International Gentrification of Rural China: The Emergence of Yangjiale

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Abstract

Yangjiale is a type of bed and breakfast (BnB) accommodation that originates from the villages of Mount Mogan in Zhejiang Province, located in the Yangtze River Delta region of China. In this area, non-natives from nearby metropolitan cities, such as Shanghai, began renting abandoned village houses from local farmers. They signed 20-year lease contracts at low prices, refurbished the properties with modern designs, and transformed them into hospitality services.The success of the Yangjiale phenomenon in the villages and towns of Mount Mogan, Zhejiang, reveals the touristification of rural areas caused by the flow of the global bourgeoisie in the surrounding megacities of Hangzhou and Shanghai. Its development phases are the following: embryonic-exogenous, prosperity-indigenous, mass-plateau. After the epidemic, Yangjiale experienced a decline in popularity and was criticized for its excessive homogeneity and market saturation. The emergence and development of Yangjiale can be expounded as a global gentrification process brought about by the globalization flow of the global bourgeoisie, which reveals a sense of urban entrepreneurialism. The development of Yangjiale reflects consumerism from the perspective of the Chinese market. Combined with China's platform economy, its development to the bottleneck shows a cultural swing from anti-McDonaldization to McDonaldization.This article primarily examines the causes of the Yangjiale phenomenon and describes the social mechanisms associated with it namely Yangjialization. It observes changes in Yangjiale's architectural style, explores the relationship between the Yangjiale phenomenon and shifts in local architectural styles, also offers insights for the development of rural tourism in similar regions. The article primarily employs three methods: 1. Literature research to create a theoretical framework that explains the phenomenon of Yangjialelization; 2. Interview methods to gather diverse perspectives on Yangjiale, establishing a foundation for expressing its significance; and 3. An analysis of the evolution of Yangjiale's architectural style using photo archives.

Keywords

Yangjiale, touristification, McDonaldization, urban entrepreneurialism, global gentrification, consumerism, platform economy

1. Introduction

In 1890, an American journalist reported that the Mount Mogan area in Zhejiang Province, China, due to its superior natural scenery, attracted many wealthy people from various countries, including Chinese celebrities, to build villas in Mount Mogan. Until modern times, in 2000, Hangzhou TV reporter Xia Yuqing rented cheap local abandoned houses on the mountain at low prices to build a holiday villa (i.e., the Summer Palace), to raise his children in a natural environment capable of attracting foreigners from the big surrounding cities including Shanghai and Hangzhou. In 2007, a South African businessman, Gao Tiancheng (Zimeng Gao& Li Wang,2019), rented cheap abandoned village houses in the local village in Sanjiuwu on the mountain and co-designed the holiday villa Naked Castle with his wife, Ye Kaixin, an architect and designer, which became a colossal commercial success. During this period, many foreigners built their villas around Mount Mogan; their high housing prices and advanced design with operation concepts marked the rise of the rural BnB industry in Yangjiale in the Mount Mogan area of Zhejiang Province. The success of Yangjiale has attracted the input of designers and rural talents from big cities around Mount Mogan. For example, the Da Le Zhi Ye (Feng Shida,&Shui Yanfei, 2017) building was designed by Yang Mohan, a designer in Shanghai who graduated from Shanghai Tongji University. From 2013 to 2015, many middle-class citizens of Hangzhou and Shanghai returned to their hometowns to rent or convert their idle farmhouses; high-end design and marketing operations launched the BnB industry with boutique pricing. In this process, local villagers witnessed the success of the Yangjiale model and also began to rent or convert their homesteads into BnBs with original design approaches (e.g., the library-style BnB Mount Mogan Dwelling Picture launched by resident Zhu Jindong).

As Yangjiale continues to expand, many local villagers have entered the BnB market in the area. Since 2018, numerous similar BnB offerings have emerged, closely imitating the original first generations' Yangjiale BnBs. Overall, the market is approaching a saturation point, leading to the closure of some BnBs. This trend suggests that the unique character of Yangjiale is becoming increasingly commoditized.

Yangjiale is a BnB phenomenon located in China's Jiangsu, Zhejiang, and Shanghai provinces. Because it occurs in rural areas, it intersects with both tourism and rural research. Exploring the causes and background of its emergence will help us understand the impact of globalization and consumerism on the transformation of rural spaces in China and, more broadly, in East Asia.

Yangjiale is a noteworthy homestay phenomenon found in rural areas of Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Shanghai, and other regions in China. This phenomenon intersects with both tourism and rural research. Currently, scholarly research on Yangjialelization encompasses various topics, including its development stages, commercial behaviors, cultural discourses, human behavior studies, social media influence, and the platform economy. However, there is still a

significant research gap regarding the architectural styles of Yangjiale BnBs. This paper aims to address two primary research questions: 1. What is Yangjiale, and what does Yangjialelization entail? 2. How are changes in architectural style related to the developmental stages of Yangjiale? To explore these questions, the paper employs several research methods, including literature review, field investigation, interviews, and photography library. The literature review, field investigations, and interviews primarily focus on answering the first research question, revealing the essence of the Yangjiale phenomenon. Meanwhile, the photographic documentation will help answer the second question by examining the relationship between architectural style changes and Yangjiale's development stages. This study analyzes the underlying reasons for the Yangjiale phenomenon, describes the social dynamics introduced by Yangjialeization, and explores its implications in architectural production. Special emphasis is placed on the connection between the evolution of architectural styles and the various developmental stages of Yangjiale BnBs. This research aims to provide valuable insights for the development of rural tourism in similar regions or countries. Through the case study of Yangjiale, the paper highlights the causes and context of its emergence, helping us understand the effects of globalization and consumerism on spatial transformations in rural areas of China and East Asia.

