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Abstract

With the massive infusion of external (foreign) capital into the Chinese economy since the 1980s, some historical villages in Huangshan city have been largely transformed for heritage tourism. Preservation restrictions on altering structures are in place to keep intact the architectural and morphological integrity of the sites. Questions arise on the roles played by various governments and private sector enterprises, and their influence on local residents

In the summer of 2013, I conducted field work including interviews, participatory observation and archival research on three adjacent villages in Huangshan city: Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun. They were at three different tourism development levels and in different jurisdictions.

As a World Heritage Site, Hongcun attracts more tourists than the other two historical villages. To put Hongcun on display, a private sector enterprise authorized by local county government constructed not only infrastructure for tourism but also heritage. Heritage construction for tourism includes selection of historical sites for display and reinventions of historical stories for the staging of an ongoing pageant play performance to attract tourists. Successful tourism, however, has fostered conflict within the local community and largely transformed local villagers' lives.

Seeing Hongcun as the benchmark in heritage tourism, Chengkan imitates Hongcun by introducing external private sector enterprises and by implementing the strict Cultural Relic Preservation Law. The Chengkan Tourism Company has tried many innovative marketing strategies to compete with Hongcun, such as place-branding and place construction to demonstrate its feng shui authenticity. As such, Chenkan's residents face strict enforcement of the Cultural Relic Preservation Regulation while getting small benefits from tourism

development. Also, some of them try to make their own heritage, which is different from the hegemonic heritage made by the tourism company.

Xucun serves as yet another story in that it does not take any measures to lure tourists. Knowing it is impossible to compete with other villages, Xucun's local government prefers social stability and security to economic growth. Thus, they broke their contract with the private sector tourist company and protected local villagers' property rights. In this way, the three cases suggest that the state plays varying roles in encouraging tourism development and local autonomy in implementing tourism development. Also, issues of representation by private sectors and local community's identity and property rights vary markedly at the village scale.

My thesis contributes to the literature of heritage tourism studies undertaken from a political economic perspective. It uses this perspective to understand landscape in the Chinese context. My work also illustrates various avenues of future research on Chinese cultural geography.

THE PRODUCTION OF HERITAGE TOURISM IN CHINA: A CASE
STUDY OF THREE ADJACENT VILLAGES

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B.S. East China Normal University
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Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Geography

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Problems and Research Questions

Heritage and tourism are collaborative industries, heritage converting locations into destinations and tourism making them economically viable as exhibits of themselves. Locations become museums of themselves within a tourism industry (Kirschenblatt-Gimblett, 1998: 151).

Tourism is one of the largest industries in the world today (Britton, 1991), desirable because it brings in a great deal of foreign currency and promotes the local economy. In China, the government considers tourism as a way to meet national and local economic goals (Zhang, Chong, and Ap, 1999). In fact, heritage tourism's contribution to GDP has become a means to determine the effectiveness of local government officials, some of whom have gone as far as to lease historical villages to private firms to develop for tourism.

When I was conducting fieldwork for this thesis during the summer of 2013, I met an older woman while she sat in front of her house selling souvenirs. She lives in a historical village where local officials had partnered with private firms to establish heritage tourism. She told me she had once been a farmer but was forced to sell her agricultural land to the government-authorized local tourism company. Her compensation was permission from the local government to enlarge one of the windows in her house, a designated historic structure. Normally, government preservation regulations would have forbidden a change like this, but the company and the government needed both her land and her cooperation; thus, they allowed her to alter her house. The tourism company then paved over her family's agricultural land to make a tour-bus parking lot, and she went to work for the tourism company. Now retired, she sits in front of her house selling souvenirs. Fortunately, her house was not on the designated tour route; had it been, she would not been allowed to supplement her income in this way because such activities are

considered disorderly and thus impeding tourism.

In another historical village I chose to study, I encountered a local senior villager in an ancestral hall, a traditional architectural structure upon which descendants affix name tablets to honor their forebears. He told me that these halls are places that educate successive generations to respect the value of family and the values of their specific family. In the past, ancestral halls also served as a sort of courthouse, where individuals who disrespected the values of the family were brought for punishment. Before 1949, responsibility for this particular ancestral hall belonged to a senior villager's family. However, after 1949, the Communist Party transformed it into state-owned building that served as a primary school until 1992. In 1993, the local government repaired it and opened it to the public as a historical tourism site. These stories raise the following questions regarding the production of heritage sites in China.

Research Question 1. What are the roles of the various levels of government in tourism development? How does each level relate to tourism entrepreneurs?

To pursue economic growth, the central government redistributed some of its power to local governments and coupled the public employee promotion system to the growth of the local economy. That is to say, in localities with a stronger economy local government employees have a greater possibility of being promoted as officials in the state employment system than employees and officials in localities with weaker economies. As a result, every village tries its best to promote tourism for local economic growth. Some do a good job; others do not. Meanwhile, security needs to be considered. While pursuing economic growth, local governments need to guarantee local social stability, which is difficult due to structural shifts and imbalances. Thus, state-related governmentalities at various scales/levels need to be examined.

Research Question 2. Who designates places as historic and why?

In China, some villages have been designated as United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage Sites while others historical villages have not. Although the United Nations seems to play the leading role, there are many government levels and sectors involved. Entities that designate places as historic need to be examined. At a broad scale, heritage making for World Heritage Site designation is examined; at a smaller scale, heritage making by private sector enterprise is explored.

Research Question 3. What is the role of entrepreneurs in heritage preservation and tourism development?

At times, entrepreneurs create the heritage in heritage tourism, at the request of local governments. They market each village as unique and authentic, “packaging” historical villages to cater to the tourists.

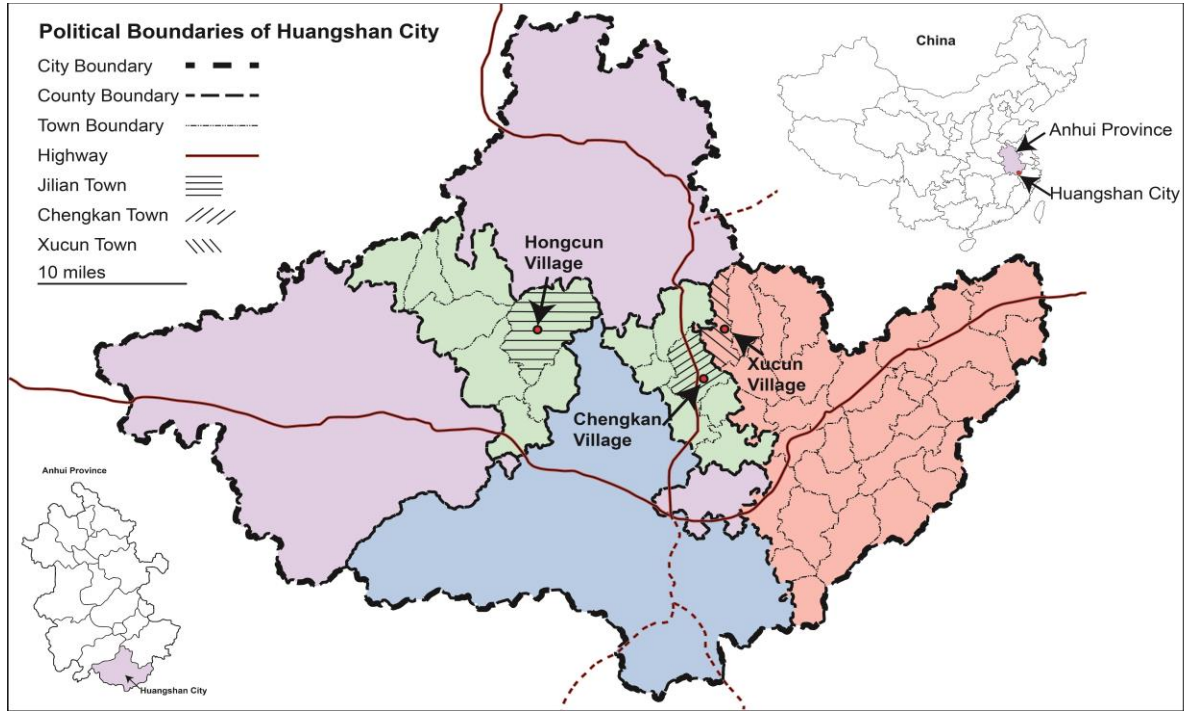
Research Question 4. What does it mean for local residents—who cherish their identity and their culture—to watch that identity and culture get re-represented by external agents? What is the influence of the government’s Cultural Relics Preservation Law on the local residents? How does it play out in different contexts?

Basically, the government preserves historical villages, and then private companies market them as being exactly the same as they were 300 years ago. In some villages, however, entrepreneurs have actually changed cultural “relics” to make them seem more unique. What do these actions mean to the villagers, who can only maintain, not decorate or improve, their houses

because they have to be as they were thought to be 300 years ago?

Justification of the Research Questions and Research Sites

During the summer of 2013, I conducted fieldwork in Huangshan city, which is located in the southern part of Anhui province. (See Map 1.1).



Map 1.1: City of Huangshan. (By author)

The locator map in the upper right shows the location of Anhui province, while the map in the lower left shows the location of Huangshan city within Anhui province. The main map shows Huangshan city with highways and the hierarchy of political boundaries.

In Huangshan, many historical villages have been developed as supplementary tourism sites to Mount Huang—which is a famous and frequently visited World Natural Heritage Site. These historical villages soon became well-known heritage tourism sites because of the architectural and urban morphological forms associated with Hui culture. This culture was influenced by two major migrations during the Northern and Southern Dynasty and the Five Dynasties periods. In

both migrations, people left the central plains and took to the mountainous region to avoid warfare. Immigrants consisted of many influential and privileged families who brought with them a strong fidelity to Confucian family culture (Zhu, 2003). The natural environment further shaped Hui culture. The mountainous topography meant less arable land, and with population growth, there was not enough food produced locally. Thus, after the middle period of the Ming Dynasty, men from Huizhou traveled to eastern China to trade lumber from the mountains for food. As a consequence, Hui culture developed a dual orientation: toward business and toward Confucian-influenced education. Ultimately, this helped the Huizhou people do well in the Imperial Examination System, which screened and accredited young men for government employment in ancient China. The exam mainly focused on several classic books on Confucianism. Successful Huizhou-born officials then favored Huizhou merchants, who quickly became rich and reinvested some of their profits in land in their hometowns and villages. They rebuilt houses and infrastructure, such as bridges, schools, and ancestral halls. Through these last two forms of social infrastructure, the younger generations became better educated and more qualified to take the Imperial Examination and to become government officials. Statistics indicate that more than 260 schools were built in Huizhou region from the Song Dynasty to the Qing Dynasty. During the eighth year of Emperor Hongwu in the Ming Dynasty (AD 1357), Huizhou had 462 schools. During the reign of Emperor Kangxi, the number increased to 562, resulting in even more scholars and officials. In the Song Dynasty, 624 people got through the final examination in the Imperial Examination System. In the Ming Dynasty, this number was 392, and in the Qing dynasty, 226 (Liu, 2002) (See Table 1.1.) Thus, the Huizhou culture gradually took on its own peculiar regional characteristics that stressed family values, trade, and state service (Zhu, 2003). Today, the landscape that this culture produces—the schools, ancestral

halls, bridges, and houses—has been transformed into the heritage landscape targeted toward tourists.

Table 1.1: Huizhou Education Situation

Time Period	Number of Successful Candidates in the Highest Imperial Examinations System
Song Dynasty	624
Ming Dynasty	329
Qing Dynasty	226

By author, based on Liu, 2002.

I chose Huangshan city as the research site not only because of its long history but also because of two internationally famous historical villages located in this city—Xidi and Hongcun. Once I began my fieldwork, however, I amended my site selection because of a conversation with an “insider”—a geography professor in China who is familiar with the region. He told me if I was interested in tourism development, I should look at three villages—Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun—because they represent different development levels. Hongcun is most developed, as evidenced by its World Heritage title. It is classified as a 5A Tourism Area by the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). Chengkan occupies a middle development level and is significant given tensions within the village caused by tourism development. The CNTA classifies it as a 4A Tourism Area. Xucun is notable given the richness of its history and architecture, which in the view of many Chinese is more worthy of a heritage designation than Hongcun and Chengkan. However, tourism development there is very weak—almost nonexistent—in part because of its 3A Tourism Area designation.

Once in the field, I discovered that the three villages did indeed display differences in

incomes, lifestyles, and place-branding strategies of tourism companies. Additionally, the role of government in tourism development differs among the three villages. To be exact, government agencies get involved in tourism to varying degrees, depending on the county and village officials, jurisdiction, and intergovernmental relations.

Methodology

My methodology consisted of ethnographic participant observation and interviews in the field, and archival research at East China Normal University. I conducted interviews with representatives of three different sectors within heritage tourism: government officials, tourism company employees, and local residents. I chose local residents in public spaces or at their places of business who appeared to be available and not busy doing other things. They were either senior villagers (60 years old and older) or the owners of different souvenir shops.

This strategy worked well in Chengkan and Hongcun but not as well in Xucun, a typical rural village in China. Young laborers migrate to big cities for jobs, leaving the elders, women, and children at home. Hence, most potential interviewees were senior villagers who spoke local dialects I had difficulty understanding. Also, there were no souvenir stores in Xucun. Therefore, I talked to two middle-aged villagers who operated a grocery store. I believe the difficulties I encountered in this village in relation to selecting interviewees were related to its low level of tourism development.

To select officials from various levels of government to interview, I began by speaking to receptionists at local government offices and asking who I should interview for my project. They usually forwarded me to people either in charge of cultural relics preservation or knowledgeable about tourism development. This strategy was effective for the village and town levels but less so

for city-level officials. When I went to Huangshan city's propaganda department to ask about its work in advertising these three villages, they checked my national identity card (身份证), my current graduate student ID card, and my undergraduate student ID card. The interview did not go well because the officer did not seem to take my inquiry seriously. The meeting abruptly ended when another person entered the office holding an introductory letter that had been issued by someone in an upper-government position. I learned that I would need to have this type of letter in the future if I was to have a meaningful interview with a city-level official.

I gained access to the tourism company in Hongcun (Jingyi Company) with the help of a local official in the city-level tourism administration. I was concerned the tourism company would not grant an interview because it was a famous and economically successful venture. The government official gave me the manager's contact information, and I called him to make an appointment. Knowing that I was referred by a government official, he quickly accepted my request. When I arrived, he referred me to an employee responsible for public relations who could best answer my questions.

The tourism company in Chengkan (Chengkan Eight Diagram Tourism Company) was much easier to access. I learned about this small firm from the owner of the inn where I stayed. The supervisor of the company had operated a restaurant and then moved to Chengkan to begin a tourism company due to the good relationship he had with the local government. When I first visited the company's office building and introduced myself, I talked to a lower-level employee who told me to come back later to interview the supervisor. When I returned, the supervisor was again not available, but I interviewed the person I had met previously; it turned out he was also responsible for the company's public relations. For my research in Xucun, I interviewed the supervisor of the tourism company using my undergraduate professor's recommendation to gain

access.

In summary, I interviewed 42 people, including local residents, officials from tourism companies, and village- and city-level government officials (Table 1.2). The interviews were semistructured; I had some questions outlined for the interview, but the conversation varied from individual to individual. Some interviewees were not very forthcoming during the interview, making these encounters briefer than others. For those who were very talkative, the conversation continued until its natural ending. Table 1.2 shows the number of people I interviewed in each of the different sectors in the three villages.

Table 1.2: People Interviewed during Fieldwork

	Hongcun	Chengkan	Xucun
Residents	11	11	7
Tourist guides	1	1	1
Government officials	1	2	1
Other tourist company employees	1	1	1

By author.

In addition, I interviewed several government officials in Huangshan city about tourism development and heritage preservation. They represented the Municipal Propaganda Department, Huangshan Tourism Administration, Cultural Relics Bureau, and Heritage Office in the Planning Bureau.

Many scholars have discussed the insider/outsider role in fieldwork. Yang Yang (2014) recognized her “stranger-familiar” role (Lipman 1998) because she applied a Euro-Anglo framework to explore Chinese issues as a Chinese researcher. I found it difficult to define my positionality during this research. It is very complex to define what an insider or outsider is. Although I felt my standing with the locals was similar to Yang’s stranger-familiar role, it did not go as Yang argued. She focused on the fact that she could understand the local language, which she believed made the locals cooperative as participants during her research. I did not categorize

myself as an insider because I did not grow up in Hui culture; however, I am Chinese and speak the same language and share many sociocultural habits. As such, I perceived myself as being in a liminal role that did not fit into any specific category and that varied depending on the village and the sector being investigated.

In Hongcun and Chengkan, although I was an outsider, residents and officials perceived me as “normal” because they were used to outsiders—such as tourists. In Hongcun, I stayed at a family inn inside the historical village and could speak with residents naturally in front of their houses. In Chengkan, some villagers invited me into their homes for a tour as if they were hosting a guest. The situation was quite different in Xucun, however. Because there are not many tourists visiting the village, I was considered an outsider, especially when I returned to do fieldwork on my own. Everyone stared at me wherever I went!

Structure

This thesis is structured into six chapters; they involve this introduction, the theoretical approach, three case studies, and the conclusion.

In the theoretical approach chapter (Chapter 2), I examine the literature in tourism studies in three sections: scientific, post-structuralism, and “beyond post-structuralism.” I argue that business-led tourism research tends to apply a scientific approach. The post-structural literature was shaped by the cultural turn in social science epistemology and transformed the field of tourism studies so that it focus more on representation, discourse, and identity than the ideology behind them. I argue that my research blends the two aforementioned approaches into a political economy approach. Thus, I characterize this thesis as an example of “critical tourism studies” with “new” cultural geography sensibilities in the Chinese context.

Background information is also provided in Chapter 2 to provide a foundation for the discussions in subsequent chapters. Since 1978, Chinese scholars have viewed tourism as an economic activity and as a signifier of Open and Reform policies (Zhang, Chong, and Ap, 1999). They have noted the increasing importance of external capital investments in local tourism industries. Understanding policies and the Chinese legal system is critical because overlaps in the latter lead to tensions in communities in relation to tourism development (Liu, 2008).

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 contain case studies of Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun, respectively, in terms of the politics of historical villages' representation in heritage tourism, the roles that various governments play, and local communities' reaction to tourism and preservation.

The politics of historical villages' representation are analyzed using the tourism routes and attraction sites that the private sector (tourism companies) has designed. The tourism companies do not put whole villages on display, and they do not select tourism sites randomly or even according to their historical value, but instead choose them based on cost. Furthermore, because of competition, some companies physically alter the village or construct village imaginaries to make the setting more alluring to tourists.

The role of government and governmental cooperation with tourism companies are examined. The public-private relationship varies depending on the village, raising the question of who has the right to designate heritage. This topic is particularly important for World Heritage Sites, which are created via a government-led process. The Chinese central government assigned the project of developing World Heritage Sites to the Anhui provincial government, which in turn solicited input from academic scholars before assigning this project to a specific city, Huangshan. However, the county-level governments within Huangshan were, in the end, actually responsible for selecting candidate villages and for preparing them for examination by

UNESCO.

There are differences from village to village as to (a) what these developments meant for local residents, (b) whose dwelling places were put on display, and (c) which villages were redefined by others. I discuss tourism development's effects on host communities by examining some individuals' lives in each village. Villagers' personal lives and their ability (or inability) to enter into negotiation with tourism companies have been influenced by heritage preservation. At stake is self-autonomy over identity.

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis with summaries and future research plans.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL APPROACH

Introduction

Heritage tourism is “centered on what we have inherited, which can mean anything from historic buildings, to art works, to beautiful scenery” (Yale, 1991: 21, cited in Garrod and Fyall, 2001). Heritage tourism includes all the issues that tourism geography focuses on, such as development models, spatial laws, representation, identity, community planning, etc. However, it has its own unique characteristics: the consumption object is heritage, the local community’s ancestors’ labor is put on display, and it is closely related to history, which is closely connected to identity. In addition, discourse, representation, property rights, heritage preservation, and heritage tourism as a way for development are all important issues.

Historically, business-oriented research dominated tourism studies. It used economic modeling to predict profitability, which linked it to aspects of economic geography and regional science. Later, the cultural turn in the social sciences (including geography, sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology, (small segments of) economics, and therefore tourism studies) fostered the emergence of something that might be “loosely termed post-structuralism” (Barnett, 1998; Valentine, 2001). This influenced tourism research agendas by encouraging *critical* (as opposed to business-oriented) tourism studies. However, Raoul Bianchi has criticized critical tourism studies that focus solely on discourse, representation, and identity; instead, he promotes research that adds political economy (Bianchi, 2012). This research moves ‘beyond the post-structuralist.’

In this chapter, I examine the scientific, post-structuralist, and beyond post-structuralist approaches. I contextualize my research subject—heritage tourism—and examine some of the

major stakeholders' roles in its production, focusing on various levels of government and their partnership with private sector enterprises, property rights and heritage preservation. I also address the representation of and resistance to tourism development by local community members. I explore government-private relationships and the debate regarding whether the Chinese state is now neoliberal. I also examine research about local community perceptions about tourism development. These frameworks help answer the research questions raised in Chapter 1 regarding the roles played by various levels of government the private sector, the local residents' perceptions of tourism, identity issues in heritage making, and difficulties surrounding the Cultural Relics Preservation Law.

