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Tourism, Residents Agent Practice and Traditional Residential Landscapes at a Cultural Heritage Site: The Case Study of Hongcun Village, China

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Abstract: The contradiction between tourism development and sustainable heritage is a topic of academic debate. Taking Hongcun village, a UNESCO World Heritage site in China, as a case study, this paper focuses on the role of resident spatial practice and provides the possibility of balance between capital-driven and sustainable development and local culture, which has important implications for the sustainable development of cultural heritage. The study used archival research, non-participatory observations, and semi-structured interviews, following Pierre Bourdieu's theory of practice to analyze the practical logic of local residents who transform their dwellings to achieve the aim of landscape sustainability. This study found that in the development of Hongcun tourism, the residential landscape has been adaptively transformed at both the material and non-material levels, due to residents' habitus and the capital brought in by tourism. This material transformation was mainly manifested in the change of residential function, the courtyard structure, and the alienation of residential space. The non-material transformation was mainly manifested in the relationships between residents and other actors. Residents who tended to conduct protection actions positively were more likely to achieve a sustainable livelihood that contributes to a sustainable cultural landscape. This paper argues that the sustainable development of heritage requires that attention be paid to the positive role of grassroots agents and practices. Bottom-up agency is the key to realizing the adaptation of living heritage to external changes.

Keywords: traditional residential landscape; tourism; cultural landscape; sustainability; Bourdieu; Hongcun village

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Citation: Zuo, D.; Li, C.; Lin, M.; Chen, P.; Kong, X. Tourism, Residents Agent Practice and Traditional Residential Landscapes at a Cultural Heritage Site: The Case Study of Hongcun Village, China. *Sustainability* **2022**, *14*, 4423. https://doi.org/10.3390/su14084423

Academic Editors: Shangyi Zhou and Shaoming Lu

Received: 27 February 2022
Accepted: 6 April 2022
Published: 8 April 2022

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1. Introduction

The question of whether capital-driven and commoditized tourism practices have positive or negative effects on heritage is a matter of long-standing academic debate [1]. Rather than being a finished product, heritage is seen as an ongoing process [2]. Tourism can bring profits from heritage, cover the high cost of conservation, and help to convey the cultural value of heritage [3,4]. The construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of heritage are influenced by local political and economic practices [5]. The development of tourism has shifted the discourse of heritage toward a focus on the economy, where its value is determined by the market and profit-making, and where history and spirit are irrelevant [6]. In heritage tourism, balancing profit with authenticity preservation becomes a problem, but the protagonists of this balance are generally considered to be planners, governments, or marketers, ignoring the power of grassroots activity. Actions balancing the needs of both residents and tourists and preserving precious cultural memories have become an endogenous response to traditional forms of tourism for the actors involved in the field of tourism, especially for communities. An understanding of these actions

and actors still needs to be developed in order to maintain sustainable landscapes under tourism development.

Traditional villages are one of the typical heritage sites seen in China, as they symbolize farming history and civilization and inspire nostalgia [7,8]. However, due to the process of urbanization, traditional villages disappeared at an average rate of 80 to 100 per day between 2000 and 2010 [9]. In the face of this rural hollowing out, tourism development has become an important path for the activation and protection of traditional villages, involving restaurants, bars, cafes, Nongjiales (a Chinese word, also known as agritainment), and homestays [10]. Despite the limitations of the renewal of building exteriors, maneuverable rebuilding has been explored by residents in their daily practices of living and commerce. A common way to conserve buildings as "living heritage" while avoiding "museification" is to adaptively reuse local heritage houses [11]; this is exactly the aim of conserving these traditional houses by turning them into homestays. Homestay tourism, which has gradually been developed using traditional vernacular houses as accommodation, has become popular. It has provided residents with extra income and employment opportunities, as well as conveying local knowledge to tourists [12].

Rural dwellings and landscapes are an important part of heritage conservation and provide an important experience for tourists. For those tourists who wish to achieve in-depth experiences of nature, culture, and lifestyles in traditional villages, homestays, the main component of habitable landscapes, are the perfect venue for accommodation run by local residents. The construction of homestays involves either newly built houses or reconstructed traditional vernacular houses, creating an impact on both the dwellings and landscapes. Therefore, homestay tourism may be helpful to explore the adaptive development and protection of traditional residential landscapes by the residents.

In this paper, we mainly focus on the homestays in reconstructed traditional vernacular houses, where interactions and conflicts take place directly between tourists and residents, to explore protection practices in residential landscapes. Taking the tourism development of a traditional Chinese village as a case study, this paper is dedicated to a study of the interactions between tourism, traditional residential landscapes, and sustainability in the community. To be specific, we study residents' agency in the spatial practice of homestay construction and the possible relationship between the capital-driven and sustainable development of local culture, which has important implications for the sustainable development of cultural heritage and its corresponding landscapes. The main questions discussed in this study are as follows: how do the actors interact in the tourism field and what are the consequences of utilizing vernacular houses as homestays? What are the different strategies that residents have used in the transformation and utilization of vernacular houses while achieving sustainable landscape development? The aim of the study is to deepen our understanding of the adaptive use and sustainability of vernacular houses, and the relationships between tourism development, adaptive actions by residents, and traditional residential landscape protection.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Residential Landscapes in Traditional Villages and Tourism

The UNESCO World Heritage Committee officially included cultural landscapes in the World Heritage List in December 1992, becoming the fourth heritage type after natural heritage, cultural heritage, and natural and cultural heritage. At the Convention for the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, cultural landscapes were divided into three main types: landscapes designed and constructed intentionally by man, organically evolved landscapes, and associative cultural landscapes [13].

Hongcun, our research case, is not only a traditional Chinese village but also a World Cultural Heritage site with a variety of landscapes, such as agricultural landscapes, waterway landscapes, domestic landscapes, and calligraphy landscapes. Furthermore, the traditional dwellings, our specific research object, are also a type of cultural landscape mentioned in the convention. Heritage sites partly rely on the socio-cultural practices of

residents to retain their identities [14]. It is the living practices of residents, generation by generation, that make these heritage sites unique [15].

Residential landscapes are represented by traditional vernacular houses and are created by the collision of human wisdom with the natural environment. They are safe homes created by people to ensure their long-term survival in nature. Traditional dwellings encapsulate a specific building layout, materials, and typology, as well as the intangible methods of making them, and embody the way of life of both the builders and residents [16,17]. Therefore, as a place where residents live, our understanding of traditional residential landscapes should not be limited to the physical space of "a shelter from wind and rain, or a container filled with furniture and other objects" but should be recognized as a material and an affective space [18] rooted in personal and social significance and the daily practices of the residents [19]. Therefore, residents in historic communities are the core of heritage and cultural studies.

Tourism has become one of the main ways for many traditional villages to promote local social and economic development [20,21] and is an aspect of the changing spatial organization and the political economy of production and consumption. Scholars have long recognized the importance of understanding the power and complexity that tourism brings to spaces and places [22]. When emphasizing the attractiveness of the cultural consumption of residential landscapes, which are regarded as the most valuable cultural heritage resource and a representation of residents' daily lives [23,24], tourism activities inevitably result in a series of changes to those landscapes and the reconstruction of social structures in the human–land relationship of villages, posing challenges regarding the protection of heritage [25–29]. For residential landscapes, it is obvious that the development of tourism has brought many disharmonious landscape features, such as uncoordinated building exterior materials, non-traditional general layouts and landscape design [30], and inappropriate large-scale tourist infrastructure [31], which may damage the original material environment and cultural landscape and may even change the traditional culture of the residential area [32]. On the other hand, commodification has led to the reconstruction of building functions [33], accompanied by a functional transformation from their original residential purpose toward commercial operations [34], which has led to the detaching of these residential landscapes from their native society [35]. Furthermore, tourism development has dramatically changed the traditional houses that the residents call home since the landscapes with which they were familiar have given way to tourism businesses [36].

