

# **Ethnography of intangible heritage: a theoretical and methodological route based on critical discourse analysis\***

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## **ABSTRACT**

This article explores the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) merged with Ethnography as a theoretical and methodological approach to studying power relations and ideology in social interactions focused on intangible cultural heritage. We examine the evolution of the cultural heritage concept to acknowledge non-Western cultures and practices. The UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is analyzed, as it marks a shift towards respecting and preserving cultural practices.

**KEY WORDS:** Intangible Heritage, Ethnography, Critical Discourse Analysis, Theory and Methods.

## **ETNOGRAFÍA DEL PATRIMONIO INTANGIBLE: UNA RUTA TEÓRICA Y METODOLÓGICA BASADA EN EL ANÁLISIS CRÍTICO DEL DISCURSO**

## **RESUMEN**

Este artículo explora el uso del Análisis Crítico del Discurso (ACD) fusionado con la Etnografía como enfoque teórico-metodológico para estudiar relaciones de poder e ideología en las interacciones sociales centradas en el patrimonio cultural intangible. Examinamos la evolución del concepto de patrimonio cultural para reconocer las culturas y prácticas no occidentales. Se analiza la Convención de UNESCO para la Salvaguardia del Patrimonio Cultural Inmaterial, que marca un cambio hacia el respeto y preservación de las prácticas culturales.

**PALABRAS Clave:** Patrimonio inmaterial, etnografía, análisis crítico del discurso, teoría y métodos. history

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## 1. EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

As a foreword for this article, it's need it to explain our interest in developing a theoretical and methodological framework for analyzing some intangible cultural manifestations and its heritagization process as a part of the Cultural Landscape of La Serena (Badajoz, Spain) where we are working in order to write a PhD dissertation based on ethnography. This the route we are proposing to do it.

The concept of cultural heritage has evolved since the second half of the 20th century, with Western societies establishing their own conceptions of what constitutes cultural or natural heritage. In 1972, the World Heritage Convention (WHC) began defining heritage as something "universal" and shared by all humanity, but this perspective has been criticized for its ethnocentrism and reductionism, as it tends to focus on architectural monuments or archaeological sites with tourist potential. This view, known as "monumentalism," was challenged in the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage, where for the first time, the world recognized the Western-centric view of heritage and began to include cultural practices and manifestations. However, this progress was mainly discursive, and the world's non-Western cultures played a crucial role in its development.

The ICHC marked a shift in focus towards respect for human rights, a new terminology, and a concern for how to manage and safeguard the living cultural practices without trivializing or fossilizing them. Some of the harmful effects of heritagization include the trivialization of cultural heritage through uncontrolled practices or projects that tend to focus on creating theme parks or tourist attractions. The heritage industry has emerged as the distribution of goods and packages that must be sold to large audiences as experiences loaded with technological innovations that allow for greater interaction with the audience. This has led

to the Disneyfication of heritage, where people are assigned roles as actors in the presentation of heritage (Smith, L., 2006, pp. 195).

The Western perspective of heritage is known as the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD), which sees heritage as a material, monumental, aesthetically valuable, and "universal" good. This discourse has been criticized for imposing a particular view of conservation and preservation that is based mainly on the fields of architecture and archaeology. The evolution of the concept of cultural heritage has been influenced by the recognition of non-Western cultures and their practices, as well as the need to safeguard and manage living cultural practices.

### **1.1. Tangible is intangible and cultural by definition**

As pointed out by Laurajane Smith and Natsuko Akagawa (2009) in their introduction to the now-celebrated book *Intangible Heritage*, heritage is only heritage when recognized according to a particular framework of cultural and social values. In this sense, cultural heritage is "real" thanks to the values that people give it. In this way, every manifestation, whether material or immaterial, is only understood through ideas that are intangible. What generates this truth is an opposition between the definitions of heritage in each culture which, on many occasions, may not correspond, to a greater or lesser extent, to the definitions of heritage coming from institutions like UNESCO and their local institutional expressions.