Tourism Research

Business-led Tourism Research

According to Robinson (1976), the rise of mass tourism is a postwar phenomenon that resulted from improvements in transportation and communication technology. In his book *A Geography of Tourism*, he categorized research themes and analyzed tourism from a scientific economic perspective by discussing supply and demand and management, among other issues. He identified two reasons why the tourism industry is important to Western countries:

1. In many countries, especially Western European countries and those of North America, the tourist trade is now a major activity employing large numbers of people;
2. The receipts from tourism form a very valuable invisible export, are especially important as a dollar earner, and frequently contribute substantially to the balance of payments. (Robinson, 1976: xxii)

Today, travel and tourism are one of the largest industries in the Western world (Britton, 1991). For local communities, it is a means toward capital accumulation and place development. Therefore, it is necessary to describe, explain, and forecast tourist behavior, spending, and

associated externality effects. Butler's (1980) Tourist Area Life Cycle (TALC) model, for example, explains the different stages that tourism sites go through in terms of visitation and profitability. Tim Gale (2012) considers this model as representative of the structuralist thinking in tourism studies in the early 1980s.

The TALC model divides the development of tourism sites into six stages: (1) exploration, (2) involvement, (3) development, (4) consolidation, (5) stagnation, and (6) decline or rejuvenation (see Fig. 2.1).

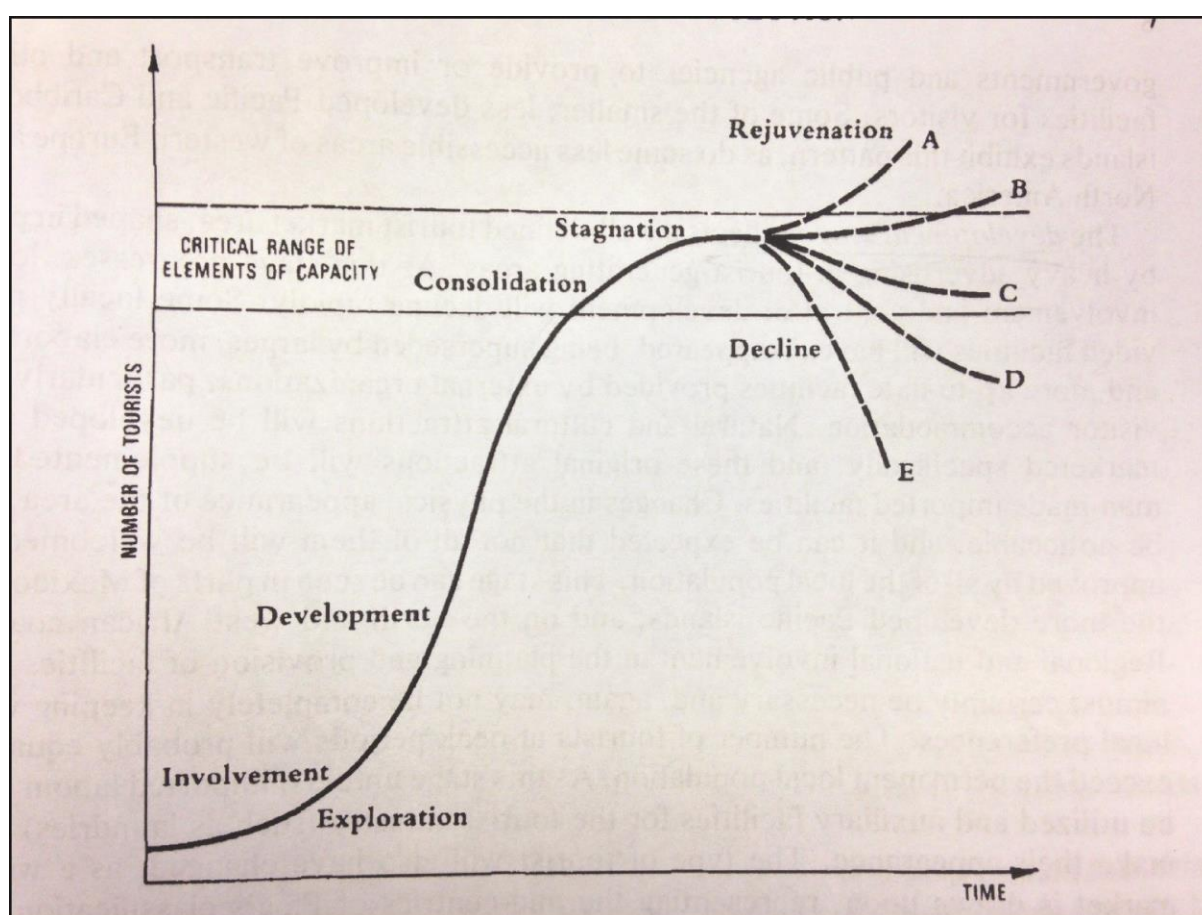


Figure 2.1: Tourist area life cycle. (From Butler, 1980.)

The *exploration* stage is “characterized by small numbers of tourists,” where the local community is “unchanged” by tourism (Butler, 1980: 6). Local residents move into the *involvement* stage when the number of tourists increases, some tourism facilities are constructed,

and the locals begin catering to the tourists.

The *development* begins when an area's tourism increases enough to warrant an externally based operator to oversee the trade, thereby reducing the community's dominant involvement, although much of the local infrastructure and facilities exist in support of the tourism trade. Eventually, the rate of tourism development declines, but the total number of tourists continues to grow. Butler claims that some tension from permanent residents would emerge at this point, the *consolidation* stage, because of some "deprivation and restrictions upon their activities" (Butler, 1980: 8). The *stagnation* stage follows: the number of tourists peaks and local carrying capacity is reached or exceeded, thereby creating environmental issues that degrade tourist attractions and make the site "unfashionable and uncompetitive" (Butler, 1980: 8). Meanwhile, some surrounding development emerges to try to prolong profitability. After this, there are two possible outcomes: the *decline* stage (when the tourism trade comes to an end) or the *rejuvenation* stage (when new, unique attractions become the focus).

According to Gale, the TALC model is "a brilliant example of how scientific progress could and should work...as probably the only model in tourism that has been scrutinized in many different contexts with modifications suggested to fit specific situations and circumstances" (Oppermann, 1998: 180, quoted in Gale, 2012: 41). Some scholars applied this model to examine tourism in Zhang Jiajie National Forest Park in China. They concluded that the tourist industry has passed through the first four stages and is now in the consolidation stage; the industry has become important to the local economy and the government and private sectors will play important roles in further development (Zhong, Deng, and Xiang, 2008).

Heritage tourism, specifically, has been studied using the TALC model. According to Logan (2001), heritage tourism offers the possibility for economic growth by showcasing distinctive

local cultures, the key component within the “heritage industry” (Edson 2004: 343). Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) also argue that the conservation of heritage resources leads to their economic use; this has inspired research exploring heritage tourism in terms of supply and demand (Apostolakis, 2003). However, there are some concerns about the applicability of the economic model in different contexts, such as China. Li and Lo (2004) address this issue in their examination of the market appeal model in China.

Critical Tourism Studies

Critical tourism studies focus on discourse, representation, and identity, particularly as they combine around the concept of authenticity. According to Fine and Speer (1997, quoted in Chhabra, Healyb, and Sillsc, 2003: 705), “an authentic experience involves participation in a collective ritual, where strangers get together in a cultural production to share a feeling of closeness or solidarity. This cultural production is not a total re-creation of the past. In fact, nostalgic collective memory selectively reconstructs the past to serve the needs of the present.”

Researchers have shown that tourists who have a more personal attachment to a tourist site through shared heritage will change their behavior in the site more than those who lack personal heritage attachments (Poria, Butler, and Airey, 2003). Peggy Teo and Brenda Yeoh (1997), for example, incorporated this logic when they explored local residents’ and tourists’ perceptions of a heritage site that had been re-created for tourism. They showed that local residents attached memories to the old landscape, while tourists with no prior direct experience of the place considered it more as a commodity. These findings inform my research in terms of the local communities’ perceptions of tourism development, especially in relation to tension among residents and their identity.

These scholars' research on authenticity and identity are examples of critical tourism studies. Although I later examine them critically for their neglect of political economy, they have informed how I frame authenticity and identity in my research. They take authenticity to be an aspect of the subjective feelings of tourists. I did not interview tourists, but I apply authenticity as a concept in my consideration of how the government and private sector market historical villages as authentic (unique) to compete with similar historical villages. Underlying this is the assumption that authentic (unique) villages will be recognized and visited by tourists and, therefore, bring in profits.

In the context of heritage tourism literature, there is a broad discussion around the concept of heritage. The most frequently asked questions are who designates specific places as heritage sites (Adams, 2003) and who determines that they should be put on display. Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge (2000) argue that the definition of heritage should be clarified, especially in an era when the use of heritage is so abused. "Heritage is selective" (Timothy and Boyd, 2002: 2) and historically and socially constructed (Harvey, 2001). It is usually a selection by private or public sectors for a certain reason (either collective identity or profit) (Lowenthal, 1985). However, other scholars argue that the purpose of selection and construction is tourist consumption of an experiential or emotional product. Cassia (1999) argues that heritage is a way to consume the academic knowledge produced by history, and sometimes it is a selective consumption of elements in the past (Tunbridge and Ashworth, 2000), which mostly results in an inauthentic experience for tourists (MacCannell, 1979). Heritage can be seen from a symbolic and social construction perspective in addition to its materialistic nature and "the significance of constructing 'the gaze' and 'the other' in engendered heritage representation and consumption" (Aitchison, 1999: 59). Therefore, a more centered question around heritage would be who

designates places as heritage for consumption. “Frequently, [political or social] power was conceptualized as existing on its own as practically a commodity or a capacity or a currency which could be traded or fought over” (Church and Coles, 2007: preface). Thus, it is important to incorporate political economy into critical tourism studies.

Combined Political Economy and Critical Tourism Studies

Some scholars maintain that business-oriented tourism research neglects issues of power, discourse, and representation (Ateljevic and others, 2007, quoted in Gale, 2012: 45). Nevertheless, critical tourism studies are gradually being mainstreamed into the business-oriented approach through publications that seek to meld the two literatures; examples of this provided by Gale (2012: 45) include:

Embodying Tourism Research: Advancing Critical Approaches (Dubrovnik, 2005), The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies: Promoting an Academy of Hope (Split, 2007), Connecting Academies of Hope: Creative Vistas and Critical Visions (Zadar, 2009), and Tourism Futures: Creative and Critical Action (Cardiff, 2011).

However, critical tourism studies still privilege the *cultural*, which means “the discursive, symbolic and performativity realm of tourism and tourists’ experiences” over political and economic issues (Bianchi, 2012). Bianchi argues that “despite their [critical tourism studies] avowed political orientation, advocates of the ‘critical turn’ appear largely concerned with the analysis of culture, discourse and representation within the confines of a globalizing free market system, which remains largely external to critical scrutiny” (Bianchi, 2012: 47).

I concur with Bianchi’s argument. Critical tourism studies emphasize representation, discourse, and cultural power, but largely ignore political economy. Bianchi, however, almost presents this as post-structural/structural dualism. To counter this, Gale argues that in post-structuralism “social structures may constrain human action, yet these are not strictly

economic—culture and politics (power) play their part, too” (Gale, 2012: 39).

To begin incorporating political economy into critical tourism studies, Valentine (2001) claims it is important to analyze the structures that cause social injustice while acknowledging the importance of cultural difference and form of representation. She concludes that at a macro scale we must recognize the collectiveness of a community and the existence of a structure system that influences people. However, on a small scale, it is reasonable to discuss difference and representation, which could also reflect social injustice. As such, a hybridized research agenda emerges from combining these discussions and then having new ones at different scales.

One possible way forward is offered by Anne Snitow (1990). She argues that academics need to retain a constantly shifting scale of focus, in which sometimes it is appropriate to focus on difference and minimize claims to a shared identity or goal, whereas at other times it is politically expedient to “maximize” a shared identity or position to proclaim common needs and political aims. To think in terms of shifting scales seems a particularly appropriate direction for social geographers to begin to map a new agenda for the sub-discipline. (Valentine, 2001: 171).

Answering this call (to combine political economy with critical tourism studies to understand more fully the tourism process), I focus on some China tourism researchers who have already done relevant research on the issue of commodification, specifically as related to the government’s role and tourism and cultural relic preservation policies. Xu, Yan, and Zhu (2013), for example, examine commodification in a Chinese heritage village; however, they indicate, “this is just a preliminary study on the commodification of Chinese heritage villages; it lacks the comparison of the level of commodification” (page: 415).

Some scholars are exploring heritage tourism policy and implementation because the state considers heritage tourism as a tool to promote local economy. Hongliang Yan and Bill Bramwell (2008) explore the relationship between heritage tourism related to Confucianism and the government’s policy-making system and attitude toward tradition. In addition, Yi Wang and Bill Bramwell (2012) examine the role played by government in determining the priority of heritage

protection and tourism development with a political economy approach. Timothy Oakes (2013) examines heritage tourism in the Chinese context using the theoretical framework of modernization, which is considered one approach to development and includes modernization, dependency, and neoliberalism theories. Jason Beery (2012) analyzes the private sector in managing tourism and competition, further demonstrating the tourism industry as a capital accumulation process in a neoliberalism trend.

My heritage tourism research considers political economy through the lens of governmentality. I also explore the agenda embedded within neoliberalism that posits that heritage is a controllable instrument that will improve economic and social development. Thus my study considers neoliberalism, the role played by governments and the private sector in tourism development, and the manipulation of heritage representation for place promotion in a competitive tourism market. Representations of historical villages vary with different sectors.

As such, I developed a research agenda to combine political economy and critical tourism studies and to examine different cases at various scales. Within this framework, it is possible to analyze the roles of the main stakeholders—the state (government at multiple levels/spatial scales), the private sector, and the local community—in heritage tourism’s production.

Main Stakeholders in Heritage Tourism’s Production

State and Private Sector

There are heated discussions about whether China is a neoliberal state. Several scholars conclude that it has many neoliberal characteristics, but that the state still plays a strong role (Yeh and Gaerrang, 2011; Harvey, 2005; So, 2007). Some scholars claim that this is neoliberalism with Chinese characteristics (Harvey, 2005), while other scholars claim the

situation follows a more general East Asia development model (So, 2007). In this context, I agree with Emily Yeh's statement, "We find 'neoliberalization' useful to mark the deepening of market reforms since Deng Xiaoping's 1992 'southern tour,' including an emphasis on commodification, the withdrawal of state welfare provisions, privatization of formerly commonly owned assets and increasing disparities between rich and poor" (Yeh and Gaerrang, 2011: 165).

As Yeh and Gaerrang mentioned, these so-called neoliberal characteristics were initiated by Open and Reform policies. Now add to this the idea that tourism has become a signifier of Open and Reform in China (Xiao, 2006). According to Zhang, Chong, and Ap (1999), prior to 1978, government officials viewed tourism as a political activity. With the implementation of the Open and Reform policies in 1978, they began considering tourism as both a political instrument and an economic activity. Hongge Xiao (2006) specifically points out that tourism should be seen as a signifier of Open and Reform policies in terms of economic development; this conclusion is based on his analysis of five talks given in 1979 by then Vice Prime Minister Deng Xiaoping (Xiao, 2006). One of these talks was given in Huangshan city.

Qihong¹ is famous all over the world. Huangshan has the resources to generate wealth. This is a good place for tourism development. There should be planning for it in the provincial government....We need to be ambitious and to establish and broadcast the brand of Huangshan....Employees need to be paid according to their labor quality and labor time. Nine hundred million people cannot get rich at the same time. It has to be some region that gets rich first. Within a region, only some people get rich first. The income from tourism needs to be shared with local government. To initiate tourism, the central government also needs to invest. (Local chronicles of Huangsan city, 2010)

By Deng targeting "entrepreneurship, foreign investment in tourist facilities, salary/wage (re)distributions, marketing and promotion, and customer orientation" in one of his talks, Xiao (2006) suggests that this may indicate an ideological transformation of the Chinese government to "capitalist business operations." These transformations, in turn, led to policy changes that showed a struggle to balance between a government-led versus market-driven orientation.

1 Qihong is a kind of red tea in Huangshan city.

Meanwhile, instead of becoming a political instrument for diplomacy, tourism has become an economic activity for development that boomed with the Open and Reform policies (Xiao, 2006).

The first period of transformation was from 1978 to 1984. In 1978, the Bureaus of Travel and Tourism under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was reorganized as the State General Administration of Travel and Tourism; it was directly regulated by the State Council and became responsible for tourism administration. Meanwhile, Anhui province's Travel Tour Business Administration was established to manage the tourism industry in Anhui province (local chronicles of Huangshan city, 2010). In 1982, the functions of China International Travel Services were separated from the State General Administration of Travel and Tourism, and it was later renamed the China National Tourism Administration (CNTA). From 1982 on, tourism enterprise activities were no longer government functions (Sofield and Li, 2011). In 1984, the State Council allowed "central government, localities, individual government departments, collectives and even individuals to invest in and operate tourism development projects" (Zhang, Chong, and Ap, 1999: 476). This encouraged the development of town and village enterprises (TVEs²) and the private sector in tourism (Sofield and Li, 2011).

The next transformation period occurred from 1985 to 1991. In 1985, tourism was incorporated into the Seventh Five-Year National Plan (1986–90) (Zhang, Chong, and Ap, 1999; Shepherd, 2006), signaling the point in time when the central government began viewing tourism as an economic development activity. In 1986, Anhui province incorporated the tourism industry into its National Economic and Social Development Plan; the Travel Tour Business Administration became an independent institution and part of the Anhui province government

² TVEs are market-oriented enterprises owned by town or village governments.

structure. By 1991, tourism was seen as a chief service sector in the Eighth Five-Year National Plan (1991–95) (Shepherd, 2006).

The final period of transformation was from 1992 to 2002. In 1992, Deng Xiaoping gave a talk in Guangdong, further confirming the opening up of hinterland China.

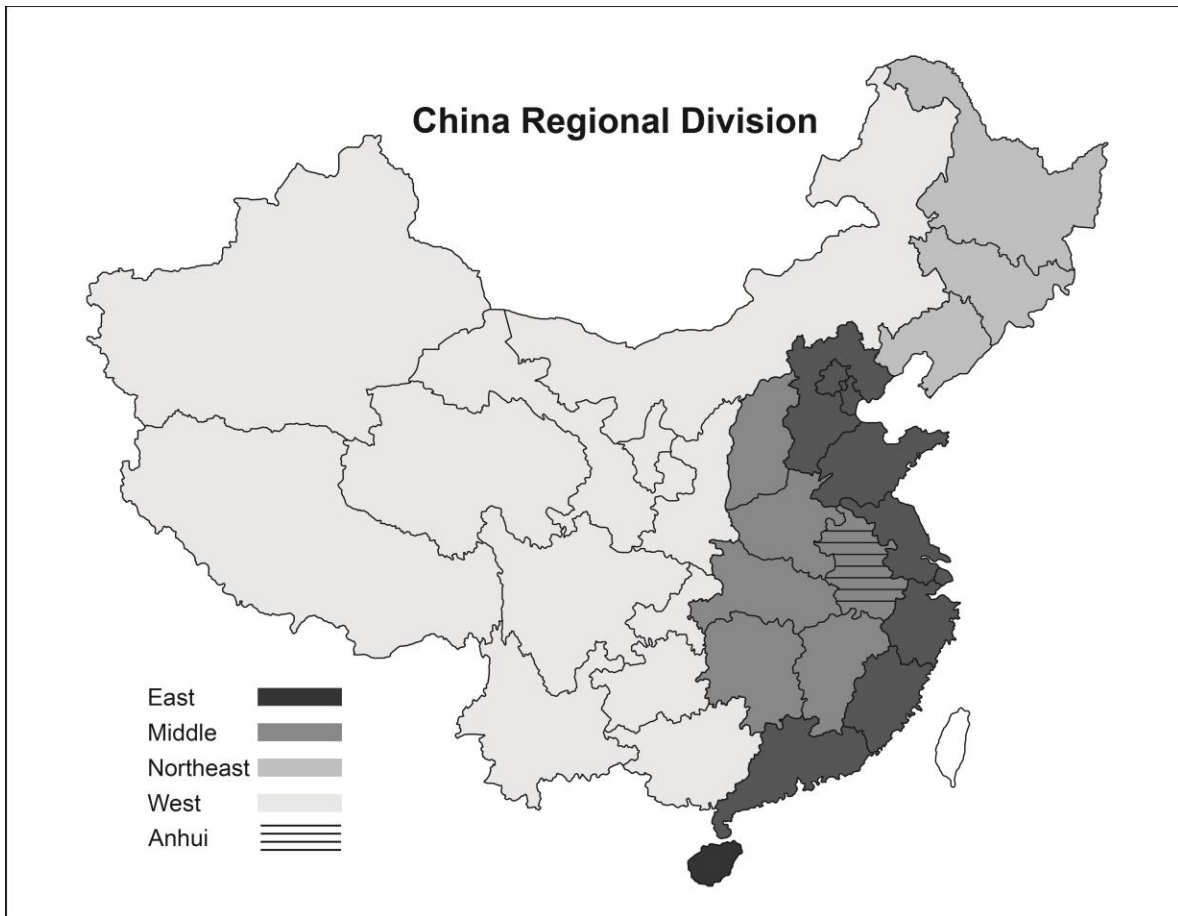
As the government gradually decreased restrictions and controls at the macro-policy level, a more truly private sector began to expand and by 1995 it outrivaled TVEs. With increased market integration and competition, TVEs lost their protected position; the changes in the economic environment gradually reduced the benefits of public ownership and increased their costs. They experienced a dramatic decline in the face of increased competition and rewards accruing to the more efficient, better managed private operations and those that survived were forced to restructure substantially. By 1996, TVEs accounted for approximately 7% of GDP, down from about 30% at their peak (Sofield and Li, 2011: 509).

