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Built Heritage

REVIEW ARTICLE

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Diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management: a systematic literature review

Yan Zhou[1*], Lidwine Spoormans[1] and Ana Pereira Roders[1]

Abstract

Community participation in heritage management is increasing. Actively participating communities, groups, and individuals can help identify and protect values and attributes that convey these values and guide sustainable management. However, how can diasporic communities participate in built heritage management? In addition to existing studies on community participation in built heritage management, this systematic literature review draws from 106 scholarly articles and distils how diasporic communities participate in built heritage management. The results categorise four relationships between diasporic communities and built heritage, from the conservation of built heritage, the reconstruction and design of diasporic spaces and places, and the use of built environments as venues, to the representation and interpretation of built environments. The five categories of research trends summarised in this study represent multidisciplinary research interests, including the analysis of well-implemented heritage management strategies, reflections on challenges in managing participatory heritage practices, studies on creating community-centred heritage, the design of participatory methods and tools, and surveys on future-oriented heritage preferences. Strategies and challenges related to twenty factors of participation are identified through SWOT analysis, revealing strengths (heritage initiatives, participation, and sense of identity), weaknesses (regulation, authorised heritage discourse, and resources), opportunities (participation, sense of identity, and resources), and threats (stakeholders' interests/relationships, authorised heritage discourse, and resources), followed by a discussion of cross-domain factors and interconnectedness. The findings can be considered, referenced, and adapted for future participatory built heritage management that engages diasporic communities. This study also discusses current research limitations and recommendations.

Keywords Systematic literature review, Diasporic communities, Built heritage, Participatory practices, SWOT analysis

1 Introduction

Over the past two decades, active participation has enabled different communities, groups, and individuals to identify heritage values and the attributes that convey these values and guide sustainable management while protecting these values (Veldpaus et al. 2013). International doctrinal documents have advocated the increase in participatory practices in heritage management[1] as one of the core aspects for celebrating cultural diversity, building consensus, and balancing heritage conservation and urban development (UNESCO 2003, 2005, 2011; COE 2005; Australia ICOMOS 2013). The

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[1] Participatory heritage management was advocated in various international doctrines such as UNESCO (2011) and UNESCO (2021) to reach consensus in heritage planning and policy-making. A wide range of stakeholders are encouraged to be involved in various steps of heritage management through a process of consultation, e.g., the identification of heritage values, the development of conservation strategies, and the execution of management actions, monitoring, evaluation and feedback (Landorf 2009; Veldpaus 2015; Li et al. 2020).

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2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions emphasises that participation in cultural development is a right for communities, including minorities and indigenous peoples (UNESCO 2005). The 2005 Faro Convention encouraged members of society to define and manage cultural heritage as a 'heritage community' (COE 2005). The ICCROM 'living heritage' approach emphasises the people-centred process for maintaining the continuity of functions, community connections, cultural expressions, and traditional management knowledge systems (Wijesuriya 2015). As with every goal, there is a fear of potential 'participation washing', which seems to promote participation in heritage management, while in practice, it remains closed and controlled (Carvalho and Santini 2019, 177; Sloane et al. 2022, 1). A growing body of academic work is building theories to measure and assess the effectiveness of participation practices in heritage management and their impacts (Landorf 2009; Rosetti et al. 2022a, b).

International migration, diasporas, and their heritages have become more visible in academic research. The concept of 'diaspora' refers to communities with shared characteristics, such as dispersion, homeland orientation, and social boundary maintenance. These individuals and groups choose to form their identities and belongings as diaspora, proactively maintain connections with their homelands, and undertake the burdens involved in a diasporic existence (Gabriel 2003; Brubaker 2005; Cohen 2008; Bauböck and Faist 2010). The concept 'diasporic heritage'[2] describes heritage created and maintained by diasporic communities (Reed 2015; Dellios and Henrich 2020).

This study explores the intersection of 'participation' and 'diasporic communities' in built heritage management. As shown in studies of heritage management, urban planning, tourism management, and development governance, diasporic community participation has become crucial but remains far from mainstream. Instead of considering 'local communities' in general, research reassessing diasporic communities' participation continues to question the assumption of homogeneity and consensus of the mainstream community, which oversimplifies the 'others' in current heritage policies (Reed 2015; Dellios and Henrich 2020).

However, despite a growing interest in analysing diasporic communities' participation in the management of different heritage categories, e.g., diasporic festivals (Nikielska-Sekula 2019; Toji 2023) and diasporic art (Murugan et al. 2021), attention to diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management, in both places of origin and destination, is somehow more unnoticed than intangible heritage. Within the great diversity of heritage categories, ranging from tangible to intangible, natural to cultural, movable and immovable, built heritage concerns all aspects of the constructed environment of cultural significance (Martins et al. 2017; Sektani et al. 2022). In addition to changes in diasporic communities' practices, expressions and transmissions due to the integration and assimilation mentioned in studies of intangible heritage participation (Migone 2020; Giglitto et al. 2022), diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management is constrained by traditional nation-bound and material-based heritage mindsets, which rarely receive the same protection concerns as official heritage properties (Byrne 2016; Dellios and Henrich 2020). This challenge has triggered rich discussions, particularly related to diasporic ethnic minorities, on the shift from the expert-based paradigm of heritage management to diverse community initiatives and cocreation, challenging the authorised heritage discourses that privilege heritage narratives by conventions, charters and experts (Smith 2006; Dellios and Henrich 2020; Byrne 2023).

Involving diasporic communities in their built heritage management can help strengthen the sense of belonging, maintain intangible connections within diasporic communities, and protect significant places that can be shared with broader society (Dellios and Henrich 2020; Bonnerjee 2023). Distilling the experience of current participatory built heritage management, emphasising the strategies and challenges encountered by diasporic communities as stakeholders, can help prevent biased authority-led decision-making and recurring mistakes in practice, strengthening social justice and inclusion. No studies comprehensively summarise and compare how diasporic communities participate in managing built heritage; thus, this study aims to bridge this knowledge gap through a systematic literature review.

