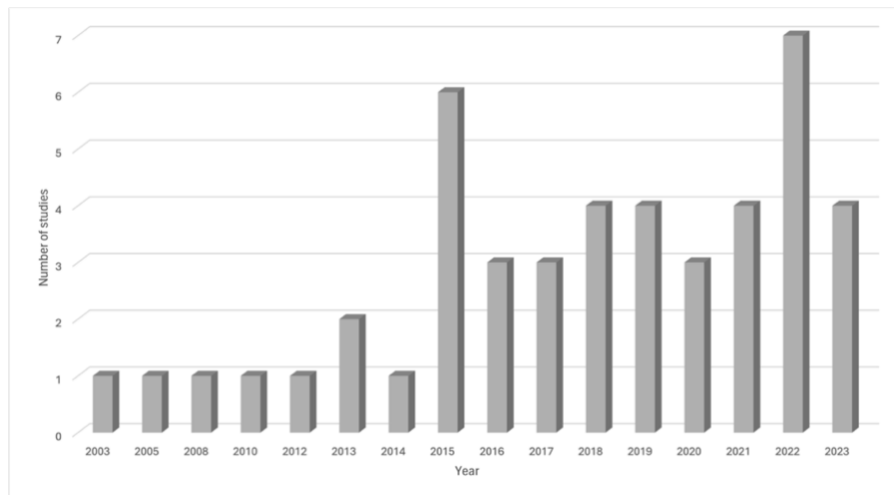


Fig. 4. Number of publications per year.

The geographic distributions of the locations where the studies were conducted showed that the topic is of interest in 19 countries. In the UK the topic attracted the most attention as it was examined in 12 out of 46 papers. This predominance might reaffirm the relationship between the advent of these categories and a participatory shift in the field of heritage studies, since the concept of "heritage from below" (Robertson, 2012) gained traction in the UK. In terms of most popular categories (Figure 5), *everyday* heritage predominates, featuring in 10 out of 46 papers.

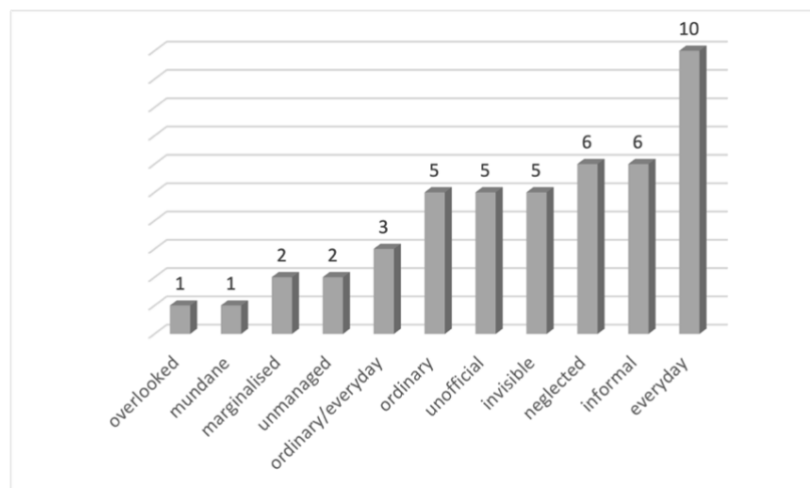


Fig. 5. Distribution of each category in the database.

Finally, when examining the types of heritage, built and intangible heritage emerge as the most prominent within our dataset (Fig. 6). The dataset also reveals a notable disproportion in the representation of heritage types, with movable heritage comprising only a mere 5% of the total. The dominance of fields like Geography and Architecture explains why built heritage takes precedence. Yet, it also highlights the underrepresentation of other types, like movable heritage.

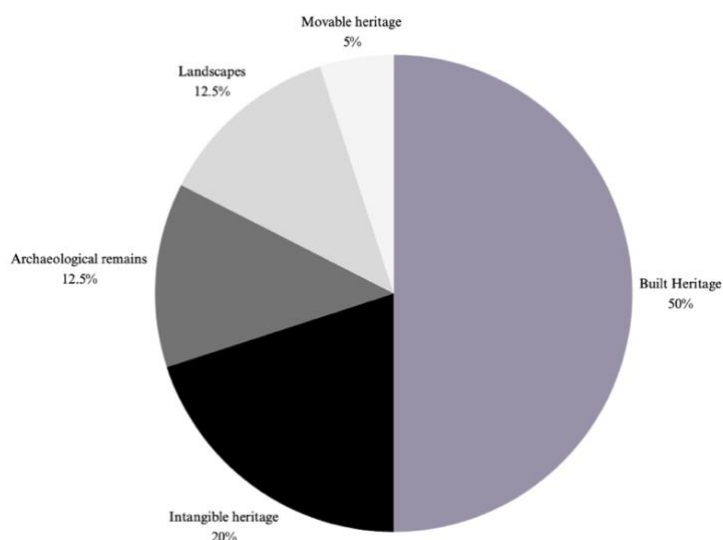


Fig. 6. Different types of heritage in the database.