During this time, a wave of investment occurred in China. After 10 years of economic development, China's eastern coastal area established a sound export-oriented industrial system. The region's labor-intensive industries needed to be upgraded and transformed into technology- and capital-intensive enterprises. Because of globalization and China's participation in the World Trade Organization (WTO), the state adopted many flexible strategies to attract more of these types of industries. At the same time, mid-western and western China developed at a much slower rate. As such, the central government issued a set of policies to induce economic growth in the mid-western region. One approach was to apply investment promotion strategies intensively and to accept the industries removed in the eastern region because of industrial upgrades (Zhong, 2006).

According to Zhong (2006) and Harvey (2005), financial resources were more flexible in the 1990s than they were 10 years earlier. According to these researchers, at the beginning of the Open and Reform policies, investment promotion targeted foreign capital and companies. However, with the development of Chinese private enterprises, local governments promoted investment through those private companies and capital, which became important investment resources in the mid-western region. With the development of the market economy, local

governments were more able to allocate resources at micro scales and to become relatively independent active agents earning most of the profits from development. To control local governments, the central government took over the local governments' financial rights, forcing them to compete for those budgets. The quality, amount, and speed of local economic growth became the main criteria for the central government in its evaluation of local government officials, thereby determining whether they would be promoted. This formed the basis of the personnel promotion system for Chinese government officials. Therefore, it has come to be very much in the interest of local government officials to support efforts to boost the local economy.

Given this situation at the macro level, Anhui province, located in the middle of China (see Map 2.1), adopted a set of policies to improve its economic growth.



Map 2.1: China's regional divisions. (By author.)

Anhui provincial and Huangshan municipal governments stressed the importance of tourism development. In 1992, Anhui province's government held a symposium on tourism and the economy and pointed out that the tourism industry should be the pillar industry in Anhui's economy. In 1994, local governments promoted external capital for tourism development in Hongcun (Yi County), Chengkan (Huizhou County), and Xucun (She County) after Vice Prime Minister Zhu Rongji gave explicit instructions regarding tourism development in Yi County (local chronicles of Huangshan city, 2010).

As suggested, tourism development in Anhui province, or broadly speaking, in China, is a government-led process. This process has many neoliberal characteristics, such as the distribution of power to local governments and the involvement of the private sector, but the state still plays a strong hand, such as its control over tax, budgetary, and personnel promotion concerns. In this environment, tourism in Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun boomed. Booming tourism, however, has caused many changes and raised several issues for the local communities.

Local Community

Tourism development has raised many issues among local residents, especially those whose dwelling places are selected to be displayed on the heritage tour. A review of these issues reveals that resistance to tourism development and heritage preservation, and the effects of these on identity deserve attention.

Resistance to tourism development within the host community mainly focuses on the host community's participation and whether or not it decides to cooperate with the plans of the state and private sector. Ying and Zhou (2007) compare two cases, Hongcun and Xidi, the two World Heritage Sites in Huangshan city. Lack of consideration for the concerns of the host community

in tourism development has caused tensions in Hongcun; more inclusion and participation of the host community in Xidi has resulted in more benefits to residents and less tension and resistance to tourism development. The main reason for the resistance to tourism development among local community in this case is the level of interest from tourism. Other researchers suggest that local communities' reaction to tourism development is influenced not only by benefits but also by heritage preservation issues.

In heritage tourism, one main resistance or tension among the host community is the issue of preservation. Historical sites are regulated under the Cultural Relics Preservation Law but private property is protected under the newly formed Real Right Law. In this case, the two laws contradict with each other and no specific regulations exist regarding which law should be implemented in any given situation. As such, government officials have much more latitude in determining which law to implement. This legal overlap is formed by the structure of Chinese legal system (see Fig. 2.2).

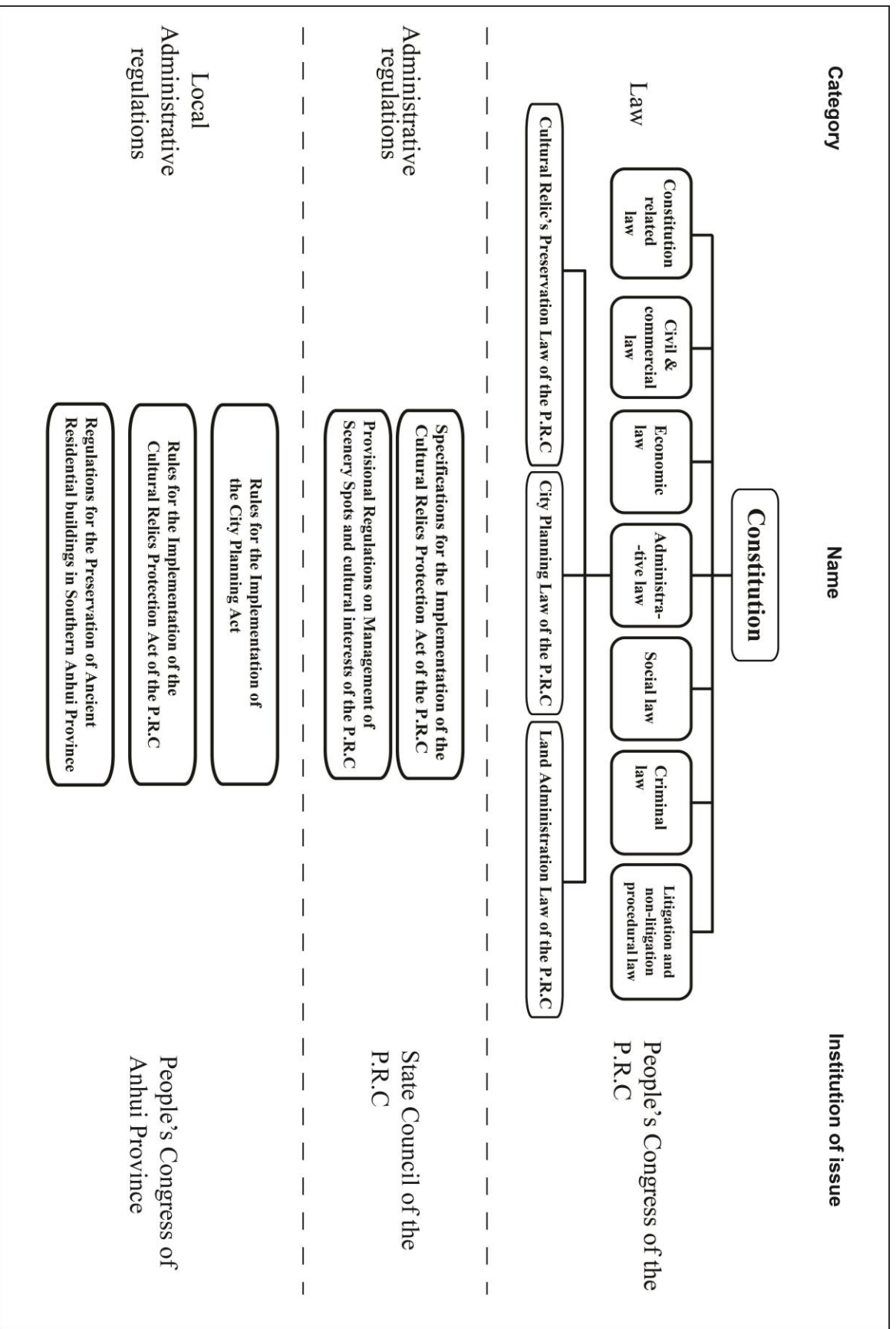


Figure 2.2: Summary of the legal system in China. (Compiled by author based on Zhang, 2009; The Ministry of Construction; The Administration of Cultural Relics)

China's legal system is unified and multileveled. Unified means that no law or administrative regulation can contradict the Constitution of the P.R.C., which is the fundamental law. Laws created at lower levels of government administration cannot contradict those created in upper levels. This hierarchy is outlined in Fig. 2.3. Legislative authority belongs to the People's Congress and its standing committee.

In the hierarchy, after the Constitution, there are seven basic categories of laws: constitution-related, civil and commercial, economic, administrative, social, criminal, and litigation and non-litigation procedural laws. These are all issued by the People's Congress of the P.R.C., but some laws can be modified by the standing committee of the People's Congress when it is not in session (Zhang, 2009; Huang, 1996; Fu, 2012).

Article 22 of the Constitution puts forth, "the state protects historical interests, precious cultural relics and other important historic and cultural properties." Three laws are particularly relevant to cultural relic preservation: City Planning Act of the P.R.C., Cultural Relics Preservation Law of the P.R.C., and Administrative Law of the P.R.C.

City Planning Act (April 1, 1990), Article 14: In city planning, attention should be paid to protection and improvement of urban ecological environment, prevention of pollution and its harmful effects, enhancement of tree planting. Efforts should be made to achieve a clean and healthy city environment, to preserve historical and cultural relics, traditional customs, local specialties and natural scenery.

Rules for the Implementation of the City Planning Act of the People's Republic of China in Anhui Province (August 30, 1991), Article 15: When constructing new city areas and renovating old areas, practical measures should be taken according to related laws and regulations, to protect architectures, buildings, antiques, structures and ancient and famous trees that have important historical and cultural values.

Law of Cultural Relics Protection (November 19, 1982), Article 2: Within the boundaries of the People's Republic of China, the following cultural relics with historic, artistic and scientific values are under state protection. 1. Ancient cultural relics, ancient tombs and funerary objects, ancient architectures, rock grottoes and stone inscriptions with historic, artistic and scientific values. 2. Architectures and relics which are related to important historic events, revolutionary movements and historic figures, and thus having important memorial and educational significance and values as historical data. . . . Article 5: The ownership of memorial relics, ancient architectures and traditional cultural relics belonging to collective groups and individuals is protected by state laws, and owners must abide by relevant laws of preservation. (quote from Ministry of Construction; the Administration of Cultural Relics)

In my research, the multileveled nature of the legal system refers to the situation in which the People's Congress and its standing committee in different levels have the supreme authority to enact laws. Meanwhile, the Administrative agencies such as the State Council, the one in the national level, also hold certain legislative power. In essence, both the State Council and the provincial People's Congress and its standing committee can issue local administrative regulations. Also, a large municipality's People's Congress and its standing committee can issue its own local administrative regulations with the approval of its higher-level provincial People's Congress; those local administrative regulations have to be put on record with the national People's Congress.

Furthermore, the provincial People's Congress in minority autonomous areas can issue its own administrative regulations according to its minority politics, economic situation, and cultural characteristics, with the approval from the upper-level People's Congress. Ministries and commissions under the State Council and provincial and major municipal government can issue regulations according to laws and administrative regulations. For example, different government levels of tourism administrative can issue regulations for tourism activity, which need to be put on record with the State Council, while regulations issued by local tourism administrations need to be put on record with the State Council and the local People's Congress (Zhang, 2009; Fu, 2012). All regulations must be put on record with the national People's Congress's standing committee, and they must not contradict any laws in the nation's Constitution.

Higher and local administrative regulations relevant to cultural relics preservation in Huangshan include Specifications for the Implementation of the Cultural Relics Protection Act of the P.R.C., Provisional Regulations on Management of Scenery Spots and Cultural

Interests, Rules of the Implementation of the City Planning Act of the People's Republic of China in Anhui Province, Rules for the Implementation of the Cultural Relics Protection Act of the P.R.C., and Regulations for the Preservation of Ancient Residential Buildings in Southern Anhui Province. The last listed serves as the most detailed set of cultural relics preservation regulation relevant to the case studies in my research. Several articles in this regulation stand out regarding how it affects local residents.

Article 2: All historical dwellings in this regulation refer to architectures built before AD 1911 with historic, artistic, and scientific value, which include individual houses, ancestral halls, temples, academic colleges, etc. from ancient times.

Article 16: Different government levels hold responsibility for the historical buildings in their district.

Article 17: The repair and preservation of historical buildings cannot violate the principle of "no change on its original formation." The agency hired to preserve historical houses should be approved by the administrative departments. The preservation plan should also be approved by the administrative departments for cultural relics.

Article 18: The owner or user of a historical building should be responsible for its preservation. If there is financial difficulty in doing so, the local government can offer some help.

Article 21: All behaviors that destroy historical buildings are forbidden. 3

The alteration and repair of historical buildings built before AD 1911 is strictly controlled. Local governments supervise the implementation of the regulation, and the local villagers who own the historical buildings are responsible for their preservation; that preservation work and restoration should be done by a professional team recognized by local governments. According to the regulations, when the owner cannot afford to pay for a professional team to repair a building, the local government may pay for it. This is where tension arises for villagers; the articles contradict the newly issued Real Right Law. See Fig. 2.3.

3 From <http://www.law-lib.com/lawhtm/1997/30347.htm>
From *The Protection Regulation of Historical Villages in Southern Anhui Province*, translated by the author

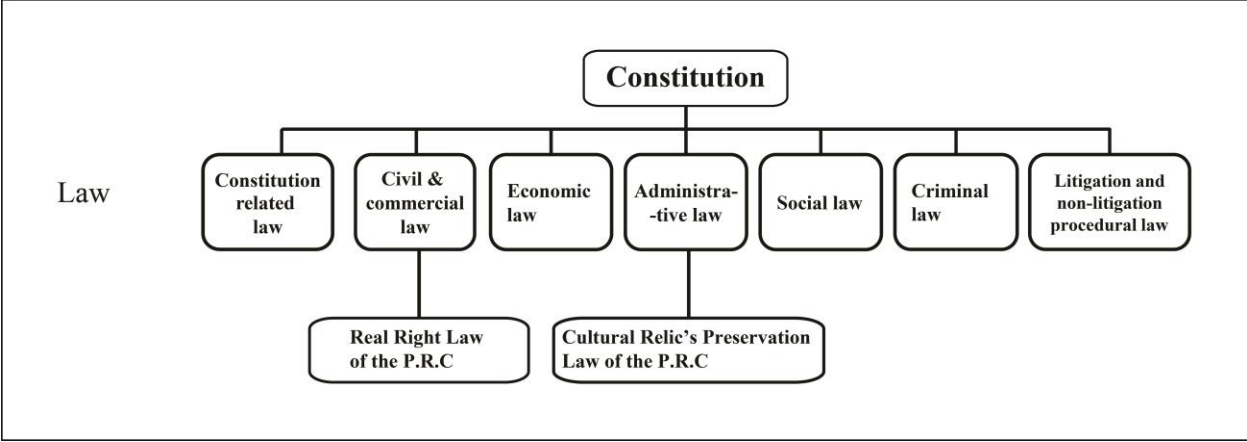


Figure 2.3: Relationship between Real Right Law and Cultural Relics Preservation Law. (By author.)

Various scholars have discussed the contradiction between the Real Right Law and the Cultural Relics Preservation Law. According to Hongbing Liu (2008), the Real Right Law falls in the private law category, which is aimed at manipulating relationships arising from the ownership and circulation of goods or capital among equal subjects. The Cultural Relics Preservation Law is in the public law category, which intends to balance the social relationships created by the state’s management of national cultural relics (Liu 2008). Additionally, the Real Right Law is a general law while the Cultural Relics Preservation Law is a special law, which follows the principle that special laws supersede general laws. Liu argues that the Cultural Relics Preservation Law does not function well and that it violates citizens’ legal rights in relation to cultural relic ownership.

This is a problematic and complicated issue. Influenced by the then-Soviet Union, Chinese law maintains that land and cultural relics are state owned. Normally, it is the central government that controls property rights, but it is impossible for it to control cultural relics in individual communities. As such, local governments become the entities that actually own the cultural relics. It is at this juncture where the issue of sharing and cooperation among various governments emerges.

The case in Anhui involves land and cultural relic property rights. Property rights refer to both ownership and right to use. In Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun, the lands belong to the state. Most historical buildings are privately owned, but some, especially ancestral halls, are state owned. State-owned properties have been given to tourism companies as attractions, and the companies have taken charge of their preservation. Companies have also rented some privately owned houses for conversion into tourist attractions. Private properties not rented by the companies, however, remain the responsibility of the individual owners. It is in this last group where tension is experienced because of the conflicts between the Real Right Law and the Cultural Relics Preservation Law. According to the Real Right Law, local owners have property rights allowing them to use, change, convert, alter, raze, and/or sell their buildings. However, according to the preservation law, owners cannot alter their buildings if they were built before 1911. This legal overlap has fueled tensions among local residents who want to alter or rebuild their houses but who cannot because it is illegal under one of the laws. Furthermore, this overlap leaves latitude for local governments to implement either or both of the laws. More details are revealed in the following case study chapters.

Conclusion

My research aims to combine political economy with critical tourism studies that focus on representation, discourse, and identity. Through this dual lens, I explore the main stakeholders' role and their perceptions of tourism development; specifically I address research questions about the governmentality of the Chinese state in heritage tourism, government-private sector cooperation, and tourism's influence on local communities. In addition, in the context of heritage tourism, I examine the issue of authenticity and the process of heritage designation.

CHAPTER 3

HONGCUN



Figs. 3.1–3.2: Pictures of Hongcun. (By author)

Hongcun, a village originally settled during the Southern Song Dynasty (1131–1162) (Wang and Luo, 2002: 27), now has 137 historical houses (Wu, 2011). After the international success of the Academy Award-winning film *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* (shot partially in Hongcun), the village began to be known for its beautiful environment and historical houses. Tourism development was initially undertaken by the local government and then handled by the local community, but it did not blossom under either group's management. In 1997, with the investment promotion policy and a formal contract with the county government, a private sector company, Jingyi, was authorized to develop tourism in Hongcun. In 2002, the village was designated as a World Heritage Site, as was Xidi. Since then, tourism has boomed. In 2012, 1.3 million people visited Hongcun village, and total ticket income was 77.56 million RMB⁴. Tourism production in Hongcun thus serves as a benchmark for similar historical villages because of its success in attracting a large number of tourists, creating employment, fueling the local economy, and urbanizing the local community. Thriving tourism, however, has created tensions within the local community.

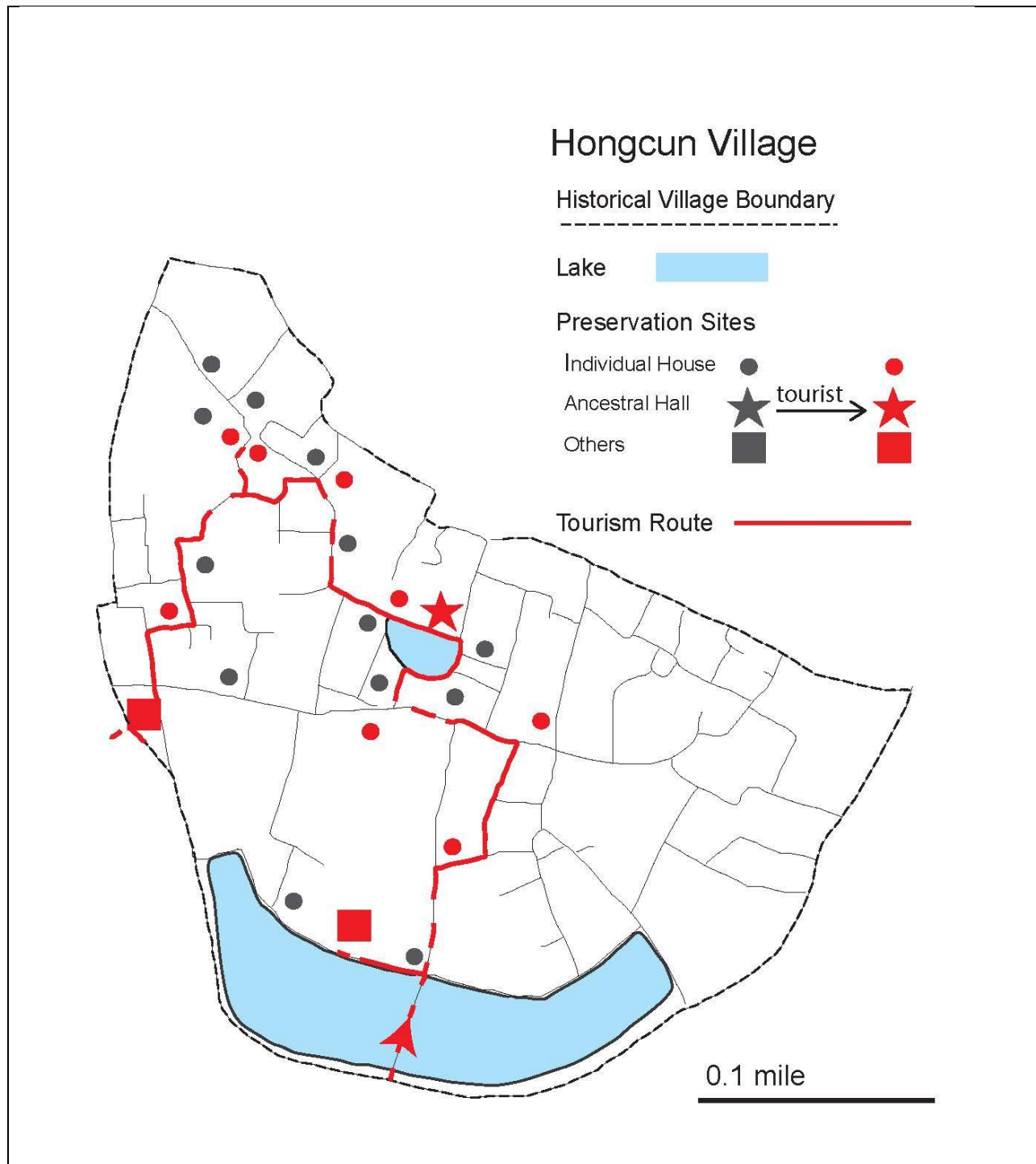
In this chapter, I explore the politics of Hongcun's representation by the tourism company, the role of various governments in Hongcun's designation as a World Heritage Site, and its tourism development. Additionally, I examine the local community's life via information gained in ethnographic interviews.

