Article

The Practice Characteristics of Authorized Heritage Discourse in Tourism: Thematic and Spatial

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Abstract: Under the influence of tourism and globalization, heritage production presents a new landscape. As a crucial framework for interpreting heritage, Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) has profound significance in discussing its practice characteristics in this context. Taking cities along the Jiangsu–Zhejiang section of the Grand Canal as a case study and drawing upon policy text, this study explores the practice characteristics of AHD in the tourism context. Results indicate that the thematic practices of AHD encompass protection and management, ecological construction, cultural production and inheritance, touristification, infrastructure and services, and marketing and cooperation, forming a clustering pattern with touristification as the central theme. The spatial characteristics manifest as multi-scale practices ranging from global to regional to local, each corresponding to diverse thematic characteristics. This study deepens the understanding of AHD in tourism and advances the research progress of heritage tourism. It also provides practical references for the utilization of urban heritage and the management of heritage tourism.

Keywords: heritage tourism; Authorized Heritage Discourse; policy text; practice characteristics; thematic and spatial; the Grand Canal

1. Introduction

Heritage is regarded as a vital link between the past and present, capable of transmitting the historical and cultural legacy it embodies into the current moment [1]. This proactive manifestation of significance endows heritage with a dynamic vitality, facilitating the continuous production and evolution of its diverse cultural, economic, social, and aesthetic values, exhibiting a sustained long-tail effect [2–4], which constitutes the interpretive process of heritage significance. This characteristic underscores the diversity, complexity, dynamism, and constructivist nature inherent within the connotations of heritage [5], inspiring a reevaluation and deeper understanding of it, thereby giving rise to the academic trend of “Critical Heritage Research” (CHR). Scholars have come to realize that heritage is not merely an inert object but rather a dynamic sociopolitical and cultural phenomenon [6], continuously produced and created throughout the process of societal construction [7].

Thus, in order to deepen the critical understanding of heritage, scholars, under the enlightenment of the “discursive turn” [8], have proposed the methodology of “Critical Discourse Analysis” (CDA) and further conceptualized heritage as a discursive practice constituted by multiple subjects [9]. This discourse shapes a series of ways in which heritage is identified, interpreted, managed, protected, utilized, and constructed. Related research endeavors to examine the practices, metaphors, and power relations behind the process of heritage formation [10,11], primarily focusing on the definition and role of official “Authorized Heritage Discourse” (AHD) [12], as well as the decentralizing role of unofficial discourse [13].
Within AHD, the production and reproduction of heritage are understood as discursive practices carried out by governmental bodies, experts, and elite groups [12,14], determining the ways and processes in which heritage is interpreted and disseminated through a series of naturalization and legitimization means [15], thereby emerging as a crucial lens through which heritage is understood [16].

Tourism, as a primary means of heritage management and utilization [17], has led to the development of heritage tourism, which has become one of the most widespread forms of the tourism industry [18], sparking ongoing debates about its intricate relationship with heritage. On the one hand, imbued with profound historical and cultural value, heritage has provided fertile ground for tourism development [19,20]. On the other hand, despite potential conflicts such as those concerning authenticity preservation and heritage inheritance [21], tourism has indeed offered positive feedback for heritage [5] and significantly broadened the domain of its production [7,22]. Within this context, the key aspects of the heritage domain, namely “thematic” and “spatial” [23], have undergone reconstruction.

Furthermore, through a comprehensive review of literature, it becomes evident that this reconstruction in practice has resulted in more diverse heritage themes (including intangible cultural heritage, urban landscapes, etc.) and broader exhibition space (such as museums, historic districts, translocal tourism corridors, etc.) [24–26]. Consequently, new connotations of heritage practice have emerged within the tourism context.

Therefore, as a critical framework for understanding heritage, AHD will naturally exhibit different characteristics under the catalysis of tourism compared to before. Especially in the context of globalization [27], tourism, functioning as a “heritage production machine”, has accelerated its operations, profoundly altering the nature and scale of heritage production. Furthermore, this has prompted AHD to continually adjust its narrative logic and approach [16]. Therefore, in-depth discussions on the practice characteristics of AHD in theme and space in tourism are necessary and urgent, offering scientific insights into the development of heritage tourism, given its significant theoretical and practical value.

The Grand Canal stands as a treasure trove of historical and cultural heritage in China, boasting a legacy spanning over 2500 years and traversing more than 2700 km in geographical expanse. Recognized as a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage in 2014, its significance extends beyond time and space, enriching the heritage resources along its route and embodying the essence of profound traditional culture. In recent years, the central government has prioritized the preservation, inheritance, and utilization of its legacy. Initiatives such as the construction of the Grand Canal Cultural Belt and National Cultural Parks (known as “GCCC”) underscore the integration of culture and tourism development as a cornerstone. In response to this national directive, cities along the canal have embraced tourism as a focal point, issuing comprehensive policy frameworks to guide the utilization of the Grand Canal heritage for tourism purposes, leading to numerous outstanding examples of heritage tourism [28,29]. These policy texts constitute the representation of AHD at the textual level, offering valuable insights and opportunities for interpreting heritage tourism through the lens of AHD [30].

Based on this, the research objectives of this paper are established to analyze the thematic and spatial characteristics of AHD practices in the context of tourism. To achieve these objectives, this study focuses on the Grand Canal as a heritage subject and selects cities along the Jiangsu–Zhejiang section of the Grand Canal as the research area. Using policy text data from 2010 to 2023, this paper employs text analysis methods to discuss the characteristics of AHD practices in tourism. The specific procedures are as follows: First, Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) topic modeling is employed to cluster policy texts to clarify the thematic characteristics of AHD practices. Second, a customized place name dictionary is constructed to identify and extract places mentioned in the texts. These places are then categorized according to the global–regional–local scale to analyze the spatial characteristics of AHD practices. Third, by further categorizing the place names within each thematic text, the correspondence between thematic and spatial characteristics is revealed.
2. Literature Review

**Authorized Heritage Discourse (AHD) and Heritage Tourism**

Smith first introduced the concept of “Authorized Heritage Discourse” (AHD), defining it as “a range of assumptions about the nature and meaning of heritage” and critically pointing out its top-down dominance in heritage practice, often tinged with Western centrism [31]. Subsequently, Waterton et al. explored the practices of AHD by employing Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and considering the Burra Charter as its textual presentation [10]. They analyzed how AHD shaped various practices representing heritage, revealing how it constructed an exclusive heritage concept, marginalizing other non-authoritative discourses [10]. Ashton conducted a case study of the Snowy Mountain Hydro-Electricity Scheme in Australia and analyzed how AHD actively contributed to creating a contemporary national narrative, where complex negotiations and interactions between official and community organizations played a crucial role [32]. These early studies discussed the characteristics of AHD, highlighting the existence of non-mainstream discourses and bringing them into focus.