2.2. Living Heritage as Landscape

A Chinese traditional village is one form of living heritage. Living heritage refers to community-based cultural heritage [37], and has the characteristics of continuity and practice. It mainly relies on the original community maintaining contact with its heritage, with traditional local knowledge being applied to heritage protection and tangible or intangible heritage dynamically changing to respond to the external environment [37,38]. Due to continuity, living heritage inevitably evolves, which leads to changes in its material or immaterial components [39]. However, in the Chinese context, the protection of traditional villages does not pay much attention to the continuity of heritage but focuses more on the materiality of the village, hoping to convey the authentic culture through the preservation of material heritage and its symbols [40]. This study argues that, despite strict restrictions on the material heritage of traditional villages at the official level, grassroots practices are still reshaping the meaning of landscapes, which requires an understanding of dynamic heritage as being distinct from the practicality of the landscapes.

Theoretically, "landscape" is a key word in geography. The word "landscape" originated from "Landschäft" in German. In geography, "landscape" refers to the complex of various geographical phenomena on the earth's surface. In the 1920s, the term "cultural landscape" was widely used and was defined as "a form of human activity attached to natural landscape" by Carl O. Sauer [41]. Under the "cultural turn", the landscape is understood as a representation—that is, it contains the values of the subject; geograph-

ical research focuses more on how different cultural groups understand the meaning of landscape [42,43]. The shift in the meaning of the spectacle also implies the reproduction of social relations, reflecting a power struggle [44]. However, this separates the social meaning of the landscape from its material carrier, and the landscape is reduced to symbols, discourses, and narratives.

Under the influence of post-structuralism, the landscape is seen as a product of practice aimed at breaking the binary relationship between materialism and culturalism [45]. For example, the non-representational theory holds that the landscape is the product of embodied acts [46]. "Re-materialization" thinking focuses on the moving, body-sensing, and vital materials of the landscape [47]. Pearson introduced dramaturgy to discuss the performability of landscape, focusing on the practical activities of people's bodies and landscapes in their encounters [48]. In general, a landscape is no longer a static, objectified carrier of symbols and text, but is instead closely related to people's daily practice and is undergoing dynamic change [49].

However, if we only understand the formation of a landscape from its interaction with the body and space at the micro-level, we cannot explain the influence of external political and economic processes on a larger scale. In the context of heritage tourism, commodification is the starting point for understanding how tourism constitutes a significant drive toward development in modern villages, in which the influence of capital is highlighted [50–53]. Therefore, this study introduces Pierre Bourdieu's theory to explain the practicality of landscapes. Pierre Bourdieu (1990) wanted to construct a general theory for the analysis of all practices in the economy, so he formulated three important concepts in his work on cultural consumption practice studies: habitus, capital, and field [54]. He put forward the term "field" as the space where consumption and actions take place and "habitus" as the intention of a structured individual or collective to act. An approach using field and habitus avoids structural determinism by combining the social structure and actors in a relational perspective, thus providing possible explanations for both structure and actor agency. At the same time, the field exists in the space and the agent's activities require a specific location, while the relationship constructed by the actor's practice in a specific field will also act on the landscape [55]. Thus, the observation of changes in heritage landscapes enables an analysis of the power relations and capital logic behind it. It allows us to consider how traditional residential landscapes are rebuilt, and how the residents adapt their actions of preserving and rebuilding [56,57] in tourism development, from the perspective of Bourdieu's theory. This research explores what influence the residents have experienced with the development of tourism and how they actively adapt and transform traditional vernacular houses, apart from the capital and market influence, to attain good sustainability.

3. Study Area and Research Methods

3.1. Study Area

Hongcun is located in the northeast of Yixian County, southwest of Huangshan City in the south of Anhui Province (Figure 1), which was also historically named Huizhou. Hongcun was built in 1131 CE during the Shaoxing period of the Southern Song Dynasty and has a history encompassing more than 890 years [58]. In terms of natural resources, the village is mostly located in the flat zone of the Hongcun basin and has a humid subtropical monsoon climate. In terms of historical and cultural resources, there are 103 traditional buildings originally built in the Ming (1368–1644 CE) and Qing (1644–1911 CE) dynasties, along with 34 buildings built during the Republic of China (1912–1949 CE) [59], some of which were built for the purpose of glorifying and illuminating their ancestors by Huizhou merchants who had accumulated much wealth when away from home. The overall architectural layout and settlement form, and the specific interiors of individual buildings in the village, were guided by the geomantic omen theory of Zhouyi, which embodies the traditional Chinese philosophy of the unity between humans and nature. In 2000, as a "witness of traditional human civilization, a typical work of local traditional

architecture, and a brilliant model of the harmonious combination of human and nature", Hongcun village was listed as a World Cultural Heritage Site. Since then, it has won the great honor of being listed by the National Key Cultural Relics Protection Unit (2001), the First Group of Chinese Historical and Cultural Villages (2003), and the National 5A-level Tourist Scenic Spots (2011).