Hongcun on Display

Tourists researching potential vacation destinations on the Internet with the hopes of finding one that is both interesting and educational, may come across the images in Figs. 3.1–3.2, whose caption reads, “A village in a Chinese painting.” The more detailed description claims that this

⁴ RMB: Currency used in China.

place is a well-preserved village built 300–400 years ago. Tourists who become intrigued by the beautiful pictures and the available tourism package might contemplate making the necessary plans that will ultimately engage them in heritage tourism. They will arrive at Huangshan city and then go to Hongcun in Yi County, a 90-minute ride. After buying an entrance ticket for 104 yuan, tourists will be assigned a tourist guide and begin the tour.



Map 3.1: Tourism map of Hongcun. (By author.)

The red dashed line on the map delineates the tour route, which takes approximately 45 minutes and includes a visit to a state-owned ancestral hall, a historical school, and four historical houses owned by local residents. The types of historical sites on the tour are provided

in Table 3.1. Classes of Historical Sites in Hongcun

Type of structure	Definition
Individual house	Houses built before AD 1919 (the last year of the Qing Dynasty)
Ancestral hall	Hall to memorialize ancestors
Bridge	Bridges built before 1919, with stories attached
Other ⁵	Ancient academies, temples, temple gates, and other architecture built before 1919, and old trees

(By author)

On the Hongcun tour, why are only some sites, such as the ancestral hall and specific houses, put on display and not others?

The head of public relations at Jingyi (the Hongcun tourism company) explained the rationale behind what sites are included in the tour:

All the historical houses are very similar. All the historical buildings you saw have similar inside decoration. The tourism route we chose is the most convenient for tourists. The tourists who come to a historical village will stay no more than two hours. As such, we have to choose a competitive tourism route. Types of heritage sites shown to the tourists are not repeated. We chose the ancestral hall, an academic school in our history, and dwelling places of ordinary villagers, so tourists can see the best tourism sites. (Interview with head of public relations at Jingyi, 06/21/2013)

Essentially, Jingyi designed what it saw as the perfect tourism route to show the perfect heritage sites to tourists. Hongcun's local residents' perspectives on the tourism routes are another story.

Two historical sites that impressed me the most were a privately owned ancestral hall and one specific house. Tourists could visit both if they paid the additional gate fee charged by each owner. The ancestral hall's owner decorated the building with different kinds of plaques and named it the Plaque Museum (Fig. 3.3).

⁵ Others in Hongcun refer to the academy and some ancient trees.



Figure 3.3: The Plaque Museum. (By author.)

I did not get an opportunity to interview the owner formally, but we did have an informal conversation. He purchased the house at a fairly low price during an auction held by the Yi County government in the 1990s. He did not join the tourism company and open his house to tourists on the formal tour route because he did not like the contract proposed by the company, especially the small share of money it offered.

The owner of another historical house that impressed me shared a similar reason for not being on the tour. His house appeared to have much potential as a unique tourist attraction, but it was not on the company's tour. The owner became very agitated and angry during the interview when providing the following explanation:

I refuse to cooperate with the tourism company. We will lose part of our freedom if we join it. It gives you only a small amount of money, just like a candy wrapper without the real candy. You can only imagine the sweet. Every day, there will be 30,000 people. We cannot afford that. It would cost 3,000 yuan each month to hire a cleaning person and a door guard. Tourists are all cheated. They could see more than 100 houses, but now, fewer than five houses are shown; only three of them are privately owned. All the houses shown by the company are

those joining its tourism plan. The tourism company pays the private owner thousands of yuan each month. (Interview with a local senior villager, 06/06/2013)

Jingyi chose approximately seven historical houses to show to tourists; the number was limited because of the tour's 45-minute duration. The selection of which houses are included is based on negotiations between homeowners and the tourism company, not on an assessment of historical value. Those negotiations constitute an economic activity. The demand of the company and the supply of houses available from local villagers make up the heritage shown to tourists.

Once designated as World Heritage Sites, Xidi and Hongcun became very famous and attracted thousands of tourists wishing to visit the special architectural and village forms built according to the traditional Chinese philosophy of feng shui. These two villages have dominated the heritage tourism industry in the city of Huangshan over the past 20 years. Jingyi sought to find something new or unique to stimulate tourism even further. As a World Historical Site, Hongcun cannot be largely altered, so the tourism company developed a historical pageant based on a real story in the village's history, titled *Hongcun A Ju* (宏村阿菊). (See Fig. 3.4)



Figure 3.4: *Hongcun A Ju*. (By author.)

The head of public relations at Jingyi summarized the story for me:

A Ju is a real person in the region's history whose picture is hung on the wall of the ancestral hall. She designed the water system in Hongcun and built an ancestral hall. She was an awesome Huizhou female, especially given that females are not recognized as having status in ancient China. *Hongcun A Ju* shows that she is not a passive female but a strong and wise Huizhou female. It is produced by a professional team [Canada Show Company]. (Interview with Jingyi's head of public relations, 06/21/2013)

The story portrayed in the play is that of a married woman whose husband goes out of town for business; after he leaves, the woman gives birth to a baby, whom she raises to become a knowledgeable person. In addition, A Ju is portrayed as a strong woman who even fights off robbers during the time her husband is away.

The story stresses that the Huizhou woman was very brave and could raise the whole village during her husband's absence, but her main goal and happiness were possible only through her reunion with her husband, which is consistent with depictions of women in the Ming Dynasty. It is interesting that, at a time when Chinese women's social status is increasing, the show developed in Hongcun however focuses on the service role of women in ancient times. The play is very unique and piques people's interest and curiosity.

Recrafting a true story from history to create uniqueness is a strategy to attract tourists; constructing or embellishing certain aspects of a historical fact while silencing others becomes part of tourism development. Similar to the cartographic silence of propaganda maps, designers hide facts they do not want people to notice (Monmonier, 1991).

The performance also raises the issue of the relationship between heritage and history. David Lowenthal argues that heritage is something that is packaged for certain purposes while history is a selective description by historians using standard techniques based on principles of science and truth (Lowenthal, 1985). Historians have a set of standard rules and technologies, such as archeology, to illustrate facts in history, while heritage is constructed by people in

various roles for different purposes. Heritage cannot necessarily be objective, scientific, or true. People depicting heritage use stories based on history to increase credibility, to make the narrative sound real, and thus to serve their purposes. There are circumstances in which people construct heritage out of nowhere or nothing; when they need a story to brand a location but there are no unique events in the place's history, they may create a story.

To increase the profitability of tourism, Jingyi constructed this historical pageant to represent Hongcun, which is unique (for now) in its heritage tourism in the Huangshan area. One must ask, however, how was Jingyi able to build a big stage near Hongcun to hold this historical pageant if preservation regulations do not allow for substantial changes/construction to occur based on its World Heritage Site status. The answer involves the roles of various governments. They allowed Jingyi to buy forested or agricultural lands so they could be cleared to build a hotel and a stage near the historical village. The president of Jingyi, Huang Nubo, claimed these lands are an investment that would lead to more profits from real estate than tourism income. As such, the roles of various governments need to be explored in terms of tourism development and the designation of World Heritage Sites.

Why World Heritage Site Status?

Hongcun's designation as a World Heritage Site largely changed its development destiny. During my time in the field, a series of books in a local bookstore caught my attention. Its name was *Huizhou's 5,000 Villages*. Although I was aware of the existence of many historical villages in Huizhou, the number 5,000 still shocked me. Only a few villages mentioned in the publication were familiar to me, even though I had been to the area more than three times and have researched it since 2009. Why were only a few of the 5,000 villages well known? Also, why were only Xidi and Hongcun designated as World Heritage Sites while others were not? The

following is a description of Xidi and Hongcun on UNESCO's website:

The two traditional villages of Xidi and Hongcun preserve to a remarkable extent the appearance of non-urban settlements of a type that largely disappeared or was transformed during the last century. Their street plan, their architecture and decoration, and the integration of houses with comprehensive water systems are unique surviving examples.⁶

Xidi and Hongcun villages were designated as World Heritage Sites in 2000 by satisfying three criteria:

Criteria (iii): The villages of Xidi and Hongcun are graphic illustrations of a type of human settlement created during a feudal period and based on a prosperous trading economy.

Criteria (iv): In their buildings and their street patterns, the two villages of southern Anhui reflect the socio-economic structure of a long-lived settled period of Chinese history.

Criteria (v): The traditional non-urban settlements of China, which have, to a very large extent, disappeared during the past century, are exceptionally well preserved in the villages of Xidi and Hongcun. (From the UNESCO website)

In this chapter, I look into the reasons why Hongcun and Xidi were designated as World Heritage Sites and other villages in the Huizhou region were not because of the strikingly different levels of tourism development between World Heritage Sites and other villages. Recognition and designation by UNESCO drastically changes the destiny of some historical villages not only by promoting tourism but also by increasing housing price.

I began my research with archival materials. In the local chronicles of Huangshan city, I found a detailed description of the application process for World Heritage Site designation for Xidi and Hongcun.

The proposal for Yi County applying for the WHS was first raised by an architecture professor at Tsinghua University in 1989. During that year, the vice mayor of Huangshan city visited the National Ministry of Construction and discussed the prospect of applying for WHS. In 1996, a group of central government officials and experts visited Xidi and Hongcun. They also visited many other historical villages including Chengkan and Xucun. During that year, the Anhui Construction Department listed Xidi and Hongcun as chosen villages for applying as WHS. (Local chronicles of Huangshan city, 2010: 2390–91)

Based on information in these chronicles, the Huangshan government led and promoted this process, and Xidi and Hongcun seemed to be the choice from the beginning. I uncovered another

⁶ <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1002>.

version of the designation story, however, during an interview with a town government official in Huangshan. He provided his thoughts on why Chengkan, another historical village, did not receive World Heritage Site status:

At that time, Chengkan and Xidi had been chosen to apply for the World Cultural Heritage Designation. Hongcun had not been included. The first batch was to submit application materials to the Construction Department in Anhui Province. The upper government wanted us to apply, so then we applied. However, we did not give it a lot of attention and did not provide sound documents. Also, the natural environment in Chengkan at that time was terrible. The pigs and cows were everywhere. Another reason is that the village of Hongcun is very big. The number of local residents at that time was more than 3,000. The consideration at that time was not based on the value of houses or the value of Hui culture. So Chengkan was removed from the list and Hongcun was added to the list....We plan to apply for the World Cultural Heritage Site status again. (Interview with a government official, 06/06/2013)

A long conversation with this official ensued, revealing how Chengkan government officials were regretful that they had been removed from the list and how difficult it is today to become a World Heritage Site. Besides the reasons he gave that appear in the excerpt above, he offered another reason, which he implied was his personal opinion.

The leader who was responsible for making the decision of what village gets the designation in Huangshan city government came from Yi County, where Hongcun and Xidi are located. He did not inform the Chengkan government specifically how to apply for World Heritage Site status. But he told Hongcun how to prepare [a planning document, environment management and so on].

This official felt that Chengkan was better qualified to become a heritage site than Hongcun based on its historical houses and culture. To him, it was the city-level government leader's personal attachment to his hometown that led to the uneven treatment among different historical villages in the application process for World Heritage Site status. This village-level government official's perceptions on the process are—like the city-level official--affected by his personal attachment to his home village, but they do offer insights into the process and into local people's perspective.

Another explanation comes from a different government official, one serving in the city tourism administration:

The application for World Cultural Heritage designation has a history, and I happen to know this. In the early period of P.R.C., local governments did not pay attention to the WHS thing. Anhui province was very poor in the 1990s. The project of applying for World Cultural Heritage designation was assigned by the central government to Anhui provincial government. The Anhui provincial government assigned the project to Huangshan city. At first, the city government told She County to apply for it. However, the leader there was not interested and thought it would cost a lot of money. Then the city government told Yi County to apply. The government leader in Yi County was very excited about this project so they chose Xidi. It's not because other villages did not meet the requirements. This process needed a strong government involved in it. (Interview with a government official in the city tourism administration, 06/21/2013)

Similar to the government official in Chengkan, this official stressed the role of government officials in charge of county government at that time.

Other perspectives exist as well. For example, the director of the city Cultural Relics Bureau explained the process as follows:

During that time, I worked in the office that was in charge of the process. We had somewhere between three and five potential villages. Xidi and Hongcun were chosen because they had plans. Xidi made a plan in 1997, and Hongcun made a plan in 1998. Other villages in Huangshan city did not have plans. It is required by UNESCO to have a plan to get in. At that time, governments did not have the idea of making plans. Nowadays, every village has a plan, like Nanping village and Tangyue village. So other villages, such as Chengkan, were taken out of consideration because of this reason. (Interview with the head of city Cultural Relics Bureau, 06/21/2013)

Although this interviewee believes that Xidi and Hongcun were chosen because they had plans in place in 1997 and 1998, the local chronicles of Huangshan city show that the city government chose Xidi and Huangshan in 1996. At that time, Yi County government officials made a preservation plan for these two villages.

Making a preservation plan is the basis for applying for WHS. Yi County government then entrusted the Huangshan City Planning Design Institute to make the plan in 1997 and 1998. (Local chronicles, Huangshan, 2010:2391)

This quote contradicts what the head of City Cultural Relics Bureau said; it is not because Xidi and Hongcun had a preservation plan that they were chosen. Instead, they were chosen first, and that is what led them to make the preservation plan. Applying to be a World Cultural Heritage Site is truly a top-down national government-led process, but the selection was made by the Anhui provincial government, and city - and county-level governments in Huangshan.

Whether the designation of World Cultural Heritage Site was granted because of some leaders' personal attachment cannot be proven, but it is definitely a government-led process. Also, the selection is based not solely on heritage value but on county governments' preference.

An Absent Government

I did not interview local government officials in Hongcun because none were available. When I went to the government office in Hongcun village, some television reporters were interviewing the top officials. A lower-level person assisted me, but had little information. This situation led me to speculate that the village government officials here are seemingly absent—not only because I did not gain any useful information from them or their employees, but also because they have clearly delegated much of their work in tourism development to the tourism company. Ultimately, I found that the tourism company played a much more obvious role in tourism development than the local government.

Jingyi developed tourism freely at Hongcun, like in a free market, because it had approval from the local government. This situation is related to the art of governance; as Foucault discusses in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, the issue is not whether there is any governance but rather how and to what extent government becomes involved with economic activities. The seemingly absent role of Hongcun government in tourism development is explored in terms of its art of governance.

The tourism development process in Hongcun village is provided in detail in Tianyu Ying and Yongguang Zhou's 2007 article; it is summarized in Table 3.2-3.3.

Table 3.2: History of Hongcun’s Tourism Development: 1986–1999.

Year	Event	Brief description
1986–1988	Tourism was initiated by the Tourism Bureau of Yi County.	Conducted by the Tourism Bureau of Yi County; only two view spots were opened with a ticket price of 4 cents; no payment to the local; the potential for tourism had not been recognized by the community.
1994–1995	The community tried to dominate tourism development.	The local residents recognized the potential values of the village; villagers’ committee submitted reports to town and county authorities asking for a self-appointed tourism program, but the request was rejected.
1996	The town authority controlled Hongcun’s tourism development.	The villagers’ committee of Hongcun requested again; tourism development was assigned to the town authority; a town-owned corporation was founded in June, but it was depreciated by the community.
1997	A community-owned tourism corporation was founded.	The community contracted the right of tourism operation with the town authority for one year with a guarantee of about US\$3,720; a community-owned tourism corporation was founded in January, and a senior villager took the position of general manager.
1998	An external company controlled tourism development and fired the indigenous tour guide.	The community’s tourism business failed, the county government withdrew operational rights and transferred them to an external company—Jingyi Company, with several provisos outlying to Hongcun’s tourism business, including developing tourism in adjacent villages, taking over a county-owned hotel and travel agency, etc. Jingyi Corporation was founded by Jingyi to take charge of Hongcun’s tourism business for 30 years beginning in January. During the year, the indigenous tour guides were replaced by a group of nonlocal young girls. ⁷
1999	The external company reached a deal with the community on benefit allocation.	Jingyi Corporation, the community, and the tourism authority of the town came to an agreement in August to regulate tourism revenue allocation; after paying the community a fixed US\$21,118 every year, the company would take away 95 percent of the ticket income with very limited investments, 4 percent would be given to the local township government, and only 1 percent to the community.

(Reproduced from Ying and Zhou, 2007: 101)

Tourism development was originally the responsibility of the county-level government corresponding to the TVEs time period; later it was transferred to the local community. After the TVE’s failure in the market and the creation of policies encouraging private sector involvement,

⁷ When I conducted fieldwork in 2013, Jingyi claimed that 90% of its employees were local villagers [“local” means Yi County]. This was confirmed by a tour guide who told me that most of them were from Hongcun village.

an external company took over the rights to develop tourism in Hongcun via a form of rental contract. In 1997, the government of Yi County signed a contract with Jingyi, a Beijing company with capital accumulated from real estate. An employee of Jingyi explained the process the company went through to become involved in tourism development:

Jingyi Company got into Yi County through the leadership of the Yi County government. During that time, every region in China had a project for investment promotion. With that backdrop, our boss came here and was attracted to this region. Then, he signed a contract with the government in Hongcun village, as well as with the governments of some other historical villages, such as Nanping village and Guanlu village. [These three villages are all located in Yi County.] We have been running the tourism business in Hongcun since 1998, with a contract to rent the village for 30 years. It has been 15 years. (Interview with the head of public relations at Hongcun, 06/21/2013)

Investment promotion has been an important strategy taken by the Chinese government in its Open and Reform Policies which is influenced by political economic conditions outside and inside of China. The original capital accumulation of Jingyi was from investments in the real estate industry in Beijing in 1997, when it earned more than 50,000,000 yuan (roughly US\$6,250,000 at that time⁸). Huang Nubo, president of Jingyi, was originally a government official but resigned his position to participate in economic activities in 1990. This phenomenon of moving from government into the private economic sector was very common given the influence of the market in China during that time. This phenomenon—of government officials resigning their positions and moving into the private sector—is called *Xiahai*, which means ‘to step into the (market) sea to begin adventures.’ Apparently, Huang Nubo adapted well to his new environment and earned his initial fortune in real estate. Later he took on tourism development in Hongcun because of, first, a personal relationship with government officials in Yi County and, second, his personal interest in cultural relics.⁹

Jingyi’s growth path is closely related to the political economy in China. First, its founding

⁸ This amount is calculated according to the exchange rate in 1997—US\$1 = 8 yuan.

⁹ <http://www.techweb.com.cn/commerce/2009-12-17/499438.shtml>

would not have been possible before the beginning of the Open and Reform policies in 1979. Only with the encouragement of the central government could it participate in economic activities after that time. Also, Huang Nubo could earn his original fortune only because of the emergent real estate industry. In 1990, China issued policies on housing that allowed houses in cities to be commoditized. Prior to 1990, ‘working units’¹⁰ built houses and allowed employees to live in them at no cost. After 1990, houses were privatized, and anyone could buy an apartment (He and Wu, 2009). Thus, stakeholders such as Huang Nubo earned their original capital in this process.

Given both the company’s accumulated capital and favorable government policies that promoted investment by encouraging polities to engage the private sector in tourism, Jingyi Company stepped into tourism development in Hongcun. Critical was Huang Nubo’s personal friendship, *guanxi*, with Yi County government officials. This represents a common informal relationship between government officials and entrepreneurs in China (Wang and Ap, 2013). As mentioned, the central government greatly encouraged tourism development in Huangshan city because it was a way to increase economic growth (Zhang, Chong, and Ap, 1999; Xiao 2006). The monetary aspect is key, evident in part of Deng Xiaoping’s speech in Huangshan city in 1979:

What brings money first is what we should do.¹¹ Foreigners will be unsatisfied if they spent less money on tourism in China. The employees need to be paid according to their labor quality and labor time. Nine hundred million people cannot get rich at the same time. It has to be some region that gets rich first. Within that region, it has to be some people who get rich first. The foreign income from tourism needs to be shared with local government. To initiate tourism, the central government also needs to invest.¹²

This kind of uneven development is the foundation of investment promotion. After Jingyi took over tourism development in Hongcun, it built infrastructure, such as roads, parking lots, a

¹⁰ Working units are stated-owned entities, such as companies, government sector agencies, and public schools.

¹¹ <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64093/64387/9644320.html>.

¹² http://www.ah.xinhuanet.com/zhuanti/2009-06/30/content_16953827.htm.

hotel, and an outside stage for the historic pageant. Although it is natural for a tourism company to develop infrastructure to support tourism, Jingyi gained attention because its infrastructure projects all have taken place with the approval of local government officials.

Building infrastructure required obtaining agricultural land. Land in China—especially agricultural land—is strictly controlled by governments. The City Planning Law dictates that agricultural lands be strictly controlled, especially when the developer plans to change land use.¹³ However, local government officials, who had been granted power from the central government (consistent with the redistribution of power corresponding to neoliberal trends discussed in previous chapter), made it possible to take local villagers' agricultural land to build such things as roads, parking lots, and hotels.

Local governments show a positive attitude toward tourism development, and their behavior can be understood through Foucault's discussion on governmental reason: "Government, at any rate, government in this new governmental reason, is something that works with interests" (Foucault, 2008: 44). Local governments, including those of Yi County, Jilian town, and Hongcun village, all protect tourism development in Hongcun to suit their interests.

For local government leaders, the primary goal is to ensure promotion during their political career (Silamu and Seyiti, 2007). Under the Local Government Official Performance Evaluation System, the constraints faced by local governments mainly derive from upper-level governments. Thus, getting support from that upper level is especially important in local government officials keeping their jobs and pursuing promotion opportunities. This support can be gained in two ways: increasing the local GDP and establishing/maintaining social stability (Silamu and Seyiti, 2007). Tourism is seen as a way to pursue GDP growth.

