Bonding and dissonance: Rethinking the Interrelations Among Stakeholders in Heritage Tourism

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

This paper aims to extend understanding of the way Chinese domestic tourists and local communities understand and use the World Heritage Ancient Villages of Xidi and Hongcun. Tourism in each of these villages is managed differently, with the tourism companies respectively managed by a local collective and by an external operator. The paper argues that understanding the emotional engagement of tourists interacting not only with the heritage sites but also with residents allows a deeper understanding of the social impacts of tourism. Moreover, it reveals how historical and heritage meaning may be reinforced or remade through individual and collective tourism practices, and the consequences of local inclusion or exclusion in tourism management. Understanding the affective and emotional content of the cultural and social interactions of tourists and residents at these sites illustrates the agency of both tourists and residents in the making and remaking of heritage values and meaning.

1. Introduction

In 2000, Xidi and Hongcun, two rural traditional villages in Yi County, in the south of Anhui Provence, China, were jointly inscribed on the World Heritage List. Both clan-based villages are considered to possess well preserved ancient architecture, decorative arts, street and waterway arrangements dating back to the fourteenth century (UNESCO, 2000a, see Figs. 1 and 2). Before 2000, domestic tourism had contributed significantly to the local economies and incomes of residents in and around these villages, and this of course was given a substantial boost following World Heritage designation (Liu, 2005; Su, Cao, & Lin, 2005; Ying & Zhou, 2007). The management of tourism in both villages has, until recently, been distinctly different, with a locally elected village committee running the Xidi Tourism Service Company, while tourism in Hongcun is managed by a franchise of a private Beijing-based company. The aim of this paper, drawing on qualitative data, is to compare the experiences of both residents and domestic tourists in the context of the two different management systems.

In developing this comparison, the paper illustrates how both locals and residents construct a sense of place for each of the villages, and the historical and contemporary social meanings tourists construct and take away from each site. The paper draws on a developing body of scholarship from within critical heritage studies and critical tourism studies that stress the agency of tourists in constructing the historical and social meanings of heritage sites (see for example Ateljevic, Pritchard, Morgan 2007; Poria, Butler, & Airey, 2003; Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Smith, 2006, 2015; Staiff, Bushell and Watson 2013; Waterton & Watson, 2014). We argue that understanding the nuances of this agency may bring a deeper understanding of the social impacts, both positive and negative, that tourism and the way it is managed can have on local communities. Heritage places are often valued as they provide experiences that mediate a sense of place, that is, a sense of both historical and social belonging and security (Hayden, 1997; Tuan, 1977). While these experiences may be momentary as a tourist engages with new places, they may also be intense and lasting for residents; nonetheless how a sense of place invokes the emotional processes of remembering can provide, however fleetingly, a point of interaction and engagement between tourists and locals. As this paper argues, how engagement with local culture and heritage is mediated through the management of heritage tourism is revealed to have a significant impact on the intensity and perceived 'authenticity' of the experiences of *both* tourists and local people. In developing this argument, the paper also points to the importance of tourist agency and the emotive nature and force of feelings that underpinned the heritage meanings constructed by domestic Chinese tourists during their visits to Xidi and Hongcun.

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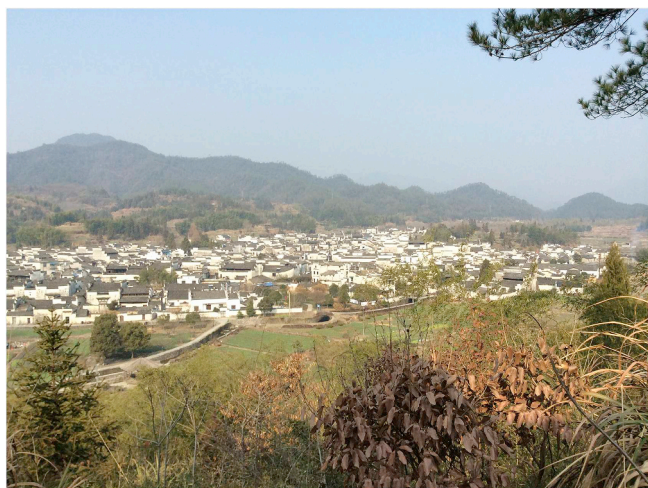 *E-mail address:* rouranzhang@live.cn (R. Zhang).

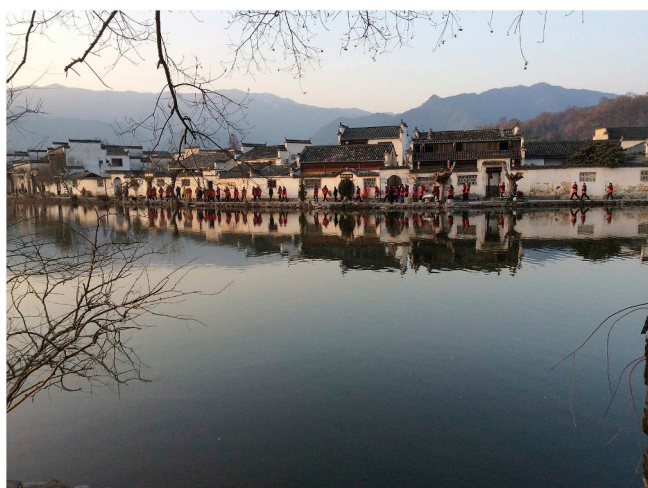Fig. 1. A view of Xidi (Photo by Rouran Zhang).

Fig. 2. A view of Hongcun (Photo by Rouran Zhang).

2. Case study background and tourism management

The Ancient Villages of Southern Anhui – Xidi and Hongcun – are located about 15 km apart in the northern and north-eastern part of Yi County in southern Anhui. This region is historically called 徽州 Huizhou and is renowned for its traditional Hui landscape, 程朱理学 Cheng-Zhu philosophy, and 徽商 Hui merchant traditions (UNESCO, 2000a). Xidi and Hongcun have similar geographical settings and populations, and share many local cultural expressions, while their ancient buildings are defined as 'epitomes of the architectural style in Anhui area, presenting strong local features in overall arrangement, style and techniques' (UNESCO, 2000b, p. 15).

While the heritage attractions in both villages are very similar, the histories of the development of tourism in the two sites are very different. Commercial tourism started in Xidi in 1986, leading to steady growth in tourist numbers and income, and in 1993, when tourist numbers had reached 33,800 visitors annually, the Xidi Tourism Service Company was established (Chen, 2005; Liang & Wang, 2005; Ying & Zhou, 2007). A locally elected village committee, at the time of the fieldwork, ran the Company, and when the Tourism Bureau of Yixian County tried to take charge of Xidi's tourism management, the local community vigorously rejected this move (Liang & Wang, 2005; Ying & Zhou, 2007). World Heritage listing led to dramatic increases in tourists, whose numbers grew from 250,000 in 2001 to 800,000 in 2012, with ticket-sale revenue of US$1.125 million recorded in 2001

and US$5.48 million in 2012 (Ying & Zhou, 2007). As the ownership of the tourism company was vested solely to the Villagers' Committee of Xidi, local people share a proportion of the tourism revenue, although how much they receive is subject to varying reports (Liang & Wang, 2005, p. 29; Xidi Government, 2013a). In 2012, there were 16 hostels, 36 restaurants, and 143 shops and inns run by locals, and more than 70% of locals were engaged in businesses associated with tourism (Xidi Government, 2013b). Xidi's average annual income per capita was the highest in Yi County (Zhai, 2002). Local satisfaction with the benefits of tourism development at that time has been well documented (Liang & Wang, 2005; Ying & Zhou, 2007; Zhai, 2002). However, since 2003, Xidi's tourist numbers and revenue have been exceeded by Hongcun (Xidi Government, 2013b).