Subsequently, scholars gradually realized that the hegemonic position of AHD is not immutable, as it is profoundly influenced by other discourses and social/local contexts, further deepening the understanding of this concept [13]. Ludwig explored AHD practices from the perspective of conservation planning practices, finding that they were cleverly reshaped within local social contexts to become more diverse [33]. Xia investigated the dual relationship between AHD and local communities using ethnographic methods, using the example of a renovated private residence in Qingtian, China [34]. While AHD influenced the community’s interaction with the past in heritage reconstruction, local traditions and genealogies helped AHD select memories, collectively transforming the private residence into a heritage site with patriotic themes [34]. Yan compared the official discourse in the Chinese context with Western AHD through the case of the Fujian Tulou World Heritage Site and highlighted differences in their approaches to harmony between nature and community and the emphasis on human activity in a material site, calling for a reexamination of AHD in non-Western contexts [35].

The above studies indicate that scholars primarily focus on the underlying power dynamics of AHD, suggesting that it does not unilaterally impose influence on non-official discourse but is also shaped by these discourses, thus leading heritage in an interactive and negotiated manner [16]. Moreover, AHD does not necessarily imply a universal heritage practice with Western characteristics; instead, local texts and social contexts also play a role in shaping it, resulting in an AHD that incorporates local agency [36,37]. Consequently, AHD has transcended from a static and fixed concept to a “fluid” discourse system.

Heritage tourism, as a widespread practice, diversifies the discourse and social contexts surrounding heritage, which is evident in the active involvement of various stakeholders, including tourists, tourism businesses, and organizations in heritage discursive practices. They engage in negotiations and interactions with AHD from a grassroots perspective, reshaping its processes to some extent [16] and enriching its discourse framework [38]. Meanwhile, according to Choay’s discourse, heritage shows an expanding trend in terms of thematic and spatial scope. The former refers to the concept of heritage expanding from traditional commemorative buildings and artworks to industrial buildings, urban landscapes, and even the entire city. The latter refers to the spread of the concept of heritage from Europe to other continents, that is, from local to global [23]. Due to the extraordinary spatial productive power of tourism [39], it is likely that the narrative logic of AHD regarding thematic and spatial will undergo significant reshaping and expansion [5,26], as the two aspects are part of the “triple extension” of heritage [23].

However, amidst the decentralization trend, existing discourse analysis literature in heritage tourism predominantly focuses on non-official discourses (especially tourist perspectives), exploring their acceptance, resistance, and negotiation with AHD. For example, Wight conducted a discourse analysis of social media content related to European massacre sites and identified vital characteristics of tourist discourse [40]. Similarly, Roppola et al.
investigated the identification of local visitors from different generations with the Australian War Memorial, categorizing two groups of visitors who either accepted or resisted AHD [41].

Yet, limited literature directly paid attention to the research question of the practice characteristics of AHD in tourism. Feng et al. surveyed discourse analysis involving stakeholders at the Mutianyu Great Wall, revealing that the destination image from the perspective of operators (AHD) included architectural design, natural beauty, local cuisine, tourism facilities, and entertainment activities [42]. This work touched upon the question above but did not explicitly unveil it. Piñeiro-Naval and Serra conducted a content analysis of Portuguese municipal websites, highlighting that AHD, in practice, was based on culinary and architectural heritage assets, fostering heritage tourism through enhanced glocalization [43]. This is one of the few studies responding to this research question, providing theoretical and empirical insights for our current work. However, the study mainly examined the types of heritage elements present in AHD texts without delving into the rest of the content.

Therefore, a comprehensive and clear understanding of the practice logic of AHD, including its thematic and spatial practices, has not been fully revealed. Moreover, the current research predominantly relies on qualitative methods for AHD analysis, suggesting the potential enhancement of methodological rigor by incorporating innovative quantitative research tools.

In conclusion, our current understanding of the practice features of AHD in the tourism context remains limited, highlighting the urgent need for in-depth mixed-methods research. This paper takes the cities along the Jiangsu–Zhejiang section of the Grand Canal as an example. It delves into the thematic and spatial characteristics of AHD from the perspective of policy texts, contributing knowledge and experience to the theoretical research and management practices of heritage tourism.

The research questions we aim to address are: What are the thematic and spatial characteristics of AHD practices? What is the relationship between these two aspects? The main innovations of this study are as follows: (1) Inspired by the notion that tourism can reshape AHD practices, we analyzed the characteristics of AHD practices in tourism. This approach extends the focus on AHD from the heritage context to the tourism context, exploring the potential dialogue space between AHD and (heritage) tourism. (2) By employing text analysis, we discussed the thematic and spatial characteristics of AHD within tourism, revealing AHD’s multi-scale spatial practices from global to regional to local levels. This finding helps us capture the regional scale, which has rarely been addressed, thereby expanding the scope of scale research in heritage tourism and its knowledge boundaries within geography.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1. Data

AHD represents the official attitude and intentions towards heritage, and policy documents are well-suited to reflect this aspect, making them widely used for interpreting AHD. The policy text data for this study were sourced from official government websites of various cities. We retrieved all policy documents (49 in total) and government work reports (182 in total) related to the Grand Canal from cities in the study area for the period from 2010 to 2023. Through manual screening, we selected content related to tourism development for the analysis of AHD, totaling over 90,000 words (in Chinese). While the research methods used the Chinese version of the data, they were presented in English in the figures and tables.