¹³ <http://www.china.org.cn/english/environment/34354.htm>.

With the Tax Distribution System established in 1994, local governments share tax income with the central government. However, local entrepreneurs' income taxes belong to the local government (Liu, 2010). Thus, the local government seeks not only to increase GDP but also to obtain more tax income from local entrepreneurs. Because the government wants economic growth and believes the tourism company can greatly help increase the GDP and tax income, it works to remove any obstacles blocking Jingyi's efforts to develop tourism.

Local Community

As mentioned, Jingyi Company used local villagers' agricultural land to build infrastructure. According to one older female villager, the government forced the local villagers whose agricultural land coincided with areas Jingyi wanted to develop to sell their lands for a certain price. To make the local villagers sell their land, the government granted favors, of a sort. For example, one senior villager explained that she received permission to install a bigger window on the outside wall of her house for better light, a renovation that would not have been allowed under preservation regulations. Other villagers could not broaden their windows as she did, but she was allowed because she sold her land. It is evident that both tourism development and the Cultural Relics Preservation Regulation have largely affected, and in some cases possibly transformed, local residents' lives.

While staying in Hongcun, several things about the local villagers impressed me. I selected local villagers to interview based on who was available at the time and who agreed to be interviewed. I formally interviewed 11 local residents in Hongcun; most were store owners and senior villagers. The two I chose for the case studies were both senior villagers; they had much more time available and were willing to talk with me for more than one hour.

Case Study 1: A Grandfather

This man was quoted earlier in this chapter about the reasons why his house was excluded from the tourist route designed by the tourism company. That his house was a point of interest was made known by local villagers, not by the tourism company's website or brochures. He refused to cooperate with Jingyi because of the low price it offered as compensation. As a result, he—as a small entrepreneur inside the historical village—charged 5 yuan (less than US\$1) as a gate fee to visit his house. In addition, he offered green tea to visitors.

Interviewee: Our ancestor is [a] doctor. Brothers divided the house and each son inherited one part of it.¹⁴ The original house was built in the Qing Dynasty during Emperor Wanli's reign. Many parts got damaged. The so-called preservation by government did not make any difference. Everything [about the house] is our own. That's why we charged a gate fee in front of the house; otherwise, we wouldn't do that. Preservation has nothing to do with tourism development for us. We found the profit distribution system to be unreasonable so we did not agree to work with Jingyi.

We got nothing from Jingyi! Tourists come to visit historical architecture (instead of agricultural land). Our dwelling place is a historical house; however, they did not include us in the distribution system. They [Jingyi] did not pay us so why should we serve them? The host community got 5 percent of the gate fee. This is ridiculous. The host community is supposed to get 51 percent while they get 49 percent.

Yi: The 5 percent is shared by the whole host community? That is 2,700 yuan [US\$430] per capita right?

Interviewee: 2,700 yuan per capita only refers to farmers. Only people who hold agricultural lands could participate in that benefit sharing. If you do not hold agricultural land, you would get nothing. (Interview with the senior villager, 06/03/2013)

Information disclosed during this conversation contradicted my knowledge of the benefit-sharing system in Hongcun. Through various other interviews, I got the impression that every villager in Hongcun got 2,700 yuan in 2012, but this was not the case according to this villager. His family did not hold agricultural lands so could not share in the profits. He continued explaining the arrangement.

¹⁴ In ancient China, only sons could inherit family property; daughters were married into other families. After the parents passed away, each son received part of the property.

The tourism company could give more to the farmers, but it is unreasonable to give nothing to those of us who do not hold farm lands. This is a sail under false colors. (Interview with the senior villager, 06/03/2013)

The man's dissatisfaction with Jingyi extended to the local government. In this part of the conversation, he mentioned the conflict between the host community and the tourism company or the government. This conflict was reported by a journalist in *Southern Weekly*. Later, the *Southern Weekly* apologized to the tourism company, and the journalist was fired. The grandfather explained:

The corruption is like a cancer in our society. The government officials got lots of money and benefits from Jingyi Company, which makes them turn a blind eye to what the company did. Sometimes, the government would hire people to suppress the local villagers if they quarreled with Jingyi Company. The company has bribed different sectors, but there is no use to report it to the public. For example, when the *Southern Weekly* reported the conflict, the upper-level government replaced the local government officials while the local situation remained the same. They even changed the editors at *Southern Weekly*. (Interview with the senior villager, 06/03/2013)

The conflict reported in the *Southern Weekly* newspaper was about the leasing of Hongcun to Jingyi; the contract was between the company and the Yi County government rather than the government in Hongcun village. The contract required Jingyi to pay the government 170,000 yuan every year; 95 percent of the income would belong to Jingyi, 4 percent to the Jilian town government, and 1 percent to the Hongcun village government. In addition, the company had to pay the Yi County government 1,600,000 yuan to compensate for the losses incurred by a hotel that was run by the government.¹⁵

Local residents were angry with this contract and felt they had been sold out without their knowledge. They took many actions to resist tourism development. The head of Jingyi's public relations department stated,

After 2000, Hongcun became a World Heritage Site designated by UNESCO. The annual income from the tourism gate fee increased from 170,000 yuan to millions of yuan. The local villagers thought they were cheated (because they were jealous). So they blocked the route of the tourism bus, put the excrement of their livestock at tourism sites such as the ancestral hall

¹⁵ Information cited from "Pain of Hongcun" in *Southern Weekly*, available in Chinese online at <http://you.ctrip.com/travels/huangshan19/733645.html>

and the academy. They greatly impeded tourism in Hongcun. So our boss signed another contract with the local government in Hongcun village that 67 percent of the annual income from tourism belongs to the company, 20 percent goes to the Hongcun Heritage Preservation Foundation, 5 percent goes to the local villagers, and 8 percent goes to the Hongcun town government. (Interview with Jingyi's head of public relations, 06/21/2013)

According to the report in *Southern Weekly*, local villagers not only put excrement at the heritage sites but also accused the Yi County government and Jingyi of abusing their property rights.

Table 3.3: History of Hongcun's Tourism Development: 2000–2002

Year	Event	Brief description
2000	The locals requested the tourism developmental rights back again, but failed.	More than 300 villagers gathered in November and later submitted a report to the county government, requesting the tourism business back. The county government rejected the community's request and claimed the right of tourism development should be separated from the community's ownerships of the historic structures and should belong to the governments.
2001	730 villagers appealed to the court.	More than 730 villagers (over 60 percent of the local population) signed an appeal to the Anhui Provincial Court in September, indicating the county government's encroachment of their rights in tourism, after having their first appeal denied by the Court of Huangshan City in July; the community's second attempt failed.
2002	A new agreement on revenue allocation was achieved.	After several rounds of negotiation, the main stakeholders reached a new agreement on tourism revenue allocation; Jingyi Company would receive 67 percent of the ticket income, the county government 20 percent, the local township government 5 percent, and the community 8 percent. The locals received US\$37 per capita at the end of that year, but some residents were still unsatisfied.

(Reproduced from Ying and Zhou, 2007: 101.)

By 2013, when I was in the area to do fieldwork, most locals received US\$430 per capita, but only those who held a *hukou* (household register) in Hongcun village could receive this benefit. Therefore, not only were those who received the money dissatisfied with the small amount of money, but those excluded from receiving the benefit were angry, such as the grandfather I

interviewed.

Case Study 2: A Grandmother

After acquiring this woman's permission to interview her, we sat in front of her house, where she often sat selling souvenirs and water (I mention her in my introductory chapter), and we chatted about her life and the village. During our conversation, tourists stopped by to buy souvenirs or to ask for directions to certain tourist sites; we would stop our conversation so she could assist them. She explained her situation.

In 1999 I sold my agricultural land to the tourism company to build a parking lot for tour buses at the price of 8,000 yuan per *mu*¹⁶ (roughly \$7,762 per acre). They asked what my stipulations were to sell my land. I said I wanted to make the window of my house bigger. The government approved it. Usually, to alter the outside of the house, we need to apply to the local government, and we need to pay a deposit. If the house turns out OK, the deposit will be returned; if not, the deposit will never be returned. Since I did not have the land to cultivate anymore after selling it to the tourism company, I got a job with the company to clean the road in the village. Then when I got older, I started to just sit in front of my house to sell souvenirs. (Interview with a local senior villager, 06/21/2013)

The locals were not only restricted in relation to alternations to their historical houses, but they were also forced to change their occupation and lifestyle: from engaging in agriculture to working for the local tourism company, which is categorized as a service industry.

According to one tourist company employee, more than 90 percent of the local villagers are engaged in tourism services, running family inns or restaurants or selling souvenirs, for example. It is much easier to earn money working in these jobs than engaging in agriculture. The employee also mentioned that at the beginning of tourism development, the local community was against tourism because they could not raise cattle near their houses and their behaviors were under strict surveillance. Local villagers have since changed their opinions of tourism, according to this employee, who explained that villagers' attitudes changed naturally as time went on and

¹⁶ Mu (亩): a unit for measuring area. 1 mu = 666.66 square meters.

as acceptance of tourism grew. Once the locals recognized the benefits, they changed their minds and altered their traditional lifestyle.

They still raise pigs, but not many. They have already changed their way of life. More than 90 percent of the people directly or indirectly engage in the tourism industry. They opened Happy Farmer Inns or restaurants, or are selling souvenirs. This can make much more money than what they could earn working as migrant workers in big cities. The local villagers also make more money through tourism than through agriculture. Money comes in faster. (Interview with Jingyi employee, 06/21/2013)

During interviews with local villagers in Hongcun, most of them mentioned their agricultural lands had been taken over by the government and sold to Jingyi to build modern infrastructures to serve tourism. As a result, their lifestyle changed. Following is an excerpt from an interview revealing how local lives were transformed.

We local villagers got used to the fact that the government took our agricultural lands. After several years, we got some benefit from tourism development by receiving some money from the gate fee and doing some small business in front of our own houses. Some villagers whose family lacked young labor would rent their house to others to run as family inns for the price from around 30,000 yuan to 60,000 yuan per year [roughly US\$4,777–\$9,554]. There are more than 100 family inns in our village. We are allowed to open family inns on the tourist routes but not to sell souvenirs in front of private houses on the tourist routes. My house is not on the tourist routes, so I can put stuff on the outside in front of it. The local government has assigned a group of young people to monitor that we don't do business on tourist routes. They look like militiamen (Interview with a local senior villager, 06/21/2013).

Tourism has frequently been seen by government and planning officials as an opportunity to stimulate the local economy, attract foreign investment, produce employment, and introduce modern values and lifestyles (Telfer, 2002, quoted in Palomino-Schalscha, 2012: 189). Scholars have also pointed out that tourism can induce “urbanization, industrialization, nation-state building and the replacement of traditional patterns of thoughts and beliefs with a notion of scientific economic rationality” (Willis and Kumar, 2009: 112, quoted in Palomino-Schalscha, 2012: 189).

In summary, the local residents' lives have been largely transformed by tourism development and the strict Cultural Relics Preservation Law. Some locals have appropriated heritage themselves by selling souvenirs or creating tourist displays on or around their homes (when

allowed), while many transform their dwelling places into family inns. These changes are reflections of a booming tourism industry in Hongcun, an industry initiated by local government and approved by central government. The designation of World Cultural Heritage Site also promotes heritage tourism in Hongcun. Overall, Hongcun serves as a benchmark for adjacent villages desiring development.

CHAPTER 4
CHENGGAN



Figures 4.1–4.2: Photos of Chengkan. (By author.)

Located in Huizhou County, adjacent to Yi County, Chengkan has a history reaching back more than 1,100 years. According to a member of the Luo clan, some of his ancestors migrated here from Jiangxi province to avoid warfare. Chengkan's village structure is based on "unification of Yin (Cheng) and Yang (Kan), unification of Human and Nature" (Wu, 2011). With its unique village structure, more than 30 historical houses built during the Ming Dynasty, and 140 houses built during Qing Dynasty, Chengkan became another potential village for heritage tourism (Wu, 2011). As such, tourism development was first undertaken by the local town government. After failing in the market and perceiving Hongcun as the benchmark, Chengkan's government focused on attracting external capital to invest in tourism.

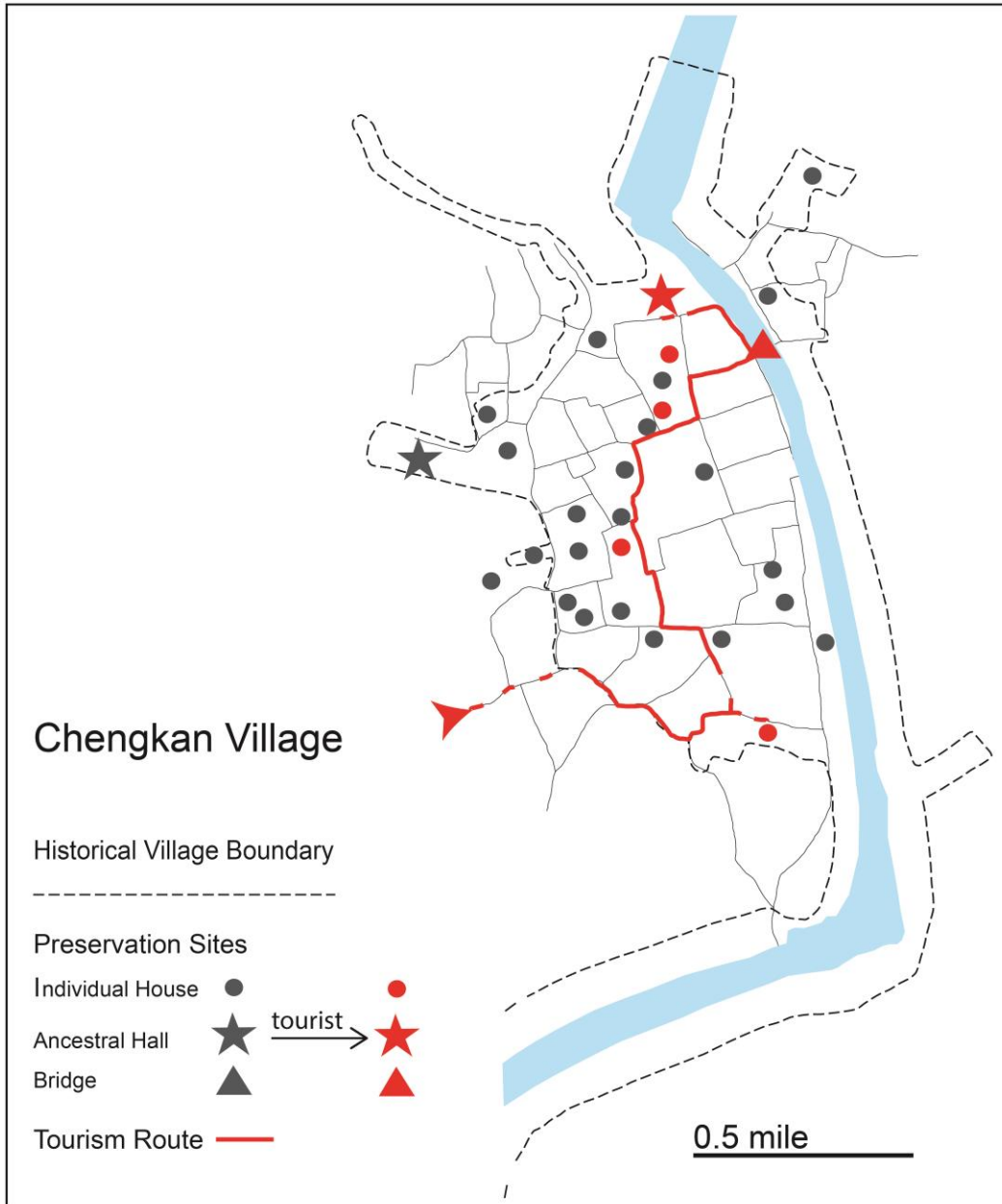
With local government's support, a local tourism company, the Chengkan Eight Diagram¹⁷ Village Tourism Company, was organized, and Chengkan was branded as the "No. 1 Feng Shui Village." To compete with Hongcun, representations of Chengkan were largely transformed through the selection and reconstruction of various heritage sites. This highlighted the issue of identity for the local community, which sought to have accurate depictions of their village's history on display. At the same time, strict cultural relics preservation regulations were imposed, provoking tensions.

Chengkan on Display

As a tourist seeking authenticity, one may be disappointed with the commodification of Hongcun. As a Hongcun tourist said to me, "I would recommend you to go to Nanping, where there are not as many tourists." With a smaller number of tourists but similar cultural assets, Nanping seems to offer some foreign tourists the chance to experience what they believe to be a more authentic setting. For the same reason, that tourist also recommended Chengkan. Tourists

¹⁷ Eight Diagrams is a diagram used in feng shui.

may anticipate that Chengkan will be very different and more authentic. Initially, they will find some similarities, such as the required gate fee and a 40–45-minute's tour with an assigned tourist guide.



Map 4.1: Tourism map of Chengkan. (By author.)

Tourists are guided through the village along a pre-established route, shown with the dashed line on the map, stopping at the specific places highlighted on the map: three individual houses, an old bridge, and an ancestral hall. Questions arise again about other houses that are not on the tour and about the blank and gray places on the map.

Chengkan seemed to have a much more obvious selection process, with a small number of heritage sites on display, than Hongcun. In Hongcun, the houses on the tour tended to be either nationally owned houses, houses whose property rights were transferred during the land reform¹⁸ period, or private houses contracted by the tourism company. However, in Chengkan, some state-owned property was excluded from the tourist route, such as a big ancestral hall. The village owns two ancestral halls, and their destinies are very different. One is open to tourists and the other is not. Figs. 4.3 and 4.4 show the two halls.



Figure 4.3: Ancestral hall open to tourists: Bao Lun Ge. (By author.)

¹⁸ Land reform here refers to the Land Reform Law of P.R.C. issued in 1950. It mainly transformed land ownership.



Figure 4.4: Ancestral hall not open to tourists. (By author.)

Fig. 4.4 shows a bigger hall, which was the main ancestral hall in Chengkan. Based on its role in history and its location at the entrance to the village, one would expect it to be on the route, but it is not. It was in a state of disrepair, and the tourism company—or the government—claimed it did not have money to fix and maintain it. Based on an informal conversation with a student from East China Normal University who also conducted fieldwork in Chengkan, the government fixed only those heritage sites that required the least amount of work and cost. As a result, this big ancestral hall stood forgotten, eroding as time passed.

Even though this big hall is located near the entrance to the historical village, few tourists notice it, in part because it is not highlighted by the tour guide and in part because its back faces the entrance, making it look like a wall from that vantage point. This spatial arrangement made it possible for the Chengkan Eight Diagram Village Tourism Company to ignore it.

Another state-owned property excluded from the route is a stone bridge located outside the village. One local villager said that, according to folklore, the bridge has gold inside: if Chengkan were ever in trouble, villagers could dig out the gold to save the whole village. This suggests that the old bridge is recognized as an important heritage site by local villagers.

However, because the bridge is not located within the village boundary and would add time to the tour, it was not chosen as an attraction. It appears that time efficiency is more important than true historical value. Exclusion of both the larger, more historically relevant ancestral hall and the stone bridge illustrates some of the influential criteria in tourist site selection. Buildings are more likely to be chosen if they are in better structural shape, and structures, in general, that are spatially closer to other heritage sites are favored.

To compete with Hongcun, planners for Chengkan had to find or develop the village's own unique characteristic or focus. The main marketing strategy was to emphasize the feng shui philosophy, a traditional Chinese philosophy that frames the world with two factors: yin and yang. Later, it was used by some to predict the future and to avoid difficulties in life. The Chengkan Eight Diagram Village Tourism Company adopts several methods to emphasize and manipulate the feng shui philosophy all around Chengkan. It tries to make Chengkan very unique by connecting the concept of feng shui to the surrounding terrain. The tourist guide explained it to the tourists specifically according to *Zhouyi*, a classical book on feng shui philosophy.

A monument at the entrance to Chengkan details how the village situates its feng shui (Fig. 4.5).



Figure 4.5: The Eight Diagrams Monument. Its script reads, The village lies in natural chart of Eight Diagrams custom, corresponding to the innate Eight Diagrams. The whole village is surrounded by eight mountains, forming a congenital Diagrams eight position. There is a river named Zhongchun meandering through the village from the north to the south forming the black and white dividing line between Yin and Yang Eight Diagrams fish. (By author.)



Figure 4.6: Tourism planning map.¹⁹

The map in Fig. 4.6 suggests how Chengkan “lies in natural chart of Eight Diagrams custom.” The tourism company assigned each mountain a name discussed in *Zhouyi* to show how Chengkan was developed specifically according to feng shui. For example, nearby Liwang Mountain was assigned the Kun diagram (坤卦), with a metaphor of the earth or the land that nurtures everything but does not require any return.