This study reveals the current research trends of diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management and discusses the state-of-the-art factors (strategies and challenges) through SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). While diasporic heritage practices are dynamic and pluralistic rather than linear, this study does not discuss the evolution of diasporic heritage discourses or power dynamics. Instead, it applies the lens of diasporic heritage to review research trends and management strategies that tackle shared challenges. Such a standpoint aligns with the argument of Brubaker (2005) that the understanding of the diaspora has moved beyond fixed nation-states or ethnic entities towards that of an idiom, stance,

[2] Some literature also used the expression 'migrant/migration/migrating heritage' to describe such heritage (Byrne 2016; Nikielska-Sekula 2019; Dellios and Henrich 2020; Byrne 2023).

and claim, a way of formulating identities and loyalties of a population. This perspective centres on diasporic practices and shared struggles as a way of defining communities. The term 'diasporic community' used in this study refers to all the subjects of diasporic heritage practices, including but not limited to expatriates, exiles, political refugees, immigrants, ethnic minorities, and communities with a migration background across generations (Reed 2015; Dellios and Henrich 2020).

2 Methodology

2.1 Systematic literature review process

This study follows the steps of a systematic literature review to search, screen, analyse, and summarise the literature (Boland et al. 2017) (see the PRISMA diagram in Fig. 1). Two databases, Web of Science (WoS) and Scopus, were used as data sources. Three search-term groups—'*diasporic communities*', '*heritage*', and '*participatory management*'—were used in the search (Fig. 1). The retrieved publications (WoS = 1392 and Scopus = 1853) were academic articles and book chapters. The screening process excluded unrelated topics, non-English publications, duplications, and unavailable publications. A further exclusion process uses the SPIDER framework as a criterion to select the most relevant publications (Cooke et al. 2012). Ultimately, 106 articles referencing built heritage that addressing tangible and intangible attributes were selected as case studies for in-depth analysis.

A systematic literature review is a reproducible process that provides an overview and reveals trends in the academic literature across disciplines and beyond personal networks. It does not rely on specific cases but rather on groups of evidence (Brignardello-Petersen et al. 2025), while trends can be illustrated through examples found in the literature within their respective contexts.

2.2 Review focus themes

The analysis process was divided into two steps. First, the papers were read and analysed through an inductive thematic postcoding process (Popay et al. 2006), where the relationships between diasporic communities and built heritage, the research methods, and topics of research interest were identified and categorised. Second, a classification process following the SWOT framework of analysis was conducted to identify and compare the main influencing factors (strategies and challenges), which led to different participation outcomes according to the researchers' assessment. Originating from business planning, SWOT analysis is a qualitative method used to classify and cluster factors into four main groups: positive and internal (strengths); negative and internal (weaknesses); positive and external (opportunities); and negative and external (threats) (Benzaghta et al. 2021). The definition of each domain varies across different research topics. For example, SWOT can also identify present/future strategies,[3] where strengths and weaknesses refer to factors that safeguard and impede current management, respectively, and opportunities and threats refer to favourable factors that could benefit future operations and unfavourable factors that could cause harm, respectively (Puyt et al. 2023). SWOT analysis has also been widely used in systematic literature reviews (Paes et al. 2019; Bonfante et al. 2021; Kenneson et al. 2023) and assessments of cultural heritage management, such as reviewing the operations of the 'historic urban landscape' approach (Veldpaus 2015; Rosetti et al. 2022) and assessing the collaborative model of digital participation (Psomadaki et al. 2019).

For this systematic literature review, the SWOT framework of analysis was translated into four main groups: strengths as factors fostering the participation of diasporic communities, weaknesses as current challenges impeding their participation, opportunities as potential factors facilitating participation, and threats as foreseeable obstacles. A factor is a concept mentioned in the literature with positive/negative effects (Ikiz Kaya et al. 2021). As is common in content analysis and precoding, whenever a specific action/condition (executed by a particular stakeholder) and impact were mentioned, a factor and a domain of SWOT were manually assigned to the sentence(s). The precoding of factors followed the 25 international factors identified in a previous study of mayors' perceptions of participatory heritage management in world heritage cities (Rosetti, et al., 2022). The international scope facilitated cross-context comparisons. Given the need for authority recognition and underrepresentation compared with majority priorities (Giglitto et al. 2022), applying this list of factors deduced from decision-makers' perceptions to diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management also helps address the overlapping concerns perceived by authorities and diasporic communities. However, adaptations were made by merging factors with similar meanings,[4] removing nonmentioned factors,[5] and introducing newly referenced factors in diasporic heritage case studies.[6] The resulting 20 factors were therefore tailored while serving as a heuristic guide rather than a

[3] SWOT also has another name; the 'SOFT approach' (S-satisfactory, O-opportunities, F-faults, T-threats. S and W belong to the domain of 'present' factors while 'O' and 'T' belong to the domain of 'future' factors (Puyt et al. 2023).

[4] e.g., 'conservation' and 'preservation', 'participation' and 'community engagement'.

[5] e.g., 'schools outreach' and 'natural disasters'.

[6] e.g., 'authorised heritage discourse' and 'propaganda'.