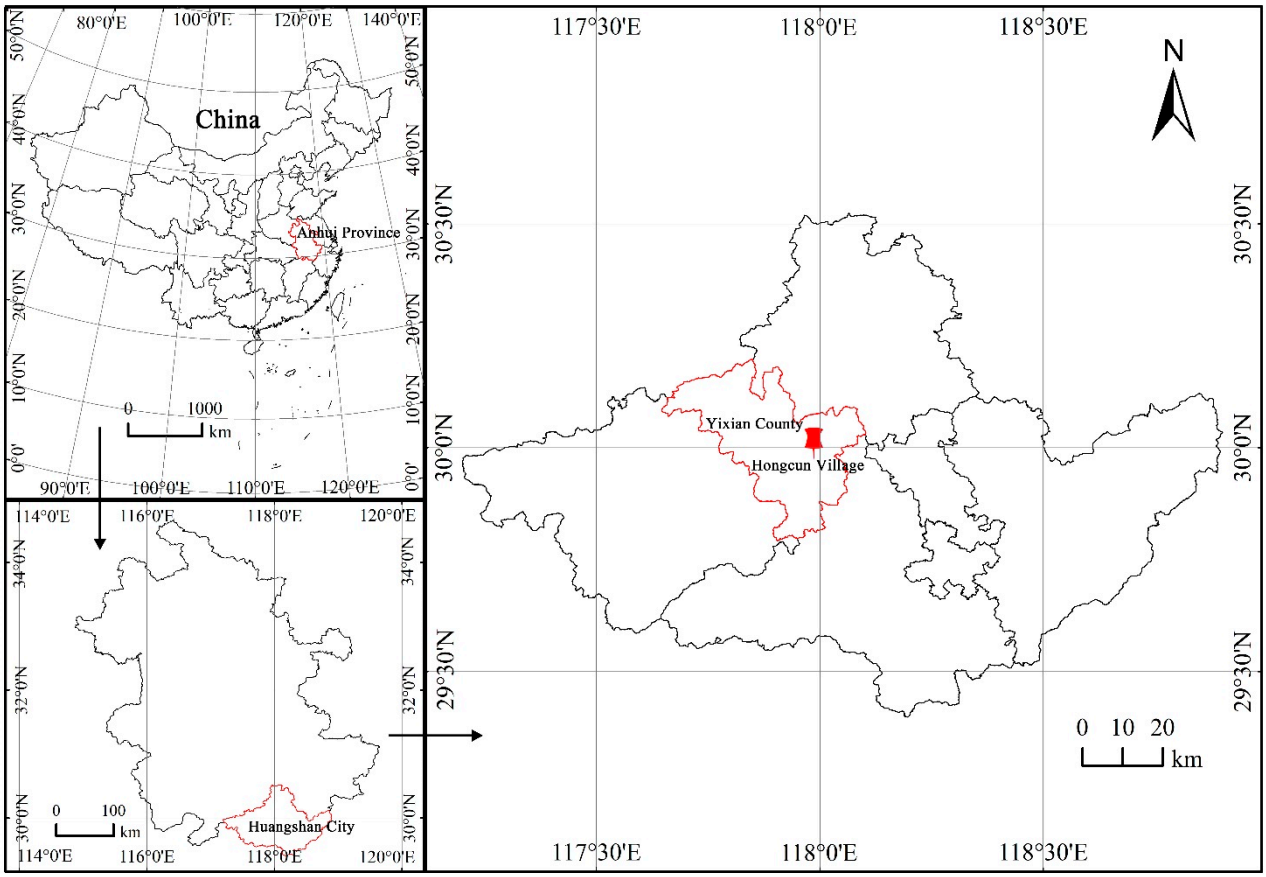

Figure 1. Location of Hongcun village. Source: the authors.

Historically, Hongcun was a settlement dominated by agriculture. With the opening of China's tourism market, especially the rise of rural tourism after the 1990s, villages have become important tourism vehicles, with unique rural folk cultures as their resources and farms as their main business. The tourism development of Hongcun began in 1986, but the tourism industry did not develop rapidly until the Beijing Zhongkun Group Co., Ltd., Beijing, China leased the business in 1997. Since then, tourism has become the pillar industry for the village, pushing most of the labor force in the village to gradually shift from agriculture to tour-related industries like handicrafts stalls, tea, and other local specialties, accommodation, and catering. According to statistics, in 2018 the number of visiting tourists was 2.3 million and the direct tourism income was USD 20.4 million, which gave employment to more than 80% of the local farmers and helped 100% of farmers escape poverty [60]. The heritage conservation practices in Hongcun reflect the opportunities and challenges of traditional Chinese villages that face significant changes to their traditional domestic landscapes as a result of tourism development and socio-economic transformation.

3.2. Research Design and Data Collection

We conducted field research twice, from 28 August to 2 September 2020 and from 11 to 14 April 2021, respectively. A combination of research methods, including non-participatory observations, in-depth interviews, historical documents, and secondary data,

such as statistics from government departments and the relevant policy texts, were applied to the research (Figure 2).

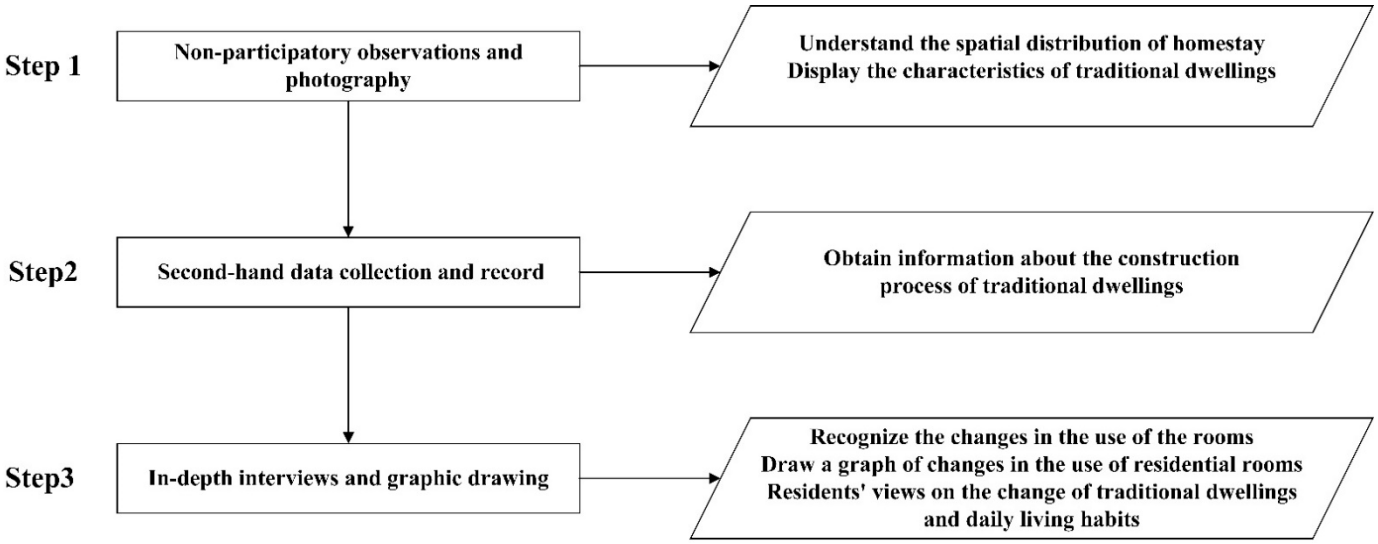

Figure 2. The methods applied in this article. Source: the authors.

3.2.1. Non-Participatory Observations

We observed and displayed the characteristics and current situation of traditional Huizhou dwellings through non-participatory observations and photography. At the same time, we recorded the land use of Hongcun through observation, to understand the spatial distribution characteristics of homestays. Most of the homestays, the typical utilization method of vernacular houses, are not on the tourist route and are scattered around Hongcun. Based on this information, we divided the village into 10 blocks, including the Upper Ditch, Chahang Lane, Moon Pond, Nanhu Lake, the Front Street, the Back Street, Huchengtou, the Eastern Street, Wu's Ancestral Hall, and the Eastern Field. We conducted in-depth interviews in these areas to comprehensively grasp the development of homestays in Hongcun and selected typical residential landscapes for analysis.

3.2.2. In-Depth Interviews

We conducted interviews with three groups of people. Firstly, we conducted interviews with residents who operated homestays in order to learn what changes had been made to the use of the rooms and how the inhabitants retained the characteristics of their traditional vernacular houses to attract tourists. We lived in different homestays every day and had lunches and dinners in the local restaurants so that we could have more opportunities to contact the local residents. This helped us to understand the views of people in different blocks regarding the changes to traditional houses, the changes to daily living habits, and the protection of houses. We interviewed 21 operators of various homestays, ranging from 15 min to 1.5 h for each interviewee, with an average duration of 45 min. Secondly, we interviewed senior residents who knew about the traditional residential landscapes of Hongcun. Through the residents' memories of the basic spatial pattern and spatial form changes of their houses, we drew spatial layouts and functional diagrams so as to classify the spatial reconstruction of traditional residential landscapes. Thirdly, the leaders of the Hongcun Village Committee and town government were interviewed to understand the operation and management status of the homestays in Hongcun, as well as the reconstruction management and protection measures of the houses.