The question of whether the feng shui philosophy was really considered by the ancestors or if it is merely constructed by the tourism company cannot be categorically answered. It does raise the issue of the construction of discourse and its extent, which brings to mind my visit to the “Holy City” in the Wichita Mountains in Oklahoma in the United States. The Holy City is a heritage site largely accepted by the area’s inhabitants even though it is socially constructed. A group of people came to the area and noticed the physical landscape perfectly matched a

¹⁹ This picture was downloaded from http://image.baidu.com/i?ct=503316480&z=&tn=baiduimagedetail&ipn=d&word=%E5%91%88%E5%9D%8E%E5%85%AB%E5%8D%A6%E5%9B%BE&step_word=&ie=utf-8&in=13035&cl=2&lm=-1&st=-1&pn=7&rn=1&di=105250471600&ln=1977&fr=&&fmq=1385505707979_R&ic=0&s=&se=1&sme=0&tab=&wdth=&height=&face=0&is=&istype=2&ist=&jit=&objurl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww2.sinaimg.cn%2Fmw600%2Fbfd882gw1e2rkcjfj8v4j.jpg#pn7&-1&di105250471600&objURLhttp%3A%2F%2Fwww2.sinaimg.cn%2Fmw600%2Fbfd882gw1e2rkcjfj8v4j.jpg&fromURLippr_z2C%24qAzdH3FAzdH3Fojtkw_z%26e3Bojtk5_z%26e3Bv54AzdH3F8aadnAzdH3FpAzdH3FzgH08iD7B&W512&H284&T8475&S62&TPjpg. I saw this map in a tourism planning document when I interviewed the employee of Chengkan’s tourism company. However, I was not allowed to take pictures.

topographical description in the Bible. As such, they built the Holy City and attributed each nearby hill with a role according to the Bible. The Holy City is obviously a cultural landscape that was built based on the physical landscape and its association with a story in the Bible. The precondition of this construction was acceptance, use, or knowledge of the Bible. The feng shui interpretation of the natural landscape around Chengkan may work like this; the tourism company, anticipating tourists driven by feng shui, imposed feng shui on it with no evidence that feng shui played an integral role in Chengkan's location. This superimposition of feng shui principles by the tourism company is a marketing tool, one used at various heritage sites in Chengkan, such as the water garden.

'Water Garden' is the term used to describe the entrance to the village; the area is constructed in the style of a garden, with a well, a few trees, and a stone monument denoting the place as the entrance to the village (Fig. 4.7).



Figure 4.7: Water garden at Chengkan. (By author.)

When I arrived at the village, the tour guide explained how the water garden was designed according to feng shui but did not mention it had been built recently. A monument in the water garden with the inscription Dong Han Water Garden (东汉水口) misleads tourists by stating it was built during the Dong Han Dynasty; in reality, the garden came into being only very recently. According to an employee of Chengkan Eight Diagram Village Tourism Company:

There are many similar historical villages, like Xidi and Hongcun. We branded Chengkan with feng shui. The water garden and the bridge were built recently. They suggest the Eight Diagrams landscape in feng shui. We advertised Chengkan as the first feng shui village in China, with the slogan “Visit Chengkan, have a life without difficulties” (游呈坎一生无坎). In Chinese, “difficulty” is the same character as Kan in the name of Chengkan. ... Our boss knows feng shui very well. He had an ancestor who was a feng shui expert. I heard that it was designed by him. (Interview with employee of the tourism company, 06/07/2013)

This interview revealed that Chengkan had difficulty competing with Hongcun and Xidi because they have the World Heritage Site status, so the tourism company in Chengkan built the water garden and created a story to make the village unique and attractive to tourists eager for good luck and a life free from difficulties. They appeal to the belief that there is a mysterious force guiding our lives, which the Communist Party considers to be mere superstition. Karl Marx argued that as production increases fairytales will diminish because people will have the power to control nature (Harvey, 1990). The Communist Party directed citizens to believe in communism rather than religion. However, the local government did not regulate the tourism company’s feng shui marketing because it did not cause any problems.

My interviews revealed that what *is* important to the government is how to support the tourism company in its efforts to attract more tourists. This is closely related to the policy direction of the central government to encourage development and to the personnel promotion system within the Chinese government (discussed in Chapter 3 and later in this chapter).

Some tensions have arisen in Chengkan, however, over the new water garden. According to a senior villager there:

It's difficult to relate to the history of the water garden where we charge the gate fee now [because it implicates the tourism company]. In 2005, it was fertile agriculture land. The stone monument and the bridge are on what was agricultural land and now is called the Dong Han Water Garden. The center of our country was at Xi'an during Dong Han Dynasty. Huizhou was a marginalized place and considered barbaric at that time. Our ancestors came here during the Han Dynasty as refugees to avoid wars. They could not build houses when they first came because they did not have that production ability.

In those days, Chengkan was uncultivated; they had not yet formed a village or established a clan. That did not occur until a much later stage as a result of three large immigrations: the East Jin Dynasty (AD 317–420), the Late Tang Dynasty (AD 755–907), and the Song Dynasty (AD 960–1279). During the Han Dynasty (AD 206–220), people lived near the river and inside the mountain. Once they had enough capital, they started garden architecture. Even the garden in the empire did not emerge until the Song Dynasty (AD 960–1279), when Emperor Song Gaozong (AD 1107–1187) brought some stones from Yunnan province for aesthetic reasons. Because the empire did not build gardens until the Song Dynasty, how could Chengkan have a garden since the Dong Han Dynasty?

Those houses around the water garden were all brought from different places. The designation about its unique feng shui and its age in Dong Han Dynasty was made by the tourism company. It was taken over for the price of 1,000 yuan per mu (US\$26 per acre). (Interview with a senior villager, 06/06/2013)

The historical water garden is somewhere else, not where Chengkan Eight Diagram Village Tourism Company built it. As such, not only did the company redate the water garden; it relocated it.

Tourists witnessed this public conversation. I learned more in a later, private conversation with this same villager. (I made an appointment to interview him again when there were no tourists around.) He began the second conversation by stating that he would not be telling me this information if it were daytime and there were people around, leading me to believe this is a sensitive issue.

Interviewee: Tourism is tourism, culture is culture, and villagers are villagers. There is no connection, no relationship among them. The tourism company aims to achieve an economic goal; it is not concerned with traditional cultural heritage. If the boss cared about culture and history, he would not have built the fake water garden. He would have built up the real water garden. To build the fake one, they brought some historical houses from other villages and put them in the water garden. It cost a huge amount of money. That amount of money would be enough to maintain the ecological environment and build up the real water garden.

Yi: Who initiated this?

Interviewee: Since they took the land, it must be the local government who did this. I think they did nothing to show the [traditional] culture. They built new architecture and cheated the tourists by telling them it was old. They lied. If they really cared about the history and the

heritage, they would not have done this and not fix the ramshackle houses or build up the real water garden. The big ancestor hall near the entrance to the village [discussed in a previous part in this chapter] was not fixed, and they cheated the tourists by using the houses they brought in. So I think Chengkan needs to change; it cannot stay like this. (Interview with a senior villager, 06/06/2013)

The village was transformed based on the tourism company obtaining permission from the government to invest capital for the production of historical space. Whatever the tourism company could not resolve through market forces, the government stepped in to help, such as taking over agricultural land that belonged to local villagers to build the water garden. However, the tourism company has had the power to alter the telling of history by writing the script used by the tour guides and by advertising as it deems necessary without the government's intervention.

The head government official at the Cultural Relics Bureau was aware of the construction of the entrance to Chengkan village and said this construction had been approved by the government.

Changes in historical villages require experts' approval. Some changes are not allowed because they will alter what the village used to look like. However, to attract tourists, or to satisfy the demand of tourists, it can be allowed. For example, the door control system in Chengkan; we thought it was necessary, but it needed the approval of experts, so the tourism company bought the historical house so it could build a door control system. This is ok. You cannot always stay the same; the world is changing. (Interview with the head government official in the Cultural Relics Bureau in Huangshan city, 06/21/2013)

I asked him about the water garden, but his answer focused on the door control system, which refers to the entrance that tourists use to get in with their tickets. This may be the language the tourism company used to gain approval, but it did not simply build a door control system; it also designed and built a water garden that contains several lakes and a bridge. The government controls the right to transform the historical village. The interviewed official stated that alterations that change history are not allowed but then continued with "the world is changing," justifying the construction of the water garden in Chengkan because it served the important role of attracting tourists. His comment that the world is changing also implies that Chengkan needed

to change too.

What is changing? As discussed in Chapter 2, in the context of globalization and a worldwide neoliberalism trend since the 1970s, China is currently pursuing rapid economic growth. To achieve this goal, it joined the World Trade Organization (WTO), opened markets, and became socialist with Chinese characteristics, or perhaps I should say “neoliberalism with Chinese character” (Harvey, 2005). I argue, however, that it is a governmentality that contains some neoliberalism characteristics but that cannot be categorized neoliberalism.

A Supportive Government: “We Want Economic Growth”

The changing of historical villages is strictly controlled by governments according to the regulations found in *The Protection Regulation of Historical Villages in Southern Anhui Province* mentioned in Chapter 2. It is possible to alter historical villages with government approval. Clearly, city government has the power to decide which changes are allowed and which are not, a result of the redistribution of power from the central government. The tourism company used the lure of economic growth to convince county and city governments to approve its application for changing the historical village. Because economic growth is directly related to the personnel promotion system for government officials in China, the local government ultimately was easily convinced.

The tourism company in Chengkan built a fake water garden and claimed that the village is more authentic or older than other villages and that it is more attractive because of its feng shui design. This construction is based on the discourse and belief that claims of authenticity increase profits. The local government desires economic growth to compete with other places with governmentality that contains neoliberalism traits, which leads it to remove obstacles impeding

tourism development by private companies. However, this runs counter to preservation law, which is meant to preserve the history of the village to satisfy tourists' gaze (Urry, 1990). In the case of Chengkan, the government actually broke the law to make it easier for the tourism company, instead of serving as administrator or gatekeeper working on behalf of the People. This further supports that China is not an exclusively neoliberal government, but rather that the country displays a mixed and combined governmentality: a strong state getting involved in economic activities (So, 2007). As mentioned, tourism development in Chengkan was initially undertaken by the local government but not profitably. Thus, in 2004, the local government leased the village to a private company, with a preferential policy requiring only tax revenue in return. An interview with a government official in Chengkan's town government revealed the process well.

Currently, we need to support the development of the tourism company; we cannot ask for profits. If the tourism company went broke, what benefit would the government get? We mainly need to let the number of tourists rise. We need to educate the local villagers not to focus on the small amount of benefit shared with the tourism company. We cannot achieve the goal that all the villagers get rich through sharing profits from the gate fee charged by the tourism company. Our purpose is to get all the villagers engaged in the tourism development....All we want is that the number of tourists rises. In the past, there were almost no tourists at all. Last year, we had more than 200,000–300,000 tourists. (Interview with a township government official in Chengkan, 06/06/2013)

According to this official, what matters is the number of tourists. In another words, what matters most is the tax revenue from the money tourists bring in. The local government is very supportive of the tourism company, and, as this government official claimed, all the government wants is the tax revenue from the increasing numbers of tourists.

Based on interviews with the local villagers in Chengkan, the villagers receive 30 yuan annually from the tourism company, but not as cash; it is paid in the form of health insurance known as the New Rural Cooperative Medical System. This is a government-run health insurance system for which individuals in rural China pay 60 yuan a year. The tourism company

leases their hometown and compensates them by paying their health insurance every other year, which can be seen as a form of privatization of the health system. This is in line with one of the major features of neoliberalism—the commodification of human services. As Guan argues,

Whereas the Maoist state provided human services (like housing, health care, welfare, education, pension, etc.) on a need basis and free of charge to all citizens, the post-reform state treated human services as a commodity to be distributed to people on market principles. Beneficiaries now were to pay a part of the costs for services in most welfare fields. Such changes occurred in social insurance (pension, medical care and the newly created unemployment insurance), higher education, and many personal services. (Guan, 2000, quoted in So, 2007: 64).

Compared to the 2,700 yuan per year that villagers in Hongcun receive from the Jingyi Company, the payment of 30 yuan a year to villagers in Chengkan is a very small amount. My fieldwork uncovered complaints, but they were not about sharing profits; they focused instead on heritage preservation and regulations controlling agricultural lands.

Heritage preservation regulations are strictly enforced for villagers. They cannot rebuild their own historical houses. At the same time, however, the local government in Chengkan does not help fix or repair old houses even if they are dilapidated. According to a senior villager, the old houses look good from the outside, but they are in ruins inside. The government does not take care of them but strictly controls any exterior construction. According to another villager, the government will demolish any structure villagers build because such structures violate the preservation regulations in the *Chengkan Historical Village Protection Regulation and Utilization Planning* document.

Construction Control

- 1, Buildings in Chengkan should be mainly two-story structures, with strict limitations on three-story structures, and four-story houses are forbidden. All the houses must be in Huizhou traditional slope roof form.
- 2, The height of each floor is strictly controlled.²⁰
- 3, The original height of cultural relics and historic buildings must be maintained.
- 4, Construction or repair of structures needs to maintain the original height and build in the traditional Hui sloping roof form. (*Chengkan Historical Village Protection Regulation and*

²⁰ Since I do not know the technical term for the requirement of building, I did not totally translate it.

Utilization Planning, 2010: 10²¹)

The fixed size of house plots and strict controls over height thus limits the size of houses. Also, the preservation regulation requires that historical houses built before 1911 must be preserved. If a villager wants to build a new house, the local government assigns an area where they can buy land and construct a new building. A local villager explains:

Nowadays, we cannot raze our old house to build a new one; also building something else based on the old one is not allowed. We can only fix and preserve our house. Villagers complained about this. They have a big yard, but they cannot build a new house. The government lets you buy another property outside of the historical village. Nobody likes that. The government took the land with the price of 10,000-90,000 yuan while selling it to you for the price of 100,000–900,000 yuan. (Interview with a local villager, 06/05/2013)

This villager also mentioned that the local government forced villagers to sell their agricultural land to build infrastructure that supported tourism development. This is exactly what happened in relation to the newly built water garden at the entrance to the historical village. Agricultural lands are controlled by the government; therefore, any changes made on agricultural land must be approved by government officials.

The government, recognizing the competition with other villages for tourists, maintains that it needs to support the tourism company as much as possible. It is hard to compete with World Heritage Sites, such as Hongcun and Xidi in an adjacent county.

After fail[ing] in our first application for the WHS, we tried to apply for it a second time. However, we never succeed[ed]. We are making efforts, our documents are complete, our management is good. However, it is very difficult to be included in the World Heritage list. Normally, a similar landscape can only apply once. So, even if we do a good job now, we may never succeed in becoming a WHS. It is a huge loss that we lost to Hongcun last time. Actually, we should be a WHS. (Interview with a government official in Chengkan town government, 06/06/2013)

Compared to Hongcun, the local government in Chengkan is more determined and has a stronger hand in tourism development. For example, during an interview a local village government official told me the town and village governments also pay for the cleaning work

²¹ I got access to this document from the Chengkan town government and took pictures of it with permission. The translation is mine.

done inside the historical village; this is in addition to what the tourism company pays. The local government is also responsible for security in the historical village; in Hongcun, however, this is done by the tourism company. This further convinced me of Hongcun town and village governments' absent role.

The villagers in Hongcun have brought a lawsuit against the tourism company and their local government to gain more benefits from tourism and rights to their own village. Villagers in Chengkan have not taken this route, even though their situation is worse. The regulation of heritage preservation is as strict in Chengkan as it is in Hongcun, but the benefits Chengkan villagers receive from the tourism company are almost nonexistent. Potential reasons for why Chengkan villagers have not taken the tourism company and the government to court may be that the local government controls the local residents more strictly and that the tourism company does not earn as much profit as the Jingyi Company does in Hongcun. Yet, Chengkan villagers' lives are largely influenced by tourism development and the strict Cultural Relics Preservation Regulation.

Local Community

Case Study 1: A Decent Local Resident

Teo and Yeoh (1997) have explored local residents' and tourists' perceptions of a Singapore heritage site that was remade for tourism. Their study shows that local residents attach memories to the old landscape, while tourists consider it more as a commodity. Personal attachment to tourism sites was especially evident with one senior villager in Chengkan. Enthusiastic about the local culture, he dedicates his life to studying and sharing knowledge about the lineage of Chengkan village. This man frequently gives lectures to university students when they go there

to do fieldwork. I was fortunate to have attended one of his lectures in the summer of 2013.

One day, approximately 20 students, including myself, sat on the floor of an ancestral hall while he lectured on the history of the village and its dilemma today. Highlights of his lecture follow.

In the 1980s, I started to do research on Chengkan's history. I have been here for more than 30 years. Chengkan used to be called Longxi, which in the dictionary means the sound of water. It was named this because it has lots of water. People who lived here used to be primitive humans. In the East Han Dynasty, three families lived here: Lv, Sun, and Jin. However, they did not form a strong family unit and they lived together with the primitive humans. Later, the three families either left or disappeared. The whole village formed because of the Luo family.

Later in the Late Tang Dynasty, two cousins of the Luo family came to Chengkan and settled down because of Chengkan's good feng shui. Nowadays, villagers do not care about feng shui. As long as transportation is convenient, and their motorcycle or their car can drive into their yard, then it is OK. They do not want road bends in front of their house or stairs that were built according to feng shui of the old times. Their life tempo is very quick, and the tempo of the whole county is very quick. It is impossible to follow the norms of the old times.

Until now, Chengkan had more than 20 historical houses from the Ming Dynasty, and more than 100 historical houses from the Qing Dynasty. When I was young, there were lots of historical houses around the big stone bridge in front of the village, which is the true water garden. After 1949, however, those historical buildings became state-owned property and then fell down because of a lack of financial aid for preservation.

In 2005, a historical house built during the Ming Dynasty was torn down. The reason is very complex. Even though it was listed as a preservation unit by the government, financial aid was limited. Many other places also needed the money; for example, an ordinary house that used to be a family's house. Later, the old grandpa in the ordinary house died and his sons moved out to build their own houses. In this case, the preservation of the old house became a problem because of the huge amount of money it required. When the old grandpa was still alive, all the sons were willing to help pay for the preservation. After he died, some sons were willing to pay for the preservation but some were not, because nobody would actually live in it. There are many other historical houses facing the same problem. Cultural relic preservation cannot always rely on the state since the property rights are private. Some people refuse to let the government repair their house, even when the state government would pay for it.

Our Luo family used to have more than 20 ancestral halls with two main ancestral halls for the first two cousins who came here. This ancestral hall [the one in which we were listening to his lecture] is a branch ancestral hall of the main ancestral hall.²² In 1920, my grandfather was in charge of this ancestral hall, and from 1920 to 1949, my father was in charge. After 1949, this ancestral hall became the state's property, and in 1953, it became a school. As part of the education system, it was well preserved, unlike other ancestral halls in the village, most of which got destroyed or damaged. Only four or five still exist, but they are all in a very bad condition, with only parts of them existing. This ancestral hall served as a school from 1953 to 1991, and in 1991, with government investment and some private financial aid, it was repaired. In 1994, it was officially opened to the public.

²² Branch ancestral hall: A main ancestral hall is built in memory of the first people who came to the area, while a branch ancestral is built in memory of a particular son or grandson in the family for his outstanding contribution to the family, for example, outstanding work in government or business.

This villager's presentation concentrated on the history of the whole village and on the particular ancestor hall of his family. Throughout his talk, his enthusiasm about his past, his family, and his hometown was evident. If worship can be seen as emotion, then all his emotions toward his village showed worship of the past and silence about current developments. Today, he works in his family's ancestral hall, which is state owned, researches Chengkan's history, and works with the Cultural Relics Bureau to preserve his village. During the lecture, he answered a phone call from the Bureau about a historical house's preservation issue. At the end of the talk, he briefly mentioned his own personal experience with the ancestral hall.

When I was young, around 13 or 14, I caught fish in the river with my friends. After my father found this out, he made me kneel in the ancestral hall for confession. Nobody can beg for forgiveness for me. I knelt there in front of all my ancestors' tablets for one day. This was an experience that I can never forget. My father intended to educate me to respect natural lives, the lives of the fish.

His experience reflected the lives and feelings of the local elites who care about local culture in the development process. His passion for the culture and for teaching others about it is a way of constructing the meaning of his life. Through this, he connected his life with his ancestors' lives and with the past of his whole community. His life became eternal by connecting to the past and to the future of his community, even though his actual life is limited by time (Wang, 2007).

Case Study 2: We Need a House for Our Son's Marriage

Among my fieldwork sites, I found Chengkan to be the village with the most tensions caused by tourism development specifically because it was heavily regulated even though the properties were not historic as defined in government regulations discussed in Chapter 2.

One interviewee in Chengkan spoke of the villagers' struggle. She was watching TV in her store when I came in and asked for permission to interview her.

Interviewee: We still own a house in the historical village, but nobody lives in it now. We cannot alter the house now that the village is developed for tourism. Every change to the house needs to be made to match the old style. If the house is leaking, you are allowed to fix it in the old style, but other alterations are not allowed. You are responsible for your own house. For example, if it is going to collapse [in disrepair], you need to fix it by hiring professional workers. First, professional workers are very expensive. Second, if they fall off the roof, you are responsible for them. That is very dangerous; the house can fall down at any time. As a result, we just leave the house there with nobody living in it.

Yi: Why not sell it?

Interviewee: Nobody will buy it except the tourism company. Only the tourism company would buy it, but it only buys houses built before 1911. This is very annoying. For example, if you only have a one-story house, and your son grows up and gets married, you want to rebuild the house to make some space for your son, but they won't allow that.

Yi: Any compensation?

Interviewee: No. If my son gets married, we need to buy an apartment in the nearby town called Yanzi.

Yi: Don't you have two houses? Why not let your son live in the old house located within the historical village?

Interviewee: The old house is only good when you visit it; it is very bad to live in. The house is too small; it is very uncomfortable to live in. Only tourists will see it as something valuable. For us, it is all dusty and has very bad lighting. Sometimes, there is a ghost inside. The ancestral hall used to have a ghost.

She owned two houses, one within the historical village and one outside of it but near the border. The house in the historical village cannot be altered without the government's permission, even though it was built after 1911. If a house is near or in the historical village, it is highly controlled, a situation that has caused tension between the local government and villagers. This also reveals the legal overlap between the Cultural Relics Preservation Law and the Real Right Law discussed in Chapter 2, increasing the latitude for local governments when implementing the laws. In this case, which law gets enforced depends on the local government's interest. The Chengkan local government clears obstacles for the tourism company's efforts to development tourism but ignores the costs to, and property rights, of the villagers.