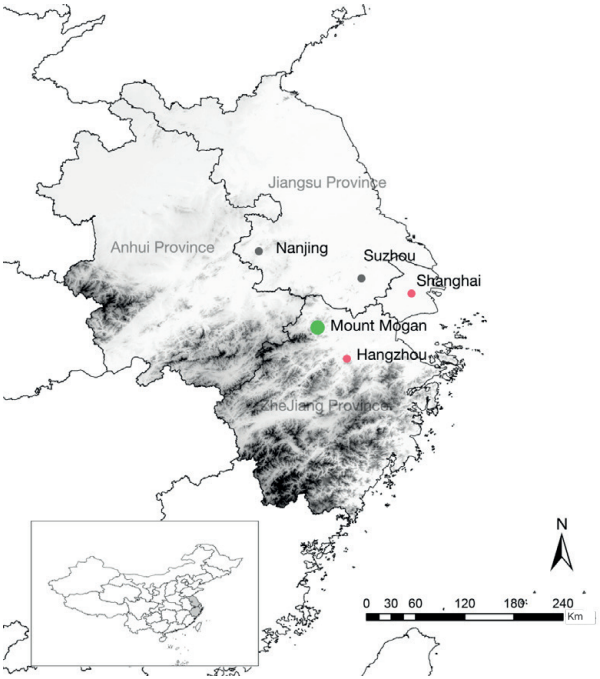


Figure 1. Mount Mogan Distribution Map.

2. Literature Review

Yangjialelization has emerged prominently within the context of rural tourism in Mount Mogan, Huzhou City, Zhejiang Province, China. This phenomenon, particularly the rural BnB tourism in Mount Mogan, has gained significant attention from domestic and international scholars. Modern research on bed and breakfasts (BnBs) began in the 1980s, with China initiating its studies in 1984. Until 2006, Chinese BnB research literature primarily focused on the clustering phenomena of BnBs in Japan and Taiwan. From 2006 onwards, Chinese BnB research exhibited a multipolar trend (Haijing Yang & Lijun Yang, 2019). The spatial development of BnBs around Mount Mogan has gradually formed a strong clustering pattern (Haizhou Zhang et al., 2019). Currently, a spatial development structure of BnBs has emerged, charac-

terized by a core clustering area around Mount Mogan centred on Houwu-Xiantan-Liaoyuan-Laoling-Lanshukeng and multi-point clustering in the marginal villages adjacent to the Mount Mogan Scenic Area.

Defining the development stages of Yangjiale and understanding the determinants of the process are common concerns in Yangjiale's studies. Fei Long et al. (2018) divided the development of Mount Mogan BnBs into three stages: the initial development stage (2007-2011), the rapid development stage (2012-2015), and the mature development stage (2016 to present), using Butler's tourist-destination life cycle model (Butler, 1980). Later, Jianzhuang Zheng and Lingyan Huang (2022) divided the Yangjialelization development into a slow growth stage (2004-2013) and a high growth stage (2014-2019). Researchers have also investigated the Yangjialelization process, focusing on behaviour and cultural studies. The rural gentrification that has emerged in the Yangjialelization process can significantly promote local rural revitalization and facilitate the return of the rural population, as noted by Chen et al. (2024). In rural tourism, Chen (2023) also pointed out that Yangjiale, created by the urban gentry, intertwines the discourse power of gentrification between China and the West, offering a perspective on gentrification beyond Western discourse.

Yangjialelization has expanded the understanding of tourism by incorporating the bucolic BnBs of Mount Mogan, as explored in Jing Han's research (2019). However, it has also faced criticism for the negotiation and coexistence between rural tourism creators (RTMs) and residents, revealing that RTMs in this region are predominantly middle-class urban residents who lead the gentrification process of rural tourism in China. As Peipei Chen et al. (2022) described, this relationship goes beyond direct displacement, with residents also gaining some benefits. In the field of the platform economy, Yangjiale has also been the subject of extensive research. The competition in the digital field has become a significant battleground for Yangjiale BnB operators and consumers (Qiaoying Zhu, Huilan Zhong & Jiayi Chen, 2024). The iconic BnB brand developed from Yangjiale has also prompted research into entrepreneurial methods for "lifestyle entrepreneurship" (Linlin Lu, 2024).

The development of BnBs utilizing Internet platforms in rural areas is emerging as a growing trend globally. Various regions around the world, including rural areas in Northern Europe, such as Iceland, Norway, and Denmark, have adopted models for BnB development based on Internet platforms like Airbnb, promoting rural entrepreneurship in the hospitality sector (Birgit Leick et al., 2024).

Barcelona and coastal rural areas in Catalonia are developing BnB industries based on peer-to-peer (P2P) accommodation (Martí Cors-Iglesias et al., 2020). Similarly, rural regions in Taiwan, such as Penghu Island, and in Spain, like La Palma Island, are fostering rural tourism and BnB businesses that capitalize on the natural beauty and tranquility of the countryside. Ad-

ditionally, some rural areas in Andorra are also establishing BnB industries focused on scenic landscapes (Antoni Domènech & Volkan Zoğal, 2020). The growth of BnB industries in these rural areas worldwide has, to a certain extent, contributed to the return of local young people, resulting in a small-scale counter-urbanization phenomenon. The rise of the sharing economy, exemplified by platforms like Airbnb, has provided more opportunities for individuals to start their own businesses. This encouragement of individual entrepreneurship within the Internet economy serves as a key factor supporting BnB ventures in rural areas (Birgit Leick et al., 2024).