It is noteworthy that in this paper, we utilize policy texts to analyze the practices of AHD, which is based on the assumption that policies are fully translated into practices. However, we are also cognizant of the basic contradiction between “policies” and “practices”: policies may not be fully implemented in practice [1]. Therefore, to enhance the scientific rigor and validity of the research design, we have conducted a thorough review
of literature and policy texts used in this paper and uncovered several characteristics that may help mitigate the contradiction between “practices” and “policies” to some extent:

Firstly, in some policy research papers, scholars often regard policy texts as representatives of practice [44] or construct policies as a kind of discourse practice [45]. This provides a certain theoretical basis for this paper to discuss the practical characteristics of AHD from the perspective of policy texts. Meanwhile, Waterton et al.’s critical discourse analysis based on the Charter of Brussels has revealed how multiple discourses, particularly AHD, shape heritage [10]. This research has enlightened us on the reference value of policy texts when discussing the practice of AHD.

Secondly, the policy texts used in this paper consist of two main categories: government work reports and official policy documents. The government work report is released annually, mainly focusing on a summary of the work done in the past year and a work plan for the next year. Actually, the basic contradiction between “practices” and “policies” mainly reflects the asymmetry between “what has been done in the past” (practices) and “what will be (or might be) done in the future” (policies). Among government work reports, the work summary, “what has been done in the past,” can be considered to reflect the practice of AHD. However, the reflection of the work plan on practice remains uncertain, as the work plan is a planning and expectation for the future, and its translation into actual actions is subject to various factors. Fortunately, the characteristics of the government work report can help us reduce this uncertainty. By comparing the work plan in the previous year’s government work report with the work summary of the following year (such as the work plan of 2014 and the work summary of 2015), we found that most of the actions mentioned in the plan appeared in the work summary of the next year, indicating that most policies have been translated into practice. This provides a certain guarantee for the rationality of the research design.

Thirdly, it is difficult for us to verify whether official policy documents have been implemented in practice using the same method. However, most of them are “plan” documents, and we have found some materials that provide a certain degree of evidence that can serve as clues for AHD practices. First, the formulation and publication of government-level planning documents require several rounds of literature review, field research, expert argumentation, and other processes, which largely ensure the feasibility of the plan content (not unrealistic). Second, relevant studies believe that the plan is binding on the government, and it is also included in the performance assessment [46], which, to a certain extent, promotes the efficiency of translating planning into practice. Furthermore, the “14th Five-Year Plan and the Long-Range Objectives Through the Year 2035” of China proposes to accelerate the introduction of development planning laws to provide legal guarantees for the implementation of planning. This actually involves supervision and constraint on government departments, ensuring that planning is translated into practice.

3.2. Study Area

This paper focuses on 13 cities along the Jiangsu–Zhejiang section of the Grand Canal in China, spanning approximately 1117 km and falling within the provinces of Jiangsu and Zhejiang (Figure 1). Originating from this region, the Grand Canal bears witness to over 2500 years of historical evolution and boasts rich heritage resources. Compellingly, the Jiangsu-Zhejiang section constitutes a significant portion of the Grand Canal’s World Heritage Sites, encompassing 11 canal watercourses (40.74% of the total) and 35 heritage sites (60.34% of the total) (https://www.jiangsu.gov.cn/art/2021/4/7/art_46143_9745264.html, accessed on 3 June 2024; http://wwj.zj.gov.cn/art/2022/6/28/art_1641251_58880594.html, accessed on 3 June 2024).

Simultaneously, existing research indicates that the recreational suitability of canal routes in the Jiangsu and Zhejiang provinces is the highest along the Grand Canal [47]. Moreover, these regions lead in cultural tourism development [48], demonstrating the exemplary and typical nature of tourism development centered around the Grand Canal heritage. In specific practices, a number of heritage tourism projects, such as the Grand
Canal Museum, the Grand Canal Cultural Tourism Expo, and the Beijing–Hangzhou Grand Canal Scenic Area, have been implemented in this region. Additionally, government departments in these cities have actively promoted heritage tourism, issuing a series of policy documents (a total of 49 policy documents) to guide heritage tourism development. This provides a rich and valuable data reference for understanding the practice characteristics of AHD. Therefore, using cities along the Jiangsu–Zhejiang section of the Grand Canal as a case study is highly representative and illustrative.

Figure 1. Study area.

3.3. Methods
3.3.1. Dictionary of Stop-Words and Specific Terms

In text analysis, data preprocessing can significantly impact the final results. To ensure the reliability of the research findings, the Harbin Institute of Technology (HIT) stop word list was used to remove irrelevant or meaningless words from the policy texts. Furthermore, a custom tokenization dictionary was developed to ensure that critical information is not lost during automatic tokenization. This dictionary incorporates specific terms found in the policies, such as cultural tourism, Top Ten Sceneries of the Canal, National Cultural Park, etc., thereby enhancing the precision of text segmentation.

3.3.2. TF-IDF (Term Frequency-Inverse Document Frequency) Algorithm

After preprocessing, the TF-IDF algorithm was applied to identify key terms within the text. This method, commonly employed in text mining, assigns weight to terms based on their frequency within the text and inversely to their frequency across the entire corpus [49]. The extraction and weight calculation of keywords can be achieved by multiplying term frequency (TF) and inverse document frequency (IDF). Unlike solely relying on term frequency statistics, this algorithm effectively filters out terms with high frequencies but no practical significance, making it more robust compared to simple term frequency statistics [50].
This study leverages this algorithm to enhance the accuracy of keyword identification. Specifically, TF denotes the frequency of a keyword, represented by the formula:

$$TF(w) = \frac{N_w}{N}$$  \hspace{1cm} (1)

where $TF(w)$ represents the term frequency of word $w$, $N_w$ is the number of occurrences of word $w$ in a specific document, and $N$ denotes the total number of terms in the document.

The calculation of IDF is given by:

$$IDF(w) = \ln \frac{Y}{1 + Y_w}$$  \hspace{1cm} (2)

where $IDF(w)$ represents the inverse document frequency of word $w$, $Y$ is the total number of documents in the text, and $Y_w$ refers to the number of documents containing the word $w$.