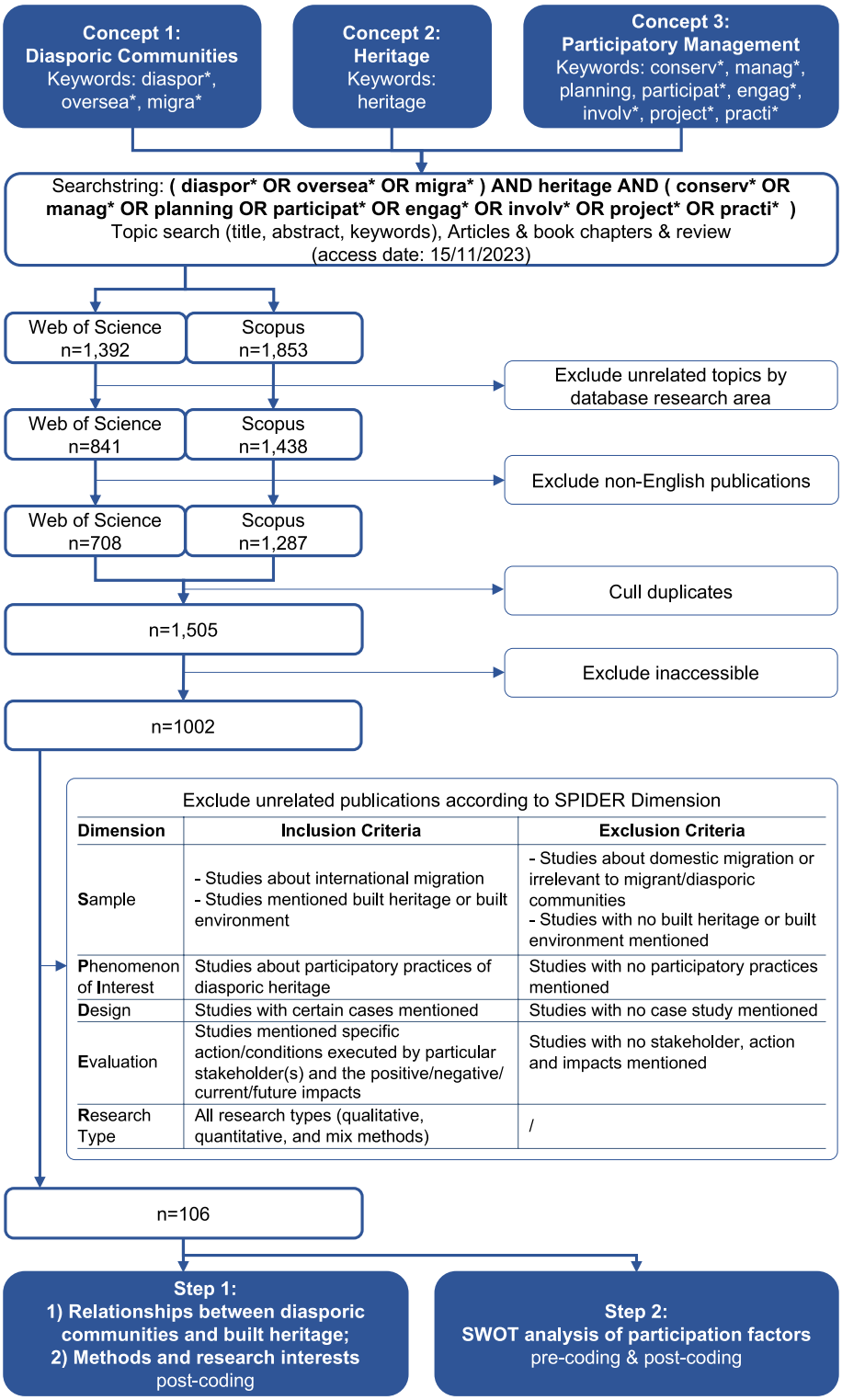


Fig. 1 PRISMA diagram, detailing the number of eligible records and inclusion/exclusion criteria in each step (Source: the author)

definitive framework. Repetitive factor–SWOT combinations executed by the same stakeholder sector in each case were merged into one occurrence. All factor–SWOT occurrences were analysed quantitatively and ranked to facilitate their comparison and a greater understanding of their interrelations (Rosetti et al. 2022).

3 Results

3.1 Relationships between diasporic communities and built heritage

Built heritage is researched by most of the reviewed articles, with built properties as research sites. Moreover, built heritage is referenced by more than 20% of the 106 articles, with themes related to intangible or movable heritage. Links between built heritage and other heritage categories and interrelations between tangible and intangible attributes have arguably been indispensable (Tomalin and Starkey 2017; Shircliff 2020; Colomer 2022; Trzeszczynska et al. 2023; Umejei 2023). Diasporic communities' heritage practices in, or for, built heritage management manifest in the diverse relationships between the communities and built heritage. These relationships can be understood as the processes and roles through which diasporic communities establish, maintain, and reinterpret their connections with the built environment, encompassing the intervention and use of physical spaces and the continuation of intangible heritage practices in the built environment. Four categories were identified (Fig. 2).

(1) the conservation of built heritage, ranging from the conservation of monuments and statues (Boswell 2011; Hammami 2016), buildings and interiors (Barenboim 2018; Li 2018; Lauria 2022), and districts and cities (Munawar and Symonds 2022; Desille 2023), to archaeological remains (Cicalo 2015; Reid 2022);
(2) the reconstruction and design of diasporic spaces and places (Choi 2020; Chen and Yang 2022; Chen and Chen 2023), even though the built attributes have not yet been recognised as 'heritage';
(3) using built environments as venues to safeguard intangible heritage, such as festivals and commemorations (Lobo 2020; Colomer 2022); and
(4) the representation and interpretation of built environments, e.g., through various art forms (De Bock 2020; Terracciano 2020).

3.2 Methods and research interests

The retrieved articles covered various disciplines, such as anthropology, architecture, heritage studies, and computational urban management. Most structured academic papers use traditional methods to collect data (e.g., archival/textual data, field/observational research, survey/interview/discussion) and qualitative methods for analysis (e.g., content analysis). Digital data (e.g., social media posts and comments) and spatial analysis (e.g., heritage mapping) have been used in recent studies (Potter et al. 2023; Prawitasari and Setiadi 2023). Practical project processes have been documented in some narrative academic papers (Howell 2020).

The articles can also be categorised into five research interests (Fig. 2).