3.2.3. Secondary Materials Analysis

Historical materials, such as the "Hongcun Wang Family Tree" obtained in the field investigation, also provided much information clarifying the construction process of Hongcun's traditional residential landscapes. This serves as auxiliary analysis material.

4. Traditional Vernacular Houses in Hongcun: A Geographical Perspective

4.1. Foundation of Geographical Environment in Hongcun

At the end of the Han Dynasty, around 200 CE, the 31st ancestor of the Wang family moved from the northern Central Plains to Shaoxing, Zhejiang, and later lived in Shexian County. Wang Renya, the 61st ancestor of the Wang family, moved from Shexian to Jinling (now Nanjing) for business reasons. Unfortunately, his shop was destroyed by a fire and he left to move back to his hometown. Feeling too ashamed to face his family, and attracted by the surrounding landscape on the way back home, he decided to relocate to the village of Qishu in the north of Yixian County. However, he thought that Qishu village was scattered and not suitable for long-term living when mountain torrents and fires broke out. He left his last words: future generations should relocate to the south of Leigang Mountain [58,61,62].

In 1131 CE, Qishu village suffered war and fires, and more than 300 houses were destroyed. Wang Yanji, the 66th ancestor of the Wang family clan, followed his ancestor's advice and moved to the hillside of Leigang Mountain. He bought a few acres of land from the Dai family and built four buildings with a total of 13 houses, which project took him 22 years; from then, this place started to be called Hongcun. At that time, the village was limited by its surroundings and was not as big as it is now; the Suixi River created a boundary at the foot of Leigang Mountain from the north to the east, and the Yangzhan River from the west to the south and the east. However, on May 15 of the lunar calendar in 1276, a huge flood broke out in Hongcun that caused the Xixi River to be diverted. As a result, this turned the original Xixi river channel into a large empty dry beach that was very suitable as a base site for village construction. After the Wang family settled down in Hongcun, they were mainly engaged in farming for a long time, with only a weak ability to transform nature and the slow accumulation of wealth. Therefore, after more than 260 years, until the early Ming Dynasty, Hongcun was still only a settlement village made up of a few scattered houses [58,61,62].

During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, due to the rise of the Huizhou merchants, the Wang family accumulated much wealth, purchasing land and building houses for the glory of their ancestors, also building bridges, paving roads, and triggering two construction periods in Hongcun. In 1403, the 76th ancestor, Wang Siqi, invited senior members of his clan and the geomancer He Keda to inspect the surrounding mountains and rivers of the village. They drew up a blueprint for the expansion and overall planning of the village. Therefore, the Wang family used clan property to build the Moon Pond from a natural spring in the village, then diverted Xixi River water into the village. During more than 170 years, from 1425 to 1596 CE, dozens of ancestral halls were built in the village, including Lexutang, Baoshantang, Zhengyitang, and Wubentang, as well as Sanlitang, Lexiantang, Chengzhitang, and the Nanhu Academy. Longpai Temple was built in the east of the village, Guanyin Pavilion in the west of the village, and the South Lake in the south of the village. Red poplar, peach, and willow trees were planted. A hazelnut forest was planted on Leigang mountain in the north of the village [58]. In this way, Hongcun was formed and the patriarchal residential settlements were perfected based on blood and geographic relationships [58,61,62].

The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom's army seized Yixian County through the Yangzhanling Tunnel near the village several times around 1855 CE, and countless houses were burnt down in Hongcun. Almost at the same time, the Huizhou merchants fell into a slump, due to the reform of the ticket law, and the population and economy of the village were further weakened [58,61,62].

After the foundation of the People's Republic of China, large traditional houses were redistributed, due to property rights changes, but most residents still lived in traditional

houses. In order to meet the needs of daily use, disordered construction was taken up in the courtyards and the original functions and structures of these houses were divided up into pieces. People had to rebuild their houses with simple beams, river pebbles, and yellow mud. After the Great Leap Forward movement and the Cultural Revolution, the ancestral halls and traditional houses were severely damaged. The wooden structures fell apart, and the traditional buildings in Hongcun collapsed, one after another. Fortunately, more than 130 houses that were built before 1949 survived, and the water system, roadway, and spatial pattern of the village have been basically preserved. In the late 1960s, wealthier residents built brick bungalows with one hall and two to four rooms, while a few people built double-story houses of brick and wooden structures. After 2000, with the development of tourism, many residents built new houses of two or more stories [58,61,62]. Although these newly built houses adopt new structures and forms, their scale and appearance are mostly similar to those of traditional houses, ensuring the relative harmony of Huizhou's architectural styles (Figure 3).



Figure 3. Panorama of Hongcun village. Source: the authors, 30 August 2020.

4.2. Characteristics of Traditional Vernacular Houses in Hongcun

Traditional vernacular houses are the physical shelters produced by people's instinctive need to keep themselves away from the wind and rain. Due to the characteristics of narrow spaces and a large population, the vernacular houses in Hongcun are used and divided rationally into limited spaces. Therefore, making full use of limited space is a major feature of the residential space environment. The typical single-story vernacular houses can be renovated for living needs by the lengthwise expansion of the functional space and by increasing the number of floors. The Sanheyuan courtyard is the basic type of house layout, with three variations including the docking of two triad courtyards ("回" type), the opposite connection of two triad courtyards ("H" type), and the series connection of two triad courtyards ("日" type) (Figure 4). Of these four types of houses, there are 42 houses of the Sanheyuan type, and 17 of the "回" type, 12 of the "H" type, and 8 of the "日" type. The above four forms are the main components of the residential houses of Hongcun. Among them, the Sanheyuan courtyard is the most distinctive component of the Hongcun vernacular architecture and is suitable for houses with a small homestead area. The Sanheyuan courtyards are generally two-story houses with a symmetrical layout. A three-bay room occupies the ground floor, and the principal room is in the middle, with bedrooms on both wings; a narrow and long patio with a very small depth is on the front of the hall, and both sides of the patio are generally porches, sometimes used for bedroom

entrances. The layout of the second floor is basically similar to that of the ground floor. The principal room is the ancestral hall, displaying ancestral tablets. The two wing sides are used as bedrooms, storage rooms or corridors. The straight-running wooden ladder connects the upper and lower floors, either behind the wall or in the side corridors. Thus far, the Sanheyuan courtyard is still the prevailing form in both newly built houses and traditional vernacular houses.