3.3.3. Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA) Topic Modeling

LDA utilizes machine learning techniques to identify latent topics and probability distributions within documents [51]. It consists of a three-tiered Bayesian document–topic–word structure, widely applicable in text clustering scenarios [52]. The basic idea is to assume that each document can be represented as a mixture of several latent topics, with each topic being a probability distribution over all the words. This paper employed this model to cluster policy texts. Firstly, the TF-IDF algorithm was used to convert policy texts into a term-document matrix. Then, according to Formula (3), the LDA topic model was executed through Python. This process ultimately yielded two distribution results: document–topic probabilities and topic–word probabilities, which were used to identify the thematic features of AHD practices. The final output results are words and documents contained in each topic (both in xlsx format).

$$P(\theta, t, w, \phi|\alpha, \beta) = \prod_{n=1}^{N} \frac{\sum_{d=1}^{M} \log(w_d)}{\sum_{d=1}^{M} N_d}$$  \hspace{1cm} (3)

Specifically, $\alpha$ represents the document parameters; $\beta$ represents the word parameters; $\theta$ is the “document–topic” matrix sampled from $\beta$; $\phi$ is the “topic–word” matrix sampled from $\beta$; $t$ is the topic sampled from $\theta$; and $N$ is the total number of words in the document collection.

Additionally, given the reliability of coherence metrics in evaluating topic modeling, we employed it to determine the optimal number of topics. Higher coherence scores indicate better topic classification effectiveness for the corresponding number of topics. We used C_V Coherence for measurement. It creates content vectors of words using their co-occurrences and calculates the score through normalized pointwise mutual information (NPMI) and the cosine similarity. The calculation process is based on Syed and Spruit’s research [53].

4. Results

4.1. Thematic Characteristics of AHD Practice in Tourism

Python was employed for text analysis. Based on the result of coherence scores (Figure 2) and combined with empirical judgment, the identification of six topics yielded optimal results.

Subsequently, we selected the top 20 keywords for each topic (see Table 1). Based on the keywords of each topic and the content of the output document of each topic, combined with conversations with relevant literature, we summarize the six thematic features of AHD as follows: Protection and Management, Ecological Construction, Cultural Production and Inheritance, Touristification, Infrastructure and Services, and Marketing and Cooperation.
4. Results

4.1. Thematic Characteristics of AHD Practice in Tourism

Subsequently, we selected the top 20 keywords for each topic of LDA topic model. The results are shown in Figure 2.

Table 1. Result of LDA topic model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Keywords</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Protection and Management</td>
<td>heritage, protect, work, world, utilize, management, archaeology, monitor, cultural relic, construction, declare, plan, cultural belt, level, material, firing, logo, all-out, river system, environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ecological Construction</td>
<td>construction, ecology, environment, remediation, gallery, project, cultural belt, landscape, engineering, ruins, museum, park, function, National Cultural Park, history, space, comprehensive, style, characteristic, area.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Cultural Production and Inheritance</td>
<td>historical and cultural city, cultural industry, construction, undertaking, cultural belt, tradition, engineering, memory, story, heritage, nation, create, development, masterpiece, quality, utilize, work, celebrity, former residence, strength.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Touristification</td>
<td>tourism, development, cultural tourism, tourist attraction, industry, tourism industry, resort, brand, construction, Grand Canal, holistic tourism, resource, project, cultivate, region, product, experience, acting, nation, integration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Infrastructure and Services</td>
<td>construction, traffic, base, digital, supply, sightseeing, public service, center, tourism, product, cultural tourism, urban area, consumption, characteristic, village, ecology, project, image, tourist, development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Marketing and Cooperation</td>
<td>event, marketing, world, international, cultural tourism, tourism, brand, product, cooperation, study, construction, poetry road, resource, theme, exposition, cultural belt, culture and tourism, characteristic, red, famous city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.1.1. Protection & Management, Ecological Construction, and Cultural Production & Inheritance

As a response to sustainable development in heritage tourism, Protection and Management, Ecological Construction, and Cultural Production and Inheritance have received significant attention in AHD practices. From a heritage perspective, the World Heritage Committee declared heritage as “An instrument for the sustainable development of all societies” in 2002, emphasizing its role in sustainable development [54]. Further, from 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), Goal 11 aims to “make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” by “strengthen [ing] efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage” with target 11.4. All of these indicate that sustainable development is the future vision for heritage, and the above three themes are key to achieving sustainable heritage development [55,56]. To this end, AHD practices include the “protection” of “heritage” (such as “cultural relics”) as well as the scientific and effective “monitoring” and “management” of these assets. Moreover, tangible heritage, such as the Grand Canal, is vulnerable to climate change and industrial pollution [57], necessitating ecological construction efforts.

From a tourism perspective, the relationship between tourism and heritage has been debated, with scholars holding conflicting views [58]. Sustainable tourism is considered an effective means of reconciling this tension, with the three themes being crucial components [59]. Based on the evidence provided by keywords such as “heritage”, “protection”, “ecology”, “environment”, “remediation”, “ruins”, and “project” as well as the specific
content of the texts, we found that AHD has undertaken positive actions in this regard. These actions include constructing ecological corridors, managing water bodies, protecting ruins and relics, formulating regulations, and establishing heritage transmission systems. Examples include "Construct ecological greenways along the Grand Canal" (Changzhou). "Take the lead in issuing the ‘Huai’an Grand Canal Cultural Heritage Protection Regulations’" (Huai’an).

Furthermore, as a branch of cultural tourism, heritage tourism relies on cultural production as its inherent foundation [60]. Culture is not only a key dimension for attracting tourists [61] but also essential for heritage inheritance [60], making it a core element of AHD practices. Therefore, discursive practices such as cultural research, integration of cultural resources (corresponding to keywords such as “celebrity” and “former residence”), construction of “cultural industry”, and protection and inheritance of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) (corresponding to the keywords “tradition” “memory” “story” etc.) have been employed to promote cultural production in heritage, providing rich material for tourism utilization and heritage continuation [55,62]. Examples include “Implement strategic initiatives through significant cultural industry projects to drive development, with a focus on creating high-level cultural platforms such as the Grand Canal Cultural Industry Belt” (Hangzhou). “Strengthen the protection of ICH projects and the training of ICH inheritors, . . . create a highland for the canal cultural industry, promote the activation and transformation of ICH resources and build the Grand Canal ICH Cultural Park” (Yangzhou).