(1) Analysis of well-implemented heritage management strategies. Successful heritage management strategies in conservation projects involving actions from multiple stakeholders were analysed to derive key lessons, for example, from the interactions between public and private stakeholders (Arokiasamy 2012; Törnquist-Plewa and Pietraszewski 2023).
(2) Reflections on challenges in managing participatory heritage practices. Conservation projects that exposed conflicts between official strategies and grassroots interests (Corsale and Krakover 2019; McClelland 2022) were discussed. Specific strategies, such as the impacts of branding (Klingmann 2022; Desille 2023), commercialisation (Corsale and Krakover 2019; Chiang 2021), and gentrification (Henderson 2008; Guan 2020), have been examined.
(3) Studies on creating community-centred heritage. Drawing from the creation, cocreation and interpretation of heritage by diasporic communities, specific attention has been given to diverse bottom-up practices by diasporic communities in different contexts, recognising community knowledge (e.g. Barenboim 2018; Anteby-Yemini 2019; Kenyatta 2023) and strategies opposing or adapting official frameworks (Xie 2010; Dellios 2015a). The topics covered multiple diasporic contexts, such as the religious diaspora (Rhodes 2016), diasporic political activists (Cicalo 2015), returned diasporic communities (Kordel and Lutsch 2018), and diasporic subgroups (Trzeszczynska et al. 2023).
(4) Design of participatory methods and tools for heritage management. To provide innovative insights, the feasibility and limitations of professional- or organisation-led participatory experiments were recorded. Toolkits using digital platforms (Howell 2020; Nisi et al. 2023), experimental artistic projects (Wakefield 2017; Terracciano 2020), and new participation workflows (Gunella and Rodrigo 2022; Ortiz et al. 2023) have been developed and tested.
(5) Surveys on future-oriented heritage preferences. Attitudes were gathered from stakeholders to

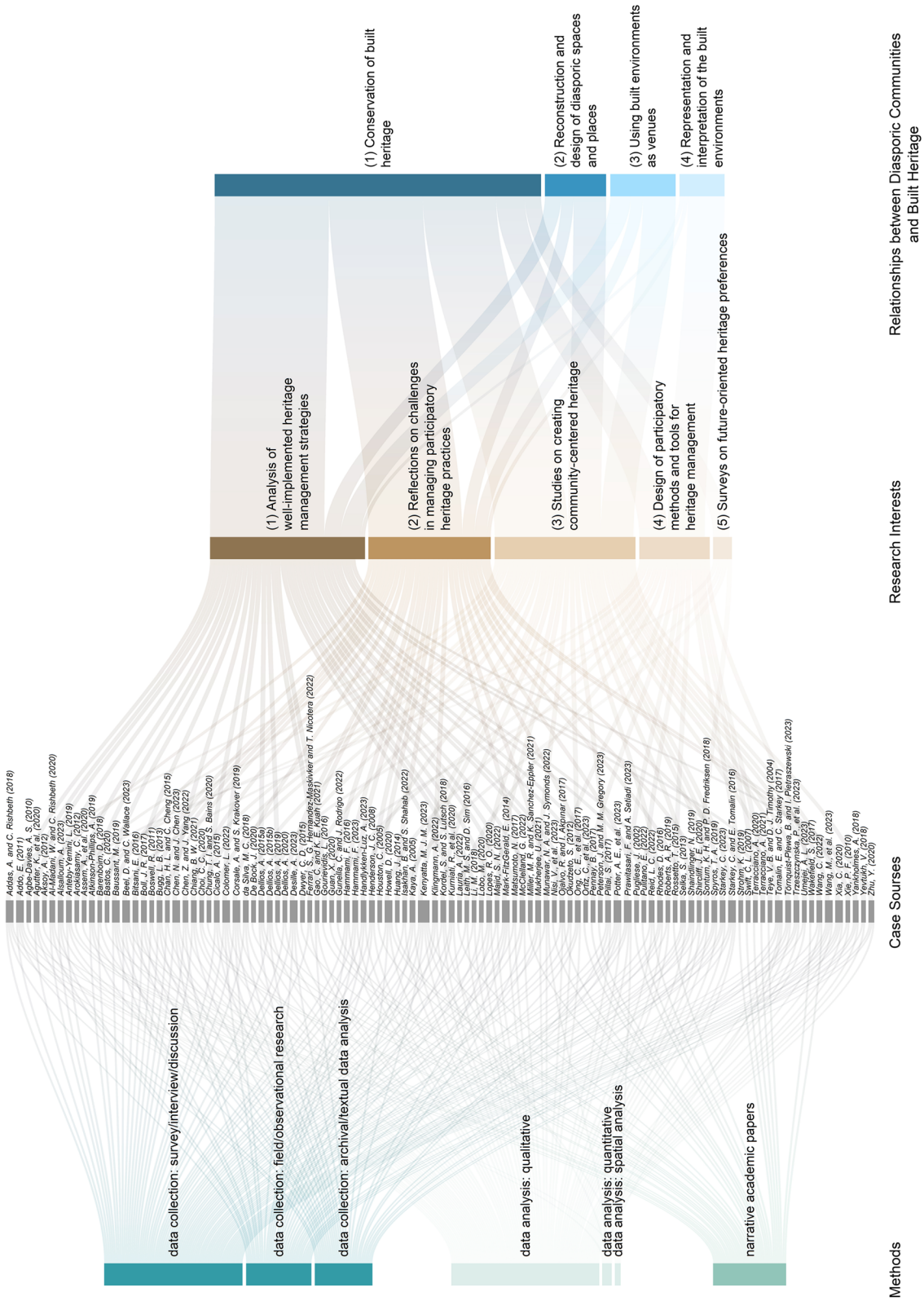


Fig. 2 Research trends (research methods, case sources, research interests, and relationships between diasporic communities and built heritage) summarised from the articles (Source: the author)

understand the factors related to willingness to participate (Isakhan and Shahab 2022; Alsalloum 2023), perceptions of heritage conservation (Isakhan and Shahab 2022), attitudes towards heritage tourism (Ferrari et al. 2022), and values of heritage attributes (Shircliff 2020).