In 2012, the revenue from the sale of entrance tickets in Hongcun was more than twice that of Xidi (Xidi Government, 2013a). Although the villagers in Xidi appear to share a greater percentage of entrance ticket revenue than in Hongcun, residents of Xidi complained that compared to the business opportunities that tourists brought to Hongcun, ticket-sale revenue was only a small proportion of their annual income.[1] At the time of the interviews a state-owned enterprise, Co. Huihuang Ltd, was taking charge of tourism development and promotion in Xidi, creating local conflict within and between the village and the new company (we return to this development below).

Tourism in Hongcun developed in the 1990s, having been inspired by developments in Xidi, however, the local government of Yi County ensured that, in 1998, Hongcun developed a franchise with Huangshan Tourism Development Co. Jingyi Ltd, a subsidiary of the private Beijing-based tourist company, Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group (Chen, 2005; Liang & Wang, 2005). This company's immediate investments in infrastructure, marketing and professional management methods resulted in Hongcun quickly becoming a popular tourist destination whose visitor numbers were higher than in Xidi. However, ongoing conflict among local governments, the franchise company and local communities emerged, particularly over the distribution of ticket revenue (Ying & Zhou, 2007, p. 101; see also; Liang & Wang, 2005; Xu, Wan, & Fan, 2012). Since World Heritage listing, the Beijing Zhongkun Investment Group has increased its investment in Hongcun, building new roads and hotels and investing in shops selling local handicrafts and produce.

3. Literature review

3.1. Heritage: a definition

Heritage, within the dominant discourses of heritage management, or within what Smith (2006, 2015) has identified as the 'authorized heritage discourse' (AHD), is defined as either materially based, that is as sites, places or buildings, or as intangible cultural practices that may include such things as music, traditions, festivals and so forth. In this study, we reject such binary definitions and have adopted the more dynamic definition that heritage is something that is *done* and continually produced and reproduced through the practices of management and touristic visitation (Harvey, 2001; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Macdonald, 2013; Smith, 2006). Specifically, we adopt the definition put forward by Smith (2006) that heritage is a cultural process of meaning-making in which material places and sites or intangible cultural events are used as cultural tools in the processes and performances of creating, recreating and validating meaning for the present. More specifically, this is a process Macdonald (2013) refers to as past-presenting, wherein the past is brought to the present in active processes of remembering and forgetting. As Smith (2006, 2011) argues, the processes and performances of managing heritage, of choosing what to place on regional, national or international heritage registers and

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[1] Source: interviews with locals in Xidi conducted in December 2013.

lists, and how places and events are interpreted and defined, are all acts of heritage making. Further, how individuals use physical places or intangible events as heritage, the meanings they construct for themselves as they visit or tour heritage sites are all acts of collective and individual meaning-making (Smith, 2006).

The meanings thus created, while addressing the needs and aspirations of the present (Smith, 2006, p. 58), will inevitably focus on definitions of collective or individual identity and 'sense of place'. Both concepts are intimately linked to all definitions and understandings of heritage (Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000). The idea of sense of place is understood to be both a conceptual understanding of heritage as a site or place, and a product of interactions with heritage places. In reference to the latter, heritage is understood as not only 'constructing a sense of abstract identity', but also helping us to 'position ourselves as a nation, community or individual and our 'place' in our cultural, social and physical world' (Smith, 2006, p. 75). However, neither sense of place nor a sense of identity are simply 'found' at heritage sites, rather these feelings and concepts are expressed through an embodied process of meaning making (Smith, 2006). In the re-theorizing of heritage as a process or act of meaning making, heritage sites or places are conceptualized as having neither inherent meaning or authenticity, but rather meaning and concepts of authenticity are continually reworked and remade through the experiences individuals have at those places (Harvey, 2001; Macdonald, 2013; Smith, 2006). This re-theorization in what has become known as 'critical heritage studies' (Gentry & Smith, 2019) draws on the arguments developed below about the agency of non-expert users of heritage to create and recreate their own sense of place, meaning and authenticity. It also has synergy with Tuan's (1977) argument that places are experienced. As Tuan observes, places may be used to embody or materially represent 'feelings, images and thoughts' (1977: 17). The meanings embodied by place are neither intrinsic nor determined by material authenticity, but rather are assigned through the affective experiences and activities carried out in those spaces (Casey 1996; Smith, 2006). While no place may have an intrinsic or authentic meaning, the physicality of heritage places may nonetheless mark the activities undertaken at them as outside of day-to-day activities and thus as 'special', underlining the significance and meanings of the experiences and events occurring at those places (Smith, 2006, p. 46). These experiences may be mediated at heritage sites by site managers or tour operators, or indeed, by individual visitors themselves; however, engaging with the idea of sense of place must not only consider the commonalities of lived experience, but must also engage with the differences and diversities of those experiences (Hayden, 1997).

3.2. Heritage, tourism and visitor agency

Tourism and tourists have tended to be constructed as a perennially difficult 'problem' for heritage professionals. Ashworth (2009) has observed that there is a tendency to negatively categorize tourism as a threat to the authenticity of supposedly fragile heritage, and as responsible for the perceived simplification of historical and cultural interpretation at sites. There is also wariness that tourism may convert a cultural concern over heritage to one dominated by discourses of economic resource development (Silberman, 2013, pp. 213–225). This attitude is largely a result of the naturalising effects the AHD. This professional discourse, embedded within and authorized by the World Heritage listing and management processes, privileges the material authenticity and innate value of heritage, emphasising the material fragility of heritage and the role of experts in stewarding the meaning of the past for the future. In maintaining particular hierarchies of cultural expertize and understanding, tourists are identified by the AHD as both a primary threat to the authenticity of heritage and as passive consumers of expert heritage interpretations (Smith 2012). These attitudes toward tourists and tourism have resulted in a dominant body of research that has focused on discussing 'marketing, facility management or growth statistics' (Taylor, 2012, p. 28). This management literature

has also tended to focus on documenting the motivations of tourists to understand the growth and decline of tourist numbers, and to provide appropriate on-site and museum educational interpretation and planning (see for example, Falk, 2009; Falk & Dierking, 2011; McKercher & Du Cros, 2002). Within Chinese scholarship a similar tendency to focus on practical and economic management issues can also be observed (see for instance, Wu, Li, & Huang, 2002; Lu & Zhou, 2004; Deng, 2005; Liang, 2006; Huang, 2006; Zhang & Ma, 2006).

In contrast to this tendency, a growing body of literature within critical heritage studies, much like that within critical tourism studies, has developed which seeks to understand the performative, cultural and social experiences of tourists (Ateljevic, Pritchard, Morgan 2007; Smith, Waterton and Watson 2012). It is important to stress here that any such critical turn, as Bianchi (2009) emphasizes, must deal with the materiality of power and agency and consider the material consequences of touristic activities. Growing unease with assumptions about the assumed passivity of tourists and museum visitors has led to an increase in studies that attempt to explore the agency of visitors (Smith, 2006, 2015; Staiff, 2014). As Waterton and Watson (2014) argue, tourism is an experience, and understanding that experience from a tourist's perspective requires an acknowledgement of the agency of tourists. Agency, they note, needs to be central to the development of research and management practices, as a failure to do so perpetuates a limited concern with simple issues of supply and demand. Documenting the agency of tourists visiting museums and heritage sites has revealed the diversity of ways in which tourists both engage and disengage with heritage. It has also challenged traditional tourist typologies by illustrating that what people do at sites, and the social consequences for sense of place and identity of what they do, is more than motivational satiation (see for example, Bagnall, 2003; Light, 2015; Palmer, 2005; Sather-Wagstaff, 2011, 2008; Smith, Waterton and Watson 2012; Staiff, 2014). As Watson, Waterton, and Smith (2012: 13–4) argue, a concern with agency also requires an analytical focus on how tourists interact with hosts, heritage sites, tourist professionals, marketers and so forth, and the consequence this has for the development of a sense of place, community, and individual wellbeing.