A definition of what heritage is must necessarily go through the definition of what culture is, and this, in turn, must be defined from what Claude Lévi-Strauss (1991) called symbolic systems. In this sense, culture is a set of symbolic systems that are responsible for giving meaning to the basic operating norms of human groups (language, marriage rules, economy, religion, science, art, among others). In the process of giving meaning, they also organize material reality. The interaction of these symbolic systems constitutes the material and immaterial existence of the

cultural (Lévi-Strauss, 1991, p. 20). In this sense, an event as trivial as fishing is related to a way of reproducing an activity to seek sustenance for a community, but at the same time, it constitutes a unique way of activity with its own cultural nuances if we take into account the place where we go fishing, the materials we use, the time of year we do it, and even the people who can access such a socio-productive activity. Some authors point out the transcendence of the constitutive elements of intangible heritage compared to the constitutive elements of individuals, speaking in biological terms. In this sense, intangible culture is passed down from one generation to another, replicating the genetic transmission of humans (Skounti, 2009, pp. 77). In her book *The Uses of Heritage* (2006), archaeologist Laurajane Smith presents an example of how an activity such as fishing among the Waanyi indigenous women of New Zealand manifested itself as an activity with multiple layers that, in addition to being a way of seeking food or recreation, constitutes a way in which women recreate their own intimate space where they recreate cultural memory, share experiences, establish family relationships, transmit intergenerational knowledge, and define family strategies for the future. So, when Smith went to do fieldwork that was supposed to be purely archaeological (visit a site, carry out a survey, write a technical report, etc.), she came across a thick cultural and social web, to use Clifford Geertz's term, that completely redefined her work and forced her to observe the social and cultural space and symbolic systems that were interacting and that went beyond the materiality of an archaeological site (cf. Smith, 2006). In this sense, heritage is not only about the past or material things, but also about social processes, communication, giving meaning to things in the present, it is an act of cultural semiosis. The very fact of telling a story about a site and the events that happened there to young people implies the transmission of knowledge and instructions about what to do with that knowledge in the future. That transmitted information is normally attached to a specific

location in reality and from this process, we can say that that site, with a specific real location, is part of the heritage of a culture. All the information and knowledge that is transmitted within a culture is linked to the experiences and emotions of the people involved.

## **1.2. Alternatives to the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD)**

The Authorized Discourse on Heritage (ADH) is a dominant discourse that naturalizes certain presuppositions about heritage and situates it as a series of immutable, aesthetic objects, things or places. This discourse is maintained by a cultural elite with universal aspirations and institutional practices that shape the way we think, write, and talk about heritage. However, there are alternative positions to this hegemonic discourse, such as Laurajane Smith's definition of heritage as a discourse framed by the negotiation and regulation of social meanings and practices associated with the creation and recreation of identity. This new approach has emerged in part due to the increasing voices of indigenous people and non-Western countries who emphasize the intangibility of heritage and its non-tie to immutable ideas of monumentality. This interdisciplinary movement redefines heritage as something that concerns not only architects, archaeologists, and museum curators but also various other disciplines. However, the AHD's power is performative and recalls what George Balandier (1992) says about the power of discourse in his book, "The Power in Scenes: From the Representation of Power to the Power of Representation." The ADH established and legitimized a discursive reality through its ability to appropriate certain information and monopolize knowledge, which allowed it to manage the dominion of what could be considered heritage. This was achieved through the UNESCO's supranational stage, where political lobbies made their necessary moves to strengthen their self-referential discourse and hegemony. The AHD's validation

of certain expertise has led to the subalternization of alternative discourses, which have been relegated to the unofficial registry.

These lines are a theoretical and methodological reflection on the problem of heritage and its relationship with cultural practices and discourses. We suggest that analyzing the constitutive structure of the authorized heritage discourse (AHD) contributes to the consolidation of a theoretical, epistemological, and methodological framework for approaching the issue of heritage. This framework empowers discourses that prioritize the cultural, social, and psychological experiences of people over historical interests. By examining the discourses at play, it is possible to see how language is used to construct a concrete reality and contrast opposing discourses. There are two types of discourse operating in this context: the authorized discourse on heritage (AHD), which is dominant in Western societies, and a series of emerging discourses from non-Western and indigenous cultural traditions. Both types of discourse are instrumentalized in practices and guide how to produce ideas, concepts, and practices around heritage. An analysis of discourse is a powerful tool for social scientists to approach social practices surrounding heritage. By highlighting the objective of describing how different groups think, act, and relate to physical and social space, we argue that it is possible to trace what happens in these contexts and how they politicize heritage, which has real effects on people's lives, either reinforcing or subverting dominant discourses. AHD discourse has its roots in the nationalism and liberal modernity of the 19th century in Western societies, with a strong focus on material and monumental heritage and a particular aesthetic and identity. This is still a dominant discourse that exists and that disciplines such as architecture and archaeology (or a certain type of archaeology) emerged as representatives of it.