3.3 Main strategies and challenges of diasporic communities' participation

The factors influencing diasporic communities' participation were addressed in the retrieved scholarly articles. Factors such as *participation* (method, process, degree of participation, and stakeholders involved) (80), *sense of identity* (76), *heritage initiatives* (73), *resources* (68), and *regulation* (66) were discussed in more than half of the articles (Fig. 3a). All 20 factors were discussed positively or negatively (Fig. 3b). However, *heritage initiatives*, *collaboration*, *professional support*, *education*, *communication*, *participation*, *sense of identity*, and *awareness* were mostly positive, both as strengths for those using these factors and as opportunities for those recommending their usage (S/O). In contrast, *gentrification*, *stakeholders' interests/relationships*, *authorised heritage discourse*, and *equality* were referenced mostly negatively (W/T). Factors such as *propaganda*, *resources*, *stakeholders' benefits*, *tourism*, *capacity building*, *regulation* , and *conservation vs. development* were referenced equally positively and negatively.

3.3.1 Strengths

Heritage initiatives (70), *participation* (68), and *sense of identity* (58) are the top three referenced strengths (Fig. 3c). *Heritage initiatives* showcase diasporic communities and their heritage, gaining self-awareness and public awareness. Conservation and heritage listing initiatives help build a sense of attachment, as seen in London's Foguangshan Temple renovation (Starkey 2023) and Rio de Janeiro's Valongo Wharf listing (Cicalo 2015). Other initiatives include festivals (Chen and Yang 2022), commemorations (Colomer 2022), and exhibitions (Handlykken-Luz 2023) in the built environment. In some cases threatened by urban redevelopment schemes, diasporic communities initiate protests to protect their territories, as seen in Singapore's Bukit Brown Cemetery (Huang 2014) and Rio de Janeiro's favelas (Handlykken-Luz 2023). In many countries, governmental initiatives for diasporic communities are launched under multicultural policies (Dellios 2015a; Li 2018), recognising diasporic communities as important city stakeholders, exemplified by the 'Whose Heritage' scheme by the London Mayor's Commission on African and Asian Heritage (Arokiasamy 2012). There are also growing academic initiatives that cooperate with marginalised diasporic communities to document their heritage, as seen in practices in the UK's Cheltenham and Sheffield (Howell 2020; Ortiz et al. 2023).

Diasporic communities can benefit from *participation* with proper tools and processes. Digital tools can help bridge geographical gaps and facilitate onsite-offsite communication. Overseas communities can participate remotely via social media, websites and apps, as seen in the online root-tracing database 'Hebridean Connections' (Beel and Wallace 2023) and the virtual-tour app for Sutherland diasporic communities (Gourievidis 2016). Increasingly, in tools and workflow design, a more customised and respectful process in which partners with diasporic communities are suggested, shifting diasporic communities from participants to coresearchers (Gunella and Rodrigo 2022). For example, marginalised migrants across generations in Barcelona, Paris, and Lisbon were involved in codesigning digital storytelling software with experts, which was highly empowering (Nisi et al. 2023). Additionally, participation can be strengthened by reaching linguistic alignment, such as through the use of native languages and dialects to allow free expression (Alsalloum 2023) and the clarification of personal meanings of official terminology to avoid misunderstandings (Gunella and Rodrigo 2022).

The *sense of identity* is the motivation for diasporic communities' participation. This can be emphasised by the heritage concept of a 'shared migration background'. For example, the city heritage of Trieste, Italy, was described as a shared culture for historical and modern immigrants (Bitsani 2016). A similar approach was used in the post-war conservation of Wrocław, Poland, to develop a new sense of identity and belonging among citizens with mixed immigrant backgrounds (Törnquist-Plewa and Pietraszewski 2023). It is crucial to recognise hidden and nonspeakable identities and involve those willing to share in built heritage management, especially in the case of victims or refugees with traumatic pasts (Pennay 2017). Broader stakeholders who share the same sense of identity with diasporic communities can reinforce diasporic communities' participation. This can be seen in neighbourhood interest groups cooperating with diasporic communities (Pennay 2017; Wang et al. 2023), African Americans participating in the management of Black archaeological sites with different ancestral ties (Agbe-Davies 2010; Reid 2022), and pan-Asian societies supporting Korean diasporic memorials (Matsumoto 2017).

3.3.2 Weaknesses

Regulation (42), *authorised heritage discourse* (37), and *resources* (31) are the top three factors referenced as weaknesses (Fig. 3c). Diasporic minorities, as active makers of a city's legacy, are often excluded from urban