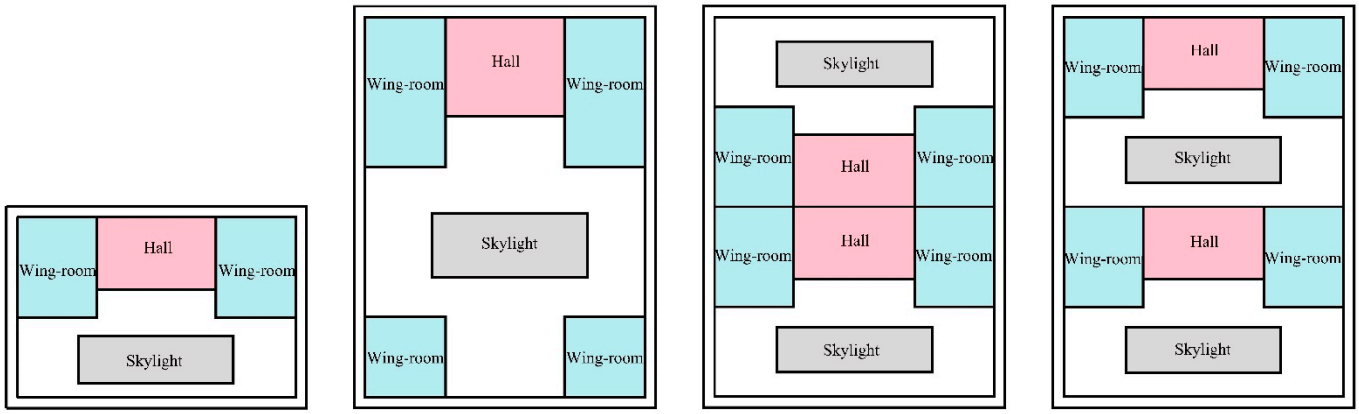

Figure 4. Basic modes of the building units. Source: the authors.

The orientation of Hongcun houses is mostly to the southeast or southwest. The courtyards are surrounded by towering walls, to enclose and isolate the area from the outside. The exterior walls, usually without windows at all or with very small windows on the second floor, are higher than the roof, and most of the gates of the houses are located in narrow alleys. Gatehouses are usually carved above the gates. The houses are made of wooden load-bearing structures involving posts, lintel frames, columns, and ties, and the nodes are connected by tenons. The rowlock walls, filled with mud, bear no structural load and only serve for space enclosure. In other words, the house frames are erected first and are then filled in with walls so that the outside walls can be prevented from collapsing. The stepped horsehead-shaped gables are higher than the roof and follow the slope of the roof, are another characteristic of the village's traditional houses. Simple colors, such as black, white, and gray are adopted. In terms of the overall appearance, the old saying, "white walls, black tiles, and horsehead-shaped gables" is the best summary of the appearance of the traditional houses.

Stone, wood, and brick, most of which are locally sourced, are the main building materials used in Hongcun. The wood is mainly derived from Chinese fir and pine trees grown in the hilly areas of Anhui Province. The stone used is mainly known as green and tea garden stone from Yixian County, which is usually limestone [63] that is economically viable. These materials are combined and can be used appropriately according to the different characteristics of various materials in the houses. The beam frame system of the traditional houses is an organic combination of wood and stone, such as the combination of wooden pillars and stone pillar foundations shown in Figure 5. From a functional point of view, the pillars are taller and the wood is relatively light, which facilitates the construction of the pillars and reduces the load on the foundations. The pillar foundations are the load-bearing components, and the stone pillar foundations are more robust and are able to withstand larger loads [63].

Decoration is one of the main features of traditional houses. Great attention has been paid to decoration and aesthetics, despite the simple construction structure of the houses in Hongcun. On the one hand, a variety of exquisite Huizhou-style carvings are used. Brick carvings mainly decorate door fronts and gatehouses. Stone carvings are used for the pillar foundations of residential steps, the stone drums in front of the gates, and the calligraphy and painting artworks on the door fronts, as well as the open windows inlaid on the outer walls of the courtyard. Wood carvings are used in many places, such as cornices, beams,

doors and windows, patios, second-floor railings, and interior furnishings. The patterns originate from various sources, including Chinese legends, birds and beasts, flowers, and auspicious clouds. The real theme is often expressed through the metaphors or homophony of the patterns. On the other hand, in the decoration of the houses, special attention is paid to their interior furnishings, which are inseparable parts of traditional houses and the material manifestation of residential cultural life. The hall, which is a prominent part of the houses, is a place where the emphasis is placed on decoration and literary talent. The high-hanging plaques in the main hall, philosophical couplets on the pillars in the hall, and traditional Chinese tables and chairs greatly enhance the ornamental value of the houses.



Figure 5. The organic combination of wood and stone. Source: the authors, 12 April 2021. Notes: The pillar foundations are the stones that bear the load of the roof columns, which can play a role in preventing moisture. (**a**) The wooden gate and the door pillow stone; (**b**) The fully exposed wooden pillars and stone pillar foundations; (**c**) The wooden pillars and stone pillar foundations in the wall.

4.3. Cultural Roots of Traditional Vernacular Houses

Traditional Chinese architecture displays, permeates, and reflects the traditional ritual order and ethical culture of China, either in its overall layout and combination, its architectural form or in the spatial sequence and function, in the decorative details and utensils [64]. As a traditional village with more than 800 years of history, Hongcun has a rich traditional culture. The morality, values, way of life and of thinking are visible in the houses. In Hongcun, in either the locations of the houses, the architectural patterns, or even the locations of the cemetery, Feng shui is significantly regarded as a guarantee of the prosperity of the clan, the family, and the longevity of good fortune. The Wang family so strongly believed in Feng shui that they believed the part of Leigang Mountain extending to the center of the village was the extension of a "dragon vein". The village base to the north of Moon Pond was considered too divine for ordinary residential houses. In the later periods of village development, there were too many houses needed and so it was impossible for every household to have their choice of location; however, adjustments could be made in terms of the door directions, the setting up of screen walls and shadow walls, and in adopting certain residential shapes.

The traditional culture was reflected in the residential form and spatial order. In a traditional society governed by rituals, Huizhou residential buildings were caught in the shackles of the ritual system. First, the houses had different layouts and sizes, corresponding to the different ranks of officials in the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The law of the Ming Dynasty regulated the sizes and decorations of buildings in detail. For example, in the 26th year of Hongwu's reign (1393 CE), officials of the first and second ranks could have a five-room, nine-frame hall; officials of the third to fifth ranks could have a five-room, seven-frame hall; and officials of the sixth to ninth ranks could have a three-room, seven-frame hall [65]. Second, there were several structural forms in the different locations of a single house, including lobbies, wing rooms, side rooms, and back halls. The statuses of those who lived in different rooms were stringently ranked; the wing room on the left was generally for the elderly, while the wing room on the right was generally for the parents.

Men and women generally lived separately. The daughters mostly lived on the second floor [66]. This distinction reflected traditional Huizhou culture in terms of its emphasis on priority by rank and respect for seniority, the differences between males and females, and the left being considered superior to the right [67].

The decoration was also an important way to convey cultural connotations, especially in the halls and on the patios and doors. Brick carvings, stone carvings, and wood carvings mainly depicting historical stories and auspicious patterns were the three most important decoration forms in Hongcun vernacular buildings. In other words, the representational culture was depicted using traditional symbols of good fortune, as well as employing homophonic, consonant, and hieroglyphic methods. For example, the patterns combining pine trees and cranes meant longevity, while combining peaches and bats meant blessings and longevity. In addition, in the interior of the hall, there were porcelain vases and hat tubes on the east side of the table, a magnetic mirror with a portrait on the west side, and a clock in the middle. This arrangement was commonly known as "East bottle, West mirror", which meant peace for life [68] and the predicting of great success for Huizhou merchants and their families. Calligraphy, paintings, and couplets would be hung on the walls on both sides of the hall to show the owners' aspirations. The plants in the courtyard were usually plums, orchids, bamboos, chrysanthemums, peonies, osmanthuses, pines, and cypresses, which symbolized the owners' personal characters and embodied Confucian ethics (Figure 6).