### **1.3. Heritage processes as cultural semiosis**

Deciding on one's own identity is both establishing a

sense of community emotionally and politically, and an act of taking power over history and the memories linked to it. This is why indigenous initiatives are a response to what they consider a vice of the Western world, especially in the field of knowledge production about their world. Thus, the criticism mainly falls on those figures who have been involved in this type of knowledge production, such as historians, archaeologists, museum curators, public officials, and even anthropologists, who have historically been interested in getting to know the "other" from outside the Western world.

As a result, the criticism has been transferred to the international stage, where the discussion revolves around heritage, or the scope of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. Indigenous groups demand a new, culturally relevant conceptualization of heritage. Accordingly, a definition that reflects this demand would establish heritage as a cultural process that recreates acts of memory to give meaning and understand its connection to the present. Sites and places are mediators of this recreation of memory and contain its significance.

Thus, according to Smith (2006), material things should be considered as tools that facilitate these processes of meaning-making, but they are not necessarily vital for these processes to occur (Smith, 2006, pp. 44). This is why heritage is not a site or an artifact in itself, but the act of transmitting cultural knowledge in specific contexts and spaces. Heritage denotes what is valuable to humans and what we want to pass on to future generations using performativity as a cultural resource through dances, songs, language, knowledge systems, traditions, constructions, material culture, and even ideology (Kearney, 2009, pp. 210).

Understanding the processes by which culture becomes heritage and how it is institutionalized is what we call "heritagization." This process involves obligations of conservation, preservation, and care, but also a series of phenomena that have to do with emotions, from sentimental affinities of individuals

with heritage to aggressive political reactions that it can generate in some people, collectives, and institutions, which often have pernicious consequences for heritage. Thus, new institutions, new positions, new expertise, and new professional profiles are created that problematize and complexify everything related to heritage, giving rise to conflicts around how or for what to preserve and what to select. This seems obvious, but to preserve, one must select, and conflicts are included in this selection process.

It is of paramount importance to understand that the processes of heritage are contained within individuals who are carriers of these processes. The example of a project proposed for execution without considering relevant cultural studies, generating active opposition from community members due to cultural contradictions, is well known in the context of international cooperation for development. For example, if we want to develop a project to build a water well in the center of an indigenous community where accessing water is a task that women perform by walking five kilometers, we must consider much more than technical and practical elements, as these elements can often generate contradictions with individuals' cultural guidelines. The example of the construction of the water well in the indigenous community had many active opponents because those who formulated it did not consider that going to the water site was not just an activity to access it. It meant a space of interaction between women in the community where they practiced the transmission of cultural knowledge between women of different ages, and it meant having a space of intimacy and camaraderie of gender that served as a cathartic moment and, at the same time, had a ritual significance of ancient tradition and linked to the site where the water was fetched. It is evident that they would encounter resistance from women in the community to the construction of a well in the center of the village.

#### **1.4. Anthropology, territory, and Cultural Landscape**

In recent years, a renewed interest in the territory has



been evident in disciplines such as anthropology and geography, favoring the use of the term 'place' when referring to heritage, instead of 'site' which has been historically used in dominant heritage disciplines such as archaeology or architecture, which were limited to making lists and maps of locations where tangible cultural objects or manifestations were found. In this debate, the emergence of the use of the term 'place' allows for linking a territory to a series of identity practices and a sense of belonging, a meaning that the term 'site' did not imply due to its aesthetic and material significance. Thus, the territory is a social and political construction with a geographical and historical continuity that is linked to cultural practices, community experiences, and social organization that give it meaning as a manifestation of heritage. It is not isolated from a vast array of interactions with ecology, economy, politics, and territory (Munjeri, 2009, pp. 141).

In this sense, space is a material manifestation of imaginaries, thoughts, and feelings expressed in a cultural landscape. This concept of a cultural landscape is fundamental to our understanding of what heritage is. The idea of heritage as places that generate emotional responses in human groups is essential to explaining how identity and the present function with historical roots, and it is the fundamental niche from which we can extract the symbolic material that we will later subject to ethnological and discursive analysis to offer a scientific view of the studied phenomenon.