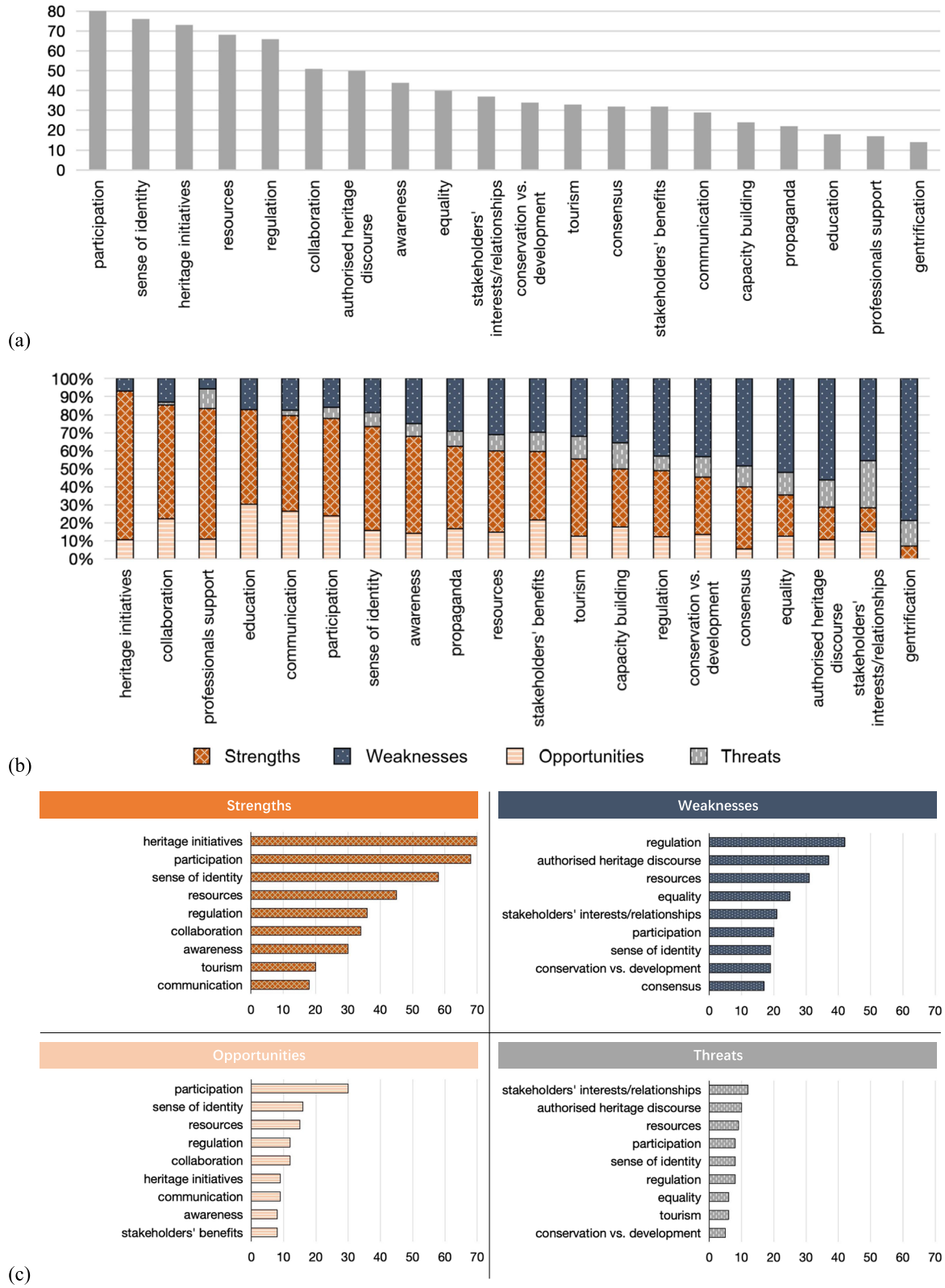


Fig. 3 Overall SWOT and positive/negative comparisons of factors related to diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management (Source: the author)

regulations (Ortiz et al. 2023), especially those without property rights or citizenship (Aksoy 2012; Bugg 2013; Kenyatta 2023). Although more diaspora policies have been released to encourage participatory heritage management, they are often economically or politically driven, as seen in China, Scotland, and Singapore (Chan and Cheng 2015; Leith and Sim 2016; Shircliff 2020; Zhu 2020). Thus, diasporic communities might become merely sponsors of conservation but gain nothing in return. Some national-level policies are difficult to implement in local planning. For example, 15 years after the White Paper 'Building our Cultural Diversity' was released, few Sydney municipalities had come out with explicit planning laws for the places of worship of ethnic diasporic minorities (Bugg 2013).

The *authorised heritage discourse* on diasporic heritage, shaped by politicians, developers, and experts, has been criticised. International nominations might flatten values, as seen in UNESCO's World Heritage property of 'Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region' in Japan, which overlooked how personal traditions were adapted locally (McClelland 2022). At the national level, the official discourse for diasporic heritage conservation might follow political goals. For example, remittance houses in China were described as manifestations of patriotism from overseas Chinese communities (Xia 2020). In Singapore, Little India and Chinatown were conserved as touristic ethnic enclaves to disseminate the country's patriotic and multicultural brand (Henderson 2008). Heritage discourses can also be controlled by religious or other public institutions, as seen in the exclusion of Sicily's Jewish subgroup in the national discourse by Italian Jewish authorities, the local government, the local Catholic Church, and local tour operators (Corsale and Krakover 2019). Such one-sided discourses might misalign with diasporic individuals' interpretations of their heritage, making them hesitant to participate.

In addition to the lack of space, time, and funding, the shortage of human *resources* is particularly severe in diasporic communities (Arokiasamy 2012; Starkey and Tomalin 2016; Beel and Wallace 2023). If the social connections of diasporic communities are not exploited in a timely and positive manner, with the death of important people, social networks become weaker and less conducive to participatory heritage management (Leith and Sim 2016; McClelland 2022; Wang et al. 2023). Another limitation is the lack, or dissatisfactory status, of built heritage in the places of origin, particularly in forced migration cases. A community's sense of identity and willingness to participate heavily depend on the status of these symbolic attributes (Strohm 2019; Isakhan and Shahab 2022; Starkey 2023).

3.3.3 Opportunities

Regulation (42), *authorised heritage discourse* (37), and *resources* (31) are the top three factors referenced as opportunities (Fig. 3c). Diasporic communities' *participation* in heritage making, interpretation and usage differs across generations (Al-Madani and Rishbeth 2020) and diasporic experiences (Trzeszczynska et al. 2023). For example, young diasporic descendants can offer unique perspectives on diasporic heritage, taking on key roles in heritage transmission and engaging in future practices (Sontum and Fredriksen 2018; Gunella and Rodrigo 2022; Peterson and Gregory 2023). In the participation process, diasporic communities expect greater empowerment in decision-making and implementation to ensure they truly determine the use of their heritage (De Bock 2020) and confirm that their voices are heard (Huang 2014).

It is important to understand the formation and change of diasporic communities' *sense of identity*. The creation of diasporic heritage can be understood as a process of self- and collective negotiation, adaptation and recreation (Chan and Cheng 2015). The 'in-between' identities, distinct from those of home and host societies, should be valued (Sontum and Fredriksen 2018; Anteby-Yemini 2019). Experts can learn how to better engage communities by studying how heritage communities naturally form at the grassroots level (Agbe-Davies 2010). More research is needed to understand the importance of the bottom-up construction of heritage significance through, for example, the sensory experiences and temporal dimensions of everyday life (Xia 2020; Wang et al. 2023).