4.1.2. Touristification

The literature defines Touristification as the process by which a place evolves into a tourist destination [63] or the process by which cultural resources are converted into tourist attractions [64]. This aligns with the keywords associated with this theme, such as “tourism attraction”, “tourism”, and “resource”, thus providing a comprehensive overview of the diverse forms adopted by AHD in tourism. In this study, these strategies encompass "holistic tourism", museum tourism, red tourism, study tourism, urban tourism, and rural tourism. For example, Xuzhou has embraced holistic tourism as its primary approach, implementing the Holistic Tourism Development Plan and establishing a National Holistic Tourism Demonstration Zone to integrate tourism with culture, ecology, agriculture, and other facets. The keywords “tourism” and “product”, along with their corresponding textual content, also indicate ongoing innovation in the diverse range of tourism products. For example, Shaoxing’s “city of museums” strategy involves the construction of various Grand Canal cultural and museum venues like the East Zhejiang Canal Museum, fostering study tour products.

Additionally, tourist attractions, as primary conduits for heritage tourism [26], play pivotal roles in Touristification. Keywords such as “tourist attraction” and “resort” support this viewpoint. On the one hand, AHD transforms heritage sites into tourist attractions while adhering to conservation principles through landscape enhancement, product innovation, and cultural empowerment. “On the basis of protecting cultural relics and historic cultural blocks, innovate and improve existing tourist attractions quality, accelerate the cultivation of large-scale, comprehensive leisure and vacation projects, . . . create international and domestic boutique tourist destinations” (Huzhou). On the other hand, keywords such as “region” and “integration” indicate efforts to avoid fragmented development of heritage tourism in urban spaces. AHD focuses on establishing connections and interactions between existing scenic spots and heritage sites, aiming to achieve the integration and unity of urban regional tourism spaces. Examples include "Combine the Zhou Enlai hometown with the Liyunhe canal cultural tourism area, and create an industrial cluster for canal cities" (Huai’an). “Combine the urban circular ancient canal tourism belt, Liansi Tang Liu Park, Plum Blossom Island, and some peripheral tourist attractions to form a tourism network for one-day tours in the city” (Jiaxing).

4.1.3. Infrastructure and Services

Infrastructure and Services represents the destination’s capacity and service quality, significantly influencing the destination’s image and tourism development through
their impact on tourists’ perceptions [65]. Therefore, to facilitate Touristification, AHD continuously enhances the city’s facilities and service quality. Keywords such as “traffic”, “digital”, “supply”, and “public service” indicate efforts mainly revolving around tourism infrastructure, transportation facilities, accommodation, and dining facilities, as well as public services. For example, Hangzhou aims to “Strengthen industrial support chains and database development, . . . including the establishment of international gourmet leisure districts, themed cultural resort hotels, and specialty cultural souvenirs; . . . establish online cultural museum systems, World Heritage cultural creative industry trading systems, booking systems, and enhance tourism infrastructure and support services. Improve water-land interchange transfer systems and tourism public service facilities, such as regional tourism emergency rescue bases. Advance smart tourism development, achieving full coverage of free Wi-Fi in key public areas, and deploying fifth-generation mobile communication networks”. Suzhou integrates heritage and sports elements into the urban public service system, promoting the construction of the Grand Canal Sports Theme Park.

According to the reflection of the textual content, the direct beneficiaries of this thematic practice are tourists and residents, reflecting AHD’s care for grassroots discourse subjects or the result of inter-subject negotiations. This indicates that in the tourism context, non-mainstream discourses have an expanded impact on AHD, and the “exclusive” hegemony of AHD shows a dissolution trend, corroborating viewpoints discussed in the literature review [16].

4.1.4. Marketing and Cooperation

Based on the keywords “event”, “marketing”, “world”, “international”, “brand”, and “cooperation”, etc., Marketing and Cooperation refers to the promotion and branding of cultural heritage by AHD, as well as collaborative efforts with other cities/organizations in tourism, which play a significant role in tourism development [66]. Meanwhile, heritage tourism, being one of the most popular forms, faces intensified market competition, prompting destinations to continuously adjust and innovate marketing strategies. Therefore, governmental bodies and official organizations, as leaders in destination marketing [62], have integrated this theme into AHD. On the one hand, AHD utilizes its local characteristics for personalized heritage tourism marketing [67]. For example, with its rich commercial culture, Wuxi proposes building the brand of “industrial and commercial culture of canal”. Hangzhou leverages its leading advantage in digital economic development for international marketing of the Grand Canal through social media platforms.

Festival events (corresponding to “event”), emerging as a focal point in tourism marketing [68], have also been incorporated into this thematic practice. Various events with diverse themes and formats, such as the “Grand Canal Cultural Carnival” (Yangzhou), “Grand Canal Cultural Tourism Expo” (Suzhou), “Grand Canal Cheongsam Carnival” (Hangzhou), and “Grand Canal Literature Festival” (Huai’an), have been successively held. Furthermore, AHD’s collaboration around heritage aligns with the concepts of “collaborative product” and “joint brand” in related research [69], namely, collaborating to develop tourism products and establish brand alliances. For instance, “Interact with the Suzhou section of the Grand Canal, create a local effect, and jointly develop canal tourism products” (Jiaxing). “Take regional collaboration as a strategic approach. . . . effectively enhance the brand influence of tourist cities and the marketing effectiveness of tourism products” (Changzhou).

4.2. Spatial Characteristics of AHD Practice in Tourism

4.2.1. Global Practices

Firstly, the inclusion of the Grand Canal as a World Heritage Site is a global process. A prominent example is the World Heritage Convention, which recognizes heritage as having universal value on a global scale [2], urging local AHD efforts to comply with the relevant provisions of it and decisions of the World Heritage Committee during the application and subsequent management process. Thereby, Protection and Management represents the manifestation of AHD’s responsibilities and obligations, demonstrating its passive
adherence to the process of globally universal practices [70]. For example, “Strengthen canal heritage monitoring and control of construction projects along the route, complete the third round report of the UNESCO Asia-Pacific region World Heritage” (Changzhou).