It is important to note that the cultural practices of intangible heritage manifestations are a performance of the memories and past experiences of the individuals who perform them. Thus, every time these experiences are performed through a present cultural performance, the practices of the past are relived, rewritten, and reinterpreted. This way of cultural performance linked to a specific place defines the cultural landscape as places of unique symbolic importance. Thus, a cultural landscape contains practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, and

skills (instruments, objects, artifacts, associated cultural spaces) that communities, groups, and individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage. This is transmitted from generation to generation and is constantly recreated by communities and groups in response to their environment, their history, and their natural surroundings, providing them with an identity that is situated in a continuum. This continuum is the way in which groups, in their process of recreating intangible cultural manifestations, replicate themselves and give continuity to the community (Munjeri, 2009, pp. 141).

In this way, the tangible becomes subsidiary to the intangible, that is the form in which meaning is given to it. All material heritage contains associated intangible values, but not vice versa. That is, not all intangible heritage has a tangible form. However, the corporeality of the human being makes them a material container for both the intangibility and tangibility of heritage. Thus, through this way of being, human heritage is always tangible and intangible at the same time (Kenny, 2009, pp. 210). This is why, when talking about heritage, whether it is material or intangible, we cannot ignore the people who are at the center of its cultural production. This is what provides the concept of performativity with interpretative power to put the subject in the middle of a representation of their own meaning. It was not until the World Conference on Cultural Policies in 1982 that a cultural anthropology concept of "culture" began to be employed, viewed as the ways of life and social organization of communities, along with their traditions and other tangible and intangible cultural manifestations (Blake, 2009, pp. 48).

### **1.5. Cultural heritage, human rights and sustainable development**

The relationship between the valorization of cultural diversity and the development model based on human rights derived from the doctrine of Amartya Sen (1999) is evident,

where we could include global cultural development, considering the tangible and intangible dimensions of culture to contribute to the freedom of human beings (Sen, 1999, pp. 21). The potential of intangible cultural expressions is of vital importance for local development, identity, and to resist threats that may come from unequal power relationships with external factors to the culture itself. Therefore, following Blake (2009), we consider that an approach with participatory methods, such as the ethnographic method, is entirely relevant when aiming to identify, safeguard, and/or collect samples of cultural expressions in the style of the 2003 ICHC (Blake, 2009, pp. 49). In this regard, the ICHC states in its article 2(3) that measures must be promoted to ensure the viability of intangible cultural heritage, such as identification, documentation, research, preservation, protection, promotion, improvement, transmission, revitalization; as well as a wide range of activities required for its management with the necessary community involvement (UNESCO, 2022). According to the above, ethnography is a powerful tool for approaching and analyzing participatory research on intangible heritage-related issues. In fact, it has supported communities in various parts of the world, especially in indigenous contexts, to become involved in the management and governance of cultural heritage, for example, in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park in Australia, among others (Blake, 2009, pp. 50). The problem lies in how to apprehend the intangible nature of heritage, considering that the objectivity of something so subjective is often questioned. In fact, some authors question the intangibility of heritage, arguing that there is a broad spectrum ranging from a non-material dimension of tangible expressions (such as objects, places, or monuments) to a more intangible dimension (such as stories, songs, sounds, smells, poems etc.). That is, each material element is attributed an associated intangibility, so much so that even the brain and body are the tangible aspects of the audiovisual material that is perceived by our senses (hearing, touch, sight, smell, taste)

and stored in our memory as part of our cultural heritage and identity. Without the material dimension, the intangible could not be expressed and shared since it is the material basis of what we understand as heritage. Ultimately, it is the interdependence between the material and the intangible that gives intelligibility and meaning to cultural expressions and manifestations. Nonetheless, this interdependence is mutable, changing over time and as social groups change. For some people of one time, intangible cultural expressions may mean something completely different than for people from the same place but different times. This is because each time an expression is (re)created, it is (re)signified, so when experts, technicians, or officials try to fix a cultural expression to a record (whether photographic, iconographic, video, among other forms), we are making a copy of a specific time, which implies that if we try to do it again later in time, this copy will necessarily be different (Skounti, 2009, pp. 78). These are the reasons why one of the most controversial points in the negotiations of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is the design of a list system full of controversy. Intangible heritage can't be freezed in a catalogue.