Another opportunity is to enhance access to heritage-supporting *resources*. For example, promoting and legitimising the creative usage of heritage properties provides public spaces that allow diasporic communities to engage in intangible heritage practices (Al-Madani and Rishbeth 2020). Funding from transnational institutions is encouraged to supplement regional development needs (Chen and Yang 2022). Nongovernmental institutions (Kordel and Lutsch 2018), professionals (Agbe-Davies 2010; Lauria 2022), and local knowledge groups (Lauria 2022) have the potential to maintain social networks, acting as mediators to foster collaboration and communication.

3.3.4 Threats

Stakeholders' interests/relationships (12), *authorised heritage discourse* (10) and *resources* (9) are the top three referenced threats (Fig. 3c). The tensions found in *stakeholders' interests/relationships* can be a threat. Experts and nonexperts might have different views on conservation approaches (Hammami 2016). The same applies to conflicts between diasporic individuals and their group leaders (Bastos 2020; Trzeszczynska et al.

2023). Diasporic communities' distrust of experts might also prevent them from reporting negative experiences (Chung and Bains 2020). Some influential stakeholders might prioritise short-term gains (Hammami 2016; Munawar and Symonds 2022), leading to branding abuse and causing the city's most vulnerable populations, including diasporic communities, to leave their heritage neighbourhoods (Desille 2023).

The *authorised heritage discourse* can threaten individual narratives. Although some countries establish multicultural frameworks, the national narrative is too broad for individuals to align their personal narratives (Dellios 2019). Overemphasis on diasporic communities might also marginalise other invisible indigenous and local communities (Atkinson-Phillips 2019). An ethnic perspective towards diasporic heritage might increase the risk of dichotomising heritage into the categories of 'majority' and 'minority', 'old' and 'new', and 'white' and 'diverse', which may deepen inequality and social division (Swift 2007; Chung and Bains 2020; De Bock 2020).

Losing human *resources* is a concern if community experts are displaced (Munawar and Symonds 2022). The digitalisation of heritage might lead to the loss of control over information and the exclusion of older people from this process (Beel and Wallace 2023).

3.4 Cross-domain factors and interconnectedness

Participation, *resources*, and *regulation* rank high in all four SWOT domains (Fig. 3c). Diasporic communities' *participation* can be a weakness (20) when they are invited only at the last stage (De Bock 2020). Although digital technologies are generally welcomed (e.g. digital storytelling application, social media interviews and data analysis), the side effects of engaging diasporic communities should be considered. For example, the community recruitment that is unable to reach those lacking representation and visibility in public and media, especially when approaching via a single media source, can affect the equality in heritage documentation, as seen in the case of the UK's Cheltenham (Howell 2020). This can be a threat (8) when participation tools targeting diasporic communities risk leaking personal information (Nisi et al. 2023). Owing to the limitations of online platforms, in which content must be succinct, condensed, punchy, and itemised, full expressions might be constrained (Dellios 2015b).

As a strength, participatory diasporic heritage management values human *resources* (45). A common strategy is to use cross-sector roles to enhance communication among stakeholders. For example, diasporic individuals can assume the roles of public activists, such as politicians, policy-makers, or officers (Arokiasamy 2012; Atkinson-Phillips 2019; Reid 2022).

Regulation ranks high among strengths (36): the right to vote in homeland affairs or investment facilitation policies is granted to diasporic communities in some countries with large numbers of emigrants, such as the UK and China (Xie 2010; Leith and Sim 2016; Choi 2020). With increasing national policies released to recognise diasporic heritage and diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management, actions such as official listings of heritage properties (Roberts 2019), approving constructions of monuments (Matsumoto 2017), and incorporating diasporic communities in local participatory planning laws are taken (Wang et al. 2023). Regulation can be an opportunity (12) when it is flexibly adapted to local contexts, as seen in Nan'an, China, where informal religious cult networks could be legitimised within local diaspora policies as engaging tools (Chen and Chen 2023). However, a threat of regulation (8) can be the challenge of generating standard guidelines for all diasporic subgroups (Chen and Yang 2022). The instrumental function of heritage guidelines might fall far short of actually enhancing social belonging (Selka 2013).

Neglecting or overstating factors can have negative impacts. *Awareness* of diasporic heritage is often low, not only among the public (Desille 2023) and professionals (Huang 2014) but also within the diasporic communities (Alsalloum 2023). A traditional material-focused mindset in *conservation/development* might overlook social values, particularly when the historic and aesthetic values of built heritage conflict with contemporary use by diasporic communities. Such tensions were evident in many cases: the conflicts between Muslim diasporic elites and grassroots Muslims on the necessity of restoring older Catholic elements in a Mosque in Palestine's Nablus (Hammami 2016), the restoration of Turkey's Ahrida Synagogue according to the Turkish style but normalising values from the diasporic Jewish community (Ojalvo and Akpınar 2017), and the strict restoration regulations for the Victorian style hindering a building's reuse as a Buddhist temple in London (Starkey and Tomalin 2016).

Conversely, *heritage initiatives* might be commercialised by capital forces in tourism and economic planning, weakening diasporic communities' benefits and leading to gentrification (Aksoy 2012). *Overgentrification* might further pressure diasporic communities, which usually lack property rights and affordability compared with locals (Henderson 2008; Ong et al. 2017).

Notably, *authorised heritage discourse* is not always a weakness in diasporic communities. In some cases, authorised heritage discourses provide frameworks (e.g., language expressions in describing heritage,

official commemorations identified by the authority) for diasporic communities to interact, communicate, and negotiate (Dellios 2015b). Diasporic communities and other communities would broadly welcome the authorised discourse if diasporic heritage was absorbed as complementary to or consistent with the original local narrative (De Bock 2020; Desille 2023).