The hierarchy of relations in heritage tourism management established by the AHD sanctions a top-down relationship between experts, heritage sites and tourists, in which the expert tends to 'translate' the heritage to tourists who are perceived to be passive. The power relations maintained by the AHD has tended to result in community pushback against expertize and professional management practices, with a considerable literature having now been generated to document this conflict (for example, Hodges & Watson, 2000; Greer, Harrison, & McIntyre-Tamwoy, 2002; Smith & Waterton, 2009; Ozawa et al., 2018). The importance of community participation in heritage management, interpretation and conservation has now been extensively discussed in the heritage management literature (Byrne, Brayshaw, & Ireland, 2001; Australia ICOMOS 2013; Little & Shackel, 2014, among others). Although the heritage literature on community engagement and activism has been important in identifying and discussing the interaction of stakeholder communities with expert communities, the literature has paid less attention, in terms of qualitative research, to how communities and heritage tourists may interact.

Nonetheless, a growing body of work has started to consider and document tourist agency through qualitative interviews and observational work with tourists and museum visitors (see for example, Dicks, 2000; Bagnall, 2003; Cameron & Gatewood, 2003; Palmer, 2005; Smith, 2006, 2015, 2017; Sather-Wagstaff, 2011; Zhu, 2012; Coghlan, 2018). This paper adds to that literature by addressing a Chinese case study that answers the call by Winter (2014: 134) for greater qualitative heritage tourism research in Asia (see also Aygen & Logan, 2016). In addition, an important theme in this paper addresses one of the key issues that has emerged in qualitative heritage tourism work, the role of affect and emotion (Smith, Wetherell and Campbell 2018).

3.3. Affect and emotion in the making of heritage meaning

As Poria et al. (2003) noted, emotion plays an important role in how tourists negotiate the personal importance of heritage (see also Bagnall, 2003). Certainly, issues of affect and emotion have been of increasing concern within the wider social sciences, and an array of theoretical positions on emotion have been advanced. In this paper, we draw on the pragmatic approach offered by Margaret Wetherell (2012), which stresses that affect and emotion are relational and discursively arbitrated. Indeed, as Raymond Williams (1977) argues, there are 'structures of feeling', or emotional rules (Zembylas, 2002) that are historically and socially mediated. Further, individuals are understood to have agency in the ways they mediate their emotional responses, and then use them to work through and underpin meaning-making (Wetherell, 2012, p. 153). As Archer (2000) and Sayer (2005) both argue, emotional responses are integral not only to cognition, but also the evaluative judgements that individuals make about particular topics. A sense of emotional authenticity (Smith, 2006, pp. 67, 218), or what Morton (2013) refers to as 'emotional accuracy', in which the emotional responses of individuals are self-assessed as authentic or genuine, are important for validating the meanings and judgements thus made. In this process, as Smith and Campbell (2016: 455) have argued, heritage tourists can be understood as managing their emotional responses to heritage by making choices about not only what they choose to visit and not visit, but also how they choose to emotionally respond to sites and the histories they represent. The concept of 'registers of engagement', developed by Smith and Campbell (2016) to measure the intensity, valence, scale, and scope of emotional and cognitive engagement of visitors to heritage and museum sites, is also useful when discussing heritage tourism. This is because it acknowledges the diversity, valence and intensities of emotional responses, and thus how affective responses are utilized by tourists in negotiating the meaning of heritage in developing and expressing senses of place and identity (see also Smith 2011).

3.4. Heritage, tourism and the AHD in China

Much of the heritage and heritage tourism literature that engages with the affective and emotive agency of tourists is drawn largely from Western contexts and there has been limited application of the ideas discussed above in a Chinese context (although see Zhu, 2012; Zhang, 2017) Additionally, the Eurocentric AHD, and the heritage and heritage tourism management practices it frames have, through the authorizing authority of UNESCO, significantly influenced heritage management practices and policy in China (see Yan, 2015, 2018: 102–6; Zhang & Wu, 2016; Zhang, 2017). However, there is now an increasing number of studies concerned with the relationship between tourists and destination communities in Asia. These have tended to focus on issues framed for example by the economic benefits/burdens that tourists bring to locals (see Butcher, 2003; Fisher, , Maginnis, , Jackson, , Barrow, & and Jeanrenaud, 2008; Hitchcock, King, & Pamwell, 2010; Su & Teo, 2009); documenting how China has adapted to global tourism influences (see Cohen, 2000, 2004; Erb, 2000; Oakes, 1993; Su & Teo, 2009; Winter, 2007); or analyzed community participation within Chinese tourism management systems (Li, 2006; Wang, Long, & Zheng, 2015; Ying & Zhou, 2007). While much of this work has provided important practical management insights it has tended to do so in ways that maintain or facilitate the legitimacy of the top-down management approach to heritage places that is framed by the AHD.

Both Xidi and Hongcun have, since their World Heritage listing, been the subject of considerable research, most of which only examines the economic or physical impact of World Heritage listing and/or tourists on the heritage sites and local communities (Chen, 2005; Liu, 2005; Su et al., 2005; Ying & Zhou, 2007; Cheng & Morrison, 2008; Gao & Woudstra, 2011; Xu et al., 2012; Xu et al., 2014), as well as policy and management issues (Liang & Wang, 2005). In a departure from this,

however, Gu and Ryan (2010) have documented at Hongcun the important emotional linkage between residents and the architectural and spatial organisation of the town. Xu et al. (2014) is critical of the way tourism managers define 'authenticity' in Xidi and Hongcun as being object-related and static. Developing on their study, this paper considers how tourists may, or may not, impact residents' sense of emotional authenticity and the links they maintain to sense of place. The agency of tourists in constructing the meaning of heritage has not been examined in China, while there has only been limited research that looks at the cultural and social (as opposed to the economic) interactions of tourists and residents (Bao, Chen, & Jin, 2018). This study will provide a point of contrast with work undertaken in Western contexts to consider the affective and emotional agency and responses of Chinese domestic tourists to Xidi and Hongcun.

4. Research method

This study is ontologically and epistemologically based within critical realism, which recognizes that while epistemologically knowledge is neither theory- nor value-neutral, there is, nevertheless, an ontological reality independent of our conceptualisation (Porpora, 2015, p. 9). Knowledge and practices are discursively and socially framed and constructed but they will, however, have material consequences for social conditions and lived experiences (Archer, 2000; Bhaskar, 1989; Fairclough, Jessop, & Sayer, 2002). Qualitative mixed methods approaches, as adopted here, sit comfortably within a critical realism approach (Fletcher, 2017). To compare the experiences of domestic tourists and residents framed by the two tourist management systems at Xidi and Hongcun a series of semi-structured and structured interviews (Sørensen, 2009, p. 164) and field observations were undertaken by one of the authors (RZ) during December 2013. All interviews were conducted in Mandarin and were translated into English by RZ. Open-ended questions were employed to determine the perspectives, thoughts and feelings of both residents and tourists. As this research aimed to understand the diversity of subjective meanings given to both heritage and tourism experiences qualitative open-ended questions were used that acknowledged the agency and research legitimacy of individual experiences and engagement with local expressions of heritage. This is an example of what Jansen (2010) calls qualitative survey, where rather than measuring the frequencies of characteristics of a population as per statistical surveys, the qualitative survey addresses the diversity of the characteristics of a population.

Further, the data was then quantified through coding to determine themes and regularities in responses to each of the questions asked (Fletcher, 2017, p. 185). This coding not only allowed us to critically reflect on the data, but also allowed us to consider the representativeness of themes that emerged in the interviews and to test the reliability of the field observations (Collins & Evans, 2017: 337). We make no claims that the interview results are definitive, rather they provide an insight into the agency of those interviewed and the affective nuances of the meanings both local residents and tourists may construct as they use and engage with expressions of heritage.