Both domestic and international scholars have focused on various aspects of Yangjiale and the Yangjialelization process, including its development stages, commercial behaviour, cultural discourse, human behaviour research, social media, platform economy, and other related topics. However, the interactions between the architectural style of Yangjiale BnBs and the development stages of Yangjialelization remain a research gap. This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the architectural evolution of Yangjiale and the impact of its development stages on the architectural forms of BnBs, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding that warrants in-depth analysis.

2.1 Yangjialelization Development Stages

To elucidate the phenomenon of Yangjiale and Yangjialelization, this paper examines the topic from four perspectives: society, culture, policy, economy, and environment. The study draws on the STEEP analysis model proposed by the environmental protection community, modifying the T (Technical) to C (Cultural) to better suit the examination of Yangjialelization stages.

- **Social Level**: This includes the analysis of social phenomena such as population impact, income distribution, villager education, population mobility and growth, social neighbourhood relations, and media influence.
- **Cultural Level**: This encompasses language communication, religious beliefs, customs and habits, traditional culture, values, gender roles, life attitudes, lifestyles, and trends.
- **Political Level**: This focuses on policy analysis, including policy frameworks, labour markets, government policies, and legislation.
- **Economic Level**: This includes economic growth, inflation, interest rates, exchange rates, tariffs, unemployment rates, income levels, company dynamics, government-business cooperation, world trade, and resource availability.
- **Environmental Level**: This involves the analysis of materials, resources, carbon emissions, transportation routes, living circles, and global warming.

Drawing on the research by Jianzhuang Zheng and Lingyan Huang (2022) and Fei Long et al. (2018) on the classification of Yangjiale's development stages, we have summarized the development of Yangjiale into three stages:

1. Embryonic-Exogenous Stage: This period marks the initial creation of the brand by foreigners.

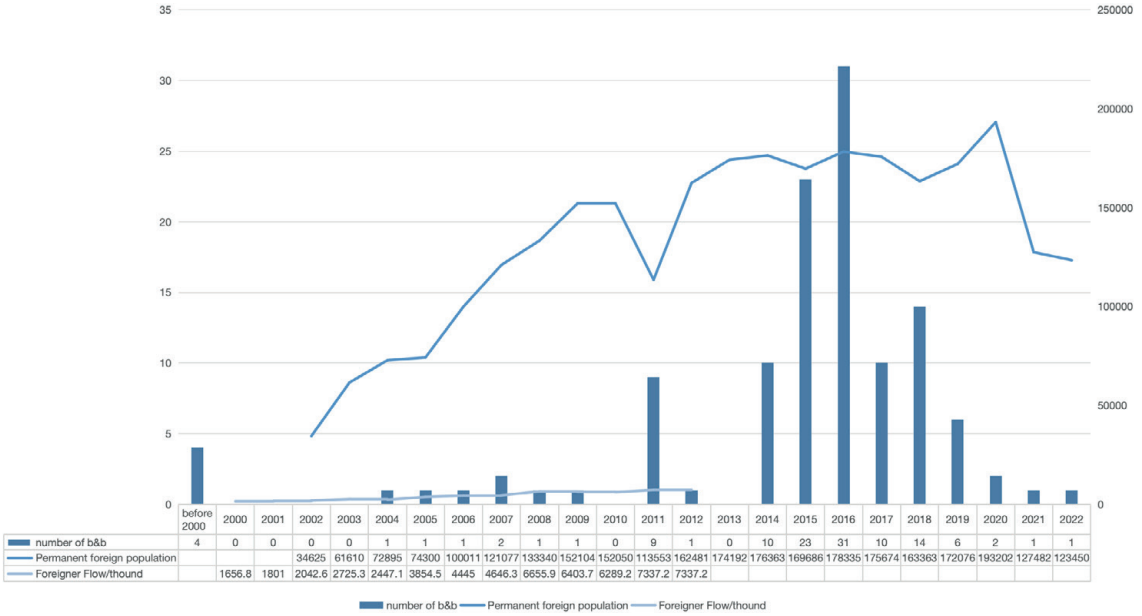
2. Prosperity-Indigenous Stage: This stage is characterized by the influx and gathering of designers and villagers from surrounding big cities.

3. Mass-Plateau Stage: This stage includes the brand platform and bottleneck periods, indicating a mature development phase.

This comprehensive framework provides a nuanced understanding of the Yangjialelization process and its multifaceted impacts on rural tourism and community development.