It can also be confirmed that factors influencing diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management are not independent but rather interconnected. First, a factor can trigger chain-like or circular effects in participatory heritage practices (Rosetti et al. 2022), such as *heritage initiatives* for raising awareness (Huang 2014; Bastos 2020; Munawar and Symonds 2022; Alsalloum 2023), building social networks as a resource (Corsale and Krakover 2019; Strohm 2019; Howell 2020), increasing public awareness (Swift 2007; Leith and Sim 2016), building a sense of identity (Shircliff 2020), and fostering communication (Arokiasamy 2012; Cicalo 2015) and education (Bitsani 2016). Second, one factor's good performance often relies on the interaction of several factors. Public *awareness* can be increased through collaboration (Roberts 2019; Ortiz et al. 2023), conservation/development (Choi 2020; Munawar and Symonds 2022), and education (Li 2018). Good regulations (Xia 2020), adequate resources (Rhodes 2016), and benefits for diasporic communities (Colomer 2022) can facilitate *heritage initiatives*. Third, the strength of some factors can also buffer the impact of weaknesses. For example, *heritage initiatives* provide opportunities for discussions between authorities and diasporic communities, allowing negotiation and adaptation to the authorised heritage discourse (Boswell 2011).

4 Discussion and conclusion

This literature review focuses on diasporic communities and how their participation in built heritage management helps distinguish and compare strategies in existing participatory built heritage practices from a scholarly perspective. Drawing from 106 papers with five trends of interest, participation by diasporic communities in built heritage management shares four relationships with built heritage and 20 common factors as either strategies or challenges. Although participation is deeply contextual in different political, cultural, economic, and geographical processes, the findings of this study can be considered, referenced and adapted by future participatory built heritage management engaging diasporic communities.

First, the four relationships between diasporic communities and built heritage represent the ways identified in current research that diasporic communities manage their connections with built heritage. Despite a dominant focus on conserving existing tangible aspects of built heritage, attention has also been given to the diverse ways of creating new tangible attributes in built environments and using and interpreting spaces and places where intangible attributes can be linked and new values created. However, studies that only discuss one specific relationship might ignore the continuity and overlapping of cultural significance between the dynamic relationships that change through diasporic experiences and over time (Wang et al. 2023), such as those between conservation and reconstruction (Colomer 2022) and those between conservation and use (Starkey 2023).

Second, the identified research trends provide insights into potential research directions regarding methods and focuses. On the one hand, current research methods are mainly qualitative and involve new data sources and quantitative analysis. On the other hand, although critical heritage studies have recognised that the interrelations between communities, built and nonbuilt heritage, and national and transnational values can be understood via multiagency analysis (Harrison 2013; Byrne 2016), most reviewed articles mentioned only limited stakeholders and single cases; thus, the results might vary from disciplinary, political, and institutional research settings. A research gap remains in assessing all public and private stakeholders' actions that support, implement, or impede diasporic communities' participation in built heritage management and multisite comparisons within a measurable framework (Chan and Cheng 2015; Reed 2015; Shircliff 2020). Furthermore, relatively few studies address the trends of the 'design of participatory methods and tools for heritage management' and 'surveys on future-oriented heritage preferences', which have the potential to increase professional support and build capacity for diasporic communities.

Third, this study discusses the strategies and challenges of diasporic communities' participation noted in research, such as strengths (heritage initiatives, participation, and sense of identity), weaknesses (regulation, authorised heritage discourse, and resources), opportunities (participation, sense of identity, and resources), and threats (stakeholders' interests/relationships, authorised heritage discourse, and resources), followed by a discussion of cross-domain factors and interconnectedness. Compared with the factors of local majority participation (Rasoolimanesh et al. 2017; Li et al. 2020; Rosetti et al. 2022; Foroughi et al. 2023) and intangible diasporic heritage management (Giglitto et al. 2022), this study emphasises strategies that strengthen the sense of identity and benefits of heritage initiatives. Common challenges are in participation methods and processes tailored for the communities, incorporating diasporic heritage management in official heritage policies, and negotiating with authorised

heritage discourses. Some challenges also hinder the whole society benefiting when diasporic communities are selected as the 'core community' (e.g. Swift 2007; Hammami 2016) or are viewed as groups sharing a common heritage with the broader society (e.g. Arokiasamy 2012; Sontum and Fredriksen 2018). Identifying diaspora identity changes and relationships with broader heritage stakeholders can help build mutual understanding and develop strategies that bridge the distinction between mainstream and diasporic community participation (Agbe-Davies 2010; Trzeszczynska et al. 2023).

Therefore, future research can continue to address the questions above. The main goal of this systematic literature review is to highlight common trends and noteworthy aspects, which has been achieved owing to the combined use of systematic literature review and SWOT analysis in heritage studies, enabling comparisons between positive and negative factors and between ambitions and results across cultural and disciplinary contexts. This study confirms that it is impossible to address all the diverse participatory practices in built heritage management, so future research and practices can further explore and compare diasporic communities' participation in different contexts by in-depth, case-by-case analysis. Additionally, although not elaborated in this study, it is worth reviewing the correlations between the review focus themes in this study to identify other research gaps and participation mechanisms, such as exploring specific gaps of the research interests and the strategies/challenges of participation regarding diasporic communities' different relationships with built heritage, and the co-occurrences between factors.

Abbreviations

COE	Council of Europe
ICCROM	International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property
ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

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Yan Zhou: Designed Paper structure, performed analysis and wrote the paper. Lidwine Spoormans: Revised paper. Ana Pereira Roders: Revised paper. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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Data availability

The publication sources for review are included in the supplementary information file. The qualitative coding datasets generated in the current study will be published through 4TU repository along with this paper. Data are also available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

Not applicable, as this study did not involve human participants or require ethics approval.

Consent for publication

Not applicable, as no identifiable personal data is included in this study.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no competing interests. Ana Pereira Roders is an Editorial Board member of *Built Heritage*.

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