Secondly, Table 1 illustrates that “international” and “world” are prominent keywords in Marketing and Cooperation. This indicates AHD also considers heritage as a node connecting the local and global, embedding itself into the global network through mechanisms and channels such as international organizations and social platforms for brand promotion and tourism cooperation, thereby enhancing international influence. For example, “Host the World Canal Cities Expo, . . . to enhance the influence of the ‘World Canal Historical and Cultural Cities Cooperation Organization’ and create the brand of ‘China International Canal Cultural Tourism Destination’” (Yangzhou). “Implement international promotion of the ‘Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal’ theme through the ‘China-Canada Tourism Year’ platform, and create overseas dissemination videos based on materials such as the Grand Canal, known as ‘Hangzhou Stories’” (Hangzhou) and so on, which resonate with keywords such as “theme” “exposition” “brand” “cooperation” and “famous city”. This process reflects AHD’s proactive integration into and participation in heterogeneous spatial practices on a global scale.

4.2.2. Regional Practices

In order to further discuss the spatial practices of AHD, we identified and extracted place names from policy texts. Specifically, we developed a place names dictionary containing all place names mentioned in the policy texts of the study area to identify geographic information. Then, the top 90% of place names were selected in terms of cumulative frequency of occurrence in each city’s text and were visualized (Figure 3). The remaining 10% of place names, due to their low frequency of occurrence, are considered too sporadic to provide robust insights into spatial features and are therefore not included in the analysis. Subsequently, combining a deep understanding of the textual content, these place names were categorized according to scale, revealing multi-scale practices of AHD encompassing regional and local levels. Furthermore, we located and annotated the occurrences of these place names in the text, conducting a qualitative analysis of their context to understand the specific practices at different scales.

Regional practices refer to spatial practices that occur between the global and urban scales, categorized based on place names into three types: river basins, urban agglomerations, and culture areas (Table 2). Among these, the Grand Canal is most mentioned in “river basins”, with being associated with all cities and appearing most frequently in most local texts, which is an indisputable result. Other river basins (such as the Yangtze River, Yellow River, and Taihu Lake) reflect AHD’s approach of integrating the management and protection of the Grand Canal with other river basins, blending canal culture with the cultures of other river basins, and integrating heritage tourism with other forms of tourism in those areas. “Coordinate the implementation of the Grand Canal Cultural Belt and the Yellow River Old Course Project. . . Promote the development of ‘Grand Canal, Ancient Yellow River Culture + Tourism’” (Suqian). Additionally, the translocal nature of river basins provides opportunities for regional practices. Platforms at the regional level, such as the “Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal City Tourism Promotion Alliance”, “Grand Canal International Cities”, and “Beijing-Hangzhou Grand Canal Ancient Town Alliance” have been established under efforts of AHD, facilitating communication and cooperation in heritage tourism.

“Urban agglomerations” encompass regions like the “Yangtze River Delta” and “Zhejiang East” (Table 2), showcasing how AHD integrates heritage tourism into the development strategies of these city clusters and collaborates with surrounding cities. For example, “Exploit the role of the Grand Canal as a link in the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region” (Hangzhou). “Enhance collaborative efforts with cities along the Grand Canal poetic route belt, such as Yangzhou in Jiangsu Province, Hangzhou, Jiaxing, and Ningbo in Zhejiang Province, to jointly promote the cultural tourism of the Grand Canal” (Huzhou).
encompassing regional and local levels. Furthermore, we located and annotated the occurrences of these place names in the text, conducting a qualitative analysis of their context to understand the specific practices at different scales.

Figure 3. Spatial practice characteristics of AHD based on place names.

Table 2. Types of different locations at the regional scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Types (%)</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Basins (61.54%)</td>
<td>Grand Canal, Yangtze River, Huanghe River, Qiantang River, Taihu Lake,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Luoma Lake, Hongze Lake, Huaihe River</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Urban agglomerations (23.08%)</td>
<td>Shanghai, Yangtze River Delta, East Zhejiang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Culture areas (15.38%)</td>
<td>Jiangnan, Huaiyang.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the text from Jiaxing, the place name “Shanghai” also appears, which can similarly be classified under “urban agglomerations”. Shanghai leads the Yangtze River Delta urban agglomeration and is adjacent to the research area, so it plays a pivotal role in the regional integration process. Furthermore, as one of the cities closest to Shanghai in the research area, Jiaxing is significantly influenced by Shanghai’s radiation. Hence, its strategy of aligning with Shanghai, integrating into the “Shanghai Leisure Holiday Tourism Belt”, and enhancing tourism cooperation with Shanghai to boost competitiveness also represents the regionalization process. Moreover, discursive practices like “collaborative product” and “joint brand” among cities in Marketing and Cooperation also vividly illustrate the practice aspects at the regional level.

“Jiangnan” and “Huaiyang” represent the concept of “culture areas” (Table 2), referring to areas with similar cultural characteristics [71], which include cities such as Suzhou, Wuxi, Huai’an, Yangzhou, Hangzhou, and Jiaxing. The policy texts of these cities all mention culture areas, indicating that AHD has embedded the broader regional culture into the construction and production process of heritage. This adds annotations to heritage with global value from a regional scale, thereby injecting new connotations into heritage tourism. For example, Shaoxing is located in the Jiangnan culture area. Hence, it aims to create the
artistic image of “misty rain in Jiangnan, with a thousand sails competing”, engraving the regional cultural symbol of “Jiangnan” into practice.

4.2.3. Local Practices

Local practices refer to AHD’s grounding in local contexts to develop heritage tourism, primarily within interrelated urban areas. These locations can be broadly categorized into heritage sites, tourist attractions, (subordinate administrative) districts, and river systems (Table 3). “Heritage sites” are those recognized as “World Cultural Heritage Sites”. These sites possess profound historical and cultural value, serving as essential material carriers for heritage preservation and exhibiting inherent advantages in heritage tourism development. Given the varying types of heritage sites in different cities, AHD actively promotes differentiated tourism utilization based on conservation and management principles, allowing for the preservation of authenticity while rejuvenating vitality, thus reflecting the agency of local contexts. For instance, in Huzhou, based on the unique heritage type of Nanxun, tourism is promoted using ancient towns as carriers.