2.1.1 Embryonic-Exogenous Stage

From the perspective of international gentrification, the emergence of Yangjiale can be attributed to the neo-colonialism of local lifestyles facilitated by the mobility of the global middle class. The initial phase of Yangjiale represents a fusion of Western and Eastern utopianism. Initially, it was a niche product created by a small group of non-natives, characterized by anti-standardized, private, customized tourism and residential offerings, akin to McDonaldization and globalization (George Ritzer, 1993). McDonaldization is a theoretical concept proposed by social scientist George Ritzer, highlighting the significant impact that the McDonald's Corporation has had on society (Ritzer, 1996). This



	before 2000	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
number of b&b	4	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	9	1	0	10	23	31	10	14	6	2	1	1
Permanent foreign population				34625	61610	72895	74300	100011	121077	133340	152104	152050	113553	162481	174192	176363	169686	178335	175674	163363	172076	193202	127482	123450
Foreigner Flow/thound		1656.8	1801	2042.6	2725.3	2447.1	3854.5	4445	4646.3	6655.9	6403.7	6289.2	7337.2	7337.2										

Figure 2. Growth of Yangjiale B&Bs over the years; the number of foreign residents in Shanghai over the years; the number of foreign population flows in Shanghai over the years.

concept refers to the standardized and uniform influence exerted by a multinational company. In the case of Yangjialelization, McDonaldization can be seen in the standardized practices adopted by certain international hotel brands. Initially, Yangjiale BnB distinguished itself in the market by offering non-standardized niche products. However, as the company expanded and evolved, the distinct characteristics and advantages of Yangjiale BnB were gradually identified and codified. This process led to a standardization and homogeneity of Yangjiale BnB offerings, causing the brand to once again fall into the patterns described by McDonaldization theory. Additionally, the non-local residents, who are not Chinese and work in nearby major cities (such as Shanghai), have become an integral part of this evolving market.The non-villagers who are not Chinese and working in nearby big cities (eg. Shanghai) first rented local houses and started businesses centred around outdoor exploration.

Shanghai has a long history of welcoming and attracting non-native residents. After the port opened in 1843 as a result of the Opium War, the city experienced almost a century of semi-concession governance. During this time, Shanghai became a hub for various non-native populations, contributing to its rapid development into one of the world's most important centers for information flow. Although the semi-concession period ended in 1943, Shanghai has maintained a strong international reputation and a diverse immigrant background. Today, it continues to be one of the most sought-after cities in East Asia for non-native residents.

Following initial success, a series of large-scale guesthouses with local styles were constructed, marking an attempt to blend globalization with local characteristics. Historically, there has been a tradition of non-native building villas in Mount Mogan, reflecting a form of globalization rooted in historical inheritance. From a design perspective, original Yangjiale brand hotels, such as “Naked Castle”(Haizhou Zhang, Lin Lu & Feng Sun , 2021), embody the idea of Disneyfication, integrating thematic elements into the natural landscape, a notion the global middle class introduced. The development of Yangjiale was further supported by government initiatives to improve rural infrastructure, including electricity, Internet, environmental enhancements, and road construction. Economically, with its affluent population and consumerist trends, the Yangtze River Delta provided a fertile ground for Yangjiale’s growth. The natural environment of the Yangjiale area also attracted significant investment, making the rise of Yangjiale in its initial phase inseparable from both infrastructure development and the natural resources of Mount Mogan.

2.1.2 Prosperity-Indigenous Stage

In the second stage of Yangjialelization, many Chinese individuals entered the Yangjiale market, emulating the style and model of the initial foreign pioneers while incorporating their values. This led to a clustering effect and the gradual platformization of the brand. Local BnBs in Mount Mogan began incubating their brands and establishing branches in other regions, forming a BnB industry chain. This stage re-

flects local culture's absorption and re-creation of Western BnB brand culture. Designers and creative professionals from nearby cities started to engage in the BnB industry, and villagers also participated in creating BnBs, showcasing a strong urban entrepreneurial spirit(ftikhar, M. Naveed., Justice, J. B., & Audretsch, D. B, 2020) and significantly improving the rural environment. The success of Mount Mogan under the Deqing County government inspired other governments in central and western China to develop BnB brands and tourism to stimulate local economies. This stage attracted substantial domestic private capital and fostered cooperation between the government and BnB operators. The development of BnBs was closely linked to the Internet, and many rural labourers returned to Mount Mogan. Environmentally, the development of BnBs led to regional renewal and upgrades, with the emergence of cafes, high-end restaurants, and art workshops. Due to the mechanism of villagers owning their land, local villagers were not displaced by the influx of Yangjiale but instead participated in the process and benefited from it.

2.1.3 Mass-Plateau Stage

In the third stage, numerous BnBs with similar operational models and inferior imitations of the original Yangjiale style emerged, leading to issues of homogeneity and oversaturation in the Mount Mogan BnB industry. Many villagers joined the Yangjiale industry by renovating their houses, and local villagers' strong urban entrepreneurial spirit significantly contributed to the transformation of the rural environment. To address the homogeneity problem, the government advocated for BnBs to accurately emphasize thematic characteristics to target consumer groups. They also promoted cooperation with internet tourism platforms and conducted educational activities for BnB owners on internet operations to counteract the industry's downward trend. At this stage, platform-based Yangjiale exhibited commercialization, selling services, local customs, and natural landscapes to consumers. Touristification quietly developed, and villagers benefited from tourism and Yangjiale, although the overall environment became increasingly urban.

3. Methods

This study primarily employs qualitative research methods, including collecting relevant literature, field interviews, and field photography to establish a BnB appearance library. Information on over 500 Yangjiale BnBs in Mount Mogan was also collected and mapped to present their distribution and changes. First-hand photographs were collected to investigate the architecture of these BnBs, and the architectural styles were categorized and mapped using GIS.

First, the study established a theoretical framework for Yangjiale's research by reviewing a large body of literature related to Yangjiale and Yangjialelization. To understand the emergence of Yangjiale BnB and examine the widespread phenomenon of Yangjialelization, it is essential to establish a theoretical foundation for this concept. This includes the relationships between consumerism, gentrification, globalization, touristification, and concepts such as

McDonaldization, Disneyfication, international gentrification, cognitive capitalism, creative class, urban entrepreneurship, platform economy, platform urbanization, and urban political ecology. These perspectives were used to interpret Yangjialelization and define the research design.