### **1.6. The ethnographic approach to heritage research**

What is the process of heritagization and how to study it ethnographically? Heritagization refers to the selective exclusion of historical and cultural memories from becoming part of cultural heritage. The process of heritagization has diverse origins, but it is generally due to the vagueness and premature approximation of the phenomenon. Through the ethnographic method, which originated in social and cultural anthropology, an adequate documentation and meticulous cultural and social rooting of the tools that allow for a reflective calibration of how intangible heritage is classified has been emphasized. This necessarily involves conceiving the processes of heritagization as cultural practices that have developed over time and how people

assign value to the material and immaterial things of everyday life, generating new cultural practices that are included in the cultural repertoire of a group. Ethnography provides documented information on the motivations and intentions of social actors in relation to different types of heritage and their economic and political dimensions.

The process of heritagization involves converting intangibility into tangibility through institutionalization. Institutions and cultural bearers can benefit from this process by documenting their intangible manifestations through research, cataloging, inventories, audiovisual documents, among other forms. This is how intangibility is encapsulated and turned into a dossier for nomination before organizations of the State or supranational entities such as UNESCO. The process of heritagization is seen as a mechanism that "ennobles" tangible or intangible cultural manifestations. The final institutionalization of cultural manifestations involves communities recognizing, accepting, and incorporating the transformation of the status of the manifestations in their daily lives and social dynamics. This new status makes heritage a factor of power that inevitably affects the social, economic, and political dimensions of communities through the management of their symbolic capital. Such management is susceptible to being manipulated and can serve as an instrument of social control.

## **2 ETHNOGRAPHY AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS**

It is well known that ethnography is a research method that originated within the anthropological field. Many authors have made efforts to explain in detail the ethnographic process, which goes beyond a simple description of social practices and being present at the moment these practices take place. In this sense, we want to define the concept that, for us, has the most relevance in the depth of ethnographic work. This is Clifford Geertz's (1983)

concept of ethnography as "thick description." In his words, "... what the ethnographer is in fact confronted with...is a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit, and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to explain. And this is true at even the most mundane, "vulgar" levels of his activity: interviewing informants, observing rituals, eliciting kin terms, tracing property lines, censusing households...writing fieldnotes. Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of "construct a reading of") a manuscript - foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in transient examples of shaped behavior" (Geertz, 1983, pp. 23-24).

This kind of symbolic interpretation that ethnographic description represents must be subjected to analysis to understand what people in a culture really think, or whether they are mere discursive simulations that resemble what they think but are actually different in nature. In any case, the social acts of the people in a culture are part of a symbolic system, and it is possible to analyze their elements to examine the internal relationships of those elements and to inquire into how the culture is organized and what underlying structures and ideological expressions it is based on, rather than studying the learned behaviors or mental phenomena to which studies in psychology are oriented. This is paying special attention to social practices, to social interactions where cultural forms are articulated and become social discourse. In this sense, the ethnographer inscribes social discourses that are described and put in writing to unravel the meaning of what is said, not from the speech act itself, but from the purpose of the discourse turned into an utterance, thought, or intention (Geertz, 1989, pp. 29-30). It is at this point where language and social practices intersect to become a critical analysis of discourses of social practices in everyday life. In these actions of the daily lives

of people, the ethnographer finds a network of meanings and symbols that are described, in Geertz's terms, by analyzing the thick social discourse, which allows discovering the conceptual structures that inform people in their practices and interactions, to thus reinscribe them in the ethnographic text using a vocabulary that allows expressing the symbolic action contained in those social and cultural practices. This is a task that is not exhaustive in the sense that it never ends, just as social practices and their evolution never end, so it is absurd to try to freeze them in heritagization devices as if they were something fixed, and as if a catalog or inventory could offer the public the thick of social acts.