4.1. Qualitative interviews'

Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with four local government officials concerned with tourism and World Heritage listing in Xidi and Hongcun. Two tourist and marketing operators working in Xidi and one in Hongcun were also interviewed to provide background information about the management of the two villages and determine their assessment of the relationship between heritage and tourism at these sites. Structured interviews with tourists and residents were then undertaken at the two sites. The interview schedule was adapted from the one developed and used extensively by Smith (2006, 2012, 2015, 2017). The questions aimed to explore the subjective meanings that both tourists and locals constructed during their interactions with and

use of the sites, to identify what tourists did and felt at the sites, and to explore the reactions of residents to the presence of tourists.[1] While twelve open-ended questions were asked of tourists, and eight of locals, for reasons of space, this paper focuses on responses to just two questions: 1) What experiences do you value on visiting Xidi/Hongcun?; 2) What messages about the heritage or history of the site do you take away? We focus on these questions as they are most illustrative of the agency of domestic tourists and the multilayered interactions among tourists and locals during their visits to Xidi and Hongcun.

All of the interviews were recorded, transcribed and translated into English. All interviews are cited anonymously, and transcripts in Mandarin of the interviews with tourist operators and government officials were provided to those interviewed for verification. Interviews with tourists and residents were recorded anonymously, and no personal information was collected, apart from basic demographic information such as gender, age, educational attainment, occupation, and, additionally for tourists, the distance they had travelled, if they were travelling alone or part of a group, and if it was their first visit to the site. Tourists were convenience sampled at each site and interviews were conducted at the main entrances/exits of both villages. Interviews with residents were initiated by RZ while staying at local hostels in both villages and then pursued through snowball sampling. In addition, further residents were recruited by unsolicited approaches within the villages. At Xidi, 69 tourists and 22 residents were interviewed, while at Hongcun, 45 tourists and 18 local residents were interviewed. These interviews ranged in time from 5 to 60 min, lasting on average, around 5 min for tourists and 10 min for locals. While the interviews were relatively short, and were designed to be short due to the nature of tourists being 'on the move', multiple interviews were undertaken with the aim of finding commonalities and shared themes in responses. The rejection rate by tourists and locals was about 10% of all those approached. The interviewer intended to undertake one-to-one interviews, although, on occasion, family and visitor groups desired to be interviewed collectively, in these cases each individual was counted as a separate interviewee as different points of views were often expressed.

The themes emerging from responses to each question were coded. These codes were then entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 22, which was used to derive descriptive statistics, and cross-tabulations were performed against the demographic variables to determine if variables such as gender, age and so forth correlated against the coded themes. Given the small size of the sample such cross tabulations returned no statistically significant results, nor were patterns in the variation of the themes and demographic variables identified. As such the results of the cross tabulations are not discussed in this paper.

The results section explores both the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the interview material. To maintain the anonymity of government and tourist officials each interview was given a field number prefixed by XD or HC to indicate Xidi or Hongcun respectively. In referencing interviews, the gender, age and occupation self-identified by the interviewee are provided.

4.2. Observations

Observations of visitors were undertaken at Xidi and Hongcun to observe what tourists 'do' at these sites and to observe how locals and tourists interact. The data was recorded photographically and by note-taking. Observations were only undertaken in public open spaces at and around both heritage sites. This method was used to map the inter-relationship among different stakeholders. Tourists' messages in the message boards and message books were also reviewed. Also, RZ participated in three different tour groups in Xidi from 14th to 24th December 2013 (which yielded 123 min of recorded data) and joined five different tour groups in Hongcun from 20th to 22nd December 2013 (yielding 204 min of recorded data). This was done to capture the focus of interpretations by tourism companies, and to observe tourists' interests and activities during the tour.

5. Study findings

5.1. Tourist agency

Sixty-nine tourists were interviewed in Xidi, 59.4% (41) were male, and 41.6% (28) were female. The majority (57.8%) of those interviewed were between 18 and 45 years in age, while 69.4% had attained some level of university education. The majority (81.2%) of those interviewed were first-time visitors, with just over half (56.7%) having travelled from a holiday address, and most (76.5%) had travelled with companions. Most tourists were relatively short stay visitors, with 98.6% having planned to visit Xidi for less than three days.

Of the forty-five people interviewed in Hongcun, 51.1% (23) were male and 48.9% (22) were female. Hongcun visitors appear to have a younger age profile with only 17.8% aged over 45 having been interviewed, those interviewed at Hongcun were also slightly more likely to have had a university education (75% of those interviewed). As at Xidi, the majority (86.7%) were first-time visitors, with 46.7% having travelled from a holiday address, while a slightly higher frequency of tourists (86.7%) travelled with companions. As with Xidi, the majority (95.6%) of visitors had planned to stay in Hongcun for less than three days.

Tables 1 and 2 outline, respectively, the coded responses to the questions asking tourists about the experiences they valued and what messages they took away from their visit. Table 1 illustrates that a desire to engage with cultural heritage, either in material forms (that is nominating the aesthetics of the architecture/landscape as a valued experience) or intangible heritage (as represented by the responses in Table 1 'immersion in local cultural, history and intangible heritage', or 'engaging in identity and memory work') were significant to both sites. At Xidi, however, the most frequent experience that drove visitors to come to the site and/or that they identified as valuing, was 'immersion in local culture, history and intangible heritage', that is an engagement with Hui culture, history and/or intangible heritage. In the coding of these questions, and using the registers of engagement defined by Smith and Campbell (2016), which assigns an intensity of engagement to each answer (measured as relative *within* the sample) from passive to active, the responses that nominated aesthetic experiences were relatively disengaged and passive. Those responses coded as engaging with Hui culture/intangible heritage were far more actively engaged with the sites they were visiting. To illustrate the difference, a 'passive' response on the register of engagement coded as valuing the 'aesthetic' values of the sites in Table 1 includes:

> I think the scenery of Hongcun is beautiful, and the village is pretty. I can take good photos. (HC010, female, 25–34, tourist)

> I think some of the sculptures are very beautiful. (HC057, female,

Table 1
What experiences do you value on visiting this site? (Total, N = 112; Xidi, N = 68; Hongcun, N = 44).

	Xidi (%)	Hongcun (%)
Immersion in local culture, history and intangible heritage (active)	35.3	20.5
Aesthetic (related to architectures/landscape) (passive)	20.6	20.5
Touristic/recreational/happy day out of the site (active)	14.7	13.6
Identity/memory work (active)	11.8	20.5
Social connection with locals/friends (active)	4.4	6.8
Compare between Xidi and Hongcun (active)	4.4	9.1
Don't know (passive)	2.9	2.3
Disappointed commercialization (active)	2.9	4.5
Talking about general experiences in other Chinese heritage sites (passive)	2.9	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 2
What messages about the heritage or history of the site do you take away?
(Total, N = 101; Xidi, N = 59; Hongcun, N = 42.