Second, two field surveys were conducted in December 2022 and July 2023 to understand the Yangjiale BnB industry and rural tourism development in Mount Mogan Town. To achieve the goals of this study, which involves observing and explaining the Yangjiale and Yangjialelization phenomena, conducting field visits and interviews with relevant individuals is essential.

The first survey in December 2022 involved interviews with 71 participants, including local village officials, tourism developers, BnB and catering industry owners, villagers, and tourists. The focus was on their views on Yangjiale's development, history, and prospects. The second survey in July 2023 involved in-depth interviews with Mount Mogan Town government officials and owners or managers of five well-known Yangjiale BnBs. The aim was to understand the recent development of Yangjiale, the challenges faced by operators, government support, and future development visions.

Third, during the July 2023 field research, over 500 Yangjiale BnBs were visited, and the exteriors of 555 BnBs were photographed. To achieve the goal of this study, which is to understand the relationship between the architectural development history of Yangjiale and its industrial growth, it is essential to create a library of BnB architectural styles. To do this, we documented a variety of local BnB architectural designs through on-site photography. These photos were organized into a library, linking them with BnB information and classifying the BnB styles into vernacular, Mediterranean, modern, and postmodern.

Finally, the study collected data on the location, village, owner's name, and starting year of 943 Yangjiale BnBs. To effectively describe the development and historical changes of Yangjiale BnBs and the phenomenon of Yangjialelization, as well as the evolution and distribution of various architectural styles, graphical mapping is essential. These visuals will help illustrate and explore the patterns of development and provide clarity on the evolution of architectural styles associated with this phenomenon. This information was imported into GIS to create a distribution map of the BnBs and track changes over the years. For 555 BnBs, appearance photos were taken, and relevant information was collected and mapped to understand the distribution and growth of different architectural styles.

4. Data Collection and Analysis

The study collected the names of 943 Yangjiale BnBs through government visits. Additionally, it gathered information on the geographical locations, number of beds, years of establishment, and names of the owners of these BnBs via online research. This information was compiled into electronic documents using Excel. To further enhance the analysis, the researchers accessed publicly available Shanghai yearbooks online to obtain data on the number of

non-native individuals residing in Shanghai over different years, as well as trends in their influx. During a subsequent visit, photographs of the exteriors of 555 BnBs were collected. These photos were categorized by hand according to their architectural styles. The geographical coordinates (longitude and latitude) of the 555 BnBs were also extracted from the Internet and entered into GIS software. This allowed for an analysis of the distribution of BnBs of various styles in Moganshan Town, which helped prepare for further distribution analysis.

5. Results

5.1 Distribution of Yangjiale BnBs

By collecting the geographical locations of 153 Yangjiale BnBs, it was found that the core distribution of Yangjiale BnBs is concentrated near the Mount Mogan Central Scenic Area and radiates to both sides of Mount Mogan Town. Analyzing the historical distribution trajectory of Yangjiale reveals that in the early days, Yangjiale was primarily located close to the central scenic area of Mount Mogan Town and gradually expanded to the central area of Mount Mogan Town in the middle and later stages. The distribution of BnBs is closely related to the road network, exhibiting characteristics of being distributed along and around the road network. The overall distribution of Yangjiale BnBs is scattered across the central, eastern, and northern parts of Mount Mogan Town, with the central scenic area as the core. Before 2007, the total number of developed Yangjiale BnBs was relatively small, and the growth rate was slow. From 2007 to 2013, the scale and growth rate began to increase significantly, and from 2013 to 2017, there was rapid growth in the number of Yangjiale BnBs in Mount Mogan Town. After 2017, the growth

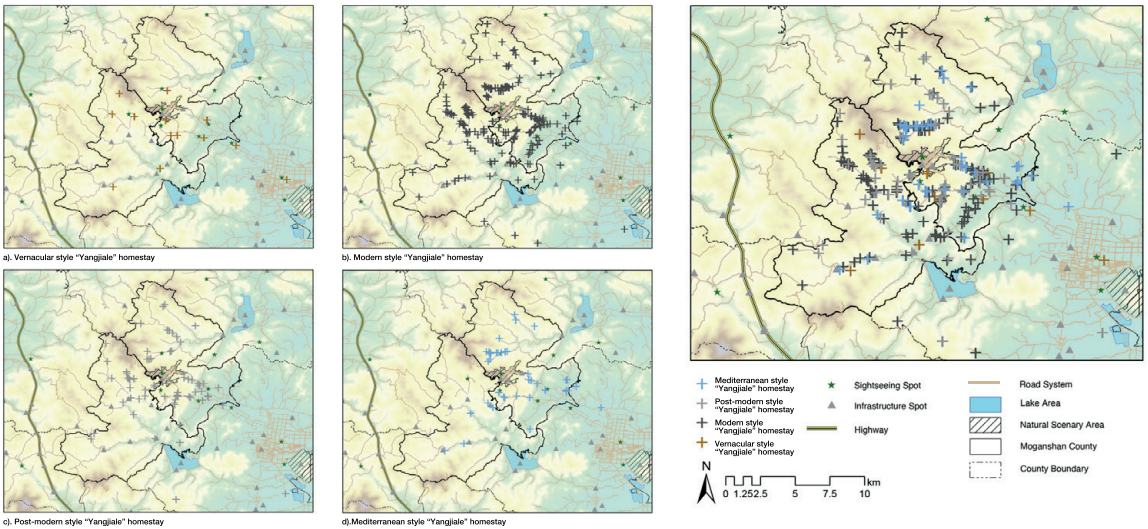


Figure 3. Geographical distribution map of 555 Yangjiale BnBs in four styles.