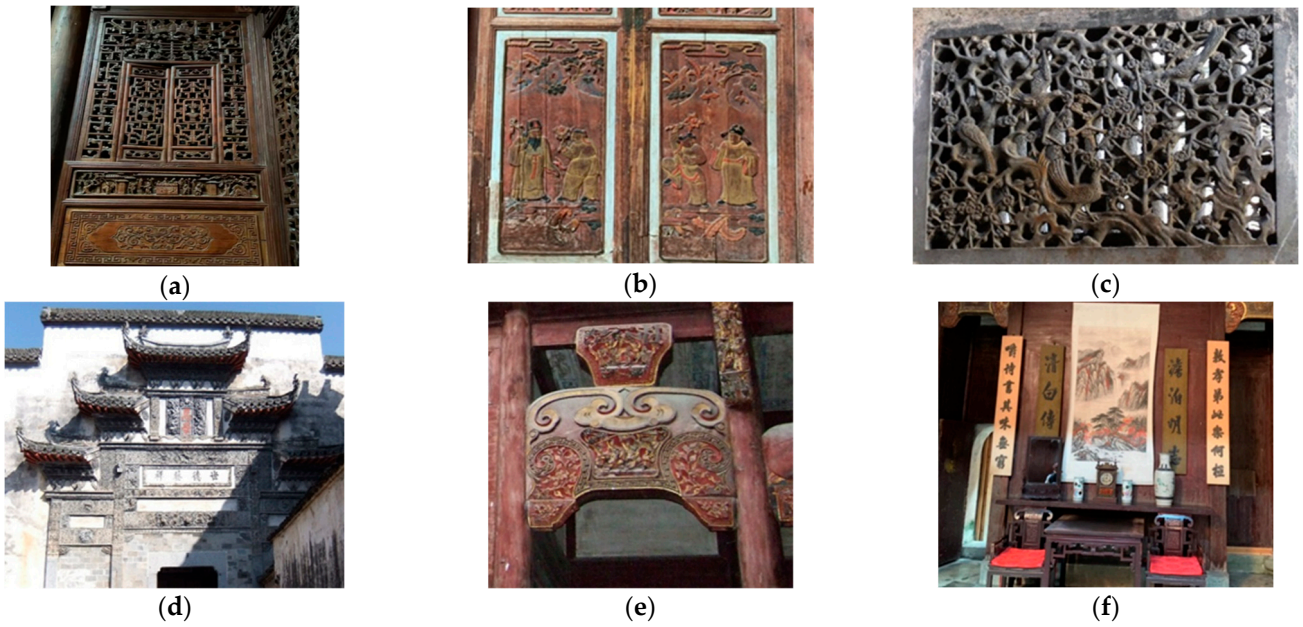

Figure 6. Examples of traditional houses and their interiors in Hongcun. Source: the authors, 12 April 2021. (**a**) Woodcuts on doors; (**b**) Color painting on doors; (**c**) Stone carvings on windows; (**d**) Arch gates; (**e**) Bend beam; (**f**) The common furnishings.

The houses were not only a material shell for people's lives but also a complex symbolic system that showed the connotations of traditional culture. The arrangement of space and form both expressed a certain meaning; they contained the ideals of former generations and expressed their hopes, fears, and beliefs [69]. The overall location, internal shape, and orientation of the residence reflected the philosophy of feng shui and traditional etiquette. The interior decoration of the houses had become a vehicle for Huizhou merchants to show off their wealth and social rank. However, even if the interior decoration of the house was often extremely luxurious, it was still affected by Confucian ethics and morality. It fully embodied the unique aesthetic taste of Huizhou merchants as "Confucian merchants".

5. Residents' Practices Regarding the Sustainable Development of the Residential Landscape

5.1. Material Level: Reconstructions of Spatiality by Residents

Habitus is put forward by Bourdieu as a concept that represents a trend of actions whereby actors may take in the inflence of social structures and personal willingness. Habitus is oriented in both, social and cultural structures objectively, and a distinctive personal background subjectively. Conscious interest is not the only factor that actors consider; unconscious personal experience is also important. This presents a possible way to understand how residents adaptively rebuild their vernacular houses during tourism development.

Under the guidance of the county government, Hongcun started tourism development in 1986. As traditional houses are an important part of world cultural heritage and immovable cultural relics, the original height, volume, shape, and color of the houses should not be changed according to the heritage regulations and relevant provisions. Nine residents that we interviewed said that before being listed as relics, the main bodies of the traditional houses were almost unchanged; however, they expanded the houses by transforming small vegetable plots and spare land into many ancillary buildings to provide accommodation for growing families.

In the 1990s, the traditional vernacular houses in Hongcun with extremely high ornamental value have been fully developed and transformed into ideal places for tourists to eat, live, play, and shop. With the gradual improvement of infrastructure and tourism services, traditional houses in Hongcun have become the best places to receive tourists due to their unique traditional architectural style, antique furniture, exquisite decorations, and modern comforts.

As early as 1999, residents began to run homestays. The original bungalows and adobe houses could not meet the living and catering needs of both the residents themselves and the visiting tourists, due to the strict regulations imposed on every household that were implemented by the local government. Aimed at bypassing officials, residents started to engage in practices such as "accidentally" setting fire to the traditional houses, so that it would be lawful to tear the damaged buildings down and build new ones. Since the domestic landscape was the core of Hongcun's cultural heritage, these actions by residents were discouraged and negotiations took place. The power in the field was restructured and the laws of the game were changed. The government finally allowed residents to build new buildings, except to replace the traditional ones that are on the Relics Protection List, but the exteriors still retained traditional architectural styles and the interiors adopted the decorative style of combining traditional characteristics with modern elements.

Firstly, the main function of the traditional houses has been transformed from residential and agricultural use to commercial use for tourists, in the context of rural commodification driven by economic capital. After the development of tourism, the residents' living space is commoditized and their private space is turned into a public space. At the same time, the residents provide services such as catering, accommodation, and exhibitions, which means that the traditional houses have become a space that integrates different actors, i.e., residents and tourists. Thus, the traditional function is transformed into both a residence for the main family members and a commercial operation for accommodating tourists. With the emergence of contradictions in tourist land, homestay owners continue to compress their own public spaces and the living space of family members, striving for more guest rooms. The host's living space has moved from the original main room to a partial room, and their domestic environment has become crowded and narrow. The space originally used for storage, the small vegetable garden in front of the house, etc., have also been added to the tourist reception space and have disappeared. This compression of living space also makes the living arrangements of the family members more scattered, thus impacting the family relationship network. However, tourism development is based on changes in spatial functions, which also promotes changes in the exclusivity of family private spaces. In order to meet the needs of tourists, private space has become more and more open, and residents can no longer express themselves freely. As the users of tradi-

tional residential spaces, residents have changed from being among their "own people" to distinguishing between their "own people" and "foreigners", which weakens the residents' sense of belonging to the area and freedom in their own homes to a certain extent.

We investigated six traditional houses built in the Ming and Qing Dynasties and four houses built in the 1960s and 1970s. First, we drew the current floor plans of the houses by hand through non-participatory observation and measurements, and then drew the floor plans before tourism, according to the memories of the interviewees. Among the investigated houses, we chose three built in the Qing Dynasty in different blocks as case studies, in Jushantang in the Upper Ditch, Yuqingtang in Huanbi Lane, and Gengxintang in the East Well, to show how the residents transform their living space under the influence of tourism development (Figure 7).