Tension also arises because villagers' land is taken in the name of tourism development; for example, land to build the new water garden. The government forced villagers to sell their

agricultural land to the tourism company for 5,000 yuan (US\$796) per mu (US\$4,776 per acre). Residents did not have a choice in this transaction; the sale of agricultural land to the tourism company in Chengkan is compulsory.

Taking Hongcun as a benchmark in heritage tourism, Chengkan struggles to imitate it while pursuing economic growth. Unable to compete with the World Heritage Site, Chengkan's tourism development remains at a lower level and cannot produce much profit to share with the local community. Meanwhile, strict preservation regulations are implemented. Therefore, the local community is in a dismal situation and struggling for better living conditions and their own heritage.

CHAPTER 5

XUCUN



Figures 5.1–5.2: Photos of Xucun. (By author.)

Hongcun serves as a benchmark in historical tourism in Huangshan city and perhaps in China as a whole; Chengkan is an example of tourism development in the face of competition with Hongcun and the perceived need for branding to make the place seem authentic or unique. Xucun is a totally different story. It is not famous; it does not strictly enforce the Cultural Relics Preservation Law; and a smaller number of tourists visit it (Table 5.1). No tensions from the local community have arisen surrounding tourism development, and my fieldwork went smoothly with the local government, local tourism company, and local community members.

Table 5.1: Basic Information of Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun's Tourism

Village	Tourism initiated	Visitors per year	Total ticket income (yuan)	Gate fee	Level of tourism attractions
Hongcun	1998	1.3 million	77.56 million	104	5A
Chengkan	2004	400,000	20.24 million	80	4A
Xucun	2004	20,000	400,000	40	3A

Information adapted from Kong (2012). Kong's data were collected in 2012. Revisions to the year that tourism was initiated were made based on findings during my fieldwork in 2013.

Located in She County, Xucun's history reaches back more than 1,500 years. Although there is no record of the exact date that Xucun was established, it first became known during the Liang Dynasty (AD 502–587). Situated along an important road, Xucun was prosperous earlier in its history (Xu and Xu, 2011). Many of its historical buildings were partially or completely destroyed during the Cultural Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, but it still has 15 National Relic Protection Units and was listed as a National Historic and Cultural Town in 2008.

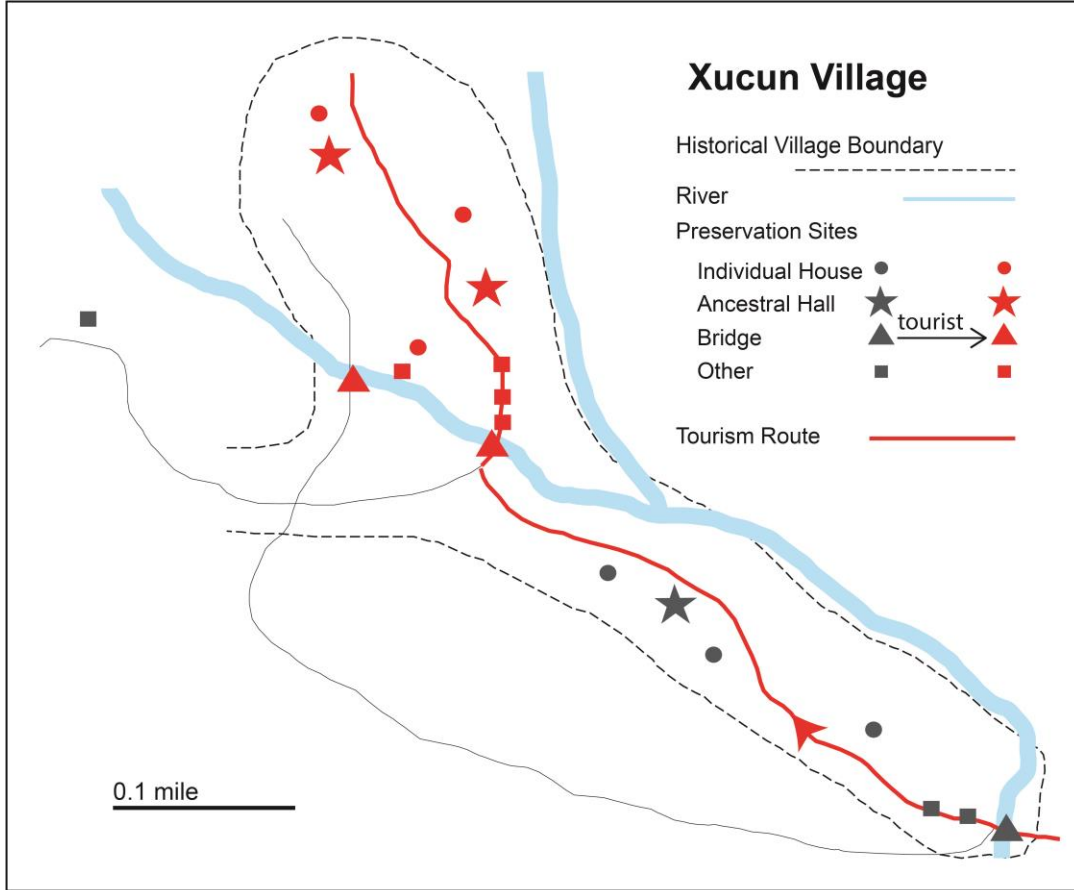
Development of Xucun's tourism began in 2003 as an investment promotion project initiated by the She County government. Similar to Hongcun, Xucun's tourism company cooperated with local government via a contract. However, neither the company nor the government carried out what stated in the contract. The tourism company did not fabricate heritage, even in the face of the monopoly of Hongcun and Xidi and the popularity of Chengkan

in the tourism market. Its tourism script was based on archival research conducted by the head of the company.

Although the Cultural Relics Preservation Law has been less rigorously enforced than the other two villages discussed here and has not caused tension in the local community, there still have been preservation problems with the historical housing stock. There is little money to preserve such structures and they are in a dilapidated state. Their poor condition, however, offers a sense of heritage and authenticity.

Xucun on Display

Having enjoyed Hongcun and Chengkan, each for its own uniqueness and the experience of being in these supposedly traditional landscapes, tourists may seek more historical sites, with more authenticity. Chengkan is certainly unique but not as authentic as some tourists may hope. They hear that Xucun is not a typical tourist city and does not, in fact, have many tourists, but that it does have some really interesting places to visit. After a one-hour drive from the center of Huangshan city, in a small car on an unpaved road, tourists arrive in Xucun. If they do not go with a group or contact the local tourism company requesting a tour guide, tourists are on their own. No gate fee is required for the first part of the tour, and tourists only need to pay a gate fee in the middle of the tour if somebody is on duty at that time tourists arrive.



Map 5.1: Map of Xucun. (By author.)²³

The side road going into the village leads to some heritage sites not included in the tour. The gate fee is charged at the lower intersection of the road and the river, and tourists can visit half of the heritage sites at no cost. The selection of tourism sites by the tourism company was based on the sites' geographical location in the village.

Most of the heritage sites designated by Xucun's tourism company are state-owned property. According to the head of the company, when they signed the contract to develop tourism in Xucun, the local government promised that the heritage sites would be available at no cost and that the tourism company would only need to invest in the construction of infrastructure.

²³ This map was constructed based on a tourism map online and my fieldwork.

As suggested in Map 5.1, most of the heritage sites on display are ancestral halls, temple gates, temples,²⁴ and bridges. Only 31.6 percent of the heritage sites are individual homes, which is very low compared to Hongcun (72.7 percent) and Chengkan (66.7 percent). According to the tour guide in Xucun, because the village was so prosperous in times past, it is hard to put all of it on display. Some precious ancestral halls lack money for maintenance (see, for example, Fig. 5.3), and they are excluded because there is a relatively large number of similar structures.

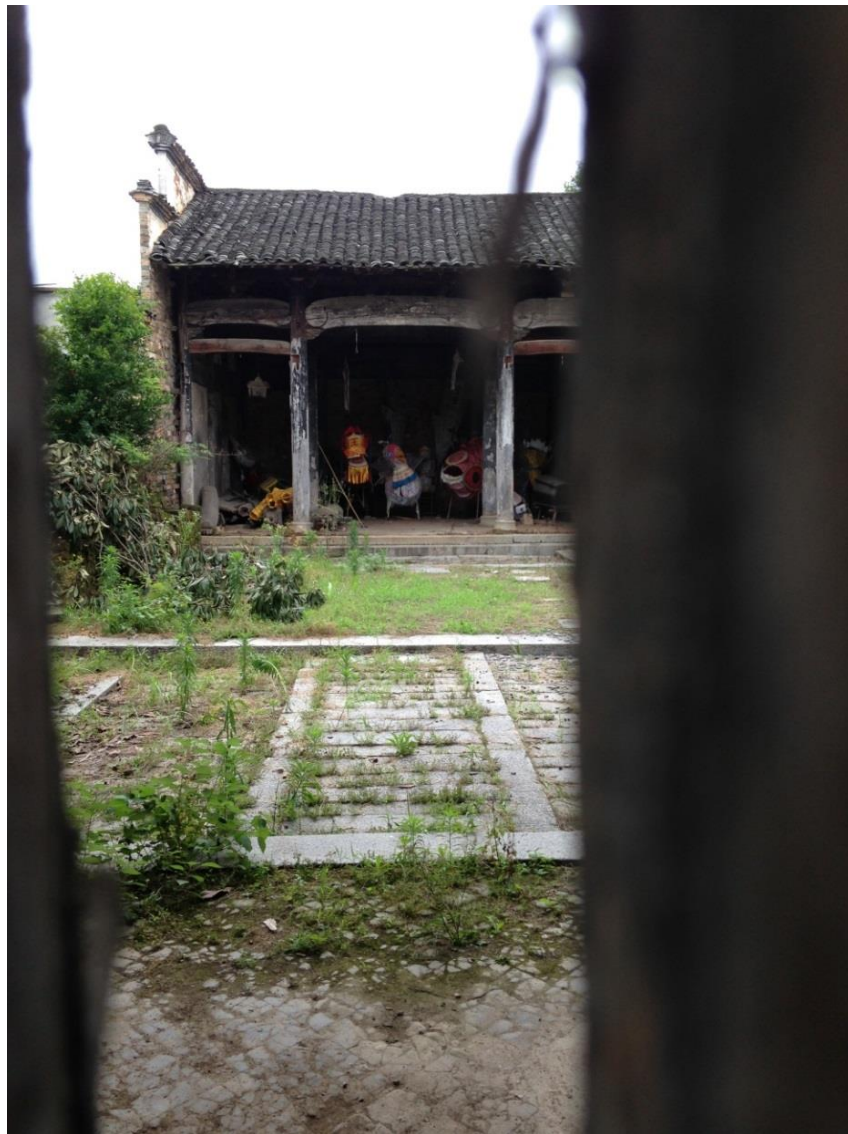


Figure 5.3: Ancestral hall excluded from the tour. (By author.)

²⁴ Temple gates and temples belong to the Other category in the map.

Putting mainly state-owned heritage sites on display (rather than several individual houses as done in Hongcun and Chengkan) may explain why there is no tension between the tourism company and the local host community. Of the three individual houses open to tourists in Xucun, only one is still used as a dwelling place. I did not get a chance to interview its residents. I heard no complaints from local villagers in Xucun about the village's tourism development.

Based on Harvey's (2001) argument, entrepreneurs try to brand their products as authentic as a means to to compete with similar products. There is no evidence of such a strategy in Xucun, and many indications of poor preservation of what could easily be marketed as 'real authentic' historical houses. The Cultural Relics Preservation Law stipulates that historical houses built before AD 1919 cannot be rebuilt or altered, but some villagers in Xucun have rebuilt their houses; when questioned about this, the local government explains that human beings are more important than buildings. This situation puts Xucun's tourism company in an awkward position. According to an interview with its head, the company labeled itself as an outsider and perceived that it could not get involved in the host community's affairs because heritage preservation is the responsibility of the local government.

The interview with the head of the tourism company also provided some insight into why the village did not get packaged for tourism in the market. When asked who wrote the tour guide script, he said he searched archives for accurate information.

I went to different libraries to search for materials about Xucun, such as a genealogy book. Everything has to be based on historical fact. We cannot just make up stories by ourselves. If we did and if some authorities came, they would laugh at us. (Interview with the head of Xucun's tourism company, 06/07/2013)

This person, responsible for explaining the area's heritage accurately, felt it was important to conduct proper research. His personal educational experience at the Central University of Finance and Economics in Beijing as an MBA student may explain his conscientious actions and

evidence of caring about business ethics, which is not always the case in the private sector in China. Some entrepreneurs have come to believe that anything that promotes profit maximization is rational behavior, even if it is unethical. Furthermore, ethical behavior—if it cuts into profits too much—is viewed as irrational and even emotional. Thus the head of the tourism company in Xucun might be viewed when he tries to behave ethically as being ruled by his emotions, which would be considered by some as ‘bad.’ The reason he tried to preserve the true history of Xucun, including the story attached to the heritage site, appears to lie in his own personal beliefs and sense of responsibility. This is in line with the critique of the Tourist Area Life Cycle Model discussed in Chapter 2:

The model assumes that stakeholders in a destination—whether tourists or businesses—behave rationally, investing when the “sun shines” (quite literally) and pulling out when the going gets tough. In reality, decision-making is rarely based on reason alone. It is governed by emotion, too (Gale, 2012: 42)

Nowadays, the promotional theme that has been attached to the whole village stresses that Xucun is “a new socialist countryside with some historical sites.” This is a materialized discourse (Schein, 1997) of the negotiation of preferences of the company and the local government. For the sake of security, and out of desire that there be no social tension in the local community, and knowing that the tourism in Xucun won’t be able to compete with other villages like Hongcun and Chengkan, the local government has allowed Xucun villagers to repair and even rebuild their historical houses. Because of the government’s position and the lack of enforcement of the cultural relics laws, the local tourism company has let the situation develop as it has and has not constructed a fake site for the sake of uniqueness (or authenticity, as the Chengkan tourism company did).

Xucun's Tourism Company: "We Are the Other"

As described, tourism development in Xucun is very weak. I had the opportunity to interview the head of the tourism company because he was not busy. He explained the tourism development process as follows:

We took over tourism in Xucun in 2003. The government in She County introduced us to Xucun's tourism project through investment promotion. We knew the leader in She County at that time, and we originally came here to invest in a manufacturing factory aimed at exporting products to foreign countries. However, it did not work out. Then the leader in She County told us that there is a project related to heritage tourism. During that time, the SARS²⁵ virus was very serious. All the tourism companies had shut down. The She County government gave us lots of favorable conditions. The contract stipulated that they would offer resources while we would invest cash to preserve the heritage and to establish the tourism area with the standard of 4A. All the profits would be shared with the government. (Interview with the head of the tourism company in Xucun, 06/07/2013)

One statement during this interview reflected the neoliberalism trend in China: "We knew the leader in She County at that time, and we originally came here to invest in a manufacturing factory aimed at exporting products." Alvin Y. So listed several features of the emergence of neoliberalism in China during the 1990s, including opening up, spatial differentiation, and the increase of the private sector (So, 2007: 63). These can be detected in the case of Xucun.

The head of Xucun's tourism company first came to She County to invest in a clothing factory. The original plan to sell its products to foreign countries is closely in line with the neoliberalism features discussed by So. The head of the company came from the coastal area where his original successes with capital accumulation had occurred; he went to She County to establish his business because of uneven levels of development between the Anhui province and coastal areas; Anhui province had more favorable conditions with lower land and labor costs. Also, because of privatization and corporatization policies related to tourism, he could take on different projects (to develop tourism in Xucun) when the original project did not work out. Distribution of power to local government also enabled the She County government to initiate

²⁵ SARS is a kind of respiratory disease that is extremely infectious. People would stay at home to avoid being infected. Thus, it greatly affected the tourism industry at that time.

the development of tourism.

Xucun's tourism project was contracted as a joint development project rather than as a rental arrangement (government renting the village to the private sector), as was done in Hongcun and Chengkan. In other words, the local government and the private sector were jointly involved in tourism development according to the contract. Why has tourism development faltered with this joint arrangement? The first reason is the decreasing number of historical buildings.

We cannot say that Xucun is a historical village now; it is a new village with some historical buildings now. The new buildings are far more in number than the old ones. (Interview with employee of Xucun's tourism company, 06/07/2013)

When asked why this is happening, the response was:

This is the government's responsibility. The biggest problem is the problem of government. No government will say that it won't preserve the heritage, but the degree that it preserves is different. See all these houses; they all used to be historical houses. They fell into ruin and were rebuilt in the past 10 years. We cannot do anything about it. (Interview with employee of Xucun's tourism company, 06/07/2013)

Building construction in Xucun was evident during the tour, especially involving structures not on the tourism route. (See Figs. 5.4 and 5.5.)



Figures 5.4–5.5 Construction of modern houses in Xucun. (By author.)

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the Cultural Relics Preservation Law and many related administrative regulations were established for historical villages. Why can Xucun's villagers continue to alter their historical houses?

The local villagers' altering their houses is not the tourism company's business; it is the government that should regulate them. We are investors from outside and cannot regulate the local villagers.

There are regulations that preserve the historical buildings; you need to interview the government. The government will definitely tell you that villagers cannot alter their houses. It is a regulation made by Anhui Province, which is useless. The tourism company has made many plans. But making planning's purpose is to put on display [instead of real implementation]. Two years ago, the tourism company made a plan for future land use. However, a building for the town government was constructed exactly where the parking lot was supposed to be according to the plan. City planning is also useless. (Interview with the head of Xucun's tourism company, 06/07/2013)

This portion of my interview with this employee highlights the poor implementation of regulations. The local residents did not receive any benefits from the tourism market, which contributed to their choosing to rebuild their houses. It is interesting that the supervisor of the tourism company claimed, "We [the tourism company] are the Other. We are the investor from outside and cannot regulate the local villager." The tourism company's recognition of itself as the Other in Xucun is closely related to the social organization in rural China. As Xiaotong Fei (1992) points out, social organization in rural China is very closely bounded. Everyone in a village knows everyone else and everyone's private business. This is perceived as normal. If something happens to one family, all the other families in the village know about it quickly. If someone who does not belong to the village arrives, everyone knows and perceives that person as an outsider. For example, I remember one day when I went to Xucun by myself for fieldwork. Everyone in the village stared at me, looking at me from top to bottom. The tightly knit nature of Xucun may well be related to its low level of tourism development. With few tourists arriving in the village, local villagers are more inclined to preserve a rural and close-knit lifestyle and way of thinking, a very different situation from Chengkan and Hongcun.

The Xucun town government has a different interpretation of poor heritage preservation in the village. A government official in Xuncun whom I interviewed claimed that tourism development in Xucun did not bring benefits to the local villagers. The government did not have money to help the villagers fix their old houses to meet the regulations in the Cultural Relics Preservation Law. Therefore, if the house was in disrepair, the local government approved villagers' applications to rebuild their houses.

Humans are much more important; unpreserved historical houses will fall down and hurt people. (Interview with a Xucun government official, 06/07/2013)

Another reason for weak tourism development is the poor condition of the unpaved roads, which appears to be a reflection of the local government's attitude towards tourism.

The main problem is the poor road; the big tour buses cannot drive on it. The government did not reconstruct the road as stipulated in the contract. Of course, the tourism company cannot do the government's work and construct a road. The main problem in China is that the leaders of local governments change too frequently. The next leader won't recognize the contract signed by previous leaders. They say it should be the people [the former leader] who signed the contract to implement it. The contract is useless. They [Xucun town government] promised to broaden the road in 2005; however, they did not do that until now. The tourism company had talked with the government, and they [government officials] said they did not have money to broaden the road. If the contract is made by two private companies, the tourism company can sue them [the other company]. It is hard to sue the government. They [Xucun town government] said they did not have money to broaden the road, and then we said we did not have money to invest the tourism here. It's hard to say. [In the contract, the local government is responsible for road construction while the Xucun local tourism company is responsible for cash investment.] China is not a society to follow rules or laws; situations change with different leaders. (Interview with the head of Xucun tourism company, 06/07/2013)

In Xucun, the government did not involve itself in tourism development. It left the tourism company to fail in the market. According to a government official involved in policy making, there are many considerations for local government officials. When it is impossible to compete with adjacent villages, they will not risk their careers by enraging local villagers by forcing them to live in ramshackle houses. The stability and security of society appear to be much more important to them than economic growth.

The principle of calculation (for the cost of manufacturing freedom) is what is called security. That is to say, liberalism, the liberal art of government, is forced to determine the precise

extent to which and up to what point individual interest, that is to say, individual interests insofar as they are different and possibly opposed to each other, constitute a danger for the interest of all. The problem of security is the protection of the collective interest against individual interests. Conversely, individual interests have to be protected against everything that could be seen as an encroachment of the collective interests. The freedom of the workers must not become a danger for the enterprise and production. (Foucault, 2008: 65)

Security could explain the government's attitude and behavior toward tourism in Xucun. As mentioned, it did not carry out the terms stipulated in the original signed contract. The government knows it would be impossible to compete with villages like Hongcun, Xidi (another World Heritage Site in this region), and Chengkan. Preserving historical houses requires money, and local villagers cannot afford or are unwilling to pay the cost of restoration. Thus, to avoid conflict with the villagers by forcing them to reside in dilapidated houses, the government has allowed them to rebuild.