Figure 4. Four architectural styles of BnB.

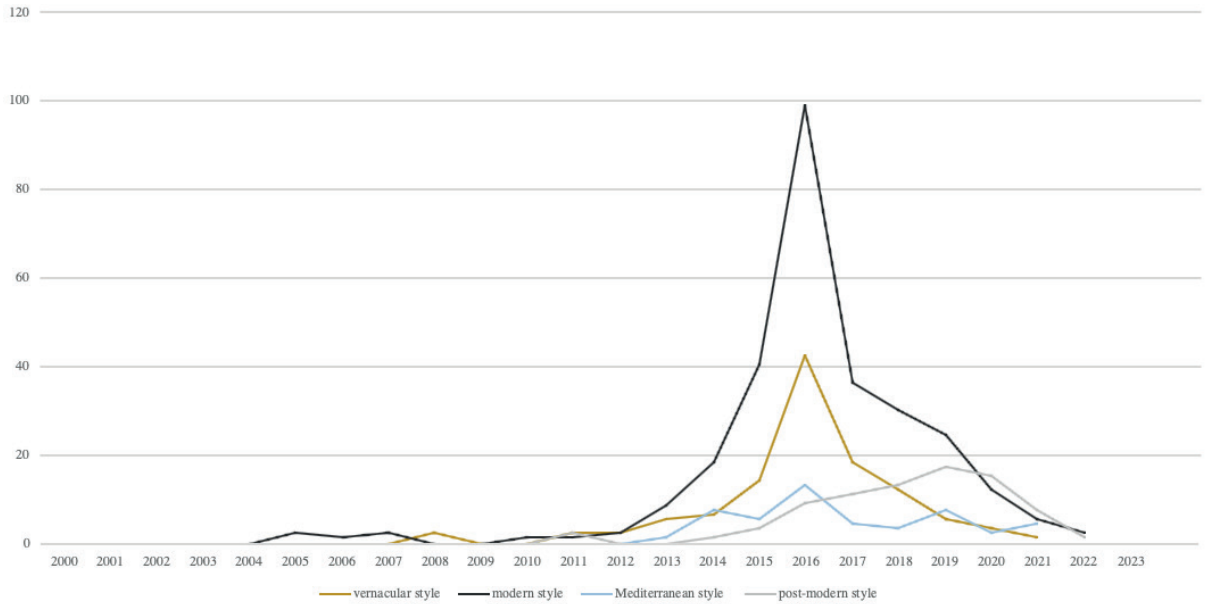


Figure 5. The 555 BnBs categorized into four styles in different stages of evolution.

rate slowed, but a certain level of growth was maintained (Figure 2).

5.2 Architecture of Yangjiale BnBs

By organizing the photos of 555 BnBs taken during the field survey in July 2023, all the collected architectural photos were classified according to the style and materials used in the buildings. BnBs that utilize wooden bamboo structures and local elements such as mud walls are classified as vernacular style BnBs. BnBs that employ brick structures and are built in a small villa-style are classified as modern architecture. Buildings featuring concrete and glass structures with unique architectural shapes and a postmodern design sense are classified as postmodern style BnBs. BnB buildings that use

large pieces of rough stone stacking structures and exhibit a castle style are classified as Mediterranean-style BnBs (Figure 4).

Through the analysis of the 555 Yangjiale BnBs whose photos were collected, their architectural styles were classified, and the opening times of the BnBs were recorded. By examining the opening times of BnBs of different styles, it was found that the first to open were BnBs in modern architectural style, followed by BnBs in vernacular style, then BnBs in postmodern architectural style, and finally Mediterranean style buildings. BnBs of all four architectural styles began to appear in 2012. From 2012 to 2015, the number of BnBs in all four architectural styles showed an upward trend, and from 2015 to 2016, the number of buildings in all four architectural styles increased significantly.

From 2016 to 2018, the growth trend of BnBs in Mediterranean architectural style, vernacular style, and modern style buildings declined, but the number of BnBs in postmodern architectural style continued to grow. From 2018 to 2019, except for the growth trend of the number of BnBs in postmodern and Mediterranean styles, the number of BnBs in vernacular and modern architectural styles showed a downward trend. After 2019, the growth trend of BnBs in all architectural styles showed a downward trend.

The most common style of local Yangjiale BnBs is the modernist style, followed by the vernacular style, followed by the postmodern style, and the least common style is the Mediterranean style (Figure 5).

The geographical coordinates of 555 BnBs collected from field photos were input into GIS, and the geographical distribution of BnBs of various styles was obtained. Overall, the location of BnBs of different styles shows overlapping, with the highest location overlap occurring in the north and south of the central scenic area and a place far south of the central scenic area. Among them, the location overlap rate of Mediterranean-style BnBs and postmodern-style BnBs with the most significant number of modern-style BnBs was high. In contrast, the overall number of vernacular-style buildings was small, and their overlap rate with other architectural styles was low.

In the north of the central scenic area, the location overlap rate of Mediterranean and modern buildings was high. In the east of the central scenic area, the location overlap rate of Mediterranean-style buildings, modern-style buildings, and postmodern buildings was high. On the west side of the central scenic area, the location overlap rate of postmodern-style buildings and modern architectural styles was high. Combined with the chronological order of the development of buildings of different styles, the relatively large-scale Mediterranean-style BnBs and modern BnBs in the early stage chose the superior environment in the north and east of the scenic area. In contrast, many postmodern buildings in the later stage chose the western part of Mount Mogan, which was less developed in the early stage.