It can be seen from the above floor plans in Figure 7 that the owner of Songhetang (1) has built a new room as his bedroom and all the bedrooms in the original family home have been changed into rental rooms. At the same time, they make full use of the space in the corridor and have turned it into a restaurant. However, this homestay business has preserved the waterside pavilion, an important attraction in this vernacular house. The owner of Yuqingtang (2) keeps two rooms on the first floor as his family's bedrooms, and the original six bedrooms and storage room have been changed into guest rooms. The owner of Gengxintang (3) has changed all the rooms in the house into bedrooms except for the living room and other public spaces. The owner has moved out of the main house and lives in a newly built house next door. In the three residential houses mentioned above, the owners make full use of various spaces for expansion and reconstruction in order to operate a homestay business, due to the limited space and lack of convenient living facilities. On the one hand, in order to better meet the living and aesthetic needs of tourists, they have all rebuilt the historical houses that they inherited from their ancestors but retained the original architectural style. On the other hand, while making use of their own vegetable plots and pig pens, they have purchased vacant farmland and houses on the verge of collapse from their neighbors and then converted them into guest rooms for greater economic benefit. Compared with the traditional houses, the overall architectural space of the reconstructed houses is greatly expanded, mainly expanding the first floor and public activity spaces. The residents not only change the function of the houses but also expand the living space of their families and improve their living conditions, thanks to tourism.

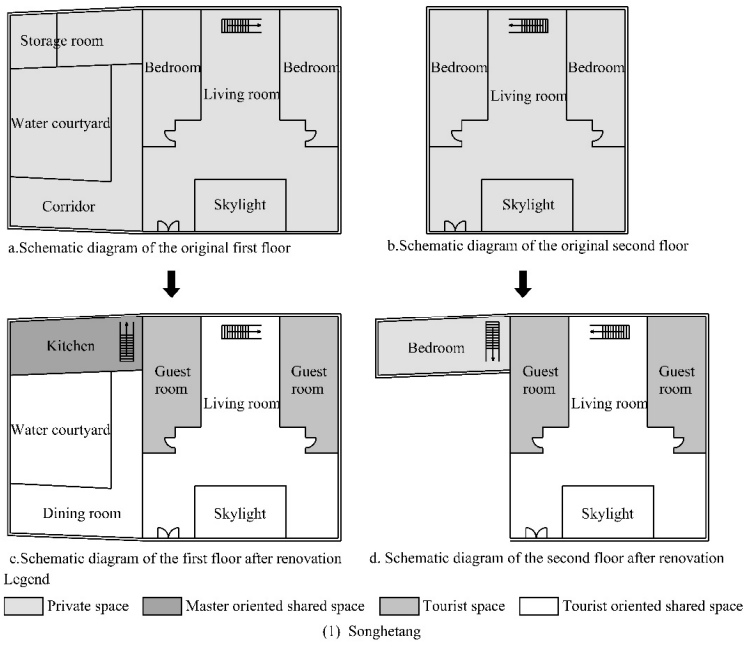

Figure 7. *Cont.*



Figure 7. Transformation of the living spaces of traditional dwellings. Source: the authors.

Secondly, the structure of the courtyards has been changed. The homestay operators also pay special attention to the courtyard space. Originally, the courtyard was mainly used for air-drying, storing unused goods, or carrying out family work. Now, the courtyards are decorated with plants and flowers, as well as sunscreen umbrellas, swings, and other leisure facilities to meet the needs of tourists. In addition, on the basis of these traditional courtyards, residents use the open spaces in the courtyards to build small shops and restaurants, using antique materials to expand the business space, which is much easier to see on the main tourist routes. The patios, which were originally open for ventilation and lighting, are now enclosed with glass to facilitate tourism reception (Figure 8). However, in order to maintain the rurality and uniqueness of the houses in a traditional style, the layout and furnishings of the halls are mostly kept intact.



(**a**) (**b**) (**c**)

Figure 8. Courtyard space after reconstruction. Source: the authors, 12 April 2021. (**a**) Swing in the garden; (**b**) Courtyard for sales; (**c**) Glass-enclosed skylight.

Thirdly, the order of residential space is turned on its head. Most residents set aside the main rooms as the guest rooms for tourists, while the owners live in the wing rooms themselves. The order of courtyard space is similarly reversed, and the ethical concept is likewise back-to-front. The residents have to share both their private and public spaces with tourists, which subverts the traditional living culture and reorganizes the sequence of living spaces. The hall is the most sacred space in a house and is also one of the places that most appeal to tourists. The operators set up the hall in an inherited tradition. In most residential halls, a plaque will be hung above the center, which is usually the name plaque given to the residence by the ancestors. Couplets will be hung on the pillars of the hall, with a table below. Generally, a vase is placed on the right side of the table and a mirror on the left. Meanwhile, operators pay much more attention to the preservation or characterization of local cultural elements, collect and make full use of antiques, for instance, plaques, doors and windows, tables and chairs, and renovate with abundant decorative elements in the main hall and rooms to create an atmosphere redolent of Huizhou culture. They also put a wooden table or tea table in the middle of the space so that tourists can eat, drink tea, and converse in the houses. The space of the hall is a representative product of tourism, shaped by individual habitus and the needs of tourism.

5.2. The Non-Material Level: The Reconstruction of Culture by Residents under Tourism

The non-material transformation in the residents' practice is mainly driven by dynamic changes in the field of tourism and the habitus embedded in the lives of the residents themselves.

At the very beginning of tourism development in Hongcun, the residents were unaware of the invisible value of the residential landscape that they were preserving for future cultural consumption. Based on their habitus at that moment, they tended to renovate their houses mainly according to living needs. However, habitus will be dynamically changed for individuals and groups if the social background and external surroundings keep changing. In the late 1980s, people's interest in the domestic landscape started to grow, striving to move beyond the residential functions and develop broader social functions. In this context, cultural tourism value has been greatly enhanced, providing an excellent opportunity for tourism development of the domestic landscape.

The function and layout of homestay rooms are quite different from those of traditional rooms, mainly to meet the physical and aesthetic needs of tourists. Homestays have been greatly decorated and adjusted internally. Along with the tourism development and interactions with other actors in the field, the residents have adjusted their habitus and then adapt their renovation actions accordingly (Figures 9 and 10). As residents transform and continue to use traditional houses, the related living culture has also weakened and changed. As mentioned above, the elderly family members now often move into the wing rooms and use the main rooms for profit by letting them to tourists who prefer to live in the traditional rooms. When deciding on which rooms to assign for commercial use, residents do not follow the traditional living arrangements. Instead, they often cater to the tourists' preferences.



(**a**) Food trade in the village: selling tofu.



(**b**) Residents washing clothes by the Moon Pond.



(**c**) Residents' dry food supplies.



(**d**) Residents brushing their teeth by the Moon Pond.

Figure 9. The former lifestyle of Hongcun residents. Source: Jianping Zhang. Note: (**a**) was taken on 16 October 2009; (**b**,**c**) were taken on 10 January 2009; (**d**) was taken on 26 October 1999.





Figure 10. The current lifestyle of Hongcun residents. Source: the authors, 12 April 2021. Notes: The locations are the same as in Figure 9; the residents no longer use the water in the Moon Pond for domestic purposes, and the surrounding houses also hang lanterns for tourism operations.