	Xidi (%)	Hongcun (%)
Messages about local culture, history and intangible heritage (active)	37.3	11.9
Aesthetic messages (passive)	15.3	26.2
Expressing Feelings of Social connection between visitors and locals or other visitors (active)	23.8	23.8
No message (passive)	13.6	26.1
Messages about local culture, history and intangible heritage (passive)	8.5	9.5
Other (passive)	1.7	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0

25–34, tourist)

I can only say that those old houses are impressive. (HC054, male, 18–24, tourist)

Responses coded 'active' on the register of engagement and as valuing 'immersion in local culture, history and intangible heritage' in Table 1 include:

When I walked through these old buildings, I can imagine how grand this building used to be. At the moment, I cannot help but take my mind back to the old Xidi, where generations of Xidi people not only built the representative 'Hui building', but created a glorious 'Hui culture' that has influenced the Southern Chinese cultural system. (XD028, female, 35–44, tourist)

Hongcun is a woman, and Xidi is a man. The water view in Hongcun is so beautiful, which makes Hongcun like a woman. The old houses and ancestral temples in Xidi are larger and bigger than Hongcun, so I imagine Xidi is a man. (XD057, male, 45–54, tourist)

The emphasis on engaging with intangible heritage, and the degree to which tourists felt they had, were coded as demonstrating immersion in local culture, which was more pronounced at Xidi than at Hongcun (Table 1). Table 2 illustrates that forms of active or passive messages, or lack of messages, taken away by tourists from either their experiences or the interpretation at both sites. A frequent set of messages related to understanding local culture, history and/or intangible heritage, which tended to follow on from the degree to which visitors nominated that they had valued their experiences of immersion in local intangible heritage. On the whole, a more passive set of 'messages' were recorded at Hongcun (Table 2). As Table 2 illustrates, a relatively passive and disengaged message about 'aesthetics' – that is the sites were 'pretty' or 'pleasant' – were offered by a higher proportion of those interviewed at Hongcun than at Xidi. The relatively passive response that 'no message' was taken away from the visit was also more frequent at Hongcun, while the active form of messages about local culture, history and intangible heritage was far more frequent at Xidi than at Hongcun. The following example is of a relatively passive response that emphasized the aesthetic values of both sites:

I come to Xidi and Hongcun just for recreational reasons. I took many pictures and enjoyed the view in Hongcun. I did not shoot many photos today because the buildings and landscape in Xidi are similar to Hongcun. (XD020, female, 55–64, tourist)

In contrast, the following visitors to Xidi offer examples of a more active response, in which the visitor engages imaginatively with Xidi culture and history:

During my visit, I listened to the interpretation from a tour guide of the history of the ancestral temple of Mr. Hu (胡家宗祠), I was thinking that there are hundreds of tourists who walk through this building, but who will think about the stories that have happened in this place or how many memories of locals and tourists have been

recorded by the building? (XD049, male, 45–54, tourist)

I am interested in the traditional buildings of Xidi, which uses wood as the framework of a building rather than concrete. These buildings resemble 'solidified poems' and 'living Chinese paintings'. They also represent typical traditional Hui Chinese architecture. I am an architect. You know, many concrete buildings collapsed during the earthquake, however, this wooden-framed traditional building survived for hundreds of years. Our ancients built these wood buildings with old technology and considered '风水 *Fengshui*'. I think I might be inspired by them. (XD046, male, 25–34, tourist)

Overall, Table 2 illustrates that the messages and engagement that tourists had while visiting Xidi tended to be more active than those at Hongcun. Nonetheless, at both sites tourists were engaged with an active sense of developing social links or connections with residents. It is worth discussing in some detail how tourists forged these links. For some visitors, the built environment of Xidi and Hongcun were identified as being associated with Chinese Southern identity and Confucianism, and their visit was an opportunity to immerse themselves in local culture and philosophy. Physical encounters with old buildings helped some visitors engage in a dialogue with the past that reinforced their own sense of place. For example, the following extracts were coded as immersive, from two tourists from entirely different parts of China to Xidi and Hongcun, who nonetheless used their visit to express a strong sense of cultural affiliation:

The buildings and landscape in my village were similar as they have Xidi and traditional Hui characteristics. However, they no longer exist. I can find my memories from when I was a boy by visiting this similar environment. (XD024, male, 35–44, tourist)

During this trip, I feel that the landscape of the site represents the strong identity of the Hui culture. My understanding may be different from people who come from a similar cultural background. However, it still arouses my memory of what I used to know of such culture, and this influences my personal emotion. (XD029, male, 35–44, tourist)

In these responses, memories had been elicited by seeing the landscape in Xidi, which then invoked a complex sense of belonging that linked the material buildings to the past Hui culture were underlined by the quiet emotions of both esteem and personal nostalgia. Physical encounters with old buildings helped generate an interesting cultural moment with a dialogue from the present to the past. XD024 and XD029 were geographically separated, as they came from different parts of China, yet both had a similar emotional attachment to the site through their invocation of memories inspired by the Xidi landscape.

Another visitor, who similarly immersed herself in physically being at the site, provided a very poetic emotional response that linked to her imagination of what the four seasons would be like in Hongcun:

HC005 … When you walk through a door, you can see a hundred-year-old tree peony in the garden. The tile carving, the wood carving, and any details of the building are so delicate. Some houses may be small, but the contents they contain are abundant. I can feel the beauty of the four seasons, with the melting of snow in the spring, the clear water flowed freely in the summer, and the withered lotus in the autumn. (HC005, female, over 65, tourist)

Another very active response was the desire, equally expressed by tourists at Hongcun and Xidi, to develop social connections and links with local people, often expressed as a sense in which the villages felt 'alive' or not. For example:

Compared to Hongcun where it has already become a commercial place, Xidi is my preferred choice for visiting. I have a feeling that Xidi is alive. Locals are doing their own activities in their old houses which were built over 200 years. I can see many preserved ducks hang under the roof, and I can feel the slight smoke curling up from

kitchen chimneys. (XD047, female, 24–35, tourist)

There is a simple poster posted on the wall of a resident's house, which indicates that the house owner is going to butcher a pig and hopes that villagers will come to buy fresh meat at that time. It is funny, very alive. (HC005, tourist, female, over 65, retired teacher)

I met a local who took me to visit his house. I was impressed by the courtyard, the kitchen, and the fishing pond and the surroundings of the house. I said to him that I would come to stay for about two months when I have a vacation. I started to fantasize the scene when I would wake up on a quiet morning, and then go to the morning market to buy fresh vegetable and have a nice breakfast. After that, I take my drawing paper sitting in the courtyard to do some sketches. How wonderful it is! (HC040, female, 25–34, tourist)

Tourists who are coded as actively engaged in Table 2 tended to link their physical encounter with Xidi and Hongcun with personal recollections or imaginative musings, as HC040 does, and HC005 when she imagines the four seasons. The emotions elicited by their visit were often used by visitors to develop their own heritage messages and meanings. As has been found by studies in Western contexts, these messages and meanings were often quite personal, and regularly different to those intended by tourist operators, but were nonetheless quite mindful and active (see for example, Smith 2015; 2017). These engaged responses were quite different from those responses identified in Table 2 as 'passive' on the register of engagement. Those that are coded as passive tended to give quite banal and/or platitudinous or indifferent responses, for example:

I came to Hongcun because the online evaluation was good here, but I do not think there is any difference compared to other places such as Wuzhen and Xitang. (HC008, female, 18–24, tourist)

This building is good and has historical and cultural value. My kid could learn something here. (HC034, female, 25–34, tourist)

Hongcun is just some old buildings that retain an ancient atmosphere. It is a kind of cultural relic. (HC027, male, 25–34, tourist)

In addition, some visitors were quite critical of the commercialization of the two villages, and in particular of the commercial changes of Hongcun, for example:

I have a very good memory of when I was at Hongcun thirteen years ago, that is was more natural and open to visitors. However, my experiences in Hongcun this time is just like the product I bought, very commercial. You know, there is a river outside Hongcun. Thirteen years ago, it used to be very natural, with beautiful vegetation and soft sand on the riverbank. However, it has turned into an ugly concrete small dam. I think the reason the tourism company and local governments did this is to ensure the water yield inside the village during the dry season. It is stupid and wrong. (XD022, male, 25–34, tourist)

You know, when I communicated with locals, they are very proud of the achievements of their ancestors. I agree with that. However, times are changing. They are selling the culture that was created by their ancestors to visitors. (XD027, male, 45–64, tourist)

As the last extracts above indicate, this commercialization was often criticized for its negative aesthetic impacts on the villages (for example, XD022). Other respondents believed it had a negative impact on local-tourist interactions, as XD027 points out, either because it impeded access to local people or because local people were seen as losing control, and thus a sense of pride, in their culture. It is important to note that tourists tended to be more critical of the commercialization of Hongcun under the private Beijing based company than of the locally run tourism management at Xidi.