Judging from the distribution of BnBs of various architectural styles, the number of vernacular-

style buildings is relatively small, and their distribution is centred on the central scenic area and located far away from it. The number of modernist-style BnBs is relatively large, mainly distributed around the central scenic area, with a small number distributed on the north and south sides of Mount Mogan Town. Postmodern-style BnBs are concentrated around the central scenic area, and Mediterranean-style BnBs are mainly distributed in the north, east, and south of the central scenic area.

The location of BnBs is greatly influenced by the central scenic area while also considering the convenience of surrounding infrastructure facilities and the accessibility of roads (Figure 3).

5.3 Association between the architectural style and development period of Yangjiale BnBs

From 2007 to 2012, Yangjiale was in the first stage of the embryonic-exogenous phase, characterized by the subversion of the original nongjiale model brought about by the international gentrification of the world's middle class's rural entrepreneurship (Jun Wu & Xiaomeng Wang, 2020). This stage began with modern-style BnBs and vernacular-style BnBs. Midway through this stage, postmodern-style BnBs began to appear, and by the end of this stage, Mediterranean-style buildings emerged.

From 2013 to 2018, many original villagers who had moved to surrounding big cities be-

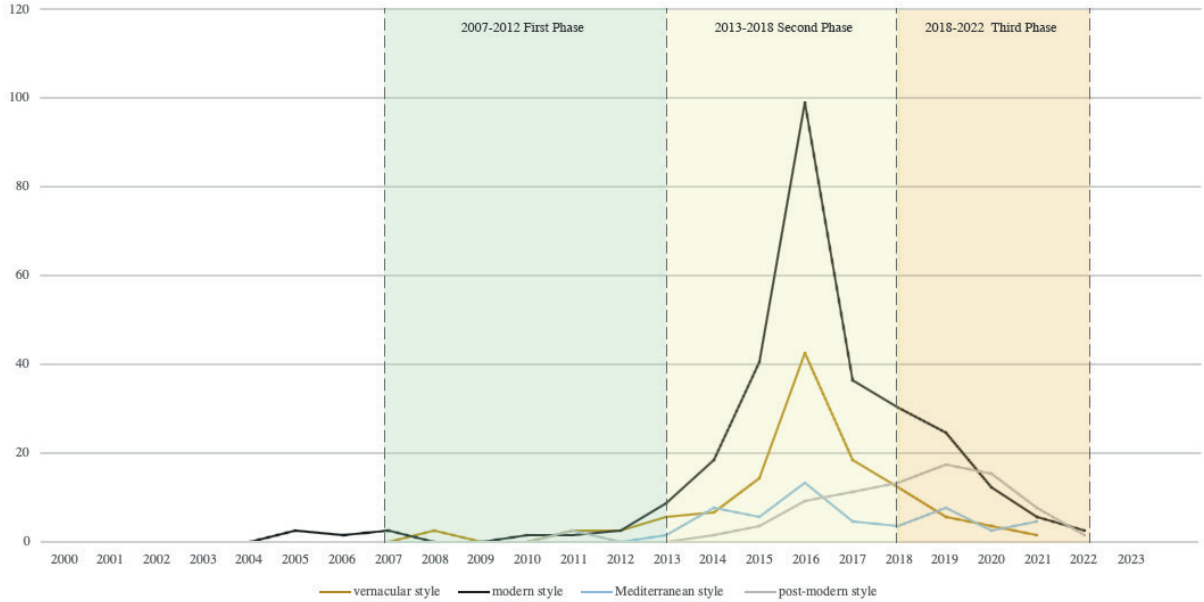


Figure 6. The growth chart of 555 Yangjiale BnBs of four styles over the years and the comparison chart of Yangjiale's development stages.

gan to return and participate in Yangjiale's localization. They combined the architectural styles and operational models introduced by foreigners with their understanding of Chinese culture, leading Yangjiale into the second stage, the prosperity-indigenous phase. During this stage, except for the continuous increase in the number of postmodern buildings, the growth of BnBs in the other three styles experienced rapid growth followed by a decline in growth rate. The growth rate ranked first in modern-style buildings, second in vernacular-style buildings, followed by Mediterranean-style buildings, and, finally, postmodern-style BnBs. The growth of postmodern-style BnBs surpassed that of Mediterranean-style BnBs in late 2016.

From 2018 to 2022, the villagers of Mount Mogan Town, witnessing the success of the earlier gentry in running Yangjiale, joined the construction process of Yangjiale BnBs in large numbers. However, their imitation of architectural styles and operating concepts was more superficial, leading to market homogenization, oversaturation, and commercialization. This period marks the last development stage, the mass plateau stage. At this stage, all BnB styles showed a deceleration in growth. Only postmodern-style BnBs and Mediterranean-style BnBs showed an upward trend from 2018 to 2019, and the number of Mediterranean-style BnBs also rose from 2020 to 2021. The fastest declining rate was in modernist-style BnBs, followed by postmodern-style BnBs. The growth decline of vernacular BnBs slowed slightly during this period, and Mediterranean-style BnBs showed an increase towards the end (Figure 6).