Table 3. Types of different locations at the local scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Types (%)</th>
<th>Places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Heritage sites (19.35%)</td>
<td>Shaobo Ancient Town, Slender West Lake, Qingming Bridge, Pingjiang, Nanxun, Qingjiangpu. Shaobo Ancient Town, Sanwan, Slender West Lake, Three Rivers and Six Banks, Yunlong Lake, Qingguo Street, Canal No. 5, Wuzhen, South Lake, Xitang.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tourist attractions (74.19%)</td>
<td>Tongxiang, Wangjiangjing, Chang'an Ancient Town, West Lake, Tangqi Ancient Town, Qiandao Lake, Qingming Bridge, Huishan, Pingjiang, Nanxun, Zaohe River, Qingjiangpu, Jian Lake.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Districts (51.61%)</td>
<td>Dantu, Shaobo Ancient Town, Baoying, Guazhou, Guangling, Yuyao, Wuzhen, Xitang, Tongxiang, Wangjiangjing, Chang'an Ancient Town, Yuhang, Tangqi Ancient Town, Huishan, Tiger Hill, Gusu, Nanxun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>River systems (22.58%)</td>
<td>Slender West Lake, Three Rivers and Six Banks, Yunlong Lake, West Lake, Qiandao Lake, Zaohe River, Jian Lake.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Tourist attractions” represent the majority of associated locations in local practices (74.19%, see Table 3), affirming their pivotal role as primary spatial entities for heritage tourism [24]. Furthermore, they represent prominent symbols of urban tourism identities and can be focal points for tourism marketing [72]. For instance, Huzhou has developed a tourism brand centered around clusters of ancient towns. Of course, as discussed within the context of Touristification, this category encompasses areas that are not heritage sites. Nevertheless, AHD leverages its connection to the Grand Canal to create integrated tourism resorts and establish a cohesive tourism product framework. For example, Sanwan in Yangzhou, originally an industrial area, has been rejuvenated into a popular eco-heritage tourist attraction under AHD’s initiative, being integrated seamlessly into the urban canal water tour routes.

The place names associated with “Districts” mainly appear in the policy texts of cities through which the Grand Canal passes, such as Yangzhou and Suzhou. These cities integrate areas such as districts, counties, and towns along the Grand Canal as interconnected blocks, forming a heritage tourism spatial pattern centered around the city and involving multiple areas. For example, “Construct the scenic axis along the Grand Canal, which is divided into five sections: urban section, Baoying section, Gaoyou section, Jiangdu section, and Hanjiang section” (Yangzhou).

“River systems” include rivers and lakes within the city. In cities with multiple river systems, AHD integrates them with the Grand Canal, coordinating efforts in water treatment, waterfront corridor construction, and the development of water tour routes. Cities like Huai’an, Suqian, and Jiaxing also capitalize on the “water” element to establish local brands as cultural and tourism water cities.
Finally, the classification of these four types of place names is not entirely mutually exclusive. For instance, West Lake belongs to the river systems of Hangzhou and also serves as a tourist attraction. Slender West Lake was originally a tourist attraction in Yangzhou but later recognized as a heritage site. However, these overlaps do not undermine the analysis results; instead, they illustrate the interconnectedness and integration of these spatial carriers. AHD tends to integrate spatial carriers at the local scale and construct a unique spatial organism for heritage tourism, exemplifying the process of localization in practice.

4.3. The Relationship between Thematic and Spatial Characteristics of AHD in Tourism

In order to further infer and reveal the relationship between thematic and spatial features, we focused on the output of the document by the LDA model under each topic (totaling six documents). Using a custom place name dictionary, we identified place names in each topic document separately, thereby summarizing the topics corresponding to multi-scale spatial features. We found that global practices are associated with Protection and Management and Marketing and Cooperation, with the former reflecting the universal practices brought about by the global value of heritage (as stipulated in the World Heritage Convention) and the latter representing the heterogeneous practices of AHD actively embedding cities into the global network. Regional practices embody Cultural Production and Inheritance, Touristification, and Marketing and Cooperation. On the one hand, AHD integrates heritage tourism into regional strategies and engages in inter-city cooperation.

On the other hand, the cultural characteristics of the region are also integrated into heritage tourism, promoting the production and reproduction of heritage culture and generating innovative cultural tourism products to create distinctive heritage tourism destinations. Place names at the local scale appear extensively in all six documents, therefore corresponding to all topics. This reflects AHD’s integration of spatial elements within cities and the interpretation of local textual agency in heritage tourism, which is a primary characteristic scale of AHD (Figure 4).

![Figure 4](image-url)

**Figure 4.** The thematic and spatial practice characteristics of AHD in tourism and their relationship.
5. Discussion

Benefiting from the emergence of CHR, the concept of AHD offers a pertinent perspective for examining the process and mechanisms of heritage production. This paradigm reconsiders the universality of AHD’s global practices and its dominant discursive position, prompting a reflection on the power relations inherent in the practices. It calls for attention to the presence of non-mainstream/non-official discourses, their feedback on AHD, and the agency of local texts and social contexts. In light of this standpoint, through literature tracking, this paper identifies that tourism has brought about new changes in heritage production [5], thereby reshaping the practices process of AHD. However, within this framework, the issue of the practice characteristics of AHD in the tourism context remains underexplored academically. Therefore, this paper takes the cities along the Grand Canal in the Jiangsu–Zhejiang section as case studies (given their prominent representation in heritage tourism) and profoundly analyzes the practice characteristics (thematic and spatial) of AHD based on policy texts from 2010 to 2023.

5.1. Theoretical Contributions

This study makes theoretical contributions in several aspects. Firstly, while Choay introduced the concept of heritage’s “triple extension”—thematic, spatial, and chronological [23]—current research has provided a limited discussion on these dimensions, particularly regarding these characteristics of AHD. As a significant means of shaping the production of heritage, AHD provides a valuable window into examining the practice process of heritage. Therefore, this paper conducts an in-depth analysis of AHD’s practice features from thematic and spatial perspectives, deepening the theoretical understanding of heritage production and facilitating exploration into the process and mechanism of heritage production.

Secondly, existing research on AHD practices has predominantly focused on heritage contexts alone, with relatively limited attention given to AHD practices in the context of tourism. This may be attributed to the pronounced “decentralizing” effect of tourism [40], prompting scholars to pay more heed to the role and significance of bottom-up, non-mainstream discourses. However, this decentralizing effect also suggests that AHD practices in tourism contexts undergo changes [16], a viewpoint supported by relevant literature [5]. In light of this insight, building upon existing research, this paper endeavors to explore the thematic and spatial practices of AHD within tourism. Employing quantitative text analysis methods such as LDA and analysis of place names, we conduct empirical research, offering new methodological tools for interpreting AHD and broadening heritage tourism studies. Six thematic aspects are identified—Protection and Management, Ecological Construction, Cultural Production and Inheritance, Touristification, Infrastructure and Services, and Marketing and Cooperation—which are interconnected and exhibit a clustering pattern centered around Touristification, effectively addressing the research question concerning the practice characteristics of AHD in a tourism context. This contributes novel insights to heritage tourism research, inheriting and deepening the viewpoints of “tourism accelerating heritage production” [5] and “tourism rewriting AHD practices” [16] in related studies.