Analyzing social discourses through Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as theory and methodology for ethnographic description and symbolic explanation begins with the perception of discourses as a social practice, from language or other forms of cultural semiosis such as images. In this way, asking relevant social and cultural questions is to ask about the discourses that run through the social fabric of communities: power, gender relations, family origins, traditions, artistic production forms, among others. When talking about research devices, we do it in the sense given by Adolfo Estalella and Tomás Sánchez-Criado (2023), leaving aside the traditional definition of field method as a pre-defined route for the incursion into the field, and more as the path of improvisation gestures that is essential to ethnographic practice. Thus, a field device is defined by its versatility that allows it to face situations with diverse entities, trajectories, and/or agencies. This is how the ethnographic moment is the configuration of different devices that mix traditional techniques such as participant observation, field diary, focus groups, interviews, photographs; but at the same time using new ad hoc devices created from the researcher's inventiveness and creativity, surpassing the logic of standardized techniques and methodological conventions due to the complex and unexpected situations that happen when being in the field as an open system of possibilities. In this unconventional route, the

ethnographer recombines and recontextualizes field devices to adapt them to the context studied (Estalella and Sánchez-Criado, 2023, pp. 7). Social practices require the configuration of various elements that allow us to apprehend the semiological fact and the diversity of mechanisms involved in its production. In our case, it is important to consider how an institutionalized discourse such as the Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) influences social practices in such a regional and local context as the region of La Serena, and specifically in Orellana La Vieja, making its influence on the social fabric regarding what heritage is and how it should be conceived, evident or not. All institutions have an internal logic that is not reduced to abstract logics with their events but has a specific and conjunctural character with a strong influence in the social context in which they act. When practices have a long permanence in time, they can be said to have institutionalized and constitute conjunctures such as the relative permanence of staged practices from specific institutions or complexes of institutions. This leads us to question the nature of cultural institutions responsible for "managing" heritage in the regional sphere and the social relations that have been constructed from the institutional discourse on heritage in a dialectical relationship that determines the social gaze towards heritage as a material and immaterial manifestation. In our case study in Orellana La Vieja, we are interested not only in the structures and events but also in the conjunctures. We will use the concepts of structure, events, and conjunctures as coined by Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999). For the authors, structures are long-term environmental conditions in which social life develops and that are slowly transformed by it. Events are the immediate performances of social life of people. Conjunctures are stable configurations of people, materials, technologies, and practices around a social manifestation in a broad sense where several institutions can be discursively involved, which will allow us to track not only individual events over time but a series of events that are conjuncturally linked, maintaining



and transforming practices (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999, pp. 22). When institutions are involved, it is normal for dominant discourses impose themselves on individuals "subordinated" through power-knowledge strategies and devices where the latter incorporate the agency of other hegemonic actors into their own actions, reducing their capacity for agency and autonomy. This is done with great subtlety from what Foucault (1988) calls effects of truth, where discursive imposition occurs by automatic identification of a dominant discourse by a group of subalternized people at a moment in history (Foucault, 1988, pp. 136).

## **2.1. How to Problematize Social Practices with CDA**

Critical discourse analysis begins with the perception of a problem, or a problematized phenomenon related to discourse in the everyday life of a social group, in its practices (interpersonal, ideational, and textual functions of discourse), and in its reflective constructions about culture (ideational problems, problems of representations and recognition). When it comes to intangible heritage, we seek to identify in these practices the needs that arise in the social fabric to conceive heritage, to express it as an identity marker, and to preserve it to pass it on to future generations. These needs can be satisfied or not and can be expressed in discursive form. Reflective constructions can be expressed in whether the expectations of social groups coincide in the public sphere with other discourses, institutionalized or coming from institutions, generating an inter-discursive dialogue in which the institutionalized discourse, normally the dominant discourse, represents its actions as in accordance with appropriate and legitimate procedures. Therefore, social groups have an ideational conception of heritage expressed in practices, which may coincide to a greater or lesser extent with the representation of heritage held by institutions (non-official, local, regional, national, supranational).

## 2.2. Ethnography and discourse analysis moments

The analysis of intangible heritage production involves examining social practices and discourses within specific social moments and processes. This includes an ethnographic incursion and discourse analysis to identify four moments: activities and material expression of heritage, social processes and relations, expressed intangible and mental phenomena, and discourse on heritage at stake. The analysis focuses on the dialectic between discourse and other moments, such as power relations, to address issues raised. The aim is to unravel the reproductive and transformative character of discourse and its relationship with the network of discourses, voices, and discursive practices. The analysis can provide insight into the possibility of change in policies around heritage. The reflections on the analysis emphasize the limitations of the theoretical and methodological assumptions and the importance of maintaining a well-defined line between the pragmatic and the ethical. The goal is to establish an open dialogue between social disciplines and approaches from various traditions, which some authors define as transdisciplinarity. Ultimately, the challenge is to systematically trace semiotic forms in the field and locate them in devices of textual analysis.

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