Combining the development process of Yangjiale's architectural styles with the development stages of Yangjiale's BnBs, it can be observed that early foreigners who opened up the Yangjiale market preferred combining the local style of vernacular architecture or simpler modern-style buildings. The gentry Chinese had the strongest desire for simple modern-style construction on the original houses, followed by the local style of vernacular architecture and the exotic Mediterranean style. The willingness to build BnBs in the postmodern architectural style showed a constantly increasing trend. During the entire period of participation by Chinese gentry, postmodern architectural style BnBs went from the lowest construction willingness at the beginning to surpass the number of vernacular-style buildings in the later period. This reflects the Chinese exploration of the aesthetics of consumers in the Yangtze River Delta and their adaptation to the architectural styles that suit local consumer preferences.

In the third stage, modern architectural styles experienced the fastest decline in growth, followed by postmodern-style and then vernacular-style BnBs. Meanwhile, the larger and more complex Mediterranean-style BnBs showed an increasing trend. This indicates that under the market conditions of severe homogeneity and saturation in the third stage, the construction quality and refinement of the BnB itself became key to market acceptance. BnBs with higher construction costs also had more profit margins and were better suited for survival in the late Yangjiale market. This also reflects that compared to the postmodern architectural style

invented and explored by the Chinese in the middle and late stages, the vernacular style combined with local customs has a more lasting appeal to consumers.

6. Conclusion

According to existing literature (Jianzhuang Zheng & Lingyan Huang, 2022; Fei Long et al., 2018) and the SCEEP model observation, Yangjiale BnBs are divided into three stages: embryonic-exogenous, prosperity-indigenous, and mass-plateau. The overall distribution of Yangjiale BnBs is centered on the central scenic area, scattered in the central, eastern, and northern areas of Mount Mogan Town. Before 2007, the total number of developed Yangjiale was small, and the growth rate was slow. From 2007 to 2013, it began to show scale and rapid growth. From 2013 to 2017, the number of Yangjiale BnBs in Mount Mogan Town showed a rapid growth trend, and the growth rate slowed down after 2017. The location distribution of Yangjiale BnBs is closely related to the road network, showing the characteristics of distribution along and around the road network, scenic view areas, and infrastructure facilities.

By counting the opening times of BnBs of different styles, it is found that the first to open were modern-style BnBs, followed by vernacular-style BnBs, then postmodern-style BnBs, and finally Mediterranean-style BnBs. Among the local Yangjiale BnBs, the most common style is modernism, followed by vernacular style, then postmodernism, and the least common is Mediterranean style. The locations of BnBs of different styles overlap, with the highest degree of overlap between the north and south sides of the central scenic area and the areas farther south from the central scenic area. Among them, the Mediterranean-style BnBs, which have the largest number of modern-style BnBs, have a high overlap rate with the postmodern-style BnBs, while the overall number of vernacular-style buildings is relatively small and has a low overlap rate with other architectural styles.

In the early days, the larger Mediterranean-style and modern BnBs were located in the north and east where the scenic environment was more superior. Later, the postmodern-style BnBs that appeared in large numbers were located in the western part of Mount Mogan, which was less developed in the early days. Combining the development process of Yangjiale's architectural style with the development stage of Yangjiale BnBs, it can be found that foreign businessmen who opened up the Yangjiale market in the early days tended to combine the local style of vernacular architecture or simpler modern-style architecture. Chinese gentry had the strongest desire to build simple modern-style BnBs for the original houses, followed by the local vernacular architectural style, and then the exotic Mediterranean style, while the willingness to build postmodern architectural style BnBs is showing an increasing trend.

As an exploration of the needs of local consumers by Chinese gentry, postmodern-style BnBs reflect the local exploration of Yangjiale in the Mount Mogan area to break away from the discourse of Western gentrification. Under the market conditions of severe homogeneity and

market saturation in the third stage, the construction quality and sophistication of the BnB itself become the key to market acceptance, and BnBs with higher construction costs also have more profit margins, which are suitable for survival in the later Yangjiale market. At the same time, the study reflects that compared with the postmodern architectural style invented and explored by the Chinese in the middle and late stages, the local style combined with local customs has a more lasting appeal to consumers.

The Yangjiale phenomenon and the accompanying pan-Yangjialelization mechanism have led to the return of local young people to their communities. For instance, in Xiantan Village, a well-known local BnB destination, young people have transitioned from engaging in the bamboo trade—specifically, exporting original bamboo building scaffolds—to a significant outflow of population seeking work in nearby towns over the past 20 years. However, with the recent growth of the Yangjiale BnB industry, an increasing number of young individuals are returning to their hometowns to start their own businesses or are finding employment within the local BnB sector, contributing to upstream and downstream industries. This has sparked a trend of counter-urbanization amidst China's broader urbanization efforts. Taking Wusi Village as an example, local authorities have established a maker center to promote the growth of Yangjiale-related industries. This center continually attracts young entrepreneurs with innovative ideas for rural development in Mount Mogan, creating a wave of rural digital immigration. This initiative draws talented individuals with resources and creative concepts from major cities, further fostering population return and the counter-urbanization of the creative class.

This study can provide a reference for the site selection of similar potential BnB runners, as well as the choice of rural architectural style in the process of rural touristification development from a non-Western perspective in the Yangtze River Delta or other similar third-world countries. At the same time, this study recommends the compilation of local Yangjiale BnB development specification guidelines in the Mount Mogan area. On the one hand, it will unify the standards and summarize the experience for the continued expansion of Yangjiale in the future; on the other hand, it can provide guidance for the development of rural tourism in similar regions in China and beyond.

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