3.2 Definition analysis: most common features

This first part of analysis framed the most relevant features of each heritage category definition. Except for *invisible* heritage², which was deemed outside the research scope, the analysis showed that the categories under consideration share some key common features.

The first unifying characteristic of these categories is their subsidiary position within the official heritage system, often due to their varying forms and underlying reasons. Indeed, all the categories discuss how these heritages are “rarely included or examined in heritage conservation” (Brown et al., 2020, p. 91) and “off the map of officially recognized heritage activities and places” (Hatala Matthes, 2018, p. 90). A second commonality is the *lived* and *functional* nature of heritage. The heritage in question is connected to the present and a specific location. Whether it is represented by an urban market or seaside holiday structures, each case presents a *living* and *functional* heritage, forming the “background of our lives” (Pielesiak, 2015, p. 74) and experienced by those living it daily. This lived dimension also impacts the management practices for this heritage. For instance, some papers emphasize the need of top-down institutional interventions, while others prioritize conservation interventions driven by local communities (Belova & Schofield, 2022). Consequently, a *one-size-fits-all* approach is unfeasible, as “the management of informal heritages is a highly complex yet urgent issue” (Barrère, 2015, p.13). Finally, our categories also exemplify the *multifaceted* nature of heritage (Woodham et al., 2017), where a single place or object can hold multiple meanings for different people and across various scales (Diaz-Andreu & Pastor Perez, 2024). The analysis revealed that the types involved possess less evidential values compared to historic heritages, involving “shared or communal values, recognised and held by distinct cultural groups or by families or even by individuals” (Belova and Schofield, 2021, p. 539). Hence, this first part of analysis demonstrated how the categories under consideration share some key features. The next section provides additional information on how these categories are applied within academic discourse through the lens of value terminologies.

3.3 Values analysis

This section provides an overview of how the value terminologies have been merged to form broader value typologies (Table 9) defined as pre-conceived criteria to break significance into constituents easy

² Based on the performed analysis, *invisible* heritage appears as a category mostly used to identify heritage sites which are not accessible, visible, or visitable often due to conservation efforts or their location (Mitchell et al., 2022). Since the analysis indicated a consistent application of this term that does not align with our research objectives, we have opted to exclude it from our study.

to detect (Olukoya, 2020). The focus on values derives from the fact that they are the intrinsic reason behind heritage identification, management, and conservation (Avrami et al., 2000; McClelland et al., 2013). However, various risks are inherent in the creation of value typologies, particularly when attempts are made to establish uniform criteria for assessing value (Avrami et al., 2000; Cameron, 2020). Consequently, the approach adopted in this second phase should be viewed as a preliminary investigation into potential values associated with the heritage typologies under consideration, since our objective is to gather additional information to enhance our understanding of how these categories are applied within academic discourse and to establish a foundation for the unified category we aim to propose. Accordingly, the value typologies discussed herein should not be regarded as definitive. Indeed, our analysis is confined to academic work, and the typologies presented serve as a groundwork to validate through empirical testing and the inclusion of a broader range of perspectives. Finally, the identified typologies have been selected as predominant because the value-related terminology from which they are derived was found to be the most prevalent in the database (Table 9).

3.3.1 The sense of place value

The first type of value outlined relates to the spatial scale of heritage. This concept intersects with that of values because "to value heritage means to identify it as a resource within a scale ranging from building structure to the larger urban context" (Berg, 2017, n.p.). In our case, the sense of place value underscores the significance of the types explored in the database on a local scale and dimension. These observations align with a process of *rescaling* (Brenner, 2000), wherein the crisis of the national container (Harvey, 2015) gives way to a growing recognition of the importance of the local scale of heritage.

Moving to our database, the transnational and global value of heritage was never mentioned, while local and urban values appear frequently. Indeed, the concerned heritage is often presented as coexisting with urban areas and people and it supports stories, memories, and identities that are valuable to residents (Jhearmaneechotechai, 2024). Whether architectural structures (Zhang et al., 2023), market streets (Podder et al., 2018) or practices and routines (Bonnin & Moore-Cherry, 2023), multiple sources emphasize the value of these overlooked for promoting a sense of place.