What the interview data reveals is that tourists were not simply 'touring'; they were undertaking a combination of both cultural and social work that centred on actively working out, remembering and negotiating cultural and heritage meanings at the site. Two issues emerge here. First, the degree to which emotions and feelings generated by being 'in place' at a culturally significant site were used to develop complex emotionally charged insights on the interactions they had, not just with the physical place, but also between tourists and local people. The second issue is that tourists tended to be more actively engaged at Xidi than at Hongcun. We will unpack these issues in the discussion section, however, while tourists were concerned to create social links with locals, it is important to ask if this desire was shared by locals themselves?

5.2. Locals reaction to tourists

Interviews with local residents (Xidi 22 and Hongcun 18) were undertaken during December 2013. Of those interviewed 18 were men (9 in Xidi and 9 in Hongcun) and 22 women men (13 in Xidi and 9 in Hongcun). Ages ranged from 25 to over 65[2], and educational attainment was relatively low, with 50% in Xidi and 46.7% in Hongcun educated to year 9 or below. The low educational attainment reflects the remote rural area and poverty the villages experienced before tourism development (Liang & Wang, 2005; Ying & Zhou, 2007). In both villages, the majority of those interviewed were small employers or own account workers, engaged mainly in tourism or tourism-related businesses.

All but two of those interviewed supported, in general, tourism development; the dissenting two declined to elaborate on their concerns. Given that 70% of locals in Xidi and 90% in Hongcun are employed in or linked to the tourism industry, this response was hardly surprising (Su et al., 2005; Gu & Ryan, 2010; Xidi Government, 2013b). However, locals were concerned with more than economic issues and also offered cultural and social reflections when assessing local tourism. They often acknowledged that tourism had negative consequences, such as increased pollution. However, the majority of locals interviewed considered that tourism had not only brought dramatic economic gain and ensured the protection of material heritage sites, but that it had also brought cultural gains. This was often expressed as a sense of local pride that facilitated their sense of identity. It is now well documented that the advent of tourism in deindustrialized or remote and economically depressed regions, like that of the Yi county region in which Xidi and Hongcun are located, tends to create demands on local labour markets that cannot be readily met (Su et al., 2005; Ying & Zhou, 2007; Cheng & Morrison, 2008; Gu & Ryan, 2010; Xu et al., 2012; Xu et al., 2014). Nonetheless, Table 3 shows that locals appeared happy with the changes experienced in the shift from farming to tourism, nominating that tourism had brought money into the region. However, a significant positive issue raised by many was the relationships fostered with tourists. This was defined not only in a commercial or business sense, but those interviewed also talked about the development of active and complex bonds between tourism and local people. Residents were asked 'what messages or experiences do you hope that visitors take away from the site', and respondents in both Xidi and Hongcun expressed not only an active sense of pride in their own heritage, as people came to visit it, but also talked about the social relationships they built with tourists, for example:

The traditional Hui buildings, landscape, and culture of Xidi are unique, which you cannot find elsewhere in the world. Most of the tourists come from big cities such as Shanghai or Beijing where they share similar identities. They want to see something different. You know the former Secretary-General of the United Nations Kofi Atta Annan said 'Xidi is the most beautiful village of the World' during his visit to Xidi. I had made a lot of friends who used to visit Xidi. Some close friends have come to my hostel every year when they have a holiday. Each year, they have sent me postcards; I send them fresh tea during the tea season (XD038, female, 45–54, local).

One local author, in his publication *Dream of Hongcun*, describes how he took 阿萌 Ms Meng on a tour, and describes how he hopes that Ms Meng would be able to feel empathy for contemporary life of Hongcun, that she would experience both new and old local customs, and thus remember her trip as a memorable journey (Wang, 2013, pp. 175–184). Wang is clear that he does not see material objects as the key actor of heritage tourism at Hongcun, but rather specifies that there has to be some bonding between locals and tourists for there to be any heritage meaning. This idea was not only echoed by XD38, but was a recurring theme in other interviews, for example:

> Well, the most important are the stories that happened or will happen in my old house, rather than the material or aesthetic things. I changed my house into a hostel more than ten years ago, and have served thousands of tourists. I always enjoy communicating with them. You know, they come here for learning traditional 'Hui culture,' enjoying the Confucianism that is carried forward by朱熹 Zhu Xi, or for their own personal reasons. But all of these stories have become a part of the story of my house. (XD033, female, 35–44, local)

> In the early morning, I saw my neighbour emerge out of the mist, with some dirt on her shoes. She was carrying a basket of fresh vegetables from her farm to the morning market. I smiled and said hi to her and then I went to Mr Wang's house which is close to Moon Pool to have a cup of tea and some breakfast. From his house, I saw four women washing clothes in the pool. They were chatting with each other, laughing. In the meantime, there are several elder people who were drinking porridge at the opposite site of Moon Pool. Suddenly, I heard a large group of footsteps getting closer, which I knew meant today's first group of guests was coming. Some of these visitors were asking about the culture or the customs of the village from the local tour guide; and some of them were shooting photos of the pool, the houses, the reflections and the villagers. I like this kind of lifestyle. (HC051, female, 45–54, local)

> One ordinary autumn morning in 2005, I was walking around Southern Lake. Looking at the peaceful lake, white houses and their reflections in the water, I began to think that a few days ago, during the 'golden week', hundreds of tourists were enjoying the view and shooting photos beside the lake. How wonderful was this! Suddenly, all my old memories were back. I still remembered that we were holding evening parties in Nanhu School during the Anti-Japanese War (1937–1945). I also have a strong memory of every villager gathered around the lake in order to produce steel in the winter in 1958[3]. During the Cultural Revolution period, all the houses were covered by Big-character posters, in particular the Nanhu School. Our village is just like a living book, it survives and keeps changing in the past, present and future. I started fantasising about the past and the future of Hongcun. What was the scene when our ancients were building Southern Lake 400 years ago? What was the scene at Southern Lake when children were going to Nanhu School when it was just built 200 years ago? What will the scene of Southern Lake be in the future? (HC052, male, over 65, local; see also Wang, 2013:3)

The interconnection between heritage and tourism, as these extracts illustrate, does not only reside in the material heritage, it also emerges from the visits of tourists and the way they and local people perceive and understand their interactions. Each performance from the individual tourist is constitutive of the meaning of heritage. For tourists, villagers are part of the 'living landscape' they are engaged with. However, some local respondents also reported that they enjoyed watching visitors and communicating with them. Tourists became embodied in the daily life of residents, and some local people were very energized by the emotional bonds they had forged with tourists. Further, new memories and heritage meanings were themselves constructed in the interactions of local people and tourists. HC052 pointed

out that tourism had become one of the most precious memories in his life, and is an important component of the heritage site. Tourism in the 'golden week' can mean extreme crowding and associated unpleasant experiences, as many of those interviewed noted. However, from HC052's narrative, even the most 'evil' tourism moment could become a precious memory, and an important opportunity to remember and to speculate about not just the past, but also the future.

Interactions between locals and tourists did not only occur in the villages. The hostels (run by locals) were the places that magnified emotional connections between locals and tourists. Locally run hostels are normally traditional Huizhou dwellings renovated by the house owners (usually locals) to meet their personal needs. Tourists frequently book local hostels on '穷游 *Qiongyou.com*' or '携程网*ctrip.com*'. They can write about their own stories about their experiences and inspirations during their visit and check via the hostel message boards other tourists' experiences before they set off. In doing so, the hostels provided places for communication or emotional engagements between locals and tourists or between tourists themselves. Some of the communications were quite banal. However, in many cases, the communications or emotional engagements were very deep, and some tourists had written (or sketched) their experiences and feelings and posted on the message boards of the hostels, eliciting responses from both local people and other tourists (Figs. 3 and 4).