Therefore, in the process of transformation, the facilities, decorations, and services in homestays are standardized in the same way as ordinary commercial hotels. Each room is equipped with modern air conditioning, TV, free broadband, an independent bathroom, and a water heater. Many of the interior decorations are mainly wooden and carved ornaments in the Huizhou style. Therefore, the pursuit of comfortable and enjoyable accommodation by tourists and the economic needs of homestay operators tend to coordinate, resulting in the continuous transformation of the traditional houses. It is this compromise and concession that makes the interior of the houses more and more "de-localized". Despite the tourists' basic desire to live in traditional houses, the pursuit of the experience of Huizhou cultural symbols keeps the exteriors of the houses traditional and vernacular. Therefore, the homestay operators try their best to maintain the local characteristics of the appearance of the houses. The method of "repairing the old as old" is adopted when damage needs to be repaired, and "re-localization" takes place during the process. In this way, houses can be protected by external "re-localization" and internal "de-localization". However, habitus plays a vital role in the rise of the consciousness of heritage conservation. Respect has been shown to the traditional domestic landscape and its implicit culture by the residents who enhance the preservation of the heritage. The homestay operators have taken to heart that the potential of traditional residential management comes from the unique charm of Huizhou culture and from participating in tourism management out of their invisible habitus. Therefore, they are motivated to devote themselves to the protection and development of traditional houses.

Different strategies and aesthetic preferences have taken hold among the residents due to the variety of habitus. Bourdieu emphasized that the strategies and practices used by actors were the integrated results of the field and habitus. Participants are dedicated to differentiating their homestays from those of others, to ensure less competition in the tourism field. In this situation, residents with abundant cultural capital manage to take advantage of others or even achieve a monopoly in operation. The operators hang delicate historical calligraphy and paintings representing local culture on the walls to attract tourists; this makes manifest the cultural tastes and distinguished family backgrounds of the operators. The general consensus among the interviewees was to attribute one's advantage to one's cultural capital and the aesthetic taste that keeps a homestay well run. Through the decoration, arrangement, and beautification of the residential space, the operators can create a warm and comfortable environment with a rich historical and cultural atmosphere. This is not only because of the operators' pursuit of better living conditions but also the operators' reflections on creating a traditional residential space in the process of communication with tourists. The idea of running homestay chains to achieve more profit is another representation of distinctive cultural capital, as shown by the residents who have more experience and knowledge regarding modern management. Despite the apparent effect of economic capital on running a business, the cultural capital reflected in individuals shows its great impact on the goals of place-making and landscape protection.

Since commodification has been developed in Hongcun for decades, the tourism field has been formed gradually, with different actors such as the local government, tourism investment companies, tourists, and residents who own traditional vernacular houses. According to the theory of Bourdieu, fields exist with their own logic and negotiation of powers, and the tourism field in Hongcun is no exception. From mandatory limitations to more flexible provisions, the power between government and residents has been repositioned. The residents have become the main actors in utilizing and preserving the residential landscape. In the process of running homestays, residents elaborately adjust their position in the field through competition and cooperation. The different habitus of each resident has become the driving force of the renovation of traditional vernacular houses and leads to variable conservation results.

6. Conclusions

Understanding the practices of local residents offers a valuable perspective when seeking a new path to a sustainable heritage that strikes a balance between residents' economic income, local culture, and daily life. Following Bourdieu's theory, it is of great importance to explore how the tourism field works and what impact tourism development has had on residents and their actions in daily practice, especially between different individuals.

The results of the study show that changes to protection regulations contribute to the renovation of traditional vernacular houses and the diverse functions of the courtyards imply changes to both practice and power positions. The previous private residential space is becoming more open and is gradually being transformed into a commercial space, resulting in a change in habitus. The residents reconstruct the function of the courtyard space and the layout of traditional houses. The residents have moved their living space from the principal room to the wing room or even to the smallest rooms in the corners. Regardless of the process of adaptation, residents will rejuvenate traditional houses and achieve sustainable development through the material transformation of houses and adjustment to individual habitus. The residents' practices in the utilization and protection of the traditional vernacular houses are the complex dynamic joint consequences of social and personal backgrounds, formed by individual and collective habitus in the field of tourism.

We have found that currently, besides the regulations and plans issued and actions taken by the government, the residents play the most important role in tourism, and it is only in this way that tourism development enables local residents to effectively achieve heritage sustainability via their adoption of adaptive livelihoods, for instance, by running homestay businesses instead of abandoning the houses. This has made them consciously preserve the domestic landscape. Tourism development also makes local residents take the initiative to adapt their habitus and make full use of all sorts of capital investments to achieve sustainable livelihoods, as well as to ensure the sustainability of the traditional residential landscape.

Responding to the controversial issue of heritage tourism, this study demonstrates that the grassroots spatial practices of local residents represent an effective way to balance economic development and the preservation of cultural memory. Living heritage emphasizes the concept of "continuity", which requires the heritage to maintain a connection with the original community, daily life, and heritage activation, and to improve the heritage's adaptive ability when facing changes in the external environment [37,70]. In addition, it should be noted that heritage protection does not preserve the physical landscape itself but should instead focus on the initiatives of people in the activation of heritage, especially the impact of bottom-up community practices regarding heritage construction and reconstruction [71,72]. Chinese traditional villages are communities that have been maintained from ancient times to the present; they are still places where the residents live out their daily lives. This research about how tourism impacts the transformation of traditional vernacular houses and residents' adaptive actions in Huizhou, China, can help provide a reference for similar living heritage areas.

This study also has some limitations. A total of 98 traditional dwellings in Hongcun were selected for entry to the List of Immovable Cultural Relics and Cultural Relics Protection Units in Yi County and the Survey of Ancient Dwellings in Yi County. This study investigated 10 traditional dwellings, from which only three traditional dwellings were selected and displayed, all of which were converted into homestays; thus, the sample size was limited. In order to improve the reliability of the research results, more traditional dwellings should be selected as samples in later research and attention should be paid to the transformation of traditional dwellings into restaurants, private exhibition halls, and other establishments. However, as some of the stakeholders of world cultural heritage protection, the roles of the government and heritage management departments in the transformation of traditional houses are rarely mentioned. Especially in the Chinese context, the government has obvious dominant characteristics. Therefore, it is necessary to further study how the government, especially local government, through its own functions can

stimulate the active participation and enthusiasm of the residents and, finally, realize the adaptive transformation and sustainable development of traditional dwellings.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, D.Z. and X.K.; methodology, D.Z. and C.L.; software, M.L.; validation, X.K.; formal analysis, D.Z.; investigation, D.Z. and P.C.; writing—original draft preparation, D.Z.; writing—review and editing, C.L. and M.L.; funding acquisition, X.K. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was financially supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (Grant No. 41771156).

Acknowledgments: We would like to thank the leaders of the Hongcun village committee and three local senior persons whom we interviewed in Hongcun. They provided much important information for this study. The first one was Senqiang Wang, who provided useful information about the construction of Hongcun. The second was Ruihua Wang, who provided us with valuable information that had not been published in the village annals. The third was Liming Wan, who is one of the few interviewees who could tell the history and story of the ancestors and ancestral houses in detail. In addition, we would like to thank the Huizhou photographers, Jianping Zhang and Junxi Zhang, for their photos.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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