The notion of *sense of place* refers to "the customary ways in which a place makes itself felt – its specific manner of being as perceived, encountered, known, and remembered by the human beings engaging with that place" (Walter 1988). In this regard, in the context of this paper the "sense of place value" refers to the ability of heritage of fostering individuals' sense of belonging to a specific location and within communities that inhabit it. Alongside this capacity to intertwine with personal narratives, the value of the types of heritage discussed also intersects with the sub-theme of *social cohesion*. In this regard, Chen (2007) presented the case of the Wedding Card Street in Hong Kong. She explained that "the street was regarded by local people as the basis for '[a] close interpersonal relationship network', as well as the basis of 'Wan Chai people's identity'" (p. 1373).

Overall, the analysis revealed how multiple sources mention the value of heritage on a local scale, aligning with a well-established academic discourse about the recent shift from monuments to people (Loulanski, 2006).

3.3.2 The historical value

When considering the value of heritage, it is imperative to underscore the significance of its historical dimension. If we mentioned the diverse range of value typologies classifications, all of them share a common foundation in historical value (Riegl, 1903; Throsby, 2001; Mason, 2002). Without delving into the broader relationship between heritage and history, this section focuses on the *historical* value, understood as heritage's contribution to our understanding of the past. If in the previous paragraph we discussed the local scale of heritage, in this section we discuss how the authors emphasise the historical value of local practices, sites, and buildings. As an example, Purbrick (2022) stresses the value of the Silvertown Explosion, a minor event in the context of national First World War history, but which holds significance for the community in East London. The event, involving "loss of life, injuries, and destruction of homes and livelihoods" (n. p.), is remembered in local contexts as an important humanitarian event and a key part of the local community heritage (Pubrick, 2022). Also, Idziorek and

Chalana (2019) attribute similar historical relevance to the U District in Seattle, a case of "everyday heritage present in the eclectic mix of building types and uses that reflects the district's diverse population and its relationship to the university" (p. 330).

An emerging theme from the analysis is also the problematic nature of traditional criteria used to identify the historical value of heritage. From a national policies perspective, Light & Chapman (2022) critique the limitations of conventional heritage criteria that prioritize *age* and *rarity*, potentially excluding valuable cultural and historical sites from formal recognition and protection. Indeed, they explain that "matters of age and rarity dominate conceptions of heritage in England" (p. 45) and buildings erected before 1850 are considered rare enough to warrant listing.

In summary, the historical value of the examined categories invites reflection on the importance of local history within the heritage discourse. Revisiting the topic of scales, the analyzed texts emphasize the historical value on a local scale, converging around what Lynch (1972) defined *micro-history*. This concept contrasts with grand narratives moving "people only momentarily, at a point remote from their vital concerns" (Lynch, 1972, p. 61). In contrast, he advocates for preserving "the near and middle past, the past with which we have real ties" (p. 61).

If the sense of place value identified these heritage types as a resource within a local context, by examining the historical perspective through the notion of *micro-history*, the spatial dimension meets the temporal one. While we saw how the spatial scale is local, the temporal scale in which these categories are situated is a near past, a discussion that we will explore further with the third identified value typology.

3.3.3 *The adaptability value*

The final typology is what we have termed the *adaptability* value, defined as heritage's capacity to resist and adapt over a long period of time as a living entity "not frozen at some point in the past" (Light & Chapman, 2022, p. 46). This observation introduces the *temporal* dimension of the heritage, where the static and contemplative dimension of heritage is replaced by an *unsettled*, dynamic status (Chen, 2020). However, the introduction of the temporal dimension raises a few questions. The first concerns the relationship between *living* status and *functional* value of heritage. Indeed, some authors (Idziorek & Chalana, 2019; Mosler, 2019) stress how heritage keeps a strong connection with the present thanks to its usage and people attributing meaning to it (Loulanski, 2006, p. 216). Idziorek & Chalana (2019) describe heritage as "woven into patterns of living" (p. 321), suggesting that it becomes integrated into everyday practices, allowing local communities to connect with the present. Jhearmaneechotechai's study (2024) examines ordinary restaurants and everyday foods in the historic center of Bangkok as an example of "ordinary urban heritage" (OUH), using the "principle of continuity of everyday heritage" (p. 11) as a selection criterion. This principle is operationalized by assessing heritage's presence in contemporary times and current activities (Jhearmaneechotechai, 2024).