However, residents clearly expressed dissatisfaction with the management style employed in both Xidi and Hongcun[4]. As Xu et al., 2014 (2014: 805) has documented, Hongcun's management policies emphasize the protection of the material authenticity and integrity of the site and, in doing so, tend to disregard the social values and uses the sites are put to by residents. Interviews with government officials, tourism and heritage managers revealed that they were well aware of local dissatisfaction, but this tended to be dismissed, as local people were considered to lack the 'international vision' of protection. Local government, and Hongcun's tourism company in particular, were firmly embedded in the international conservation ethos advanced by UNESCO and ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), which stresses the integrity of the material fabric of heritage (Smith, 2006). Further, the official guided tours that one of us (RZ) went on in Hungcun continually reinforced the material and aesthetic values of the site. The tours also ignored the site's wider local social and cultural values, and what the sites meant to the local community. This focus on aesthetics at Hungcun was, at the time of the fieldwork, less stressed in Xidi by the community-run tourism company. The focus in tourism management practices on preserving the physical sites and their aesthetic values was criticized by many locals, for example:

> HC028: I think the most important thing for world cultural heritage is how to develop sustainable use of the site, rather than [relying on] old-style experts concerned about maintaining the physical objects. In my opinion, world cultural heritage is not a patient that needs to be taken care of by governments; rather it is a cultural product. This
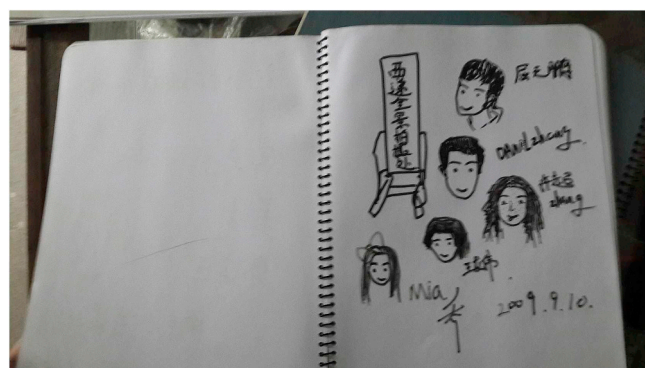

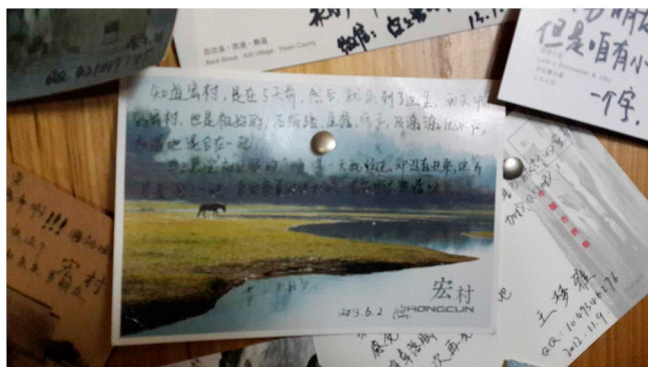**Fig. 3.** Message board in Xidi's local hostel (Photo by Rouran Zhang).

Fig. 4. Message board in Hongcun's local hostel (Photo by Rouran Zhang).

cultural product produces economic effects, which locals, local governments and tourism companies can benefit from. Culture is the soul of heritage. […] No matter how much the company invests, it is just like your clothes, very superficial. In terms of Hongcun, I think … of course, it is important to protect our existing architecture which represents the milestones and the carriers of our culture. However, the protection is not simply for physical building or decorations that we can see. Intangible culture and customs also need to be considered. I am worrying that we are using the culture which was created by our ancestors for living. However, we are not developing our own culture. Fifty years later, there are just so-called 'old buildings' in Xidi without souls. (HC028, male, 54–65, local scholar)

In addition, a sense that local activities and cultural expressions were themselves being overly managed was a concern expressed by locals. Some complained that they had no power to maintain their own houses, and had to follow government-mandated maintenance protocols. Moreover, homes 'that might be examined by international and national authorities' were given maintenance priority, while houses that were not in the touristic areas were ignored (XD038, female, 45–54, local). Further, some local activities, such as the selling of certain foodstuffs, had been banned for 'polluting' the authenticity of the site. Both locals and tourists were also concerned by the high entrance fees and an overly commercialized environment, for instance some tourists stated:

It is a theme park that I had to pay 104 RMB to enter. I felt the site has been managed. (HC038, male, 25–34, tourist)

104 RMB entrance fee! It is incredible. The village obvious has been managed. There is an organized touristic souvenir market in the village. It is funny. (HC042, male,45–54, tourist)

I had to pay 104 RMB to get through. Although the ticket includes the tour guide fees, but I do not want to join it. (XD026, 45–54, female, tourist)

There was a strong sense expressed by some locals and tourists that local governments and tourism companies in both Xidi and Hongcun not only treated heritage as static or dead material things, but they also intended to control the 'living' elements of the two sites. For many, and particularly local people, this facilitated the sense that heritage should be 'frozen in time' (Gao & Woudstra, 2011; Xu et al., 2012). The management of the two sites was identified as not only impeding residents' sense of place, but also disturbing tourists' sense of feeling and 'being at' the site, as discussed above. One local angrily observed:

… World heritage belongs to who? Locals or governments? The local governments should improve their concept of management. In my opinion, there is a soul in our old houses, but it is not just materials. It is traditional technologies and other intangible things. (XD083, man, 45–54, local)

6. Discussion

A number of intertwined themes emerge from this study. The first issue is the degree of agency that tourists expressed in discussing the experiences they valued and the messages they took away from both sites. This agency is not just tourists constructing their own meanings and messages, but is also demonstrated in the ways tourists sought to create emotional links to the sites they were visiting. The particular site that the tourist was visiting, however, mediated the agency of tourists. At Xidi, at the time of the interviews, tourism was locally managed, and the sense of active engagement by tourists here was in various ways stronger than at Hongcun, which was managed by an outside agency. A second issue centres on the role of emotion, and as the interviews with tourists revealed, many were actively using their affective responses to the sites to develop emotional links, often expressed as a desire to 'feel' or have 'feelings' about the sites they were touring. Thirdly, many of the residents interviewed at both sites also expressed a desire to forge emotional links or bonds with visitors, despite the sometimes negative intrusions of tourism on local lifestyles. The importance of ensuring visitors understood and 'felt' local culture and history was often stressed. Local residents, while obtaining economic benefits from tourism, were often concerned to mediate this economic necessity in terms of their own emotional and communal needs and aspirations. Where possible, local residents, through their face-to-face interactions and the messages boards, worked to create a sense of fellowship with tourists. This fellowship often went further in its aspirations than official tourism interactions, which often tried to create a sense of appreciation for local architectural and landscape aesthetics, and ensure a 'nice day out'. The desire to forge some sense of fellowship or emotional bond or link with tourists may be understood as an aspiration to engender respect from tourists for the *lived* Hui culture and history. That the local run Xidi tourism management company was successful in engendering a more active agency from tourists at that site comes as no real surprise.