In the three villages of Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun, each local government has its own rationale about how and to what extent it becomes involved in tourism development. Foucault has argued that governmental reason involves a balance or choice of interests, which is the principle of exchange and the criterion of utility (Foucault, 2008: 44). What differentiate the governments of the three villages are the types of interest and whose interest they choose. According to my analysis and fieldwork, it is clear that economic growth and security are behind their different enactments of governmental reason, which is exactly the standard by which the upper government evaluates local government officials (Silamu and Seyiti, 2007).

To regulate local governments, the Chinese central governments controls the financial decisions of local governments, and local governments must compete for monies from the central government. In this way, local governments become entrepreneurs who need to calculate their costs and benefits; this calculation may lead to the belief that the cost of implementing preservation laws is worthless. This calculation is an important feature of neoliberal government (Foucault, 2008: 148).

Local Community

Although a majority of the people I interviewed told me they are highly regulated in terms of changes to their houses, I observed many changes, more than I would expect given the number of people who spoke of strict regulations. It was surprising to see many new buildings and houses under construction inside Xucun's village boundaries.

The head of Xucun's tourism company claimed that Xucun cannot now be considered a historical village and that it should be seen as a new socialist village that has several historical sites. He stated that the government's failure to enforce historic preservation regulations caused this. Yet, expanding on an earlier excerpt by a local government official,

The houses under construction were those about to fall down. People are the most important thing. If a wall is going to fall down and hurt people, we need to tear it down. (Interview with a local government official, 06/07/2013)

Although local residents claimed they could not alter their historical houses, many could alter or rebuild if the structures posed a risk of hurting people. As such, Xucun's residents did not face the problem that Hongcun's or Chengkan's residents did: they did not have to live in a ramshackle house because of strict enforcement of preservation regulations. However, it did demonstrate that there was little or no support for preservation.

The government claimed that cultural relics need preservation; however, the government would not pay for it. If villagers' private houses are falling into disrepair and they do not have money to fix them, and if they do not have vacant land on which to build a new house, the local villagers let their house fall down naturally without repairing it. In this way, they could build a new one" (Interview with the head of Xucun tourism company, 06/07/2013).

Case Study 1: Retired High School Teacher as Tour Guide

Actually, I am the only tour guide in Xucun. I use many stories I got from my old father and from the head of the tourism company, who did archival research about Xucun's history. I collected them and designed the tour script according to my own knowledge. Some of the tourists come here for me. They want to listen to me telling stories about Xucun. I am a son of the Xu family. When tourists are interested in the cultural relics of Xucun, I am very

enthusiastic and excited.

Our village has lots of difficulties, like an underdeveloped economy and not enough investment capital. There is not enough money to salvage national treasures, let alone to package cultural relics for development. Xucun was very prosperous in the old times, and it is very hard to recover what it used to be in Qing or Ming Dynasties. [That is to say, it was a big village in the old times, so nowadays to recover it at that scale is very difficult.] Even to recover the middle part of Xucun is very hard. (06/06/2013)

During the conversation, he seemed much more concerned about preserving Xucun's local cultural relics than about the low salary paid by the tour company. Serving as the tourism guide is his own way of heritage making for "his" village, and it gave him his identity. He then explained the reason for poor tourism development:

Interviewee: None of the government officials in our village share the family name of Xu. One came and left after three years. Another came and left after two years. Nobody took charge or took the responsibility of cultural relics' preservation. Nowadays, nobody cares [about] the monuments established nearby the national treasures by the State Council. The government regulation stipulated that structures within 100 meters need to be controlled while no building construction is allowed within 50 meters. However, nobody managed this, the cultural relics got destroyed and new buildings were easily built.

Yi: What about the preservation regulation?

Interviewee: It did not get implemented. The heaven is high and the emperor is far way—there is no support for it. (06/06/2013)

In his mind, local government is the agent to be blamed for poor tourism development. The officials are not Xucun people, and they do not share heritage with the local villagers. Knowing that Xucun cannot compete with villages like Hongcun and Chengkan and knowing that it is risky to regulate local villages, the officials ignore the contracts signed by previous leaders. Also, aware that they will leave in three years, a span of time too short to make the tourism industry boom, they ignore tourism development. However, I assume what this villager wants is a restoration of what had been present, not implementation of the kind of tourism brought by the fake heritage sites, such as the water garden in Chengkan.

Case Study 2: Grocery Store Owner

Thinking I was a journalist, one local villager started a conversation and illustrated the preservation problem in Xucun by opening the door of his neighbor's house to let me see in (Figs. 5.6–5.7). It was an old house with many delicate-looking decorations.



Figure 5.6: Inside a closed private house. (By author.)

My thoughts about this house, however, centered on fear. I was afraid it would fall down and hurt me. What scared me more was its atmosphere: quite dark and gray. If there were a ghost story to be told, this house would be the setting. Because it is a house built 300 years ago, it is natural to wonder about the different things that went on there over time: for example, what love

stories, who died without fulfilling a dream, etc. Similar to what Caitlin DeSilvey wrote regarding the display of nonpristine settings rather than manicured historical sites, I gained more understanding from this nonpreserved house with no tour guide (DeSilvey, 2006).



Figure 5.7: Another view of the house. (By author.)

I am not sure I would be willing to live in the house. Although a valuable house historically, it seems too dark and dilapidated for habitation. The person who opened the door said the owner had tried to sell the house as a whole to someone specifically for preservation or possibly for it to be put on exhibition. However, the local government did not approve the sale, and the local tourism company did not accept it as a tourism site. Other, similarly dilapidated and unselected

heritage sites could be observed in Xucun.



Figure 5.8: Dilapidated historical house in Xucun. (By author.)

These unused, unpreserved heritage sites raise a question: how does one go about preserving a historical house? Sometimes, it is obvious the locals are taken advantage of by the local tourism company and by the government through exploitation of villagers' ancestors' labor for profit (i.e., their houses and property) and through the taking away of their property rights by forcing them to preserve their houses. However, sometimes the emptied ramshackle house has much more significance. As DeSilvey said, a piece of paper from an old book could form a poem created by worms or rats (DeSilvey, 2006). In the same way, the ramshackle house is rebuilt by time, by wind, by stories, and by generations who have lived there.

Another question emerges: do the dilapidated houses represent failure or crisis because there are no tourists viewing or experiencing them? Gale maintains that when "reduction in arrivals is equated with failure or crisis" it is "a typically 'economic' reaction that does not allow for some destinations purposively withdrawing from tourism" (Gale, 2012: 42). Opening these houses to tourists requires some restoration and decoration to cater to mass tourism. Some other heritage tourism sites (e.g., Hongcun and Chengkan) were even rebranded in an old way to be authentic. Can one say that the houses in Xucun are failures while those on heritage tours in Hongcun and Chengkan are successes? This is about the powers that shape discourse, which further defines what is successful.

I have to admit that I felt selfish for enjoying the singular beauty triggered by an empty ramshackled house: it was someone's private property, someone who had to leave it in its state of disrepair, deciding not to destroy it to build a modern, comfortable house. This house concluded my fieldwork in Xucun and also in this region. With modern houses everywhere and poor tourism development, Xucun's local villagers seem much more content than Chengkan's and Hongcun's villagers do. Thus, it tells a totally different story than Hongcun, which is seen as a

benchmark by similar historical villages such as Chengkan.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

Summary

To introduce the summation of my thesis, I revisit my discussion with the senior villager who gave lectures inside of an ancestral hall in Chengkan. That hall had belonged to the villager's family before 1949. After 1949, the Communist Party transformed it into state-owned property, and it served as a primary school from 1949 to 1992. In 1993, the local government repaired it and opened it to the public as a tourism site. This decision was influenced by the central government's Open and Reform policy and correspond to a worldwide trend toward neoliberal forms of governance. To encourage economic growth, the central government redistributed some power to local governments and linked the personnel promotion system to the sometimes incompatible goals of local economic growth and local social stability. That is to say, local government officials had a greater possibility of promotion if their local economy was more prosperous than another local economy and if the locality experience upward social mobility, little social conflict and demographic change. As a result, most local government officials tried their best to promote tourism for local economic growth while guaranteeing security.

In summer 2013, I conducted fieldwork in three nearby villages in China with a similar set of cultural relics. I found that the local governments of two of the villages sought out external investment capital as a means to develop tourism and compete with other localities. This investment was accompanied by the involvement of business entrepreneurs who marketed each village as unique sites to attract tourists. In some instances, they preserved the villages and claimed they appeared now exactly as they did when built 300 years ago (e.g. s Hongcun.) In some villages, they changed the cultural relics to a certain degree to make them unique (e.g.

Chengkan.)

What did these efforts mean to local villagers? For some, it meant they could not decorate, improve, or maintain their houses because the structures were supposed to remain true to what was constructed 300 years ago. For others, it meant they had to watch their identity and culture be misrepresented by external developers. I investigated these issues through my fieldwork and interviews in the three adjacent villages of Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun.

Hongcun is a World Heritage Site and, as such, attracts more tourists than the other two historical villages. The local county government introduced and authorized one real estate company—Jingyi Company to develop the tourism economy in Hongcun. To put Hongcun on display, Jingyi constructed not only infrastructure for tourism (e.g., a parking lot capable of handling large motor coaches, a hotel) but also heritage. Here, heritage construction for tourism included selection of historical sites for display and reinvention of historical stories for a pageant play to attract tourists.

Because of good marketing strategies and the designation as a World Heritage Site, profits from gate fees charged by Jingyi totaled 77.56 million RMB (US\$12.35 million) in 2012. However, none of these profits were shared with the local residents. The villagers protested and sued the local government and the tourism company; these actions resulted in the local community now receiving 20 percent of the gate fee.

When tourism development began, local residents' lives were dramatically transformed. Some of the villagers were willing to change, while others were forced to change. Some opened their houses as inns, decorating the inside in a modern style but keeping the outside the same as it was 300 years ago, as required. Some lost their agriculture land to parking lots or highway

construction and, because of financial necessity, had to become employees of the tourism company.

Chengkan is another historical village that has attracted external capital. Even though the village has cultural assets similar to those of Hongcun (or that some observers claim are even better than Hongcun's), Chengkan is not a World Heritage Site due to political reasons. It has tried many unique marketing strategies to compete with Hongcun, such as branding the village as the "No. 1 feng shui village," constructing a fake water garden to demonstrate its feng shui authenticity, and implementing strict preservation regulations.

Chengkan villagers' experiences with tourism development thus differ from Hongcun villagers'. Because it is not as famous as Hongcun, the number of tourists is lower, and the gate fee charged by the tourism company is barely shared with the local residents. According to interviewees, local residents receive the equivalent of US\$5 in health insurance every year. Thus, the villagers in Chengkan have a portion of their health insurance paid by the tourism company as their share of profits from tourism development. I did not observe the lifestyle changes in Chengkan that I had seen in Hongcun, even though some villagers' agricultural land had been taken by the tourism company.

I also conducted fieldwork in Xucun because it represents a village in a different county and has little tourism development. In Xucun, local residents were allowed to rebuild their house if it was going to fall down, even though the preservation law enacted by the State Council and the preservation regulations enacted by the provincial People's Congress were in place. Because tourism in Xucun is very weak, many of the village's young adults become migrant workers in the big cities. Xucun's older residents and children remain, the norm in most rural villages in China.

To improve tourism development in Xucun, the tourism company and local government officials need to work more closely together and make concerted efforts on tourism's behalf. According to my interviews, both parties had signed a contract stipulating that the local government is responsible for constructing a road and the tourism company is responsible for cash investment in infrastructure construction. However, neither is fulfilling its duties as defined in the contract. Local government officials change every three to five years, and incoming officials have not adhered to the contract's terms as far as road improvement goes; also, they have not enforced preservation regulations among the villagers, who can rebuild their houses for the sake of security. The head of Xucun's tourism company said, "It is useless to sue the government....because they did not follow the contract, why should we follow it?" This has led to weak tourism development in Xucun and has left local residents to live the same lifestyle as rural villagers elsewhere in China.

Because residents are allowed to make changes to, or rebuild, their historical houses as modern houses, "Xucun cannot be called a historical village." The head of Xucun's tourism company maintains that the place: "can only be called a new socialist village that contains some cultural relics." Visitors could experience, however, a sense of authenticity because there were some historical houses, though dilapidated and uninhabited.

The three villages represent three different development levels under three different county governments' management. Hongcun is seen as the benchmark for historical villages' development; Chengkan is trying to match Hongcun's success with its own strategies; and Xucun is village not taking extreme measures to lure tourists and illustrates a totally different story.

Contribution of My Research

Overall, my findings illuminate several issues related to heritage making, governmentality, local community resistance, entrepreneurship, identity, historical preservation, and property rights. My thesis also contributes to the understanding of heritage tourism through the lens of landscape and political economy in the Chinese context.

Scholars have discussed heritage as being something that is constructed purposely for different uses (Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge, 2000; Lowenthal, 1985.) Heritage tourism offers a rationale for entering into *heritage making*, which involves negotiations among the state, private sector, and local community. According to Zhang, Chong, and Ap (1999), before 1978 the Chinese state had treated tourism as a diplomatic activity. After that, the country began pursuing economic growth through the tourism industry. Timothy Oakes (2013) points out that heritage tourism is used as a strategy for economic development in China today.

At the village level, the meaning of heritage making through heritage tourism is influenced by private sector companies. Given differences in these companies and differences in how they interact with local government, heritage tourism and heritage making varies from place to place. Commonalities, however, include tourism companies' selection of several historical houses as tourism attractions while excluding others, mainly to minimize costs. The selected sites are either state-owned properties or individual houses contracted with tourism companies, both situations making them inexpensive to use. In the case of the local community as an agent in heritage making, villagers focus on heritage making not only as an avenue for profit but also as a means to express their identity. For example, individual homeowners in Hongcun, unsatisfied with conditions offered by the tourism company, act as entrepreneurs, transforming their dwellings into tourism attraction sites and charging additional entrance fees. In the adjacent village of

Chengkan, the situation is different; local residents make their own heritage by giving lectures to tourists. In Xucun, one resident claims his heritage by serving as a tourist guide for the private sector company. These different realities provide illustrations of local communities' heritage making.

On the national scale, heritage making for UNESCO in China has been examined by scholars in terms of governance (Shepherd, 2006) and economic growth (Su and Teo, 2009) but not in terms of the detailed process of heritage making (designation) for UNESCO. My research in Huangshan city suggests that heritage making for UNESCO is both a top-down and bottom-up process, which is initiated by the state and implemented by private and local actors. Designation is a process instigated by the central and provincial governments, leaving the city, county and village levels to work out the details as to how tourism will actually take place. Although the central government also enacts policies that should guide tourist development throughout China and be implemented universally, my research shows that adherence to policy varies significantly by locality.

Heritage making by the state has also been discussed by scholars in terms of nationality construction and economic income (Sofield and Li, 2011). Based on my research, heritage making has been mainly adopted for tourism to pursue GDP growth. Local governments promote heritage tourism as development projects for economic growth with power distributed from the central government. By introducing external capital, some historical villages in Huangshan city, Anhui province, have been largely transformed for heritage tourism purposes. Local government entities do not appear to be concerned with the accuracy of the heritage publicized by the private sector, such as the water garden in Chengkan and feng shui marketing, which is largely different from the main tenets of the Chinese Communist Party.

State heritage making also suggests the *governmentality* of the Chinese (government) state. There is a debate about this governmentality: is it market driven? Does it represent neoliberalism with limited government intervention (Harvey, 2005; He and Wu, 2009)? Or does it reflect a strong state involved in a different field of the society that is not limited to economic activity, such as social welfare and education (So, 2007)? Based on my research, it is difficult to draw a solid conclusion. I argue that it is a mixed governmentality with the state's involvement through policies to guarantee economic growth combined with neoliberal characteristics that the state initiate tourism development with TVEs and then transfer it to the private sector (privatization of tourism), thereby distributing power to the local government.

Scholars of heritage tourism have researched the exploitation of the *local community* by the entrepreneur state and private sector's involvement in representing the local community's culture while excluding them from the benefit sharing system. Scholars have explored *resistance* to tourism development in everyday life and the local community's identity (Su and Teo, 2009). My research on the local community suggested that most of the local community members care more about their housing and financial interests than about *identity*. The six local community case studies in Hongcun, Chengkan, and Xucun suggest that identity is more of a concern for senior elite villagers, such as the retired high school teacher in Xucun and the villager giving lectures inside the ancestral hall in Chengkan. Others are much more concerned about the profit they receive from the tourism company from the gate fee, their own income through involvement in tourism as independent *entrepreneurs*, and their dwelling houses. They are strictly regulated by the Cultural Relics Preservation Law, which hinders the satisfaction of local community members' basic living needs.

Cultural relics *preservation* raises issues regarding how cultural relics are preserved. The

Cultural Relics Preservation Law dictates that historical houses built before AD 1919 cannot be altered and that individual homeowners are responsible for the costs of preservation. Villagers unable to preserve their houses leave them to deteriorate over time. However, these nonpreserved houses offer a much more authentic sense of heritage than the preserved houses set up and decorated to serve as tourist attractions. Also, the Cultural Relics Preservation Law has been the source of problems in the villages I studied, and it also contradicts the Real Right Law issued in 2005. While Hongcun and Chengkan strictly enforce the preservation law, Xucun's town government allows villagers to tear down ramshackle houses so they will not get hurt. The approach taken in Xucun also worked to protect individual homeowners' property rights. More research is needed regarding property rights of historical houses in heritage tourism.

Limitations

In the process of writing my thesis, I uncovered the following limitations.

My policy research could have been more extensive; for example, interviewing more experts about specific policies and requesting hard copies of the policies (instead of relying only on online searches). My research approach and extent may have resulted in overlooking some policies and in not fully knowing the stipulations of others. Because of limited preliminary research, I did not have a strong enough understanding about various policies before going into the field, which affected my research while there and consequent interpretations.

I found other limitations with the data I used, including interviews, and I did not obtain detailed statistical information, such as income and gender of the villagers and tourists. During some interviews, when interviewees became silent, I would say something to keep the conversation going, which strongly influenced the flow and interviewees' answers. For example,

in Hongcun, one senior female villager did not respond when I asked her what impact tourism had on her life. I repeated the question and mentioned the phenomenon of tourists taking pictures; her answer then focused on how their taking pictures annoyed her.

In relation to statistical data, I reviewed only city-level data, which did not include information on tourists. My research would have been much more complete if I had acquired more detailed data during my fieldwork, particularly by asking local villagers and town governments. I was not fully prepared before going into the field and, therefore, did not gather sufficient data, which limits the results of my research. I aim to avoid such problems during my doctoral fieldwork.

Finally, I do not include a discussion in my thesis about the multifaceted roles of tourists. Consumption by tourists, for example, can actually be seen as production. I did not have an opportunity to interview tourists. They were difficult to access because of the tours' structure: tourists most often closely followed the tourist guide and quickly went through the village, finishing the tour in 45 minutes; once the tour was over, they left the village. Hongcun has successfully established some family inns (decorated with traditional themes, catering to tourists' desire for nostalgia) to house tourists overnight. These arrangements may make tourists more accessible for interviews (after establishing permissions from the appropriate parties). Chengkan and Xucun, however, have not yet established these kinds of accommodations, thereby making opportunities to communicate directly with tourists scarce.

Future Research

During my research, fieldwork, and writing, I became aware of many interesting issues and opportunities that deserve further exploration, such as a new project sponsored by the World

Bank that involves development on a global and local scale.

I learned of the “A Hundred Villages and a Thousand Houses” project, initiated by the Huangshan city government. It includes 101 historical villages and 1,065 historical houses.

According to the official website of Huangshan city government,

This project will form a preservation plan according to the preservation theme, feature, and boundary for each historical village or for individual historical houses. Through different preservation approaches, such as total preservation, centralized preservation, and forced preservation, the cultural relics will get preserved. It will be finished in five years, between 2009 and 2013. (Translated from the government’s official website)

During my interview with a Huangshan city government official at the Cultural Relics Bureau, the government office in charge of this project, I began to understand the involvement of the World Bank:

Official: We have set up an office to deal with the World Bank; it is called the World Bank Loan Office. The World Bank has already agreed to loan us almost US\$100 million. The first installment will come this year [2013]. This is also a project given by the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Finance. The World Bank loan is a scarce resource and is very hard to get. They only issue loans for projects that will contribute to the country, to the world, and to human beings in general.

Yi: What conditions were agreed to for the loan?

Official: They could not understand the “A Hundred Villages and a Thousand Houses” concept, so we packaged the project from the perspective of building beautiful villages. They can definitely understand this. Actually, building a beautiful homeland is similar to preserving the historical town, fixing heritage sites, and using the heritage. (Interview with the leader of Cultural Relics Bureau in the city of Huangshan)

The World Bank is known for providing small loans to women in third world countries to help them become entrepreneurs and to improve living conditions of families. The role of the World Bank in social justice and in the context of Africa and Latin America is also well-known. It would be interesting to look into its role in China given the strong hand of the Chinese government.

Concluding Remarks

Overall, my thesis contributes to an understanding of heritage tourism in terms of political

economy and landscape in the Chinese context. I recognize the collectiveness of a community and the existence of a structured system as both influencing heritage tourism and the ideologies involved with political economy. China is a socialist country that tries to incorporate capitalist economics and socialist politics. Heritage tourism in China is not playing out as it does in a capitalist society. I show how heritage tourism guides a broader political economy and social system as it raises questions about state power and local autonomy. On a smaller scale, I discuss differences and representations, which could also reflect social injustice and complications in the local community.

As such, I combine political economy and local context through a landscape framework in my discussion about different levels. Representation of heritage for tourism can be interpreted differently by different agents, and, overall, the construction of heritage sites for tourism can be perceived as materialized discourse, with a negotiation of power behind those discourses, that is, ideology.

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- Communicated with the Federal Cooperative Organization about the project
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