These contributions introduce a second point: adaptation and continuity do not always imply integrity. In the case of ordinary restaurants and everyday foods in the historic center of Bangkok, ordinary urban heritage is presented as embracing "changes and transformations as part of the conservation process" (Jhearmaneechotechai, 2022, p. 2). In their paper examining the significant role of fragrances in the identity construction processes of Zanzibar islanders, Boswell (2008) frames the concept of change as an essential element in heritage creation and conservation. The author points out that "some existing heritage [...] is under threat of being removed from the World Heritage List because they have been altered in ways not approved by the World Heritage Committee" (p. 299). Similarly, Light & Chapman (2022) challenge contemporary interpretations of authenticity that equate it with *unaltered* state, the "integrity of the bond between the present state of the object and its origin" (Heinich, 2011, p. 123).

These contributions highlight how the categories in question challenge the *patrimonial* value of heritage (Heinich, 2011), which allows a property to shift from a private to a common good that "escapes the fate of becoming rubbish, [...] reducible to its materiality and its utility" (p. 127). On the contrary, its functional aspect is properly what "keep heritage from becoming 'rubbish' [...] and thereby often crucial to justifying preservation" (Fredheima & Khalafb, 2016, p. 474). Consequently, the temporal dimension and its implications incentive a dynamic perspective toward heritage. Indeed, the functional view interprets it as something that "if it is not considered worth protecting now, it may become tremendously significant to future generations" (Loulanski, 2006, p. 215).

From a cultural management perspective, the findings bring forth a crucial question: if the types of heritage examined possess characteristics which contrast with established classification systems, how can we ensure that this heritage is properly cared for? In the following section, we propose "marginal heritage" as a unifying category that can encapsulate the types of heritage discussed, providing a framework for both academic discourse and institutional recognition.

Table 9. Designed value typologies.

Value typologies	Definition	Related value terminologies	Frequency of being stated
<i>Sense of place value</i>	It refers to heritage's capacity of fostering a sense of belonging and community/cultural affiliation.	Local identity	18
		Urban dimension	16
		Sense of place	6
		Local culture	7
		Sense of belonging	4
		Communality	6
		Identity	3
		Affective dimension	2
		Social cohesion	4
		Place identity	4
		Common past	2
		Community relationship with a place	4
		Sociality	1
		Identity construction	3
		Place making	3
		Local knowledge	2
Place attachment	1		
Locality	1		
<i>Historical value</i>	It refers to heritage's contribution to our understanding of the past.	Historical significance	10
		Educational	6
		Remembrance	4
		Discovery of the past	2
		Connection with the history of cities	1
		Local traditions	1
<i>Adaptability value</i>	It refers to heritage's ability to resist and adapt over a long period of time as a <i>living</i> entity, constructed and shaped by how people understand the past and interpret history. Hence, it is not frozen at some point in the past but it remains 'alive' and <i>used</i> .	Integration with daily routines	9
		Continuity	3
		Adaptability	3
		Transience	1
		Living	4
		Ways of life	2
		Routines	1
		Traditional lifeways	1
		Functionality	1

4. Our proposed category and the *marginal heritage model*

Our SLR identified ambiguity in the usage of the analysed categories, often used interchangeably. These categories span a wide range of disciplines and encompass diverse objects, though some typologies are more prevalent than others. For instance, movable heritage constitutes only 5% of our database, whereas built heritage is the most represented type. The definition and value terminology analysis revealed shared features challenging official discourse principles: the predominance of national narratives and the correlation between authenticity and integrity.

Given the importance of heritage lists and categories in safeguarding overlooked cultural goods (Rizzo & Mignosa, 2013), we propose "marginal heritage" as an umbrella term to represent, encompass, and legitimize the analysed categories. Indeed, introducing this concept aim to encourage the formalization of this category at an institutional level and prompt a re-evaluation of some conceptual foundations of the official discourse. Hence, this category also provides a crucial foundation for the overall strategy of preserving heritage types that challenge established official classification systems. Finally, we believe that it can facilitate a harmonization process within academia.