Thirdly, building upon the understanding of glocalization in heritage tourism [73], this paper discovers that AHD practices operate at multiple spatial scales—global, regional, and local. We capture the regional scale, which has received limited attention previously, aligning with and deepening Choay’s discourse on the spatial extension of heritage [23]. This expands the understanding of the scale of AHD practices and enhances the comprehension of the spatial scale involved in heritage tourism. Furthermore, we also revealed the correspondence between spatial and thematic practices, showing that different scales of spatial practices correspond to diverse thematic practices, deepening the research depth into the “triple extension” of heritage. Additionally, it offers promising possibilities for the profound interdisciplinary integration of heritage tourism and geography.
5.2. Practical Implication

Through the above analysis and discussions, destination managers can clarify the development focus and direction of heritage tourism. Specifically, based on the six thematic practices identified, managers can establish a framework for heritage tourism and highlight areas of focus (particularly touristification). The interrelationship among these thematic practices implies the need for integrated consideration rather than isolated enhancement. Moreover, the dissolution of AHD’s hegemonic exclusivity by infrastructure and services suggests that managers should pay attention to bottom-up discourse power and integrate it into specific practices. Additionally, considering that multi-scale spatial practices are driven by diverse thematic practices, managers should prioritize different thematic practices when engaging in practices at different scales (especially global and regional practices). For example, in global practices, priority should be given to the Protection and Management and Marketing and Cooperation characteristics to achieve established goals.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research Directions

There are some research limitations in this paper. Regarding the “triple extension” of thematic, spatial, and chronological [23], this paper only discusses the characteristics of AHD regarding the former two concepts without incorporating chronological features into the analysis framework. Recognizing this gap, we have conducted and completed another specialized study on the temporal features of AHD practices. In that study, we engage deeply with the theory of path dependence in evolutionary economic geography, exploring the evolution process and mechanisms of AHD from the perspectives of path dependence and path creation, thereby effectively supplementing the inadequacy of this paper.

However, constrained by existing data, we only explored the correspondence between the thematic and spatial features of AHD. Yet, based on textual clues, we tentatively infer a causal relationship between the two. In the future, we aim to conduct on-site investigations and interviews with government officials to make more reliable causal inferences.

Furthermore, the conclusion of this paper also reveals that under the influence of multi-party negotiations, the hegemony of AHD is further diminished, yet the specific negotiation process remains unrevealed. In future research, we will collect and analyze tourist comment texts on heritage tourism, comparing and correlating them with policy texts, and interpret the negotiation process between top–down AHD and bottom-up non-mainstream discourses from a perspective beyond texts [10], aiming to provide more comprehensive insights into the discourse analysis of heritage tourism.

6. Conclusions

The empirical results reveal that practices of AHD in the tourism context comprise six thematic characteristics: Protection and Management, Ecological Construction, Cultural Production and Inheritance, Touristification, Infrastructure and Services, and Marketing and Cooperation. Firstly, as a contentious issue in heritage practice, the tension between tourism and conservation is the primary challenge that AHD needs to address. Sustainable development, however, offers a viable pathway to reconcile this contradiction. Hence, Protection and Management, Ecological Construction, and Cultural Production and Inheritance reflect AHD’s commitment to sustainability. These three thematic practices effectively preserve the authenticity of heritage physically and culturally, ensuring the sustainable tourism development of heritage by avoiding disruptions in heritage landscapes and culture [61], thereby increasing the possibility of their reproduction.

Building upon this foundation, Touristification can be sustainably implemented rather than in a destructive manner. AHD promotes Touristification through diversified forms of tourism, utilizing tourist attractions as carriers and product innovation as a means. Specific practices involve shaping heritage sites into tourist attractions and facilitating their linkage with other tourist attractions to construct an integrated spatial pattern for urban tourism. The heritage tourism product system is continuously innovated and developed in this process.
Infrastructure and Services provide the essential backbone for Touristification by enhancing urban amenities such as accommodation, transportation, catering, and communication, alongside delivering quality public services to residents. This indicates a gradual dissolution of AHD’s exclusive hegemony in the heritage tourism context, marking a negotiated outcome between top–down AHD and bottom-up non-mainstream discourses [16].

Marketing and Cooperation amplifies the influence and competitiveness of heritage tourism through branding and collaborative endeavors, propelling further advancement of Touristification. Consequently, while these six themes are relatively independent, they are intricately interconnected, reflecting a structural characteristic centered around Touristification.

In terms of spatial characteristics, AHD exhibits a multi-scale practice spanning global, regional, and local levels. Specifically, global practices are associated with Protection and Management and Marketing and Cooperation, while regional practices correspond to Cultural Production and Inheritance, Touristification, and Marketing and Cooperation. Local practices are linked to all six themes.

This paper deepens the theoretical understanding of AHD by examining its thematic and spatial dimensions, focusing on AHD practices within the context of tourism. Importantly, it explores the connection between AHD and heritage tourism. Furthermore, the findings indicate that AHD’s spatial characteristics operate across three scales: global, regional, and local, thus expanding the binary understanding of “global-local” within heritage tourism.

In future research, we aim to employ a more diverse range of methods to analyze the specific relationship between thematic and spatial practices in AHD. Additionally, we plan to incorporate tourist review texts to examine the interaction between top–down AHD practices and bottom-up tourist discourse.

Author Contributions: Y.J.: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, writing—original draft. B.H.: conceptualization, formal analysis, writing—review and editing. X.K.: Supervision, funding acquisition. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was supported by the National Natural Science Foundation of China [grant number 42271244].

Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

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

Notes
1. We appreciate the valuable suggestion of the review.
2. Due to space limitations, the specific directory of policy texts is not listed here. If needed, please contact the corresponding author for further details.

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