Poria et al. (2003:248) argued that tourists who are personally linked to the heritage they were visiting tended to express a deeper emotional engagement and connection to the site than those who had no such links. However, as this study shows, tourists at sites where they have no personal links may nonetheless reach relatively deep forms of emotional engagement. Moreover, this was more readily facilitated by the involvement of local residents in tourism when, in this case, they were able to engage directly with tourists in ways that they individually and collectively controlled. Local people also appeared to enjoy a degree of fellowship with tourists through a range of interactions. Various residents talked about the relationships they had developed with tourists, XD038, for instance, talked about the 'close friends' she had made, with whom she exchanged postcards and fresh tea. HC051 considered that the tourists themselves had become part of the 'living landscapes' of Hongcun with which he interacted. The degree to which local-tourist interactions occurred through an organic desire for social connections, or was actually a pragmatic response by residents which allowed them to socially mediate the economic and policy necessities of accommodating tourists in their daily lives requires, however, further research.

Certainly, the majority of locals in both villages depend on tourism and dramatic tourism development has resulted from the World Heritage designation. However, residents, as well as tourists, demonstrated their own agency in addressing the ways they socially and emotionally accommodated the intrusion of tourists into their villages. This has implications for the ways residents are incorporated into tourism management processes, in that it requires a deeper understanding of the emotional and social links that may be forged through tourism. Further, it also suggests that understanding the emotional implications of tourism may also be important for both residents and tourists. In the case studies here, the engendering of pride was an important and positive issue for residents, which points to the need to

consider both the positive and negative emotional consequences of tourism.

Within Anglophone contexts the nature of heritage has been extensively debated, which has called into question the utility of dominant perceptions of heritage as material items 'frozen in time' (Harvey, 2001; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998; Macdonald, 2013; Smith, 2006). Smith (2006), in particular, has argued that heritage is a process and performance of meaning-making, in which particular heritage sites, landscapes and artefacts become cultural tools through which the past is used in the present to re/construct and validate contemporary values, identities, social relationships, and narratives. She challenges the AHD's conceptualisation of heritage as simply sites, places and other 'things', and her discomfort with this is shared by many of those interviewed at Xidi and Hongcun. The sense of frustration expressed, for example, by HC028 when he notes that the emphasis on the physical fabric, which simply treated heritage as 'old buildings', would result in the preservation of places 'without souls'. There would seem to be a conflicting sense of heritage between that experienced within Xidi and Hongcun and that imposed by World Heritage policies and practice. In both villages, heritage is locally conceptualized as living, eventful and changing, as HC052 observes, 'Our village', that which is identified as heritage, 'is just like a living book, it survives and keeps changing in the past, present and future'. While, XD38, states that 'the most important' heritage events for her are 'the stories that happened or will happen in my old house, rather than the material or aesthetic things'. Tourism management practices based on conceptualisations of heritage framed by the AHD will obscure the living aspects of heritage, and moreover impede how heritage is used to not only construct meaning in and for the present, but the ways it may be used to construct meaning for and *between* tourists and local communities.

Both tourists and residents expressed dissatisfaction with the heritage and tourism management undertaken by the local government and tourism companies, often noting that they considered that their feelings towards the sites, that is their emotional engagement with the villages, were being 'managed'. This was done not only by the 'walls', 'gates' and 'high entrance fees' of which they complained, but also they noted by government controls that attempted to fossilize the two villages, and Hongcun in particular, as 'theme parks'. Local residents expressed concern that their engagement, not only with heritage sites but also with tourists themselves, was misunderstood within the management planning process. Tourism management in Hongcun is currently run by Co. Jingyi Ltd, an external enterprise authorized by the local government. Following national and international policies, this company has largely been concerned with the protection of the historical and cultural appearance of heritage sites in Hongcun. This has particularly been the case since Hongcun was inscribed on the World Heritage List, and has resulted in the implementation of policies that restrict residential activities. For instance, residents must currently gain approval to alter their buildings, and an authorized construction team must be carried out alternations. In the case of Xidi, residents had run the management of tourism for more than 20 years, although in mid-2013 the state-owned enterprise Co. Huihuang Ltd had taken charge. At the time of the interviews, this new company had limited influence, but both the Xidi government and the new tourism company intended to copy Hongcun's tourism management experiences to replicate Hongcun's tourism income. Xidi residents expressed strong concerns that physical and cultural alienation might result from the tourism company taking over management. This concern may be realized given the relative levels of engagement recorded at the two sites. At Hongcun the economic income derived from tourists became a kind of 'buffer' among locals between local government and external capital in Hongcun, and their loss of feeling and links to their sense of place. This loss was often also mitigated and replaced by emotional engagement with tourists. In this case, the emotional engagements and investments both residents and tourists made with the villages became inadvertently 'managed' by the management processes, and created an oppositional response to that management that attempted to maintain or

substitute the feeling of sense of place. As Smith and Campbell (2016) argue, heritage is emotional; sense of place is one of those underlying emotional connections associated with heritage. Sense of place is not simply associated with physical place but also, as Hayden (1997) argues, with a sense of social connection, which both residents and tourists sought and found, in varying intensities, at Xidi and Hongcun in their interactions with each other.

7. Conclusion

In charting the emotional engagements and investments of tourists and residents to both their interactions with physical heritage sites and with each other, this paper develops two intertwined arguments. The first centres on the utility of considering the 'felt' aspects of tourism. Understanding the emotional complexities and range of registers of emotional engagement with which tourists and residents participate allows for a more nuanced and deeper understanding of the social impacts of tourism development and management. Understanding the emotions engendered by sense of place, and how tourists and locals mediate and negotiate the feelings, memories and cultural/historical meanings thus made and remade in this process, provides a deeper understanding of the agency of both tourists and residents. Tourists actively used their emotions, whether they were negative, indifferent or positive, to negotiate not only a range of messages about the sites they visited, but also to establish links to and understandings of the sense of place offered at Xidi and Hongcun. Further, residents also used their emotions to mediate the meaning of tourism and to work tourists into not only economic networks but their social networks and their own sense of place. The wider implications of these observations requires further research, certainly our own study is limited to a specific time and place; however, the second argument suggests that a fundamental implication is that local engagement in tourism management has not only obvious economic benefits, but emotional benefits for residents. Local inclusion in management can, in turn, facilitate greater agency on the part of tourists to engage with and take from their visits active meanings and messages about the nature and value of the sites and landscapes they visit. In short, the managerial implications of this study reinforce the utility of ensuring local residents, those whose sense of place is linked to heritage sites, are actively included in the development of joint-managerial policy and practices. The development of joint-management policies needs to consciously and actively reject the framing of heritage tourism policy and practice by the AHD and its emphasis on top-down management strategies to develop more democratic and inclusive practices. Moreover, an understanding of, and respect for, the emotional connections people have and make with heritage is integral to meaningful and successful community engagement and joint-management strategies.

Notes

1. A direct question about changing values was not asked, as we did not want to lead the interviewees on these issues, rather the questions were designed to allow space for issues of change and changing values at the sites to be raised organically in the ways relevant to the interviewee.
2. Those between 18 and 24 were not interviewed as people in that age range were working/searching for jobs outside the villages.
3. From 1958 to 1963, the campaign called the 'Great Leap Forward' was led by Mao Zedong and aimed to rapidly transform the country from an agrarian economy into a socialist society through rapid industrialization and collectivization. The production of steel was seen as one of the key pillars of the 'Great Leap Forward', with most individuals in China involved in making steel (Chan, 2007).
4. In particular, those in Xidi expressed depression and anger at the local government and the state-owned enterprise (Co. Huihuang Ltd) that had just taken over their locally run tourism program.

Author contributions

Rouran Zhang (corresponding author) undertook all of the field-work on which this paper is based. He translated the material and coded the interviews and entered them into SPSS. He also undertook qualitative analysis of the interview material. This work was undertaken as part of his PhD thesis. He drafted an early version of the paper.

Laurajane Smith (junior author) supervised Rouran Zhang's PhD, and thus supervised the data collection and analysis of the material for this paper. She reworked the preliminary draft of the paper and added the literature review and discussion sections of the paper.

Acknowledgement

Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data to this article can be found online at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2019.03.004.

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