The choice of *marginal* as a term that properly represent the collected categories is deliberate and stems from various reasons. The concept of marginality has been approached by diverse disciplines, but all of them share a theoretical concept: marginality always implies a relation with a centre (Moscarelli, 2021). In this context, marginality converges with its synonym, *peripherality* (Cullen & Pretes, 2000; Moscarelli, 2021). However, as Ferguson (1990) noted, the concept of marginality is always a relative one, since it depends on what is our reference point. Consequently, this interpretation emphasizes the *dynamic* and *relative* nature of marginality, where the position of the periphery is never definitively determined (Domansky and Lung, 2009). Moreover, a social constructivist interpretation of marginality presents *power* as the central determinant of marginality (Cullen & Pretes, 2000). Thus, marginality is perceived “as a power relationship between a group viewing itself as a *center*” (Cullen & Pretes, 2000, p. 217). Finally, the rationale behind the choice of *marginal* lies also in the fact that “*marginal*” can be easily translated in different languages.

Based on the results of our analysis, to facilitate the identification and assessment of instances of *marginal* heritage, this concept was summarised into five main indicators of the *Marginal Heritage Model* (Fig. 7). Marginal heritage can be defined as a category of heritage that occupies a subsidiary position within the official discourse and, consequently, lacks formal protection measures. It encompasses diverse types of heritage, valued primarily on local and individual scales. Its historical significance is often tied to recent history. In terms of time frame, we define *recent* history a period which span from 1900 until 50 years from the present. The period of 50 years derives from the notion of *historical object*, where 50 years are considered as the minimum period in which heritage can be passed on from one generation to another (Jhearmaneechotechai, 2024). Moreover, this heritage is characterized by contemporary everyday use, challenging the *contemplative* dimension of heritage as well as modern interpretations of authenticity that equate it with an *unaltered* state (Heinich, 2011, p. 123).

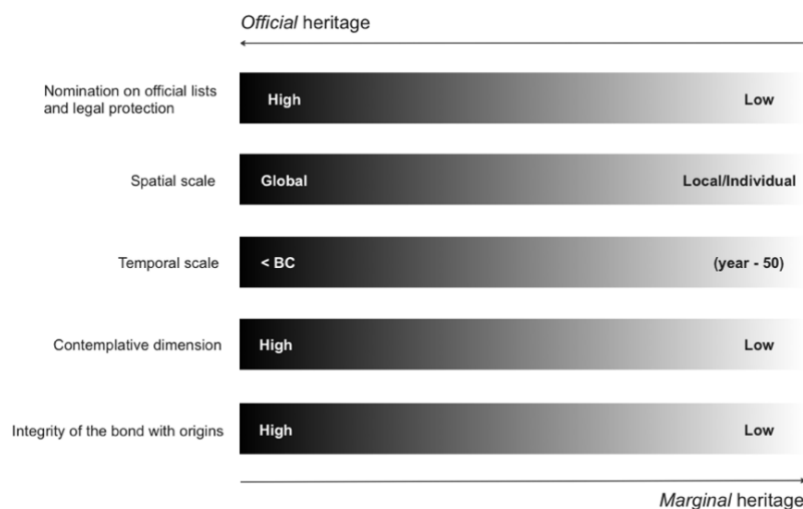


Fig. 7. The Marginal Heritage Model

5. Conclusion

This paper investigated the trend in academic discourse toward proposing new, *unofficial* heritage categories to broaden the definition of heritage and include other cultural goods. After constructing our database of 46 papers, we examined how each heritage category was defined and valued by authors. Our systematic literature review (SLR) identified ambiguity in the usage of these categories, often used interchangeably. These categories span a wide range of disciplines and encompass diverse objects, though some typologies resulted more prevalent than others. Additionally, our analysis of definitions and value terminology reveals that these categories share key features that challenge foundational principles of official heritage discourse: the predominance of national narratives and the correlation between authenticity and integrity.

Building on the theoretical outcomes of our analysis, we proposed "marginal heritage" as a term to represent, encompass, and legitimize these overlooked heritage categories. Our study implies a need to broaden the scope of what is considered cultural heritage, aligning with recent discussions that highlight the lack of "an account of temporality and change" (Harrison & Sterling, 2022, p. 99). The *Marginal Heritage Model* serves as an initial attempt to organize the discussion around these overlooked categories and provide a tool to assess marginal heritage across different contexts. Hence, this model aims to transition the discourse from the academic to the institutional sphere, challenging some conceptual foundations of heritage management.

However, since our research is limited to academic sources in English language, the derived Marginal Heritage Model does not claim to be final and it can be located in the first step of the *Vernacular Value Model*, namely the assessment of what are defined as "simple values" by outsiders. Hence, future research must move from evident to less defined and *unspoken* values "based on the congruence of the form, the process and the practice in a particular setting" (Olukoya, 2021, p. 12). In this regard, a focus on the management of this marginal heritage would not only test the proposed model, but also to provide further knowledge to define its management practices.

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